



## Newsletter No.57

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

UK – Grants for Depot Charging Facilities. The Govt. has announced a grant programme to further support to move to EV fleets: “The Government is supporting the road freight and coach industry to decarbonise their fleets and journeys. By kickstarting the installation of charging infrastructure at depots and providing funding where costs are commercially unviable, the Government is supporting the roll out of zero emission commercial vehicles. The depot charging scheme will work hand in hand with the existing vehicle incentives for zero emission vans and HGVs. By part-funding both the vehicle and the infrastructure, the Government seeks to support operators in installing reliable charging infrastructure at their depots for any battery-electric vehicle purchased. The scheme covers 75% of chargepoint and civil costs incurred, up to a maximum of £1 million across all sites. There is no limit to the number of sites you can apply for, but the scheme is limited to one application per organisation. The scheme is open to public and private sector fleets, local authorities and non-profit organisations, located in England, Scotland, Wales and/or Northern Ireland.”

However, the eligibility criteria requires that operators “must own, lease, or order at least 1 battery electric van, HGV and/or coach as part of your vehicle fleet.” This would appear to exclude those operators whose fleets comprise only minibuses or buses. TAS has contacted the Govt. for clarification on this matter. <https://find-government-grants.service.gov.uk/grants/depot-charging-scheme-1>

UK – Charities Aid Foundation Resilience Calculator Now Available. Charities Aid Foundation says: “Our calculator is designed to help you start thinking about your resilience. It takes five minutes to complete, and will support you to:

) Identify the areas where your organisation is most and least resilient

- J Compare how your resilience results benchmark against charities of a similar size to yours and the wider sector
- J Reflect on a holistic approach to building resilience"  
<https://www.cafonline.org/services-for-charities/resources/charity-resilience-calculator>

UK – Shared Prosperity Fund Allocations 2025-2026. The Shared Prosperity Fund has benefitted a number of CT operations in the UK and the 2025- 2026 allocation of £902m has been sub-divided on a local authority basis. Each authority's allocation is listed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus/ukspf-2025-26-allocations#northern-ireland>

## UK – CTA Updates

- J MiDAS gains CTA award nominations with UK National Transport Awards in the category Excellence in Road Safety, Traffic Management and Enforcement  
<https://www.transporttimes.co.uk/Admin/uploads/shortlist-ntas-2025.pdf> and for Road Safety Scheme of the Year at the Highways Awards <https://www.highwaysawards.co.uk/2025-finalists/>
- J CTA Becomes Living Wage Employer – “We’re proud to announce that the Community Transport Association is now officially an accredited Living Wage Employer, standing alongside over 16,000 businesses across the UK who believe a fair day’s work deserves a fair day’s pay.”
- J CTA Presents at the Quality Rural Bus Conference - CTA England Director Caroline Whitney presented at the Quality Rural Bus Conference’s session on Integrating Rural Transport Options. Caroline spoke alongside Tim Christian, General Manager of Ealing Community Transport highlighting the importance of community transport, the challenges that the sector faces and some early insights into our current research projects.
- J Easyfundraising - Receive unrestricted funding for your transport organisation. When your supporters shop online, retailers donate a percentage to your organisation, at no extra cost!  
<https://www.easypfundraising.org.uk/community-transport/>
- J Passenger Centred Journeys film on YouTube. CTA: “We are excited to have recently launched our brand new MiDAS Accessible online modules. As well as covering how to use specialist equipment, the new course invites delegates to deepen their understanding on why transport is so important and the impact our drivers have on a passenger’s journey. To show this impact, we’re excited to premiere our new film – Passenger Centred Journeys. This film has been created with the support of our Editorial Board, made up of Disabled People’s Organisations, and passengers, drivers and passenger assistants who shared their journeys and experiences with us...”  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9d14Y3E7LR4>



UK – Motability Foundation’s New Five Year Strategy Launched. Motability Foundation has launched Building transport equity: 2025 to 2030 strategy and says: “We identified barriers across five transport themes. Our strategy will carry out activity across six areas to help us achieve change in each transport theme. We will aim to spend up to £650m across our charitable work and organisation over our five-year strategy period. This includes £50m in grant-funding for other organisations.” The fourth of the themes is “Shared transport - Shared transport refers to services that are shared among multiple users. We include community transport services, which are designed to help people who have limited access to private or public transport, such as elderly or disabled people, rural communities or those on low incomes. Shared transport also includes taxis, car clubs and bike and electric scooter schemes. Examples of barriers to accessible shared transport include cost and vehicle design. Private taxis are often the only option for people who don’t drive in areas where public transport is poor, but they are expensive and aren’t always wheelchair accessible. Shared bike and electric scooter schemes in towns and cities are rarely designed with disabled people in mind.” Motability Foundation has also revised its eligibility criteria to consider grant applications from organisations with an annual turnover of £50,000 and above in its latest round of grants, although at present these are not available for CT services. <https://www.motabilityfoundation.org.uk/news/motability-foundation-launches-new-five-year-strategy/>

Northern Ireland – 25 Years of Armagh Rural Transport. In celebration of 25 years of service Armagh Rural Transport (ART) has been praised during a visit by Infrastructure Minister Liz Kimmins who said: “Community transport services are a lifeline to many in rural and isolated

areas and for those who are less able to travel independently. Last year alone funding from my Department enabled ART to undertake 7,735 trips and it was heartwarming to see and hear first-hand the hard work and commitment of those involved in delivering this valuable service; from the staff, drivers, volunteers, Trustees and, of course, service users.

I have also recently issued an offer of increased funding for 2025/26 to allow ART to provide an enhanced level of service to its users in the coming year...I would like to congratulate and commend ART on reaching this milestone 25th anniversary year and for their continued support to the local community."

Joanne Curran, manager of ART said: "I thank the minister for the increased funding for the year 2025/26 which will enable us to increase the level of service we provide to the community and to those most in need, putting people first at the heart of everything we do."

<https://armaghi.com/news/armagh-news/a-lifeline-to-many-armagh-rural-transport-congratulated-on-25-years-of-service-to-community/276047>

Northern Ireland – Easilink CT Develops Service. Following confirmation of its budget from the Department for Infrastructure, Easilink Community Transport has confirmed that it would be able to lift the current Dial-A-Lift SmartPass restriction of one return journey per week per member, subject to its financial resources. Daniel O'Hagan, chair of the CT said: "Whilst the funding confirmed at this time relates to the 2025–2026 financial year only, it reflects a level of government recognition and support for community transport that has not been seen in over a decade. We view this as a positive signal of intent and a welcome shift in attitude towards the vital role our services play in rural and isolated communities".



<https://www.strabaneweekly.co.uk/news/2025/07/26/gallery/journey-restrictions-eased-as-work-to-rebuild-easilink-service-capacity-continues-58698/>

Worcestershire – New Developments at Worcester Wheels. Manager Dormston Cook of Worcester Wheels Community Transport says: "We are delighted to announce that we are collaborating with CAM (Community Action Malvern) in extending our DRT coverage in and around Worcestershire. Worcestershire County Council requested a 3rd vehicle to operate rural Worcestershire and Worcester Wheels were delighted to offer this vehicle. CAM & WW were already collaborating doing 3 days each Mon-Sat, but the service has become so popular with the residents hence the reason for the extra vehicle, operating 07.00-19.00.



Worcester Wheels is also delighted to Pilot a brand-new Patient Discharge Scheme operating from Worcestershire Royal Hospital to patients' home addresses. The purpose of this scheme is to try and help with bed blockages and ease pressure on the already stretched ambulance service and Ezeq transport. The pilot is due to commence on August 4th. My team and I are delighted to share this great news with your readers on these two brand new and exciting opportunities for CT in Worcester. The prospect of delivering patient discharge on behalf of Worcester Acute Hospitals during this pilot scheme is something WW are proud to help with, and we are determined to make a success of during this pilot, hoping it might shape health authorities to engage

with their CT schemes around the country."

<https://www.worcesterwheels.org.uk/>

Wales – Welshpool CT Wins Local Community Award. At an annual community awards event, Welshpool Town Council has honoured Welshpool Community Transport as follows:

"Community Transport Scheme - during 2024-2025, the dedicated volunteers have given 1,220 hours of their own time, completing 453 journeys that covered 16,042 miles. The drivers are incredibly kind,



compassionate, attentive and always prioritise the safety and comfort of their passengers." The CT was presented with the award by the Mayor of Welshpool, Cllr Phil Owen and Deputy Mayor, Cllr Bill Rowell at a special event at Welshpool Town Hall on Sunday 20th July 2025.

<https://www.shropshirestar.com/your-world/2025/07/21/community-award-winners-celebrated/>

Greater London – Have Your Say at Westway CT. Westway Community Transport reports: “Recently, we hosted a ‘Have Your Say’ about community transport at our offices. It was organised by the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea council along with Westminster City Council. We invited users to come along to share their views and make suggestions on the community transport services available to them. The event was led by the councils and we were delighted to be involved. Feedback keeps all providers close to their passengers and what works for them. It’s great to get feedback and create opportunities for a two way conversation about services that help others. Working closely with the boroughs we provide services for is crucial, and together we help hundreds of individuals and local groups every week to get more out of the place where they live, support their members and tackle loneliness and isolation.”



“Community transport plays a crucial role in helping people to feel part of the place they live, it’s pivotal for beating loneliness as a recent study highlighted, and it can make a big impact on people’s mental health and overall well-being, which helps people feel stronger physically and mentally and we’re grateful we could help in any way we can.” <https://westwayct.org.uk/news/>

**Hampshire - Hythe Car Scheme Keeps the Community Moving.** The Hythe & District Voluntary Car Group supports the local community by offering a door-to-door medical transport service for adults in the Waterside area. Last year (April 2024 - March 2025) it completed 1,991 medical trips for 438 clients – many of whom were repeat clients. The majority of its clients are older people and have a range of mobility and disability issues that makes catching a bus or sometimes multiple buses just not a viable option for them; nor is the cost of multiple taxi fares. Its volunteer drivers are all retired (both male and female) and live within the Waterside community. The group receives no grants or other types of funding and is totally reliant on the modest fares charged to its clients. The scheme is in urgent need of additional volunteer drivers as it has more calls on its service than it can provide, which unfortunately means people in need are being turned away.

Steve is one of the valued volunteer drivers: "When I retired, I didn't want to just sit around the house. I needed to get out, meet new people and be of use to the local community. I saw a Facebook post asking for volunteer drivers and followed that up. Four years later I am still enjoying my volunteer driver role and not only am I meeting new people but seeing some familiar faces too. It feels really good to help local people by providing a much-needed service." Anyone who would like



to join the HDVCG as a volunteer driver and be part of an amazing team like Steve should please email: [hythecargroup2@outlook.com](mailto:hythecargroup2@outlook.com).

### South Yorkshire – Community Transport Survey is Launched.

South Yorkshire Combined Mayoral Authority: "Community Transport (CT) Services are for people who are unable to use public transport due to disability, age, frailty or geographic location. To use any of the CT services you need to register and receive confirmation you are eligible to use the services. We are consulting with registered users and non-users of Community Transport to help us, and the local Community Transport operators, understand how customers use Community Transport and the potential barriers to using Community Transport...The consultation will run for 6 weeks and will close at noon on Sunday 24 August 2025...Following the consultation period, the results will be analysed and SYMCA will then produce a report on the consultation. [www.southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk/explore\\_community-transport-consultation](http://www.southyorkshire-ca.gov.uk/explore_community-transport-consultation)



South Yorkshire – Harthill CT Service is Funded for Next 12 Months. With a grant award of £3,560 from South Yorkshire Community Foundation via its Loscar Wind Farm Community Fund, the Harthill Tea Day Social Club is able to offer its community transport

service for another year. The service offers free transport for members in the Harthill and Kiveton areas, providing access to tea and social entertainment, day trips and events. Trustee and Chair of Harthill Tea Day Social Club, Marlene Lockwood said: "Without the support of South Yorkshire's Community Foundation, we would have struggled to provide the free Community Transport service that makes our Tea Day meetings accessible and welcoming to all older people in our community. The continued funding of our Community Transport Service is vital to our members and to the continued sustainability of our club." <https://www.thestar.co.uk/community/foundation-funding-secures-community-transport-services-future-5244817>

East Riding of Yorkshire – New Minibus for North Holderness CT. Mellor has recently announced that North Holderness Community Transport (HART) "has recently taken delivery of a new Mellor Strata LF, ordered to support increasing demand for accessible, town-based transport across the Holderness area. The order reflects their ongoing investment in practical, passenger-focused vehicles that meet the day-to-day needs of local residents.

The Strata LF was selected for its low-floor design, ease of passenger entry, and adaptability. It provides up to 16 seats, including a versatile lower floor section with detachable seats allowing for easy access, wheelchair use, and space for walking aids or shopping bags and prams. This flexibility makes it particularly well suited to North Holderness Transport town services and door to door shopper routes. Additional specifications include front destination display, saloon passenger heating, and a CCTV system for added safety. All seats are fitted with lap and diagonal seatbelts suitable for all ages, and the vehicle incorporates designated storage space without reducing accessibility. Caroline Wegrzyn, Business Manager at North Holderness Transport, commented: 'The Drivers love it and it makes their job a lot easier, particularly in the town centre where people are often travelling with shopping trolleys and prams. Passengers really like it too, it's easy to get on and off, and it feels light, airy, and spacious inside.' The new Strata is now in service and is already making a difference across local routes. Mellor-built vehicles now account for 22% of North Holderness Transport's operational fleet. The order reinforces HART's focus on practical, modern transport solutions that support everyday travel."

<https://mellorbus.com/latest-news/north-holderness-community-transport-expands-fleet-with-new-mellor-strata-to-improve-accessibility-for-local-passengers/>



Herefordshire – Community Transport Grant Support. Funding support of up to £5,000 is being offered by Herefordshire Council.

Applications can be made for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund until 15 August. The fund is described as “a one-off revenue grant scheme [which] aims to support VCSE organisations in Herefordshire to deliver or coordinate local transport solutions that improve access, reduce social isolation, and strengthen community connections” and is available for new or ongoing CT operations that meet the criteria as follows:

- ) Enable vulnerable or isolated residents to access services, groups or events
- ) Improve access to health, wellbeing, and social opportunities
- ) Reduce loneliness and social isolation
- ) Build resilience in the voluntary and community transport sector
- ) Support and strengthen the Connected Communities and Talk Community approaches.

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/directory-record/6862/ukspf-community-transport-grant-scheme-2025-26>

Scotland – New Rural Service to Connect Kinross and Tillicoultry. A new pilot demand-responsive bus service will be trialled this August across the Hillfoots area by Glenfarg Community Transport. This is named the 203 Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) route, and will initially run three days a week for four months to connect Kinross and Tillicoultry and helping underserved communities. Glenfarg Community Transport said: “The service will operate from bus stops and if there is no bus stop at present we will designate ‘virtual stops’. You will be able to book your journey from places like Carnbo, Cleish, Vane Farm, Loch Leven Lodges, Lochend Farm. For all fare-paying customers, your fare will be calculated as follows: £2.70 base fare plus 30p per mile.” Graeme Downie MP for Dunfermline and Dollar, described the service “a vital link...The journeys are simple to book via an app ‘Ride Pingo’ app or over the phone.” All vehicles used in the pilot are fully electric, contributing to a low-carbon footprint and supporting local and national climate goals.



<https://www.alloaAdvertiser.com/news/25349436.hillfoots-new-bus-service-will-connect-unserved-regions/>

Scotland – New Edinburgh Area Community Bus. Edinburgh Evening News writes: “Public Transport Manager for the City of Edinburgh Council Stuart Lowrie, Margaret Bennett the Engagement Officer for Northfield and Willowbrae Community Council and some of the service’s new passengers joined HcL manager Robert Hutson to discuss the new 69 community bus service. This bus service covers Lady Nairne circular Monday to

Saturday. HcL have been delivering this service since December 2024 and in that short time we have supported 1000's of passengers to get out and about with 97% of these free trips taken through concessionary travel passes. Margaret Bennett of Northfield and Willowbrae Community Council stated: 'The return of the 69 Bus Service, courtesy of HCL, has been warmly welcomed by the elderly and disabled residents of Lady Nairne and Willowbrae. Living on the side of a steep hill and a long way from a bus stop led to hardship, isolation and loneliness during the Covid lockdowns after the service was withdrawn. Today, however, the one hour round trip to Asda passes all three local GP surgeries, the Library, Community Centre, several supermarkets and Portobello High Street and saves long treks uphill carrying heavy shopping bags. Travellers are guaranteed a friendly welcome on board by drivers Ros and Bob, as well as a "blether" with fellow passengers, many of whom are on first name terms already! The bus can be hailed anywhere along the route between Paisley Drive and Meadowfield Avenue and also at regular bus stops elsewhere



and takes passengers of all ages.' If you haven't used it yet, why not look out for HcL's smart black midi-coach and spend an hour familiarising yourself with the route?"

<https://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/community/hcl-new-community-bus-service-gets-the-thumbs-up-from-passengers-5229392>

Scotland – Scottish Bus Open Data – and what it means for S22 in Scotland. CTA Scotland's Director David Kelly has raised concerns around the obligations s22 operators might face following planned Transport Scotland legislation to require all bus operators – including community-owned, non-profit bus operators using Section 22 permits – to comply with the provision of Bus Open Data. CTA is "concerned that community bus operators are not ready (and cannot afford) to gather and transmit real time information, which could be required from April 2028. There will be significant challenges and costs to upgrading the fleet to ensure every vehicle can monitor, record and share live location, disruption, capacity and accessibility information. Community bus operators tell us that these increased costs could result in the loss of existing community bus services due to unaffordable increases in operational costs and prevent the growth of community bus services due to higher set-up capital costs..."

<https://ctauk.org/news/scottish-bus-open-data-and-what-it-means-s22-scotland>

Scotland – Planning CT Future Event in Highland. An event is to be held in Inverness on August 13 – hosted by Highland Council – for stakeholders to consider current provision and future of Community Transport. “It will be an opportunity for community transport providers to come together and discuss future opportunities,” said Councillor Ken Gowans, chair of the economy and infrastructure committee. “In the Highlands Community Transport providers play a vital role to address local unique circumstances and opportunities. We want to empower communities to set up services in a way which suits them. The services already running all bring important social benefits to communities where any option of public transport either does not exist or is very limited. It’s about proactively finding solutions which most closely address and meet local transport needs, with the added benefit of empowering individuals and the broader community. We hope providers take up this opportunity to come along as this is a valuable networking opportunity. It is a chance to learn from one another, share best practice, and explore future opportunities together.”

NHS Highlands will be in attendance to explore options for growth in community transport across the Highlands and explore collaborative working. The agenda will look at an overview of current Community Transport projects operating in the Highland Council area, before the focus switches to opportunities and the future. <https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/highland-community-transporters-plan-road-ahead-388810/>

Scotland – New WAV for the Western Isles. We Love Stornoway reports: “Comunn Eachdraidh Nis (CEN) has secured capital grant funding from NHS Western Isles to purchase an additional wheelchair-accessible vehicle. This expansion will help meet growing demand and help ensure that no one in the community is disadvantaged due to mobility challenges...They already had one accessible vehicle through the Motability’s Community Transport Grant Programme which greatly supported wheelchair users, individuals with restricted mobility, and those with long-term health conditions. Its availability has already made a meaningful impact on the quality of life and well-being of disabled community members...”



<https://www.welovestornoway.com/index.php/articles/39480-additional-accessible-vehicle-for-comunn-eachdraidh-nis>

West Midlands – Walsall CT Users Benefit from Community Hub Makeover. Creative arts and construction students from Sandwell College have provided a vital revamp of a lifeline community hub combating loneliness and social isolation. Chief Officer of Walsall Community Transport Debbie Chell said: “We were thrilled to have Sandwell College students help



us to make the community space in the Lets' Chat Hub in West Bromwich Bus Station more welcoming for our users, construction students gave the rooms a lick of paint and creative students developed some artwork to brighten the place up.” The hub was initially set up by community transport

groups in disused shop units as part of the Let's Chat pilot scheme, and proved to be very popular. <https://www.expressandstar.com/your-world/2025/07/12/creative-collaboration-sandwell-students-transform-community-hub/>

Shropshire - North Salop Wheelers Community Bus. Operating in the Wem, Market Drayton and Whitchurch areas the North Salop Wheelers Community Bus is reminding local readers of its services which are described as “a lifeline for many who live in the rural villages surrounding Market Drayton, making it easy for everyone to come into town for the market, do a bit of shopping, meet friends, and explore all the lovely places our town has to offer.” Regular passenger Pat, who travels in from Wem every week, said: “Wednesday is my favourite day of the week! I love coming into Market Drayton, doing my shopping, and catching up with friends. Jones is my favourite coffee shop— and I often go there to meet up with friends on a Wednesday. The best part about the journey on the community bus is chatting with the ladies on the bus; everyone is so nice.” Janet, from Coton, commented: “I'm heading to B&M for bird



food, then to Lidl for my weekly shop. I couldn't do without this bus—I wouldn't be able to carry my shopping otherwise! I'm also excited to check out the new Boyes shop that just opened. My favourite places are Savers, the Post Office, Card Factory, and Morrisons." The CT is also looking for new volunteers. Contact via [www.northsalopwheelers.co.uk](http://www.northsalopwheelers.co.uk) or by phoning 07597 273959. <https://www.shropshirestar.com/your-world/2025/07/01/wheelers-your-community-bus-hop-on-and-explore/>

## Rutland – Drivers Needed for Car Scheme. Oakham-based

Voluntary Action Rutland operates a social car scheme and is currently in urgent need of drivers following a number of long-serving drivers now stepping down. Tom Walters, Chief Executive, said: "We're proud of the difference our drivers make every day. But we urgently need more people to join our team. Even a few hours a month can have a huge impact. We will shortly be launching a Rapid Response team with volunteers looking to help react to the increasing number of last-minute appointments that are coming through from hospitals."

Volunteer driver Peter said: "I've met some wonderful people and heard incredible stories. It's more than just giving someone a lift—it's about being part of a community." Interested persons are invited to contact Voluntary Action Rutland Transport Manager Jim on 01572 724705 or Volunteer Coordinator Lorraine on 01572 723300 or visit [www.varutland.org.uk](http://www.varutland.org.uk). <https://www.lincsonline.co.uk/rutland/news/community-transport-scheme-needs-more-drivers-it-s-more-th-9427869/>

**WHY YOU SHOULD BECOME A VOLUNTEER DRIVER**  
By Voluntary Action Rutland

**Helps your Community**  
Rutland is a rural community with a growing older population. We are not well served by buses, trains or transport systems. Joining our Volunteer Drivers and helping people get about and having more independence is a crucial role.

**Gives You Purpose**  
If you have a little extra time on your hands, becoming a volunteer driver is a great way to meet people, help your community and really make a difference.

**Makes you feel Good!**  
Volunteering gives you a great sense of achievement, community spirit and a real glow on the inside, knowing you're making a real difference.

**Are you ready to start volunteering?**

Call Voluntary Action Rutland on 01572 724705 or email [enquiries@varutland.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@varutland.org.uk)

 /VARutland

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Cumbria – Honour for Founder of Western Dales Bus. In the King's birthday honours in June, Jock Cairns was awarded the MBE for his work in founding and for many years co-ordinating the Western Dales Community Bus. The service commenced in 2012 and links Dent, Sedbergh and Kirkby Stephen with Kendal. Jock, who stepped down from the organisation in 2024, said: "I was really shocked and surprised to get the call about the MBE. I certainly never expected to receive something like this. Of course it's a great honour for me but I think what has been lovely is seeing how much of a boost it has given to the current volunteers. It's a recognition

of their work as much as it is mine...We've served more and more passengers every year and our amazing volunteers are now a team of 16-20 in various roles." <https://www.thewestmorlandgazette.co.uk/news/25244570.kings-honours-list-dent-community-bus-founder-awarded-mbe/>



**TAS**

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