



Community & Voluntary Transport at



The TAS Partnership Limited
Passenger Transport Specialists

Newsletter No.27 December 2022

TAS has provided expert advice, guidance and support for the CT sector for over 30 years. This general newsletter follows from our well-received COVID-19 coverage between April & September 2020. Please let us know of any items that might be of interest to the wider CT sector. Back issues of these newsletters are uploaded on our website: <https://taspartnership.co.uk/TAS-news/>

UK – Office of the Traffic Commissioner to close Verify facility. It has been announced that “Soon you will not be able to use GOV.UK Verify to produce a signature in the Vehicle Operator Licensing service. You’ll need to create a GOV.UK account instead.”

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKOTC/bulletins/3353f91>

UK - DVSA earned recognition scheme launches new TfL module. “DVSA’s earned recognition scheme has launched a ‘TfL’ module which helps accredited operators bid for Transport for London contracts. This will allow earned recognition members access to commercial opportunities which may include construction, logistics, freight, and passenger transport.”

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKDVSA/bulletins/33404f2>

UK – Beware fake copies of The Highway Code are being sold. DVSA is currently investigating and taking action against sellers of a fake version of The Highway Code. The errors in the fake versions could put road users at risk of breaking the law or could cause failure in both theory and practical tests. Look for these key differences:

-) Barcodes; the official copy has an ISBN number above its barcode.
-) On the fake version, the logos on the front cover are slightly pixellated.
-) The official version has a matte cover, the fake version has a glossy cover.

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKDVSA/bulletins/335abde>

UK - Healthwatch recommendations on patient transport. With a remit to represent patient needs to decision-makers, Healthwatch has addressed the problems of patient transport, especially the significant minority that struggle to get to appointments. Healthwatch is lobbying on four issues:

-) The NHS to always ask about transport support following hospital discharge, so people recovering from treatment have a way to get home.
-) Ensure nobody is discharged from hospital at night unless transport can be arranged, so that patients aren't stranded.
-) A review of the NHS Non-Emergency Patient Transport Services (NEPTS) national eligibility criteria, so that people with long-term conditions who are eligible can consistently use this vital service to get to recurring hospital appointments.
-) Improvements to the Healthcare Travel Cost Scheme (HTCS), so that those who need financial support to access appointments are aware of this benefit and can be reimbursed as quickly as possible.

Amongst the challenges considered, Healthwatch notes that community transport has a "high demand for services".

<https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/news/2022-11-09/our-position-patient-transport>

England & Wales - The Charity Commission Updates

The Charity Commission has made a number of revisions to its guidance documents as follows:

-) Campaigning and political activity guidance for charities (CC9);
-) Protecting charities from abuse for extremist purposes;
-) Charities Act 2022: information about the changes being introduced;
-) NHS charities guidance;
-) Charity fundraising: a guide to trustee duties (CC20);
-) Charity emergency appeals: starting, running and supporting charitable emergency appeals (CC40);
-) Charity fundraising appeals for specific purposes;
-) Royal Charter charities;
-) Conflicts of interest: a guide for charity trustees (CC29);
-) Payments to charity trustees: what the rules are;
-) Trustee expenses and payments (CC11);
-) Setting up a charity: model governing documents and
-) Protect your charity from fraud and cyber crime.

https://www.gov.uk/search/all?parent=charity-commission&content_purpose_supergroup%5B%5D=guidance_and_regulation&organisations%5B%5D=charity-commission&order=updated-newest

Somerset – New Team Member at SWAN CT. Swan CT, which operates in areas near Bath and North East Somerset, has recruited Helen Allen to specifically recruit young people for a range of roles including bus buddying as well as driving. Helen can be contacted at youngproject@swan-transport.co.uk.

<https://www.mnrjournal.co.uk/news/a-lifeline-to-the-outside-world-swan-welcomes-new-team-member-567563>

Oxfordshire – Witney and Carterton Young People to Benefit from Reduced Price Bus Tickets. West Oxfordshire Community Transport is hoping to encourage more use from children and teenagers with a fare reduction to £1 on the Carterton 345 & 355 services and the Witney 213, 214 & 215 services. <https://www.witneygazette.co.uk/news/23092706.bus-tickets-reduced-young-people-witney-carterton/>

Gloucestershire – Volunteer Driver Appeal at Cotswold Friends. Cotswold Friends is appealing for more volunteer drivers in Cirencester and North Cotswolds. The project serves 1,600 users who make 12,000 journeys a year. Potential volunteers should contact Volunteer Manager, Sheryl Murray, on 01608 697007 or email volunteering@cotswoldfriends.org. <https://www.cotswoldjournal.co.uk/news/23053673.cirencester-charity-cotswold-friends-needs-drivers/>

Worcestershire – Worcester Wheels Receives Donations from eye-care Clinic. A welcome £1,000 donation was received by Worcester Wheels courtesy of Newmedica Worcester based at the Berkeley Business Park. The cash will contribute to the door-to-door minibus service that Worcester Wheels offers in the area. <https://www.worcesternews.co.uk/news/23088598.donation-gives-worcester-wheels-boost/>

Devon – South Hams District Council Award Grants for Local Community Services but Newton Abbot CT is Not Included. Although Ivybridge Ring and Ride was awarded £5,710, Newton Abbot CT has not been included in the grants scheme at this stage. The CT is required to produce more information before South Hams Council will consider giving financial support. The Council has emphasised that it is not closing the door to the CT, but requires more detail of the CT's work. <https://www.radioexe.co.uk/news-and-features/local-news/grants-for-south-hams-community-services/>

Devon – Okehampton CT Pays Tribute to Long-standing Supporters. For many years Annie Wills and Mino Penna have supported Okehampton and District Community Transport Group with fund-raising coffee mornings, but the two ladies are now to retire. Their efforts were celebrated at their final coffee morning by Okehampton Mayor Bob Tolley, who also presented Okehampton CT with a cheque for £1,000 from Okehampton Town Council. Information about Okehampton CT's services can be gained at www.odctg.co.uk. <https://www.okehampton-today.co.uk/news/thanks-for-years-of-coffee-morning-help-570801>

Devon – Colyton and Colyford Memory Café Receives Grant from County. The café has been funded under Devon County Council's Connecting You grant award scheme, which is specifically aimed at providing transport to the project, which meets once a month in each village, offering

quizzes, dancing, music as well as tea and cakes. Transport is provided by the Local Link car scheme and new volunteers are being sought.

<https://www.midweekherald.co.uk/news/23108757.colyton-memory-cafe-group-awarded-new-grant/>

Dorset – Portland Carers Highlight Transport Problems for Those Needing COVID Booster Vaccinations. Many Portland residents have struggled to get a booster jab at a local location and have been forced to travel to Southampton or Wareham. Jo Dolbear of the Portland Carers Support Group has been alerting people to Dorset County Council’s Community Transport Directory, which could put them in touch with a CT provider to get them to their appointment. https://uk.news.yahoo.com/nightmare-carers-portland-struggling-boost-063413451.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xILmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAACmbc0ODYIRPVfTdlYkH9eV99l-9GwosORe5d69TUmBikN6z43IFKjBEOflOCDkTyuxBRsqFkx7Osby-wlf7ICQTIvXnsyNmhMQ7L5LbgQ3GEzKEN1tbx0vMd5nQUHXcZvV3qbkVOYFf11XIVUvfGyN3k3LQuDVpJ1CE3NoCTP5O

West Sussex – Community Transport Sussex Travel Buddy Scheme Gains Support of MP. Horsham MP Jeremy Quin has thrown his support behind the new CT Sussex scheme to offer volunteers to accompany passengers on journeys. The supported journeys are aimed at those at risk of loneliness and isolation. Anyone interested in becoming a travel buddy volunteer should contact CT Sussex here: travelbuddy@ctsussex.org.uk. <https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/news/politics/new-horsham-travel-buddy-scheme-run-by-community-transport-sussex-supported-by-mp-jeremy-quin-3906273>

East Sussex – Mayor of Hailsham Pays Tribute to Cuckmere Bus. Operating since 1976, Cuckmere Bus was praised by the Mayor Paul Holbrook for its long-standing work providing a community bus service for Hailsham and Polegate. The Mayor paid a visit to managing director Philip Ayers and his team. The service does need volunteers. For further information call 07834 558376 or volunteer@cuckmerebuses.org.uk. <https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/news/people/polegate-community-bus-service-praised-for-valuable-work-3910565>

Cambridgeshire – New Digital Platform for Wisbech Users of FACT CT Service. Bus route 68 runs between the Tesco retail park and the Horsefair bus station. The service is operated by FACT CT, and is now benefitting from a booking App. This App project is a partnership between Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority, GoAscendal Labs and nemi. It is one of a growing number of App platforms designed to serve rural DRTs. Information on FACT CT and the 68 is here: <http://www.fact-cambs.co.uk>.” <https://www.fenlandcitizen.co.uk/news/new-tech-to-help-keep-wisbech-community-connected-with-publi-9278981/>

Also here: <https://www.wisbechstandard.co.uk/news/wisbech-horsefair-to-tesco-route-68-bus-app-9327132>

Cambridgeshire – New CT Service Launched to Link People with Food Banks in Lynn and Wisbech. Remi Clark, who has graduated from Nottingham University, is hoping to co-ordinate a community transport scheme to link residents of Lynn or Wisbech with local foodbanks. Remi wishes to recruit volunteers with cars to assist.

<https://www.lynnnews.co.uk/news/community-transport-links-from-to-foodbanks-offered-by-grad-9282748/>

Cumbria – British Gypsum Makes Donation to Volunteer Bus Service. The Fellrunner Village Bus has benefitted from the local Cumbrian gypsum industry to the tune of £2,000. This follows a donation of £5,000 by British Gypsum in 2021. Fellrunner has been operated entirely by volunteers since its launch by a local vicar in 1979, and provides a local lifeline in rural Cumbria.

<https://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/23055485.volunteer-bus-service-benefits-british-gypsum-donation/>

Kent – Substantial Increase of Community Transport Grant Support by Council. Kent County Council has announced an increase of its support grants for CT from £100,000 last year to £450,000. Local CT operators can apply for grants through the Council website.

<https://kccmediahub.net/council-boosts-community-transport-grant-to-support-sustainable-travel-around-county/>

Northamptonshire – Cuts in Stagecoach's Service Across Northampton Have Prompted CT Response. From 30 October, 19 Stagecoach services were withdrawn, and the Ability Community Bus Service has announced that it would extend its services to fill some of the gaps in the Long Buckby, Deanshanger and West Hunsbury areas. Users can initially use the Ability bus free of charge, although there is an admin fee of £10 or £45 for an annual membership. Enquiries can be made here:

(<https://www.facebook.com/abilitycommunitytransport/>), and on the Ability website (<https://abilitycic.org.uk/>) or phone 01327 604 123.

<https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/news/politics/community-bus-service-aims-to-plug-gap-left-by-stagecoachs-service-cuts-across-northampton-3888153>

Wiltshire – New Travel Friends Project Launched by Age UK.

With the aim of assisting older people to travel on buses and community transport, Age UK Wiltshire is recruiting volunteer Travel Friends, who will accompany passengers who have lost confidence to travel independently or who need additional support. Volunteers should apply here:

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/wiltshire/get-involved/volunteer/travel-friends/>
<https://www.salisburyjournal.co.uk/news/23070715.age-uk-travel-friends-promotes-freedom-older-people/>

Scotland – Electric Bus Charger Installed on Black Isle. A new bus charging point has been installed in Culbokie on the Black Isle peninsula north of Inverness. This will enable the Wee Ferintosh Bus to extend its operating hours. The Bus will benefit from designated charging periods, and other EVs will be able to use the facility at other times. The community bus replaced a former Stagecoach service and Highland Council funds two drivers.

<https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/4927417/buzzing-community-bus-charger/>

Scotland - Grampian Volunteer Transport Awards. Now in its fifth year, the Grampian Volunteer Transport Awards is inviting nominations across three categories:

-) Volunteer Driver of the Year;
-) Volunteer Escort of the Year and
-) Community Contribution of the Year

The awards are organised by Aberdeenshire County Council with £100 prize money sponsored by Colin Lawson Transport. Nominations are to be forwarded to Andrew.Stewart@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

<https://www.aberdeenlive.news/news/aberdeen-news/grampian-volunteer-transport-awards-back-7799377>

Scotland - Aberdeenshire Council Reminds Residents to Use Dial-a-Bus Service. The Central Buchan A2B dial-a-bus service is being promoted by Aberdeenshire Council to the communities of Auchnagatt, Fetterangus, Maud, Mintlaw, New Deer, New Leeds, New Pitsligo, Old Deer, Strichen and Stuartfield. The bus can be booked by calling 01467 535333 or emailing

a2bdialabus@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

<https://www.grampianonline.co.uk/news/central-buchan-residents-can-take-advantage-of-a2b-dial-a-bu-292100/>

Scotland – East Kilbride CT Receives National Lottery Grant. The Lanarkshire CT operator has been awarded a £10,000 grant from the Lottery. The cash will contribute to the purchase of a third minibus for the project. The CT has also gained seven new trustees following an appeal for help.

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/in-your-area/lanarkshire/lotto-cash-boost-helps-keep-28373566>

CTA Scotland – Director for Scotland David Kelly is Appointed to New Bus Taskforce. CTA has gained a place on the Bus Taskforce panel invited by Jenny Gilruth, Scotland's Transport Minister. The group also includes Transport Scotland, the Office of the Traffic Commissioner, small and large commercial bus operators, local government, regional transport partnerships and bus passenger organisations. <https://cta.uk.org/cta-scottish-bus-taskforce/>

Yorkshire – Renewable Energy Benefits from Three Oaks Solar Proposals. Plans for a Three Oaks-based renewable energy park have been outlined by Ridge Clean Energy. North Holderness Community Transport's business manager Caroline Wegrzyn, has welcomed the

initiative, commenting: "we are interested to learn how communities and businesses can benefit from this technology and project."

<https://renews.biz/81535/rce-outlines-three-oaks-community-benefit-plan/>

Yorkshire – Royal Award for Ryedale CT. One of 244 recipient organisations nationally, Ryedale Community Transport has been presented with The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service by the Lord-Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, Johanna Ropner. To continue to offer its wide range of services, however, Ryedale CT requires more volunteer drivers, who can call 01653 699059 to discuss further.

<https://www.gazetteherald.co.uk/news/23074564.ryedale-community-transport-receives-prestigious-award/>

Yorkshire – Final Excursion of the Year for Passengers of Ilkley and District Good Neighbours. Ilkley and District Community Transport provided transport on the final day out of the year, after it being postponed due to the death of the Queen. Passengers enjoyed afternoon tea at Cavendish Pavilion on the Bolton Abbey estate. The Dales Day Out excursions are due to resume next spring.

<https://www.wharfedaleobserver.co.uk/news/23106167.charitys-dales-day-trip-final-outing-year/>

Lincolnshire – Lincoln Dial-a-Ride has Minibus Stollen. Thieves drove away with one of eight precious CT vehicles in the depot during the night. Lincolnshire Police is looking into the incident. Lincoln Dial-a-Ride said the vehicle loss will have an impact on service provision but they hope disruption will be kept to a minimum.

<https://thelincolnite.co.uk/2022/10/bus-stolen-from-lincoln-dial-a-ride-charity/>

Greater London – Ealing CT puts out urgent appeal for drivers. Requiring paid staff rather than volunteers, Ealing CT is offering paid posts on its PlusBus, PlusBus for Health, Dial-a-Ride, SEND (special educational needs or disability) school transport and to help train new drivers. It has flexible shifts that can be full-time, part-time, casual or just at weekends at between £10 and £11.39 per hour. No previous experience is required and training is provided. For information, you can go to www.ectcharity.bamboohr.com/jobs/ or call 020 8813 3210.

<https://www.ealingtimes.co.uk/news/23113438.ealings-community-transport-service-appeals-drivers/>

Hampshire – CT Services Threatened as the Council Continues to Pursue Cutbacks. In its efforts to save £800,000 from its transport budget, Hampshire County Council is considering cuts to its support for New Forest Cango, the Burley taxishare and New Forest Group Travel service. John Warden, Chair of the Cango users forum, has argued that an increase in fares should be considered and feels users will be happy to pay, but HCC has claimed that Government legislation prevents this.

<https://www.advertiserandtimes.co.uk/news/new-forest-bus-services-targeted-in-council-cutbacks-9282010/>

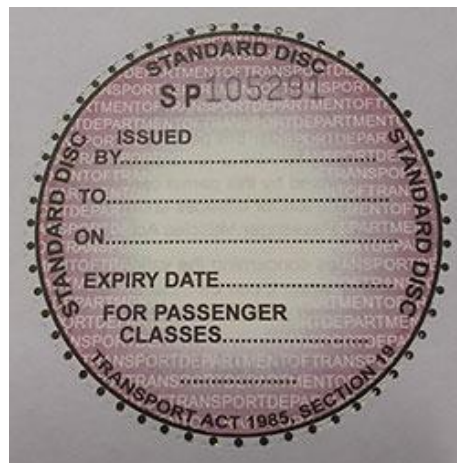
Northern Ireland – Ministerial Visit to Belfast-based CT. As part of his continuing engagement with CT providers, NI’s Infrastructure Minister John O’Dowd visited Disability Action to inspect the new electric minibus that the Department for Infrastructure has funded and to learn more about its work. <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/news/odowd-visits-disability-action-see-first-hand-valuable-services-they-provide>.

CTA Wales – Western Valleys Transport Pilot is Launched. CTA Wales has been instrumental in the launching of new and sustainable CT services in Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion. Funding support was provided by Welsh Government’s Valleys Regional Taskforce and Household Support Fund.

<https://ctauk.org/western-valleys-transport-pilot-launch-event-friday-23rd-september-2022/>

Community Transport and Small Vehicle Operations – TAS Commentary

In the good / bad old days, s19 permits were restricted to small (9-16 seats) or large (17+ seats) buses. Some of the smaller minibus models could be procured with only 8 seats, mostly for the Private Hire market, but could not be used with a permit. Then in April 2009 this restriction was revised by DfT, which extended the scope of the s19 permit to additionally include vehicles with 8 or fewer passenger seats. These were designated in DfT guidance as “small vehicles - adapted to carry 8 or fewer passengers (excluding the driver).” There was, however, a significant caveat. Small vehicles were only permitted to charge ‘separate fares’, which had operational implications for many CTs. Additionally, the VAT provision that passenger transport with a driver was zero rated only applied to buses of 9 or more seats, which meant that any fare charges on a small vehicle would be subject to VAT at the prevailing rate.



Separate Fares are defined in DfT's Permit Guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/section-19-and-22-permits-not-for-profit-passenger-transport/section-19-and-22-permits-not-for-profit-passenger-transport>

4.4 Separate fares - "Separate fares mean an individual payment by each passenger to the driver or other representative of the permit holder for the journey undertaken. Payment may be made on the vehicle or in advance. It may also be by indirect means, perhaps in respect of other services (eg tickets to an event where travel is included), or as part of a regular subscription to an organisation. Separate fares are not paid where the vehicle is hired as a whole for a set charge (which isn't influenced by the number of passengers carried) and passengers, to the knowledge of the driver or permit holder, make no individual contribution."

The implication for CT operators is that small vehicles cannot be used as part of any group travel provision where a single, overall charge is made for use. In fact, the only circumstance where a group can be provided with a smaller vehicle is where the CT hires the vehicle only to the group (similar to a commercial van hire approach). In this situation, the hiring group is the operator – it needs to use its own s19 permit if charging the passengers, and its own insurance, and provide its own driver. Another option would be for the small vehicle to operate under Private Hire (a permanent and potentially costly move), and any driver would then need to be licensed as a Private Hire driver – not so practical for multiple group usage.



The other implication for the CT sector is the inability to deploy small vehicles on local authority (or any other kind of) contract work, which intrinsically involve a single payment for usage. This can be a frustration as many contracts are structured to suit smaller vehicles with one or two passengers plus assistant, and CTs are faced with often having to operate larger and less economic minibuses on these kinds of run. In short, the use of s19 with small vehicles is restricted to services offered for individual passenger journeys, such as Dial-a-Ride or volunteer car schemes.

As a side issue, s22 permits have never been extended to include small vehicles, despite the fact that many routed rural services do not have peaks of demand that require more than 8 seats and in some areas vehicles with smaller physical dimensions than a minibus are more practicable on narrow lanes.

There is another, less well-known option: a PSV 'O' Licence holder can operate small vehicles as PSVs without requiring a Private Hire Vehicle licence – either:

) at separate fares and they must organise the journey and bring people together and the journey must be advertised to the general public. i.e. the agreement to pay separate fares must not have been organised by the passengers themselves or a third party

OR

) not at separate fares, provided the use of a small vehicle must be only a small part of the operator's business of carrying passengers by motor vehicles. The understanding from DfT Guidance is that if under 10% of the fleet of vehicles licensed under a PSV 'O' licence are small vehicles the exemption may apply. However, as the legislation states, in defining "small part of the business" other factors such as mileage run or income may be taken into account. [This exemption is at s79A PPVA1981]

Neither of these options would be straightforward to implement.

Finally, there is an environmental consideration. One appeal of small vehicles using s19 at this point is the greater range of purchasing options and affordability for accessible EVs with up to 8 seats. This coincides with a more or less general decline of demand for door-to-door minibus services, a trend that actually predates COVID. Many traditional Dial-a-Ride-type services are continuing to operate 14 or 16-seat minibuses when the peak multi-occupancy is no more than four or five, and such vehicles are prohibitively expensive to upgrade to electric in a like-for-like manner. It may be that more small vehicles are deployed on these services in future years but at present the emphasis on small EVs is at odds with the permit legislation.

