



Newsletter No.51

Edited by John Atkins (Principal Consultant). Published February 2025.

UK – DVSA Announces that New Return to Professional Driving Courses are Now Available. DVSA: “Reforms to Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) were passed by UK Parliament and came into force on 1 February 2025. One reform allows people whose Driver CPC has expired for at least 60 days, but no more than two years ago, to return to professional driving by undertaking a seven-hour return to driving course..

New courses are available: Completion of the return to driving course will allow drivers whose qualification has run out in the last two years to be able to return to driving with a National Driver CPC. They must then complete the remaining 28 hours of training within the next twelve months in order to receive a card with the remaining four year’s validity. The updated guidance is now available on <https://www.gov.uk/become-lorry-bus-driver> and the return to driving courses are available to book with <https://www.jaupt.org.uk/course-search?sortBy=distance&radius=50&type=location&order=distance>.

UK – Toyota EV Loan Scheme. Toyota GB has launched a new community programme to loan electric vehicles to various charities and educational institutions across the UK. For a two year period, qualifying organisations can have use of a Proace Verso Shuttle people carrier, in order for them to transition towards an electric fleet. 42 of the vehicles will placed on community loan. Toyota is also providing a £1,000 grant towards the purchase of a wall box charger. The first vehicles have been allocated to Surrey Wildlife Trust and Power Up (Nottingham), which promotes and enhances the physical and mental wellbeing of young people and adults including refugees, individuals with disabilities and marginalised groups, through sport and fitness.

<https://fleetworld.co.uk/toyota-opens-ev-loan-scheme-for-community-fleets/>



UK - CTA Updates

-) Community Building Session - Succession Planning Toolkit Launch: <https://ctauk.org/event/community-building-session-succession-planning-toolkit-launch>
-) Easy Fundraising for CT operators: <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/community-transport/>
-) Response to the Integrated National Transport Strategy (see also below) & roadshows: https://ctauk.org/civcrm/mailling/view?reset=1&id=368&cid=140461&cs=fcb25b8b09eb97e19de1816006e2ff1a_1737552926_336



UK - CTA – New Director of Operations & Head of Training. Former Director for Northern Ireland Noeleen Lynch has assumed a new role, as posted on Linked In: “I’m thrilled to have stepped into the role of CTA’s Director of Operations and Head of Training in December 2024, setting the stage for an exciting 2025. It’s an honour to take on this new challenge and work to support the incredible work of the CTA team and our members across the UK. As I begin this new chapter, I’m delighted

to leave the post of CTA’s Director of Northern Ireland in the exceptionally capable hands of Frances Campbell. Frances has already made a huge impact throughout 2024, leading on CTA’s State of the Sector and Mapping of NI Reports. A massive congratulations to Frances on taking up this role! With her deep research expertise and extensive experience in the community and voluntary sector, I have no doubt she will do an amazing job supporting our members in Northern Ireland, amplifying the voice of the sector, and championing its needs.



I want to take a moment to thank everyone who has supported me during my time as Director of Northern Ireland and as I transition into this new role. I'm excited to support our incredible staff team to embed and grow CTA's mission, vision, and values in everything we do."

UK – Steve Moore of Minibus Options RIP. It has been announced that Steve Moore of Minibus Options passed away on 26 January. Responding to a Linked In post by Steve Moore's son Fred James, TAS director John Taylor said: "I am really sorry to get this news which is a heartbreak for you, the family and staff, but also for the very many people and organisations, especially within community transport, to whom Steve freely gave his support over the years. Steve sits squarely in my select pantheon of individuals who helped the sector develop and who contributed significantly to raising the safety and operational standards for minibus use. He will be very sorely missed, not least for the honest way he approached challenges. My respects to Steve - he did a lot of good." Richard Armitage also added on Linked In: "When we were setting up the Community Transport Association in the 1980s, Steve Moore was an early supporter. He understood very clearly how important his 'Minibus Options' advert was in Community Transport Quarterly and his exhibition space at the Annual CT Event. When it became apparent that build standards needed to be established and raised, he did not flinch and got on with it. For me, he was a reliable, well-informed presence to whom I could turn for advice and support - and very much appreciated. Thanks, Steve."

UK – New Electric Minibus Launched in UK by Karsan. Innovative Turkey-based vehicle manufacturer Karsan has launched a right-hand drive variant on its "small city bus" the e-JEST. Designed for narrow streets, the low-floor bus has a range of 210 km and can accommodate up to 22 passengers.

<https://www.karsan.com/en/electric-bus>



UK – Changes to Definitions of SME Size. New regulations increasing company size thresholds and removing certain requirements from the Directors' Report will be effective from April 2025.

<https://www.icaew.com/insights/viewpoints-on-the-news/2024/dec-2024/uk-company-size-thresholds-to-increase-from-april-2025>

UK – Updated Guidance on Incorporating a Community Interest Company <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dos-and-donts-of-completing-an-application-to-incorporate-a-cic>

GB – Route One Reports on Permit Issue Trends. DfT began publishing weekly data on Office of the Traffic Commissioner permit issues from January 2024. Route One has commented that “The number of current Section 19 standard permits issued...fell between January 2024 and the same month in 2025, but permit volumes of Section 19 large bus and Section 22 authorisations rose over that period, data published by the TCs has shown. In mid-January 2024, there were 16,857 TC-issued Section 19 standard permits in circulation via 6,498 applications. As of the first day of 2025, those totals were 15,791 and 6,032 respectively. That represented a decline of 6.3% in the overall number although the following week’s figures showed a slight uptick. Those figures do not include Section 19 standard permits issued by designated bodies other than the TCs.” https://www.route-one.net/news/section-19-and-section-22-permit-number-show-change-in-2024/?utm_source=routeone&utm_campaign=4eea382110-ROUTEONE_DIGEST_2025_01_22&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_d67e651aef-99293085

England & Wales – Charity Commission Changes to The Charities (Annual Return) Regulations 2024. Various changes came into force 1 January 2025. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charity-commission-annual-returns-regulations-2024/the-charities-annual-return-regulations-2024>

England – Integrated National Transport Strategy: a Call for Ideas. The DfT is developing a strategy which will set the high-level direction for how transport should be designed, built and operated in England over the next ten years. It will set out a single national vision which will:

-) put people who use transport and their needs at its heart and
-) empower local leaders to deliver integrated transport solutions that meet the needs of their local communities...

To help it create the strategy, it is now asking people:

-) about their experience of transport in England
-) what it could do to make it better

It wants to hear from:

-) people who use any form of transport, including cars, vans, motorbikes, mopeds, trains, underground, metro, trams, buses, minibuses, coaches, bikes, e-bikes, walking or wheeling;
-) frontline transport workers – people who work in the transport industry and
-) companies and organisations that operate in the transport sector

Responses to this call for ideas will be considered in the drafting of the Integrated National Transport Strategy. <https://www.gov.uk/government/calls->

[for-evidence/integrated-national-transport-strategy-a-call-for-ideas/integrated-national-transport-strategy-a-call-for-ideas](#)

West Sussex – Hyde Community Bus Launched. A new bus service has been put into operation by a partnership between Hyde (Housing Association), Rivervale (vehicle retailers), and Community Transport Sussex. The Hyde Community Bus Project was launched in December



and "will address key barriers by providing a vital link to essential services, social activities, and activities to aid better mental health for residents of rural north Chichester." CEO of Community Transport Sussex Matt Roberts said "The Hyde Community Bus Project is a shining example of what can be achieved when we work together to meet local needs. By providing accessible transport, we are helping to break down barriers to mobility

and foster stronger, more connected communities. This launch marks the beginning of a journey that will empower residents to access essential services and engage in social opportunities."

<https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/news/transport/project-brings-essential-transportation-to-midhurst-and-beyond-4905338>

Warwickshire – VASA Celebrates 45 Years of Service. VASA has been offering community transport and support services in Stratford-upon-Avon for 45 years and has recently celebrated this landmark moment.

Kirsty Holder, VASA manager, said: "For over four decades, VASA has provided invaluable support through its services, especially the community transport scheme. This initiative continues to ensure that people in need have access to essential services such as healthcare, shopping, and social connections, helping them maintain their independence. The impact of this programme has been immense, particularly for VASA's elderly and vulnerable members, who rely on it as a lifeline."



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<https://leamingtonobserver.co.uk/news/vasa-celebrates-its-45th-anniversary-in-stratford-53037/#:~:text=A%20VITAL%20community%20organisation%20based,Street%20to%20mark%20the%20milestone.>

Wales – Minibus Appeal for Wrexham Wellbeing Hubs.

Funds are being raised by The Rainbow Foundation for a new minibus. The charity provides transport to wellbeing hubs in Penley, Chirk and Marchwiell. CEO of the Rainbow Foundation, Caroline Tudor-James, said: "As funding for public services is limited, we are seeing that it is the most vulnerable people in our communities who are most impacted. With diminishing transport links, they are becoming more and more isolated, living their lives in a permanent lockdown. This is why our community transport offer is so important as it allows the most vulnerable people in our communities to access services, providing a freedom and level of independence which would otherwise be out of reach." <https://www.leaderlive.co.uk/news/24855263.wrexham-charity-issues-urgent-minibus-appeal-elderly/>

Surrey – CT NEPTS Service is Curtailed in Frimley. Maidenhead-based CT operator People to Places has been forced to reduce its non-emergency patient transport service following Frimley Integrated Care Board opting to 'buy' fewer hours from the CT. The operator, which recently won a local Community Project of the Year 2024 Award, claims this will create uncertainty and barriers for passengers and put drivers at risk of having no work. The EMED Care Group has apparently been engaged by the Care Board to provide NEPTS services.

<https://www.windsorexpress.co.uk/news/health/199801/hospital-transport-changes-make-patients-worried-for-the-future.html?flip=true>

Norfolk – New Electric Vehicle for North Norfolk CT. With 25 years of valued operations behind it, North Norfolk Community Transport has now added its first zero-emission vehicle to the fleet, which is based in North Walsham. Chair Nigel Lloyd commented: "I wish to offer my sincere thanks to all the organisations that have helped us add a brand new vehicle to



our fleet. One of our strategic aims as a charity is to reduce the carbon footprint of our activities. I am therefore delighted that we have been able to replace a diesel-powered vehicle with a brand new zero emission vehicle, especially as we celebrate our 25th anniversary year of serving

communities in North Norfolk." <https://www.nnct.org.uk/news/news-release-nnct-electric-bus>

Shropshire - The Friendly Bus Receives Funding to Support Community Transport Services. A £7,000 grant has been awarded to Shropshire-based CT The Friendly Bus by the VINCI UK Foundation in support of its services in

Broseley, Much Wenlock and surrounding areas. The grant "will contribute to The Friendly Bus's 'Buy-a-Bus' campaign, which aims to purchase a fully accessible 16-seater minibus to meet the growing demand for its services. Currently, The Friendly Bus supports over 800 registered passengers, ensuring they can remain independent and socially connected." Chief Executive Officer of The Friendly Bus Marie Monk-Hawksworth commented:



"We are really grateful...for this grant. It has made a substantial contribution to our 'buy a bus' campaign, which hopes to replace two, possibly three of our old minibuses. Having driven to many clubs, social outings or shopping trips, they're now costing us vast amounts in breakdowns and repairs – leaving some of our passengers without any way of getting out and about when they are off the road."

<https://www.shropshirelive.com/news/2025/02/01/the-friendly-bus-receives-funding-to-support-community-transport-services/>

Essex – Community 360 Closes Colchester Hub. Essex CT operator Community 360 has temporarily closed its Colchester base for a few months. The organisation offers Shopmobility and voluntary sector support as well as community transport. Cris Huddleston, Chief Executive, said: "In recent months, Community360 has faced challenges that have prompted a serious and necessary re-evaluation of its business model, operations, and priorities. We believe that this review will result in positive long-term changes



for the organisation and the community we serve. As part of this transformation – and to ensure the long-term sustainability of one of our community's most valuable resources – we have made the difficult decision to temporarily close the community hub from February 1 until the end of spring."

<https://www.gazette-news.co.uk/news/24900372.colchester-community-hub-city-centre-shut-temporarily/>



Greater London – Community Transport Waltham Forest’s Big Reveal Event! Invitations have been circulated by Community Transport Waltham Forest for a Big Reveal Event on 25 March, which will be the culmination of its Heritage Lottery Funded project Charabancs and Cadillacs which took place in Newham. The event is described as “the celebration of the completion of the two-year Charabancs and Cadillac project...Our unique travel trunk will be unveiled before it sets off to destinations in Newham. You will be able to explore the trunk, meet some of our participants, makers and partners who have made this project possible...” <https://ctnewham.co.uk/charabancs-and-cadillacs/>

Somerset – Wivey Link Supports Restoration of Bus Service. Wivey Link CT has supported a campaign to restore a bus service between Wiveliscombe and Wellington, despite fears that its car service would suffer if buses again ran between the two towns. A Wivey Link spokesperson said: “Our view would be to support a Wivey-Wellington bus service. We think it is important for residents in both towns to have the flexibility of using Wivey Link or a bus service and do not consider the latter to be in competition with what we have to offer.” <https://www.wsfp.co.uk/news/wivey-link-in-favour-of-bringing-back-wiveliscombe-to-wellington-bus-service-761890>

Hertfordshire – Sawbobus Trials Route with Station Link. A two-week trial has been held to enable rail users to get to Sawbridgeworth station to meet a number of early morning London services, with late afternoon return runs. The bus is operated by Sawbridgeworth Town Council and the trial is designed to test demand and timings. The Sawbobus community transport scheme was set up in November 2009 by former town clerk Richard Bowran. It provides more than 20,000 passenger journeys a year. <https://www.bishopsstortfordindependent.co.uk/news/town-council-to-run-two-week-trial-for-sawbobus-commuter-ser-9402720/>

Northern Ireland – John O’Dowd Reflects on His First Year as Infrastructure Minister. After an uncertain time in the NI CT sector, Infrastructure Minister John O’Dowd has reiterated his support for CT in a statement following his twelve months in office: “I have ensured that public transport is affordable and I have protected concessionary fares. I have also made sure that the delivery of community transport, which is such a vital service for many, is protected by providing a 4.2% increase to support staff costs. Transport plans are taking shape with Eastern, Fermanagh and Omagh and the North West Transport plans at various stages of development. These will be important blueprints for transport planning to support our societal

needs into the future." <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/news/odowd-reflects-his-first-year-infrastructure-minister>

Dorset – End of Road for NORDCAT. Sturminster Newton-based CT operator North Dorset Community Accessible Transport (NORDCAT) has announced that it will close down from mid-February. It cites financial difficulties as the main reason and several members of staff (general manager, admin officer, four drivers) are now redundant. It is suggested that 100 current active users of its door-to-door service will be affected from a total of 800, as well as organisations who used its group transport service. Chairman Cllr Pauline Batstone said: "We bitterly regret the abrupt withdrawal of this service which has been a social lifeline to so many over the years. People have become friends with our staff and other passengers. There are other charities out there operating similar services and hopefully they may be able to move into the void left by NORDCAT." It would appear that the operator has not been able to survive the loss of several home to school contracts which supported its core CT services. In 2023 the Traffic Commissioner mounted an inquiry and concluded that NORDCAT did "not have the competence or capability" to maintain its vehicles after an inspection found a 76% MOT failure rate. Any residual assets are to go to the car scheme operated by Community



Connections. <https://www.msn.com/en-gb/money/other/community-transport-lifeline-axed-after-23-years/ar-AA1ymz6X> and <https://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/24905393.norcat-transport-dorset-stop-service-later-month/>

Devon – Dawlish CT Gains £500 Donation. A donation of £500 has been gifted to Dawlish CT and East Teignbridge Community Transport



Association from the Holcombe Gentlemen's Rugby Club, a group of sports fans who gather at the Castle Inn in Holcombe. The cash is to contribute to a fund a "replacement bespoke built car to take passengers to and from medical appointments". <https://www.dawlish-today.co.uk/news/gentlemen-support-transport-charity-762524>

Scotland - National Rural and Islands Mobility Plan (RIMP).



The draft plan has been developed by Scottish Rural and Islands Transport Community (SRITC) which says that “the RIMP project is inspired by the fact that Scotland does not have an integrated national plan for rural and island transport, and a recognition that the development and implementation of one will create better outcomes for the people who live in these communities. This 12 month project that runs from April 2024 to March 2025 and will produce interim and final reports that set out the framework for the development of a plan that is formally adopted by the Scottish Government.” RIMP is now at its Stage 4 phase (January to March 2025) which involves the “Development of Final Report and RIMP Framework for formal consultation...We are excited to

announce that the draft report summarising the findings from the first stage of the RIMP project is now available to review

(https://ruralmobility.scot/images/RIMP_Stage_1_Report_Final.pdf.) Feedback is welcomed as it will help to shape the final report as published for wider consultation. Please e-mail your feedback to sritc@ruralmobility.scot.”
<https://ruralmobility.scot/rural-and-islands-mobility-plan.html>

Scotland – Cash Boost for Kilbarchan Bus Service. A £10,000 funding boost has been awarded to Johnstone and Area Community Transport in Renfrewshire by the local council’s Economy and Regeneration Board.

The funds are to enhance a service for Kilbarchan residents to get to Johnstone, possibly extending into providing evening services. Councillor Andy Doig said: “Last year, along with other ward cllrs, I described John McBarron, the leading light behind the Johnstone and Area Community Transport bus initiative, as the hero of the hour. The big gap in bus transport .. is no evening bus service either in or out of Kilbarchan. This effectively means for non-car owners, and those on fixed



or low incomes, that they are essentially trapped in the village at night. I am hopeful that the £10K cash boost for John McBarron and his team, to recruit an additional driver, may mean that we are seeing the first steps to a night-time bus service for Kilbarchan.” <https://www.the-gazette.co.uk/news/24907538.councillor-backs-10k-boost-kilbarchan-bus-service/>

