



## Newsletter No.47

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

Greater London – TfL Dial-a-Ride Criticised by Users. Users of Dial-a-Ride had already raised issues over the move to App-based booking and now passengers are still experiencing frustrations with the London service. Complaints of vehicles arriving late or not arriving at all, are still being raised. Dial-a-Ride's general manager, James Mead, reported that the service was said to be meeting more than 90% of customer trip requests and that more staff had been hired.

Some users are unhappy with the service, with advance requests being turned down due to lack of buses and drivers. "Within the last three months buses had failed to arrive on 3% of journeys, a TfL spokesperson said, and passengers were notified. There are now around half as many Dial-a Ride drivers as there were 10 years ago due to a fall in demand, the spokesperson said. TfL recruited 12 extra drivers last year, along with five more so far this year, and more staff to improve call waiting times."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c886wgpqe25o>. Also

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/dial-a-ride-tfl-london-elderly-transport-minibus-disabled-taxi-taxicard-age-uk-b1167511.html>

Greater London – Westway CT Supports Mental Health Week. Press release: "For National Mental Health Week (13 - 19 May) Westway CT had the chance to be part of the 'beautiful game' when Kensington & Chelsea's Minds United FC played in the Woking Wellbeing Cup at Woking FC Stadium, as part of the Mental Health League on 9 May. 18 players from Kensington & Chelsea got to play in several tournaments, and it was the power of community transport provided by Westway CT, that got them there. Minds United FC is a member of Westway CT and is the only community football club for young adults with mental health issues in Kensington & Chelsea. It was set up by Tarik Kaidi in 2019. Players are all on low incomes and travel is expensive, especially in London. Tarik points out 'As we're growing there is a fair bit of travel involved and we couldn't have realised that if it wasn't for

Westway CT. I drive the minibus which saves money because I have a Midas certificate, I've been booking a bus every month in the season to take the team to the game. With Westway CT we travel as a team, and this is a way to help our members who struggle with their mental health, who benefit from having travel organised for them, or struggle with travelling alone. Travelling together means no one misses out on the banter and enjoying the pre-game atmosphere - it's more inclusive.'



Deputy CEO Ryan Price says: 'We're working with hundreds of local groups and charities across Kensington & Chelsea. We are a powerful tool for promoting independence, self-empowerment and mutual help, and we're focussed on making this borough more inclusive. Transport is essential but it can feel out of reach, we can help because we're not for profit, community owned and user led, with no private shareholders- our transport helps people do more, and we couldn't be prouder to be part of such an amazing community.'

Westway CT has a fleet of accessible community minibuses, being a member organisation keeps transport low - cost and affordable. Tarik says, 'We can do more for the players with Westway CT, we can get to our games, go to events, tournaments, and when the women's team went to meet England player Jill Scott, Westway CT got us there.'" <https://westwayct.org.uk/member-focus-minds-united-fc-mh-awareness-week/>

Somerset – Nailsea CT Launches Two Electric Buses. Funded by a grant of £177,000 from Nailsea Town Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Nailsea and District Community Transport has added two new EV minibuses to its fleet. Vice chair of the Council James Tonkin said: "This initiative marks a significant step forward in improving the mobility and connectivity of our community, whilst supporting our environmental objectives to reduce carbon emissions. But the new buses are not just about getting from one place to another, they are about bringing people together, fostering inclusivity and ensuring that everyone, regardless of age or ability, has access to reliable and convenient greener transport. This project is a testament to what can be achieved when we work together with a shared vision of progress, environmental objectives, and community support. I would like to extend my thanks to everyone who has contributed to making these new electric buses a reality. Your hard work and dedication are very much appreciated and will have a lasting impact on our community." Chairman of Nailsea CT, Cameron Stewart said: "Last year, over 13,000 journeys were carried out with our fleet of diesel minibuses. You will appreciate the advantages that these two new electric minibuses will make to local air quality and noise pollution as well as cost savings to NDCT - a 'Not for Profit' Community Benefit Society, which is celebrating 30 years of service within the community, this year."

<https://www.northsomersettimes.co.uk/news/24415934.two-new-community-transport-buses-launched-nailsea/>

### Northern Ireland – Fermanagh CT Remains Under Threat.

Further cuts are threatening Fermanagh Community Transport, as manager Jason Donaghy explains: The proposed cuts would have an extremely adverse impact on the rural elderly and disabled here. Reduction in funding or an ending of financial support for the Rural Dial a Lift Door to Door Service would hit the most vulnerable hardest of all. We had hoped that this year would have seen a stabilisation and a modest increase in the budget to reflect our rising costs, rather than a

continued push downward by the Department for Infrastructure [DfI] on it, despite the evidence and the need on the ground suggesting that Rural Dial a Lift is needed more than ever. Fermanagh Community Transport plays a vital role in getting people to hospital and GP appointments, shops, and other essential facilities. The majority of these people cannot get access to or use conventional Translink services nor do they have access to a car. From



2023 to 2024, FCT delivered 27,529 trips. Without our service, many of our most vulnerable elderly and disabled within and across our rural community would be left 'imprisoned' within their own homes, shut off from participating and engaging in life which many others take for granted. We need to see a real shift in thinking, policy and funding within the DfI sooner rather than later."

<https://fermanaghherald.com/2024/06/fermanagh-community-transport-threatened-again/> Fermanagh CT is also in the news as part of the Connect Fermanagh project, further details here:  
<https://www.impartialreporter.com/news/24431152.tesco-grant-supports-lonely-fermanagh-social-events/>

**Northern Ireland – CTA Calls for £40m Taxi Spend to be Scrutinised.** Since 2019, £40m has been spent on health and social care journeys by taxi. Alliance Party member Kellie Armstrong has asked why more journeys have not been provided by voluntary sector providers. Noeleen Lynch, director of the Community Transport Association (CTA) for NI, said: "While we acknowledge the gaps in public transport infrastructure and the occasional necessity of taxis, we must scrutinise whether allocating £40m to taxi services is the most cost-effective use of Department of Health funding. Regrettably, community transport is excluded from the current tender process with the Health and Social Care Trusts. We believe community transport presents a solution to deliver accessible transport options in a cost-effective manner." A spokesperson for Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) added: "At NIAS, our primary objective is to ensure that patients receive timely, reliable, and safe transportation to their healthcare appointments. The substantial expenditure on taxi services reflects our commitment to meeting this need. However, we recognise the importance of exploring more cost-effective and sustainable solutions, especially in these challenging financial times."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c888nm7kkzgo>

### **Derbyshire – Moorlands Connect Service Under Threat.**

Operated by Ashbourne Community Transport, the Moorlands Connect service offers a DRT facility for the Moorlands region of the Peak District, making use of an App-based bookings facility.

The sustainability of the operation has been raised, however, and Ashbourne CT has announced that more support from the local community is required, both in terms of donations and increased patronage. Chair Pat Laughlin said "We provide multiple bus services across Derby and the Peak District with the goal of ensuring people across the county are able to travel from town to town with ease. Moorlands Connect is a life-changing and pioneering service and we know that it is invaluable to some people, particularly those who need to travel to work or school. It is also a social hub for some, who will hop on board and travel with the same people each day, giving a sense of community to those who are at risk of being cut off due to lack of transport."

The service is funded until October 2025, but continued and increased support from locals would be needed for any extended provision.

<https://www.derbytelegraph.co.uk/news/local-news/life-changing-peak-district-bus-9353281>

Hertfordshire – North Herts & Stevenage Community Transport Volunteer Recruitment Initiative. CVS North Herts & Stevenage' Community Transport has been seeking new volunteers and has run a Virtual Volunteer Fair in collaboration with four other agencies. Potential volunteers were able to join an online meeting and discuss a range of opportunities. During the past year the scheme has benefitted from 67 volunteer drivers, completed 4,963 bookings and covered more than 110,000 miles - donating 14,125 volunteer hours. A service user said: "I am so very grateful to be able to use the Community Transport service. I am very frail and have found all the Volunteers friendly, helpful and above all – very kind." Another user said: "The car pick-up is always on time and the drivers are always helpful as I have mobility issues. This service is first class."

Potential volunteers should contact on 01462 689402 or email

[transport@nhcvs.org.uk](mailto:transport@nhcvs.org.uk) <https://www.thecomet.net/news/24431629.hertfordshire-community-transport-service-seeks-volunteers/>

7 Volunteer Opportunities

VOLUNTEERS WEEK

**Volunteer Drivers Required**

The North Herts & Stevenage Community Transport service

Driving | Flexible | Meet People

Community transport

Flexible Location

2-6 Hours Per Week

GoVolHerts

Essex – Community 360 Volunteer Driver becomes Citizen of the Year. Jane McCausland has been volunteering as a driver for the Community360 service in Colchester, Chelmsford and Maldon. Now in recognition of her work she has been presented with the mayor's John Jowers Award for Outstanding Citizen of the Year. Jane said there are about 24 members who go for a pub lunch or to a garden centre or for a little bit of shopping. Jane said: "We're a victim of our success really because we have two full buses and so we're really running at capacity. That's why they'd like more volunteers because they're limited in their scope by the number of volunteers they've got." She said of the award: "It was quite nice because sometimes, you know, volunteering can feel a bit lonely, you know, because you're out doing your own thing. But they've got a good team in the office and that makes a difference because it is nice to feel that you're part of something." <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/colchester-citizen-shares-joy-community-110000150.html>

Kent – Thanet CT Closes. After 25 years in operation, Thanet Community Transport Association has decided to cease operations, and the last services ended on 28 June. The organisation has cited financial issues as

the main reasons for the decision. Manager Jayne Cribben has written to users saying: "Thanet Community Transport Association has been running for the past 25 years, carrying many passengers over Thanet and surrounding areas. We are extremely proud of all that we have accomplished in these glorious years and could not be more thankful to those who have believed in us and supported us over the 25 years. Unfortunately, due to the current financial climate, the running of Thanet Community Transport Association has been difficult, like the rest of us in the economy. As a regrettable outcome of this, we have to shut the company down." It is understood that Kent Coastal Volunteers – on 01304 367898 – is trying to step in if they can.

<https://theisleofthanetnews.com/2024/07/11/thanet-community-transport-association-shuts-down-after-25-years-in-service/>

Scotland – New Electric Bus in Dumfries and Galloway. Lack of a suitable charging facility has delayed the introduction of a new 17-seat EV by Glenkens Community Transport. Initially a software fault was not corrected due to the bus manufacturers going into administration. But Glenkens CT needed a suitable 25kW DC charger point for the eBus. Chairman Alan Smith said: "When the bus was delivered in October 2023 we could not use it. The reason for the delay was that the bus manufacturer went into administration in November. The council are now looking at sites which have the physical space for the bus and a DC (direct current) charging point. A more powerful charger is needed – it's a step up from the electric car ones. It is extremely frustrating. From our perspective we need a charger up here so we can use it." A spokesperson for Dumfries and Galloway Council said: "Dumfries and Galloway Council's transport and operations team has been supporting Glenkens Community Transport, and we have sourced funding that will help secure a charge point for the Glenkens electric bus."

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/local-news/electric-bus-finally-go-service-33105689>

Scotland – CT Winner at Scottish Transport Awards. The



Scottish Transport Awards are supported by the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, Network Rail, The Railway Industry Association and CPT Scotland and the 21<sup>st</sup> awards ceremony was held in Glasgow in 20 June. Best Bus Service Winner was Glenfarg Community Transport Group for its operation of the The 55 Bus. In the category Excellence in Transport Accessibility the winner was HI TRANS for Go-Hi and Motability Mobility Credit Pilot. Also commended in this category was Badenoch & Strathspey Community ConnXions.

<https://theedinburghreporter.co.uk/2024/06/big-wins-for-edinburgh-at-scottish-transport-awards/>

### Scotland – Caithness Vehicle Wind Farm Sponsorship.

Caithness Rural Transport has gained a sponsorship arrangement from Thistle Wind Partners for some running costs to be provided for an electric vehicle for an initial period of three years. Elaine Fraser, project coordinator for Caithness Rural Transport, said: "We are delighted to have one of our vehicles sponsored. Vehicle costs have been escalating year on year, so this support is very welcome to help keep the fleet running."

<https://www.johnogroat-journal.co.uk/news/wind-farm-sponsorship-for-caithness-community-transport-serv-354759/>

### Herefordshire – Hay Dial-a-Ride & Bingo Fundraiser. The Old

Railway Line Garden Centre's popular bingo night has raised almost £952 for Hay & District Dial-A-Ride, which is this year celebrating its 30th anniversary.

Old Railway Line events manager, Matthew Lewis said: "We are incredibly proud to support such a wonderful local charity as part of their 30th anniversary celebrations. The turnout for our bingo night was fantastic, and it's

heartwarming to see our community

come together for a great cause. Hay & District Dial-A-Ride plays a crucial role in our community, and we are delighted to contribute to their mission."

<https://www.brecon-radnor.co.uk/news/old-railway-line-garden-centre-raises-ps952-for-hay-district-dial-a-ride-701831>



Dorset – Axe Valley CT Service is Withdrawn. The Axe Valley Ring and Ride service has finally ceased operating in Dorset due to lack of funding after 23 years. It has recently been assisted by local man Alan Williams who had provided some funding. Ring and Ride is to continue its operation in East Devon including Uplyme and Lyme Regis. Local resident and user Sue Wilkinson said: "I will be very sad to see it go as it is a lifeline for so many people, and I have had some lovely trips with them over the last couple of years. I shall really miss it - it's such a shame, but I feared this would happen."

Chair of Ring and Ride Sandra Ward said: "The Axe Valley Ring and Ride service, with sadness, has had to withdraw from Dorset due to funding issues and without funding from Dorset Council, Axe Valley Ring and Ride is unable to continue its services. We are extremely sorry to take this course of action, but we have had no alternative. We tried so hard to keep the services going,

and we have loved the customers we have had throughout the years, but we could not go on any longer without financial support."

Dorset Community Transport has been offering an alternative service, and DCT manager Tim Christian commented: "We were saddened to hear of the loss of services provided by Axe Valley and West Dorset Ring and Ride. We have been approached by a variety of local stakeholders – and concerned passengers – to explore how we might help. Our team has evaluated how we could provide transport for Ring and Ride passengers – particularly where our current routes travel near to those affected. Wherever possible, we'll try to include these passengers on our existing routes to reduce the impact of Ring and Ride's closure. Sadly, we are not in a position to simply take over the full Ring and Ride network. We would urge anyone directly affected by the potential changes to Ring and Ride to contact us so we can see how we might help – either now or in the future."

<https://www.bridportnews.co.uk/news/24413173.axe-valley-ring-ride-announce-end-dorset-services/>



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