



## Newsletter No.64

Edited by John Atkins (Principal Consultant). Published March 2026. Please send us any news items, stories of interest or press releases.

UK – Voluntary Sector Concerns over Government’s Earned Settlement Proposals. NCVO writes: “The proposals form part of the government’s wider asylum and immigration reforms, which would allow volunteering to be used as a condition to obtain, or shorten the route to, settlement in the UK. Drawing on engagement with 314 organisations, our findings show overwhelming concern across the voluntary sector. Respondents were in strong opposition to the proposed inclusion of volunteering to obtain or shorten the route to settlement for asylum seekers and refugees. While the government’s stated aim is to encourage integration, our members believe the proposals would have a number of serious risks including placing increased and unmanageable responsibility on charities, risking coercing vulnerable people into volunteering, and failure to address the real structural barriers to integration.” <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/news-and-insights/news-index/charities-raise-serious-concerns-about-governments-earned-settlement-proposals/>

### CTA Updates

) Bus Franchising in England: What it Could Mean for Community Transport Caroline Whitney writes: “One key point in the guidance is the treatment of permits and exemptions. Services run under Section 19 and Section 22 permits remain exempt from holding a local service permit, even in a franchised area. This provides important protection for not-for-profit, community-led transport. It allows our services to continue without facing the same processes as commercial operators. The exemption does not mean we can stand apart. It makes collaboration even more important so that S19 and S22 services are understood, valued and fully integrated into planning. Our influence depends on how early and seriously we engage.” <https://ctauk.org/news/bus-franchising-england-what-it-could-mean-community-transport>

) CTA Renews D1 Licensing Change Call  
<https://www.route-one.net/news/community-transport-association-renews-d1-licensing-change-call/>

) Vehicle Purchasing Guide for Community Transport is now available to help organisations plan, buy, replace, or expand their vehicles with confidence.  
<https://ctauk.org/resource/vehicle-purchasing-guide>



) CTA Wales “were delighted to run a session for our operators that are part of the Aneurin Bevan Transport to Health Project. This project supports operators through funding from the health board to deliver passengers to health and wellbeing services.” <https://ctauk.org/aneurin-bevan-transport-health>

) Welsh Bus Reform & Franchising “CTA and TfW hosted their first workshop for CTOs around the bus reform agenda and franchising, which will be rolled out in North Wales in 2028. TfW found it very useful to speak to the operators present about the services they provide in their communities and to hear their feedback about the rollout of franchising and how community transport sits in the new framework.”  
[https://ctauk.org/civcrm/mailling/view?reset=1&id=661&cid=27725&cs=744ebe5424a78d5b8778e4cc1dff3ad\\_1771934183\\_336](https://ctauk.org/civcrm/mailling/view?reset=1&id=661&cid=27725&cs=744ebe5424a78d5b8778e4cc1dff3ad_1771934183_336)

) Scotland - Our Movement’s Manifesto: Improve Access to Health & Social Care <https://ctauk.org/news/our-movements-manifesto-improve-access-health-social-care>

) England – Enhanced Partnerships. What the Enhanced Partnership Review is and what it Means for Community Transport  
<https://ctauk.org/news/what-enhanced-partnership-review-and-what-it-means-community-transport>

) International Women’s Day - an opportunity to recognise the women who make community transport possible – often working quietly, but making a profound difference to people’s lives.  
<https://ctauk.org/news/international-womens-day-celebrating-women-community-transport>



Worcestershire – Worcester Wheels CT Donation. A weekly community bus service operated by Worcester Wheels Community Transport for the villages of Peopleton and Drakes Broughton had had its funding withdrawn by Worcestershire County Council and parishes following the introduction of a Demand Responsive Transport service. However, a £3,500 donation has ensured that the service can continue. The money has been gifted by a local benefactor Lesley Blowes from her late father's estate. Manager Dormston Cook said: "a remarkable act of generosity has ensured its continuation. A kind-hearted lady has stepped forward to personally fund the



service, recognising how essential it is to the wellbeing of both communities. Some of the community were going to be stranded as they couldn't walk to designated bus stops. Worcester Wheels can pick them up at the end of their road and drop them at their door. People can feel vulnerable and isolated with no other form of transport and no family. They would be housebound if not for the community transport. Lesley has donated the funds to keep it going for another year. This really makes a difference."

<https://www.worcesternews.co.uk/news/25859432.worcester-wheels-community-transport-villages-service-saved/>

Lincolnshire – Consultation on CT Hub for Mablethorpe. Lincolnshire CVS has been out and about in and around Mablethorpe engaging with the local community about their thoughts on how a Community Transport Mobility Hub could serve the town. They have been keen to hear from people who live, work and visit Mablethorpe and whilst they love the opportunity to have real life conversations with individuals, their reach may be limited, particularly with the cold weather.

<https://lincolnshire.aidecrm.co.uk/surveys/respond/1KSbwcNKuYPLNYpXpSHR1NNCSDfTInQeNSHxSEPE>

Greater London – TfL Dial-a-Ride Slammed for Journey Cancellations. Residents of Hackney have faced journey cancellations recently and have complained about the service from TfL. User Bryan Pinto commented: "It's more than unacceptable. What if someone's made an arrangement to go to a funeral, and suddenly they are left stranded? It's like Uber. The majority of elderly people are not very familiar with computers. Their eyesight is very poor". Now Hackney Council's transport committee has published a new report which stated Dial-a-Ride "may be failing to meet its core purpose". The study, which concluded that TfL was "lacking depth or nuance" on accessibility, found that users were turning away from Dial-a-Ride

due to “unreliability” and inability to meet demand. The report stated: “If Dial-a-Ride is not operating at full potential, a significant number of older and disabled residents may be unable to complete essential journeys – to shops, health appointments, or social activities. This could place them at increased risk of transport-related social exclusion, exacerbate isolation and deepen inequalities”.

James Meade, General Manager of On-Demand Transport at TfL, said: “Our aim is to ensure as many older and disabled Londoners as possible benefit from our free Dial-a-Ride service, and we are very sorry if any of our customers have experienced difficulties using the service. While we are currently fulfilling more than the targeted 90 per cent of customer requests, we are always looking to improve all aspects of the service and are open to feedback”. Video item here: [https://youtu.be/U1q6Wj\\_tkxE](https://youtu.be/U1q6Wj_tkxE)  
<https://www.hackneycitizen.co.uk/2026/02/24/tfl-dial-ride-cancelled-journey/>

Wales - Cwmni Pum Plwy Penllyn Cyf launches new service. CTA writes: “After two years of hard work, we’re delighted to see the launch of the new transport service in Bala.

Michelle and Michelle visited Lowri and Dana earlier this month to see their new wheelchair accessible vehicle funded by the National Lottery. The community is really excited to have a service, and we wish them every success – well done to Sioned, Lowri and Dana on your commitment to getting the project up and running!”



[https://ctauk.org/civicrm/mailing/view?reset=1&id=661&cid=27725&cs=744e5424a78d5b8778e4cc1dff3ad\\_1771934183\\_336](https://ctauk.org/civicrm/mailing/view?reset=1&id=661&cid=27725&cs=744e5424a78d5b8778e4cc1dff3ad_1771934183_336)

Wales - Moondance Foundation Grants for CT. CTA writes: “The Moondance Foundation has supported a number of Community Transport operators in Wales, and we were delighted to hear that Siop Griffiths Cyf / Yr Orsaf in Penygroes has recently been successful in securing £20,000. Ben Gregory, from Siop Griffiths Cyf, said “I appreciated CTA sharing information about the Moondance Foundation in one of our meetings. It was a simple



online application form, short and straightforward, and we had a decision in 10 weeks. The funding will contribute to our paid driver salary costs for two years – a positive result!” It is worth checking whether your organisation can apply for a grant. Organisations need to have a two-year history of operations and accounts. Further info here:

<https://moondancefoundation.org.uk/>.

[https://ctauk.org/civicrm/mailing/view?reset=1&id=661&cid=27725&cs=744e5424a78d5b8778e4cc1dff3ad\\_1771934183\\_336](https://ctauk.org/civicrm/mailing/view?reset=1&id=661&cid=27725&cs=744e5424a78d5b8778e4cc1dff3ad_1771934183_336)

Wales – New CT Pilot Scheme in Blaenavon. A new pilot CT service is to be launched through a partnership between Blaenavon Town Council and Torfaen Voluntary Alliance (TVA) to support residents in Blaenavon, Forgeside, and surrounding communities. The service will be community-led and volunteer-based car scheme. The pilot is described as “a key component of the wider North Torfaen Community Led Transport Scheme, developed through partnership working and extensive community engagement, where residents consistently identified transport as a key barrier to accessing appointments and local services. It forms part of an ongoing effort to enhance wellbeing, strengthen community resilience, and ensure residents can access vital services locally.” Deputy Mayor of Blaenavon Town Council, Councillor Angela Lewis said: “Blaenavon has always been a community where people look out for each other. This pilot brings that spirit to life by ensuring residents who struggle with transport are not left isolated. We are proud to work with TVA and local partners to start shaping a longterm, community led solution that meets local needs.”

Aimi Morris, Chief Executive Officer of Torfaen Voluntary Alliance, commented that the “pilot is about enabling the community to take the lead. Whether by becoming a volunteer driver or helping us shape how the scheme operates, local people are at the heart of this model. We want to make it easier, safer, and more accessible for residents to reach appointments, social activities, and everyday essentials.” TVA is now seeking volunteer drivers and community volunteers to get involved and help bring the scheme to life. Telephone 01495 365610, email [volunteering@tvawales.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@tvawales.org.uk). Or complete the short online form via Blaenavon Town Council’s website at [www.Blaenavontowncouncil.co.uk](http://www.Blaenavontowncouncil.co.uk). <https://www.abergavennychronicle.com/news/blaenavon-launches-transport-scheme-revolution-882964>

Wales – Hay Dial-a-Ride to Offer Shopping Buddies. To assist its users, Hay & District Dial-a-Ride is set to introduce a “Shopping Buddies” initiative from April, each Tuesday morning in Hay until March 31, 2027. This will pair Dial-a-Ride members with a trained volunteer passenger assistant who will accompany them for all their shopping needs. CEO of Hay & District Dial-a-Ride Lesley Johnston said: “For many people, shopping is about much more than groceries. It’s about independence, social contact and feeling confident in your own community. Our Shopping Buddies pilot will provide that extra helping hand in store, giving reassurance and practical support so that members can shop with confidence.” The pilot is supported by the Social Value Fund. Members interested in booking a place on the Tuesday morning service can contact the office on 01497 821616. Advance booking is essential. <https://www.brecon-radnor.co.uk/news/hay-dial-a-ride-launches-new-shopping-buddies-pilot-884359>



South Yorkshire – Mayor’s Plea for Volunteer Drivers in Sheffield. Oliver Coppard, the Mayor of South Yorkshire has called for more volunteers for Sheffield’s Door2Door community transport service, commenting: “Volunteers are the beating heart of community transport in South Yorkshire. They help people stay active, connected and independent; often at moments when they need it most.” Mark Crossley (72), a retired maths teacher, has driven for the Sheffield CT for the past 12 years. He said: “There is a demand for younger people to volunteer otherwise the organisation may have to stop catering for the elderly. They are the very people who look forward to be able to be collected from their home, helped to the transport and meet at a warm venue for a cooked meal followed by bingo... It was very satisfying helping, especially as a volunteer, with the cost of transport being much lower than commercial hired vehicles. Many commercial vehicles could not offer a lift for wheelchair users or for those finding the steps difficult.” More information, along with how and who can volunteer, can be found here on



South Yorkshire’s transport webpage. They can also be contacted via phone at 0114 285 9906 for Sheffield.

<https://shefnews.co.uk/index.php/2026/02/20/south-yorkshire-mayor-urges-increase-in-community-transport-drivers/> You Tube video is here:  
<https://youtu.be/k8L3EdKbMwU>

## North Yorkshire – Community Transport Summit Planned.

A number of North Yorks community transport and Hub organisations are to hold a Summit on 24 March in Northallerton. The event aims to build shared understanding of the role, reach and unique social value of community transport across North Yorkshire; to explore how community transport fits within the wider public transport, health and social care systems, and to identify practical partnership opportunities between commissioners, delivery partners and the community transport sector.



Norfolk – Norfolk CT is Celebrating Lottery Win. A new grant award has been made to North Norfolk Community Transport from The National Lottery Community Fund to help continue and expand its services and invest in a new electric minibuss. Chief Executive Jane Bishop said: "Our services exist to make sure people are not cut off from everyday life simply because of where they live or the challenges they face. This funding from the National Lottery Community Fund is about independence, dignity and



connection. It means people can get to appointments, stay socially active and continue living well in their own homes. We are incredibly grateful to National Lottery players for making this possible." A service user commented: "Fantastic service, I am 78, live on my own. Being able to wait and take me home makes such a difference. I don't know what I would do without this service." The Lottery funding will also

enable the charity to purchase a new electric minibuss, supporting its transition to a more sustainable fleet and helping to reduce running costs.

<https://www.norfolknews.co.uk/news/25843184.community-transport-charity-nnct-receives-lottery-funding/>

Hampshire – Local CT Hosts Visit from Basingstoke MP. Luke Murphy, MP for Basingstoke, joined with Community First to experience the Connect door-to-door service, which provides a service throughout the urban and rural areas of Basingstoke. The MP also met with staff, volunteers and passengers on the service. He said: "I saw first-hand the vital role that Community First Transport plays in our community - helping people carry out everyday tasks, ensuring accessible transport is available to all, and, perhaps most importantly, fostering a real sense of community. Having a service like this in Basingstoke, supported by such dedicated and caring drivers, means more people can enjoy everything our town has to offer, from museums and shops to restaurants and local events.

Chief executive of Community First Tim Houghton said: "It was a pleasure to welcome Luke Murphy to our depot to show how vital our service is to the Basingstoke community. Our dedicated staff and volunteers go above and beyond every day to help people remain independent and socially connected. Raising awareness of our services is crucial, so people of all ages know there are flexible and affordable alternatives to public transport. We're grateful to Luke for taking the time to visit and for his support."



<https://www.basingstokegazette.co.uk/news/25855394.basingstoke-transport-service-keeping-communities-linked/>

Hampshire - Community Bus Route Service Expansion. A community bus operated by Community First has extended its service connecting Eastleigh with Chandler's Ford by incorporating additional stops in Valley Park. This response has been due to increased demand on the Route 44 service. Chief officer at Community First Alex Barrett said: "The service demonstrates how community transport can evolve when backed by strong local support. The growth in passenger numbers shows how valued the route has become as people can easily access onward bus and rail services across the region." Some sponsorship for the service has been provided by Ampfield Meadows and their manager Kat Andrews commented: "We are delighted to



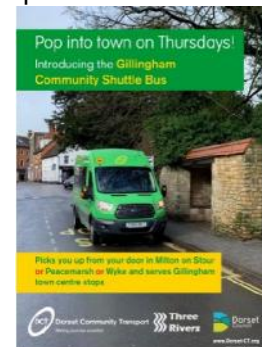
support Route 44. For many residents at Ampfield Meadows, having the freedom to travel independently to Eastleigh is vital not just for everyday errands, but for staying socially connected. This service enhances quality of life and helps combat isolation. It's a meaningful step forward not only for our community but supporting the wider community as well, which is hugely important to us. We are looking forward to welcoming new customers to the village to enjoy our

services, including a café and restaurant."

<https://www.dailyecho.co.uk/news/25910514.community-first-route-44-service-expand-valley-park/>

Dorset – Gillingham Community Shuttle Bus Hits the Road.

This new service is operated by Dorset Community Transport and aims to provide access to Gillingham for the residents of Wyke, Peacemarsh and Milton-on-Stour, stopping at existing bus stops for residents to access facilities and services in the town centre or to just socialise in cafes. The bus operates every Thursday and there are hopes that it could become a permanent fixture in the town. The launch of the service follows a public consultation and a 'drop-in' event held in April last year. It has subsequently taken a few months to get the funding in order, which has now been received for a six-month pilot period.



<https://www.gillingham-news.co.uk/news/community/gillingham-community-shuttle-bus-set-to-start-weekly-service/>

Australia – Ailing Community Transport Sector Needs

Funding Reform. Facing many challenges around financial sustainability, a new report has recommended a National Community Transport Pricing Model for the Australian CT sector, where flat fare charges are falling too far short of covering operational costs. The Australian Community Transport Association has worked with Adelaide University and 31 community transport providers across metropolitan, regional, rural, and remote Australia to ensure

that the research provided practical outcomes for providers and participants. Read the about the pricing model here:

<https://communitytransportaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Appendix-C-NCTPM-Pilot-Final-Report-20250707.pdf>  
<https://nationalseniors.com.au/news/latest-news/report-wheels-are-coming-off-community-transport>

### Cornwall – New Community Bus Service in St Dominic.

Operated by Saltash Red Bus, a new community bus service shuttles residents of St Dominic in the Tamar Valley to and from the town every Thursday morning at a cost of £4 for a return fare. Mike Finch, director of the CT as well as being a driver, said of the passengers: "they've had a day out and they've got something to put in their diary. St Dominic is about two-and-a-half-miles from the nearest bus

route and if you haven't got a driving licence, that's an awful long walk back carrying your shopping.

So we fill in that sort of need,

that's what it's all about." One

service user named Denis said:

"This bus is giving us freedom to

move on a regular basis, to be

reliable and to give us more

chances than we've had before - and it's really nice to have a chat."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c4g4xxdz21vo>



### Surrey – A New Community Bus Service Launched in Woking.

Woking Borough Council has worked with local groups Woking Community Transport and the Woking Healthy Communities Partnership Board to launch a new community transport initiative which is "designed to tackle social

isolation and make it easier for residents -

particularly older people - to stay

connected, active and independent." A

vehicle has been donated by Woking CT,

and will be managed and coordinated by

local charity Silver Friends. The North

West Surrey Alliance health partnership

has contributed £4,500 towards initial set-

up and operating costs. Founder of Silver

Friends Sandra Smook said: "Reliable

transport is often the missing link for many

local charities, particularly for older residents who may struggle to get out and

about." [https://www.hellorayo.co.uk/hits-radio/surrey-east-](https://www.hellorayo.co.uk/hits-radio/surrey-east-hampshire/news/a-new-community-bus-is-hitting-the-road-in-woking)

[hampshire/news/a-new-community-bus-is-hitting-the-road-in-woking](https://www.hellorayo.co.uk/hits-radio/surrey-east-hampshire/news/a-new-community-bus-is-hitting-the-road-in-woking)



### Northern Ireland – South Antrim CT User Feedback. An

appreciative message from a passenger has been posted on LinkedIn by

Leslie-ann Millar who is the manager of South Antrim Community Transport. Leslie-ann said: "Sharing this feedback from a service user - with permission. This is why we do what we do. Community Transport changes lives." The passenger said: "Well, what can I say about today? Absolutely out of this world, all thanks to my friend Kathy Magill!! She arranged with South Antrim Community Transport to take us out to the Lesley Abbeycentre for a day out, this was the first time I've been out to any shops since, I think 2009!! So you can imagine what an absolute treat this was for me! I could smell all the different things in the shops, touch and feel things and just have a good old look around! There was so much to take in, I'll probably wake up with a sore neck in the morning, I was so busy turning it from right to left looking at everything, I was so scared of missing something!



"The Abbeycentre has certainly changed a lot since I was last there, even the name! Our driver explained it was now named Lesley Abbeycentre, after the new owner's wife, Lesley! Our driver was absolutely lovely, a real gentleman, very helpful and chatted away to us. It was the first time I was able to sit and look out the windows (usually an ambulance window) and see how the world around me has changed and changed it certainly has! This was the first of many more outings we hope, apparently, they do day trips during school term breaks and holidays, so to the port here I come! So if you think you see me, then think no way, then you may be wrong! Speak to me if you do see me around, it could be anywhere, as I'll be too busy looking at everything!".  
[https://www.linkedin.com/posts/lesley-ann-millar-44b273356\\_sharing-this-feedback-from-a-service-user-share-7429496094197182464-VOy2?utm\\_source=share&utm\\_medium=member\\_desktop&rcm=ACoAAAWkAzYBkhHFgOsIkq3P2COp0XiF8M5YyVQ](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/lesley-ann-millar-44b273356_sharing-this-feedback-from-a-service-user-share-7429496094197182464-VOy2?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAAAWkAzYBkhHFgOsIkq3P2COp0XiF8M5YyVQ)

Northern Ireland - Newry and Mourne CT Funding Boost. Two CT operators (Down Community Transport and Newry & Mourne Community Transport) are to benefit from a £200,000 grant from Social Supermarket Fund (SSF). In partnership with Newry Mourne and Down District Council the funding will enable each operator to purchase a new mini bus and employ an additional driver. The Council Chairperson, Councillor Philip Campbell said: "Community transport providers play an invaluable role, particularly at the heart of rural communities. For many with mobility needs, the community transport service is a lifeline. The organisations have faced significant funding pressures in the past and I am delighted the service is

going from strength-to-strength. Transporting almost 11,000 passengers in a year shows the reliance people place on this invaluable service which is staffed by committed individuals, providing access for a wide group of people including the elderly, those with disabilities, Special Education Needs and community group members."

Sheileen Brady, manager of Down Community Transport commented that "This investment has made a genuine and measurable difference across the district. The funding has enabled both organisations to introduce two new accessible buses, strengthen DAL and group hire services and respond to growing community demand. The funding has enabled fleet modernisation and the recruitment of an additional driver, increasing our teams to 16 drivers and expanding our fleet to 19 buses. This has



improved reliability, comfort, safety, and service flexibility while creating local employment. The impact goes far beyond transport alone, with the buses reducing isolation, increasing independence, and strengthening community wellbeing." Speaking for Newry and Mourne Community Transport, chief executive, Stephen Yeomans said:

"The additional finance has enabled us to deliver affordable and accessible transport, reducing social isolation and allowing more people with mobility needs to participate in social, recreational and community services. The funding has allowed us to modernise our ageing fleet. With a dependable vehicle and additional driver, we have been able to extend our services, respond more flexibly to community need and support increased volunteering and partnership working." <https://downnews.co.uk/transport-providers-get-boost-from-council/>

**Nottinghamshire – Bassetlaw CT Operator Celebrates 30 Years of Service.** Bassetlaw Action Centre (BAC) played host to a number of dignitaries, including Lord Lieutenant Veronica Pickering and celebrity Reverend Kate Bottley, to celebrate completing 30 years of helping their local community. At the event presenter Howard Bradley from LS14 spoke about the difference made to over a quarter of a million people who had been in touch with BAC saying "What struck me most about the afternoon was the warmth, pride, and shared sense of purpose as people came together to celebrate Bassetlaw Action Centre. Great food and great fun and hearing directly from people whose lives have been shaped by the work made it clear that this organisation is not only reflecting on an impressive past, but is well placed for the next 30 years as well." A touching video was shown where one client explained how BAC helped with her loneliness after her husband died and saying that she wouldn't have known what to do without it, while in another a

user of the Bassetlaw Community Car Scheme described the difference it made in her life. Bassetlaw Action Centre began in 1996 with just 2.5 full time staff and over the years has grown to include 36 staff members and a large number of volunteers.

Over the years it has increased its services from a Community Car Scheme to adding in minibus trips, providing support in the home and when people have just left hospital, befriending, housing and benefit advice, and running courses on managing long term conditions. Bassetlaw Action Centre continues to need volunteers in a number of roles in order to provide

different services. Anyone who is interested, or who feels they would benefit from assistance, should visit [www.bassetlawactioncentre.org.uk](http://www.bassetlawactioncentre.org.uk), email [enquiries@actioncentre.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@actioncentre.org.uk) or call 01777 709650 to find out more.



Howard Bradley as Robin Hood

Warwickshire – Volunteer Drivers are Needed in Rugby. The VASA community transport service is in great need of additional volunteers, with an increasing demand being served by only 15 drivers. CEO of VASA Gill Cleeve said: "Since changes to the WMAS Patient Transport eligibility in November 2025, alongside the temporary loss of services like Indigo in the Rugby area and the closure of WRCC, many residents, particularly in rural areas, are finding themselves with very limited transport options. Increasingly, we are becoming the only available solution. So far this year, and we're only at the beginning of March, we've already completed 373 journeys...Behind those numbers are real people, often older residents, those with long term health conditions, or people without family support nearby, who would otherwise struggle to attend appointments or remain independent. What makes this even more remarkable is that all of this support in Rugby is delivered by just 15 volunteer drivers... We are reaching a point where demand is starting to outpace capacity. Without more volunteer drivers locally, there is a real risk that some residents may begin to miss appointments or become more isolated, which has wider implications for both individuals and the health

#### Volunteer Driver (Rugby and surrounding areas)



Our Volunteer drivers play a vital role in providing transport services across Stratford and Warwick Districts and the Rugby Borough area. We have approximately 3000 people who use this important service and approximately 150 wonderful volunteer drivers transporting passengers to medical appointments, dental appointments, social events, family gatherings and more. These drivers provide a lifeline for those who cannot travel themselves or on public transport services.

We need drivers with their own car to help us provide transport to local residents to get out and about. Without these volunteers and with the additional pressures on the NHS, many patients wouldn't be able to attend their hospital appointments in our local area. This important service can also help to alleviate social isolation, depression and loneliness.

system.” Further details <https://vasa.goassemble.com/opportunities>.  
<https://www.warwickshireworld.com/business/volunteer-drivers-needed-in-rugby-to-go-the-extra-mile-to-help-people-attend-vital-health-appointments-5619648>

### West Sussex – New Community Bus Service for Chichester.

Following a letter from an older woman concerned about changes to a bus route in Chichester, a new service has now been started, funded by Chichester City Council and operated by Community Transport Sussex. The bus operates every Wednesday between care homes and retirement homes in Stockbridge Road to the Marks & Spencer car park.

<https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/news/politics/council/community-bus-launched-in-chichester-after-plea-from-resident-5621852>

### Essex - Tendring District Council provides Community

Minibuses. Press release: Last year, Tendring District Council granted UTurn4Support £50,000 to purchase a brand new vehicle to support their work with ten to 18-year-olds across the district. The 16-seater Peugeot is now regularly used to bring youngsters to and from their sessions in Old Road, Clacton, for holiday clubs, after school activities and therapeutic mental health sessions. Youngsters also use the bus to get to school, use it to go to medical appointments and for trips further afield than was previously possible. Tania Swanson, Director of UTurn4Support, said: “We know that a lack of transport is a major hurdle preventing young people from accessing services, so we applied for the funding to help break down barriers and reduce isolation. Our team can now pick children up closer to where they live, enabling them to

access not only our services but other support available in the community. The bus arrived in November and we can already see major progress and positive outcomes.” Two other local groups - Tendring Community Transport and Harwich Connexions – have also had vehicles funded through TDC’s £20m Community Regeneration



Partnership with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government following a grant application process last year. These are due to arrive in the coming weeks... For more information about the project visit

<https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/government-funded-projects/community->

[transport-mini-buses](#). and <https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/news/youth-charity-delighted-by-impact-of-tdc-funded-community-minibus> with link to video.

Scotland – New Electric Buses for Orkney. Orkney Council Press release: “The Island of Hoy Development Trust, supported by Orkney Islands Council, has secured more than £130,000 from the Carbon Neutral Islands Capital Fund (CNICF) to accelerate the transition of its transport fleet to fully electric vehicles. The investment will enable the Trust to purchase three new electric buses and install an electric charging point at the YM Hall in Longhope. This new charger will complement the Trust’s existing electric vehicles, with installation work and vehicle delivery scheduled for completion before 31 March. Throughout the winter, the Trust has been trialling a demand-responsive transport model with residents in the north of the island. Their feedback, along with information gathered from an island wide survey in March of 2025, has played a key role in shaping how the bus service will be implemented across Hoy & Walls going forward.

The new service will operate on a door-to-door basis, allowing residents to be collected from their homes and taken to any destination within Hoy and Walls.

Bookings can be made up to two weeks in advance, or as little as two hours before travel. This shift from



a fixed-timetable bus service to a mainly demand-responsive model will enable it to be available seven days a week between the hours of 06:15 and 19:30, and is planned to launch on 1 April. The Trust’s work builds on its long-standing partnership with Orkney Islands Council, which currently contracts it to deliver public bus services across the island. This collaboration has been strengthened further through additional support from the Community Transport Grant Scheme, alongside match funding from the Sustainable and Green Transport Fund. Together, these funding streams have helped develop community transport on Hoy and Walls, ensuring quality accessible service for its residents.” <https://www.orkney.gov.uk/latest-news/island-of-hoy-development-trust-secures-funding-for-new-electric-buses/>

