



Newsletter No.42

Edited by John Atkins (Principal Consultant). Published February 2024.

UK – s19 & s22 Permit Data is Published. The Traffic Commissioner has for the first time issued a database of all valid, refused, or revoked Section 19, Section 19 Large and Section 22 Permits issued under the Transport Act 1985 within the last 5 years, including details of the operators. The TC data does not include those permits issued by CTA, local authorities or other designated bodies, so this presents only a partial picture of permit activity.

-) s19 Permits issued: 16,757 to 6,448 organisations (including 126 local authorities and 2,376 schools, colleges and universities);
-) s19 Permits refused: 324 to 155 organisations;
-) Holder of biggest number of s19 Permits: One Bus Ltd (275);
-) s19 Large Bus Permits issued: 451 to 59 organisations (including 19 local authorities);
-) s19 Large Bus Permits refused: 8 to 5 organisations;
-) Holder of biggest number of s19 Large Bus Permits: London Borough of Islington (44);
-) s22 Permits issued: 917 to 298 organisations (including 43 local authorities);
-) s22 Permits refused: 14 to 3 organisations;
-) Holder of biggest number of s22 Permits: Monmouthshire County Council (32).



<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/section-19-section-19-large-and-section-22-permits-issued-under-the-transport-act-1985>

UK – Permit Use by Schools is Questioned by MP.

Daisy Cooper, (Liberal Democrat Spokesperson (Health and Social Care) and Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats), has asked the Secretary of State for Transport "if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of withdrawing

Sections 19 and 22 exemptions for schools.” Guy Opperman (Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department for Transport) replied “We are not currently planning to revise Transport Act legislation in relation to the section 19 and 22 permit schemes.” Route One has reported this debate (following its feature on a recent campaign to prevent schools using the s19 “loophole”), quoting Steve Fitzgerald (whose daughter was killed in a 1993 school minibus accident) and Patrick Roach (General Secretary for NASUWT), both of whom argue that withdrawing s19 and s22 permits from school use would increase the safety of pupils by requiring school vehicles to operated under a full PSV regime.

<https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2024-01-08.8582.h&s=speaker:24962+section:wrans#g8582.r0> and

<https://www.route-one.net/news/government-criticised-over-section-19-school-minibuses-inaction/>

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UK – Minibus Accident Statistics – TAS Comment

The above item reflects an assumption on the part of some that minibuses operated by schools under s19 are more likely to be involved in an accident than a full PSV vehicle, presumably on the basis that it is being driven by a teacher who is either less competent a driver and / or too tired or preoccupied with other matters to properly attend to safety on the road. However, scrutiny of the official accident statistics over the last few years presents a more factual basis for understanding the relative risks inherent in different forms of motor transport. This data clearly indicates that fatal accidents involving minibuses are lower than all other vehicle types (apart from Mobility Scooters in three of the years). And of the minibuses involved in accidents, some are likely to be operated under full PSV regulations, or without any kind of permit. There is no correlation between the few minibus fatalities and schools.

Vehicles involved in reported collisions by collision severity and vehicle type, Great Britain, 10 years up to 2022

FATALITIES										
Vehicle Type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Cars	1,760	1,789	1,734	1,905	1,856	1,821	1,833	1,463	1,614	1,772
Taxis or private hire	30	35	39	29	35	37	20	25	23	27
Minibuses	12	5	8	3	6	11	5	6	6	6
Buses or coaches	69	61	64	57	55	48	71	33	34	42
Mobility scooters	5	9	8	14	5	13	12	2	8	9
Agricultural vehicles	24	32	23	19	19	29	21	27	20	14

Taken from data set ras0502. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/reported-road-accidents-vehicles-and-casualties-tables-for-great-britain#historic-trends-ras01>

UK – Leaving EU Parliamentary Debate on D1 Entitlement.

Following Daisy Cooper’s question noted above, on 31 January, following a motion by Dr Thérèse Coffey, MPs discussed the potential value of extending the D1 entitlement to those who have passed their driving test after 1997, and thereby widening the pool of potential community minibus drivers.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-01-31/debates/DOAE5C47-E81C-4304-9364-7F1B2048987F/LeavingTheEUDrivingLicences>

UK – CT Cuts in Hampshire Cited as MPs Press Prime Minister for Additional Support for Local Authorities. A BBC report on a lobby of MPs pressing for funding to avoid local council cuts has cited Hampshire County Council's proposed withdrawal of funding for community transport as an example of how vital services are under threat. Community First, which operates CT services in Hampshire, says the cuts would result in its network being "scaled back" and unviable "in some parts of the county..."

A user of the Community First service Ruth Payne, says it is "very important...much easier than using taxis or buses. Sometimes, we go to a garden centre, sometimes we go to a shopping centre, sometimes we just go to a pub for a meal...It's wonderful. We want it kept, we definitely want it kept." <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-68046627> The Hampshire CT situation was also reported on ITV news here:

<https://www.itv.com/watch/news/man-fears-community-service-cuts-will-make-him-unable-to-visit-wife-in-care-home/b5llw7t>

UK – CTA Updates

-) Reforming Network Grant Support – Scotland's successor to the Bus Services Operators' Grant and CTA's recommendations to Transport Scotland

<https://ctauk.org/network-support-grant-review/>

-) Driving Connections: The Vital Link between Community Transport and Voluntary Organisations – a profile of work of VAST's work in Stoke on Trent
- <https://ctauk.org/driving-connections-the-vital-link-between-community-transport-and-voluntary-organisations/>

-) Community Transport Manifesto Launch: Tuesday 19th March at 11am for a virtual event to unveil CTA Manifesto ahead of the forthcoming general election.

<https://member.ctauk.org/civicrm/event/register?id=31&reset=1>



UK – CTA & Modernising MiDAS. The updating of MiDAS and its new approach was launched by CTA and Hampshire County Council last year (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uX7ldwGiSRo&t=3s>). From 2nd January, provision of MiDAS is to follow the new process, and delivery organisations should note four key areas of change relating to:

-) Administration, including Purchasing and Allocating Learner Passes & Updating results;
-) Individual Practical Session and introduced an additional part of the practical course;
-) Online theory course - new online course will help to achieve that by improving standardisation and ensuring that drivers are receiving the most up to date information;

J) Costs - As part of the new MiDAS, there will be a cost of £40 per driver (or £32 for drivers from your own organisation).

<https://ctauk.org/training/what-do-i-need-to-know-to-deliver-midas/> and <https://ctauk.org/modernising-midas-insights-from-dats-and-their-vision-for-the-future/>

England – CTA Mapping England Survey. Nick Mills writes: “If you are a Community Transport organisation in England, whether you use minibuses to support other activities, or you run a community car scheme, we want to hear from you! We need your help to compile a comprehensive view of Community Transport in England: one that highlights the strength and diversity of the sector for policy makers and funders. Your organisation doesn’t need to be a CTA member to complete the survey, just be involved in delivering Community Transport.

At the end of the survey, non-profit organisations can enter a prize draw to receive one of four £250 donations for your organisation! Access the Mapping England Survey Here



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YDNQT63>. Should you have any questions or need further details, please feel free to reach out to nick@ctauk.org or contact us directly at 0161 351 1475.”

East Sussex – Dame Esther Rantzen Minibus at CT Sussex.



Community Transport Sussex has named a minibus after journalist and television presenter Dame Esther Rantzen, in recognition of her support of Travel Buddy initiative. CEO of CT Sussex Matt Roberts commented: “We are absolutely delighted to have the incredible Dame Esther Rantzen lend her support to Community Transport Sussex. Esther’s commitment to ending social isolation and loneliness, particularly through initiatives like The Silver

Line, resonates deeply with our mission and that is why we wanted to make such a unique gesture of appreciation.” Dame Esther has responded, saying “I am very touched by the honour of having a minibus named after me, but I know that the real honour lies in the work that the team do every day, in the lives they touch, and in the happiness they bring to those who ride on this minibus. To the passengers who will travel on this minibus, remember that you are not alone. And to the wonderful team at Community Transport Sussex,

please know that you have my admiration, respect, and heartfelt thanks for making such a difference in the lives of our community."

<https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/news/people/community-transport-sussex-to-honour-dame-esther-rantzen-in-haywards-heath-with-special-minibus-naming-ceremony-supported-by-age-uk-4492467>

The celebrity connections of Community Transport Sussex have also been highlighted by Marie Claire Macintosh in a profile of the organisation in Sussex Living: "Passionate about fostering connectivity, independence, and inclusivity, Community Transport Sussex is proud to have attracted support from leading actors including Miriam Margolyes, James Bolam, Sue Jameson and Jason Flemyng, as well as Dame Esther Rantzen. Every journey helps to bridge communities and ensure that people of Sussex travel through life with dignity and support. The value provided to local communities cannot be underestimated and it provides a lifeline for so many people."

<https://www.sussexliving.com/features/people/community-transport-sussex/>

West Sussex – 'Book-a-Bus' DRT is Extended. The free rural bus service 'Book-a-Bus' has now been launched in parts of Northern Chichester and Midhurst, operated by Community Transport Sussex. The new

operational area is called '96 Flex Zone' and uses the Ride Pingo App to process bookings (or via a call centre). It is part of West Sussex County Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan, and the free travel will be offered throughout February. Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Joy Dennis, said: "I am proud to share that 'Book-a-Bus' has had over 2,000



passengers carried since its launch. The flexibility this service provides helps keep our residents in rural areas connected with their communities and provide continued access to any essential and leisure services they may need." Matt Roberts of CT Sussex said: "We have seen how the local community values this flexible transport service and are very excited to expand the service to more passengers. As a charity transport provider, we see first-hand how vital it is for those in rural areas to keep connected with their communities."

<https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/news/people/parts-of-chichester-and-midhurst-to-benefit-from-free-book-a-bus-service-4498059> A busy month at CT Sussex is capped by the group being nominated at the Charity Film Awards 2024 for their film on Travel Buddies.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=779951634177552&set=a.559644072874977>

Northamptonshire – Volunteer Recruitment Drive for Healthcare Car Schemes. A campaign to recruit volunteers from all age groups as patient transport drivers in North Northamptonshire has been launched by North Northamptonshire Council's Local Area Partnership. It wishes to recruit volunteers aged between 18 and 80 who are able to provide a car for door-to-door patient transport. New volunteers are being sought by the following organisations:

-) Serve <https://serve.org.uk/> 01933 315555
-) Shire Community Services <https://shirecommunityservices.org.uk/> 01933 223 636
-) Volunteer Action Oundle <https://www.volunteeractionundle.org.uk/> 01832 275 433
-) Rushton Minibus <https://www.rushtonparishcouncil.org.uk/rushton-community-minibus/> 07850 236833
-) Corby Carpool 01933 223 636

<https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/news/recruitment-campaign-volunteer-patient-transport-drivers-launched-today>

Wales – Vale of Glamorgan Council Increases CT Fares. As part of a range of measures aimed at addressing a £7m budget shortfall, Vale of Glamorgan Council has proposed the following: "Greenlinks fares are also proposed to go up. The community transport scheme has four accessible minibuses, and two accessible cars. Fare costs are decided according to zones. Under the council's proposals, the cost of a zone one return fare would go up by 20p to £3.50; a zone two fare would go up by 60p to £5; and a zone three fare would go up by 50p to £6. The cost of a Greenlinks membership fee would go up by 50p to £6."

<https://nation.cymru/news/council-makes-plans-to-save-millions/>

Wales – Five Generations of a Family Get Together in Criccieth, Thanks to Local CT. With a combined age of 250, five female members of a family got together recently with the help of Gwynedd care group Meddyg Care and Barbara Bus North Wales. The occasion took place at Bryn Awelon in Criccieth, where 103-year-old Jane (Jini) was brought by Barbara Bus to visit her 77-year-old daughter Beti on the latter's birthday. Beti's daughter Sue, grand-daughter Olivia and 15 week old great-grand-daughter Sophie made up the party.

<https://newsfromwales.co.uk/meddyg-cares-criccieth-home-hosts-an-unforgettable-family-occasion/>



Wales – New Service Launched by Dolen Teifi in Cardigan.



Llandysul-based Dolen Teifi is one of the largest CT operators in Wales and is now launching a new pilot service to enable local people to access the Cardigan Integrated Care Centre. This follows a survey which indicated the difficulties people had in reaching the centre using public transport, a frustration also noted by local councillors. The new electric accessible bus - Bws Bro Bach – is being operated in partnership with The Friends of

Cardigan Community Health Care and 4CG, and will deploy volunteer drivers. Chair of Dolen Teifi Tom Cowcher said: "Anyone wishing to use the service should simply ring Dolen Teifi. This will be a seven-day-a-week service. We operate a 26-vehicle fleet and all our transport services rely purely on volunteer drivers. We want to thank the drivers that have already come forward to support the pilot. We are always keen to hear from new drivers so, if you or someone you know would like to become part of our growing volunteer team in the Cardigan area then please get in touch." Volunteers should contact Dolen Teifi on 01559 362 403 or send an email to info@dolenteifi.org.uk.

<https://www.tivysideadvertiser.co.uk/news/24081706.community-transport-help-cardigan-residents-access-centre/>

Wales – University Supports Llangattock CT Scheme.

Aberystwyth University's Transport and Health Integrated Research Network (THINK) has funded a Llangattock Community Council project to explore community electric buses and car share schemes. Kate Inglis of Llangattock CC said: This grant will be so useful, we are a small community council with limited funding. This grant means that we have the resources to carry out a survey and community engagement on the idea of a potential EV community shuttle bus and/or car share scheme. This could enable residents in outlying rural villages to access facilities in their nearest town, reduce car use and the need for expensive new car parks. In the current climate emergency, we need to explore better options for travelling rurally and to reduce emissions." The network is also supporting a project at the Bridges Centre in Monmouth to recruit volunteer drivers to strengthen a community car scheme.

<https://www.brecon-radnor.co.uk/news/llangattock-community-transport-project-gets-funding-boost-663595>

Wiltshire – Community Transport Funding Threat in Swindon

- Correction. An item in the previous issue (no.41) was misleading.

Evelyn Ryder, manager of Swindon Dial A Ride, has pointed out that the £182,000 funding under threat from Swindon Borough Council relates to the contract for door-to-door accessible transport awarded to AkCess. The Council has not in fact supported Swindon Dial A Ride since January 2020.

Greater London – Transport for London’s Dial-a-Ride is Defended by Mayor. A number of criticisms of TfL’s Dial-a-Ride were put to Sadiq Khan by Caroline Pidgeon at the London Assembly. She cited the decline in provision of vehicles, which have reduced by 63 per cent in between 2019 and 2023, and driver numbers down by 46%. A newly-introduced booking App was also criticised on the basis that many users did not use a smartphone, although the phone booking line was still available, albeit oversubscribed. “Mr Khan apologised to those who had received a poor service from Dial-a-Ride and said his team would investigate the examples listed by Ms Pidgeon. He agreed that for many users of the service, ‘the app isn’t the way forward...The Dial-a-Ride is a gold standard service. Over 35,000 Londoners have used the service. A small minority have received a poor service...” <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/dial-ride-tfl-london-sadiq-khan-caroline-pidgeon-app-booking-transport-minibus-b1133346.html> Also reported here: <https://walthamforestecho.co.uk/2024/01/19/dial-a-ride-performance-issues-blamed-on-teething-problems-with-new-app/> and <https://haringeycommunitypress.co.uk/2024/01/19/dial-a-ride-performance-issues-blamed-on-teething-problems-with-new-app/>

Devon – Mid-Devon Mobility & Swan Transport CTA Awards are Highlighted.

Winner in two categories in the CTA awards last year was Tiverton-based Mid-Devon Mobility, which has been speaking of its triumph in the local press. Jackie Hammond, volunteer co-ordinator, said: “We are tucked away in a corner of a multi-storey car park, but we have kept going, and kept growing, for over three decades thanks to being powered by the goodwill of our awesome team of volunteers...We are a local charity making a difference to local people offering a variety of accessible transport solutions. Our services are aimed at connecting communities, helping to increase the independence, mobility and peace of mind of older and disabled people and combating the problems of loneliness and isolation...We are so grateful to everyone who has helped to keep this organisation successfully operating for three decades and we are representing the goodwill of all people who support their own local community transport schemes. We were delighted to represent Devon and the South West and come back to Mid Devon, from Birmingham’s NEC, with three national awards.” <https://www.devonlive.com/news/devon-news/mid-devon-mobility-charity-scoops-9022620>

Meanwhile, Swan Transport’s CTA award for Innovation in Volunteering has also been celebrated. <https://www.mnrjournal.co.uk/news/outstanding-swan-transport-receive-innovation-in-volunteering-award-659497>.

Mid-Devon Mobility is currently seeking overnight parking facilities in Crediton: <https://www.creditoncourier.co.uk/news/parking-for-mid-devon-mobility-vehicles-sought-in-crediton-662079>

Scotland – April Start for ‘Fair Work First’ Policy. The Scottish Government has announced that all organisations receiving grants (including Network Support Grant) from Scottish Government departments or working under contract for Scottish authorities must adopt its ‘Fair Work First’ policy from 1st April. Chief among its provisions is the requirement for employees to be paid at least the Scottish Real Living Wage (currently £12 per hour). Organisations can apply for an ‘exception’ after applying a ‘proportionality test’ and then must be endorsed by their local authority on the basis that paying the higher rate would destabilise the organisation or business. An exception must be re-applied for annually with the expectation that organisations have ‘worked towards’ full compliance. Local authorities may themselves apply for exceptions for certain categories of workers. Guidance is contained here <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fair-work-first-guidance-2/>

Scotland – Glenfarg Community Bus profiled. Cited as one of “5 of the best things about Glenfarg”, the Community Bus is considered to be “the envy of other towns and villages. Communities across the country are eyeing its success and it’s being viewed as a model for public transport in many other rural areas”. Douglas Fraser said : “It started with the demise of our 55 bus service to Kinross. The community council came up with the idea of a community bus to fill the gap, and it’s all just taken off from there. We have five buses now, run by the Glenfarg Community Transport Group, with volunteers and paid drivers.

There’s an hourly service to Kinross. We do school pickups for Arngask Primary and pupils in places like Strathmiglo and Gateside who are outwith the catchment area for Kinross High School. And we do excursions to things like the V&A Dundee and Ikea.” <https://www.thecourier.co.uk/fp/news/perth-kinross/4861146/ask-a-local-things-to-do-in-glenfarg/>



Scotland – East Lothian Car Scheme Volunteer Success. Following an appeal in the local press, the Royal Voluntary Service car scheme that covers the rural areas of East Lothian has gained ten new volunteers. Tom Pearson, RVS service manager, said: “Off the back of the article in the Courier about our need for more volunteer drivers, we have had nine people register online for the role, which is an incredible response – the best response we have ever had to a call for more volunteers...A huge thanks to those who have registered, to the Courier for raising awareness and, as ever, to our team of volunteer drivers and our office team.” Potential volunteers are directed to <https://my.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/opportunities> for more information.

<https://www.eastlothiancourier.com/news/24042234.incredible-response-plea-volunteer-drivers/>

Scotland – Long Serving Wemyss Bay Car Scheme Driver Retires. After 28 years of providing journeys for medical appointments at Ardgowan Hospice in Inverclyde, Jim Gannon has stepped down. Jim started driving for the hospice after losing his wife Margaret to cancer. He has since devoted hours to driving people to hospitals all over the west of Scotland, including during Covid. Jim said assisting people "has helped me so much, I loved taking people all over the west coast, picking them up from different places. The hospice means such a lot to so many people. But I am 81 years old now and I just felt this was the right time to retire."

<https://www.greenocktelegraph.co.uk/news/24086867.volunteer-devoted-28-years-hospice-memory-wife/>

Germany – Profile of Bürgerbus Services. The need for community transport is prevalent in Germany, a country often perceived to have a more comprehensive public transport network than other parts of Europe. "A Bürgerbus is a public transport service which uses unpaid volunteers for most or all tasks, in particular for driving the vehicles. A Bürgerbus makes use of local resources and knowledge and close collaboration with other local stakeholders. The vehicles



used are minibuses or large passenger cars...There are today about 350 Bürgerbus services operating in Germany. The idea of using volunteers in public transport was first applied in Germany in 1985. Following initial success, the state of North-Rhine Westphalia (Nordrhein-Westfalen) decided to fund further pilot applications and then set up a framework of financial support. This has been maintained ever since and had a significant positive impact on the number of schemes - about half of all Bürgerbus services operate in North-Rhine Westphalia. In the state of Baden-Württemberg, about 60 "Bürgerbus" services and about 30 "Bürgerrufautos" (passenger cars providing a demand-responsive service) are operating at present. <https://www.zukunftsnetzwerk-oepnv.de/buergerbus-bw/volunteer-based-public-transport-services>

Somerset – Somer Valley Community Bus Operation Switches Operator. After 50 years of operation by the Midsomer Norton & Radstock Community Service Vehicle Trust, the Somer Valley Community Bus is now transferring the service to Age UK Bath & North East Somerset. Melvyn Johnson, chair of the trust, said: "Over the past 50

years, we have witnessed its impact and I am immensely proud of what we have achieved and this is down to an incredible bunch of dedicated volunteers. Knowing that Age UK Bath & North East Somerset will continue this legacy fills me with pride. May the next 50 years bring the same sense of community and support to future generations!" Age UK Bath & North East Somerset CEO Simon Allen said: "We are proud to take over the stewardship of this essential community bus service. Community transport like this is vital for ensuring that people stay connected and can fully engage in the richness of life. They not only benefit groups of individuals but also demonstrate the unwavering commitment and dedication of volunteers that run it to the wellbeing of our community." A grant from West of England Combined Authority assisted with the transition.

<https://www.somersetlive.co.uk/news/somerset-news/charity-steps-keep-indispensable-community-9041243>

Dorset – Car Schemes Under Pressure. Dorset councillor Derek Beer has raised his concerns about the unsustainable demands that are being placed on local volunteer car schemes. He reported to Dorset County Council’s People and Health Scrutiny committee that the “volunteer car schemes are not funded and they feel taken for granted, many are struggling now to meet demand. I know of organisers who say they cannot cope anymore and are wanting to throw in the towel...They do a great deal to help tackle social isolation, especially in rural areas...” The committee indicated no immediate plans to provide any financial support.

<https://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/24057186.voluntary-car-schemes-dorset-breaking-point/>

Northern Ireland – Down Armagh CT Recruiting Drivers. Due to a “significant new project”, Down Armagh Rural Transport Partnership is looking for new drivers, working from its Portadown base. They are seeking CPC D1 qualified drivers as well as part time and casual community drivers who have the D1 entitlement by test.

<https://www.dartpartnership.co.uk/workwithus>

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CONTACT KERRY/JULES (030) 3837700
 Email: kerry@dartpartnership.org.uk

www.dartpartnership.org.uk
jules@dartpartnership.org.uk



Northern Ireland – Fermanagh CT Starts New Transport to Health Service. As part of the substantial multi-operator project funded by Motability Foundation, Fermanagh Community Transport has launched the Home to Hospital, Health and Wellbeing Service which provides journeys to health appointments in the Western Trust area. Passengers will be able to access appointments at Altnagelvin Hospital and Omagh Hospital & Primary Care Complex among other locations.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=772452588258453&set=a.552036730300041>

Berkshire – New EV Minibus Launched in Downland Villages. Operated by the Downland Volunteer Group, the Handebus will serve residents of West Berkshire with a new fully accessible electric minibus offering a door-to-door facility. The vehicles has been funded by £50,000 from West Berkshire Council's Community Transport Capital Grant Fund and a number of other donors including The Greenham Trust, The Englefield Trust and the Miss Lawrence Trust in Kintbury. MP for Newbury Laura Farris said it was "an excellent community initiative" that would provide "essential support to residents in the Downland villages" and help foster "community cohesion whilst promoting greener transport options. I am very proud of all the local volunteers who have made this possible". Executive member for highways, housing and sustainable travel at West Berkshire Council, Denise Gaines said it was "heartening to see that a local community group is taking such bold steps to improve accessibility for those with mobility difficulties".

DOWNLAND
VOLUNTEER
GROUP



Volunteers with D1

entitlement are being sought

for the service. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c0jv0yv4gxgo>. West Berkshire Council has also recently launched a new demand-responsive rural service for the Downland area called Community Connect.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-berkshire-67987237>

Surrey – Woking CT Fears Door-to-door Service will Collapse Without Council Funding. The financial crisis at Woking Borough Council, and its threatened cuts to the funding of Woking Bustler, have again been highlighted in the media. The operator has issued the stark verdict that the service may well cease without the grant support it receives, currently £170,000 per year. Passengers have been emphasising how important Woking

Bustler is to their lives and wellbeing. Guy Padfield-Wilkins, CEO of Woking Community Transport, has been looking at various survival options. With a much-reduced council grant he would be forced to increase fares from £4.60 a journey to £26, which is not viable. He told the BBC that "the vast majority [of our users] are aged over 80, they are pensioners living purely on their pension, and they just will not be able to afford the cost that it would be to provide a transport service."



Woking Borough Council leader Ann-Marie Barker says she is expecting Woking CT to offer a solution: "We need them to come up with ideas, thoughts and suggestions that work". <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/jan/28/wed-be-stuck-without-it-elderly-woking-residents-face-loss-of-key-transport> and <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-surrey-68105202> Latest <https://www.wokingnewsandmail.co.uk/news/thousands-face-uncertain-future-as-woking-council-withdraws-funding-for-bus-service-663503>

Nottinghamshire – Community Bus Project Nominated for CIL Fund Share. West Bridgford residents are being asked by Rushcliffe Borough Council to select how £140,000 of Community Infrastructure Levy funds should be allocated. One of the nominated projects is a Community Minibus for St Pauls Wellbeing Hub. The project involves the "purchase of a 12/14 seat Community Bus for Wilford Hill and surrounding areas, along with minibus training for volunteers. It would allow attendees of the groups using St Pauls to more readily access the hub and broaden the offer of those groups beyond the local residents of Wilford Hill. It would seek to run as a community bus hire model, similar to Keyworth, on a donation basis." <https://westbridgfordwire.com/have-your-say-on-12-local-projects-that-could-received-a-share-of-140000-funding/>

Oxfordshire – Grants Programme Announced to Improve Community Transport. Oxfordshire County Council has awarded twelve CT operators a share of nearly £425,000 to help improve community transport in the county. Individual grants range from £700 to £135,000, and have been allocated to fund new vehicles, expand schemes, provide new services, offer administrative support and carry out surveys of potential passengers. The Council's Cabinet Member for Transport Management, Councillor Andrew Gant said: "Most of us take it for granted that we will be able to get to the places we need to. However, when people can't drive or access public transport,



they can be stranded. That's why Oxfordshire's active and diverse community transport sector is such a lifeline to so many people. From small volunteer car schemes to larger minibus schemes offering timetabled services, we are incredibly grateful to all those who work so hard to keep our residents mobile. We know these grants will make a big difference to all these organisations and help them to continue the fantastic work they are doing." The recipients are:

-) West Oxfordshire Community Transport;
-) Uffington, Baulking, Woolstone and adjacent area (UBW) Minibus;
-) The Villager Community Bus;
-) CAWNAC (Oxfordshire) Volunteer Driver Service;
-) Daybreak Oxford;
-) Readibus;
-) Shrivenham, Bourton, Watchfield and Longcot Parish Councils;
-) Wallingford Town Council;
-) Wantage & District Community Transport Community Interest Company (CIC);
-) Chinnor Village Centre;
-) First & Last Mile CIC; and
-) Watlington Parish Council.

<https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/grants-awarded-to-improve-community-transport/>

Yorkshire – East Riding CT is Seeking New Volunteers. For over 50 years Beverley Community Lift (BCL) has been offering travel for medical appointments, shopping trips, and leisure. Its aim has been to alleviate social isolation for older residents in the region. The project supports over 450 people aged 65 and over, and demand is increasing, prompting an appeal for new volunteers. BCL requires car and minibus drivers, passenger assistants and charity shop workers, to expand into under-served areas of the county (such as Brough, Welton, Elloughton and Willerby). BCL service user Mr Abbott, said: "I use the minibus service on a fortnightly basis to do my shopping and have also been transported by kind volunteers who use their own cars to take people like me to medical appointments. It's so much more than a lift, it's a sociable outing that gets me out and about..." Two upcoming volunteer events to provide more information:

-) Wednesday, February 28, 10am to 1pm, at Market Weighton Community Hall, and
-) Wednesday, March 6, 10am to 12.30pm, at Haltemprice Leisure Centre.



BCL Chief Executive Fiona Wales said: "With the rising cost of living a concern for elderly residents across the East Riding, Beverley Community Lift is dedicated to doing all it can to provide cost effective transport to essential and

social appointments. The heart of Beverley Community Lift lies in the collective effort of its volunteers. The impact of their work is evident in our ability to continue offering services that enhance the lives of local residents. Plans to engage volunteers in the wider region will enable us to widen our reach to fill the gap after other services have been forced to close." Potential volunteers can contact BCL on 01482 868082 for more information or visit [bclift.org.uk](https://www.hulldailymail.co.uk/news/local-news/community-transport-charity-lifeline-isolated-9078381) and find the charity on Facebook. <https://www.hulldailymail.co.uk/news/local-news/community-transport-charity-lifeline-isolated-9078381>

Yorkshire - Developing Financial Viability and Independence at Tadcaster Volunteer Cars and Services by Katrina Talbot (Trustee / Treasurer of TVCSA)

Background

Tadcaster Volunteer Cars and Services (TVCSA) started in 1991. It provides a community-based volunteer transport service in Tadcaster and surrounding area, which is situated midway between Leeds and York. Its beneficiaries are those who, by reason of age, ill health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage, cannot conveniently use other publically provided transport services. They work with North Yorkshire Council (NYC) as a community transport provider.

The core service is a car scheme which in 2022/23 involved 23 volunteer drivers in their own vehicles completing 4,118 passenger journeys. TVCSA also offers a community cafe, an affordable charity shop and interest groups such as knitting, jigsaws and other social meetings. They have also developed social food programmes and more advisory services to meet the growing needs of Tadcaster and the nearby villages.

The income for all activities was £130,000 for 2022/23, of which the community transport operating costs were in the order of £14,000 before expanding to run multiple schemes. TVCSA employs three Journey Administrators on a part-time job share, the only paid staff. There are a further 10 volunteers involved in the organisation and the management committee is completely based on volunteers offering their management skills.

How the service has been sustained

TVCSA was in the fortunate position of being provided with a small office free of charge, including heating and lighting, by a local benefactor. Therefore, the organisation accommodation was financially secure independently of any grant to provide services. In the early years the grant allowed us to 100% fund



expenditure associated with the service such as salary, insurance, etc. This arrangement has been influential in our business planning, in that it is now normal for us to consider the financing of the organisation itself separately to the financing of services provided by the organisation.

About 12 years ago, in common with many other Local Authorities, NYC had to make budgetary cuts in order to balance its books. There were several iterations of financing for community transport but it settled on a performance based model, whereupon our organisation received a grant based on an amount per journey plus a contribution towards administration. The effect was that community transport was only 66% grant funded.

To make Community Transport viable again, we introduced a passenger contribution towards the administration. This was brought in as a voluntary donation, which we initially set at an introductory suggested level of 50p. The level was incremented over a few years but it was found that it eventually affected journey numbers, which determined the maximum acceptable contribution that could be raised through this means. Each community will have its own acceptable value, depending on factors such as local affluence, alternative transport options and community support for the organisation. However, our experience was that this form of income is limited to raising no more than 33% of the overheads of administering community transport. In our case combination of grant funding and client contribution was sufficient to make community transport viable as a service provided it was not expected to contribute anything towards the underlying charity.



TVCSA could have continued on this basis but had little scope to develop the charity and no resilience to external changes. Then, around 8 years ago, the free office flooded to 1m deep and we were out of the office for a year while it was dried out and re-wired. The threat of the river flooding again meant it was no longer the advantage it seemed. It was the stimulus we needed to take the next step.... we rented a premises with bigger office space, space for a charity shop and meeting rooms to host social meetings. The charity suddenly had bigger overheads but an independent income to pay for it. It started out just about covering the bills but as it built regular customers, and then trade sales, the shop started funding the development of more services and a healthy reserve.

We continued to rent for five years, during which time the shop income proved the core charity organisation was financially viable. The pandemic came and went and although we operated differently and the income came in different

ways, it still came. However, by the end of the 5yr lease the rent was rising in line with high inflation. Based on financial modelling it became clear that renting was no longer the best option long term, so we found an alternative property available to buy and secured it with a commercial mortgage. The repayment interest is lower than the previous rent and reduces as the capital is paid down. The charity not only continues to be financially viable in its own right but will be debt free within ten years, after which the shop income can be used to support development of charitable objectives and services the community needs without necessarily being limited to grant funded contracts.

When assessing the viability of services, TVCSA model the cost of providing the service against the income from the service including the grant. The initial assessment must identify how the service can be delivered, including realistic manpower levels that will continue to be affordable as wages rise. However, TVCSA's assessment recognises that grants are usually set with little surplus beyond those required for the service and we are able to avoid loading the service with management overheads and accommodation. By operating all our services out of a financially independent charity that already funds the central costs, services such as Community Transport do not need to operate at a profit so as to contribute to organisational overheads. In our charity, Community Transport is viable because it is not being used to fix the overall viability of the organisation.

Rescuing Other Community Transport operations

North Yorkshire Council has several providers delivering Community Transport schemes, the majority of which have existed for many years. During the recent pandemic many of these schemes were forced to reduce services as government restrictions closed venues and prevented clients travelling.

NYC continued to keep schemes viable through the restrictions. However, having allowed their drivers to become accustomed to having free time for other interests and having allowed clients to find alternative transport arrangements many schemes have found it difficult to rebuild journey numbers back to their original levels. It will soon be two years since the last of the pandemic restrictions ended, so funding is returning to a



performance based model on each scheme's new reality. The new performance based arrangement included some increase to recognise the inflation in minimum wage to administer schemes but not enough to offset

significantly reduced journey numbers. Some providers who were already struggling financially were facing real reductions in their income.

At least one operator, Harrogate and District Community Action (HADCA), has now given notice that it will be unable to continue the schemes without additional funding. HADCA operated two schemes, one in Harrogate and another in Ripon and journey numbers in each almost halved during the pandemic from around 6,000 per scheme to around 3,500 per scheme. However, NYC is itself financially constrained and does not have money to subsidise schemes that are not viable. Instead they asked Tadcaster Volunteer Cars and Services if it would be able to run the schemes.

TVCSA had previous experience of running car schemes remotely from its offices and had assisted Selby AVS by operating the booking desk for over five years and separately assisted Easingwold through a staffing issue for three months (that turned into two years). Operating Community Transport remotely has its own problems, but TVCSA was able to use its experience to quickly establish arrangements to take over HADCA's operation with just two months' notice.

Most importantly for the financial viability of TVCSA, taking on these two additional car schemes fitted well in its financial model, namely the core charity being independently viable and the services covering their own costs.

-) The existing accommodation for Community Transport has space for additional administration desks and already had a telephone system that could accept the additional 2 local numbers for the booking lines.
-) The journey numbers on each scheme had reduced to be smaller to our own, but we knew from previous experience that the combined numbers were at a level that could be handled via a single administrator. This provides a significant saving over HADCA's previous arrangement.
-) The income for the combined journeys plus client contributions turns out to be slightly higher than required for a single administrator. This allows for sub-contracting the driver administration to local partner organisations and ensures a local community focus for the scheme which is vital.



We are still in the transition period but early indications are that this arrangement can cover its own costs. It does not have provide a profit to contribute to the charity overheads so under our model we consider it to be viable. <https://tvcsa.jimdofree.com/>

The logo consists of the letters 'T', 'A', and 'S' in a bold, serif font, each contained within a white rounded square. These three squares are arranged horizontally and separated by thin white vertical lines. The entire logo is set against a dark blue background.

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