

CT NEWS

SUMMER 2007

WILTSHIRE & SWINDON COMMUNITY TRANSPORT NEWS

Melksham Community Bus launched by local weatherman

Local B.B.C. weatherman Richard Angwin was on hand at the beginning of the summer to launch a new community minibus for people without transport living in and around Melksham.

Mr. Angwin cut the ribbon in front of a small crowd of local residents to signal the start of service for the new state of the art minibus.

The vehicle was also given a champagne toast by Melksham mayor Richard Wiltshire.

Funding for the vehicle was secured by a community group formed to expand the services offered by the local community minibus group in Melksham.

The group worked in partnership to gain the majority of the funding for the new vehicle from the South West Regional Development Agency and a significant proportion of the funding was also provided by Melksham Council of Community

Service (M.C.C.S.) who will be running the new vehicle.

Further funding support was also provided by West Wiltshire District Council and 3 local Parish Councils.

The new low floor easy access minibus will enable M.C.C.S. to continue providing transport to community groups, day centre users and shoppers with limited mobility and it will mean that in future, some new services can be provided to help able-bodied people who do not have access to a car or public transport.

These new services will be developed by the community group who worked tirelessly to secure funding for the new minibus in the first instance.

For more information about the project please call George Brown, M.C.C.S. Minibus Manager on: (01225) 700319.



Photo: Melksham Independent News
Richard Angwin, local BBC weatherman
and Sheila Wilkinson of Melksham Council
of Community Service.

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT CONFERENCE

Saturday 17th November
Lackham Countryside Centre, Nr Chippenham, Wiltshire

Social Enterprise:
“What does it mean for
Community Transport in Wiltshire and Swindon?”

For further information contact:
The Community Transport Team at Community First
Tel: 01380 722475
Email: transport@communityfirst.org.uk

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CHARITY TRUSTEES

Many community transport organisations are charities with boards of Trustees at their helm. As trustees are responsible for their organisations it is vital that they know their responsibilities under charity law.

The following checklist should help:

Trustees must ensure that their charity complies with charity law.

A new Charities Act came into being in 2006, with some parts of the Act in force already, and most of the rest coming into force by early 2008. A plain English guide to this new Act designed for Trustees is available for free from Liam at Community First.

The Charity Commission has also produced a guide called *The Essential Trustee* (which can be downloaded at www.charitycommission.gov.uk). This guide explains the basics, including the requirement for Charities to prepare their reports, annual returns and accounts.

Trustees must ensure that their charity does not breach the requirements of its governing document and stays true to its charitable purposes and objectives.

Every charity has a governing document which is the definitive legal document when it comes to running a charity. It is important that the services you provide are within the bounds of your governing document. If you think your current document is too restrictive (e.g. if your services have changed, or you would like to develop new ones) then please contact Liam for advice.

Trustees must act with integrity and avoid personal conflicts of interest or misuse of charity funds or assets.

Borrowing vehicles for personal use (without paying), employing spouses or other relatives of trustees or, indeed, employing trustees are all potential areas where this conflict isn't acceptable. For more information, please refer to the Charity Commission publications *The Essential Trustee* and/or *Payment of Charity Trustees*

Trustees have a duty of financial prudence in running their charity.

Charities' assets are held in trust for current and fu-

ture beneficiaries. These assets can only be used in support of the charity's purposes (in the governing document) and these assets must not be put at undue risk. Proper financial management including areas such as creating financial reserves and investing assets sensibly is the key to a charity's continued success and its ability to help users. More advice on the financial management of a Charity is available at

www.charitycommission.gov.uk.

Trustees must ensure that fundraising carried out by or on behalf of their charity is properly undertaken.

Most trustees of community minibus organisations know that potential donors can be more excited about helping to buy a new minibus than by contributing to its running costs, but it is a legal requirement that charities be upfront when they fundraise. It's perfectly acceptable to appeal for funds to run transport but not if you imply that the money will actually go to buy new vehicles or vice versa. The Charity Commission have produced a guide called *Charities and Fundraising* which gives more specific information and advice on this area.

(Article summarised from CTA Journal Sep/Oct '06 Vol. 1 No. 4)



Wheelchair accessible vehicle to help people with mobility difficulties.

**For further information, contact:
Liam Tatton-Bennett on
(01380) 722475 ext. 243**

NEW LOCAL TRANSPORT BILL PROPOSES POSITIVE CHANGES FOR CT

New laws designed to improve local bus services in England, Wales and Scotland are shaping up to be the 'most significant government proposals on community transport regulation for 30 years,' according to the Chief Executive of the Community Transport Association (CTA) – the sector's national umbrella body.

The Draft Local Transport Bill, envisaged to become law during 2008, proposes that community minibus organisations operating under Section 22 Permits be allowed to pay their drivers and also run vehicles with more than 16 seats.

The current restrictions on paid drivers and larger vehicles imposed by Section 22 Permits are frustrating for groups wanting to expand their services because the Section 22 regime does in fact allow community minibus groups to make a surplus and also to carry the general public.

Having the option of paying drivers on Section 22 services rather than relying solely on volunteers may prove attractive to some groups, especially if attracting volunteers is proving difficult.

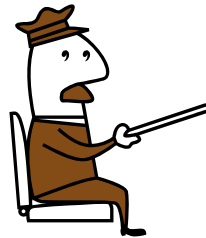
The Draft Bill also proposes that those running under Section 19 Permits be allowed to use vehicles with fewer than 9 seats. These proposals could be beneficial for community minibus groups because vehicles such as MPV's are generally

cheaper to buy and run than a minibus, they tend to be more economical when carrying small passenger groups and are more suitable for isolated locations. In addition, voluntary car schemes wanting to expand may now be able to do so using the proposed new Section 19 Permits.

The new Bill is therefore particularly significant for Community Transport because it provides the framework to allow groups to grow: "if implemented, (the new Bill) will allow community transport organisations to deliver new services to those who are most disadvantaged in rural and urban areas." (Keith Halstead, Chief Executive, CTA.)

The CTA has also managed to convince a cross party Transport Select Committee – the body advising the Government on the new Bill – to **not** implement proposals to only allow Traffic Commissioners to issue Section 19 Permits and to restrict Section 19 community transport organisations to taking only separate fares.

The Department for Transport is holding a consultation into the Draft Bill, which closes on 7 September. A draft consultation response written by the CTA on behalf of CT groups nationally is available at www.cta.org.uk. Local community transport groups can provide their comments on this by the end of August if they wish to.



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TRAINING UPDATE

CT SMALL GRANTS FUND

Driving a minibus, operating specialist equipment, assisting passengers on and off of your vehicle, transporting vulnerable passengers, minibus maintenance.....the list of things which involve risk in running community minibuses is long – but it need not be daunting if you have done a risk assessment!

Risk assessments are sometimes viewed with scepticism but in essence they simply formalise the ways in which the risks involved in managing a community minibus are considered.

For instance a community minibus group may already only allow certain drivers to lift out and refit minibus seats in vehicles – but have all the hazards involved in lifting seats been identified properly and have appropriate steps been taken to minimise these hazards from occurring?

To ensure that you can take the appropriate steps to manage such risks, Community First is running a free training session on Tuesday 18th September after the W&SCTA meeting to be held at Community First's premises in Devizes.

This training session will cover the risks that commonly apply to community minibus groups – as well as providing you with information about responding to these risks appropriately.

Groups should also be aware that the Wiltshire and Swindon User's Network will be running a training session shortly and this session will be on a related but slightly different subject – disability awareness training for drivers. This is also another important area for groups to consider when managing their operations and so group coordinators are also invited to attend. Groups should be mindful that having drivers trained in disability awareness now forms part of the criteria used by Wiltshire County Council when assessing bids for Contract work.

The driver disability awareness training will be taking place on Tuesday 28th August from 1pm – 3pm at Community First

To register to attend this training, please contact Sheila Martin by Friday 24th August on (01380) 722475 (ext. 218)

The Community Transport Small Grants Fund – previously known familiarly as the 'SOLVE' fund – is now open for applications for Community Transport projects.

The 'SOLVE' fund which closed in March this year has been replaced by the new fund and although a few small changes have been made, the process is much the same as with the previous 'SOLVE' scheme.

Working under the new Delivering Accessibility and Rural Transport Partnership (DART) the Community Transport Taskforce has been instrumental in establishing the new fund.

If you have a project up to £1,000 in value which meets the broad objectives below, you would be welcome to apply to the fund.



Projects that either:

- Improve the service, facilities, equipment or running of existing community transport schemes
- Make existing community transport groups more effective in meeting passenger needs
- Develop new local community transport schemes that would make it easier for people to access and reach the services and facilities they need and vice versa are invited to apply.

Please be aware that the fund will only provide for 75% of your project costs - match funding from own funds, other grants or 'in-kind' support constitute eligible match funding contributions.

For more information or an application pack contact:
Alison Crawford Tel. no. (01380) 722475
email: acrawford@communityfirst.org.uk

Liam Tatton-Bennett Community Transport Officer
Tel: 01380 722475

Information, contact details and news for operators and users of community transport in Wiltshire and Swindon visit
www.wiltshirecommunitytransport.org.uk

Phone: 01380 722475
Fax: 01380 728476
E-mail: transport@communityfirst.org
Web site: www.wiltshirecommunitytransport.org.uk

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