



# Community & Voluntary Transport at



The TAS Partnership Limited  
Passenger Transport Specialists

## Newsletter No.36 September 2023

Edited by John Atkins (Principal Consultant)

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 – Government Disability Action Plan Consultation. The government has launched an open consultation on its proposed Disability Action Plan: “We are seeking views on the proposed Disability Action Plan and the new areas for action it includes. We want to hear from as many people as possible. This consultation closes at 11:59pm on 6 October 2023.” Under the section ‘Government Plans for 2023-2024’, DfT lists proposed measures for rail, taxi, private hire, buses and coaches but makes no reference to community transport. Likewise, proposed actions by the Disability Unit – apart from a few mentions of general accessibility improvements – do not include any transport related measures at all.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/disability-action-plan-2023-to-2024>

UK – Parliament Transport Committee Call for Evidence. “The Transport Committee is inquiring into how the Government sets its strategic transport objectives and how these objectives do—or should—influence decisions on investment in, and cross-government planning of, services, networks and infrastructure. “Future investment planning is currently mostly done on the basis of individual transport modes or specific programmes, with bodies in different parts of the country advocating new infrastructure, revenue funding or powers to support and improve services across all modes in their area. Funding in some modes is both short-term and in short supply, with resources

often allocated by competition. The Institution of Civil Engineers and the National Infrastructure Commission are among organisations who have recently set out the case for a strategic transport vision at a national level to guide policy and investment decisions. We want to investigate the extent to which the Government takes a long-term, national and multi-modal approach to predicting, providing for, maintaining and developing the country's transport needs, and what difference adoption of clear, national strategic objectives for transport could make. We welcome submissions of written evidence that address any or all of the following themes. We are also interested in receiving submissions that draw on international comparisons to address these questions." <https://committees.parliament.uk/call-for-evidence/3175>

UK – Blue Badge Misuse Warning. A recent case in Reading in which a care home manager misused an organisational blue badge resulted in the individual being handed a £7,000 fine. This should serve to remind any CT operators of the potential consequences of organisational badge misuse.



<https://localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/litigation-and-enforcement/400-litigation-news/54473-defendant-ordered-to-pay-more-than-7k-in-fines-and-costs-over-organisational-blue-badge-fraud>

UK – Take the Bus Campaign Encourages Older People to Make the Most of Free Bus Travel. DfT has launched a new campaign to encourage passholders to use the bus this summer. DfT announcement summary:

- ) "new campaign launched to encourage older people to use their free bus pass to meet friends and family, rediscover local attractions and get their 'culture fix from 66';
- ) drive to increase bus travel will boost wellbeing of older and disabled people, support sustainable bus services and help grow the economy;
- ) latest statistics show a 36% drop in bus usage since 2019 for concessionary passholders, sparking move to encourage eligible people to get out and about for free."

[https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-campaign-to-boost-free-bus-travel-this-summer?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm\\_source=0e5add3b-da8f-4155-b755-e9e3ccee023a&utm\\_content=daily](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-campaign-to-boost-free-bus-travel-this-summer?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=0e5add3b-da8f-4155-b755-e9e3ccee023a&utm_content=daily)

UK – Reporting Bus Fires. DVSA and the Traffic Commissioner have recently investigated instances of bus fires and have emphasised to operators the need for correct maintenance and the requirement to notify DVSA of serious incidents (England, Scotland and Wales only). Operators are to use form PSV112 "to report an incident or collision involving a PSV" but it is not clear if (or how) s19 or s22 operators are to make similar reports.

<https://movingon.blog.gov.uk/2023/07/20/bus-fire-investigation-reveals-important-lessons-for-industry-to-take-forward/>

UK – CTA National Conference & Awards Event 23 Nov 2023. In a return to the format of previous events, CTA has announced CT Conference 2023 event at Birmingham's NEC for 23 November. CTA: "With a focus on securing a sustainable future for CT, the conference will highlight innovative strategies, technologies, and approaches that can sustain and enhance community transport systems for years to come. The discussions will revolve around ensuring accessibility, efficiency, and sustainability while meeting the evolving needs of diverse communities. CT Conference 2023 will be an opportunity to foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing, promote inclusivity, and discuss building resilient systems that will continue to serve communities effectively in the years ahead. The conference will showcase outstanding community transport projects, drive the exchange of experiences, address common issues, and explore partnerships. It will also raise awareness of the importance of community transport in enhancing social inclusion, supporting vulnerable populations, and ensuring equitable access to transport options."



<https://ctauk.org/ct-conference-awards-2023/> Nominations for the awards are now open: <https://ctauk.org/nominations-are-now-open-for-the-cta-2023-awards/>

UK – ATCO Guidance on Use of Seat Belt Buckle Guards. Following the recent debates on the use of buckle guards, the Association of Transport Coordinating Officers has published a guidance document Good Practice Guide for Local Authorities regarding Alternatives to Seatbelt Buckle Guards. ATCO says it has been "working with the DfE, DfT and DVSA." This document does not, as happened with the previous communication from the DVSA, give a date when we should stop using the Buckle Guards but does set out the reasoning why we need to move to a position where we all stop using them. There are also examples of alternative practices tried by some councils to reduce or cease their use." The document is available to ATCO members – CT operators who are not members may be able to obtain a copy from their local council transport contact.



## Alternatives to Seatbelt Buckle Guards

## Good Practice Guide for Local Authorities

Produced by ATCO with support from the Department for Transport (DfT), Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and the Department for Education (DfE)

July 2023

UK – How Demand Responsive Transport Boosts Community Transport - webinar. This webinar is organised by Padam Mobility and aims to “showcase practical examples of successful transport services for sparsely populated communities – and how DRT technology is supporting these services.” The event is to be held on Wednesday 20th September 2023 10:30-12:00 and is free to participants.



[https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_1qQ16pjBR\\_mVVfA8OXoMsw#/registration](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1qQ16pjBR_mVVfA8OXoMsw#/registration)

#### England – CTA Updates

- ) Forthcoming Regional Forums:
  - o East Midlands 20th Sept 1 PM - 2:30 PM.
  - o West Midlands 20th Sept 10 AM- 11:30 AM.
  - o East England 21st Sept 2 PM - 3:30 PM.
  - o South East 25th Sept 2 PM - 3:30 PM.
  - o London 26th Sept 10 AM - 11:30 AM.
  - o North West 21st Sept 10 AM - 11:30 AM.
  - o South Central 27th Sept 2 PM – 3 PM.
  - o North East 18th Sept 10 AM- 11:30 PM.
  - o Yorkshire and Humber 18th Sept 1 PM - 2:30 PM.
- ) HCC Budget Consultation - CTA has responded to a consultation by the Hampshire County Council on why funding for CT must not be discontinued.
- ) Clean Air Zone Clarification - CTA has had clarification from Portsmouth City Council that a CT M2 class vehicle operating under a Section 19 or Section 22 permit will not be subject to charges for failing to meet emission standards in the clean air zone.
- ) BSOG Fuel Allowance Uplift - The Department for Transport is currently reviewing the administrative requirements for CT providers to ensure the process is proportionate to the level of support being provided. Once this is finalised, the uplifted fuel allowance rate will be available to CT providers.
- ) State of the Sector - Much has changed since the last England-wide State of the CT sector research was published in 2014. In the autumn of 2023, CTA will begin research to provide a thorough and up-to-date overview of the sector in England, which will build on similar work conducted in Scotland and Wales to ensure harmony of data whenever possible. CTA's new Research and Insight manager, Nick Mills, will lead this work. There will be further updates as the research progresses, but if you would like to discuss this, Nick can be reached at [nick@ctauk.org](mailto:nick@ctauk.org).  
<https://mailchi.mp/ctauk/news-brief-june23-6243172?e=378541f5a9>



Nottinghamshire – CT4N Receives Welcome Donation from Car Rental Company. Enterprise Rent-A-Car, which has four outlets in and around Nottingham, has shown its commitment to reducing social isolation and increasing access to transport with a donation via its philanthropic arm to the CT4N Charitable Trust, which provides not-for-profit transport services helping elderly people and people with mobility issues to get out and about, And CT4N Managing Director Ian Combellack said he was delighted to receive a cheque for £2,000 in support of their work from the Enterprise Holdings Foundation.

Enterprise provides a car and van hire service from its Nottingham and Ilkeston outlets part of its UK wide network of more than 450 branches. "This donation is a marvellous boost for us in helping us to continue our work in providing services to counter loneliness and isolation," said Ian. "We are very grateful to the Enterprise Holdings Foundation for their support, and it's so encouraging that they recognise the value of what we do for the community." The Foundation was established in 1982 "to give back to the communities where our customers and employees live and work."

Ashley Houston, Enterprise Business Rental Sales Director, commented: "We identified that, as a local charity within the Nottingham community, the CT4N Charitable Trust aligns with Enterprise's goals of reducing social isolation and improving mental wellbeing by increasing access to mobility. Around 98 per cent of the grants made by the Foundation are made in response to requests from the employees, to benefit community causes that they personally champion and actively support."



Pictured at the cheque presentation are (from left to right): Ashley Cope, Enterprise Holdings Foundation, Ashley Houston, Enterprise Holdings Foundation; Oliver Jan De Ruitter Steer, CT4N Charity Manager; Thulani Molife, Trustee for CT4N Charitable Trust; and Ian Combellack.

Surrey – Waverley Hoppa wins Autism Friendly Award. The National Autistic Society has recognised the Waverley Hoppa service with its Autism Friendly Award. This accreditation follows the provision of staff training “to enhance their autism knowledge and developing and implementing an action plan to make its services ‘autism friendly’.” Hoppa manager Richard Davies said: “By learning more about autism, we have been able to make changes which have made our service more inclusive for everybody... More and more people are being diagnosed as autistic so I hope this award will help to give them hope that there is support, they are seen, heard and valued and that hoppa is a friendly service for all..”

<https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/surrey-hoppa-community-transport-wins-autism-friendly-award/>

Devon – Sir Geoffrey Cox MP Calls for more Support for CT. Commenting on the healthcare challenges of rural dwellers, Sir Geoffrey Cox writes:

“Transport in more difficult to reach places is one of the biggest problems in obtaining services people need...I am pressing the Government to recognise that one means by which the Government could help achieve those goals is by increasing support to our local Community Transport Associations to do more. These important voluntary groups, which I have strongly supported over the years, are a lifeline to many in our rural area and I am very glad we have obtained a reprieve this year for Holsworthy CTA after the hard work of its trustees and supporters. I am meeting the trustees again shortly to discuss how we can continue the CTA’s work well into the future...”

<https://www.holsworthy-today.co.uk/news/westminster-column-with-sir-geoffery-cox-624408>

Devon – Dawlish CT Vehicles in Arson Attack. A devastating arson attack in Dawlish on 14 July has destroyed six minibuses belonging to Dawlish

Community Transport, with a seventh vehicle also likely to be written off. Det Sgt Martin Key said: “These minibuses belong to the local community transport and are vital to the community. This is an appalling act of vandalism and we are doing all we can to locate and arrest the person responsible.” The damage is estimated to be around £280,000 and police have released CCTV image of a man at the scene whom they wish to interview. Undaunted, Dawlish CT were back in operation after a couple of days.



<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-66210751> and <https://www.itv.com/news/westcountry/2023-07-19/charitys-heartbreak-after-community-minibuses-destroyed-in-arson-attack>.  
<https://www.teignmouth-today.co.uk/news/well-keep-going-says-dawlish-transport-team-629048>  
<https://www.middevonadvertiser.co.uk/news/teams-making-tidy-work-of-dct-clean-up-629804>

As a response, local fundraising efforts have commenced to offer support: <https://www.dawlish-today.co.uk/news/fundraiser-to-help-arson-hit-charity-627212> and <https://www.teignmouth-today.co.uk/news/999/appeal-launched-to-help-arson-hit-transport-charity-626846> Contributions can be made to Go Fund Me here: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/get-dawlish-community-transport-moving-again>

Devon – Go North Devon Service to be Rescued. It has been announced that Go North Devon Ltd would cease operations completely at the end of September 2023. However, its North Devon Ring and Ride Service will now pass to another operator Mid Devon Mobility, who have pledged to keep the Ring and Ride service in place. Chief Executive of Mid Devon Mobility Faye Ashton, said: “We are very aware of how vitally important the Ring and Ride Service is to the people it serves, as without it many older and disabled people would be unable to leave their house and access local shops and facilities. Many of our customers regularly tell us how the Ring and Ride and The Day Trip Club is their only means of getting out and about and the social aspect is extremely important to them. We wanted the benefits of this service to continue for the residents of North Devon and we look forward to being able to provide it.” <https://www.northdevongazette.co.uk/news/local-news/1258473/go-north-devon-ring-ride-service-rescued-from-closure.html>

Devon – OurBus Services Threatened in Torbay Unless Volunteers can be Found. Torquay-based OurBus has struggled to meet its commitment to operate its routes 61 and 65 with only four volunteer drivers, and has reduced the level of service until it can double its driver roster. Co-ordinator Kelly Bedoyan said: “Our drivers love doing what they do and their passengers are very appreciative. But for some reason, we are struggling to find them at the moment...The passengers and volunteer drivers who are part of OurBus know that it provides more than just a bus service; it’s a community centre on wheels where neighbours can meet, share news, find out more about what’s going on in their area and maybe even become friends...” Anyone who is able to assist should contact OurBus on 07816 407495 or email [kellybedoyan@torbaycdt.org.uk](mailto:kellybedoyan@torbaycdt.org.uk). <https://wearesouthdevon.com/community-bus-services-are-under-threat-because-of-a-shortage-of-volunteer-drivers/>

Devon – CT to Assist with Football Matchday Travel at Plymouth Argyle. Once again a Dial-a-Ride service is being offered by Access Plymouth to enable supporters with access needs to attend matches by Plymouth Argyle FC. The football club said: “We are committed to providing sustainable transport options and making supporters’ match-day travel arrangements as

simple and straightforward as possible. This service supports both of these ambitions by providing a bespoke and convenient service for those with access requirements, while also serving to reduce traffic congestion and alleviate the need for parking at Home Park...Bookings are now open for the new season, and we would encourage supporters with access requirements who require support with their match-day travel arrangements to contact Access Plymouth directly on 01752 600633, or via email at: [admin@accessplymouth.co.uk](mailto:admin@accessplymouth.co.uk). Dial-A-Ride are also on the look out for volunteer drivers. For more information click here <https://www.pafc.co.uk/news/dial-ride-volunteer-drivers-needed>." <https://www.pafc.co.uk/news/dial-ride-match-days-0m>

Durham – Council Pound Project Secures Accessible Minibus for SEN School. "A school for children with learning disabilities has taken delivery of a specially adapted new minibus thanks to Esh Construction's collaboration with the award-winning County Durham Pound project. Students and staff from Villa Real School, near Consett, were delighted to receive the bus which was funded by Esh Construction and the school's own fundraising efforts. Esh's donation was secured through Durham County Council's County Durham Pound project which involves a number of local organisations that are committed to working together to maximise social, economic and environmental value throughout the county." <https://www.eshgroup.co.uk/news-social/esh-construction-funds-minibus-through-county-durham-pound-project/>

Yorkshire – Ilkley CT Stalwart Retires. The retirement has been announced of Mary Hamilton former Ilkley Office Manager for Community Action Bradford and District. Mary's role played a long-standing active part in the operation of Ilkley Community Transport. David Steel, Coordinator of Ilkley Community Transport, said: "Mary was an integral part of the Ilkley charities community, particularly in supporting our volunteers and myself over the past 2 years I have been in post." Steve Butler, former Mayor of Ilkley and current Ilkley Community Transport volunteer, says he "recognises the valuable role she has played in the town and deserves a medal for her endeavours!"



<https://www.ilkleygazette.co.uk/news/23659756.integral-part-ilkley-charities-community-mary-hamilton-retires/>

Yorkshire – 40 Years of Scarborough Dial-a-Ride. One of Yorkshire's longest-serving CT operations, Scarborough Dial-a-Ride, celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> birthday with a party at Sawdon Village Hall. The service commenced in 1983 with two secondhand minibuses. Manager Tim Lawson said: "without our wonderful drivers, passenger assistants and office support, we would not be



able to provide our essential transport services to older people and those with disabilities. They all go above and beyond and this event was a small way of saying Thank You to everyone who has been involved over the past years. Dial A Ride has continued to go from strength to strength but only because of the people involved". New volunteer minibus and car drivers and passenger assistants are being sought. Those interested should contact 01723 354434 or via the website [www.scarboroughdialaride.org](http://www.scarboroughdialaride.org).  
<https://www.thisisthecoast.co.uk/news/local-news/scarborough-dial-a-ride-celebrates-40-years/>

Scotland – Orkney CT Services are Funded. Orkney Islands Council have announced the following: "Community transport solutions - including three totally new initiatives - have been granted up to £44,000 funding by Orkney Islands Council to improve connectivity in some of our most fragile communities. A total of eight eligible bids for funding were received by the Council's Transportation service, following promotion of the Community Transport Small Grants Scheme for funding of up to £10,000 per project. OIC's Transportation Service Manager, Laura Cromarty, said: 'This was a great response and we're delighted to see three new isles projects in the mix for 2023-24. We reviewed our Community Transport Grant scheme last year, which resulted in the creation of a small grants scheme with a simplified application and approval process.'

The funding awarded will enable the continuation of a community transport service in Hoy with an extended service to connect with the Moaness ferry (Island of Hoy Development Trust), and the continued operation of the out of hours ferry for Shapinsay (Shapinsay Development Trust) and Papa Westray (Papay Development Trust) for social and leisure activities. Newly established community transport services in Rousay, Stronsay and North Ronaldsay (through Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Development Trust; Stronsay Development Trust; and North Ronaldsay Trust respectively) have also been awarded funding. Continued funding has also been awarded to Dial a Bus for door to door transport services across mainland Orkney from the large grant scheme. Additional funding during 2023/24 will be provided to enhance this valued service further.

The number of eligible projects well exceeded the community transport budget available. Match funding for the projects has come from the Council's Sustainable and Green Transport Fund to help make up the shortfall – a pot fed by ticket income from the Council's subsidised public bus services and earmarked for improvements to local transport such as additional services, bus shelters and community transport projects. Councillor David Dawson is Chair of OIC's Development and Infrastructure Committee: 'Our Transportation team works hard to try and support communities where standard public transport services are just not feasible – so this is a gratifying result for the Council and communities and I wish each of these projects the very best.'  
<https://www.orkney.gov.uk/News?postid=7836>

Scotland – CT Project in North West Sutherland is Shelved. A proposed project Farr Goes Community Transport had intended to operate a two vehicle service in the Bettyhill and Melvich areas but the required budget could not be secured, and despite raising £100,000, the project has now been put on hold. <https://www.northern-times.co.uk/news/north-west-sutherland-community-transport-scheme-shelved-due-320571/>

Scotland – West Dunbartonshire CT Praised by MP. Following a visit to West Dunbartonshire Community Transport, local MP Martin Docherty-Hughes said: "I have been really impressed by the work of the volunteers at WDCT. They are providing a valuable service for residents who would otherwise find it challenging to travel for essential healthcare appointments. The free community transport initiative particularly benefits vulnerable people; helping to tackle social isolation and improve health outcomes. I was delighted to catch up with the team at WDCT and hope to see them serving the communities of West Dunbartonshire for years to come. The charity's community driver scheme is currently on the lookout for volunteers – I'd encourage anyone interested in volunteering to get in touch." WDCT can be contacted 07990 825 754 or email [wdctag@gmail.com](mailto:wdctag@gmail.com). <https://www.dumbartonreporter.co.uk/news/23660251.west-dunbartonshire-transport-group-praised-local-mp/>

Greater London – Ealing CT and 'This Better Transport Week'. In June Ealing Community Transport was involved with Health Day of Better Transport Week: "a series of events organised by the Campaign for Better Transport to celebrate the positive difference that sustainable transport can bring. Most of the attention on Health Day will focus on the impact that better transport can have through cutting congestion and air pollution – plus exploring the benefits of active



travel choices like cycling and walking. These are vitally important issues, but they are not the only way that better transport has a positive impact on health...Our experience - and our own research shows that transport has a direct role to play in the physical and mental health of its passengers – through helping to tackle loneliness and social isolation...We know that transport – and particularly community transport – can do something about that. Up and down the country, community transport operators like ECT Charity are providing door-to-door transport services that help vulnerable and isolated people get out and about, connecting them with their communities..." <https://ectcharity.co.uk/news/story/this-better-transport-week-we-highlight-that-better-transport-leads-to-better-health>

Greater London – Via Software Platform to Transform TfL’s Dial-a-Ride. Transport for London has awarded a multi-year contract to tech developers Via, with the aim of improving “accessible transport across the city through technology. As a result of a competitive two-year tender process, Via will introduce its software platform in early 2024, powering the Dial-a-Ride service with the aim to further increase the quality of service and passenger experience for elderly and disabled members in London. The partnership will also help TfL to expand the Dial-a-Ride service to reach even more people. The announcement is a milestone in the adoption of technology-enabled accessible transport solutions in the UK. TfL’s Dial-a-Ride, with Via’s software, will serve as a blueprint for other cities and transport authorities across Europe to make public transport more inclusive, efficient, and cost-efficient at scale...The new software will benefit Dial-a-Ride’s 30,000 members helping TfL to provide customers with reliable and equal access to transport for everyday leisure trips that are so important to maintain a high quality of life.”

[https://ridewithvia.com/news/transport-for-london-awards-via-with-multi-year-contract-to-transform-accessible-transport?utm\\_source=pardot&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=tfl\\_tender\\_announcement](https://ridewithvia.com/news/transport-for-london-awards-via-with-multi-year-contract-to-transform-accessible-transport?utm_source=pardot&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=tfl_tender_announcement)

Greater London – TfL ULEZ Minibus Scrappage Scheme. Transport for London has been reminding vehicle owners of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) standards that will apply across all London Boroughs from 29 August 2023. For charities operating minibuses, it has offered a scrappage scheme: “We are increasing the grant payments to scrap or retrofit a non-compliant van or a minibus. Successful applicants can now get £7,000 to scrap a van, £9,000 to scrap a minibus, £6,000 to retrofit a van or minibus, £9,500 to scrap a van and replace with an electric van and £11,500 to scrap and replace a minibus with an electric minibus. This increased payment will be available from 4 August 2023 for all new applicants and those who have applied but not yet submitted evidence of scrap or retrofit.

Charities operating in London can apply to scrap or retrofit up to 3 vans or minibuses, and may reapply even if they already received a grant payment for one vehicle as part of this scrappage scheme or received a grant through the previous scrappage scheme. From 21 August 2023, eligible businesses and sole traders will also be able to apply for up to 3 vans or minibuses in total, even if they had received a grant payment for one vehicle as part of this scheme.” <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/ultra-low-emission-zone/scrappage-schemes/van-minibus>. However, CT operators can enjoy a full discount on ULEZ charges for another year: “Many not-for-profit organisations that operate minibuses used for community transport can register for a temporary 100% discount of the ULEZ charge until 26 October 2025. These are minibuses that carry passengers on a not-for-profit basis. For example, for educational, religious, social welfare reasons, or other activities that benefit the community...” <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/ultra-low-emission-zone/discounts-and-exemptions#on-this-page-4>

Berkshire – Readibus has ‘Gagging Clause’ Removed. CT operator Readibus has announced that it is no longer constrained by a West Berkshire Council contract clause which disallowed them to “make any press announcement or publicise the agreement or any part of the agreement in any way, except with the prior written consent of the council.” The Council has now agreed to remove the clause from future contracts.

<https://www.newburytoday.co.uk/news/readibus-welcomes-removal-of-west-berkshire-council-s-gaggi-9321205/>

Berkshire – Reading Councillor and Founder of Readibus Receives Honorary Degree. Councillor Tony Page’s 50 years of public service was recognised with an honorary degree from the University of Reading. As well as being a Labour councillor and former Mayor, Tony has developed “better public transport for the people of Reading” and was “instrumental in establishing Readibus, the UK’s first dial-a-ride community transport service in the 1970s, which still serves the town today.”

<https://www.reading.ac.uk/news/2023/University-News/Veteran-local-councillor-receives-honorary-degree>

Suffolk – Volunteer Drivers Required for CT Service in Haverhill Area. The community transport service provided by The Voluntary Network is seeking volunteers for its Connecting Communities project, involving both minibuses and cars. Managing Director Caroline Robinson said: “Certainly a lack of volunteers does impact upon the service. We are increasingly having to decline local groups which is really frustrating. They invariably have no affordable alternative. Passengers are still rebuilding confidence and connections after Covid. Lockdown has had a longer-lasting impact upon some, facing a significant change to their mobility and confidence. The last thing we want is for a lack of transport to be the barrier.”

<https://www.suffolknews.co.uk/haverhill/news/we-are-increasingly-having-to-decline-local-groups-which-is-9322291/>

Hampshire – New Community Bus Service for Chandler’s Ford. A new year-long trial bus service is to be operated by Community First, serving a route between Chandler’s Ford and Eastleigh via Hiltingbury on Mondays to Fridays. The new service has been funded by Chandler’s Ford Parish Council, Hampshire County Council and Eastleigh Borough Council.



<https://hantsbus.blog/2023/07/new-u-links-and-more/> and <https://www.eastleighnews.co.uk/2023/07/new-community-bus-service-for-chandlers-ford-and-hiltingbury/>

Cambridgeshire – FACT Takes Over 36 Eye to Thorney Route from Stagecoach. The March-based FACT Community Transport is now operating the former Stagecoach 36 service, following the latter’s withdrawal due to low passenger numbers. The new minibus service commenced on 31

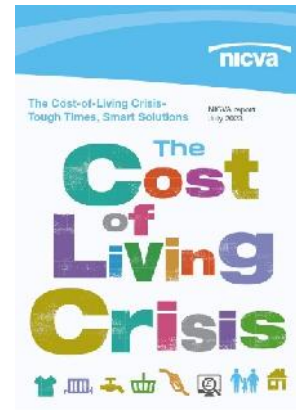
July. Mayor Dr Nik Johnson said: "The minibus service will take over seamlessly from the 36-bus route, so there won't be interruptions to the service provided...Every lost service deeply affects people who rely on buses and hobbles their ability to get on with their lives. This is why I recently announced my bold vision for Bus Reform which, driven by our Bus Strategy, will create an affordable, reliable, convenient, and sustainable bus network that the people of our region need and deserve."

<https://www.cambsnews.co.uk/news/fact-minibus-replaces-stagecoach-on-thorney-to-eye-service/12818/>

Northern Ireland – Fermanagh CT Assists with LGBT+ Event. The Belfast Pride event on 29 July was attended by a group from Fermanagh Pride including David McDermott from Enniskillen. David commented: "With the support of the excellent Fermanagh Community Transport, we are taking a group to attend Belfast Pride this Saturday. It is looking like it will be one of their best ever, with an estimated 70,000 people attending..."

<https://www.impartialreporter.com/news/23684835.culture-war-fuelling-trans-attacks-says-lgbt-campaigner/> An evaluation of the impact of Fermanagh CT services has also been cited in the context of Queen's University's Science Shop: <https://indiaeducationdiary.in/queens-university-belfast-science-shop-team-bags-prestigious-national-teaching-award/>

Northern Ireland – Cost of Living Report Highlights Impact on Community Transport. A new report details the impact of the economic situation on NI's voluntary sector. Published by NICVA (Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action) the report mentioned the "severe financial pressures driven by the rising costs of energy and fuel. Community Transport has also been directly affected with less service being available due to the prohibitive costs. Volunteering has also been affected with people just not able to afford to travel to where they volunteer. This has had a huge effect on people relying on these services."



<https://viewdigital.org/devastating-effect-of-cost-of-living-crisis-revealed-in-new-report/> The full report is here:

[https://www.nicva.org/sites/default/files/files/004767%20NICVA%20Cost%20Of%20Living%20ES%20Report%2031%20July\(1\).pdf](https://www.nicva.org/sites/default/files/files/004767%20NICVA%20Cost%20Of%20Living%20ES%20Report%2031%20July(1).pdf)

Northern Ireland – Easilink Funding Secured until March 2024. The Department for Infrastructure's decision to continue CT funding at a reduced level for another year is reported for the benefit of users of Easilink Community Transport, which serves communities in Strabane, Omagh and Derry / Londonderry. <https://www.derrydaily.net/2023/08/04/durkan-welcomes-funding-for-community-transport/>

Northamptonshire – Profile of Ability CT's Efforts to Keep Rural Communities Connected. An article by Rural Services Network has highlighted how Towcester-based Ability Community Transport has been able to step in with a service for Hackleton after the local bus was withdrawn. Kerry Booth, RSN Chief Executive, said: "I would like to congratulate Lynn and Nigel Hinch for stepping in and providing a vital lifeline for so many. Sadly, the story of Hackleton is echoed across the country, with many vulnerable people being left stranded overnight. Imagine if one day one of the tube lines just closed down. People living and working in London would be in chaos but they have alternatives. Why should our rural communities be treated so differently with no other options available to them?"

<https://rsnonline.org.uk/rural-communities-fight-back-against-bus-cuts>

Wales – Gwynedd CT Operator Featured at National Eisteddfod. Community-led initiatives have been highlighted at a 'Cymunedoli' stall at the Eisteddfod event in Boduan. This is a new network which aims to celebrate local projects and offer "an insight into what operating on a community level means."



The first day of the event focusses on the theme of community transport and features Pen Llŷn CT operator O Ddrws i Ddrws. Manager Wil Parry said: "We as initiatives have fostered so much expertise over the years and it's truly wonderful that we are able to share it with the attendees of the Eisteddfod this year, which will hopefully feed back to their local areas

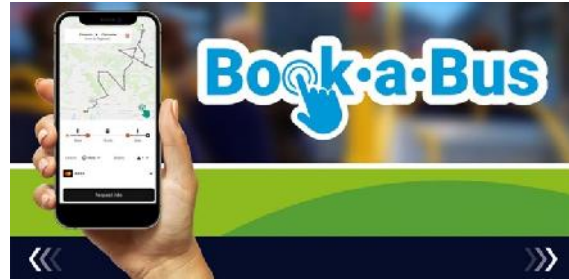
and lead to the development of new community initiatives."

<https://nation.cymru/news/new-community-network-to-be-launched-at-eisteddfod/>

Wales – Bridgend CT Trials Hydrogen-fuelled Vehicle. In a partnership between Marubeni Europower and Hyppo Hydrogen Solutions, Bridgend Community Transport is operating a "zero-emission hydrogen fuel cell car running on local green hydrogen providing users...with essential services such as transportation to doctor appointments and hospital visits... Marubeni Europower, a leading investor in renewable energy, is committed to contributing to the transition towards a low-carbon society by delivering a mix of renewables projects, including green hydrogen."

<https://www.wales247.co.uk/hydrogen-powered-bus-trialled-in-bridgend>

West Sussex – Petworth ‘98 Flex’ Book a Bus Launched. A new service called ‘98 Flexi’ has been launched to serve north Petworth, under West Sussex County Council’s Book-a-Bus DRT brand. Community Transport Sussex is the operator, and manager Matt Roberts commented: “We are very excited to launch this service with the county council and provide the local community in the north of Petworth area with an exciting new transport option. We understand that passengers have varying needs. Our minibuses are fully accessible for those with mobility issues or to those who are boarding with a wheelchair or a pram. Our drivers are also highly trained to be of support to every passenger. By providing this service, we are happy to be of support in ensuring that everyone is able to travel efficiently and stay connected.” The service user



the Ride Pingo App. <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/news/introducing-the-98-flex-your-flexible-new-way-to-travel-by-bus-around-the-north-of-petworth/>

Lincolnshire – Funding Programme to Favour Wolds CT. Amongst some 14 projects being awarded a total of £1.2m from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural Prosperity Fund is Wolds Community Transport. The CT is to receive a grant as “investment in a new bus for the project which is supported by a long-term business plan and a series of affiliate organisations who will use the bus long-term.” <https://lincolnshiretoday.net/mag/more-than-1-2m-awarded-to-community-projects-in-third-round-of-grant-scheme/>

Glimpse into the CT Past - TAS Community Transport Photo Archives



