



Community & Voluntary Transport at



The TAS Partnership Limited
Passenger Transport Specialists

Newsletter No.38 November 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 – Ten-step Guide on Data Protection Considerations when Sharing Personal Information for Child Safeguarding Purposes. This guidance has been published by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and aims to help you feel confident about sharing information when you need to safeguard a child or young person at risk of harm. It does not tell you how to safeguard children and young people, but it does give you practical advice on data protection as part of the safeguarding process.

The ICO's role is as the regulator of information rights, not of safeguarding practices. Data protection law allows you to share information when required to identify children at risk of harm and to safeguard them from harm. Data protection law doesn't prevent you from doing this. It simply helps you to share information in a fair, proportionate and lawful way. It can be more harmful not to share information that is needed to protect a child or young person.

Appropriate information sharing is central to effectively safeguarding children from harm and promoting their wellbeing. There have been many reviews of cases where children have died or been seriously harmed through abuse or neglect. The case reviews frequently identify gaps in information sharing as a factor contributing to failures to protect the children involved. Data protection law has an enabling role, supporting you to share information.

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/data-sharing/a-10-step-guide-to-sharing-information-to-safeguard-children/>

UK – Age UK analysis warns that older people’s IT skills cannot be taken for granted. New research by Age UK suggests that policymakers should not assume internet usage is not a challenge for many older people, and that the increasing digitisation of services – such as that seen in the sphere of transport procurement – can lead to exclusion. Caroline Abrahams,



Age UK Director, said: “The figures we are releasing today should be a wake-up call for policymakers, because they show the alarming extent to which the rush towards ‘digital by default’ is excluding our older population. It is well known that millions of older people are not online and that’s bad enough, but now it is also clear that even among those who are online in this age group, the majority only have relatively limited digital skills...”

Briefing

Facts and figures about digital inclusion and older people

September 2023

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/latest-press/articles/2023/age-uk-analysis-reveals-that-almost-6-million-people-5800000-aged-65-are-either-unable-to-use-the-internet-safely-and-successfully-or-arent-online-at-all/>

England & Wales – Charity Commission Issues New Guidance on Charities’ use of Social Media. “The guidance makes clear that social media can be a highly effective way for a charity to engage its audiences and communicate about its work but that there are risks involved which trustees should plan for. The new guidance is clear that charities using social media should have a social media policy in place and should ensure the policy is followed. This is standard practice in many charities and across other sectors and industries and can help an organisation avoid problems and address issues swiftly if they occur. The regulator says its casework has revealed a knowledge gap. Trustees are not always aware of the risks that may arise from using social media, meaning that some do not have sufficient oversight of their charity’s activity,

leaving them and their charity vulnerable. The guidance aims to help trustees understand these risks, how their legal duties apply, and what to consider if



issues arise.” <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/regulator-publishes-new-guidance-on-charities-social-media-use>

England (minus London!) – DfT National Bus Fare Cap Grant. This scheme has been announced by DfT to follow the Bus Fare Cap Grant (BFCG) Phase 3, which expires at the end of October. Commencing on 1 November, the National Bus Fare Cap (NBFC) grant is available to community transport operators who provide 'open door' services under s22.

The grant is administered by Ernst & Young Global Limited (EY) which said: "To participate in the NBFC scheme, CTOs will need to contact EY at bfcg@uk.ey.com and notify us of their intention to participate and confirmation that the eligibility criteria are met. A separate simple data collection proforma will then be provided by EY for the CTO to complete and submit."

The level of the cap was intended to increase to £2.50 at that point, but the Prime Minister subsequently announced on 4 October as part of his HS2 decision that the current £2 fare cap will remain in place until the end of December 2024. Ernst & Young (EY) issued communications to bus operators and Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) on DfT's behalf on Wednesday afternoon setting out next steps for delivering the extension to the £2 scheme from 1 November.

Further updates are expected shortly, including further information on communicating participation in the extension from 1 November, and an updated stakeholder toolkit. If operators and LTAs have not received updates from EY or have any further queries about the scheme in the meantime, please contact us and EY at: nationalbusfarecap@dft.gov.uk or bfcg@uk.ey.com. As with much of the detail of the PM's announcement, further information is awaited...

Northern Ireland – Former CT manager and MLA Kellie Armstrong Praises NI CT on 25 years of Operation. At a Stormont event marking 25 years of the NI CT partnerships, Strangford MLA Kellie Armstrong (Alliance Party) has said: "Before I became an MLA, I had the privilege of working in Community Transport Association, North Belfast Community Transport, and PACT (Peninsula Community Transport) for 16 years. During those years, Rural Transport provided thousands of older people and people with disabilities with accessible transport solutions. The Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS) trained hundreds of community and volunteer drivers, and I personally wrote hundreds of S10b minibus permits on behalf of DVANI for minibuses across the country...Every time I see a white minibus I am reminded of the lovely passengers, committed drivers, and kind office staff, who were all tirelessly committed to delivering local transport solutions to make life better for those that needed them in our communities. I used to say Community Transport played a pivotal role in the community, and that it was the enabler than helped people stay connected and reduce isolation. It still is. For 25 years Community Transport has made a difference, and I am so privileged to have been part of such a wonderful movement of dedicated community activists." https://www.allianceparty.org/armstrong_congratulates_community_transport_on_25_years_of_service_across_ni

Northern Ireland – MLA Cathal Boylan Urges that CT in NI is Protected. At the same 25 year celebration, MLA Cathal Boylan (Sinn Féin) said: "Community transport is a vital service to help people in communities to travel and prevent isolation particularly in rural areas, and it must be protected. The elderly and some of our most vulnerable people in rural communities rely heavily on these services. Savage Tory cuts to our public services are threatening the future of these services. We need the Assembly up and running now to support vital community transport and support services in rural communities." <https://vote.sinnfein.ie/community-transport-must-be-protected-boylan/> and <https://www.4ni.co.uk/northern-ireland-news/301079/community-transport-must-be-protected>

Northern Ireland – Illuminated Tribute to Rural CT Services in Omagh. As part of a series of illuminated celebrations, on 4 October, Enniskillen Castle and Strule Arts Centre were illuminated blue "in recognition of Rural Community Transport and the Rural Transport Fund who have been connecting communities for 25 years." <https://www.fermanaghomagh.com/article/fermanagh-and-omagh-district-council-will-illuminate-enniskillen-castle-and-strule-arts-centre-omagh-on-various-dates-throughout-the-month-of-october/>

Republic of Ireland – Leitrim Car Scheme Closure. A funding shortage has forced Leitrim Community Car Scheme to close. The service, operated by Leitrim Volunteer Centre in Carrick-on-Shannon, needed €20,000 to continue. The service has over 35 volunteer drivers and has carried 533 passengers in the last 14 months. Development Officer at the Volunteer Centre Niall Speak said: "There are so many people ringing already who are stuck for a lift to appointments and we have to tell them no. Some people are waiting years for operations and the HSE is sending them to Ballykelly or Belfast and they have to make their own way there - a three and a half hour journey. The majority of the people who used our service are elderly and maybe do not have a family or their family lives away and they need to attend the hospital for a variety of reasons." <https://www.independent.ie/regionals/leitrim/leitrim-volunteer-driver-service-which-brought-people-to-hospital-is-closing-due-to-lack-of-funding/a489522902.html>

CTA News Updates



- J UK – A reminder to register for the CTA event in Birmingham on 23 November <https://ctauk.org/register-for-the-ct23-conference/>
- J UK – BSOG support information <https://ctauk.org/bsog-funding-to-support-ct-provision/>
- J UK – CT Week 23 Campaign Toolkit <https://ctauk.org/resources/ctweek23-campaign-toolkit/>

- J) Scotland – Review and Reflections on the Scottish CT conference held in Glasgow on 12 September. <https://ctauk.org/scotland-conference-2023-review/> & <https://ctauk.org/scotland-conference-2023-reflections/>
- J) Scotland – CTA's David Kelly responds to the new Scottish Human Rights Act <https://ctauk.org/a-new-scottish-human-rights-act-ctas-response/>

Wales – Bwcabus Service is Set to Close as Funding Ends. With services in Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion, Bwcabus has been operating for 14 years as a rural DRT network. However, funding is set to cease from 31 October following an announcement by Welsh Government. Talks are ongoing around whether investment can be sought from elsewhere.

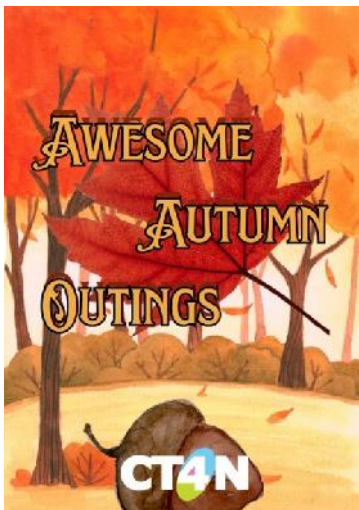
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-66884517>

and

<https://www.tenby-today.co.uk/news/more-than-a-bus-senedd-plea-to-save-vital-fflecsi-bwcabus-service-641191>



Nottinghamshire – CT4N Plans 'Awesome Autumn Outings'. CT4N reports: "After a successful summer of bargain days out to top local attractions, local community groups can now look forward to a packed programme of activities thanks to CT4N Charitable Trust...and it has devised a whole new range of discounted trips to run from September 18 to November 24. Destinations include everything from traditional market towns to art galleries, historic houses, garden centres and a host of other interesting attractions. Ian Combellack, CT4N Managing Director, commented: 'We have well-trained and sympathetic drivers and accessible buses to make sure that



people with mobility problems, wheelchair users and anyone who might otherwise struggle to use public transport can have a wonderful day out at a remarkably low cost. Thanks to our 'Awesome Autumn Outings' programme, local groups can enjoy great days out...As always, our aim is not only to provide a great day out at a great price but also to provide a sociable group outing to help tackle the kind of social isolation that can become a factor for anyone who has difficulties travelling independently or on public transport.' Full details of all the destinations and costs are detailed in CT4N's online brochure here:

<https://www.ct4n.co.uk/admin/resources/awesome-autumn-outings-min.pdf>."

Worcestershire – New Base for Wyre CT. Community Transport Wyre Forest has moved into new premises in Stourhead, after some years at Whittles' Coaches depot in Kidderminster. Chief Executive Beverley Coldrick commented that “we outgrew our Bewdley base and moved to Whittles' almost four years ago and are very grateful to them for accommodating us. Since the end of the Covid-19 pandemic,



the coach firm has seen a lot of business growth and needs more space. Similarly, we are supporting more individuals and organisations and needed more space for our fleet of minibuses. We have designated, secure parking at Wilden for our vehicles and are delighted with our new office and shared boardroom, located within the Wash House administration building.”

<https://www.expressandstar.com/news/local-hubs/wyre-forest/2023/10/03/lifeline-transport-charity-finds-new-home-in-expansion-drive/>

Gloucestershire – County Council Pledges Levelling Up Funds to Community Transport. A major chunk of £1.5m of unspent COVID funding is to be reallocated by Gloucestershire County Council for improving communities and reducing health inequalities. It is proposed that some of the £949,954 fund is devoted to community transport. One of the funding strands is “Access to services and community transport – Some communities and groups face particular disadvantages in transport and mobility, including older adults, those with disabilities, young people and those in rural communities. The county council aims to provide accessible and sustainable transport solutions as part of its ambition to ‘level up’ communities.”

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gloucestershire-county-council-news/news-september-2023/communities-set-to-benefit-from-second-phase-of-levelling-up/>

Gloucestershire – Green Community Travel is Awarded Motability Grant. Motability Foundation has announced a new grant award for Green CT, based near Yate: “Green Community Travel has received £220,000 to purchase three new accessible minibuses – including an electric vehicle. The charity is keen to help even more disabled people across South Gloucestershire make more journeys. The new buses will reduce maintenance costs and help take some of their older buses off their fleet. They will also provide a more comfortable and flexible ride for their passengers. GCT’s manager, Jenny Bright, described this grant as a ‘once in a lifetime opportunity. The difference that these new vehicles will make to our organisation will be very long lasting. The funds have also supported some advertising and training for our

volunteers as well as some volunteer events to try to recruit some more amazing volunteers to join our team. We can tell them that they'll have some much nicer vehicles to drive too! The improved flexibility of seating of these minibuses will also mean we can do even more for those passengers that use us who consider themselves disabled." Lisa Jones, Director of Charitable Operations at the Motability Foundation, said: 'We're delighted to award Green Community Travel with this grant to support new buses for their community transport service, so that disabled people in South Gloucestershire have greater access to travel. For many disabled people, transport can be a challenge, so having access to a service like this can be a lifeline. Awarding grants to experienced community transport organisations, like Green Community Travel, helps disabled people make the journeys they choose. We wish the dedicated team of volunteers, who work closely with individuals, all the best!'"



<https://www.motabilityfoundation.org.uk/news/new-grant-awarded-to-green-community-travel/>

Dorset – Concern over West Dorset Ring & Ride Closure. Following the announcement that Axe Valley & West Dorset Ring and Ride would cease to serve West Dorset by the end of the year if funding was not secured, a campaign has been launched to save the service. Dorset Council is being approached to find funding for the service, which it has not supported since 2019. Local people are being asked to lobby local councillors to urge them to support the service: cllrray.bryan@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk and cllrsimon.christopher@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk. <https://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/23808653.concern-closure-west-dorset-ring-ride-service/>. See also: <https://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/23821484.west-dorset-bus-service-elderly-scrapped/>

Scotland – North Ayrshire CT 'Pathfinder' Development. A community transport 'Pathfinder' development has been agreed by North Ayrshire Council. Councillor Tony Gurney has outlined how funds have been allocated "to undertake detailed survey work to understand specific community transport demands so that a pilot scheme can be developed, and also to make Coalfield Community Transport's 'Dayhopper' service available in North Ayrshire as an initial demand test, with a future report to be brought to cabinet later in the year outlining further proposals. Officers have met with several interested community transport stakeholders including Coalfield Community Transport, South Ayrshire Community Transport, Ayrshire CVS and Radio City Association over the summer period to explore different delivery models. They are finalising the procurement exercise for the survey work. Cabinet has agreed to receive a further progress update towards the end of 2023."

<https://www.ardrossanherald.com/news/23793151.council-steam-ahead-community-transport-project/>

Scotland – Community Transport is Thriving, Argues CTA Scotland Director. In an article which outlines how CT services are filling the gaps left by the struggling bus network, David Kelly asks: “What happens to a community when the last bus disappears? More and more people across



Scotland are finding out. Communities are increasingly turning to us at CTA to help them figure out what to do next. We've fielded more enquiries this year than perhaps ever before. With years of expertise and experience in community development, local government and transport policy, our team provides

tailored advice, training, resources and support to local charities, community groups and social enterprises to help them create new community-led solutions to unmet transport needs. Community Transport is a way of plugging gaps in our public transport network on a non-profit basis with a focus on accessibility and sustainability to enable all of these activities and connections to continue and perhaps even expand...”

<https://tfn.scot/opinion/community-transport-thriving-movement-in-challenging-times>

Scotland – Driver Wanted at East Kilbride CT. The two vehicle East Kilbride Community Transport service is seeking a part-time driver for around 10 hours per week. Anyone who is interested should phone secretary/administrator June Harpum on 07849486937.

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/in-your-area/lanarkshire/east-kilbride-charity-bus-service-31060446>

Scotland – Chief Executive Wanted at Borders Wheels. “Borders Wheels is a new voluntary organisation providing transport services for people who are isolated or have mobility difficulties in the Scottish Borders. It is being formed as a result of merging community transport services in different parts of the Scottish Borders. We are seeking a first Chief Executive to provide leadership in establishing the new organisation. This is an exciting opportunity for someone to make a real impact in improving the mobility of older, disabled and other people who have limited transport options in the Scottish Borders.

You must have experience of managing staff and budgets. Experience of managing community transport services would be an advantage but is not essential." Salary is circa £40,000 for 35 hours per week. Closing 23rd October 2023.

<https://goodmoves.org/vacancy/a4sP1000000RzVIAU/chief-executive?distance=16.09344&keywords=transport>

Greater London - Westway CT Launches New Website. Setting the pace for the online presence of community transport is the impressive new website from Westway Community Transport (www.westwayct.org.uk). Westway

CT commented that the new website is "a development of Westway CT's original site, but with enhanced navigation to make it easier and simpler for members and new visitors to find what they need, including a dedicated 'My Westway' tab where members can pay their fees, check Shopper Bus timetables, and get an estimate on a trip, all in one space.



The new navigation, alongside the friendly, accessible imagery also aims to make it easier for new visitors to find what they are looking for, among the many services Westway CT offers, whether that's a home to school trip, Shopper Bus timetable or driver training. A News section allows Westway CT to explore how it helps people get more from its community, and the role community transport plays in fighting social isolation, promoting inclusive communities by making neighbourhoods accessible, and helping older people and those less mobile to stay independent."

Greater London – Dial-a-Ride Extends its Service. The operating hours of Transport for London's Dial-a-Ride service have been extended to midnight for seven days per week, following a 12% increase in demand. James Mead, Dial-a-Ride manager at TfL commented: "Our free door-to-door Dial-a-Ride service enables people of all ages with accessibility needs to get where they need to be. It helps to boost their social contact and reduce isolation, which makes a real difference to people's lives. We are committed to ensuring that more Londoners take advantage of this vital free service, which is why we are investing to improve Dial-a-Ride further with extended opening hours, additional staff, and a new simpler booking system. We are also increasing our engagement with local groups and healthcare providers to promote Dial-a-Ride to more people." https://www.route-one.net/news/tfl-extends-london-dial-a-ride-hours-as-service-usage-grows/?utm_source=routeone&utm_campaign=a4981a40b9-

EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2023_10_04_NEWS+_DIGEST&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-ecdfdee912-%5BLIST_EMAIL_ID%5D

Wiltshire – Another minibus is Destroyed in Arson Attack. Following several similar recent events, a minibus operated by Sunflowers nursery in East Grafton was stolen and set on fire on 5 September. The group is now fundraising to replace the vehicle. In the meantime Swindon Dial-a-Ride has provided a replacement for a few months.

<https://www.itv.com/news/westcountry/2023-10-03/nursery-fundraising-after-minibus-stolen-and-set-on-fire>

Devon – Dawlish CT Puts New Vehicles on the Road. Dawlish-based Water Rotary Club has responded to the needs of Dawlish Community Transport following its vehicle losses due to fire. £500 from the Rotarians has assisted with the purchase of a new vehicle. Sally Preston, Manager at Dawlish CT, said “the contributions have enabled us to purchase the first replacement vehicle ‘Eric’ – named after our driver of over 30 years – and this will be on the road in the next few days.” <https://www.dawlish-today.co.uk/news/meet-eric-the-first-of-a-new-fleet-for-dawlish-transport-charity-639738>

Devon – Go North Devon CT Closure Sees Residual Cash be Channelled into Charitable Fund. The Barnstaple-based CT operator Go North Devon closed down in August and £120,000 residual funds are to be distributed to “community groups and charities that support older people and those with mobility problems. Go North Devon, which for 30 years ran community transport like ring and ride and other services to keep people active and mobile in the Barnstaple area, is transferring the money it has left to North Devon Council for the grant scheme. ‘Keep North Devon Connected’ will run from 2024 to 2027, donating £40,000 a year in grants of up to £5,000....When Go North Devon announced its closure, Mid Devon Mobility stepped in to take over the ring and ride service and has been operating it since the end of August. Comments on Go North Devon’s Facebook page said its closure ‘a great loss to the community’.”

<https://www.northdevongazette.co.uk/news/local-news/1314387/go-north-devon-cash-will-continue-to-help-vulnerable-people.html>

Surrey – County Council Invests £6.3m in Green CT Vehicles. Press release: “Surrey County Council has been awarded £7.8m to further improve and protect local buses. The council will work with bus operators over the coming month to allocate the funding which is likely to generate more frequent buses, more evening and weekend services and reduced fares for young people to help them access education, training and employment. The investment will also be used to help ten Surrey bus services with low passenger numbers to increase their patronage so that people who rely on them for essential services can continue to access their local bus...Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth at Surrey County Council said, ‘I’m delighted that Surrey has been selected as one of the

local authorities to receive this essential funding which will help us to build upon our own significant investment and encourage more people to take the bus. We're investing in making our buses greener including...£6.3m for more ultra-low and zero emission community transport minibuses..."

<https://news.surreycc.gov.uk/2023/10/02/bus-services-in-surrey-to-be-boosted-with-7-8m-investment/>

The 'State of the Art' CT vehicle in 1988...

35 years ago CTA (headed by Richard Armitage and assisted by John Taylor) took the innovative step of offering minibuses to its members. Known as the 'Bulk Purchase' vehicle, it was based on a Freight Rover Sherpa panel van, converted into a high specification 14-seat minibus by Wadham Stringer and fitted with a Henderson Hideaway lift. John recalled "I insisted on having the full-size side door which I still can't understand not being mandatory now. The front row of passenger seats could be turned round to face rearwards! Colour-coded tracking; Seatbelts on every seat; Additional stanchions at rear; Boarding light at rear; Storage over the driver's cab. Built by Wadham Stringer – I remember going down to Waterlooville to give them a hard time on Quality Control – included checking the contents of the First Aid kit...." The photographs below are of the Hulme Community Transport bulk purchase vehicle in Manchester.





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