



## Newsletter No.44

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

UK – DPTAC Coach PSVAR Position Grows to Community Transport & DRT. Route One reports: “Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) has underlined its call for all coaches to be in scope of PSVAR and added that minibuses used by community transport organisations and demand responsive transport (DRT) services should do the same...On community transport minibuses, DPTAC acknowledges that the sector has long embraced accessibility ‘and is seen as wanting to meet the needs of others with mobility impairments.’

However, the Committee puts forward that it is ‘not clear how well [community transport operators] deal with hidden impairments...Consequently, we believe that PSVAR should apply to the minibus type vehicles they use. ‘Similarly, DPTAC notes that DRT services already accommodate wheelchair users, although not necessarily in all vehicles used. But it adds that there is ‘no evidence’ that DRT providers ‘have considered other accessibility features. “Because of that, and an expected greater future role for DRT, the Committee believes that it is ‘vital’ for vehicles used on those services to fall within scope of PSVAR.” <https://www.route-one.net/news/dptac-coach-psvar-position-grows-to-community-transport-drt/>



UK – CTA Urges Next Government to Prioritize Community Transport to Protect NHS Future. Community Transport Association (CTA) is calling for the next UK government to utilise community solutions in a hard-hitting manifesto on the state of accessible transport across the UK. The CTA manifesto, A Better Future for Transport: National Challenges, Community Solutions calls for a new and dynamic partnership between the

next UK government, CTA and the Community Transport sector to continue to fill the gaps left by a shrinking bus network; respond to an ageing population, protect the future of the NHS and social care; tackle climate change, reduce poverty, inequality and the cost of living crisis, and level up the nations and regions of the UK.

CTA Director for Scotland, David Kelly said: "Investing in community solutions is essential to build a more accessible, affordable, and attractive transport system with far-reaching benefits. "As we look towards the general election, it is vital the next UK Government fully values and invests in community transport. Working with communities is not only a pragmatic solution to alleviate pressures on our NHS and the social care system, but it is also the right thing to do to demonstrate our collective commitment to ensuring universal access and greater equality for generations to come."

Produced in collaboration with UK wide Community Transport operators and CTA members, the CTA Manifesto focuses on five key priorities based on the national challenges facing the UK:

- ) Modernising for Growth
- ) Improving Access to Health and Social Care
- ) Investing in Community Solutions
- ) Accelerating Community-led Climate Action
- ) Delivering a Fair Deal for Volunteers



CTA research found that trips to access health services are amongst the popular purposes for CT, to support people to get to GP surgeries, hospitals, hospices, vaccination centres and care homes. Jeff Zycinski, manager at Partnerships for Wellbeing in Inverness said: "The CTA Manifesto makes clear something that we at Partnerships for Wellbeing have long recognised; community transport is about so much more than getting people from A to B. It's about providing a service that allows people to live well for longer, that allows older and disabled adults to retain a level of independence and to continue living in their own homes and communities, postponing by many years the need for residential or nursing care. To that end it eases the financial burden on the NHS and council services and, should, therefore be the kind of support that is built into any health and wellbeing infrastructure plans by government and local authorities." [www.ctauk.org/manifesto2024/](http://www.ctauk.org/manifesto2024/) or get involved on social media using #CommunitySolutions.

## UK – CTA Updates

- J CTA Membership Update: Enhancements, New Offerings, and Benefits. Outcomes of the recent CTA membership review and the developments to be introduced to membership benefits.

<https://ctauk.org/cta-membership-update-enhancements-new-offerings-and-benefits/>

- J CTA Leads Coalition Calling for More Plugged-In Communities. CTA has assembled a diverse coalition of influential organisations to call on the Scottish Government to invest further in Community Transport's transition to zero-emission fleets.

<https://ctauk.org/cta-leads-coalition-calling-for-more-plugged-in-communities/>



## Hampshire – Threats to CT Funding Continue. Major Hampshire



CT operator Community First has claimed that Hampshire County Council's proposed funding cuts are a false economy. The operator could potentially lose £500k in grant support if the County reduces its CT support. Speaking for Community First Fabian Cook said: "We've done studies into the social value of our service which show we deliver £1m of indirect savings in healthcare, reducing social isolation, giving people access to

friendship and the community." Service user Jean Polly said: "This service is vital. To come by bus I'd have to cross two roads and - with my walker, because of how slow I am - I can't do it. It's my only time I can get out to the shops, it's my one time to leave my home in a week."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ce5ezpk6333o>

## Cornwall – Roseland CT Requires Volunteers to Operate New

Minibus. A new vehicle at Roseland Community Transport has resulted in service planning for "regular shopping and lunch trips and excursions around Cornwall." However, volunteers are being sought to assist with the service. Chair Julian German, said: "There is no



expectation of doing a certain amount of driving - an occasional trip would be great, and will help other people in our community. We are only a small committee, and any additional help is gratefully received - this could be filling

in grant forms, using social media, or whatever skill you think maybe useful to us." Grant support is being sought "to deliver a round-Roseland bus service one day a week. This will need a paid driver – again, expressions of interest are welcome. Contact Mary Symons at [admin@roselandct.org](mailto:admin@roselandct.org)." <https://www.voicenewspapers.co.uk/news/new-mini-bus-for-roseland-675553>

**Scotland – Funding for Community Buses in Renfrewshire**  
 £25,000 has been awarded to Renfrewshire Community Transport Group to create a sustainable business case to introduce community buses to Renfrewshire. The money has come from Renfrewshire Council's Sustainable Communities Fund. The CT group is due to produce a feasibility report. Deputy Convenor of Housing and Communities, Cllr Robert Innes, said: "I am really pleased to see the Renfrewshire Community Transport Group successfully applying to the Sustainable Communities Fund, projects like this are exactly what this investment in our community is for. For too long our bus services have been stripped back to the point that in some areas people are truly isolated because of public transport. With an ageing population in Renfrewshire this should definitely be a focus not just for now but for the future." Lesley Compston, of Renfrewshire Community Transport, said: "We are excited about the prospect of Renfrewshire to have a sustainable community transport system. We can now make progress with our plans and push on to establish a much-needed community bus service." <https://www.the-gazette.co.uk/news/24182487.making-community-buses-renfrewshire-reality-takes-step-forward/>

**Scotland – MiDAS DAT Training in Outer Hebrides.** Community Led Local Development (CLLD) in the Outer Hebrides reports: "Towards the end of March, a Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS) training course, which provides a nationally recognised standard for the assessment and training of minibus drivers, was delivered in Stornoway. As a result, representatives from Voluntary Action Barra & Vatersay, Cothrom, Scalpay Minibus and Third Sector Hebrides are now qualified to deliver training and assess individuals in their organisations and wider communities. A lack of MiDAS-trained individuals had previously been identified as an issue in a CLLD-funded baseline study into community transport in the Outer Hebrides. By covering course fees and offering the course locally, the costs and time commitment required from delegates, who would normally have to travel to the mainland for this 3-day course, were significantly reduced. The newly-qualified trainers are now among the first nationally to have been trained in the recently revised MiDAS syllabus. All attendees agreed that the course had been very useful and they were unanimous in their praise for their trainer,

Kenny. One stated: 'This was an excellent course. It was really informative and I enjoyed it loads. Kenny is clearly very knowledgeable and enjoys delivering the course.' Demonstrating that the learning was not one-sided, Kenny responded by saying: 'The delegates were very helpful in supporting me take my Gaelic vocabulary into almost double figures', concluding with 'tioraidh an-dràsta'. A special thanks goes to attendees from the Southern Isles and their employers for freeing up the time to attend the course."



<https://www.hebevents.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/EVENTS-218.pdf>

### Scotland – Outer Hebrides CT Funding Cuts.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar has announced a 55% funding cut which will significantly impact upon CT operators Bus Bharraigh (in Barra) and Tagsa Uibhist (in Uist). Following recent meetings the chair of Comhairle's transportation committee Uisdean Robertson said: "Obviously we are sympathetic and our officers have been asked to look at non-statutory funding options, so we hope something can be done". A number of other Western Isles CT services will also be affected. Operators of Bus Bharraigh, Voluntary Action Barra and Vatersay, received the following from the council: "The Community Transport budget has been under review as part of a number of savings the Comhairle are looking to achieve from non-statutory services. Following confirmation at full Council, the budget for Community Transport has been reduced from £182,000 to £73,354.35."

Eoin MacNeil, Chief Officer of Voluntary Action Barra and Vatersay, said: "In real terms this means that the council will only allocate the Bus Bharraigh service £20k to support our islands' community transport needs. This will have a direct and immediate effect on the level of service provision we will be able to offer. Our community transport service also employs around seven local people who rely on this employment. Bus Bharraigh offers a door to door service to meet a range of client needs including transport to Garadh a' Bhàgh a' Tuath, Cobhair Bharraigh Adult services and provision for youth club and café when requested. It also provides pensioner clubs and shopping and access to the weekly men's club. It has five wheelchair accessible vehicles." Tagsa Uibhist said: "With cuts to funding being announced recently, Tagsa will be fighting to keep this service fully funded and will be lobbying the Comhairle and councillors to keep this essential service going".

<https://www.stornowaygazette.co.uk/business/barra-and-uist-will-be-hit-by-community-bus-cuts-4586417>

## Scotland – CT Stalwart Retires in Badenoch and Strathspey.



A surprise party was held for Maggie Lawson MBE who is retiring as Development Manager after 25 years at Badenoch and Strathspey Community ConnXions. Over 100 well-wishers attended the party at Carrbridge's Landmark Forest Adventure Park. Guests included "many past and present volunteers, funders, supporters, trustees and staff. Officials from the Cairngorms National Park Authority, NHS Highland and

Highland Council were in attendance as well as regional Labour MSP Rhoda Grant and Nicola Mitchell, from the Community Transport Association." Maggie said: "I am feeling nervous and I know that I will miss so much of it especially helping people and our volunteers but after 25 years I think that it is good for someone who is young to come into the organisation with new ideas and new vision." <https://www.strathspey-herald.co.uk/news/badenoch-and-strathspey-bids-a-fond-farewell-to-connector-346534/>

## Scotland – New Car Club in Strontian to Enhance Local CT Service.

The communities of Acharacle, Ardgour, Morvern, Sunart and West Ardnamurchan are to benefit from the Urram Electric Car Club. "The club will support Urram's existing community transport service that takes residents to appointments which has increased its number of journeys in the last couple of years by more than 100 per cent." Urram chairman James Hilder said: "Widening the availability of Urram transport to include a car club was a natural progression to enable the community to make the most of the assets we have. As Urram continued to seek ways to improve health and wellbeing for all our residents, it became more and more evident that transport is a big hurdle for people who want to live in this beautiful place. Hopefully the car club will reduce some of these challenges, reducing the need for householders to own a car or, in some cases, a second car." <https://www.westcoasttoday.co.uk/news/strontian-charity-drives-community-transport-service-forward>

## Scotland – Durness Bus Plan for New Depot.

Nearby to the current base of the Durness Community Bus is a derelict building at Sangomore which the operator wishes to gain planning approval to use as a site for a new base. "The new design includes three large service bays which will be utilised for servicing and maintenance of vehicles. An office space next to the units will combine driver welfare facilities with a space for meetings. The firm currently runs a small fleet of minibuses and cars providing a 'diverse mixture of lifeline services' linking remote areas in the north and north-west of Sutherland to bigger towns such as Lochinver or Thurso, and south to Inverness. In the company's development proposal, Mr and Mrs Fuller of Durness Bus said: 'The spread out nature of a crofting community means that we are not too close to our neighbours and will not impact on their lives

too greatly. Indeed, we are just moving our operating centre 100m further along Sangomore and providing proper facilities that will enhance the site and remove an eyesore of a derelict fire damaged building that blights the community. We have already started to clear the site of years of rubbish and debris from old buildings and are eager to start the building process."

<https://www.northern-times.co.uk/news/north-west-community-transport-firm-seek-approval-to-knock-d-346359/>

Scotland - Black Isle Community Bus Service Set to be Replaced by Highland Council Alternative. The Ferintosh Wee Bus has ceased operating on the Black Isle. A temporary replacement is being provided by Highland Council's in-house bus service. Cllr Ken Gowans said: "Community Support and Information, Ross-shire (CSIR) have sadly made the difficult decision to withdraw from delivery of daytime journeys for the Ferintosh Wee Bus. The timetabled service will take passengers between Culbokie and Tore Services so they can connect to Stagecoach services travelling North and South along the A9. As this is a timetabled service, bookings are not required." <https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/black-isle-wee-bus-service-set-for-highland-council-replac-347508/>

Devon – Holsworthy CT Receives National Lottery Award.

Holsworthy Rural Community Transport has been awarded a National Lottery grant for a three-year project, including the purchase of a new minibus. A spokesperson from Holsworthy CT said: "Thanks go to players of the National Lottery for helping to achieve this. We provide subsidised minibus trips for essential shopping, social trips and places of interest, plus volunteer car journeys to take people to vital medical appointments."



<https://www.holsworthy-today.co.uk/news/community-bus-secures-funding-to-help-tackle-loneliness-671533>

Devon - Community Bus Service Picking up Last Passengers Operated by Torbay Communities, it has been announced that two OurBus Torbay scheduled services (the 61 and 65) will be withdrawn. Community Transport Coordinator, Kelly Bedoyan said: "It has been an absolute pleasure providing the 61 and 65 services. A big thank you needs to go out to all of our lovely passengers for supporting us and sticking by us even when we've not been able to run the services. An even bigger thank you has to go to all of the fantastic volunteer drivers, past and present, who have given up their time to drive the buses so that others could get out and about. We honestly couldn't have done it without each and every one of them, and they have certainly

been our biggest asset, often going above and beyond when passengers need it the most. We've learnt a lot over the past five years and are now looking forward to providing more day trips and other community transport initiatives". The services have passed to other operators.

<https://wearesouthdevon.com/community-bus-service-picking-up-last-passengers/>

**Wales - £1 Million Boost for Community Transport in Pembrokeshire.** The Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations (PACTO) has secured grant aid of almost £1m from the Motability Foundation to launch a three-year project to transform community transport in Pembrokeshire. The funding will provide for five wheelchair accessible cars and four wheelchair accessible minibuses, to replace and expand the community transport fleet and running costs for services. PACTO is formed from six individual CT operations. 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.
- ) support at least 500 passengers to access community transport services in Pembrokeshire for the first time.
- ) triple the number of passenger journeys by wheelchair accessible car over the course of three years.
- ) increase the number of passenger journeys on dial-a-ride services by 50% over the course of three years.
- ) 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.

Chair of PACTO Caroline Wilson 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://www.westerntelegraph.co.uk/news/24201482.pacto-grant-improve-community-transport-pembrokeshire/>. See also:

<https://www.westerntelegraph.co.uk/news/24233788.pacto-launches-pembrokeshire-community-transport-scheme/>

**Wales - Threat to Powys Car Scheme.** A car scheme operated by North Montgomeryshire Volunteer Bureau (NMVB) is struggling to recruit volunteer trustees to manage the service. Sharon Baines, manager of NMVB,



said: "Without our volunteer drivers some people would just not be able to get out or to stay living independently. Being a trustee is an interesting and varied role and doesn't take up a large amount of your time...Common sense and enthusiasm are the best attributes. There are opportunities to help with particular tasks such as admin, publicity, and attending events." Would-be volunteers should contact Ms Baines, either by email at [Northmontgomeryshirevolcentre@outlook.com](mailto:Northmontgomeryshirevolcentre@outlook.com) or by ringing 01938 554484. <https://www.countytimes.co.uk/news/24248975.powys-community-transport-scheme-danger-closing/>

### Northamptonshire – ABILITY Backs the CTA's Manifesto.

"ABILITY is the largest not for profit organisation that delivers bus services across the West Northants areas, is backing the Community Transport Association's (CTA) manifesto launch today. The demand for our bus services is growing at a phenomenal rate."

<https://www.banburyguardian.co.uk/news/opinion/a-better-future-for-transport-national-challenges-community-solutions-4560826>

### Lancashire – Volunteers are Sought for Lancaster Area Car Scheme.

A long-established Community Cars scheme serving Lancaster and district needs new volunteers. The service is operated by Preston Community Transport. Organisers say: "Although the scheme has operated in Lancaster for a long time, and our district has plenty of people in need of the service, there is a real lack of volunteers at the moment.

Anyone between 25 and 80 years of age, with a current, clean driving licence, and access to an appropriate vehicle, can volunteer as a driver. Over 80s are considered but a medical certificate may be required. All service users are in the same local area as the volunteer and trips are generally within a maximum of 20 miles of the pick up point."

If you are interested in finding out more about volunteering as a driver with Community Cars see Preston CT: <http://www.prestonct.org.uk/>



Yorkshire – Future CT Services Planned for Bridlington and Holderness Following Survey Findings. A recent CT survey has been conducted by East Yorkshire Community Transport (EYCT) and East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC). 424 people contributed to the survey of whom 59% said they "use Community Transport for medical and shopping, that 47% feel they needed more information about the service and 56% of respondents had felt isolated at least occasionally in the previous week." Survey findings will be used to plan future services.

Community Development Officer at EYCT Jane Evison said: "I am very grateful to ERYC for their help in producing the survey which has proved to be a useful exercise, confirming that our services can make a real difference to the quality of people's lives, and we will be using the information we have to try and reach even more people. We are already working on using social media and the media to try and reach more people with information about our services.

Since Covid and the cost-of-living crisis all the community transport groups have seen an increase in requests for the service to provide more day trips, these are proving to be an excellent way of bringing people together and address issues of loneliness. To be able to reach more people and provide more services we need more vehicles and more volunteer drivers, using the information the transport survey has given us we are now starting work to look for the funding needed to help more lonely people. We know our services can make a real difference to improve lives"

<https://bridlingtonecho.co.uk/community-transport-survey-plans-future-needs-for-bridlingtin-and-holderness/>

Suffolk – FACTS Applies to Continue its Use of Mobile Buildings in Car Park. Due to expiry of planning consent, Felixstowe Area Community Transport Service has requested that East Suffolk Council grants permission for the operator to continue its use of portacabins on the Garrison Lane car park in Felixstowe. In the application Robert Nice of FACTS said: "There is no change to the use to the area or additions to existing buildings previously agreed. The area houses two portakabins used for office and storage facilities for community transport services operated by FACTS." <https://www.ipswichstar.co.uk/news/24223049.facts-felixstowe-applied-east-suffolk-council/>



Bedfordshire – New Villager Minibus Hits the Road. Based in Sharnbrook, the Villager Bus has recently deployed a new £120,000 accessible minibus. The vehicle can carry up to 16 passengers, has space for a wheelchair and is easy to access. Volunteer driver Jos Daalhuizen said trips to places such as Olney in Buckinghamshire, Bedford, Milton Keynes and Rushden Lakes, in Northamptonshire, were "100% full. The fact the bus is now accessible has made a vast difference. People can just walk on with their shopping baskets, when before they had to go up three steps. We are now attracting new customers and the bus is really making a statement." The bus was funded with contributions from



Bedford Borough Council, The Harpur Trust, the Gale Family Charity Trust, Felmersham and Radwell Community Trust, The Wixamtree Trust, The Connolly Foundation and The Christopher HR Reeves Trust.  
<https://www.msn.com/en-za/news/world/new-120-000-community-bus-takes-to-the-road/ar-BB1IAAXy>

Hertfordshire – Bishop’s Stortford CT Receives Funding for Replacement Bus. Bishop’s Stortford Community Transport has been given a £10,000 grant from the town council’s Brazier Trust towards a secondhand bus. The group has already raised £27,000. The vehicle is to be deployed on the self-drive hire service, as well as a stand-in for the Stortford Shuttle when that bus is off the road. Cllr John Wyllie said: “It’s a very worthwhile charity and so I have no issues with giving them £10,000. Having driven some of the minibuses, I know some of them are coming to the end of their life.” <https://www.bishopsstortfordindependent.co.uk/news/10-000-grant-to-keep-bishops-stortford-community-transport-9359032/>

Worcestershire – New Malvern Community Bus Service. From Friday, May 3, Community Action Malvern & District is introducing a new bus service to run from Half Key Road and Malvern Vale area to the Retail Park every Friday. Chief Officer Kate Walton said: “Feedback from initial surveys, coupled with the introduction of the Worcestershire on Demand bus service, has highlighted areas with limited transport services where a community bus route would be a great solution. After consultation with local councillors and other parish representatives, we developed plans for a new bus route covering Malvern Vale. It is a ring and book service only - the number to book or make enquiries is 01684 892381 - and passengers must book by 12.30 the day before travel.” <https://www.malverngazette.co.uk/news/24256906.new-community-bus-service-launches-malvern/>



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