



Newsletter No.61

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

UK – DVSA Outcome of the Consultation on Zero emission Vans: Regulatory Flexibility. DVSA recently ran “a consultation on proposals to amend regulations which apply to large zero emission (ZE) goods vehicles with a maximum authorised mass (MAM) of over 3.5 tonnes, up to and including 4.25 tonnes. Due to the extra weight of the battery or other ZE technology, these vehicles are often heavier than an equivalently sized, and equivalently used, internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle. This extra weight may move the ZE vehicle above the 3.5t threshold, over which additional regulatory requirements for heavy goods vehicles apply. In this consultation response ‘3.5 to 4.25t’ is used to describe vehicles weighing over 3.5t, up to and including 4.25t.” Position of minibuses to be kept under review. Consultation findings are here:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKDVSA/bulletins/3fcc791>

UK – HM Treasury Consultation on Electric Vehicle Excise Duty (eVED). The 2025 budget announced a new mileage charge for electric and plug-in hybrid cars, which will take effect from April 2028. This consultation sets out further detail on how eVED will work and seeks views its design and implementation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-introduction-of-electric-vehicle-excise-duty-eved>

UK - CTA Updates

-) CTA responds to Budget 2025
<https://cta.uk.org/news/cta-responds-budget-2025>
-) Meet The Funder Q&A: Motability Foundation
<https://cta.uk.org/news/meet-funder-motability-foundation>



- J Telling Your Story – Gemma’s Reflectors <https://ctauk.org/news/how-tell-your-story-cbs-gemmas-reflections>
- J AGM 2025 – PP slides are here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5wWX2_hCx1M
- J 2025 CTA Membership Survey - <https://ctauk.org/form/cta-membership-survey-2025>
- J D1 Focus Groups in January <https://ctauk.org/community-transport-events>

Devon - It's an MBE for Bob! News release: Bob the Bus, operated by Totnes and Rural Community Transport, has received a King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS). This is a fantastic tribute to everyone involved with Bob the Bus over its 30-year history – volunteer drivers, trustees, coordinators, passengers and supporters. It's also a celebration of the more than 1,500 community transport groups in the UK, all of which are helping to meet local accessibility needs. Equivalent to an MBE, KAVS is the highest Award given to local voluntary groups in the UK, and it's awarded for life. Created in 2002 to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee and previously known as The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS), the Award has been shining a light on the fantastic work of voluntary groups from across the UK for many years. Bob the Bus was nominated for an award in December 2024. We were visited by representatives of the Devon Lieutenancy in February 2025. They conducted a detailed assessment of what we do and how we do it, and spent some time meeting trustees, volunteers and some of our regular passengers and Travel Club members. A report was submitted to the KAVS National Assessors, and we were notified of Royal Approval in October 2025.

Bob the Bus currently has 35 volunteers (mostly drivers) and only 2 part-time paid staff. It operates scheduled services Monday to Saturday in and around Totnes, and is the only public transport giving access to the busy Fore Street and High Street. There are also services to Stoke Gabriel, Ashprington and Cornworthy. Travel Club members enjoy regular day trips to local places of interest, and our yellow buses serve the Christmas markets, Totnes Show and other community events.

Every day, millions of people across the UK are making a difference by volunteering. Each year, outstanding examples of this work are



celebrated through the King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAWS). Bob the Bus is always looking for new volunteers, so please get in touch if you have a few hours to spare. totnescommunitytransport@gmail.com
www.bobthebus.org.uk

Somerset – Another King's Award Recipient. The Exmoor Community Bus Association is one of four Somerset charities to be awarded the King's Award for Voluntary Service. The Exmoor Community Bus Association was set up to serve rural villages with no public transport. The service is run with help from Somerset Council, which provides funding for vehicle, its maintenance and fuel. Jan Ross MBE, who is a trustee and volunteer driver said: "We are absolutely delighted and feel humbled to have received this award. It recognises the work we have been doing for the last 42 years."



<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5y0v215k6xo>

Somerset – Expansion of Wivey Link Service. Wiveliscombe-based CT Wivey Link has now welcomed a new vehicle to its fleet and expanded its operational area to include Watchet and more of Exmoor. The addition has been funded by the Rural England Prosperity Fund. Wivey Link Manager Bec Briar said: "West Somerset ranks very high nationally for poor social mobility and the inadequate transport connectivity exacerbates this. Wivey Link aims to facilitate transport throughout the community and this has widespread benefits to people's lives and also the rural economy. That applies to young and old, whether for attending leisure activities, appointments, or simply getting to work. The new car will enable our valuable service to grow further and help more people.

Donations from locals are such an important part of our funding so this greater profile will bring more support throughout West Somerset which we return back to the community through better accessibility." It is estimated that 8,000 people living in the '10 Parishes' area in and around Wiveliscombe are



eligible to become members for an annual fee starting at £25, and trips then costing £1.60 a mile, and the eligible zone now includes Dulverton and Watchet. Volunteer drivers are also being sought to service 400 members in an area which stretches from Uffculme and Willand in the Culm Valley to the Quantock Hills to the West Somerset coast and southern Exmoor.

<https://www.wellington-today.co.uk/news/more-areas-to-be-covered-by-wivey-link-transport-as-new-car-is-added-to-fleet-855548> and <https://www.somersetcountygazette.co.uk/news/25648607.wivey-link-community-transport-service-set-expand/>

Wales – PACTO & Older People’s Commissioner for Wales

PACTO writes: Members of Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations (PACTO) recently met with the Older People’s Commissioner for Wales, Rhian Bowen-Davies, to outline the progress of our three-year Transformation Project, funded by the Motability Foundation.

The Older People’s Commissioner for Wales protects and promotes the rights of people aged 60 and over, and the meeting at Pembrokeshire Archives in Haverfordwest allowed Transformation Project Manager Wyndham Williams and PACTO’s General Manager Ady Poole to give a presentation detailing the impact the project has had to date. As well as outlining some of Community Transport in Pembrokeshire’s key achievements in recent times, the team also explained some of the key issues that CT faces in Pembrokeshire.

Pembrokeshire’s Community Transport sector is made up of six operators: Bloomfield House Community Centre NDCSA, Green Dragon Community Transport, Manorbier and District Community Transport, Pembrokeshire Voluntary Transport, the Royal Voluntary Service and The VC Gallery. In total, CT in Pembrokeshire has seen 4,336 beneficiaries with mobility needs in the last 21 months, as it approaches the final year of the transformation project. This number includes 187 individual wheelchair users who have also benefited from CT across the county between October 2024 and September 2025.

Rhian Bowen-Davies, said: “Spending a week travelling across Pembrokeshire to meet with older peoples’ groups, as well as organisations providing crucial community support, was hugely valuable to see first-hand some of the activities making a positive difference to people’s lives, as well as hear directly about the challenges and barriers people are facing. Issues relating to transport were raised with me by older people wherever I



went, and it was clear that community transport plays a particularly important role in Pembrokeshire. So, it was really helpful to meet with PACTO during my time in the county, to learn more about the ways they are supporting a wide range of CT services to provide innovative, flexible options that are essential to enable people to get out and about and do the things that matter to them."

<https://www.pacto.org.uk/press-releases/pacto-meets-with-older-peoples-commissioner-for-wales/> and <https://pembrokeshire-herald.com/127913/community-transport-progress-highlighted-during-visit-by-older-peoples-commissioner/>

Suffolk – Rugby Club’s Bid for new Minibus. Lowestoft and Yarmouth Rugby Club has launched a drive to raise funds for a new minibus, which will offer transport for its members to matches as well as young, disadvantaged players and elderly, isolated community members. When a local bus service was withdrawn leaving the villages of Lound and Blundeston without a service, a club minibus filled the gap, free of charge and driven by club volunteers. However, the original vehicle now needs to be replaced.

Club chair Dr Ian Gibson said: "Every Friday we take the socially isolated, vulnerable and elderly of the surrounding villages to Tesco's so they can do their shopping. This is more than simply about shopping, this is about community spirit and helping those in need. We also lend the bus to local primary schools free of charge, so they can take their pupils to sports activities, and the bus is also used to ferry players of all ages to and from rugby games...We desperately don't want the community to lose this vital asset." A Crowdfunder campaign has been launched and aims to raise £30,000 for the new vehicle. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25634486.lowestoft-rugby-club-appeal-minibus-suffolk-villages/>

Norfolk – North Norfolk CT Benefits from New Grants. North Norfolk Community Transport Facebook posts: (17 November) "We've just been awarded £5,000 from Norfolk Community Foundation through the Love Norfolk Fund 2025 for our Dial-a-Ride service. Passenger fares only



cover around 10% of our running costs, so grants like these keep us on the road. As you can see our buses collect passengers from their homes and travel the routes that others fear to tread!" and (13 November) "We are so grateful to have received a grant from the Garfield Weston Foundation.

This funding, which stretches across two years, will have a significant impact on our sustainability and means we can continue our vision

of helping people go to places together.”

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

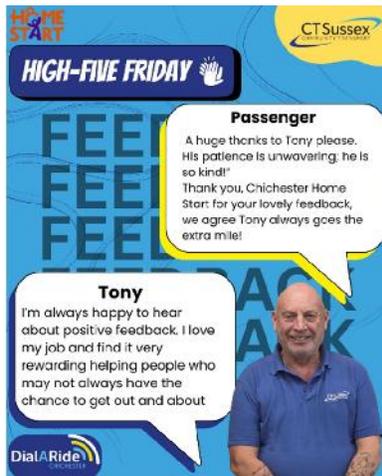
East Sussex – Bexhill Community Bus Volunteers are Celebrated. A special Christmas event is planned at Bexhill Community Bus to celebrate its much-valued volunteers. Trustee Lynn Langlands said: “Part of the event will be dedicated to our long-standing volunteers, and we will be awarding them a



certificate for their service. One volunteer has been with the Bexhill Community Bus since its inception in 1980, and has served as a volunteer for 45yrs. This is unprecedented, and we would like to make this a special evening for this particular volunteer. We have invited the Mayor to do the presentation.” Since its foundation in 1980 Bexhill Community Bus has carried nearly two million passengers and, in recognition, was awarded the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Services - the highest award for voluntary groups.

<https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/news/people/bexhill-community-bus-volunteers-to-be-honoured-at-special-event-5400787>

West Sussex – High-Five Friday Staff Tributes Continue at CT



Sussex. CT Sussex: “This week we’re celebrating Tony from our Chichester depot. A passenger said: ‘A huge thanks to Tony please. His patience is unwavering; he is so kind! Tony’s response: ‘I’m always happy to hear positive feedback. I love my job and find it so rewarding helping people who may not always have the chance to get out and about.’” CT Sussex has also recently partnered with Littlehampton Wave and Arun District Council to help local residents travel to and from Littlehampton Wave. passengers can now book transport for just £3 per trip, with the rest funded through this scheme.

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

Isle of Wight – Southern Vectis Volunteer Driver Honour.

A volunteer driver from Cowes has been recognised with an award for his work on the commercial and community bus partnership on the Isle of Wight. At its first Gold Awards event the Southern Vectis driver John Berry received the Community Award accolade from the Go-Ahead Group. John commented: “I

get an immense sense of fulfilment, knowing I'm providing such an essential service to local people. Speaking to passengers over the years, I realise how much people come to rely on the rural services – and how some would feel increasingly isolated if the community bus wasn't here. I have met and got to know many hundreds of people driving the bus and, because I do it so regularly, I have become an easily identifiable figure in the areas the bus serves. There are many people who wave at me as the bus passes who I've never spoken to but who know there is a familiar face about."

Southern Vectis managing director, Ben Murray added: "This is a well-deserved acknowledgement of the work John carries out day-after-day here on the Island. He's done incredibly well to be recognised in the category ahead of Go-Ahead team members across the world. It demonstrates the commitment John has to those living here on the Isle of Wight, doing all he can to ensure local



people have access to bus services in order to visit local shops and services. The award also reflects our aim here at Southern Vectis to ensure buses are accessible to as many people as possible. Congratulations John. An amazing achievement." <https://www.islandecho.co.uk/cowes-community-bus-driver-honoured-at-go-ahead-gold-awards/>

North Yorkshire - Decarbonising Community Transport

Project. The CT sector in the North Yorkshire area has benefitted from a grant scheme worth £552,000 designed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. The Decarbonising Community Transport Project has provided grants to enable electric vehicles (cars, minibuses and mopeds) to be purchased and so far, 24 such vehicles (two being wheelchair accessible vehicles) and 10 e-mopeds, have been delivered to 11 community transport organisations.



North Yorkshire Council has made the grant awards sourced from the Devolution Deal Net Zero Fund, funded by the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority. Ryedale Community Transport has benefitted from six electric mopeds with trackers and

two minibuses. Mark Harris, CEO, commented: "This project has been a huge success. It has improved the flexibility of providing transport to other

organisations and improved the service to those that need us who live in the local community unable to use public transport."

Scarborough Dial a Ride has gained two electric cars which have been praised for their comfort and reduced noise. Steve March, manager at Scarborough Dial a Ride, said: "Introducing an electric vehicle to our fleet has shown that we are able to make this technology work for our beneficiaries. The vehicles have proven popular with our volunteer drivers, and with customers providing comfortable, quiet transport. This project has given us the confidence to go ahead with the purchase of an electric minibus with further funding, which will be used to support passengers to maintain their independence on many local journeys."

David Skaith, Mayor of York and North Yorkshire, added: "Delivering real change for our communities is exactly what our Net Zero Fund is for, like new electric minibuses and mopeds, benefiting people in Scarborough and across Ryedale, through clean, reliable energy. When we invest in our communities, we can meet our climate goals and build a sustainable future for York and North Yorkshire, together."

<https://www.thescarboroughnews.co.uk/news/politics/council/grants-enable-scarborough-and-ryedale-community-transport-groups-to-choose-electric-5406780> and <https://www.thisisthecoast.co.uk/news/local-news/scarborough-dial-a-ride-goes-electric-with-transport-grant/>

Scotland – Farr Goes CT Celebrates its First Year. A CT service in North Coast, Scotland, has been operating for a year and is set to expand as demand is increasing. The group has now acquired an additional electric vehicle and part-time driver to improve transport options for local residents.

The service is run by the Farr North Community Development Trust. The new addition to the fleet is a long-range, all-wheel-drive electric vehicle which is better suited to the area's challenging winter roads. The operation offers transport options for the communities of Bettyhill, Melvich, and Strath Halladale. For more information on the service, residents can contact the Farr North Community Development Trust at manager@farnorth.onmicrosoft.com. <https://www.northern-times.co.uk/news/pictures-farr-goes-community-transport-scheme-celebrates-fi-419820/>

Cornwall - Bodmin and Lanivet Community Bus scheme. The Bodmin and Lanivet Community Bus has been funding in the first round of Rural Mobility Pilot funding is being used from Peninsula Transport and Western Gateway.

The pilot service is operated by Lanivet Parish Sport and Recreational Trust. The project was awarded a share of £100,000 which enabled a full-time coordinator to be hired.

Community Centre Manager Barry Cornelius, said: "The grant received from Peninsula Transport has enabled us to fund the resources to develop a totally integrated community transport initiative for the Camel Valley area. This initiative will deliver a transport solution aimed at reducing isolation in both rural and urban areas and to all ages from the young to the old. We are pleased to be working with our local MP, Cornwall Councillors and Town and Parish Councils to plan the initiative and make it sustainable. Even though we are still in the development stage there is considerable interest from areas outside of the Camel Valley and we hope the model can be replicated in other areas within Cornwall."



Peninsula Transport Chair Councillor John Stephens, commented: "We are pleased to see so many local organisations, including Age UK, take an interest in the pilot and encouraging residents to use the service. If successful, this approach could be used in other parts of the Southwest to improve transport for rural communities. Around a third of the South West's population lives in rural communities, but traditional transport options often don't meet their needs. That's why Peninsula Transport and Western Gateway are working together on a shared rural mobility strategy and set of pilot schemes to find practical rural transport solutions. Our aim is to make rural travel better by improving reliability, affordability, and sustainability." <https://highways-news.com/bodmins-new-community-bus-scheme-boosted-by-peninsula-transport-rural-mobility-funding/>

Cornwall – Newquay Community Bus Proposal. Planned roadworks are set to close a main road in Newquay resulting in the reduction of the 59 bus service. Local residents fear becoming isolated and have formed Treloggan Bus Association but initial appeals to Cornwall Council to maintain the bus service during the works have been rejected. The Association is now looking at options for a community bus to operate when the 59 is not available and spokesperson Thomas Beeson said: "I think potentially exploring a community bus effort could be the next steps, if there's a will there's a way."

We would like to hear from anyone who has information to help us with this and how we could go about this. I do understand the reasoning why our suggestions couldn't be implemented at the moment. But with winter closing in and no plans as of yet to improve our service throughout the disruption, many residents including myself feel like we have been left with a poor service to save costs...We understand the council can't fund our suggestions, but I do feel like we would be worth the extra cost to stop Treloggan residents from essentially being isolated over winter."

<https://www.voicenewspapers.co.uk/news/campaigners-consider-launching-community-bus-scheme-853512>

Warwickshire – CT Operator announces Closure. Warwick-based Warwickshire Rural Community Council has closed down with immediate effect after 88 years. In more recent years the charity has been an important CT provider in the area offering Back&4th minibus service, IndieGo Rugby DRT, Community Group Hire, and MiDAS Training. The organisation said: “Our immediate thoughts are with our staff, who have lost their jobs without notice and so close to Christmas. We want to express our heartfelt thanks for their commitment and dedication, and we wish them every success in the next chapter of their lives. We also extend our sincerest appreciation to the team of volunteers who have tirelessly supported our Community Transport services through the years, providing affordable transport solutions to schools and community groups across the county... Despite undergoing a significant programme of change during 2025, WRCC has suffered two years of losses and income targets not being met... All trustees and our Chief Executive, Chris Cowcher, are truly sorry that it must end this way. We hope that our partners and other organisations will continue to champion rural communities, ensuring local voices are heard and their needs met in the future.”



<https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/news/community-transport-charity-closes-suddenly-job-losses.html> and <https://www.facebook.com/wrccrural>

Leicestershire – Harborough Community Bus Left Frustrated After Failed Attempts to Get Blue Badge Status.

Harborough Community Bus has been frustrated after failing to obtain an organisational Blue Badge. The operator has argued that 65% of its passengers are eligible for the badge, but being a transport operator alone does not meet DfT’s qualifying criteria unless the operator “cares” or “assists” disabled people as well.

Harborough’s MP Neil O’Brien visited the project and has since raised this issue in Parliament. DfT responded saying “Officials will undertake a review of the Blue Badge guidance, including the section regarding organisational Blue Badges, to ensure the guidance is clear when applying for a Blue Badge.”



Neil O’Brien said: “Harborough Community Bus does fantastic work helping people who would otherwise

struggle to get out and about. The current rules just don't reflect what these volunteer groups do every day. I'm pleased the Government has agreed to look again at the guidance. A clearer and fairer system would make a real difference to the people who rely on community transport."

<https://www.harboroughmail.co.uk/news/people/organisers-at-harborough-community-bus-left-frustrated-after-failed-attempts-to-get-blue-badge-status-5411938>

TAS comment – we note that DfT states that to qualify for a badge an organisation must

) "care for or assist people who need a Blue Badge" and

) "transport people who need a Blue Badge."

They go on to add "it is unlikely that...community transport operators would be eligible for an organisational Blue Badge as they are not usually concerned with the care of disabled people" [our italics].

DfT's understanding of CT appears flawed here, especially as there is already a rule which states that "an organisational badge must only be displayed when someone who would be eligible for a Blue Badge in their own right is being transported" which CT operators would be more than happy to abide by. It therefore comes down to how "care" and "assist" for disabled people is defined. Many CTs can argue that they certainly provide care and assistance. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blue-badge-can-i-get-one/can-i-get-a-blue-badge#blue-badges-for-organisations>)

Cumbria – Celebration of 10 years of the Border Rambler. Celebrations are being held to mark ten years of operation of the Border Rambler community bus, which covers areas in the Border region, and is described as a lifeline for residents in rural areas and visitors exploring Hadrian's Wall. The bus carries around 1,500 passengers per year with an annual turnover of £12,000-£15,000.

Chair of the Border Rambler Trustees, Keith Meller commented: "Our volunteer drivers are the heart and soul of the Border Rambler. Their hard work, patience, and generosity have ensured that this service continues to make a real difference to people's lives. Without them, there simply wouldn't be a Border Rambler...This anniversary is a testament to the dedication of the volunteer drivers, whose tireless commitment keeps the service running day in and day out. Their friendly faces and community spirit have made the Border Rambler far more than just a bus — it's become a symbol of local pride and mutual support."

Volunteer driver Ian added: "I've been driving the Rambler since the start, and it's one of the best things I've ever done. You get to meet so many people, hear their stories, and know that you're doing something that genuinely matters. It's



not just a bus — it's part of the community...Volunteering as a driver is incredibly rewarding. You don't just help people get from A to B — you become part of a friendly team that makes a genuine difference every day. We'd love to welcome more local people on board."

<https://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/25628071.border-rambler-bus-service-celebrates-10th-anniversary/>

Greater London – Poor Dial-a-Ride Performance is Highlighted. Performance data from TfL has indicated that more than half of London boroughs have failed to meet the 90% targets for on-time Dial-a-Ride pick-ups. Barnet fared worst between July and August, with 17% of all pick-ups being classed 'late'.

Dial-a-Ride punctuality is measured against a 15-minute leeway either side of the booked time. On average, punctuality was at 87% across all 33 boroughs, meaning that of the 550,000 trips made this year to date, at least 71,500 of them were late. Head of Dial-a-Ride James Mead said: "What we're finding is that we're doing quite well on the drop-off. So we're getting customers to where they need to go on time, but we're not quite as good at picking them up to start the journey. We're always trying to review that regularly, but it's clearly one of the things that we want to keep working on and keep refining."

The Dial-a-Ride failings have been commented upon by John McGreachy, Campaigns Manager at Age UK London: "I always say with dial-a-ride, it's a really good service because it can make a huge difference to people's lives and it's free, but when it goes wrong, it can have a really big impact on people...It's really hard to know the exact picture, but there does seem to be a



disconnect between people's on-the-ground real-life experiences and TfL's data. It also has an impact on organisations providing services. Because if you're hosting a dementia class, or chair exercises, or Zumba, and you've got everyone there for three o'clock, and then half the people don't turn up, there are wasted resources that go into that."

<https://www.swlondoner.co.uk/news/05122025-tfls-dial-a-ride-service-falls-short-on-timeliness>

Essex – Wivenhoe Car Scheme Seeks Volunteers. Wivenhoe Helping Hands urgently requires volunteer drivers for its car scheme which involves driving residents without vehicles to hospitals, GPs, opticians, chiropodists, dentists, as well as other healthcare visits between Wivenhoe, Clacton, and Colchester A spokesperson said: "It's simply about doing our bit

for the community and helping with transport logistics and supporting our fight against loneliness". Those interested should call Wivenhoe Helping Hands on 07834452764 or email them at wivenhoehelpinghands@gmail.com.
<https://www.gazette-news.co.uk/news/25636958.wivenhoe-helping-hands-urgently-need-volunteer-drivers/>

