



# Community & Voluntary Transport at



The TAS Partnership Limited  
Passenger Transport Specialists

## Newsletter No.39

Edited by John Atkins (Principal Consultant) – published November 2023

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 – Community Transport 2023 Awards Finalists.

CTA has announced the finalists of this year's awards.

- ) Provider of the Year (for small fleet size CT with about 1-5 vehicles): The Sprint Community Transport; Hopeman Community Bus; South Denbighshire Community Partnership;
- ) Provider of the Year (for large fleet size CT with above 5 vehicles): Community Transport Sussex; Badenoch & Strathspey Community ConnXions; Bassetlaw Action Centre;
- ) Innovation in Volunteering: SWAN Transport; Mid Devon Mobility;
- ) Partnership of the Year: ECT Charity; Mid Devon Mobility; The Wolfpack Project;
- ) Making a Difference: CT4N Ltd; Readibus; Merton Community Transport;
- ) Commitment to Sustainability: Buchan Dial-A-Community Bus; Awel Aman Tawe – Taith Co-op; Sustainable Transport Service in Cornwall;



J) CT Champion of the Year: Jim Grose – Mid Devon Mobility; Sachà Petrie – Taith Coop; Rosemarie Darlington – Mid Devon Mobility; Angela Perrett- Sprint Community Transport.

Winners will be announced at the CTA event at the NEC Birmingham on 23 November 2023. <https://ctauk.org/community-transport-awards-2023-finalists/>

**UK – DfT’s Consultation Outcome: Driving Licence Flexibility for Alternately-fuelled Vehicles.** DfT’s consultation and proposed changes to licensing flexibility has arisen because “alternately-fuelled vehicles (AFVs) have an increased mass compared to their petrol and diesel equivalents. This is due to the additional weight of their powertrain, including the battery. Despite this extra weight, these vehicles are equivalent in function and appearance to larger petrol and diesel vans. Flexibility to allow category B licence holders to drive AFVs was introduced to avoid constraining payload for operators using cleaner, alternately-fuelled options, predominantly battery electric vehicles...”

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/driving-licence-flexibility-for-alternately-fuelled-vehicles/outcome/consultation-outcome-driving-licence-flexibility-for-alternately-fuelled-vehicles>. CTA commentary is here: <https://ctauk.org/dft-announces-planned-changes-to-zero-emission-vehicle-driver-licensing-flexibility/>

**UK – CT Services Should be Protected, Argues CEO of Rural Service Network.** Kerry Booth of RSN, proposes a “roadmap out of isolation” and one of three key asks of politicians is a plea for the “protection for community transport by creating a larger funding pot sustained over a longer period. It should promote the use of Community Transport schemes which serve outlying settlements and feed into bus or rail routes.” <https://rsnonline.org.uk/chief-executive-editorial-a-roadmap-out-of-isolation>

**England & Wales – Charity Commission Trustee Quiz.**

As part of its Trustee Campaign, the Charity Commission has launched a quiz which “encourages trustees to check what they know about their duties, and aims to increase their awareness of the Commission’s 5-minute

guides...The quiz is designed to engage trustees with a variety of questions based on everyday scenarios that they may encounter at their charity. It has been designed to help identify knowledge gaps and is an ideal refresher for trustees at all levels of experience.



Research shows that the majority of trustees feel confident in their ability to manage their charities, however there may be areas of knowledge they can improve on. The quiz is intended to encourage trustees to think again about what they know, to inspire upskilling."

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/charity-commission-launches-new-quiz-for-trustees-to-test-their-knowledge>

The Charity Commission has also revised its guidance on how the tax system applies to charities: [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-detailed-guidance-notes?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm\\_source=aae01b52-61b9-4c94-885f-2c19bbdb030c&utm\\_content=weekly#full-publication-update-history](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charities-detailed-guidance-notes?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=aae01b52-61b9-4c94-885f-2c19bbdb030c&utm_content=weekly#full-publication-update-history)

**England – CT to Receive 60% BSOG Increase.** Following the controversial cancellation of the Northern leg of HS2, the Government has diverted £150m to invest in local transport services. In the same press release, there is reference to and enhancement of funds for CT services. DfT: "Today also sees community services for older people and vulnerable passengers receive a 60% funding boost. These 'lifesaver' services are vital for older and vulnerable people to get to the shops, medical appointments and see loved ones. The funding increase, made through the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), will help keep fares down and has been hailed by charities and vulnerable passengers who have difficulty using regular buses and rely on community services to get around and combat loneliness. This boost comes as part of the government's nearly £260 million annual BSOG payments to support bus services in England outside of London. This also includes up to £213 million for commercial bus operators and, for the tenth year, £42 million for local authorities.



Department  
for Transport

Application for Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG)

Chief Executive of the Community Transport Association, Victoria Armstrong, said: 'Community transport plays a vital role in connecting people in our communities to health care appointments and social opportunities. We welcome DfT's announcement increasing the funding for community transport organisations and are pleased that the DfT has listened to the needs of the community transport sector and responded by increasing this essential funding.'" CTA has also commented on the announcement and has clarified that "for claims from 1 July 2023 to 31 March 2025, a 60% uplift will be applied to BSOG claims from Community Transport Operators operating services under a section 19 permit. For diesel, the payment rate will increase from 35 pence per litre to 56 pence per litre, so for every £1 claimed, operators will now receive £1.60. Operators do not need to apply for the uplift. It will be applied automatically".

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-150-million-funding-boost-for-local-bus-services-as-fare-cap-set-to-be-extended> and CTA commentary here <https://ctauk.org/bsog-funding-announcement/>

## UK – CTA Updates:

- ) Thank You for Celebrating #CTWeek23! “CT Week was a remarkable showcase of the power of community spirit and the vital role that community transport plays in helping millions of people across the UK connect with their communities, socialise and live independently.” <https://ctauk.org/thank-you-for-celebrating-ctweek23/> There also were themed blog posts on specific aspects of CT Week: <https://ctauk.org/celebrating-ct-week-ct-services-day/> <https://ctauk.org/ct-passengers-day-who-are-community-transport-passengers/> <https://ctauk.org/uk-prepares-to-celebrate-community-powered-transport/>
- ) CTA Conference, NEC Birmingham, 23 Nov 2023 <https://ctauk.org/ct23conference/>
- ) Unlocking Opportunities: The Impact of Community Transport on Rural Mobility. Paula Juliana Salazar Becerra “explores the profound impact of community transport on rural mobility, highlighting the transformative changes it brings to the lives of people living in these regions.” <https://ctauk.org/impact-of-community-transport-on-rural-mobility/>
- ) The Rural Mobility Fund Evaluation – Digital DRT and the connection with Community Transport. Commentary by Caroline Whitney on the event around the monitoring and evaluation interim report on the Rural Mobility Fund pilot schemes. <https://ctauk.org/the-rural-mobility-fund-evaluation-digital-drt/>
- ) CT'23 Photo Competition: Cast your Vote and be the Judge <https://ctauk.org/ct23-competition-cast-your-vote/>
- ) The Value of Community Transport Forums: Insights from Somerset <https://ctauk.org/the-value-of-community-transport-forums-insights-from-somerset/>



**Devon – Okehampton CT Appoints New Manager.** A change of manager has taken place at Okehampton and District Community Transport Group (ODCTG) with long-serving Sue Wonnacott now stepping down after 15 years. The new manager is Paula Anscomb who was one of many people to wish Sue well at a leaving event. Chair Tony Leech said: "I would like to say that we all have a lot to thank Sue for. Fifteen years of helping to build up the ODCTG, which now has a very good reputation for helping anyone who needs assistance, shows that Sue has had a lot of dedication to the group and the community at large. Sue, along with other members of staff and trustees past and present, has worked very hard, with diminishing grants, to keep the ODCTG afloat and with its well-deserved good reputation intact. We should all be grateful, and Sue should be very proud of what has been achieved." <https://www.okehampton-today.co.uk/news/new-face-at-okey-transport-group-642251>



**Devon – Concert Fundraiser for Dawlish CT.** Over £1,000 was raised for Dawlish Community Transport at a special event at Dawlish Methodist Church which featured performances from the High Cs community choir and popular shanty group the Back Beach Boyz. The CT is recovering from the arson attack which destroyed their vehicles. <https://www.middevonadvertiser.co.uk/news/charity-concert-raises-cash-for-fire-ravaged-dawlish-transport-group-646436>

**Worcestershire - Wyre Forest CT Offers Volunteers' Discounts.** Community Transport Wyre Forest has chosen to mark CT Week by offering discounts to its volunteers. The CT has negotiated a deal whereby volunteers can benefit from 10% off the cost of an MOT with Woodhouse Brothers, and domestic appliances firm The Wash House is giving free delivery, installation and removal. Chief Officer Beverley Coldrick said: "This is CT Week, the first ever national promotion of the vital work of community transport, and I'm thrilled to mark it with the announcement of these incentives. We are extremely grateful to Woodhouse Brothers and The Wash House for their generous acknowledgement of the work of our volunteers and hope more businesses will come on board. Volunteers selflessly give so much and ask for no reward other than the knowledge that they are making a huge difference to the lives of their passengers. However, they deserve to be thanked and recognised for what they do and discounts from local businesses is a tangible way of doing that." <https://www.kidderminstershuttle.co.uk/news/23862768.wyre-forest-firms-rally-support-community-transport-volunteers/>

## Scotland – Debates Around the Future of Scotland’s Bus Network & CT Solutions.

Scottish political commentary platform Holyrood has recently featured the ongoing debate around passenger transport and considered whether Greater Manchester’s Bee Network can offer any models for Scotland to adopt. The article also makes reference to transport campaigner Ellie Harrison’s ‘Get Glasgow Moving’



concept of publicly owned buses in Glasgow. Harrison makes reference to the value of “community-based alternatives such as that offered in rural Perthshire by the Glenfarg Community Transport Group, which set up in April after retirement took the local bus company off the roads. One of around 20 such community schemes in Scotland, it carries more than 300 passengers per week across 11 daily runs...” However, she points out what she feels to be a limitation of the CT approach: “The more spare time, the more well-to-do a community is – the more middle class they are – the more they are going to

be able to put resources into running a community bus service. It’s great if you can do that. But the communities most in need are the ones that don’t have the resources and that’s why our public bodies have to get it right, get rid of those inequalities and close the gaps in our public transport network so that everybody is served and the communities most in need are getting a real upgrade.” [https://www.holyrood.com/inside-politics/view\\_wheels-in-motion-should-scotland-take-the-same-route-as-greater-manchester-on-public-transport](https://www.holyrood.com/inside-politics/view_wheels-in-motion-should-scotland-take-the-same-route-as-greater-manchester-on-public-transport)

## Scotland – CTA Welcomes Free Bus Travel for Asylum Seekers.

CTA Scotland: “Free bus travel for people seeking asylum in Scotland will be ‘transformative’, says CTA. Patrick Harvie MSP, the Minister for Active Travel and Co-Leader of the Scottish Greens, announced on Saturday at his party’s annual conference in Dunfermline that the Scottish Government will invest £2m to extend the concessionary bus pass – which offers free bus travel to people aged under 22 and over 60, as well as disabled people – to everyone in Scotland who is seeking asylum. The move was welcomed by CTA, which has published new research showing that more than 4 in 5 people seeking asylum in Scotland have been unable to use public transport due to



‘A Feeling of Freedom’

The Unmet Transport Needs of Refugees and People Seeking Asylum in Scotland

Community Transport Association in partnership with Mental Health Foundation

October 2023

[www.ctauk.org](http://www.ctauk.org)

its cost and half cannot afford it 'all or almost all of the time'.

David Kelly, CTA's Director for Scotland, said: 'We warmly welcome the Minister's announcement that the Scottish Government will invest £2m in free bus travel for everyone in Scotland who is seeking asylum. The testimonials in our new report demonstrate how important buses are for people seeking asylum as an essential part of their daily lives, but also how unaffordable tickets are. The community relies on the bus to get to the shops to buy essentials, to visit family and friends and to take their kids to school. Free bus travel will be transformative, giving people seeking asylum "a feeling of freedom" and helping them to better integrate into our society. The success of the campaign is credit to the community's determination and the hard work of our friends at the Maryhill Integration Network. However, there is much more still to do to make sure public transport in Scotland is accessible and affordable for all of our people and communities. We look forward to working with the Scottish Government, as well as local authorities, bus operators, passengers and partners, to make this happen'." The report is here:

<https://ctauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/A-Feeling-of-Freedom-CTA-2023.pdf>

**Scotland – Dornoch CT's Electric Car is in Demand.** At Dornoch Community Transport in the Highlands, a Volkswagen ID.3 electric car is being operated as a community car service for residents in the IV25 postcode area. The car has been in service between 3-4 days per week since being launched in April, and demand has been strong. The car is mainly used to take passengers to medical appointments in Dingwall and Inverness, and for some local trips to Golspie, Tain and around Dornoch and Embo. To book the service or to talk about becoming a volunteer driver, call 07341 284405 or email:



[transport@dornochhub.co.uk](mailto:transport@dornochhub.co.uk)

<https://www.northern-times.co.uk/news/dornochs-new-community-car-clocks-up-3k-miles-since-launch-329876/>

**Scotland – New Vehicles for Caithness.** Two new minibuses have been acquired by Caithness Voluntary Group in Wick for its Caithness Rural Transport service. Both vehicles are fully accessible, and one is electric. The latter was funded by a £54,142 grant from Energy Saving Trust's 'Plugged-in Communities' programme, whilst the other vehicle was paid for from the Caithness and North Sutherland Fund (£19,979.72), RWE Camster Wind Farm Community Fund, Foundation Scotland (£10,000), and North Highland Initiative (£10,000). The operator has met with increasing demand and currently delivers around 690 journeys a month,

with vehicles covering up to 300 miles a day. <https://www.johnogroat-journal.co.uk/news/new-minibuses-for-caithness-rural-transport-as-demand-contin-330022/>

## Scotland – Perth & Kinross Community Bus is

**Extended.** After threats to funding earlier in the year, the Auchterarder Community Bus Group has now added an extra day to its schedule. With its operation contracted to Docherty's Midland Coaches, the service has responded to demand that now exceeds over 50 a day.

<https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/perth-kinross/4740631/auchterarder-community-bus-group/>

## Scotland – Grant Scheme for Community Vehicles.

Charities which operate in Scotland may be able to access capital (part funding of between £2,500 to £10,000) from the Robertson Trust's Community Vehicle Grants programme. Organisations need to be using vehicles to address "the impacts of poverty and/or trauma under one or more of the following themes: Financial wellbeing; Emotional wellbeing and relationships; and Educational and work pathways."

<https://www.therobertsontrust.org.uk/funding/community-vehicle-grants/>

## Scotland - Badenoch and Strathspey CT Welcomes

**new CEO.** A new Chief Executive Officer has been appointed at Badenoch



& Strathspey Community ConnXions, based at Aviemore. Donald Hall is due to take over from Sandra Veitch who has led the implementation of a recent 5-year strategic plan. Donald's experience includes 15 years of service delivery across Highlands & Islands Enterprise, High Life Highland, Scottish Cycling and Snowsport Scotland, as well as a range of

volunteering activities.

<https://www.bscx.co.uk/post/new-chief-executive-officer>

## Ile of Wight – FYTbus

**Launches New Electric Bus Service.** The island's Totland-based CT operator FYTbus has launched a weekday afternoon run (Route E) serving Bouldnor, Yarmouth, Freshwater, Totland, Alum Bay and the Needles with a new electric minibus. FYTbus has also recently launched a new





bookings App, to compliment its telephone system.

<https://www.islandecho.co.uk/fytbus-launches-new-afternoon-community-bus-route-with-electric-vehicle/>

## Hampshire – Volunteers Needed for Hampshire CT.

“Colden Common Community Transport is looking for more volunteer drivers. They operate shopping trips to local supermarkets on Wednesdays and Thursdays. For more details, contact Dave Walton on 01962 712986.”

<https://www.hampshirechronicle.co.uk/news/23837316.twyford-colden-common-community-news/>

## Hampshire – New Forest Volunteers are Nominated

for Honours. A passenger on the Community First Call and Go service Bernadine Rouse has nominated two volunteers for a formal honour. Driver Rod Pink (83) and assistant Denise Blain (74) have volunteered for the CT services for a combined 60 years, and hope to be awarded with an OBE.

Community First has described the two as “superstars who never miss a trip. They are a pair. They work well together. That’s why the bus works so well.”

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-67090869>. Community First New Forest has also recently profiled one of its regular users 91-year old Walter. <https://www.cfirst.org.uk/transport/save-our-community-transport-service-walters-story/>



## Greater London – A Day with Westway CT’s Shopper

Bus – A Local Hero. Samantha Shaw recently took a trip on Westway Community Transport’s Shopper Bus in North West London (St John’s Wood, Primrose Hill and Lisson Grove area). Sam writes: “This supermarket trip is more than transport from A to B for the passengers who use it every week. It is an opportunity to chat, share stories, inquire about local developments, vent about the rising cost of living, observe changes through the bus windows, and, most importantly, feel like a part of their community.”

Joyce, at 92 years young, embodies resilience and spirit. Despite her partial blindness, she radiates vitality. With a distinguished career in the civil service spanning 35 years, she dedicated herself to the Pensions Department, specialising in war pensions. When we chatted during a September Wednesday morning on the Shopper Bus trip, she recounted her experiences, as if they happened just yesterday. Joyce relies on the Shopper Bus once a week, it's a lifeline that she can't do without. It's not just about freedom, it's the camaraderie and lively conversations with fellow passengers that she treasures.



Eileen is 81, a retired primary school helper and salesperson. She exclaims, 'It is fantastic,' while buying 24 cans of Diet Coke every week – an indulgence only made possible with the assistance of the bus service and passenger assistant who helps with the bags and bulky items. On the trip, I crossed paths with several other passengers: Maureen, a retired property manager, Joan, a former traffic warden, David, a former restaurateur, and Barbara, a retired secretary.

Our journey took us to Sainsbury's on the Finchley Road, where everyone dispersed to shop. When they finished, Pam, the Passenger Assistant, lent a hand to get their purchases back on board. I had to retrieve some tomato sauce for Maureen – it's so easy to forget something, and in a world where a week long wait for ketchup is unthinkable, a helping hand becomes invaluable.

Joan succinctly described the Shopper Bus experience as a 'social club.' Passengers exchanged news about people, discussed changes in the neighbourhood, and chatted about this and that. Lillian, mid 90's with difficulty walking unaided looked to her friends for reassurance about moving to a new flat with a lift, a major decision for someone in their 90s. The conversation flowed with a willingness to offer assistance, reflecting the sense of community that has formed among these passengers. This experience underscored that the bonds uniting us are often unassuming, almost invisible on their own, yet immensely potent when woven together through shared



experiences. Whether these experiences are remarkable or mundane, the Shopper Bus helps the weaving of these threads, strengthening the community and rekindling the sense of belonging for its members. In turn, it enriches all our lives with newfound connections and shared moments."

<https://westwayct.org.uk/>

**Northamptonshire – Northampton CT & Power the Red.** Northampton Community Transport used CT Week to launch a 'Power the Red' fundraising campaign. Manager Rafal Piecha said: "Our red minibuses provide essential transport for individuals in Northampton who cannot access public transport because of impaired mobility or disability. A lifeline for many, enabling housebound residents to enjoy a level of independence, choice and freedom." Northampton CT is inviting donations via links through Mobile Banking <https://wonderful.org/pay?ref=1087513> and <https://www.givey.com/powerthered> <https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/news/northampton-community-transport-launches-power-the-red-fundraising-appeal-to-coincide-with-ct-week-4370990>

**Northamptonshire – ABILITY Services in Spotlight.** Operating across South Northants and North Oxfordshire, ABILITY CIC is a 10-vehicle CT operation profiled for CT Week. Director Nigel Hinch said: "People who live in the more rural areas in particular can feel very isolated without access to transport. The service we provide allows people, as they put it, to get out of the same four walls. We are thrilled to be part of the CT Week as it is vital that we highlight the role of community transport and the positive impact that it has on so many people. It is hoped that the week will shine a light on transport providers, members, volunteers and help spread the word about the sector...One of our members said 'When my husband had to go into a care home, I had to spend a lot of money on taxis just to go and see him. Thanks to ABILITY they now take me twice a week from my home near Roade to Daventry. It gives me so much pleasure to be able to see and care for him during our visits. Without this vital lifeline I just do not know how I would get to see my husband. Thanks to all the ABILITY team in the office and the wonderful drivers.'"

<https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/news/transport/celebrating-a-lifeline-across-west-northamptonshire-4374950>

**Northern Ireland – CT Services Receive Cash Boost from Motability Foundation.** A grant of £3.42m has been awarded to Easilink Community Transport, CDM Community Transport, Fermanagh Community Transport and North Coast Community Transport courtesy of the Motability Foundation's CT grant programme. "The programme consists of 4 key strands: delivery of passenger trips to disability-centred groups; investment in a fleet of 23 fit for purpose accessible mini-

buses; a driver training and employment programme; and the establishment of a scheme to provide transport to regional hospital and health appointment

On behalf of Easilink Chief Executive Claire Russell said: 'As an organisation, we are delighted to be working with our partners to bring such a ground-breaking level of investment into the community and voluntary sector within the North-West area. The project will allow us to transform the accessible transport options available to both disabled individuals, the elderly and local organisations who exist to support those with a wide range of both seen and unseen disabilities.'

<https://www.farminglife.com/business/rural-transport-scheme-receives-a-ps34m-cash-boost-4371686>

## Nottinghamshire – CT4N Offers Free Trips to Mark CT Week.



CT Week promoted the contribution made by community transport providers around the country, and CT4N Charitable Trust played its part by inviting its Easylink passengers to enjoy a free journey on either Monday, October 23, or Friday, October 27. Barry Allitt, CT4N Commercial Director, said: "This is our chance to offer a thank you to our loyal customers, celebrate Community Transport Week, and spread the word about the benefits of using the Easylink service. We fully

back the principle of CT Week, which has a theme of 'Bridging the Gap, Connecting Communities', and believe community transport is more than just moving people from A to B. It's about fostering a sense of belonging, bridging divides, and empowering individuals to access education, employment, healthcare, and social opportunities that are the bedrock of a thriving community". For more information on Easylink go to <https://www.ct4n.co.uk/charity/easylink> or email [easylink@ct4n.co.uk](mailto:easylink@ct4n.co.uk) or call their helpful team on (0115) 969 1801.

## Nottinghamshire – CT's Volunteers are Celebrated!

As part of its support for community transport, Nottinghamshire County Council has highlighted the work of volunteers in the CT sector as part the CT Week theme. There are around 400 volunteer drivers in Nottinghamshire on the county's funded CT schemes and they deliver over 40,000 trips. Volunteer Dave from the Bassetlaw Action Centre Community Car Scheme said: "I know how appreciative the people are when they on visits to where they need to go and to places where they enjoy going. It's been a great thing to do and I think anyone would enjoy themselves if they were doing it." Transport manager at Bassetlaw Jayne Bullock said: "Our volunteer drivers are the wheels that keep our local community moving forward. Their selfless

dedication and tireless efforts bring about a transformative impact. By offering transportation services to those who are unable to access public transport, our volunteer drivers bridge the gap between isolation and connection. They ensure that individuals can attend crucial appointments, social events, and enjoy activities that would otherwise be out of reach. In doing so, they not only restore a sense of freedom but also uplift the spirits and well-being of those they serve. Our volunteer drivers truly embody the essence of community support, making a difference one ride at a time."

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/newsroom/news/celebrating-helping-the-county-get-out-and-about/>

**Bedfordshire – South Beds Dial-a-Ride Seeks New Home for Vehicles.** The imminent sale of a Central Bedfordshire Council building in Dunstable has caused a problem for South Beds Dial-a-Ride, which parks its vehicles at the site. Watling House has been put on the market by Dunstable Town Council and the CT operator has been given notice on an attached plot of land which served as its vehicle depot.

Chair of the CT, Beryl Meakins, told the Council that "we were within three hours of closing our transport service, less than 18 months ago. It provides for those who can't access public transport or have difficulty using conventional vehicles," she explained. We needed to relocate from our former premises because that was required for other purposes and we were unable to find suitable secure parking for our transport. We found our current location at the last minute. This area has no amenity for drivers, and no water or power. But it allows us to provide our service to residents. I ask you to consider excluding this small yard we occupy on the edge of the site in any sale, or impose conditions to ensure we can be allowed to remain in occupation and improvements made so we can maintain our vehicles. Any sale without safeguarding this land will potentially put our charity at risk again and leave us in the position we were in 18 months ago."

The Council has agreed to work with the operator to identify alternative premises.

<https://www.lutontoday.co.uk/news/politics/council/dial-a-ride-service-at-risk-as-central-beds-council-agrees-to-sell-its-former-offices-in-dunstable-4374404>

**Surrey – Woking CT Faces Funding Crisis.** With the effective bankruptcy of Woking Borough Council, the well-regarded Woking Bustler CT operation looks set to lose a substantial portion of funding. Users of the service have been made aware of the threat and have described it as a

"lifeline." Chief Executive of Woking CT Guy Padfield-Wilkins predicted "dark days ahead...It's devastating. We have just under 4,000 members, all who are either disabled or have reduced mobility. People have said they won't get out of the house if it wasn't for us." Speaking on behalf of Woking Borough Council deputy leader Will Forster said the service was "sadly at real risk. The council has started consulting on a range of changes to services. As part of this consultation, the council will meet with organisations like Woking Community Transport to understand what impact it would have if the council no longer funds them and explore what alternative options are available."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-surrey-67143723>



## Hertfordshire – Community Action Dacorum Celebrates its Volunteer Drivers.

Volunteers are vital to the community transport operation offered by Community Action Dacorum, which provides transport for voluntary groups, and for individuals with its Door2Store service and Day Trippers club. Minibus driver Rob Trowt, who has been a volunteer for two years, has been profiled in the local press.



Rob said: "I volunteer because I want to give something back, after all the years of working and being busy when you retire it is nice to be able to give something back to the community. Throughout my career I've always done driving, working within the car industry, so this is something I can turn my hand to easily. You get great satisfaction from the older people getting off the bus, they always say thank you. On a regular basis I have been helping transport elderly people to a church service, they are over the moon with the service because they wouldn't be able to get there otherwise. It's rewarding to me to see how much it means to them."

<https://www.hemeltoday.co.uk/news/people/making-a-difference-in-dacorum-4372957>

Yorkshire – The Power of Community-led Health Service Design. 'A recent report Not Just Tickling Boxes outlines how

in North Yorkshire the health sector has worked productively with CT operators to tackle health inequalities in a densely rural area. The chapter 'Improving rural access to healthcare in North Yorkshire' describes how a "partnership of voluntary, community and health organisations set out to improve access to healthcare and wellbeing services" in Hambleton & Richmondshire, Nidderdale and Ryedale "by exploring specific solutions tailored to the needs of local communities..." The partnerships have included CT operators such as Hambleton Community Action, Nidderdale Plus Community Hub, and MoorsBus, and transport has been a main focus, with CT solutions being brokered as followed:



- ) Nidderdale – “we have developed better links with the hospital to make transport run more smoothly. For example, ensuring that someone is available to take the person to their appointment and, if they do, that there is somewhere to park. Nidderdale Plus is delivering a pilot around the provision of adult social care with a community element, focusing on stronger community links to support and recruit local carers. It explores how to embed a transport element within this to enable people to access the care and support they need easily.”
- ) Richmond & Hambleton – “we are looking at extending the rural community transport model, alongside working with PCNs (Primary Care Networks) to explore the clustering of appointments led by Hambleton Community Action (HCA) who have also started exploring ways to bring services to communities via monthly hubs (with six place leads and six thematic providers) to improve people’s access to health and wellbeing services. HCA is also doing a research piece engaging with social prescribers, mental health practitioners and others to explore their transport priorities, and also try and understand PCNs’ transport priorities.”

In concluding it is reported that “the NHS is considering providing longer-term funding for community transport, recognising that this may help ease hospital pressures. The steering group will continue to meet. Now that new connections have been made, the plan is to continue to work together. In a period of system evolution and change, the connected approach is fundamental and provides a basis for collective responses to the peaks in demand for NHS services. It means the core people central to this initiative will continue collaborating, irrespective of who they work for.”

<https://www.ivar.org.uk/publication/not-just-ticking-boxes/>

## Yorkshire – New Travel Survey in East Riding. A

community consultation has been launched by East Yorkshire Community Transport in an effort to better plan future services. The study is co-ordinated by Jane Evison, who said: "It may be that people would like to be part of Men in Sheds [community workshops] or their local knit and natter group, attend a coffee morning, go shopping or get to a medical appointment but not having access to transport is putting a barrier in their way...But before we can start to address any issues and try to find

solutions to the problems, we need people to engage with us and tell us just how the lack of transport affects their lives." Chair of East Yorkshire CT Nigel Rowe expects the survey to help the organisation "to see who else could benefit from our services". The questionnaire, which is open until 15 December, and is supported by East Riding of Yorkshire Council, is



accessed here: <https://eastridingcommunities.commonplace.is/en-GB/proposals/east-yorkshire-community-transport/step1>  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-humber-67151269>

## Yorkshire – Net-zero Project in North Yorkshire

**Benefits CT Sector.** The York and North Yorkshire Net Zero Fund has allocated £6m for various schemes which can deliver significant carbon reductions. One of the designated capital projects is Community Transport Decarbonisation led by North Yorkshire Council. Each capital project is to receive an average of £500,000. <https://bmmagazine.co.uk/news/net-zero-projects-in-york-and-north-yorkshire-have-been-approved-for-allocations-from-a-7m-net-zero-fund/>

## Cumbria – Punk Fundraiser for New Minibus in Workington.

A live music event has been arranged to raise funds for Age UK West Cumbria, which hopes to buy a new community minibus. Age UK hopes that the "bus will get older people out more to socialise and fight loneliness which can cause anxiety, depression, and cognitive decline." Described as "a night of alternative punk and rock music" the event links with the charity's new initiative to engage with younger people, as CEO Jane Minday explained: "The name 'Live-Age' is the new music off-shoot of our 'Vint-Age' brand, specifically designed to branch out and engage with a younger demographic, creating more awareness of our charity and its services. The idea being, that a large portion of people under 50 are likely to be related to, or at the very least know, someone who would benefit from our services. We also wish to simultaneously give back to the community by helping to give exposure and development opportunities to young/up-and-coming local talent..."



<https://www.timesandstar.co.uk/news/23861807.age-uk-cumbria-host-punk-night-raise-funds-community-bus/>

Cumbria – New Fellrunner Services are Launched. The long-running volunteer-operated Fellrunner community bus has augmented its services with two new routes linking Penrith with Shap and Langwathby from November. Chair of Fellrunner Kevin McGilloway said: “We were very pleased, in Community Transport Week (earlier this month), to be able to announce these new services to give passengers the opportunity to get to and from Shap and Langwathby to Penrith on Saturdays. We have been working with the Shap 106 Bus Group who have been unable to source a commercial operator to run the Shap service on Saturdays and we are



pleased to be able to step in and help...”

<https://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/23876202.fellrunner-bus-service-set-connect-penrith-shap-langwathby/>

Republic of Ireland – Leitrim Car Scheme Closes.

The plight of users of the volunteer car scheme operated by Leitrim Volunteer Centre has been highlighted as the service has been forced to close due to lack of funding. Over 600 people relied on the service to access health care appointments. It cost €20,000 a year and it was estimated that the service saved €111,000 in hospital and health transport. Joseph Musgrave, chief executive of Home and Community Care Ireland commented that “we are just not giving attention to rural older people...It somewhat beggars belief that a service like this can't be supported.”

<https://www.irishtimes.com/health/2023/10/16/lack-of-funds-ends-community-car-scheme-which-took-people-to-medical-appointments/>,

<https://www.shannonside.ie/news/leitrim-patients-will-be-stranded-without-community-car-harkin-230633> and

<https://www.leitrimobserver.ie/news/home/1314123/dont-leave-people-in-leitrim-stranded-without-transport-harkin-tells-taoiseach.html>.

**Norfolk – Car Scheme Enables Volunteers to Offer the ‘Gift of a Lift!’** More volunteers are needed for the Travel Norfolk Car Scheme which is co-ordinated by Norfolk County Council. Jeanne Heal, a volunteer for the past 18 months, has shared her experience: “I’ve always been committed to helping the community in North Norfolk and, having spent a lot of my working career in the area, I know the challenges people face in getting around this rural part of Norfolk. I also love people and enjoy driving so this really is an ideal role for me. As a volunteer driver I enable people to keep various medical appointments, necessary shopping trips, visit relatives in hospital or care homes. People can be anxious travelling, I enjoy chatting, listening to people and sharing experiences with passengers which seems to put them at their ease. Without the service, passengers have expressed that they would be unable to attend appointments. In the past 18 months I have volunteered with Travel Norfolk Car Scheme every journey has been a pleasure, it is satisfying knowing that passengers feel safe during their journeys.” Potential volunteers should contact

[www.norfolk.gov.uk/volunteerdrivers](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/volunteerdrivers) or Travel Norfolk Car Scheme at 0344 800 8020.

<https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/23800165.plea-volunteers-join-norfolk-driving-scheme/> and <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/jobs-training-and-volunteering/work-at-norfolk-county-council/volunteering/case-studies/jeanne-heal>



**Herefordshire – Ledbury Car Scheme Appeals for Volunteers.** Due to increasing demand Ledbury Ring and Ride is seeking new volunteers. Operated by Community Action Ledbury, the scheme saw a 23% increase in journeys in 2022, delivering 3,650 trips. Manager Tim Barnes





## Cambridgeshire – Car Scheme Development Ideas are Put to the Community.

Organisers of the East Cambridgeshire Social Car Scheme are asking for responses from the community to two future options which will support a new funding bid:

- J 1: The provision of a carer to assist those who are able to get in and out of a car unaided but need assistance whilst attending appointments.
- J 2: The provision of a wheelchair adapted vehicle with a carer to assist those who are a wheelchair user and need assistance whilst attending appointments.

The consultation is being undertaken by the operator of the scheme Voluntary Community Action East Cambs, and comments can be addressed to Angela Haylock at [angela@vcaec.org.uk](mailto:angela@vcaec.org.uk) by Nov 10.

<https://www.elystandard.co.uk/news/23873649.think-east-cambridgeshire-social-car-scheme/>

## Cambridgeshire – Fenland CT Offers Community

**Fridge.** As part of its work to combat rural isolation and economic deprivation, Fenland Association for Community Transport (FACT) has launched a community fridge in Wimblington Parish Hall offering free food to those in need, following a similar facility in March. Zoe Phillips from FACT said that “people can’t always get the transport in for our community fridge...We were speaking to a lot of people based in Wimblington and they were saying they would use the fridge in March if they could, so we’ve decided to bring it here to trial, to see if it works.”. The food has been donated from supermarkets and comprises items “that are close to their sell-by date or would be going to landfill - so it’s being saved and hopefully will help some people who perhaps are on a tight budget or just need the extra little bit of help...” <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-67126721>

## Dorset – Axe Valley Ring & Ride Considers its

**Options.** Funding uncertainty has forced Honiton-based Axe Valley Ring & Ride to consider its future. Its West Dorset services were due to be withdrawn, although the East Dorset service was secured following funding commitment from Dorset County Council. The Ring & Ride covers 30 villages and is able to carry users to Bridport, Dorchester, Axminster, Lyme Regis, Chard and Crewkerne for shopping and medical appointments. The operator is currently in discussion with Dorset County Council around the future of its West Dorset service. <https://www.bridportnews.co.uk/news/23864793.axe-valley-ring-ride-service-extended-west-dorset/> and <https://planetradio.co.uk/greatest-hits/west-dorset/news/ring-and-ride-bus-customers-west-dorset-lifeline/>

## Wales – Managerial Vacancy at Bridgend CT.

An Operations Manager is being sought by Bridgend Community Transport. Applications are to be submitted by 24 November. For further details contact Graham Cartwright (Operations Manager), Bridgend Community Transport,

Unit 1A Australian Terrace, Bridgend, CF31 1LY. Tel: 01656 669665. Email: [graham@bridgendcommunitytransport.co.uk](mailto:graham@bridgendcommunitytransport.co.uk).

**Wales – Powys CT Operator Wins Award.** An award for best Social Enterprise or Charity has been made to The Arches – Rhayader & District Community Support at the Powys Business Awards. The organisation offers:

- )] Dial-A-Ride in and around Rhayader in a wheelchair accessible VW caddy;
- )] Community Car Scheme taking residents to hospital, health-related and other social transport;
- )] Community Minibus - a 16 seater minibus that we use for outings near and far. Popular destinations include Hereford, Carmarthen and Aberystwyth as well as afternoon tea in the Elan Valley or at Llandrindod Wells lake.



Award judges said: "The Arches is a long-established organisation which has an impressive range of services, supporting everyone in the community, including those who are struggling the most. We were impressed not only by the wide spectrum that such a small organisation is reaching but also by their ambition to do more, to tackle root causes of issues and to reach out to more people." <https://newsfromwales.co.uk/charity-at-the-heart-of-community-wins-powys-business-award/>

**Wales – PACTO is Awarded Motability Foundation Funding.** A grant valued at almost £1m over a three year period has been awarded to

Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations. The project is to gain five wheelchair accessible cars and four wheelchair accessible minibuses, with a budget for running costs.



The objectives of the project are:

- )] To develop a clearly defined model for delivering community transport services in Pembrokeshire, which demonstrates better coordination of the resources we have and better meets the needs of passengers.

- J To support at least 500 passengers to access community transport services in Pembrokeshire for the first time.
- J To triple the number of passenger journeys by wheelchair accessible car over the course of three years.
- J To increase the number of passenger journeys on dial-a-ride services by 50% over the course of three years.
- J To embed travel support and confidence building for people with extra mobility needs within the Pembrokeshire Community Hub, supporting at least 300 people by end of the project.

Caroline Wilson, chair of PACTO, said: "This is a rare and exciting opportunity for the CT sector in Pembrokeshire, and we look forward to making a huge difference for local people with mobility issues and sharing the lessons we learn for the benefit of the wider CT sector across the UK. We would like to thank the Motability Foundation for their support". <https://pembrokeshire-herald.com/85869/close-to-1m-boost-for-community-transport-in-pembrokeshire/>

## Wales - LI n-based CT Celebrates 20 Years of

**Service.** (This article originally appeared on BBC Cymru Fyw, courtesy of Gareth Wyn Williams. We have permission to publish the English version. Thanks to CTA's Michelle Kelsall.) Established in 2003, O Ddrws I Ddrws ('From Door to Door') has transported thousands of LI n and Eifionydd people on necessary journeys including medical appointments and transport to hospitals. It has been described as an "essential service" for many in the area, and its success has prompted the expansion of other services such as Fflecsi buses. Since 2021 O Ddrws I Ddrws has been offering a similar service over the summer, assisting people in rural areas that are often far from the usual bus lines. But with the demise of similar services in other parts of Wales, there are renewed calls for financial security to plan.



According to Wil Parry (left), the service helps people to be able to live independently

This was an evolution of the coastal bus service and was intended, as a supplementary service to the public bus services, to encourage local residents and visitors to use their cars less, with the bus booking app to assist them.

The service has been protected in LI n for 2024 following a successful application for grant funding – but the picture is less clear thereafter.

"The Fflecsi service is a very successful one, apart from our core service of course," Wil Parry, O Ddrws I Ddrws Project Manager, tells Cymru Fyw.

"The core service is to help people who can't get to places themselves like medical appointments, going shopping, even socialising. In countryside like this there are so many who can't drive and the bus services doesn't get everywhere, does it? Our services make sure people can live independently."

'It's priceless' One passenger who says she is heavily reliant on O Ddrws I Ddrws services is Megan Jones from Llanaelhaearn. At 92 and no longer driving, she is a regular user of their services. Megan Jones: "They also pick me up if you come shopping or go to the dentist... they're extremely convenient. I use the service every Monday morning to go to the centre in Nefyn, which is about seven miles away. I could never go there without O Ddrws I Ddrws because I'm no longer a driver and I'm so proud of them. They also pick me up if I want to shop or go to the dentist... they're incredibly convenient. A friend of mine in Abererch gets a great deal of use out of it. Apart from the bus coming to pick you up, the people who drive are so handy and help you, it's literally door to door... it's priceless."



'Ongoing battle to deliver the service' But maintaining such a service comes at a cost, with the charity turning over around £250,000 a year while maintaining seven vehicles - three of which are electric - and employing drivers. Although collecting income through travel tickets, donations from the community and a few school contracts, Wil Parry added that grants were the main source of funding. But with the service having made 2,500 trips between April and September last year, he believes it is "showing its worth...It's not a sustainable enterprise in any way, but I think commercial [bus] companies are also unsupported. We'd like to thank AONB [Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty] LI n and Transport for Wales and Natural Resources Wales over the past couple of years [for grant-in-aid] but there's an end to that... it's an ongoing battle to provide that service."

This week it was confirmed that the future of the Fflecsi service was protected for another year, thanks to funding from the UK's Common Prosperity Fund. Wil Parry said the fate of that grant is the difference "if the flexi runs next year or not". Adding that the flexi model "is the way forward in a rural area like this", he said "funding is the problem. It's a treadmill, isn't it? There's no guarantee of any sorts in the world if we can run the service."

'We live on grants' Robert Hywel Wyn Williams, chairman of the charity, said the service was "essential" when public transport in general is on a precipice. He added that he would like to see services similar to O Ddrws I Ddrws set up in other rural areas of Wales.

Robert Hywel Wyn Williams: "At the moment we're going month to month and year to year"

"It's really needed more these days because of the decline in public transport and less public money as well. We live on grants, but I'd like a plan, or money over three years, so we can plan ahead. Right now we're going month to month and year to year. We have staff who have expertise with disadvantaged people, those who are ill or disabled. We have a van that has a special wheelchair lift to enable them to travel. I'd love to see more co-operation with local councils, and also the Senedd in Cardiff, as the money is coming from there. 20 years shows we've done something right, doesn't it... more than anything that the service is needed. We're not here except that there's that need."



'Services must be preserved' Earlier this year, on the 20th anniversary of the service, the local MP tabled a motion in Westminster congratulating them on their success. But he added that the funding round and the ability to offer longer grants needed to be "revisited".



Liz Saville Roberts: "I know how difficult it is for a voluntary enterprise to survive from year to year"

Liz Saville Roberts told Cymru Fyw: "We know how difficult it is to live without cars. ' We're fairly fortunate locally that we have very good company with Buses Nefyn, but there are people who need to go beyond the

usual journeys. And in this day and age where we hear politicians asking to use our cars less we have to keep these services in the countryside. I know how difficult it is for a voluntary enterprise to survive from year to year, to make the financial requests, the uncertainty is whether the money is going to come and having to jump through hoops to prove that need. We really need the Welsh Government, and everyone else who funds initiatives like this, to ensure that, not only do they continue into the future, but that they are easy to do, and that the administrative side is not a burden."



A Welsh Government spokesman said "Together with public bodies and third sector organisations, we are experiencing an incredibly difficult financial situation. We will do everything we can to protect frontline public services and continue to provide targeted support to those who need it most."

<https://www.oddrwsiddrws.cymru/en/>



If you require any advice or support please contact us on 01772-204988 or email [john.atkins@taspartnership.com](mailto:john.atkins@taspartnership.com)