



Newsletter No.70

Edited by John Atkins (Principal Consultant). Published September 2026.

Please send us any news items, stories of interest, press releases or photographs.

John Taylor (1952-2026). TAS Partnership is sad to announce the death on 23 August of its longest-standing director and the UK's foremost authority on community transport matters, **John Taylor**. John had been involved in accessible and community-based transport since 1977 and during a long and committed career he had managed CT projects in Manchester, headed the **National Advisory Unit for Community Transport** and worked towards the formation of the **Community Transport Association** before moving into consultancy, initially in partnership with **Graham Lightfoot**, whose death was announced last year. John joined TAS in 1994 specialising in community, rural and accessible transport. As a TAS Director, John led a wide variety of projects throughout the UK and Europe, providing extensive support and advice to local authorities around procurement, in-house operations and fleet management. His home-to-school transport reviews were transformative, saving local authorities many thousands of pounds and at the same time improving safety standards and well-being of passengers. With a legal background, John became an expert on community transport operational legislation, authoring the CTA's ground-breaking and influential publications *Starting Up - A guide to running a community minibus*, *Permit Legislation Guide - A guide to minibus law*, and *Choosing the right minibus - A guide to minibus specification*. He also led on many campaigns and safety initiatives such as **MIDAS**. Aside of his TAS involvement, John has served as chair of **Preston CT** for the last few years. John battled with cancer during his final few months and only during his last few weeks did this prevent him from engaging with colleagues and maintaining his energetic zeal for work. See full obituary below.





John receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award from CTA Director Victoria Armstrong in 2024 – the only time he accepted any formal acknowledgement of his work on behalf of the sector.

England – Network Accessibility Planning required by Local Authorities. DfT has published guidance around how local transport authorities are now required to prepare a **Bus Network Accessibility Plan** (Bus NAP): "All local transport authorities (LTAs) in England must publish an initial bus network accessibility plan (Bus NAP) by 1 April 2027. A Bus NAP covers any services with at least one stop in an LTA's area and must:

- describe existing features of the bus network which support disabled people to use local bus services
- assess the extent to which features of the network enable disabled people to travel independently, safely and in reasonable comfort and
- describe any action that the authority plans to take to improve the accessibility of bus services in their area...

Authorities must review and update their Bus NAP at least once every 3 years, or sooner if there is a substantial change to the provision of local services."



Whilst the plan is primarily concerned with the accessibility of the local bus network, the guidance goes on to state that: "LTAs can also include the following in their Bus NAPs: services supporting local bus services, or important to the local transport mix, including demand responsive transport

(DRT) and community transport... Authorities should take a whole-network approach, looking at how accessible journeys work end to end. This means that LTAs should consider all aspects of bus service provision, including community and demand responsive transport services, that support disabled passengers and how they integrate with other elements of the wider transport system that sit within the authority's remit..."

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creating-and-managing-a-bus-network-accessibility-plan-bus-nap/creating-and-managing-a-bus-network-accessibility-plan>

Nottinghamshire - Nottingham CT Announces Closure. After a period of uncertainty, the main Nottingham-based CT operator has closed down. The CT operator (**CT4N Charitable Trust** and **CT4N** trading subsidiary) has issued the following statement: "Despite the approval of a **Company Voluntary Arrangement** in October 2025 and significant efforts by the Board and management team to restructure the business, CT4N has faced increasingly challenging trading conditions. Rising fuel, insurance, maintenance and employment costs, combined with regulatory pressures affecting its operations, have placed significant strain on the Company's financial and operational viability. The Directors have worked with professional advisers to explore all available options. However, after careful consideration, they have concluded that given the circumstances, the Company has no viable alternative but to take steps to cease trading immediately.

Unfortunately, as a consequence, the Company has had to announce the immediate redundancy of the majority of its 76 staff and steps are being taken to formally place the Company into Administration. CT4N has a long history of serving communities across Nottingham and the wider region, tracing its origins back to the formation of **Nottingham Community Transport** in 1979.



The Directors would like to thank its employees, passengers, customers, suppliers and stakeholders for their support and commitment over many years. The Company has informed the **East Midlands Combined County Authority** (EMCCA) of its decision and understands that arrangements are being considered to minimise disruption to passengers and maintain services where possible." CT4N Charitable Trust has failed to file any accounts with the Charity Commission since the financial year 2022/2023. <https://www.ct4n.co.uk/ct4n-statement-of-business>. Also see:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c20eyg9pp9lo>

In response the Mayor of the East Midlands **Claire Ward** said: "Losing a local bus service is life-changing, and we have taken seriously the impact that the collapse of CT4N has had. Some services have already been replaced by other

operators, and we are working at pace with them and other local partners to explore every available option to further minimise disruption and keep communities connected wherever possible. I appreciate that for people employed by CT4N in this region, this will be a difficult time, and we will be happy to support people who have lost their jobs by signposting them into EMCCA's relevant employment and skills programmes. EMCCA will provide updates as soon as further arrangements can be confirmed."

<https://westbridgfordwire.com/work-under-way-to-restore-nottinghamshire-bus-routes-after-ct4n-collapse/>

Former passengers and employees of CT4N services have spoken of the impact of the loss of service here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn9nw4e8ln0o>. However, some former services have been taken up by other operators:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/czjlxm7wdzwo>

Northumberland – Former CT Employee is Convicted for Fraud.

As an employee of **Community Transport** between 2021 and 2023, **Hayley Smith** was responsible for managing funds in its Blyth furniture operation. During the period, a court heard that she defrauded the CT of over £20,000. The CT finally identified the irregularities, but only after a number of volunteers fell under suspicion during the subsequent investigation. Described as a "gambling addict", Smith later pleaded guilty to theft, fraud by position of trust and failing to surrender. The court heard how she had previous offences for dishonesty dating back to 2011. Her actions also damaged morale at Community Transport. Smith was sentenced to 27 months in prison suspended for three years. She was ordered to carry out 175 hours of unpaid work, 20 rehabilitation activity requirement days and made subject to an electronically monitored curfew for 12 months. <https://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/gambling-addict-stole-more-20000-34432688>

Devon – Priority Parking for CT Vehicles in Ivybridge. Three car parks in Ivybridge have been given a makeover by **South Hams District Council** and now incorporate designated bays for community transport minibuses. The minibus bays are to be used by **Ivybridge and District Community Transport Association** and **Devon County Council** minibuses.

Coordinator at Ivybridge CT, **Alex Thom**, said the new bays would make the service "more timely and efficient... In the past we have often not been able to find parking when buses return and have had to circle around or find parking elsewhere. It will therefore allow a more timely and efficient departure so more timely collection of passengers. The organisation had raised the need for dedicated minibus bays with SHDC in the past and we are very



grateful they have listened to these requests and enabled them. We would like to thank the local District councillors for supplying these dedicated bays."

<https://www.themoorlander.co.uk/news/ivybridge-car-parks-reopen-new-disabled-bays-ps73k-pop-up-market-and-minibus-spaces-unveiled-8921825>

Wales - Llŷn Peninsula fflecsi Bus Highlighted. The fflecsi DRT service resumed operations for the summer, gaining praise for offering locals and tourists a chance to travel affordably and conveniently around the Llŷn peninsula. The service is operated by **O Drws i Drws** ("from door to door") and ran on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday between 9am – 6pm until September 12, 2026. The bus is booked by App or phone call and provides flexible transport to and from designated pick-up and drop-off points across the Llŷn. O Drws i Drws says: "It's simple, user-friendly and ideal for rural areas where traditional bus routes don't always meet local needs" offering a "simple, affordable, and eco-friendly service" which "helps local residents and tourists to travel more easily and conveniently around the Llŷn...It's for everyone – local residents, visitors, families, older people, young people and anyone who wants to travel around Pen Llŷn without needing a car. It's especially helpful



for those who might otherwise struggle with transport options...We are fortunate to receive financial support from the **Llŷn AONB Sustainable Development Fund** towards running the service. We work closely with **Transport for Wales** and local stakeholders to promote the service and ensure it continues to benefit the communities of Llŷn

Peninsula." To book a journey, passengers downloaded the fflecsi app or called 0300 234 0300. For more information, visit www.fflecsi.cymru website or contact O Ddrws i Ddrws on 01758 721 777.

<https://www.northwaleschronicle.co.uk/news/26473361.flexible-bus-service-opens-ll-n-locals-tourists/>

Wales – 'On the Go' in Carmarthenshire. Age Cymru has posted: "Our **On the Go / Ar y Ffordd** community transport service, delivered in partnership by **Age Cymru Dyfed** and **Dolen Teifi**, continues to grow, helping more people living with disabilities across Carmarthenshire to access essential services, activities and opportunities that might otherwise be difficult or impossible to reach. Funded from June 2025 for an initial three years, the

service provides a community transport option for people living with disabilities across Carmarthenshire, including wheelchair accessible vehicles. At the end of the three-



year funding period, the vehicles will become community assets, providing a lasting benefit to local communities... We are delighted that a further five vehicles will shortly be joining the On the Go fleet. This additional resource will significantly increase the capacity of the service and provide more opportunities for people and organisations across Carmarthenshire to access flexible, accessible community transport... For further information on the project, please visit our On The Go page and/or get in touch by email or phone. Email: communitytransport@agecymrudyfed.org.uk <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/dyfed/about-us/news/articles/2021/on-the-go--community-transport-making-a-difference-across-carmarthenshire/>

Wales – North Wales Regional CT Forum. CTA has posted: “Team Wales held a Regional Forum in Llandudno on 8 July to bring members and supporters together to share information about the Team’s work and to provide space for members to share insights and ideas about creating their dream CT service and the practical support needed in relation to fundraising. ‘There’s always a warmth in the room when we come to one of your events,’ one participant told us, testament to the welcoming nature of operators and staff alike! The discussions included:

- The need for closer working with the Health Board covering North Wales because ‘it’s really difficult to get an “in” to the NHS’, and operators want to ensure that the work they do on a daily basis to help people access vital healthcare, is understood, acknowledged and funded.
- That there is a high level of interest in events such as this one that bring people together, and members spoke about how important they are, especially as running a community transport service can feel quite isolating at times. There is something incredibly valuable about peer support and having the opportunity to chat informally with CTA team members as well as with other operators.
- The need for practical support around funding, including help to understand the logistics of what is needed to start or expand a CT service, so that funding proposals can be accurately costed, leading to more financially resilient services. There was discussion



about the need for an up-to-date tool that assists operators to base services on a Full Cost Delivery model.

- Another key message highlighted the importance of sharing learning across the community transport sector. Coordinators and Managers of schemes have a wealth of skills, expertise and 'know-how' in funding, so we need to find more ways to share funding tips and techniques, information about supportive funders and live funding opportunities, and create space for collaboration." <https://ctauk.org/news/north-wales-regional-forum-july-2026>

Wales – PACTO Celebrates its People. An appreciation of **Craig Morgan** has been posted by **Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations**: "Craig joined PACTO in August 2015, and he has since become an invaluable member of the team. Over the course of his service, he has trained and assessed more than 1,330 drivers through the nationally-recognised **MIDAS** (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) programme, helping to maintain high standards of safety and professionalism across the community transport sector. Craig has also undertaken over 60 Wheelchair Passport assessments, ensuring that wheelchair users can travel safely and with confidence in crash-tested wheelchairs on accessible community transport vehicles throughout Pembrokeshire.

Each November, he supports the **Crucial Crew** programme, delivering safety awareness sessions for school children and helping them develop the knowledge and skills needed to use school and public transport safely. In addition to his training and assessment work, Craig brings a wealth of knowledge and practical expertise to the sector. His insight has been instrumental in the procurement and specification of accessible vehicles for the community transport fleet. Craig's hard work was recognised in 2024 when PACTO were awarded the **MIDAS Organisation of the Year Award** at the **Community Transport Association**, before being nominated for a second time in 2025. He is highly respected by colleagues, operators and partners alike for his professionalism, approachable manner, and commitment to supporting others, making him a trusted source of guidance and expertise across the community transport network. Thank you, Craig!" <https://lnkd.in/p/eQ8sicbB>



PACTO has also been nominated in two categories in the **2026 Social Business Wales Awards** by **Cwmpas** for Social Enterprise Innovation and Community-based Social Enterprise. General Manager of PACTO **Ady Poole** commented: "We are absolutely delighted to have been shortlisted in two national award categories. This recognition reflects the commitment and dedication of our staff, volunteers, trustees, member organisations and

partners, all of whom work tirelessly to support communities across Pembrokeshire. Community Transport is about much more than getting people from A to B. It enables people to access healthcare, maintain independence, stay connected to their communities and enjoy a better quality of life. We are incredibly proud to represent Pembrokeshire and to showcase the positive impact that community-led transport solutions can have on people's lives."

<https://www.westerntelegraph.co.uk/news/26543956.pembrokeshire-transport-group-shortlisted-two-awards/>

CTA Updates

- **CTA's Tribute to John Taylor** <https://ctauk.org/news/remembering-john-taylor-pioneer-community-transport>
- **CTA AGM and D1 Reception at Westminster** - On Thursday 15 October, we're bringing CTA members and stakeholders together at the Palace of Westminster for our 2026 Annual General Meeting and a special reception focused on our campaign to change minibus driver licensing rules.
- <https://ctauk.org/event/cta-agm-and-d1-reception-westminster>
- **CTWeek26** - Community Transport Week returns from 12–16 October with this year's theme, 'Driving Communities Forward', celebrating everyone who



keeps community transport moving. Whether you're planning an open day, celebrating your volunteers, sharing passenger stories or highlighting the impact of your services, our CTWeek26 toolkit includes resources and ideas to help

you get involved and spread the word. <https://ctauk.org/ctweek26-how-get-involved>

- **Community Action Ledbury: Rebuilding Community One Journey at a Time** <https://ctauk.org/news/community-action-ledbury-rebuilding-community-one-journey-time>
- **Community Transport & Health in Cambridgeshire Workshop** <https://ctauk.org/news/community-transport-health-cambridgeshire-workshop>
- **Social investment – an opportunity to diversify your funding?** <https://ctauk.org/news/social-investment-opportunity-diversify-your-funding>

North East England – Shaping Rural Transport Across the

North East - ROUTES Transport Survey. The **ROUTES** (Rural Optimised User-centred Transport Eco System) Project is inviting individuals in the North East of England to contribute to a survey. The ROUTES project is being delivered by **Edge Innovation Ltd** in partnership with **Weardale Community Transport, Connected Places Catapult, Rural Design Centre, and Eco Car Club**, and is funded by the **North East Mayoral Combined Authority**. The project aims to better understand experiences, needs, and perspectives related to transport in the North East. By gathering feedback from individuals and communities, the project seeks to identify opportunities for improvement and inform future policies and practices. Your input is extremely valuable. The information you provide will help shape recommendations and contribute to more inclusive, effective, and responsive solutions.



Weardale Community Transport

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=aKng34m4IUqjPyDLXnseB2wOPN5AqKNAoQfrVJxHrDtUNVdTMDRBMzA1WkZOVlICQUo2VFBSS0I4VC4u&route=shorturl>

Somerset - SWAN Transport Seeks Trustees. **SWAN** has posted: "the Radstock based charity supporting people across BANES with community focussed services, is looking for new Trustees to help guide its future. For over 40 years, SWAN has been helping local people stay connected to their communities. From providing accessible transport for people who would otherwise struggle to keep their independence, to tackling food insecurity through the **Radstock Food Club**, and reducing isolation through Cuppa and



Steve, SWAN Transport passenger

“ The only time I get out is with SWAN drivers.

Basically, they help me get out the house as I'm house-bound. So it's lovely. It enables me to socialise. 🙌

cta
community transport
association

Chat, SWAN supports hundreds of local residents every year. As demand for these services continues to grow, the charity is seeking enthusiastic individuals to join its Board of Trustees and help ensure it can continue making a lasting difference across the community...Chair of Trustees, **Chris Davies**, said: "Our Trustees play a vital role in helping SWAN grow and respond to the needs of our communities. We're looking for people who care about making a positive difference and want to use

their skills and experience to help shape the future of a charity that supports thousands of local journeys and community connections every year. If you share our values and want to make a real impact, we'd love to hear from you." To express an interest or request further information, contact sofia@swan-

transport.co.uk , call 01761 439 548, or pop into the Radstock Office on Waterloo Road." <https://swan-transport.com/f/could-you-help-shape-the-future-of-swan>

Northamptonshire – Closure of Ability CT Service has Left a Gap. In April 2026, Northampton-based CT **Ability** ceased operations due to funding pressures. Five months later, former passengers living in and around Brackley, Towcester, Daventry and Northampton are struggling in the absence of any replacement service. **West Northamptonshire Council**, which has since pledged £172,000 in CT grants, had announced that there had been “significant interest” from potential replacement providers but these have failed to materialise. **Sarah Bool** (South Northants MP) has raised concerns in an open letter, warning that community transport providers faced an “impossible position” while awaiting certainty over funding. She said: “Multiple community transport providers will have to cease operations in the coming months if West Northamptonshire Council does not announce details of any grants and provide them with certainty.”



The Council stated that no provider had submitted a “fully developed and financially robust” proposal capable of replacing Ability on a similar scale, despite **CommMiniBus** having submitted a proposal for a rural bus network following Ability’s closure. A council spokesperson said: “The council remains committed to supporting community transport wherever possible and to ensuring that

available funding is used effectively, transparently and in a manner that best meets the needs of local communities.”

<https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/news/politics/rural-communities-in-west-northamptonshire-still-without-replacement-bus-service-five-months-after-ability-closure-8928222> and <https://ca.news.yahoo.com/search-rural-bus-operator-goes-123657683.html> and <https://www.banburyguardian.co.uk/community/rural-communities-near-banbury-and-brackley-still-without-bus-service-five-months-after-closure-8928864>

Norfolk – West Norfolk Community Transport Driver Praised for Response During Fight at King's Lynn Bus Station.

A driver from **West Norfolk Community Transport** has been praised for her actions in keeping passengers safe following a fight involving eight people (one of whom was stabbed) at King's Lynn on Aug 22. Managing director of West Norfolk CT **Peter Brown** commended her efforts as follows: "When the fight and stabbing took place, the bus driver acted very well - she kept all the passengers on board, and got one young person who had got off back on. She also took some people who were not our passengers from the station on our bus for safekeeping. We're extremely proud of the prompt and responsible way she acted to protect people – it was first-class." <https://www.lynnnews.co.uk/news/bus-driver-s-first-class-actions-keep-passengers-safe-duri-9479917/>



West Norfolk CT has also paid tribute on the recent death of its founder: "It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of **Barry Langley**, who founded West Norfolk Community Transport in 1992. Without Barry's support, vision and dedication in setting up WNCTP, we would not be here today providing the many services we offer to our community. We would like to say a heartfelt thank you to Barry, for everything you did and for the lasting legacy you have left behind. Our thoughts and deepest sympathies are with Barry's family and loved ones at this very sad time."

<https://www.facebook.com/westnorfolkcommunitytransport/posts/it-is-with-great-sadness-that-we-announce-the-passing-of-barry-langley-who-found/1514255027165913/>

Shropshire – Shrewsbury CT Commences Route 745

Community Bus Service. As mentioned in the last newsletter, it has now been confirmed that **Shrewsbury Community Transport Initiative Ltd** (which operates as **Shrewsbury Dial-a-Ride**) will run along the former 745 route from 2 September. The new service is supported by **Shrewsbury Council** and will serve residents living along the route that links Pontesbury, Bishop's Castle, Clun, Craven Arms and Ludlow. Branded the **Three Castles Shuttle**, the bus will initially run as a two-year pilot and operate on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, with all journeys needing to be pre-booked. **Neil Langford** of Shrewsbury Dial-a-Ride commented that the service



"really is a lifeline for people...We can get anybody [onto the bus], whether they use an electric scooter, a walker, or a wheelchair...It's also about youngsters... getting out of rural areas into Ludlow or wherever they want to go. Our main motto here is that we provide services for people who cannot access traditional transport...We're not a big bus, but we'll have some fun - everyone gets to know each other..."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn74l4r3lvpo>

and <https://www.countytimes.co.uk/news/26491415.border-communities-get-new-demand-responsive-transport-link/> Also

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cd94q97yjneo>

Hertfordshire - Harpenden Hopper Welcomes 'Hetty'.

Harpenden Connect Limited which runs the **Harpenden Hopper** service has posted the following: "Our new minibus arrived on Wednesday afternoon, 19th August, 2026. Members of the Hopper Team were at the Highfield Oval to greet the new vehicle which had been named "Hetty" by local schoolchildren only a couple of hours earlier at the annual Hopper drivers' tea party for passengers - see below for that. At the same time it was a little sad as we had to say "good-bye" to Holly Hopper minibus who has served the town well over the past 7 years. Holly had

travelled 61,000 miles - mostly in Harpenden itself and I could work out the number of passengers she's carried over that time - but I'm not going to. Suffice it to say - it's been a lot. Holly was driven away to pastures new - to begin a new life (somewhere else). Hetty Hopper is still in her "birthday suit" and will be given Hopper "clothes" on



9th September when she will return covered in green and with frogs attached. She won't be travelling on the Hopper route until afterwards."

<https://www.harpendenhopper.co.uk/news/its-good-bye-to-holly-but-hello-to-hetty>

Harpenden Hopper also recently held its annual tea party for passengers:

"Once again, the Hopper drivers have organised our annual tea party for passengers. It took place on Wednesday 19th August in the garden of St Nicholas Church Hall. Several Hopper drivers arrived early in the morning to set up two gazebos to provide shade and then to set out all the chairs. Then two Hopper minibuses arrived with many regular passengers to enjoy a social chat with tea/coffee and home made cake (produced by some of our drivers, but also from some of the passengers too). It was lovely to see everyone relaxing and talking to each other. Luckily the weather was a little cooler than



of late, thus making it very pleasant sitting in the gentle sunshine. Andy Buchanan, Chair of **Harpenden Connect** (the charity that operates the Harpenden Hopper service), spoke to everyone. He gave a brief update on passenger numbers and also gave news about the imminent arrival of our new minibus (the very same day - but later on). Andy thanked our loyal passengers and of course our volunteer drivers,

without whom there would be no community transport service."

<https://www.harpendenhopper.co.uk/news/annual-hopper-passengers-tea-party-19th-august>

Gloucestershire - Bream Voluntary Car Service seeks Drivers.

The **Bream Voluntary Car Service** is currently recruiting volunteer drivers. The scheme has been providing transport services for medical and health-related appointments in the Forest of Dean since 1994. The charity believes that with more centralisation of medical facilities and reduction in public transport services, it has become more difficult for its local clients to access their appointments - which is why the service is so important. It has recently increased its mileage reimbursement to 55p per mile.

<https://www.theforestreview.co.uk/news/community-news/bream-voluntary-car-service-seeks-drivers-to-help-forest-of-dean-residents-936901>



Scotland – £4 million for Greener Community Transport.

Transport for Scotland release: A further £4 million is being made available for community transport operators to invest in zero emission vehicles and

charging infrastructure. The latest round of the

Scottish Government's Plugged-in

Communities Fund offers grants for the

purchase or lease of electric vehicles, including wheelchair accessible vehicles, and the associated charging infrastructure. Since its launch in 2021, the Plugged-in Communities Fund has enabled community transport organisations to procure 118 new, zero emission vehicles to replace their current diesel vehicles. Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Tourism and Transport **Stephen Flynn** said:

"This money from the Scottish Government makes investing in reliable electric vehicles more affordable for community groups in the heart of our local areas. Community transport



is a daily lifeline for so many vulnerable groups – helping people to get to the shops, meet friends and attend appointments. We know that for many people, using public transport can be a real challenge, whilst for others the option simply does not exist – which is why this money for electric vehicles and the chargers they require is so needed. When people ask what a Net Zero future looks like, this is it – reliable, affordable electric vehicles for vulnerable people in our local communities.” <https://www.transport.gov.scot/news/4-million-for-greener-community-transport/>

CTA Scotland comments: “We’re delighted to share that another round of the Plugged-In Communities Grant Fund has been secured from Transport Scotland, with a record £4 million to be invested into Community Transport’s transition to zero-emission fleets. This is fantastic news for our sector, with many CTA members set to benefit from funding for minibuses, MPVs and cars,



helping them to reduce operational costs, improve passenger comfort and cut carbon emissions. A great result for our members and another important step towards a greener, more sustainable Community Transport sector in Scotland.” <https://www.facebook.com/CTAUK1>

Scotland – Electric Car Hire Project Launched by Coalfield CT.

Residents in the Cumnock and Doon Valley areas are to benefit from a new project by **Coalfield Community Transport** named **Community Electric Car Club**. This is an electric vehicle hire initiative funded by **Ayrshire Growth Deal's Community Renewable Energy (CoRE)** project. The fleet includes three family-sized cars and a wheelchair accessible vehicle to improve accessibility and tackle social isolation for disabled residents. Councillor **Graham Barton** said: “Transport links and connectivity have long been a



concern for some of our outlying communities, with the lack of regular public transport links but the Community Car Club offers an affordable solution as well as contributing towards East Ayrshire's journey to net zero. The beauty of this scheme is that locals can hire a car for short journeys, in

the same way they might hop on a bus or train, whether that be for work, shopping, appointments or leisure – for less than the cost of an average fare on public transport – offering a perfect solution for local families on the move. The Electric Car Club has been developed to improve transport options for rural

communities, support access to employment, education and essential services and to encourage greater use of electric vehicles.”

<https://ayrshiredailynews.co.uk/article/coalfield-communities-welcome-car-hire-with-a-difference>

Worcestershire - Droitwich Spa CT Volunteers win Award.

Wychavon District Council has posted: “Volunteers **Droitwich CVS** transport. **Droitwich Community Volunteering Service** provides an essential lifeline for local residents, offering community transport that enables people to attend medical appointments, social clubs, and activities that would otherwise be out of reach. Its dedicated volunteer drivers give their time each week to support passengers, providing not only safe transport but also friendship, reassurance, and companionship.

For many users, including those with mobility challenges, this service plays a vital role in maintaining independence, mental wellbeing, and social connections. The volunteers go above and beyond, assisting passengers with care and dignity, while giving families and carers valuable respite.



Alongside community transport, the organisation supports the wider community through volunteer opportunities, room hire, advice and support services, and regular social activities. Droitwich Community Volunteering Service is a much-valued local organisation that makes a lasting difference to the lives of residents across the area.” <https://www.wychavon.gov.uk/community-and-living/wychavon-community-stars/community-stars-winners>

Teesside - Minibuses Belonging to North East Special School Smashed up by Mindless Vandals.



Chronicle Live reports: “Three minibuses belonging to a special school in the North East that provide a valuable lifeline to youngsters have been smashed up by vandals. Mindless yobs targeted the vehicles at Priory Woods School and Arts College, in Tothill Avenue, in Middlesbrough, smashing the windows, damaging the lights and causing ‘significant vandalism’ inside three of their five buses. Staff say the buses are ‘not a luxury’ but ‘essential’ for the welfare of the children. A fundraiser to repair the damage has already reached more than £7,000 in donations. As reported on **Teesside Live**, the incident, which saw the vandals repeatedly return to the school to carry out the damage, happened on Thursday, August 20, between

6pm and 7.30pm. Now, dozens of pupils will not be able to go on school trips, activities and community experiences 'that are such an important part of their education and development'. In a post on **Facebook** the staff said: 'With only two minibuses remaining available for the start of term, our ability to provide these opportunities will be significantly affected. As a Special Educational Needs school, our minibuses are not a luxury. They are essential. They enable our students to access opportunities beyond the classroom, develop independence and take part in experiences that many people take for granted...' <https://www.chroniclive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/minibuses-belonging-north-east-special-34540942>

Essex – Community Transport Survey Launched. Essex County Council has posted the following: Users of vital transport services that help residents access local services are being asked to share their views to help shape the future of the service...By seeking feedback from users, Essex County Council wants to better understand how services are being used, awareness of the services in local communities and future transport needs. This is the first countywide survey specifically focused on Community Transport services in Essex.

The survey is part of Essex County Council's ongoing work to better understand Community Transport needs across the county and ensure services continue to meet the needs of residents now and in the future. The feedback received will help the Council understand:

- How Community Transport services are currently being used;
- Levels of customer satisfaction;
- Barriers to accessing services;
- Areas where there may be unmet demand;
- Opportunities to improve information, communications and accessibility and
- The impact Community Transport has on people's independence and wellbeing.

The survey is open to current and previous Community Transport users, carers, family members and residents who would like to learn more about Community Transport in their area. As part of the survey, residents will also be able to access information about their local Community Transport provider and provide feedback on the information and support available through provider websites and communications.

The findings will help inform future Community Transport planning, service development, funding and commissioning decisions. As the first countywide survey specifically focused on Community

Transport services in Essex, it will also establish a baseline understanding of resident awareness, satisfaction and transport needs, enabling the Council to



measure future improvements and ensure services continue to meet the needs of local communities.

Councillor **Mark Webster**, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, said: "Community Transport services provide a vital link for many Essex residents, helping people stay connected to their communities and access essential services. We are keen to hear from as many people as possible so we can understand how our residents are using these services and where we can make improvements to ensure these vital transport services continue to meet user need." <https://www.travessex.co.uk/news/essex-residents-invited-to-share-their-views-on-community-transport-services>

Isle of Wight – Daisy Ring Bus Celebrates its First Year. An Isle of Wight CT service **Daisy Ring Bus CIC** has completed a year in service, enabling local residents to access cancer treatment in Portsmouth or Southampton on the mainland. Its first birthday celebration event raised £3,500 through donations and fundraising activities. Chair of Daisy Ring Bus is **Michèle Le Quesne**

Newton who said:

"Our first anniversary gave us an opportunity not only to celebrate what Daisy Ring Bus has achieved, but to thank the incredible people who have made it possible. The support we receive from our volunteers, drivers, local businesses, organisations and the wider island community continues to amaze us.

Every donation, every fundraiser and every hour given helps us continue providing a service that makes a genuine difference to people's lives...We are very grateful to everyone who has supported us during our first year, and we are excited about what comes next."

<https://www.countypress.co.uk/news/26510271.daisy-ring-bus-transport-service-celebrates-anniversary/>

A subsequent garden party by **Kim Swallow** has raised £1,600 for the Daisy Ring Bus. <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/garden-tea-party-raises-more-040000825.html>



East Sussex – Cuckmere Buses Celebrates 50 Years in Service – and is the Future Electric?



In Berwick, East Sussex **Cuckmere Buses** has served the community now for 50 years, managed and driven entirely by volunteers. Funding for the service is from "fares and ENCTS reimbursement, and grants from local councils and other bodies. That allows one new vehicle to be purchased per year as a general rule, with the minibus to be sold

retaining a reasonable residual value. How such an arrangement works for the next arrival – a battery-electric **EVM e-Cityline** – is still to be decided upon. Support from Wealden District Council has enabled the e-Cityline purchase, along with charging equipment. That followed a look at HVO. While some positives were present there, supply was a difficulty. Ultimately, the decision was taken to make a first step into zero-emission. Deploying the e-Cityline will be a learning curve... No commitment to further electrics has yet been made, although there is an element of futureproofing in the charging infrastructure that has been installed..." <https://www.route-one.net/features/cuckmere-buses-marks-50-years-of-serving-its-local-community/>

Northern Ireland – Easilink Community Transport & RiSE

Project. Easilink Community Transport serves residents of Omagh, Strabane and Foyle and is now one of several rural-based organisations taking part in the €3.97 million **Rural Innovation and Social Enterprise (RiSE)**

Project. The project involves a programme of learning, development and collaboration, with participant organisations engaging in a programme of activity designed to strengthen leadership, build connections, encourage shared learning and support the development of sustainable social enterprise activity. **Claire Russell** Easilink's chief executive, commented "We are excited about looking at what we are currently doing and what other opportunities there are for us to further develop as an organisation. We already have some ideas in mind and RiSE is giving us the opportunity to explore those further. One of the key aspects of the programme has been the networking and engagement with other groups and organisations right across Northern Ireland and the border areas. It has been really beneficial to hear their stories and experiences, to learn what has worked and what hasn't worked in the past, and to hear about their plans going forward. We are already getting inspiration from the other organisations on RiSE and are excited to see how we can use that learning to develop what we do."



<https://www.tyronecon.co.uk/news/2026/09/04/news/easilink-community-transport-embarks-on-new-journey-through-3-97m-peaceplus-project-64152/>

Greater London – Dial-a-Ride Feature. James Mead, General Manager for On Demand Transport at **Transport for London**, writes: “I was looking through some old photographs the other day when I came across a picture of me as a six-year-old boy in Mission, South Dakota. In the photo, I am happily playing with a Matchbox London bus. If someone had told me then that one day I would be living in the UK and working for the organisation that runs those buses, I would never have believed them. Yet here I am today, working in one of the least-known but most important parts of Transport for



London (TfL)... I know there are many Londoners who could use the service but may not be aware it exists, or perhaps believe it is not intended for them. My aim is to continue growing the service so more people can benefit from what **Dial-a-Ride** offers. Dial-a-Ride does not usually provide a wait-and-return service, but we can in special circumstances... A common misconception about Dial-a-Ride is that it only takes

customers to hospital appointments. In fact, we cannot provide that service, as patient transport is the responsibility of the NHS. However, Dial-a-Ride can be used for a wide range of trips. While shopping journeys make up a significant proportion of our work, we can take passengers wherever they want to go. That could be a place of worship, a social event, the local pub to meet up with friends and play bridge, or even a fishing trip. At its heart, Dial-a-Ride helps people stay connected to their communities, maintain their independence and continue enjoying opportunities across their local area and the wider city. It's a service I am incredibly proud to be part of..."

<https://www.romfordrecorder.co.uk/news/26524440.londoners-know-dial-a-ride/>

Greater London – Some Thoughts from Westway CT.

Samantha Shaw from **Westway Community Transport** shares the following: “What can the conversation about loneliness among Gen Z teach us about older people? A recent *Guardian* article about the decline in friendship and rising loneliness among younger people, had us at Westway CT thinking about something we see every day in community transport and the parallels. The circumstances aren't the same. And we shouldn't pretend they are. But there is a common thread: connection doesn't just happen. It needs opportunity.

For younger people, that might mean places to meet, social spaces and opportunities to build friendships. For older people, everyday opportunities for connection can gradually disappear too. Retirement, bereavement, changing family circumstances, reduced mobility or simply finding it harder to get out can all change the social networks around us. Which is why community

infrastructure matters. A community group. A local activity. A regular outing. A familiar face.

And sometimes, the transport that makes those things accessible. At Westway CT, 62% of our service users told us they felt isolated or lonely at least some of the time before using our services. Of those who had experienced loneliness, 88% said using Westway CT helped prevent it. We don't claim that transport solves loneliness. But we do know that access creates opportunity - to get out, take part, see people and stay connected. And that's true for all community transport providers working in their communities. Different generations may experience loneliness differently. But the need for connection is something we all share." <https://westwayct.org.uk/>



Obituary: John Taylor (1952-2026)

The death of **John Taylor** from cancer at the age of 74 robs the industry of one of its foremost experts in the field of community, rural and accessible transport.

In a career lasting some 49 years, John was a pioneer in the field, before becoming a leading consultant for 40 years. Following several years as a freelancer, he joined forces with the late Peter Huntley in 1994, and became a director of Preston-based firm **The TAS Partnership**, a position he would hold for the next 32 years. Throughout, he worked extensively with the Community Transport Association UK, authoring several of their guidance publications.



John's many achievements include writing and developing the nationally accredited **MIDAS** (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) and **PATS** (Passenger Assistant Training Scheme) systems. He also designed and helped implement systems for assessment of the individual transport safety needs for adults and children with severe disabilities, together with appropriate training for carers.

John Robin Stamford Taylor was born in Cambridge in April 1952, and raised in Croydon, Surrey. He was educated at Whitgift School and New College, Oxford, obtaining a degree in Politics, Philosophy and Economics before going on to gain a master's degree in economics at the University of Manchester. He later earned a Diploma in Business Administration (DBA) from Manchester Business School.

After University, John began training as a Solicitor. He quit before qualification, but his legal training served him and his clients well in the years ahead. He joined the national charity **Community Transport** (CT) in 1977, gaining first-hand experience of the design, operational, legal and technical aspects of CT. In 1982, he was a co-founder and first Secretary of **Manchester Community Transport** (originally known as **Wythenshawe Mobile**). In 1984, he was a founding director of **Community Transport Services Ltd.**, later the **Community Transport Association UK**. During his time at TAS, John led a wide variety of projects throughout the UK and Europe.



Clients included government departments, devolved assemblies and local government at all levels. He was a pioneer in studies of the feasibility and implementation of local authority Integrated Passenger Transport Units and other co-ordination reviews of education, social care, health and voluntary sector transport for passenger transport and education authorities in the UK and the Republic of Ireland including restructuring of staff roles and changes to responsibilities. At all times, he supported local CT groups,

including serving in a voluntary capacity as a director at **Preston Community Transport**.

For the DfT, he devised the content of, contributed to and edited '*Tendering Road Passenger Transport Contracts: Best Practice Guide*' (2013), a guide on Disability Discrimination Act compliance on Local Transport Plan investment and the '*Bus Partnership Best Practice Guide*' (2016). This later proved to be a key document in the development of **Bus Service Improvement Plans** and Enhanced Partnerships under the 2021 **National Bus Strategy**.

John had many outside interests, including a particular love of walking and hill-climbing. He achieved one of his lifetime ambitions when he climbed the 7,000m Himalayan peak Ama Dablam. Nearer home, he was an avid supporter of **Morecambe Football Club** and a proud member of the **Shrimps Fans Trust**.

John will be sorely missed by colleagues at TAS, his many friends and his family. He is survived by his son **Robin**, who also works at TAS, **Jonathan** and **Ashley** and partner **Barbara**.



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