



Community & Voluntary Transport at



The TAS Partnership Limited
Passenger Transport Specialists

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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 – National Rural Conference on 21 September. This event is being hosted by Rural Services Network: “It is vital that rural communities can access employment, training, education and services such as medical appointments. A lack of public transport options can make this more difficult. We’ve seen Government attempt to tackle transport policy in recent years with Bus Back Better and the competitive bidding for Bus Improvement Funds which has ultimately left many rural areas without public transport options. On Thursday 21st September we will be focusing on rural transport in our National Rural Conference with three expert speakers joining us. The session will be opened by Selaine Saxby MP, one of the Vice Chairs of our All Party Parliamentary Group on Rural Services. First up will be John Birtwistle, Head of Policy at First Bus who will be talking about the renaissance of the rural bus. Next, we will hear from Caroline Whitney, Director for England at the Community Transport Association sharing her views on ‘Community Transport: Challenges and Opportunities’. Finally discussion will focus on



Rutland County Council and Emma Odabas, the Acting Senior Transport Manager who will share her expertise on Rural Transport in England's smallest county. The session will finish with a wider debate amongst delegates of some of the key challenges facing rural communities in accessing transport, along with potential solutions. <https://rsnonline.org.uk/conference-spotlight-focus-on-rural-transport>

UK – Motability Launches Rebranding. Long-standing supporter of disabled people and recent substantial funder of community transport services, Motability has now adopted the new name Motability Foundation: “The charity was founded to create a car leasing scheme that could offer disabled people the best value for money, give advice on suitable cars and adaptations, and make any adaptations needed. Anyone who couldn't afford a car through the Motability



Scheme could also apply to Motability for a grant to make up the difference. Since then, we're proud that the Motability Scheme has supplied more than 5.5 million cars, scooters and powered wheelchairs to disabled people across the UK, supported by thousands of grants from the charity every year. We are now known as Motability Foundation. Every day we continue to expand our work, both with and for disabled people, focusing on the ongoing changes needed across different types of transport to make all journeys accessible.”

<https://www.motability.co.uk/>

UK – Mobility as a Service DfT Code of Practice. Department for Transport has introduced a Code of Practice for MaaS, as it believes that “better use of data and digital technologies can help improve the efficiency of the transport system, providing greater freedom and choice for how we travel around. Joining up different modes of transport can also improve the commercial viability of services and help them to reach more people.” In the summary of recommendations on accessibility, the code states: “We recommend community transport services should be integrated as far as possible into MaaS schemes.” The DfT's overall reasons for offering a code of practice are given as follows: “Developing MaaS is a complex undertaking. There are many technical and commercial challenges to overcome when designing a MaaS solution, alongside overlapping regulatory frameworks that create a challenging environment for MaaS to succeed...Now is an opportune time to take a **voluntary, guidance-based approach** through a code of practice to enable these platforms to emerge and mitigate any unintended consequences. A code of practice will enable us to support MaaS as it grows without introducing regulations at a time that could stifle innovation in this emerging industry. A code of practice will also provide an opportunity

to gather further evidence in a structured manner to understand if and where regulation might need to be brought forward in the future.”

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mobility-as-a-service-maas-code-of-practice/mobility-as-a-service-code-of-practice>

CTA has welcomed the code of practice: <https://ctauk.org/cta-welcomes-maas-code-of-practice/>

UK - CTA News Updates

-) MiDAS Transformation - Further information on the MiDAS transformation project which is due to be launched on 2 January 2024. <https://ctauk.org/midas-the-gold-standard-in-minibus-driver-training/>
-) CTA Members' Corner - What difference can a minibus make? – the experience of the West Midlands-based Beacon Centre for the Blind's participation in the CTA's Tackling Loneliness Project <https://ctauk.org/cta-members-corner-what-difference-can-a-minibus-make/>
-) Community Transport Week 2023 - A week-long celebration of the impact of community transport! Between October 16 and 21 2023, communities across the UK will celebrate the vital role and inspiring work of Community Transport in helping millions of people to stay independent, participate in their communities and access essential public services and employment. This year's Community Transport Week themed Bridging the gap; Uniting communities will celebrate how accessible, inclusive and affordable transport is fostering stronger and more connected communities. <https://ctauk.org/community-transport-week-2023/>
-) CTA's Director for Wales speaks on BBC Radio Wales - Gemma Lelliot discusses the proposed changes to bus funding in Wales and the potential impact on passengers. <https://ctauk.org/bbc-breakfast/>
-) CT '23 Awards – Final nominations were submitted in early Sept across four categories:
 -) Innovation in Volunteering – A CT Organisation with the most innovative approach to recruiting and retaining volunteers.
 -) Making a Difference – An organisation that has invented new ways to make sure their passengers feel included and supported.
 -) Commitment to Sustainability – An organisation that puts sustainability at the core of its work.
 -) Award for Transport/Local Authorities – A local or transport authority that has been supportive and advocative of Community Transport causes in their region. <https://ctauk.org/deadline-extension-for-the-ct-awards-2023/>





GB – DVLA call for evidence on driver licensing for people with medical conditions. Evidence has been requested by the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency to inform its future position regarding medical fitness to drive. “DVLA assesses the fitness to drive of individuals with medical conditions and makes licensing decisions to make sure that driving licences are only issued to those who

meet the required medical standards. It is important that licensing decisions are made based on the correct information and strike the right balance between the road safety risks and the needs of a driver to maintain mobility...”

Part of the review is prompted by the need to recognise “multiple medical conditions and an ageing population...Over recent decades there have been significant demographic changes with advances in medicine and better health awareness resulting in individuals living longer and working longer. As a society, we expect to be able to use cars, motorcycles, and leisure vehicles for longer and in our later years and to help maintain an independent lifestyle, particularly in rural areas. Losing a driving licence can be a life-changing event and can have significant impacts on an individual, making them more dependent on others, reducing their freedom and sense of wellbeing...”

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/driver-licensing-for-people-with-medical-conditions-call-for-evidence/call-for-evidence-driver-licensing-for-people-with-medical-conditions#multiple-medical-conditions-and-an-ageing-population>

Nottinghamshire – CT4N day trips proving a hit with community groups. “Bargain days out to coastal resorts, market towns, stately homes and other attractions are proving a big hit with community groups taking advantage of discounted travel offered by a Nottingham transport charity. The day trips organised by CT4N Charitable Trust cater for a wide range of local voluntary groups, including those with

members who use a wheelchair or face other mobility problems. They also aim to offer fun days out to those who might otherwise feel isolated or vulnerable, when the practical problems of conventional public transport prove just too challenging. Barry Allitt, CT4N Operations Director, said: ‘Following the success of similar trips earlier in the year, we’ve recently launched our Summer Super Savers programme that includes even more great days out at an affordable price for other charities and community groups. Trips start from one fixed pick-up point, and coastal destinations include Skegness – traditionally Nottingham’s favourite resort – as well as Hunstanton and Cleethorpes. Chatsworth House, with its magnificent gardens, and market towns such as Newark, Bakewell and Melton Mowbray are



also included, as are country parks and designer shopping outlets such as McArthur Glen, near Alfreton.' Groups such as Wilford View Care Home and not-for-profit wellbeing company Your Time To Believe Belong Become CIC have been enjoying affordable days out that open up all kinds of destinations that may be too expensive or difficult to access using other forms of public transport. A spokesman for Your Time To Believe Belong Become CIC, commented: 'CT4N provides an excellent service, and all its drivers are fantastic!' Full details of all the destinations available and their cost are available in CT4N's online brochure here (<https://www.ct4n.co.uk/news/2023-06-22-ct4n-charitable-trust-launch-our-summer-super-savers-group-trips-part-1>). Group leaders interested in booking a day out for their members can call the friendly team on (0115) 985 6904 or email hello@ct4n.co.uk."

Yorkshire – New electric minibus in Calderdale and Kirklees. A new accessible electric minibus has been acquired by Age UK Calderdale and Kirklees to support their Home from Hospital service and transport people to and from their Wellbeing (Care) Centres. £66,000 was raised through a successful community fundraising campaign.

<https://kirkleestogether.co.uk/2023/08/16/electric-bus-means-greener-travel-to-tackle-loneliness/>



Yorkshire – Volunteers needed for Ryedale CT car scheme. New volunteers are being sought in Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside by Ryedale Community Transport as part of their popular community car scheme. Andrew Fuller (Chief Officer) said: "Volunteer driving is a highly-valued and enjoyable activity to help our community. As a volunteer driver, you will be able to improve other people's lives by getting out and about around beautiful Ryedale while giving as much, or as little, of your time as you would like to spare. Volunteers who use their cars receive 45p per mile tax-free mileage allowance to compensate them for the running costs of their vehicles from the moment they leave their homes until they come back. If you have your own car and think you could help out, please do give us a call on 01653 699059, Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 2.30pm."

<https://www.gazetteherald.co.uk/news/23745982.volunteer-drivers-needed-make-difference-ryedale/>

Devon – Dawlish CT gets support from local children. A group of children from Gatehouse Primary School have used their holiday time to raise money for Dawlish CT following the arson attack on its vehicles in July. The children raised £80 selling cakes from a stall. <https://www.teignmouth-today.co.uk/news/gatehouse-school-friends-step-in-to-help-raise-funds-for-arson-hit-charity-632483>

Devon – Exe Valley Community Bus needs volunteers or faces closure. The long-running Exe Valley Market Bus, based in Tiverton, is facing closure unless it can recruit new volunteer drivers and trustees. After 45 years in operation, the bus service has decided to close if it fails to recruit younger volunteers to run the service, including new drivers, by June 2024. The bus provides vital services to the communities of Oakford, Washfield, Loxbeare, Stoodleigh, Lurley, and Calverleigh. In the search for new committee members, Chair Colin Radford said: “Whoever wishes to take on the role of chairman will need some organisational ability, and all potential committee members need basic computer skills and access to the internet. Candidates will be supported in their roles by the current committee members until they are happy with their roles.” Anybody able to help should call Colin Radford on 01884 881351 or Jennie Chappell on 01398 351666.”



<https://www.wsfpc.co.uk/news/volunteers-needed-to-help-keep-exmoor-community-bus-service-running-636903>

Somerset – Long-serving Wivey Link CT volunteer dies. The death has been announced of Brian Collingridge (88), former head of Kingsmead School in Wiveliscombe, and volunteer for the Wivey Link community transport service.

<https://www.somersetcountygazette.co.uk/news/23730763.death-former-kingsmead-school-head-brian-collingridge/>

Scotland – Perthshire Village runs its own bus service. A new bus service has been launched in Glenfarg following the collapse of the 55 bus service previously operated by Earnside Coaches. Newly-formed Glenfarg Community Transport Group now offers an 11-times a day run to Kinross, as well as a school service and various community runs. A mix of paid and volunteer drivers is utilised, and more than 200 trips were achieved in the first week. Group chair Drew Smart said: “What we’re doing is unique – this mix of community and service routes. I like to describe us as a cross between Dad’s Army and On The Buses.” Drew acknowledged support from Perth and Kinross Council, Community Transport Glasgow and the Community Transport Association. <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/perth-kinross/4656262/glenfarg-bus-service/> See also here:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-tayside-central-66536184?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=KARANGA. The story has also been picked up by The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/aug/27/how-a-community-bus-service-made-a-perthshire-village-smile-again>

Scotland – GP closure in Methven prompts community bus feasibility. The closure of the Methven surgery north west of Perth has left some 1,500 patients with a 12 mile round trip. Councillors from Perth and Kinross Council have now “agreed to explore the introduction of a voluntary community bus service which could transport patients”, with deputy council leader Eric Drysdale tabling “a motion calling for urgent action”. He said: “If we fail to defend the health frontline, we risk poorer health outcomes for more of the population and even greater pressure being placed on our hospitals caring for those with acute or chronic conditions.”

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/local-news/councillors-call-urgent-meetings-try-30861416>

Scotland – 20th Anniversary of Banffshire Dial-a-Bus. To commemorate the 20th year of the Dial-a-Bus service, Banffshire Partnership invited users and friends to a garden party at the Boyndie Visitor Centre. The bus provides vital links between Banff, Turrif, Fraserburgh, Inverurie, and Elgin. Duncan Leece, Banffshire Partnership CEO, introduced special guest Lord Lieutenant of Banffshire Andrew Simpson, who delivered a message from the King.

<https://www.grampianonline.co.uk/news/pictures-banffshire-partnerships-dial-a-bus-service-celebr-321282/>

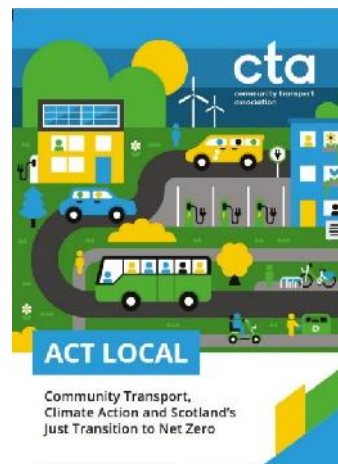
Scotland – Clackmannanshire cuts Dial-a-Journey Funding. The long-standing Order of Malta Dial-a-Journey service in Clackmannanshire is due to cease after 30 years of operation. Clackmannanshire Council have decided to discontinue the door-to-door minibus service from August 13 after consultation. DAJ chief executive Duncan Hearsom said: “In the knowledge that there was a risk of Dial-a-Journey not being paid for delivering services going forward, the Trustees gave the council notice that this was not a sustainable position. As yet we have not been made aware of any alternative arrangements for the continuation of the door-to-door transport service, or whether or not Dial-a-Journey is included in any future plans. It has been a difficult decision to write to service users with this news, and one that no Board of Trustees should have to make a time where vulnerable service users are already experiencing severe impacts on their day to day lives...” Stirling based Dial-a-Journey continues to offer its door-to-door minibus service in Falkirk and Stirling. <https://www.alloaadvertiser.com/news/23752675.dial-a-journey-service-scrapped-funding-withdrawal/>



Scotland - CTA & Scottish Rural & Islands Parliament 2023. Duncan Clark (CTA Development Officer for Scotland) reports: "Community Transport Association (CTA) Scotland is excited to be working with the Scottish Islands and Rural Transport Community (SRITC), and a wide range of other organisations, as part of the Rural and Islands Parliament which will be held in Fort William, 1 – 3 November 2023. Please visit Join us at the Scottish Rural & Islands Parliament 2023! (srp.scot) for more information. The SRITC will be highlighting the ways by which new forms of transport and technology can help people living in rural communities whilst also having as minimal an impact on the environment as possible. This will be at the centre of the study visit that is being held, most likely near Oban, and we want to take the opportunity to promote the vital work that CT providers do everyday in the Lochaber area, and across the country. I hope that...local CTA members will be able to attend the study visit on 2 November. And that you'll look at attending the main events in Fort William. More information about what we are planning – with your help – to celebrate and promote the CT sector, will follow in the coming weeks. The theme of this meeting of the Parliament is village halls – and what better way to get to an event, or to access services, that to travel by community transport!"



Scotland – CTA's 'Act Local' report: Community Transport, Climate Action and Scotland's Just Transition to Net Zero. A new report by CTA warns that "Scotland will fail to achieve net zero carbon emissions without more 'community-led climate action'...Scotland's ambitious climate targets will be missed unless more communities are supported to deliver local transport projects and services like community-owned buses, bicycles and car clubs. The Scottish Government has set targets to reduce car use by 20% by 2030 and achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2045, but missed its legally binding carbon reduction targets in 8 out of the last 12 years. Transport is Scotland's biggest emitting sector. CTA says that 'time is running out' and 'we need a different approach'. It's calling for more investment by the government and councils to maximise the 'full potential of local charities, community groups and social enterprises' to empower people to change to more sustainable travel



behaviours.” David Kelly, CTA’s Director for Scotland, said: “Scotland’s transport emissions have barely changed since the 1990s. We need to do more – and we need to change our approach. As grassroots organisations, local Community Transport operators are perfectly placed to encourage and empower people to leave the car at home and travel more sustainably. Community Transport operators are doing fantastic work to reduce carbon emissions, tackle car dependency and encourage active travel. They’re making journeys by bus, shared car or electric bike more accessible, affordable and attractive for everyone, regardless of age, disability, gender, income or geography...But government, funders and other stakeholders need to do more to help our sector. Communities require more investment and practical support. Community Transport is an essential partner in Scotland’s Just Transition to net zero to ensure no one and no community is left behind.”

<https://ctauk.org/act-local-report/>



Wales – Threats to local bus services could increase loneliness, warns Age Cymru. Reports that around 25% of Welsh bus services could be cut if operators cannot secure further long-term government funding has been highlighted by Age Cymru. Fearing an increase in loneliness and isolation amongst older people, Age Cymru are urging “Welsh government, local authorities, and bus operators to work together to develop sustainable services for communities across Wales...Car ownership is not an option for many older people and taxis can be prohibitively expensive, so together with community transport, the bus service provides a crucial lifeline for many...”

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/latest-news/wales-could-lose-a-quarter-of-bus-services/> and <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/latest-news/reduced-bus-services-could-increase-loneliness-and-isolation-amongst-older-people-warns-age-cymru/>

Wales – Bridgend CT hydrogen fuel cell car. The innovative fleet in service at Bridgend Community Transport has been noted in the environmental press, which reports that a hydrogen-fuelled bus is being trialled with bus operator First Cymru and that “a hydrogen fuel cell car running has provided users of Bridgend Community Transport with essential services such as transportation to doctor appointments and hospital visits.”

<https://airqualitynews.com/cars-freight-transport/a-bus-using-locally-produced-green-hydrogen-starts-trials-in-bridgend/>

Essex – GoStart CT passengers enjoy the Mersea Island Festival. The Mersea Island Festival is a long-established annual event that “brings together children, young people and adults with or without a physical or learning disability. The Festival provides an opportunity to try out new activities, make new friends and have loads of fun!!!” The week long event is held each August at a permanent site on the coast near Colchester. Sudbury-based GoStart Community Transport has been instrumental in this year’s event, reflecting their view that “we provide more than just a bus journey.” On Saturday 26th August GoStart took a group of 12 people with disabilities and learning difficulties to the event as day visitors rather than as week long staying visitors. Passengers included:

- J) Julia (aged 60+) who has failing sight, limited speech, and just about walks with a zimmer. She wanted to try a pedal car (with a little bit of assistance getting moving) and archery. She tried both and several other activities. She tried them all.



- J) Chris (aged 55+) who has never been on a trampoline or fired a bow and arrow. Despite very poor eyesight, walking very slowly and with one arm that she cannot use, she tried everything available.

Cambridgeshire – Dial-a-Ride expands to four additional villages. With grant support from South Cambridgeshire District Council,



Cambridgeshire Dial-a-Ride has now extended its service to Cottenham, Histon, Bar Hill and Impington. As well as a door-to-door accessible weekday service, users can enjoy newly-launched Saturday trips to the seaside, garden centres and other places of interest advertised on the website. Anyone wishing to use the service should call 01223 506335, or email members@cambridgedialaride.org, or visit

www.cambridgedialaride.org.uk.

<https://www.cambridgeindependent.co.uk/news/get-on-board-as-dial-a-ride-expands-services-to-four-south-c-9325210/>

Shropshire – Stolen Bridgnorth CT minibus is back in service. In February a Bridgnorth Community Transport Group minibus was stolen. It was recovered later by the police in Wolverhampton in a damaged state. Following repairs by TJ Vickers of Telford, the vehicle has now resumed service. Phil Davenport from Bridgnorth Community Transport Group said "We are very pleased to have it back after what has been quite a long and protracted process. We have three minibuses but this was the only one that was able to take a wheelchair, so we have been unable to offer that service since it was taken. Ben Pearce, Service Manager at TJ Vickers said the thieves had 'ransacked' the inside of the vehicle and caused nearly £10,000 worth of damage..." <https://www.expressandstar.com/news/local-hubs/shropshire/bridgnorth/2023/09/05/bridgnorth-charity-gets-its-community-bus-back-on-the-road/>

Hampshire – Community First fights the cuts to CT budget. The intention of Hampshire County Council to drastically reduce its once substantial funding support for community transport has been long-heralded. The major CT operator in Hampshire – Community First – is now poised to fight back with a high-profile campaign 'Save our Community Transport Service'.

Communities and service users are being urged to lobby councillors and MPs to grant a reprieve to the cuts which would otherwise see the entire £800,000 CT budget being cancelled. Such a cut would have a major impact on the users of the many Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go services across 11 districts. Chief executive of Community First Tim Houghton said: "Travel habits have changed since the pandemic and services now reflect this, but the importance of social



connectivity is undeniable and the cost of isolation impacting mental and physical wellbeing, would far outweigh any savings. Our customers cannot afford to travel independently and often other options are unavailable particularly for those with physical disabilities. There is a shortage of accessible vehicles and we're a lifeline to 4,200 groups who hire buses for regular social trips and outings. Town and neighbourhood centres are struggling and community transport services provide a vital link to shops and hospitality venues." Community First is urging residents to write to their county councillor or MP, or comment on how the cuts would impact upon them by contacting support@cfirst.org.uk.

<https://www.hampshirechronicle.co.uk/news/23770784.community-first-launches-campaign-save-transport-services/>

Shropshire – MP supports St Martins Car Scheme. North Shropshire MP Helen Morgan has lent her support to St Martins Car Scheme, which operates north of Oswestry. The scheme is seeking new volunteer drivers. Scheme organiser Viv Fisher said: "To have a door-to-door service from a local volunteer for an affordable fee is so important and relevant to St Martins as there is no health care provision in the village...Many can't walk to a bus stop or get on a bus, so just having that one-to-one service for an hour or so is so important. There may be someone who might like to get to village events or visit loved ones in hospital or residential care. The scheme has been established with the help and support of Shropshire Council." The scheme can be contacted on 07931 760879.

<https://www.bordercountiesadvertizer.co.uk/news/23675584.shropshire-mp-backs-call-st-martins-car-scheme-support/>

Hertfordshire – Harpenden Hopper carries record number of passengers. The summer has seen record numbers of passenger trips being delivered by the Harpenden Hopper community bus, which links residential areas of Harpenden with the town centre.

To celebrate its continuing success, the operator held a tea party at Cornelia's Café in St Nicholas's Church. The service was founded seven years ago by chair Andy Buchanan who



commented that "it has become clear from talking to our passengers that the Hopper is more than just a bus service. It plays an important role in combatting the feeling of isolation and loneliness for many residents in our community." One passenger said that "the Hopper really does bring the community together. I've made new friends and it has given me independence." <https://www.hertsad.co.uk/news/23768447.harpenden-hopper-celebrates-record-passenger-numbers/>



If you require any advice or support please contact us on 01772-204988 or email

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