



Newsletter No.53

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

UK – CTA Announces Further Development of MiDAS

Training. Community Transport Association says: "As you know, last year we successfully launched the first phase of a new MiDAS offering. Since the launch, nearly 20,000 drivers have completed MiDAS with 94% stating they feel confident driving a minibus following the course and 97% saying that they would recommend MiDAS to a friend or colleague. Our focus has now turned to two other courses under the MiDAS umbrella; MiDAS Accessible and the Passenger Assistant Training Scheme (PATS). These courses focus on passenger support, equipping drivers and passenger assistants with essential skills to ensure that every passenger can travel with comfort and confidence. Our goal is to build on the success of MiDAS Standard, ensuring that the content, delivery model and quality assurance systems continue representing the gold standard. We have been working with Disabled People's Organisations, experts from across the sector, and consulting with key stakeholders to ensure that the new offering has the voices of disabled people at the centre, placing an emphasis empowering drivers and passenger assistants to feel confident in their roles." CTA has invited MiDAS Driver Assessors, Administrators or PATS Trainers to participate in a survey to capture experience of carrying passengers in wheelchairs here:

<https://ctauk.org/form/wtors-survey>.



Regarding PATS, Noeleen Lynch, CTA's Director of Operations and Head of Training writes "MiDAS, the Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme, which encompasses PATS (Passenger Assistant Training Scheme), has been the gold standard in passenger safety and care for 30 years. Nationally recognised, it provides drivers and passenger assistants with the essential skills to ensure safe, legal, and comfortable journeys. The Community Transport Association (CTA) and Hampshire County Council (HCC) are in the process of transforming PATS. We have previously sought views from commissioning organisations and are keen to engage further. We want to ensure that the transformed training, for launch later this year, is delivered in the most up to date, inclusive and beneficial way for passenger assistants, commissioning organisations, and most importantly, passengers. Your insights are invaluable in guiding the transformation of PATS to ensure it continues to meet your needs. Here is the link for the survey we would like you to complete: https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=V4hTJhK6iU6OZPTKh6UQpbQ3ta_ON-dEqsOh2zdkVVJUNjZJT0dKN09EUzEzSE9NODRGS0pCRDNHRC4u&route=shorturl

Please feel free to circulate it within your network and note that the deadline for completion is 5pm Friday 2nd May. Any questions related to the transformation, or the survey please email training@ctauk.org. We appreciate your time and input—thank you for your support!"

UK – CTA Represents Community Transport at the Transport Committee. CTA's Director for England Caroline Whitney writes: "I had the privilege of representing the Community Transport Association members at the Transport Committee's ongoing inquiry, Buses Connecting Communities. The inquiry is investigating how areas have responded to bus service cuts,

particularly through Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) and community transport solutions. It was a valuable opportunity to highlight the vital role of community transport (CT) and ensure that the voices of our members were heard at the heart of government..."



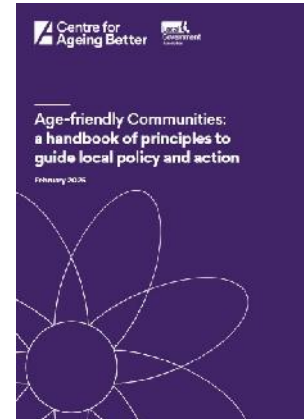
<https://ctauk.org/news/representing-community-transport-transport-committee>

UK – DVSA Announces Changes to Drivers' Hours rules. New regulations come into force on Monday 21 April which require changes to the drivers' hours rules for PSV operators. The mention of GB Domestic will affect CT groups.

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKDVSA/bulletins/3dc06f3>

UK - Centre for Ageing Better & Age-Friendly Transport.

Natalie Turner of the Centre for Ageing Better has written an article for TransportXtra in which she expresses a belief "that it is possible to make changes that will lead to benefits for older people, enabling them to engage in the wider community." However, she notes that "the absence of good public and community transport can lead to older people being restricted in the way that they lead their lives." A new publication has been issued titled Age-friendly Communities: a handbook of principles to guide local policy and action in which Nidderdale Plus Community Hub is cited as a case study of how CT services can benefit older people (downloadable here https://ageing-better.org.uk/sites/default/files/2025-02/Age_Friendly_Handbook_final.pdf.)



<https://www.transportxtra.com/publications/new-transit/news/77966/making-transport-more-age-friendly/>

UK – Aubin App offers 'Accessible Solutions for Disrupted Journeys'

A new travel App has been launched aimed at autistic travellers by Aubin: "Autism is a lifelong condition that affects how people experience the world. Many autistic individuals avoid public transport due to anxiety from unexpected changes, sensory overload, or difficulty processing information—especially in busy environments. This can have a negative impact on social and economic activities and leave many people feeling isolated. Aubin aims to support, not solve, these challenges by providing journey information and communication tools to help users feel more confident and make informed travel decisions. The idea came from Product Manager Corinna Smiles, inspired by her autistic son. She envisioned a travel app focused on user needs and preferences, not just speed. With her team, Aubin took shape and has continued to evolve ever since." Described as "an autism friendly travel companion" the App offers:

-] "New route planning technology - with personalised travel settings and stress calculating algorithm technology to help you choose the quietest or quickest route.
-] Station wayfinding - includes station facility information for all stations on the National Rail Network.
-] Digital autism card - to aid communication with transport staff and fellow-passengers.

-) Communication - offers grounding techniques and integrated text-to-speech functionality to help support you in overwhelming situations
-) Emergency calls - Aubin includes an emergency call function to contact a parent or friend quickly and easily."

It is planned that the App will also offer:

-) Route disruption re-planning
-) Live train data and disruption information
-) Integrated Ticketing
-) Detailed Station Information (including photos)
-) Crowding data for stations

<https://news.railbusinessdaily.com/aubin-app-aims-revolutionise-travel-for-neurodivergent-community/> and <https://aubin.app/>

UK – Motability Grants Programme Evaluation Published.

Motability Foundation writes: "Between April 2022 and March 2025, the Community Transport grant programme provided over £14 million in funding to 33 organisations across the UK. It was developed to make an immediate impact for disabled people, by awarding funding to develop, expand and improve community transport options. Funding could be used for staff or volunteer training, buying accessible vehicles, upscaling existing initiatives, increasing awareness of the services for potential passengers and influencing strategy and policy within the sector. The evaluation has been delivered by the New Philanthropy Capital (NPC), a social sector consultancy that supports charities, foundations and individuals to maximise social impact.



<https://www.motabilityfoundation.org.uk/news/evaluation-of-our-community-transport-grant-programme/>

Scotland – Two New Vehicles for HcL Transport. Edinburgh and Lothian-based CT operator HcL has recently taken delivery of two new 16 seater, 22 capacity EVM Cityline buses that will expand its growing fleet. An HcL spokesperson said: "Both buses will support our two community bus services. One will be used on our 69-bus route in Edinburgh and the other our 2A bus route in West Lothian...We have been delivering a local bus service in West Lothian Broxburn area between August 2023 and August 2024 - 37,590 passengers travelled with HcL with 33,300 trips using concessionary travel passes. This service links the public and the people with mobility challenges from residential areas with key services on main streets including shops and health and personal care outlets. It also supports users to connect to existing public transport services in these areas for forward travel."

<https://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/business/are-we-seeing-double-two-brand-new-16-seater-adapted-buses-arrive-at-the-hcl-community-transport-depot-5071374>

Scotland – £100k Rural Support Package for Banff and Troup to include Community Transport.

Aberdeenshire Council release:

"A new pilot project will be launched this week aimed at providing access to transport and crisis support for communities in north-west Aberdeenshire.

Banffshire Partnership Ltd (BPL) will coordinate and deliver the two-year 'Just Ask Boyndie' initiative which is being primarily funded through a £100,000 grant from Aberdeenshire Council's Banff and Buchan Rural Poverty Fund.

It comes in response to a reported increase in demand for crisis support across the Banff and Buchan area and limited public transport options between rural settlements...Focussing specifically on the two council wards of Banff and District and Troup, Just Ask Boyndie will see the creation of a one-stop-shop for crisis and welfare support, providing food, toiletries, bedding and clothing for those in need. The project referral service will be demand-led by those living in communities, with Banffshire Partnership Ltd coordinating and meeting the need through a network of third and public sector partners, while also signposting service users to specialist welfare and financial support. The second strand of the project will see provision of community transport services to enable individuals to access welfare, training, upskilling and social connectivity appointments."

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/news/2025/mar/just-ask-boyndie-to-provide-access-to-transport-and-crisis-support>



Scotland – Community Bus Proposed for Barrhead. A campaign is underway to launch a new community bus service to replace a former "lifeline" service, the 52 circular which was withdrawn by McGill's nearly two years ago. The community-led Better Buses Barrhead campaign group is launching a community survey and consultation on a proposed route. Speaking for the group Rena McGuire said: "Our report 'We Need Our Bus!' highlighted the devastating effects of losing local bus services on local people and the need to take action. What became clear from our meetings was that the best option is to try to create a community-owned bus service." To find out more about the group visit their Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/people/Better-Buses-Barrhead/61567130143271/?_rdr or email betterbusesbarrhead@gmail.com. The next meeting of the group is at 10am on the April 17 at Dunterlie Resource Centre.

<https://www.barrheadnews.com/news/25074982.plans-establish-community-owned-bus-service-barrhead/>

Scotland – CTA Team Announces 'Exciting New Era'.

David Kelly writes: "I'm pleased to be taking on the role of Head of Policy and Campaigns, alongside my responsibilities as Scotland Director. I'm looking forward to getting stuck in to the big UK policy issues and



strengthening CTA as a voice for our members at the heart of Westminster and Whitehall, as we've done at Holyrood. I'm also proud that my fantastic colleagues Lara Henderson and Nicola Mitchell have been promoted to the role of Development Manager in recognition of their hard work and talents, with new responsibilities for supporting our local communities, policymakers and decisionmakers. I think we're a great team (and you could say I'm biased), but I'm not the only one! The icing on the cake to the start of 2025/26 has been the news that we've been shortlisted for a Scottish Transport Award for Excellence in Transport Accessibility for our Community Development programme."

https://www.linkedin.com/feed/?highlightedUpdateType=SHARED_BY_YOUR_NETWORK&highlightedUpdateUrn=urn%3Ali%3Aactivity%3A7315814034547638273

Derbyshire – Connex CT Service Loses Funding. Buxton-based Connex Community Support has received notice from Derbyshire County Council that it will lose its £16k support from March 31st for its social transport service which takes elderly and isolated people to hairdresser appointments or to clubs to meet friends. Connex has appealed for support, saying: "The people this service helps will not be able to afford an increased charge so we are calling on you to help us plug the funding gap. Here's how your donation can make a difference: £18 will cover three life-changing journeys for someone in need; £45 will support the daily operation of the service; and £115 will provide twenty journeys. We will be grateful for any donation so that we can keep vulnerable people connected, active, and independent. Last year, when Connex faced a similar challenge with our Readycall Befriending Service, your incredible generosity kept it going. We're hoping you can help again! Please consider donating or sharing this appeal with others who care about making a difference. Together, we can keep our community connected and ensure no one is left isolated or lonely."

<https://www.buxtonadvertiser.co.uk/news/people/lifeline-transport-service-in-buxton-under-threat-after-losing-dcc-funding-5012146> and

<https://connex.org.uk/help-us-keep-our-vital-social-transport-service-rolling/>

Hampshire – Funding Boost for Local Buses to Include Community-Based Initiatives. A £13m grant has been awarded to Hampshire County Council primarily to improve its bus service infrastructure under its 2025/2026 BSIP programme, some of which can be deployed within the community. HCC officer said: “We’re putting forward a pot of funding that allows communities, whether it is a parish council, a town council, communities groups or existing community transport operators, to come forward with proposals that we can receive and then fill those gaps themselves.” According to HCC’s committee report, there is a capital element that can be allocated (amongst other items) towards “community self-help innovation - capital (a contribution towards vehicle costs)” with an estimate of £150k. And revenue usage includes “community self-help innovation - revenue (Seed funding) and disability awareness initiatives” with an estimate of £150k + £75k.

<https://www.liphookherald.com/news/hampshire-county-council-receives-ps13m-funding-to-upgrade-local-bus-services-773193>

and <https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/s131426/1%202025-26%20BSIP%20Funding-2025-03-06-EMH2050%20Decision%20Day.pdf>

West Sussex – Local Removals Firm Supports CT Sussex.

Westmeston-based firm John Broomfield Removals has supported a number of charities over the years including Community Transport Sussex. The firm has supported a Bluebird Community Transport minibus which has been dedicated to John Broomfield. John’s wife Liz says “the family are delighted to have a minibus named after him with its dedicated lift for transporting those that are in wheelchairs, scooters and frames, John would have been so proud to be associated with transport for people with disabilities, something he and the family struggled

with when diagnosed with MND.” CEO of CT Sussex Matt Roberts said “having received a community award in 2024 it is fitting that a local person should be recognised and John’s name sitting proudly on one of our vehicles”.

Further details

michael@ctsussex.org.uk 07837 916087

<https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/community/mid-sussex-based-removals-firm-supports-community-transport-5036489>



Meanwhile Matt raised money for CT Sussex recently by completing the Brighton 10K with a personal best time of 1:19:58.

<https://www.facebook.com/CommunityTransportSussex/videos/1012545054174709>

Staffordshire – Cash Boost for Newcastle CT. Press release: "Wheelchair users and people with mobility difficulties in Newcastle are benefiting from a project thanks to a local voluntary group and funding from the county council. Newcastle Community Transport provides a wheelchair-friendly, door-to-door transport service covering Newcastle and the surrounding areas. The service helps people get to medical appointments, shopping trips and to attend support groups, day centres, churches, and social clubs. The charity has more than 120 regular customers and makes around 4,700 journeys per year. The project received £2,200 from Staffordshire County Council's Local Community Fund to help purchase a small wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) and help with the maintenance costs.

Barrie Swift, Chairperson of Newcastle Community Transport said: 'We're extremely grateful for the funding and I'd like to thank those councillors who contributed. The funding towards the smaller bus has made a huge difference to us in terms of being more accessible for our customers. This means we're able to get people closer to drop off points, which makes it easier for them. As a small local charity, which has been in existence for 50+ years, we rely heavily on volunteers to drive the buses. This smaller bus can also be driven by more volunteers and anyone interested in joining the charity as a volunteer should get in touch.' Victoria Wilson, Cabinet Member for Culture and Communities at Staffordshire County Council, said: 'Staffordshire has always had a vibrant voluntary and community sector, with hundreds of fantastic groups making a huge difference in their local communities. This is a wonderful community service that provides vital transport to those unable to easily access public transport and for those who do not have a car to enable them to get to essential appointments and to access other shopping or social activities. It's exactly the kind of project we aim to support and I'm pleased that our funding has been able to help the group in buying and maintaining the new smaller bus.'

John and Chris Yarwood from Newcastle are one couple who use the bus on a regular basis. Chris said: 'This really is a brilliant service and without it we'd be totally lost. John is a wheelchair user, so the new bus is perfect for getting us around the town for hospital and GP appointments. I'd like to thank Barry and the team and all the volunteer drivers who are great. I'd also urge other people with



Barry Swift, Chairman of Newcastle Community Transport, Chris and John Yarwood (customers) and Ernie, (Volunteer Driver).

a disability who struggle to get out and about to try the service for themselves.' Staffordshire County Council's Local Community Fund gives all county councillors an allocation of up to £2,500 to spend on community projects in their area..."

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Newsroom/Articles/2025/03-March/Council-funding-helps-charity-get-people-out-and-about.aspx>

Greater London - Community Transport Waltham Forest Trunk is on Tour! CTWF Release: "Community Transport Waltham Forest heritage project Charabancs and Cadillacs funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund has achieved a major milestone – the trunk is completed and has started its journey around Newham touring libraries, schools and community centres. The trunk and its collection are the culmination of a two year project working with elderly in Newham to collect travel and transport memories through Oral Histories and reminiscence sessions, a series of Heritage trips and Heritage lunches.



Cllr Sarah Ruiz Deputy Mayor of Newham said 'I have followed the progress on this project on Facebook for the last two years and it is the best reminiscence project I have seen.' In a community like Newham where generations of people from all corners of the globe have settled, we were keen to capture the untold stories of residents shaped by travel, transport and change, these are now housed in our collection in the trunk which features an interactive screen, and our unique collection of memorabilia collected during the project'.

During The Big Reveal - a special event in March at the Stratford Old Town Hall - the unique travel trunk and quilt were revealed and special guests and participants in the project had the first view of the travel trunk and its contents. The event was formally opened by Cllr Sarah Ruiz Deputy Mayor in Newham, a story trail gave attendees the opportunity to explore the project timeline, enjoy a meal together and explore both the trunk and the travel quilt. The project in its entirety is contained on our Charabancs and Cadillacs Website for all to enjoy www.charabancsandcadillacs.co.uk."

Lincolnshire – CT Consortium is Launched. Earlier this year, the Lincolnshire Community Transport Consortium was launched. The project reported: "Twelve community transport schemes travelled to Horncastle to discuss the formation of the Lincolnshire Community Transport Consortium, which will act as a support group for individual schemes to share ideas, and challenges they face. Our Community Transport project lead, Rachel

Gmajner, chaired the meeting and celebrated the invaluable contributions of community transport services to communities across Lincolnshire. The initial meeting set out the Terms of Reference and Membership for the Consortium, and engaged groups in discussion on the best practice standards to promote. Everyone enjoyed the opportunity to network and share advice!"

<https://lincscvp.org.uk/lincolnshire-community-transport-consortium-launch/>

North East Lincolnshire – Dial A Ride Carries Passenger after Two Years Confined to House. North East Lincolnshire Council news release: "An 84-year-old Dial A Ride driver has vowed to keep volunteering for as long so he can help the people who need it most. Frank Bemrose, from Grimsby, has been driving with the charity for eight years and has loved every moment. From taking children to and from school to helping get people out the house, life as a driver is never dull. Driving keeps Frank active, which he believes has helped him stay healthy for longer.

He said: 'I've been driving for eight years, and doing it five days a week for four. It's so rewarding and I enjoy helping the community, I look forward to it every day. My favourite part of the job is the people though. When my wife passed away 18 months ago, customers sent me so many letters and cards, they made friends with me as much as I did with them.' However, that isn't the only good thing about the job. 'The satisfaction I get from helping people is great too. I helped one woman who said she hadn't left the house in two years, but because of Dial A Ride she was able to. Something as simple as getting to the shops isn't possible without us for some people. They can't make it to the nearest bus stop and certainly can't carry any shopping home if they can. Additionally, it keeps me active and healthy. I could play golf or just do nothing, but this makes sure I'm busy and I'm helping people at the same time.'

To help more people in the community get out and about, Dial A Ride are asking for more drivers to volunteer. Frank said: 'We really want more people to help us with driving. Anyone can do it and it's a massive help to people in the community who rely on the service to get them out and about.' For more information about Dial A Ride, visit <https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/streets-travel-and-parking/travel-and-public-transport/dial-a-ride/>. Want to become a volunteer? Register your interest at TakePartNEL and see how you could make a difference. For more information, visit <https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/jobs-training-and-volunteering/volunteering/volunteering-opportunities/>." <https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/one-passenger-hadnt-left-the-house-in-two-years-before-using-dial-a-ride/>

Buckinghamshire – New Minibus Arrives at Chilterns Dial-a-Ride. The first electric minibus has been delivered to the Chilterns Dial-a-Ride (CDAR), following another new bus in October last year. Both vehicles were funded by donations from National Lottery Community Fund and

seven of the southern Buckinghamshire Council Community Boards. David Ouvry, chair of CDAR said: "With the addition of these two new minibuses, we now have a fleet of 10 minibuses, all of them with electric tail lifts and with plenty of room to accommodate today's modern wheelchairs. No less than half of our passengers are in wheelchairs and the electric tail lifts also allow step-free access for less mobile walkers."

<https://www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/news/25033473.chilterns-dial-a-ride-adds-new-minibuses-fleet/>

Worcestershire – New Car for Droitwich Spa CVS. The CT service operated by Droitwich CVS has taken delivery of a new car following support from councillor Kate Fellows who chose the charity as one of her civic beneficiaries for her year in the role during 2023/24). The balance was donated by Councillors Christine and Eric Bowden, who up until 2023 ran Droitwich Stroke Club. Further support was received by Avery Healthcare (Droitwich Mews Care Home), Platform Housing Group and Worcestershire Community Transport Consortium donated a sum from their small grants fund. CEO of Droitwich Spa CVS Tonia Enderbury BEM, said: "We have been raising money to purchase a newer vehicle as the other one was 11 years old.



We have been very lucky to have been supported in this by some local people and organisations. We are so grateful to be able to purchase a newer vehicle using these donations and we couldn't have done it without their support. We are very lucky to have such dedicated volunteers who help us to run the service and we are always looking for new volunteers." The new vehicle has prompted CVS to rebrand all its vehicles.

<https://droitwichstandard.co.uk/news/droitwich-cvs-expands-community-transport-fleet-thanks-to-generous-donors/>

Worcestershire - Wyre Forest CT Salutes Two Retiring Trustees. Following the recent merger of Dial-A-Ride and Community Transport Wyre Forest as Wyre Forest Community Transport, two trustees have stepped down. Wyre Forest CT posts: "Finally caught up with these two busy people - Rob Smith and Chris Perry - to present them with their well-deserved leaving gifts and cards from their fellow trustees as they have stepped down from the role. Rob was the longest serving trustee for Community



Transport Wyre Forest having joined in 2013 and served as chair for a number of years, and Chris joined in 2022. Massive thanks to both and they both wish us well in our new guise as WFCT, following the joining together of CTWF and Wyre Forest Dial-A-Ride."

<https://www.facebook.com/communitytransportwyreforest>

Gloucestershire – Lydney Dial-a-Ride Launches Travel Costs Fund.

Lydney Dial-a-Ride has launched a fund that will give eligible people greater opportunities to travel, as well as taking delivery of a new minibus. Manager Louise Currie said: "We've been fortunate enough to secure some funding through a poverty hurts campaign that looks at the cost of living crisis and how we can help. We have a small pot of money, which we've launched as our cost of living fund. People who are on low incomes will have a £40 credit into their Dial a Ride account, which they can use for the Dial a Ride door to door service and the voluntary car service. We're hoping that it gives a chance for people to try the service. We know how difficult it is sometimes to access travel within the area. Somebody may think that Dial-a-Ride isn't for them and it gives them a chance to give it a try. You don't have to be a certain age to use us – I think that's one of the biggest myths with Dial a Ride." Lydney Dial-a-Ride operates 15 minibuses and a car scheme.

<https://www.theforester.co.uk/news/fares-fair-as-transport-charity-passes-milestone-780923>

Nottinghamshire – Ashfield CT Misses out on Council Minibus Disposal.

Ashfield Community Transport, which operates as Our Centre is currently struggling to keep its ageing fleet of 12 minibuses on the road. It was recently aggrieved that Nottinghamshire County Council sold off to Milton Keynes many older vehicles which it would have valued. With seven of its fleet off the road with breakdowns, Our Centre is less than happy at missing out on the council sell-off. Angie Peppard from Our Centre said: "As a charity, we are constantly seeking funding to replace our minibuses, and we have repeatedly asked Nottinghamshire County Council to consider us when they replace their



vehicles. They never have. The youngest bus we have is eleven years old, and the oldest is eighteen...I am disgusted, angry, hurt, and emotional, but not surprised. How many times have they done this before, and why?" The council has undertaken to notify Our Centre about future vehicle sales and points out that it has provided £65,000 of funding over the past three years, including £20,000 for a new minibus.

<https://www.chad.co.uk/news/people/council-defends-selling-off-old-vehicles-despite-ashfield-transport-charity-feeling-overlooked-5045327>

Devon – Crediton Car Scheme is Seeking Volunteers as Two Drivers Retire. Two long-serving volunteers are stepping down from duties with MID Devon Mobility's car scheme after a combined 15 years of service.



Transport Co-Ordinator Sarah Holmes said: "Dawn Eldridge, a volunteer driver since June 2015, feels the time has come for her to hang up her keys, while Richard Meeds, who joined the charity in October 2019, is moving out of the area. Both Richard and Dawn have been part of Mid Devon Mobility's popular Community Car scheme, in which volunteers use their own cars to transport older or disabled people to medical or social appointments. These are often local to Crediton or in Exeter, but subject to volunteer ability we

sometimes go much further afield. So popular is the scheme that we occasionally have to tell passengers we are not able to help them. The loss of Richard and Dawn will be even more keenly felt. If there are any drivers who might be interested in giving some time, please do get in touch to find out more about how we operate." Potential volunteers are urged to contact Sarah at the Crediton Mid Devon Mobility office on 01363 773303 or email:

Sarah@middevonmobility.org.uk.

<https://www.creditoncourier.co.uk/news/could-you-become-a-volunteer-car-scheme-driver-777367>

Devon – Transport Frustrations in Holsworthy. Yahoo reports on the difficulties of public transport in Holsworthy: "Residents, workers and students who live in and around a leafy Devon town all seem to have a similar grievance with public transport. The Holsworthy area has five main bus routes that go no further than Barnstaple. And locals say they feel significantly 'cut off' from other areas of Devon as a result. Services run throughout the day to various areas, Devon County Council say, but locals don't feel they are regular or reliable enough. While Holsworthy is a smaller area in the South West, there are many residents who see the lack of public transport at 'unfriendly' hours as an 'impossible service'. Holsworthy Rural Community Transport is a small charity dedicated to helping the people of Holsworthy and the surrounding area of rural Devon. Their aim is to improve 'rurally isolated people's quality of life.' They cover a geographical pick up area of 175 square miles of rural road, with destinations including North Devon District Hospital, Derriford and the Royal Devon and Exeter as well as medical centres and dentist surgeries. A spokesperson said: 'Community transport is an absolutely vital lifeline to people in our community but is not provided by local councils and hence is left to charities like ours to deliver.'"

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/devon-locals-feel-cut-off-150000263.html>

Dorset – ‘Ambitious’ Bus Service Improvements Announced.
 With £3.3m of funding to implement its BSIP, Dorset County Council’s key projects for 2025/26 include a “New Community Transport Service: Launch of a pilot enhanced community transport provision, using an electric vehicle - a vital first step towards a zero-emission fleet.” This has been allocated revenue funding as well capital. Dorset’s BSIP commits to “Community and voluntary sector solutions - Working in partnership with the community and voluntary transport sectors we will develop the role of these services to enable essential journeys and unlock rural communities. The new core route contract model provides opportunities for community transport to feed passengers into hubs along the route. We will also investigate the potential of ‘Total Transport’ pilots.” <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/news/ambitious-bus-service-improvements-unveiled>

Yorkshire – Keighley Community Transport Praised by MP.

Following a visit to Keighley CT, local MP Robbie Moore said: "Keighley Community Transport is a fantastic organisation that makes an enormous difference to so many lives. Whether it's helping elderly residents stay independent, supporting community groups or ensuring that those with additional needs can get out and about, the work it does is truly outstanding – and it was fantastic to see this first-hand. We must do everything we can to support the organisation, and I urge anyone to come forward who can spare a bit of time to get involved."



<https://www.keighleynews.co.uk/news/25067000.keighley-service-praised-outstanding-work/>

Greater Manchester - TfGM Modernises Dial-a-Ride and DRT with Via.

Transport for Greater Manchester release: “TfGM is partnering with Via Transportation to help modernise its long-standing door-to-door transport services Ring & Ride and Local Link. The collaboration with the technology company signifies another step toward Greater Manchester’s bold vision for a fully integrated Bee Network that connects people to new opportunities, essential services and each other. Ring & Ride provides accessible, low-cost transport to disabled people and older people with walking difficulties in Greater Manchester, while Local Link offers a flexible minibus service for local journeys in parts of the city-



region where public transport services are limited. The upgraded transport services launched on 26th February, and ride bookings will now open on for customers. As a result, more than 850 passengers per day – primarily older people, disabled people, or those not well-connected to other transport routes – will enjoy a more convenient and flexible travel experience than ever before.

Key benefits of the upgraded Ring & Ride and Local Link services include:

-) New booking options: For the first time, passengers can book rides through an intuitive mobile app with real-time information and updates. Passengers can also still book through the call centre or web if preferred, ensuring inclusivity for all.
-) Smarter vehicle scheduling: Via's technology matches passengers travelling in the same direction into shared vehicles, reducing wait times and optimising routes.
-) Seamless integration: In the near future, TfGM and Via will integrate journeys with the broader Bee Network, ensuring convenient transfers and helping to service even more passengers efficiently.

Alison Chew, TfGM's Deputy Director of Bus, said: 'The Bee Network is committed to making public transport and active travel more inclusive and accessible for everyone in Greater Manchester, and both Ring & Ride and Local Link play a vital role in providing access to low-cost, accessible and flexible journeys by public transport.'" <https://news.tfgm.com/press-releases/f83e57cc-fd0c-4944-ac10-1a6858feb527/tfgm-partner-with-tech-company-via-to-revamp-ring-ride-and-local-link-services>

Northern Ireland - Mapping Community Transport Feature.

Coach and Bus Week writes: "Following on from his recent conversation with South Antrim Community Transport, Jonathan Welch takes a look at a new report which shows what the sector needs to move forwards in Northern Ireland...A few weeks ago, we spoke to Northern Irish operator South Antrim Community Transport about its vital role in the community, the challenges it faces and the need for funding security. A recent report by the Community Transport Association (CTA) has helped to show what the current landscape is across the wider community transport sector in Northern Ireland. CTA Director for Northern Ireland Frances Campbell explains: 'Mapping Northern Ireland is the first update to the State of the Sector research since the initial study in 2010. Focusing on Northern Ireland's community transport operators (CTOs), this report aims to provide a vital source of information for CTOs, policy makers, funders, volunteers and the other stakeholders that use, fund, or link with CTOs.'" <https://cbwmagazine.com/communities-first-in-northern-ireland/>

Shropshire – Merger of Ellesmere and Oswestry CT Services.

A merger has taken place between the North Shropshire operators Ellesmere Community Cars and Qube Transport. The move is intended to offer more services and to cover a wider area. Ellesmere Community Cars has previously relied on voluntary co-ordinators, whilst Qube has employed bookings staff.

Ellesmere passengers are expected to receive additional services as the Qube Community Transport covers social engagements as well as essential journeys, and a weekly minibus service to Tesco is being planned. Former Mayor, Cllr Anne Wignall, said "Suzanne Hutchinson took on the coordination role several months ago and also worked tirelessly to continue the excellent service and to plan the transition to Qube. I'm sure I speak on behalf of everyone who has used the service in thanking both coordinators and the fantastic team of volunteer drivers who have provided this support. I look forward to seeing the service develop under Qube.

<https://www.bordercountiesadvertizer.co.uk/news/25051902.ellesmere-community-cars-oswestry-dial-ride-merge/>

Bristol – Kingswood CT Wins £10,000. Kingswood Community Transport is celebrating winning £10,000 from the Aviva Community Broker Fund after being nominated by Ashley Rodwell Insurance. Kingsway CT said: "We are raising funds to purchase an additional accessible vehicle to help with our growing demand for people living in our local area. On 26th March 2025 we successfully raised £14,047 (+ est. £377.25 gift aid) with 40 supporters in 0 days." Aviva matched each donation that was received.



<https://www.avivacommunityfund.co.uk/p/accessible-vehicle-2>



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