



Newsletter No.52

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

UK – DVLA Announces New Tax Rates for Electric, Zero and Low Emission Vehicles.

Changes as follows:

- **Electric, zero or low emission cars registered on or after 1 April 2025.** You will need to pay the lowest first year rate of vehicle tax set at £10 from 1 April 2025. From the second tax payment onwards, you will pay the standard rate. This will be £195.
- **Electric, zero or low emission cars registered between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2025.** You will pay the standard rate. This will be £195.
- **Electric, zero or low emission cars registered between 1 March 2001 and 31 March 2017.** These vehicles will move to the first band that has a VED value. This will be £20.
- **Hybrid and alternatively fuelled vehicles (AFVs).** The £10 annual discount for hybrid and AFVs will be removed, and the rate you will pay will depend on when the vehicle was first registered. If the vehicle was:
 - registered before 1 April 2017 - this rate will depend on the vehicle's CO₂ emissions (check the current rates for these vehicles)
 - registered on or after 1 April 2017 - you will pay the standard rate (this will be £195)
- **Electric vans.** Most electric vans will move to the standard annual rate for light goods vehicles. Check the current rates for these vehicles.
- **Electric motorcycles and tricycles** will move to the annual rate for the smallest engine size. Check the current rates for these vehicles.
- **Additional rate (expensive car supplement).** New electric and zero emission vehicles registered on or after 1 April 2025 with the list price



exceeding £40,000 will attract the standard rate, plus the expensive car supplement for the first 5 years from the start of the second licence.

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKDVLA/bulletins/3d24f43>

UK - CTA Research Project: Community Transport - Empowering Disabled Children and Young People to Travel.

CTA has announced it will be leading an exciting new research project, 'Creating connections: Reimagining inclusive transport for disabled children and young people', funded by the **Motability Foundation**. The project will explore how CT can overcome barriers to travel for disabled children and young people. CTA: "Our overarching aim is to provide solutions in the form of guidance to charities, operators and stakeholders that enables wider transport options for disabled children and young people. CTA Chief Executive **Victoria Armstrong** said: 'We are extremely proud to be undertaking this important research. After exploring the transport needs of disabled children and young people, we will work with Community Transport Operators to understand how our sector can help deliver the transport services these children and young people need'. This project will provide important evidence on the transport needs of disabled children and young people, collected and co-produced in close collaboration with passengers and their families, potential passengers, disability charities, Community Transport operators and statutory stakeholders.



"Our research will expand the limited evidence base on the transport needs of disabled children and young people, focusing on how Community Transport operators currently meet or could meet these needs. The findings of this research will be used to co-produce a suite of good practice guides, case studies and training resources for the sector, outlining the findings of the research together with guidance for

providing Community Transport for disabled children and young people."

<https://ctauk.org/news/press-release-community-transport-empowering-disabled-children-and-young-people-travel>

UK – Session on Volunteer Driving. A free online session is to be offered on 25 March by **Volunteer Now** in collaboration with **CTA**. "In the session, we will be introducing the landscape, explaining the trends and findings from latest research. We will also be speaking about insurance implications, mileage rates and issues around recruitment and retention of volunteers. Volunteer drivers can be involved in a range of different roles, such as transporting older people to appointments, transporting young people to school, collecting food from local supermarkets and more. Drivers contribute a significant number of hours, with 16% of formal volunteers 'providing transport

or driving'. We want to hear from you directly about the current challenges and good news stories, while allowing organisations to network, collaborate and learn from each other. If you currently involve volunteers as drivers, or may like to involve volunteers in these roles, we would love to see you at the session." Places can be booked here:

https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/course/volt-session-volunteer-driving-2/cid_0/

UK - CTA updates:

- **New Commercial Affiliates – TBC Conversions and North East Transport and Training (NETT)** have been added to the CTA's list of Commercial Affiliates. <https://ctauk.org/commercial-directory>
- **CTA Chief Executive joins Women in Bus and Coach** - WiBC has announced the appointment of CTA Chief Executive, **Victoria Armstrong** to its Board of Directors, Victoria said: "I am honoured to join the Board of Women in Bus and Coach. Accessibility is something that is incredibly important to me, and I look forward to working with the WiBC board to drive meaningful change and create a more inclusive industry."
<https://womeninbusandcoach.org.uk/news/news/women-in-bus-and-coach-welcomes-victoria-armstrong-and-laura-hadzik-to-its-board-of-directors/>
- **ConneCTing England Event - New Research Announced** - Team England is launching five Deep Dive research areas to tackle key challenges in community transport:
 - EVs in Community Transport
 - Group Hire Services
 - Volunteer Car
 - Community Bus Routes
 - Development, Partnerships & Franchising<https://ctauk.org/connecting-england-deep-dive>

East Sussex – Brighton & Hove CT Minibus Fire. A minibus belonging to **Brighton & Hove Community Transport** was badly damaged in an engine fire. The vehicle was on a roundabout on Carden Avenue near the A27 junction when the fire occurred. There were no casualties reported and no other vehicles were involved.

<https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/24925572.brighton-hove-community-transport-van-destroyed-fire/>

East Sussex – CT Sussex CT Manager takes on Fundraising Run. New **Just Giving** appeal as **Matt Roberts** joins the Brighton 10k run: "**Community Transport Sussex** (CTS) is dedicated to ensuring that no one is left behind due to a lack of transport. Every day, we help older people, those with disabilities, and individuals in rural areas stay connected to essential services, social activities, and loved ones. Our CEO is taking on the Brighton 10K to raise vital funds that will help keep our community transport services running. With rising costs and increasing demand, every donation will go

towards keeping our buses on the road, supporting vulnerable people across Sussex, and making sure they can lead independent and fulfilling lives. Your support means more people can access healthcare, do their shopping, meet friends, and maintain their independence. Every pound you donate makes a real difference—thank you for helping us keep our communities moving!"

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/brighton10k>

Wales – Grant Funding Programme is Extended. The UK's **Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF)** was introduced by the previous Government three years ago to replace **EU** funding and had been set to run until March 2025 but is being extended by 12 months. The fund has assisted the CT sector, specifically **Dolen Teifi**, which operates in Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire. The operator (which provided 20% match funding) secured £57,000 for a new 17-seat accessible minibus to operate in the Gwendraeth Valley. **Rod Bowen** of Dolen Teifi said "we've got an older population, and a lot of non-emergency hospital transport isn't able to cover rural areas...We have a lifelong legacy for the community."

https://uk.news.yahoo.com/future-millions-really-valuable-grants-120815922.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xILmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAABIJma_7KJO5ZNc_kHhUXJUqobBoImmfuBNcRrzBfBuL-WuNwn2vZYbJJMM6wXBf_PhC-LwxbQ5O4-Eqa1EVVRZe_fu3g-uHQJuLuzs6qZry163DebmaiBYyrrCSQF12I1ePPg-IGyUPKKM6226RxxSGoEsXe4HmwLu2WZa0nRO7

Wales – Dial-a-Ride Newtown Launches new EV Minibus. With the benefit of funding of £70,000 from the UK Government's **Levelling Up Fund** and **Cultivate**, **Dial-a-Ride Newtown** has put the a new electric minibus into service on this door to door and group travel service. Steve Evans, manager of the Dial-a-Ride said: "Newtown Dial-a-Ride is excited to be partnering with Cultivate on this joint project and hope that it is the first of many local collaborations. We, together with Cultivate, would like to thank and acknowledge the help and support of the following who were key in providing and distributing the funding: The Government's Levelling Up fund, **Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations**, **Powys County Council** and **Growing Mid Wales...**"

<https://www.countytimes.co.uk/news/24931004.newtown-dial-a-ride-service-introduce-electric-minibus/>

Wales – Flintshire Ring & Ride Imposes Tighter Controls. The **Ring & Ride** service provided by **Flintshire County Council** subsidises journeys for NHS appointments and is available to older and disabled residents, who pay a £10 membership and contribute 45p per mile. The journeys are provided by local private hire operators. Recent budget scrutiny has indicated that the £40k annual budget had overspent by 100% due to some ineligible journeys having been made. Flintshire Council has estimated a third of journeys were made for inappropriate purposes. Flintshire's Integrated

Transport Unit Manager **Helen Telford** commented that "Registered passengers have doubled since 2022 and it has become really popular. It was supposed to be a last resort for people who couldn't access other transport options. But it became so popular and people began using it for non-medical visits or visits to ineligible hospitals." The Council is now considering increasing costs to £25 annually, £2.50 for the first five miles and 50p per mile after that. It is also hoping to improve training to prevent ineligible journeys taking place. <https://www.leaderlive.co.uk/news/24927399.crackdown-flintshire-ring-ride-service-abuse-gains-approval/>

Wales – Pembrokeshire CTs Meet with MS. The **Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations (PACTO)** recently met



with Welsh Assembly member for Preseli Pembrokeshire **Paul Davies** to discuss aspects of CT and PACTO's ongoing work. Paul Davies commented that "PACTO do a fantastic job in helping people travel across Pembrokeshire and I'm pleased to have met the team and learnt more about their work. Travelling across Pembrokeshire is not without its challenges and so it was great to talk to the PACTO team about how they plan to

transform community travel across the county and build on their good work in our communities." <https://www.westerntelegraph.co.uk/news/24941485.ms-paul-davies-meets-pacto-discuss-transport/>

Wales – Beautiful Moment Man Breaks into Song on CT Bus

A video has captured "the heartwarming moment an elderly man spontaneously broke into song on a bus". **Living with Dementia** is a fundraising organisation that raises money for various dementia projects based in Crickhowell. It also runs **Caffi Croeso**, which is a dementia-friendly social café that takes place at Maes-y-Ffynnon, in Beaufort Street, Crickhowell, on the third Tuesday of every month. It organised a bus to bring guests to and from the event and among those to attend the latest session was 87-year-old **John Price** and his wife **Rose**. On the way home Mr Price, from Crickhowell, who was a member of the **Beaufort Male Voice Choir** until the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic, broke into song with a rendition of **On The Street Where You Live**, which first featured in the 1956 Broadway musical **My Fair Lady**. The organisation shared the poignant clip on its social media page and it has since been watched 15,000 times with many viewers praising Mr Price's vocals. Suzan Alderton, who funds and runs both the organisation and café together with her husband Mike Alderton, said: 'We've had so many positive comments. I've put it on Facebook and there's been 15,000 people watching it. I've had people ringing me – it's just so lovely to hear it. They were being taken home by Dial-a-Ride, with a few of their friends which came along, and John started singing which is lovely because it proves the afternoon means a

lot to everyone and puts them in a great mood. John and his wife have been coming to the café for months and they are lovely.'

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/beautiful-moment-man-breaks-song-162449844.html>

Wales – CTA Wales Conference 2025 Date Announced.

"CTA's **Our Wales** conference will take place in North Wales this year on 21st May. Team Wales are in the final stages of selecting a venue so please save the date in your calendars and we'll update you in the coming weeks."

Worcestershire – New Offer for Redditch Dial-a-Ride and Shopmobility Users.

Annual membership fees for users of Dial-a-Ride and Shopmobility have been agreed by **Redditch Borough Council**. Each service formerly required a separate £15 membership but a new combined package will enable a £22 membership for both services. Speaking for the Council, Coun Monica Stringfellow said: "I am delighted that we are in a position to continue to offer this discount



to our users. In a cost-of-living crisis every little helps." Coun Joe Baker, Redditch Borough Council leader, added: "This is a fantastic offering that we hope lots of residents take advantage of as well as people further afield to help get our town centre bustling again. We've already reduced the fares and introduced this offer as a fresh start and we will continue to do this for the next financial year." Dial a Ride charges for 25/26 will remain the same at £2.50 with a concessionary bus pass.

<http://redditchstandard.co.uk/news/offer-in-place-for-dial-a-ride-and-shopmobility-for-redditch-residents/>

Worcestershire – Wyre Forest CT Merger.

Two CT services in Wyre Forest have announced an amalgamation. **Wyre Forest Dial-A-Ride** and **Community Transport Wyre Forest** will now operate from Kidderminster as one entity named **Wyre Forest Community Transport** from 1 March. The two operators had been working closely since 2024, more recently sharing a chief officer **David Muggeridge**. Chair of the new board **Glen Collins** said: "We are delighted to announce the integration of our two organisations for the benefit of our several hundred passengers across Wyre Forest and to enhance our capacity to cope with ever-growing demand."



Our lifeline services to elderly and disabled people, as well as to those for whom there is a lack of adequate public transport, will not change but efficiency and effectiveness will be enhanced...It also provides the prospect for new areas of provision to be pursued and offers attractive funding opportunities to major funding bodies, along with significant scope for further local funding bids and fundraising." Wyre Forest Community Transport services include door-to-door affordable transport using minibuses and volunteers' own cars for medical and social appointments, outings, shopper services and three community bus services.

<https://www.kidderminstershuttle.co.uk/news/24969722.transport-charities-wyre-forest-gearing-major-change/>

Somerset – Portishead Car Scheme is Profiled. A talk was recently given in Portishead by **Sue Stone** about the **Portishead Porters** voluntary car scheme. "The Portishead Porters, an established group of volunteers, offer a vital service to the community. The charity, which has been running for over 25 years, provides a taxi service to and from various hospitals, surgeries and health centres for those unable to drive. The service operates using a network of more than 50 qualified and insured drivers, who use their own cars. Hospitals served by the Portishead Porters include Southmead Hospital, Emersons Green, Bristol Royal Infirmary, Bristol Eye Hospital, Bristol Dental Hospital, Weston General Hospital, Clevedon Cottage Hospital and various local health centres. The organisation is still actively recruiting more drivers to help maintain their user-friendly service." Sue has been seeking new volunteer drivers - contact 07990624928.

<https://www.northsomersettimes.co.uk/news/24924588.portishead-probus-club-hear-portishead-porters/>

Northern Ireland – Shortage of Wheelchair Taxis Puts Further Pressure on CT services. The comparative lack of wheelchair accessible taxis in Northern Ireland has recently been highlighted: There are 354 Class B (wheelchair accessible) taxis currently licensed in Northern Ireland, 200 of which are in the Belfast. This gives an overall average of 0.2 accessible vehicles per 1,000 residents (which is commensurate with England and Wales). There are 0.3 accessible vehicles per 1,000 residents in Belfast, and 0.1 accessible vehicles per 1,000 residents elsewhere.

This has had an impact on CT services, the main provider in Belfast being **Disability Action Transport Scheme. Nuala Toman** from Disability Action said: "...Over the last decade, the budget which we have been allocated to deliver accessible transport has been reduced...We could deliver an evening service and a weekend service, but unfortunately the level of resource which we receive at this point in time does not allow us to provide that service...So if people wanted to go to the cinema, do their shopping in the evening, we would have been able to provide that service... But that's not something that we can do at the current funding level...We believe that unfortunately, disabled people

are living under curfew and have been put in an impossible position of experiencing huge barriers to accessing public and private life because of the lack of provision of accessible transport. Now, there have been positive developments like the **Glider**, which is fully accessible but only available in the Belfast area. So when you go out into rural areas, you're really seeing people left behind, trapped and unable to socialise or make decisions about going out in the evening that should be just a part of life. There's no incentive for taxi drivers to provide wheelchair accessible taxis, and there are often increased costs both for the driver and the passenger." A spokesperson from the **Department for Infrastructure** said: "The department is aware of the decreasing number of Wheelchair Accessible Taxis and, in its role of the regulation of the Taxi industry, is committed to helping the taxi industry address the range of issues it faces..." <https://www.itv.com/news/utv/2025-02-18/living-under-a-curfew-calls-for-help-to-reduce-shortage-of-wheelchair-taxis>

Northern Ireland – CTA Mapping Report is Launched. On 25 February CTA held an event to launch its findings of a recent mapping project. CTA posted: "A huge thank you to everyone who joined us at Stormont...for the launch of our **Mapping Northern Ireland** report! This research marks the first update to the **State of the Sector** study since 2010, offering vital insights into the challenges and impact of Community Transport across Northern Ireland. Community Transport plays a crucial role in keeping people connected, and despite ongoing challenges, CTOs continue to go above and beyond for their passengers. We're grateful to everyone who contributed to this research and to **Dormant Assets NI** and **The National Lottery Community Fund** for making it possible." CTA also commented: "It was fantastic to see so many of our Northern Ireland members, MLAs, and key stakeholders come together to explore the report's findings and discuss what they mean for the future of Community Transport. The event was filled with insightful discussions, with operators on the frontline sharing their experiences and highlighting the challenges and opportunities ahead. The passion and dedication within the sector were clear, reinforcing the vital role of Community Transport in keeping people connected. A special thank you to **Kellie Armstrong** MLA for sponsoring the event and for her ongoing support of our sector..." The report is available here; <https://ctauk.org/sites/default/files/2025-02/Mapping%20Northern%20Ireland.pdf>



County Durham – Teesdale Bus appeals for Volunteers. A CT services operated by Middleton-in-Teesdale-based **Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Service (UTASS)** is appealing for volunteer drivers to maintain its local services which are provided by two minibuses. A current driver is 80-year-old **Alan Thompson** who first stepped in using his own car during the pandemic. Alan said "When Covid was over they asked if I'd like to volunteer as a mini-bus driver. It is something to do and I enjoy driving. " Admin officer **Claire Stoddart** coordinates the community bus project and organises two shopping trips each month. Claire said: "We go to Tindale once a month for more budget shopping and we tend to go somewhere else like a farm shop, garden centre or a Christmas market. Sometimes we put both buses on due to the popularity of some of the destinations. We have one



to Lanchester Garden Centre next and that is two buses. It is massively rewarding to bring people together for a day out and socialising. We couldn't do any of it without our volunteer drivers, so we are eternally grateful to them." Potential volunteers should call in at the Utass office on Chapel Row or ring Ms Stoddart on 01833 641010.

<https://teesdalemercury.co.uk/news/urgent-plea-for-volunteers-to-keep-community-bus-on-road/>

Leicestershire - Local CT to Benefit from 90 year-old's Glider Flight. 90 year-old **Barbara Brookes** of Lutterworth has turned a prize of a flight in a glider into a fund raising opportunity, one of the beneficiaries of which is **Lutterworth**



Community Transport (along with **Age Concern Lutterworth and District** and the **Academy for Dementia Research and Education**). Barbara said: "Since moving to Lutterworth with my late husband Keith, these three fantastic organisations have given me amazing support. Now it is my

90th birthday and I have been fortunate to have won the opportunity to experience a glider flight for the first time in the town Mayor's Christmas raffle. I would love to use this occasion to raise some much needed funds for the groups that have helped me so much."

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/barbara-brookes1>

Scotland – CTA Spring Events Announced.

- **“Meet The Movement - Tuesday 15th April - Edinburgh.** Our ‘Meet the Movement’ event is back, this time in Edinburgh! We’re bringing together sector operators, supporters, and partners to make new connections, build closer relationships, and more.
- **Meet The Minister with Jim Fairlie** - Tuesday 13th May - Online. CTA members are invited to this special meeting with Jim Fairlie MSP, Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity. Bring your questions and hear about the Minister’s vision for the future of community transport.
- **Show & Tell LEAP Car Club** - Tuesday 10th June - Online. Next up in our Show and Tell series is Renfrewshire based **Local Energy Action Plan (LEAP)**. Join us to hear about securing funding, choosing the right vehicles, navigating bureaucracy, managing rising insurance costs, and more.”
<https://ctauk.org/community-transport-events>



Scotland – Cabinet Secretary for Transport involved in CT discussions in Dumfries and Galloway. Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Transport **Fiona Hyslop** recently visited **Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway** where the importance of CT in the south of Scotland was highlighted. Also involved in the meeting were representatives from **Transport Scotland, SWestrans, South of Scotland Enterprise, Galloway Community Transport** and **Borders Community Action**. Discussions included the need for coordinated and people-focussed models of transport, its investment potential, and the importance of transport to tackling inequity, isolation, for economic development and to the community. Chair of the **Community Transport Strategic Development Group for Dumfries and Galloway, Alan Webb**, said: “We have a great range of operators across Dumfries and Galloway working every day to respond to local needs, but our collective partnership has ambitions to do more, especially given the challenges facing our area. We look forward to continued discussion on that potential...” <https://tfn.scot/news/potential-of-community-transport-highlighted-during-cabinet-secretary-visit>

Scotland - Badenoch and Strathspey CT Concert Fundraiser. Nethy Bridge Community Centre was recently host to an unusual two-day orchestral recital to raise funds for the **Badenoch & Strathspey Community ConnXions** which operates around Aviemore. The performance of the **Abirneithi Sinfonia** raised over £500 for the CT. CEO Donald Hall said: “We

really enjoyed attending the event and would like to pass on our sincere thanks to everyone involved. We raised vital funds towards our community minibus service thanks to generous donations from the audience." The event spanned a Saturday and Sunday and attracted sizable audiences, with over 80 packed into the centre on Sunday for Abirneithi Sinfonia's sixth annual concert which offered an eclectic mix of orchestral music. <https://www.strathspey-herald.co.uk/news/badenoch-and-strathspey-community-transport-boosted-by-virtu-376213/>



Following the recent influx of Lynx entering the National Park in search of employment and Mike the Macaque's sudden retirement, we are pleased to announce that Larry the Lynx has joined the team. Further proof of BSCX's commitment to equal opportunities!

West Yorkshire – Holbeck CT Profiled. “**Holbeck Together** offers a reliable and affordable community minibus service that caters to the needs of local residents. The minibus is used to help community members get out and about and stay as independent as possible. Weekly return trips to local shops (including visits to Morley Town Centre, Crossgates, or Owlcoates, Pudsey), offer older adults in the community the opportunity to do their shopping in a convenient, safe manner. The community transport service is also there to help those with mobility difficulties stay active. The transport service plays a vital role in ensuring that local people can participate in activities and outings that they might otherwise find difficult to attend – whether it’s popping out to



Holbeck Together’s activity programme at St Matthews or enjoying a day trip to the seaside.

Barry, a local Holbeck resident says: ‘I love the fact that Holbeck Together’s transport offer enables me as a wheelchair user to get out and about and enjoy group trips. It also means I can retain some independence by going on the weekly shopping trips...’”

<https://southleedslife.com/holbeck-togethers-community-transport-service-is-supporting-the-community/>

Devon - Communities Benefit from Legacy of Connecting You Project.

Devon County Council reports: “The legacy of a year-long pilot project which trialled a number of innovative transport schemes in Devon to help reduce loneliness is still being felt today. Devon County Council’s

Connecting You project was one of 12 across the country supported with the Department for Transport’s **Tackling Loneliness with Transport** (TLwT) funding in 2022. The initiative aimed to reduce loneliness in over-55’s and young people aged 16-24. In total, 25 organisations were involved in delivering the project to more than 1,850 people, who covered more than 10,000 miles. Almost £90,000 was also distributed to 14 local groups to trial projects. Delivery organisations included **Devon Communities Together**, **Wellmoor**, **Seachange** and **Devon in Sight**. **Grahame Flynn**, Chief Executive Officer at Devon in Sight, said: ‘We hope that our Bus Driver Disability Awareness Training will help remove barriers for people living with disabilities who wish to use public and community transport and ultimately help them reduce feelings of loneliness and social isolation.’ The Connecting You project repeatedly found that community transport, which is often seen as a ‘safety net’ due to mobility reasons or rurality, is highly valued in building confidence and as a useful stepping stone towards independent use of public transport.” <https://www.devon.gov.uk/news/communities-benefit-from-legacy-of-connecting-you-project/>



If you require any advice or support please contact us on 01772-204988 or email john.atkins@taspartnership.com