

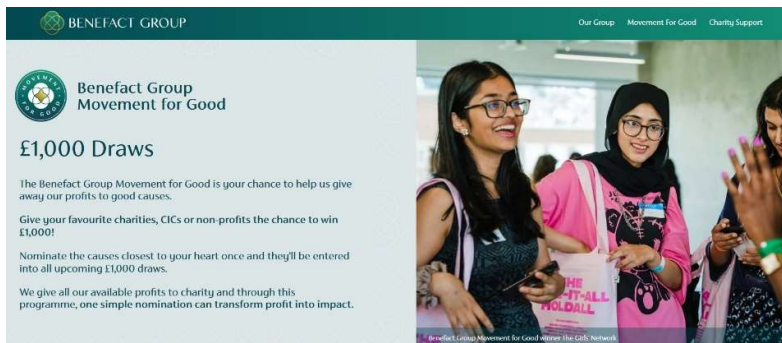


Newsletter No.71

Edited by John Atkins (Associate Consultant). Published October 2026.

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

UK - Benefact Group Movement for Good. A useful way of distributing funds to charity is being offered by financial services company **Benefact Group** which is guided by external nominations via a draw for £1,000 awards (from a total 2026 fund of £440,000) and £5,000 awards (total 2026 fund of £200,000), the latter earmarked for "charities making a difference in the fields of Health, Community and Animals and Wildlife...The Benefact Group Movement for Good is your chance to help us give away our profits to good causes. In just one minute, you can nominate the charities,



CICs or non-profit [bodies] of your choice for our draws. Every entry gives them the chance to receive a donation that could make a real difference. We give all our available profits to charity and through this programme, one simple

nomination can transform profit into impact." **CT Sussex** has mobilised a campaign to encourage nominations for itself: <https://lnkd.in/p/eq8TJNxP>. Other CTs might follow. See <https://movementforgood.com/>

UK – Women in Bus & Coach Awards. **Women in Bus and Coach** has posted: "At the **Women in Bus and Coach Summit 2026**, we were proud to present our annual Awards, celebrating the outstanding women and allies making a difference across the bus, coach and community transport sector...The nominations showcased the remarkable people working across our sector, giving our judges the difficult task of choosing this year's winners. We warmly congratulate everyone nominated and thank our judges and Award sponsors for their support." **Best Woman in Community Transport Award** (sponsored by **London Hire**) was **Laurie Robson** of **Community Transport:**

"Laurie has been honoured with the Woman in Community Transport Award for her inspiring leadership, dedication and commitment to supporting her community. Through her work, she has championed access, inclusion and care, ensuring that community transport continues to play a vital role in people's lives."



Other nominees in the CT category were **Angela Vowles** of **Sprint Community Transport** and **Lesley-Ann Millar** of **South Antrim Community Transport**. **Route One** reported: "In addition to the awards, a new blue plaque initiative was announced for **Kathleen Lyons**, CEO of **Westway Community Transport**. 'Kathleen... is an incredible icon,' comments **Gemma Lelliott**, Wales Director and Head of Advice and Support of **Community Transport Association**. 'She knows so much, is a font of wisdom, and an incredible person.'"

<https://womeninbusandcoach.org.uk/news/news/celebrating-our-winners-from-the-women-in-bus-and-coach-awards-2026> and <https://www.route-one.net/people/mary-carruthers-leads-at-women-in-bus-and-coach-awards/>

Scotland - NHS Highland and Highland Council Launch New Transport Service for Renal Patients.

Highland Council release: "NHS Highland and The Highland Council are pleased to announce the launch of a new bespoke year-round transport service for renal haemodialysis patients across Highland. Funded through a grant from NHS Highland, the service marks the first phase of a new approach to patient transport delivery, designed to support the long-term development of a more sustainable, flexible and community-focused transport model for Highland. Under the new arrangement, The Highland Council will operate a hybrid service, combining in-house delivery with support from community transport providers."

In the initial phase, **Wheels in Nairnshire** and **St John Scotland** will deliver services alongside the Council, bringing extensive experience of supporting communities across Highland. Dr **Ken McDonald**, Consultant Renal Physician and Clinical Lead, said: "We are pleased to be working in partnership with The Highland Council on this new transport model, which represents an important step towards the development of a coordinated Highland-wide Patient Transport Hub. By bringing together public sector and community transport expertise, we can create a service that is responsive, resilient and better able to meet the needs of patients living across Highland's geographically dispersed communities. This new approach also supports our shared ambition to ensure patient transport services remain sustainable and effective for the future, while continuing to provide high-quality support for those who rely on them."

Chair of the Council's Economy and Infrastructure Committee, Councillor **Ken Gowans**, said: "The launch of this new service is about much more than providing transport. It represents a key step in delivering the Council's future operating model by building stronger partnerships with community transport organisations and creating a more sustainable way of delivering essential services across Highland. Community transport providers are deeply rooted in the areas they serve and have a vital role to play in supporting our communities. By working together, we are not only providing a year-round transport service for renal patients but also helping to strengthen the wider community transport network across Highland. This is the first phase of a longer-term programme. As the model develops, we intend to bring more community transport providers into the network, creating greater capacity, resilience and local benefit while ensuring patients continue to receive reliable transport to access treatment."



Barri Millar, Chief Operating Officer at St John Scotland, said: "We're delighted to be expanding our Patient Transport Service to cover the Highlands and to be working in partnership with Highland Council. For many patients, travelling to regular dialysis appointments can be difficult, particularly when living in rural communities. This service will help ensure people can access the treatment they need while giving volunteers a rewarding opportunity to make a genuine difference in someone's life."

<https://www.highland.gov.uk/news/article/17488/launch-of-new-transport-service-for-renal-patients-in-highland>

Scotland - Care Lochaber Community Car Scheme Thanks its Drivers. Based in Fort William, **Care Lochaber** is holding a **Volunteer Tea Afternoon** to offer thanks to its volunteer drivers. Manager **Allison Kane** said: "They do a fantastic job and we couldn't run this great scheme without them... **Community Transport Week** is a chance to celebrate the people who keep our communities moving. At Care Lochaber, our drivers, volunteers and staff do far more than help people get from A to B. They help people stay connected, access essential services, and remain part of community life."

This year's theme, **Driving Communities Forward**, reflects what community transport is all about. Every journey makes a difference. We are actively looking for more Volunteer Drivers to join our Community Car Scheme. Demand for our service continues to grow and additional volunteers will help us support more local residents who rely on us for essential journeys to medical appointments, shopping, social activities and community services. By giving just a few hours a

Our volunteers provide a service for people who are have difficulty accessing public transport. If you have any spare time, we would be delighted to welcome you to our team!

Please contact us to find out more about volunteering, training and support.

We pay all out-of-pocket expenses.

Call 01397 701222 10am - 2pm Monday to Friday

Charity No SC019863

Care Lochaber, Waverley House, High Street, Fort William PH33 6XX
Telephone 01397 701222 Monday to Friday 10am - 2pm
email: carsscheme@carelochaber.org

week, Volunteer Drivers make a meaningful difference to people who would otherwise face isolation or struggle to access vital support.” Last year, the Car Scheme delivered 3,323 journeys, covered 50,138 miles and its Volunteer Drivers gave 3,033 hours of their time to transport people. All expenses are paid and Volunteer Drivers are never out of pocket. Please call Laura or Allison on 01397 701222 if you are interested.

<https://www.westcoasttoday.co.uk/news/corpach-charity-gears-up-for-community-transport-celebration>

Scotland – ‘Exciting’ New Community Transport Plans in North Ayrshire Get Green Light. North Ayrshire Council release:

“Exciting plans for a new community transport system were approved at a meeting of Cabinet on Tuesday. Elected members were asked to rubberstamp proposals for a new project in partnership with **Coalfields Community Transport** which would help people access employment, amenities and services across the region. It comes after extensive engagement with local communities which highlighted transport as a significant barrier for many residents, particularly those living in rural areas, older people, disabled people and those experiencing isolation. The Council has already earmarked £100,000 to explore and develop community transport solutions. This funding will support the development and initial three-year delivery of the project, helping establish an accessible, community-led transport service tailored to local needs.

‘We have engaged extensively with stakeholders and communities and it is very clear that transport, or the lack of it, remains a huge barrier for some people. We are always looking for solutions and ideas to make opportunities equitable across North Ayrshire,’ said Councillor **Alan Hill**, Cabinet Member for Housing, Islands and Communities. ‘There is absolutely no doubt that access to reliable transport services can be hugely important and have a positive impact on the lives of many people. By working with Coalfields Community Transport, we have an opportunity to build a sustainable service that tackles transport barriers, reduces isolation and helps ensure everyone can take part in community life.’



The proposed model would include a dedicated accessible minibus for North Ayrshire, supported by a central booking system, trained drivers and volunteer opportunities. Services could include transport for community groups, door-to-door journeys for people with mobility challenges,

links to healthcare appointments and improved connections for residents in areas with limited public transport options. Recent consultation responses showed strong support for accessible minibuses, trained drivers, affordable travel and improved transport options during evenings and weekends. Residents also highlighted the need for services that complement existing bus routes rather than duplicate them. Work will begin on further developing the

model, engaging with communities and establishing the service, with the aim of introducing initial transport provision following vehicle procurement and project mobilisation. <https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/news/exciting-new-community-transport-plans-get-green-light>

Devon – TRIP Appeals for New Volunteers. Due to rising demand, Honiton-based **TRIP Community Transport Association** is seeking additional volunteers to help meet demand for patient transport services across East Devon. **Ross Walker** from of TRIP, said: “There is no doubt that the recent increase in the cost of living has led to an increase in the number of elderly patients seeking more cost-effective means of getting to medical appointments. TRIP provides a magnificent service to the community, but we now need more drivers to meet the greater demand. As a volunteer driver, you get to choose when and how much driving you do for TRIP, enabling you to fit it in around your own commitments. Some of our drivers work just a few hours a week, whereas others like to drive more, but every one of them is highly valued: without our drivers, we simply couldn’t provide the services we do.”



One of TRIP’s existing volunteer drivers added: “As well as helping the community, being a part of the TRIP team really is rewarding and the feedback and gratitude from our passengers makes it all worthwhile. It is also easy, as all the journeys are booked in advance with the friendly staff in the office and we receive a mileage allowance, so all my costs are covered. I enjoy driving anyway but being a voluntary driver has given me something purposeful to look forward to each week. And it’s great to feel that I am doing my bit to make a difference.” Anyone interested in finding out more about volunteering as a car or minibus driver can contact the TRIP office on 01404 46529.

<https://www.midweekherald.co.uk/news/26550981.east-devon-charity-seeks-volunteer-drivers-patient-transport/>

South Yorkshire – Sheffield CT Passenger Turns 100. A special journey to a lunch club was undertaken by passenger **Audrey Lowe** to celebrate her 100th birthday. The trip was made possible by **Transport 17** which has long been active in the Totley area. The CT group organised the



event for Audrey as part of its continuing commitment to provide assistance for older residents of South Sheffield. Volunteer drivers and passenger assistants generously give their time to help older people in the community feel less alone and

isolated. The group currently operates three minibuses across five days per week.

Transport 17 has also recently paid tribute to its volunteer driver **Stuart** who is retiring from driving at 80 after ten years. Stuart commented: "Transport 17 is an independent organisation that works closely with local lunch clubs. It enables friendships and understanding to grow while helping people remain part of their community. After the COVID restrictions, some passengers returned with significantly reduced mobility. Without Transport 17, many would rarely leave their homes or see another person. I'm proud to have played a small part in helping them regain their confidence and independence...I've been able to spend time with our passengers, contribute to their wellbeing and share in their enjoyment. Some are even younger than I am! It has been very rewarding to know that I've made a difference."

<https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/community-transport-service-throws-birthday-party-for-passenger-9057713> and

<https://www.transport17.co.uk/post/celebrating-stuart-nearly-10-years-of-volunteering-and-a-very-happy-80th-birthday>

CTA Updates

- **Connect and Learn: Engaging with your Community**
<https://ctauk.org/news/connect-and-learn-engaging-your-community>
- **England - Franchising: Why Community Transport Should be Interested** <https://ctauk.org/news/franchising-why-community-transport-should-be-interested>
- **Remembering Peter Haley of People & Places**
https://ctauk.org/civCRM/mailling/view?reset=1&id=790&cid=140461&cs=e00bb99c2f2394059e8d0f94106bae91_1790151384_336
- **Join us at our ConneCTing Conference 2026**
<https://ctauk.org/connecting-conference-2026>
- **MPs are getting behind CT Week: now it's your turn!**
<https://ctauk.org/ctweek26-how-get-involved>
- **CTA leads AMAP calls ahead of UK Budget**
<https://ctauk.org/news/cta-leads-amap-calls-ahead-uk-budget>
- **Volunteer driver rules: what community transport organisations need to know** <https://ctauk.org/news/volunteer-driver-rules-what-community-transport-organisations-need-know-0>



Northern Ireland – Enniskillen Castle and Strule Arts Centre to Illuminate in Symbolic Colours for CT Week. Fermanagh and Omagh District Council release: “Throughout October 2026, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council will illuminate Enniskillen Castle and the Strule Arts Centre in a series of symbolic colours from 6pm to midnight, supporting a range of important awareness campaigns, commemorative events and causes that matter to communities across the district... Wednesday 14 October 2026 – Blue for **Community Transport Week**: From 12–16 October 2026,

communities across Northern Ireland are encouraged to celebrate the work of local Community Transport organisations, including **Fermanagh Community Transport** and **Easilink Community Transport**, as part of Community Transport Week 2026. This year’s theme, ‘Driving Communities Forward’, celebrates volunteers, staff, and trustees whose dedication keeps community transport moving every day and makes these essential journeys possible.”



<https://www.fermanaghomagh.com/article/enniskillen-castle-and-strule-arts-centre-to-illuminate-in-symbolic-colours-this-october/>

Somerset – Watch CIO Launches New Minibus. Chard-based CIO **Watch** has posted: “A new nature, health and wellbeing minibus has been officially launched to support and improve community transport provision, helping isolated people in rural south Somerset. WATCH CIO, a mental health charity based in Chard, unveiled its new minibus at the launch held on Wednesday, 23 September, 2026 at Gillingham Grange Care Home. More than thirty supporters and donators of the minibus attended the event, including representatives from the **Blackdown Hills Nature Connection Network**, the **Carers’ Group**, **Inner Wheel**, **Somerset Council**, and local farmers. Since December, the charity has fundraised more than £18,500 – including a generous grant from the **Clothworkers Foundation**, along with individual donations – to purchase the nine-seater vehicle, which will improve accessibility for members of Watch CIO and other community groups.

Speaking at the event, **Julie Matthews** BEM, CEO of Watch CIO, said: ‘For many years now, our members, staff and volunteers have faced endless difficulties with transport. Following our successful application to the Clothworkers Foundation, and the generosity of the community, we were able to purchase the minibus – a resource we see as the first link to help isolated people, but also other community groups.’ Julie also thanked **Gillingham Grange Care Home** for their continuous support and servicing of the minibus: ‘We see the relationship with Gillingham as a crucial link to enable other community groups to have access to the minibus, which will help break down some of the transport barriers we face in Chard and the wider rural area.’ Speaking at the event, **Amanda Whyte**, Manager of Gillingham Grange Care Home, said: “Today is a particularly special occasion as we celebrate the launch of this wonderful new minibus. What makes this achievement even

more remarkable is that it has been funded entirely through donations and fundraising efforts. We know that many people across Chard will benefit from it, including our own residents, and over the past year we have raised £373 for the Watch Project.'

The name of the minibus – Bertie – was also unveiled at the event, with a luxury hamper won by **Amanda Whyte**, chosen at random from the entrants of the 'Name the Bus' competition. To find out more about how to book the minibus as a community resource, contact Watch CIO on 07907 506314 or email info@watchproject.org.uk. A dedicated minibus webpage is also being developed at:

www.watchproject.org.uk/minibus.

<https://www.somersetcountygazette.co.uk/news/26579043.minibus-improve-transport-isolated-chard-residents/> and

<https://www.somersetcountygazette.co.uk/news/26579043.minibus-improve-transport-isolated-chard-residents/>



Suffolk – Council Funding for Newmarket CT Minibus. Release from **West Suffolk Council**: "A community transport scheme that reduces isolation and loneliness is now offering an improved service after receiving support from West Suffolk Council. **The Voluntary Network** operates a dozen **Connecting Communities** minibuses in West Suffolk helping people who would otherwise be isolated get out to meet friends, go shopping and get to medical appointments. But some of its vehicles are ageing which means they are more prone to breaking down, leading to time off road in the garage undergoing costly repairs. Now the charity has been able to replace one of its



older, less reliable vehicles with a newer 16-seater bus, thanks to a £30,000 grant from West Suffolk Council, using funding from the Government's **Rural England Prosperity Fund**. This latest addition to its fleet is five seats larger than the older bus and is fully wheelchair accessible.

As it was the next route due for a replacement bus, the vehicle is being used in and around Haverhill and helping to cater for increased demand for the service there.

In turn, the 'retired' bus has become a reserve vehicle, benefiting the service across all of West Suffolk. **Caroline Wilson**, Managing Director of The Voluntary Network said: 'We are very grateful for West Suffolk Council's support. Connecting Communities makes the world of difference to people who may otherwise be stuck indoors. We help them get out, meet friends, go shopping, get to appointments and more, reducing social isolation and loneliness which is vital to their health and wellbeing. We have already had passengers' feedback they would feel lost without our help. We provide a lifeline and having a new vehicle means we can offer a service that is more reliable to the people that need our support.'

Cllr **Indy Wijenayaka**, Cabinet Member for Growth led the review said: 'The Action Plan that we adopted late last year set out the steps we can take within our powers to ensure residents have access to public and community transport across West Suffolk. This grant for a better Connecting Communities bus is just one part of that plan. I am delighted that we are able to support The Voluntary Network for its invaluable work and to help cater for the increased demand that it is seeing in and around Haverhill. This will help ensure people can meet up with friends, use and support local businesses and access other vital services.'" <https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/news/pr20260928ws01.cfm>

Sussex – Royal Visit to West Sussex Minibus. The **Princess of Wales** paid a visit to **West Sussex Minibus** on September 30. The royal visit "highlighted the role community transport plays in bringing people together, reducing isolation, and enabling the everyday acts of kindness that make volunteers the unsung heroes of many communities. The visit will underscore how a culture of care can be created anywhere, with small, everyday gestures helping to build stronger, more connected communities..."

Celebrating its 50th year of service West Sussex Minibus is an all-volunteer CT organisation supporting people living in rural West Sussex. It currently works from eight village hubs, supported by 284 volunteers and a fleet of 11 minibuses. Its fleet travels approximately 60,000 miles each year, providing around 13,000 passenger journeys. "The Princess began her visit by travelling on one of the minibus's pick-up journeys and help passengers from their homes into the minibus. On the bus Her Royal Highness heard about how the service is a lifeline for many isolated people in the community, and helps them remain active, independent and socially connected by maintaining friendships, joining community activities and remaining involved in the things they enjoy. And Catherine picked up **Stella Drewett**, aged 94. Stella grew up in Graffham and is born and bred Sussex. She is a new member of the service..."



The Princess also spent time with West Sussex Minibus's volunteers, whose dedication makes the service possible and helps ensure that people can continue to participate in community life, maintain social connections and

access the activities that matter most to them...”

<https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/news/people/princess-of-wales-visits-west-sussex-on-volunteer-led-community-transport-organisations-50th-anniversary-in-pictures-9234472> and <https://www.sussexexpress.co.uk/community/i-dont-get-excited-unfazed-94-year-old-meets-princess-of-wales-on-west-sussex-royal-visit-9234262>

[N.B. This story has been covered multiple times by the media and is perhaps the highest profile CT story in years. So if you want to make a splash in the papers, you know who to invite...]

Shropshire – CT Partnership Joining Forces for People Living with Dementia.

News release: A new partnership between **Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin** and **Shrewsbury Dial-a-Ride** is helping a group of older people living with dementia to stay socially connected and supported. On 1 October, the **International Day of Older Persons**, the two local organisations highlighted the difference that community partnerships can make to older people living with dementia and the families who care for them. Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin has joined forces with Shrewsbury Dial-a-Ride to provide a safe, reliable and friendly transport service for a group of men who attend and enjoy the charity’s dementia respite service at Withywood in Shrewsbury.



The men, who have formed a firm friendship at Withywood through their shared love of music, will now travel together to and from the service. They have been affectionately

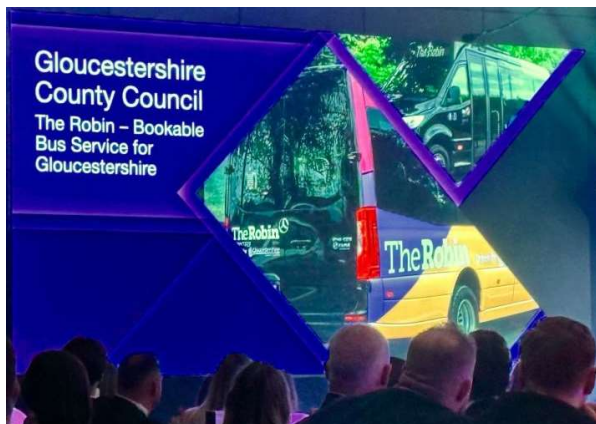
dubbed “the rock band” and their weekly journeys are now an important part of their social connection and enjoyment. **Emma Wilde** from Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin said: “This new partnership makes such a difference to the carers, the passengers and the staff at our charity as it gives everyone more time, convenience and security. We offer very person-centred care and providing a safe and reliable form of transport to and from the venue is an important part of that service.”

The addition of dedicated community transport is helping extend that person-centred approach beyond the doors of Withywood. For Shrewsbury Dial-a-Ride, the partnership is about much more than transportation. **Neil Langford**, Chief Officer at Shrewsbury Dial-a-Ride, said: “We’re really pleased that we’ve been able to make this work. Community transport is about much more than simply getting someone from A to B. It’s about helping people stay connected, continue doing the things they enjoy and, wherever we can, making life a little easier for their families and carers too. We know how important that extra bit

of support and reassurance can be, particularly for someone caring for a person living with dementia. If something as simple as providing a reliable and friendly journey home can make a difference, then that is exactly what we are here for. It's also a lovely example of what can be achieved when local organisations work together, and I'm very proud of our team at Shrewsbury Dial-a-Ride for helping to make it happen."

For carers, knowing that their loved one can travel safely with familiar and friendly support can make a significant difference to their own time away from caring responsibilities. **Jan Gibb**, whose husband **Nick** regularly attends the dementia respite service, said: "I was so relieved when Shrewsbury Dial-a-Ride announced they were putting on a return service from Withywood. It is so good to be able to relax knowing Nick will be brought home safely by people who care. It makes such a difference to my day of respite and Nick enjoys the ride home with friends, a big thank you to all who organise the service." Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin is encouraging anyone caring for a loved one with dementia to get in touch to find out more about the dementia respite service. To find out more or book a visit to Withywood with one of our dementia support workers, call 01743 233 123 or email enquiries@ageukstw.org.uk
<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/shropshireandtelford/about-us/news/articles/2026/joining-forces-for-people-living-with-dementia/>

Gloucestershire – Lydney Dial-a-Ride Award Nomination. At the 2026 **National Transport Awards**, the outstanding **Robin** DRT service operated by **Lydney Dial-a-Ride** was one of the nominations for the category Best Bus Service, but was pipped by **Grant Palmer**.



CEO of Lydney Dial-a-Ride **Louise Currie** said: "Well we didn't win but were in a group with everyone doing such amazing work. My thanks to **Gloucestershire County Council** for letting me be part of the evening. Most of all thanks for those who make The Robin such a success in the Forest of Dean...Without them we would not have the success we have and we are so proud of what we have achieved."

The Robin is a pre bookable service covering the south Forest of Dean is open to everyone and concessionary bus passes can be used. It is available Monday to Saturday 7am to 7pm and ideal for travelling in the district, linking up with the railway station in Lydney or the bus station. You can book via the call centre or downloading the app.

https://www.facebook.com/Lydneydialaride/?locale=en_GB

East Riding of Yorkshire – Drivers Requested for Beverley CT Service.

A volunteer recruitment effort has been raised by **Beverley Community Lift**, which operates CT services and Medibus in the East Riding district. Potential minibuses drivers are being sought, all of whom are required to have D1 entitlement driving licence. Volunteer **Simon Home** encourages other to join, saying: "It's very rewarding knowing how much [the residents] appreciate the service and the time the volunteers give. I would certainly



recommend this to anyone who has some spare time. I have met some lovely people who find it difficult to get out and about."

Councillor **Nick Coultish** added: "Community transport is incredibly important in the East Riding as some residents rely on these services to get to hospital or doctors' appointments because they don't have their own transport. I'd encourage anyone with spare time and enthusiasm to go along...find out what it's about and give minibus driving a go." Anyone interested can contact Beverley

Community Lift for more information. <https://bclift.org.uk/>
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwn8dy7z1kyvo>

Wiltshire – Four Villages Link Volunteer is Honoured. Serving Bratton, Coulston, Edington and Erlestoke, the **Four Villages Link** provides a range of support services for local residents, including a volunteer car scheme. And now a long-serving volunteer **David Green** is stepping down after 11 years of driving, and duty as a trustee. Speaking for Four Villages Link, **Catherine Elliot** said of David: "He was highly regarded by clients for his warmth and willingness to help. At 79, David feels it is time to take a rest, and he will be very much missed by clients, volunteers and the committee."



<https://whitehorsenews.co.uk/community-transport-volunteer-awarded-for-long-service/>

Rutland – CT Minibus is Stolen and Stripped of Engine.

Oakham-based CT operator **Voluntary Action Oakham** has suffered a blow with two minibuses being targeted by thieves. One vehicle was damaged in situ at the group's base but the other was removed from the site and had its engine removed. The operator said: "We are heartbroken to share with you

that overnight on Friday, October 2, two of our wheelchair accessible minibuses, parked at Oakham Enterprise Park, were broken into and one of them was stolen, trashed and has had the engine removed to be sold on. Gutted and frustrated does not come close to how we are feeling. We apologise in advance to all the community groups, schools and organisations whose trips will be interrupted as a result of this. Fortunately, no one appears to have been hurt, and our vehicles are insured...We will bounce back, stronger than ever and start to fundraise. Your support would be hugely appreciated."



<https://www.lincsonline.co.uk/rutland/news/we-are-heartbroken-charity-s-minibus-stolen-and-trashed-9485481/>

Warwickshire – 90-year-old Wing Walker Raises Funds for

CT. In an unusual effort to raise funds for **VASA**, which offers a CT service in Warwickshire, volunteer **Frankie Stuart** has taken to the skies strapped to a biplane. VASA reported: "Today our fabulous Telephone Volunteer Frankie completed her wing walk in honour of her 90th birthday. At 90 years young, she took to the skies above RFC Rendcomb Airfield and walked on the wing of a plane, because a parachute jump at 70 and gliding at 80 clearly weren't enough for our Frankie! And the total so far? Almost £1,800 raised for VASA, nearly double her original £1,000 target, and the donations are still coming in. We are absolutely blown away, and incredibly grateful that Frankie chose to raise money and awareness for us. When she's not soaring through the skies, she's one of the friendly voices on the end of our phones, chatting to people, booking appointments, and always making sure they've had a laugh before she goes. Thank you, Frankie. You are one in a million, and you've done our whole community proud. Could we get her to £2,000? The link is below if you'd like to help push her over the line. Every single pound helps VASA keep people connected, get to medical appointments and supported. Frankie, we salute you." <https://www.facebook.com/reel/1058537513694609>



Dorset – Major Transport Transformation Plan is Approved by Council.

Dorset Council release: An ambitious programme to transform travel across Dorset has been given the green light, paving the way for improved, more frequent and better-connected public and community transport...The £65m programme will be delivered in phases and funded through a combination of existing transport budgets, government funding, developer contributions and future external funding opportunities.

It will help:

- Young people and adults to travel more confidently and independently through a new Independent Travel Training service. This will open up more access to education, employment and community life.
- Residents who need extra support will have more transport options to help them stay active, connected and independent by expanding community transport services.
- Make getting to healthcare appointment easier and less stressful, thanks to better co-ordination between transport and health services.
- People living in areas without regular bus routes will have access to more flexible transport services that fit around local needs via a new 'on-demand' service.



Tim Christian, General Manager at **Dorset Community Transport**, said: "We think that the new plan will make a real difference to people in Dorset. It sees transport as an engine of economic and social development, recognises that community transport has a part to play and integrates it into in almost every area where transport is needed. We look forward to taking part as it gets going." Dorset Council will continue to support residents who require specialist transport, while creating more opportunities for people to travel independently and use public and community transport services where appropriate. This approach is designed to help more people remain connected and independent while ensuring specialist support remains available for those who need it. <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/news/dorset-council-approves-biggest-transport-transformation-in-a-generation>

Wales – PACTO & Social Business Wales Awards 2026.

Wyndham Williams (Transformation Project Manager) at **Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport**

Organisations has messaged: "We were shortlisted in two categories, **Social Enterprise Innovation** and **Community-Based Social Enterprise**, so simply reaching the finals amongst such an impressive group of Welsh social enterprises was an achievement in itself. To then hear PACTO announced as the winner of the Innovation Award was an incredibly special moment. The award recognises the transformation of Community Transport in Pembrokeshire over the past three years, including the Transport Connector Service, our Wheelchair Passenger Assessment and Passport Scheme, investment in accessible vehicles, volunteer development, digital innovation, improved governance and the move towards a more coordinated, passenger-



centred Community Transport network. I particularly wanted to share the news with you because the support and guidance of **TAS** have been instrumental in enabling this transformation. And there is another piece of exciting news. Following our win in Wales, PACTO will now go forward to the **UK Social Enterprise Awards 2026** in Manchester on 12 November, giving us the opportunity to represent Pembrokeshire and Wales on the UK stage. The UK awards are being organised by Social Enterprise UK and Co-operatives UK and will take place at New Century Hall in Manchester. Whatever happens in Manchester, we are enormously proud of what has already been achieved and very grateful to the Motability Foundation for believing in the vision and helping us turn it into reality. We will, of course, keep you updated as we head towards Manchester." <https://www.pacto.org.uk/>

And finally...

After over 70 editions of this newsletter since September 2020, I am standing down as editor. I'm retiring from my post as Principal Consultant and CT specialist at **TAS** from mid-October after 20 years. TAS is hoping to keep the newsletter going but there may be some changes in style and frequency. Watch this space. Thanks to all our readers, many of whom have expressed their encouragement and appreciation over the years. I am still likely to be contributing to TAS CT projects in the future as Associate Consultant and can still be contacted via my usual TAS email address john.atkins@taspartnership.com. Best wishes to all.



John Atkins.

