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community transport
association

ACT LOCAL

Community Transport,
Climate Action and Scotland's
Just Transition to Net Zero

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SUMMARY

What does the data tell us about Community Transport and Climate Action?

Community Transport holds the key to unlocking community-led climate action. Scotland needs to harness the full potential of local charities, community groups and social enterprises to deliver sustainable transport solutions. We cannot deliver a Just Transition to net zero without them.

It's time to think global, act local and back Community Transport!



63%

of Community Transport operators agree climate action is part of their mission



77%

have taken climate action in the last 12 months



45%

do not yet have a net zero plan or strategy



18%

of the Community Transport fleet in Scotland is now electric, up from 12% in 2021



54%

cite a lack of funding as a barrier to their transition to EVs



17%

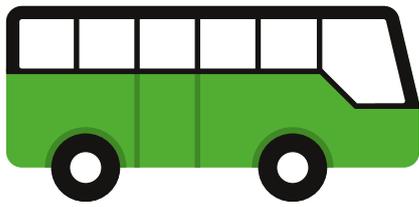
increase in Community Transport vehicle costs over the last 18 months



29%

cite a lack of local charging infrastructure as a barrier to their transition to EVs

How is Community Transport helping Scotland to reduce car use, reduce carbon emissions and deliver a Just Transition to net zero?



Community Buses



Electric Vehicles



Car Clubs



Walking & Wheeling



Bikes & e-Bikes



Demand-Responsive Transport



Car Share

What next?



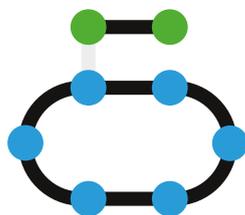
Community Transport is at the heart of community-led climate action



Community Transport is an essential partner to deliver a Just Transition to net zero



Community Transport operators are transitioning to zero-emission fleets – but need more investment



Community Transport services should be integrated into Scotland's public transport network



Communities require more practical support to achieve net zero



INTRODUCTION



Scotland was one of the first countries in the world to declare a global climate emergency in 2019 and has ambitious targets to reduce car use by 20% by 2030 and achieve net zero

carbon emissions by 2045. Yet Scotland has missed its legally binding carbon reduction targets in 8 out of the last 12 years. Transport emissions are stubbornly high, almost unchanged in three decades.¹

Time is running out. We need to do more – and we need a different approach. We need to identify what works and invest in it – to nurture, grow and replicate local projects all across the country. It's time for community-led climate action.

In January 2023, we launched CTA's Climate Action programme – of which this report is just one part – to step-up our efforts and expand the advice, information and support we offer to our members in Scotland. Our new briefings, forums, research and training have given more non-profit operators the confidence, funding, knowledge and skills they need to accelerate, or even just begin, their journey to net zero.²

In this report, we present new data about climate action in Scotland's Community Transport sector and 7 fantastic case studies of best practice. We showcase local operators serving urban and rural communities in Glasgow, Highland, Midlothian, Perth and Kinross, Renfrewshire and South Lanarkshire. From community-owned buses and car clubs, to cycling classes and walking festivals, they exemplify community-led climate action.

CTA members are passionate and practical problem solvers. They believe in the power of collaboration and community. And every day they live the credo of Patrick Geddes, the pioneering Scottish town planner: 'Think global, act local'.³

We hope these case studies will educate and encourage government, funders, partners and other stakeholders about the art of the possible in our sector, as well as inspire and equip more local groups to start their own sustainable transport services.

Scotland needs to harness the full potential of Community Transport. Simply put, we cannot deliver a Just Transition to net zero without them.

As grassroots organisations, local Community Transport operators are perfectly placed to design and deliver cost-effective, impactful and innovative solutions which reduce carbon emissions, reduce car use and accelerate modal shift. They plug gaps in our public transport network. They make shared transport accessible, affordable and attractive to everyone. They empower people to take climate action, change their travel behaviours and get out of cars.

It's time to think global, act local and back Community Transport!

David Kelly

*Director for Scotland,
Community Transport Association*

¹ www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-65960717

² www.ctauk.org/climateaction

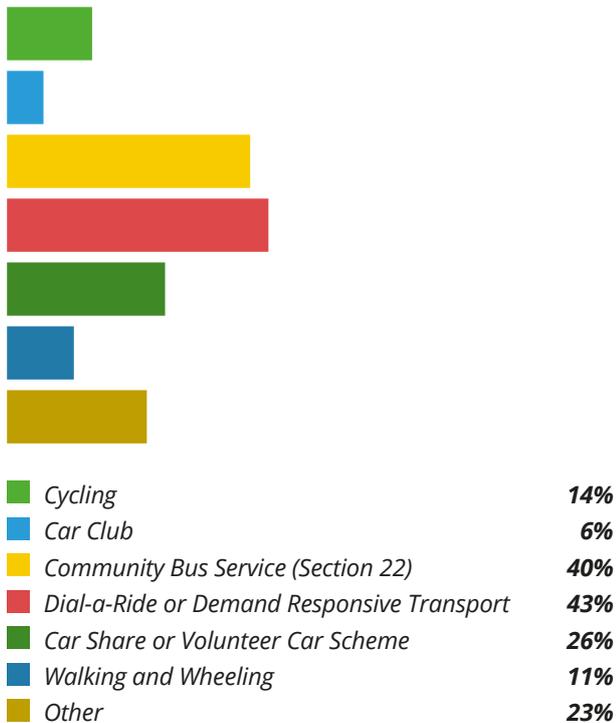
³ Walter Stephen (2005) *Think Global, Act Local: The Life and Legacy of Patrick Geddes*, Luath Press: Edinburgh

DATA & ANALYSIS

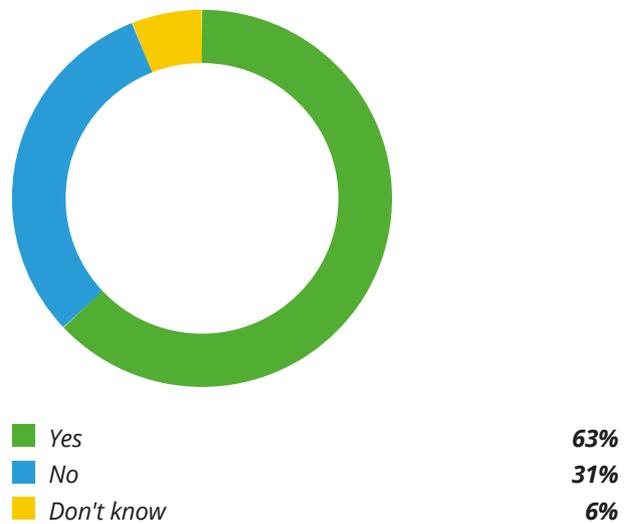
Between February and June 2023, we gathered quantitative data about Community Transport and climate action through an online survey, which was open to all local, non-profit operators in Scotland.⁴ We received 35 responses, more than 20% of CTA's members in Scotland, providing a valuable snapshot of the Community Transport sector.

Community Transport is delivering diverse interventions to tackle climate change. Dial-a-Ride or Demand Responsive Transport and Community Bus Services on a Section 22 permit were the most common services delivered by respondents. A total of 1 in 4 of operators have active travel projects facilitating or promoting walking, wheeling or cycling.

Q1 Many Community Transport activities and services help to reduce emissions by reducing car use, supporting shared transport or encouraging active travel. Which do you deliver? Please select any or all that apply.

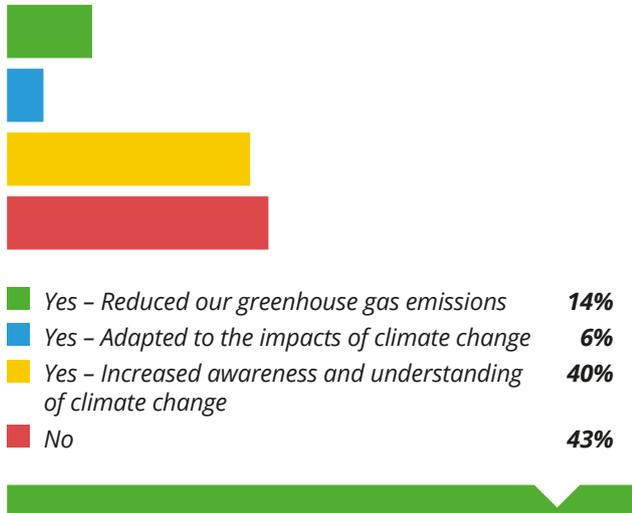


Q2 Is climate action a key mission or objective of your organisation?



⁴ www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ClimateActioninCT

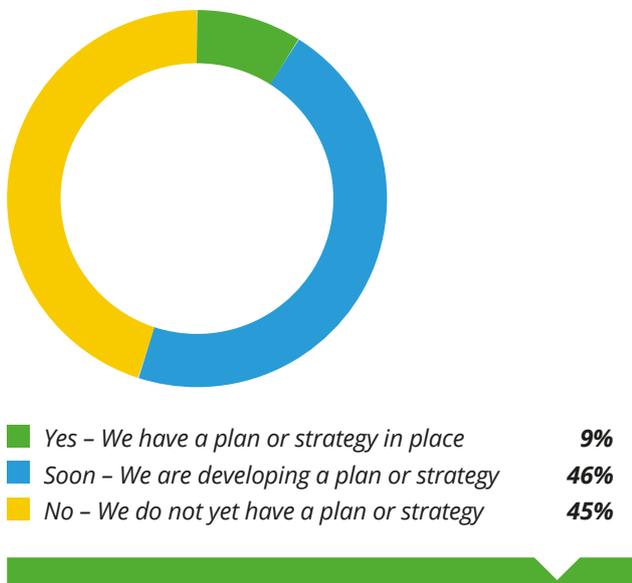
Q3 Has your organisation taken climate action in the last 12 months? Please select any or all that apply.



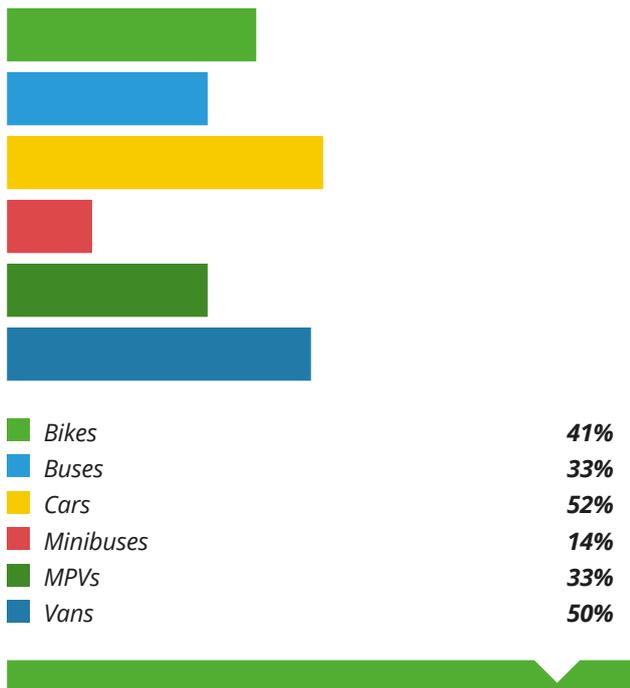
Nearly two-thirds of respondents agreed that climate action was integral to their organisation's mission, while 77% had taken climate action in the last 12 months. This indicates the strength of support for the sustainability agenda in the Community Transport sector. Operators widely recognise the role they have to play in helping to end Scotland's contribution to climate change and are taking steps to achieve this.

However, fewer than 1 in 10 respondents said they already have a net zero plan, and nearly 1 in 4 were not able to take climate action in the last 12 months, especially smaller community groups with very limited capacity and resources. This suggests that operators require further technical advice and tailored support to help them to develop holistic decarbonisation strategies for all of their operations, not just their transport-related services.

Q4 Does your organisation have a plan or strategy to reach net zero?



Q5 What proportion of your fleet is electric?



The data provided by respondents suggests that 18% of Scotland's Community Transport fleet is now electric, up from 12% in 2021. This represents an average annual increase of 3% and positive progress in the sector's transition to net zero despite an extremely challenging financial and operational context over the last two years.

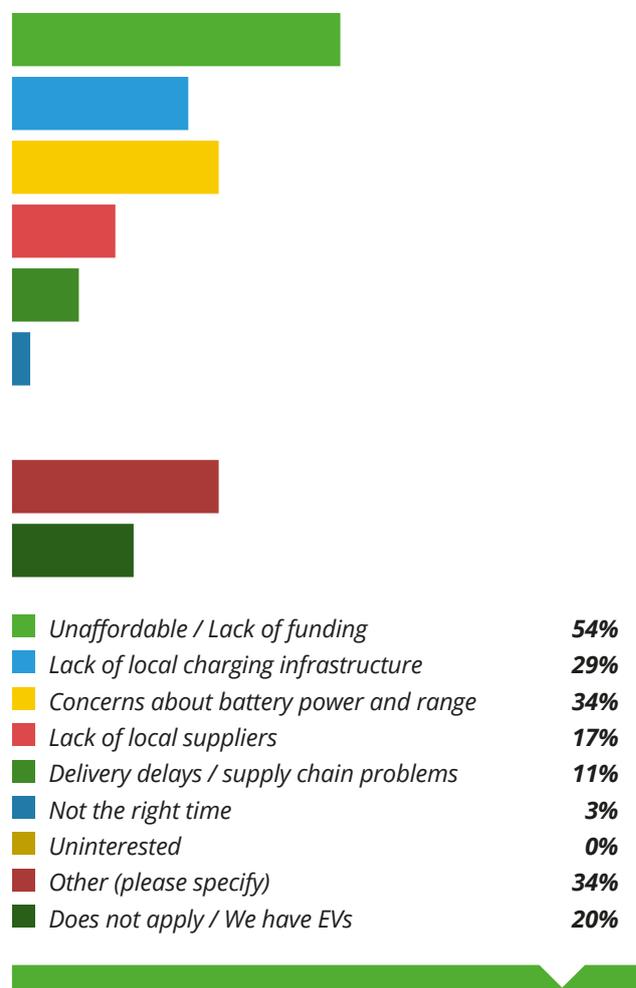
Significant progress to date has been made with e-bikes, vans, cars and MPVs. However, there remains a long way to go, especially with minibuses, which represent around two-thirds of the vehicles owned or leased by Scottish operators.

E-bikes have proven popular with operators, because they enable longer journeys by active travel rather than by car, while also widening access to cycling for many older and disabled people. Like e-bikes, electric cars are currently more affordable to operators and are increasingly widely available and rely on proven, trusted technology. A much larger proportion of volunteer drivers' own vehicles, however, would be expected to be petrol or diesel cars.

Meanwhile, the electric minibus market is more challenging and complex. There is a limited supply of electric minibuses and an even more limited range of suitable accessible models which meet the needs of Community Transport passengers.

The transition to EVs needs to be accelerated to ensure Community Transport operators and the communities they serve are not left behind as part of a Just Transition to net zero.

Q6 If your organisation does not yet have any EVs, can you tell us why? Please select any or all that apply.

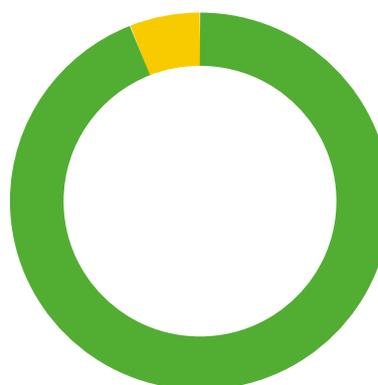


20% of respondents told us they have at least one EV. However, a lack of funding, charging infrastructure and local suppliers remain significant barriers for others. Over a third of operators raised concerns about battery power and range, especially in rural areas and during winter.

Supply chain disruption is an increasing problem, with growing delays across the UK related to the impact of Brexit and hangover effects from COVID-19, according to industry. Some operators have been waiting for more than 12 months for the delivery of an electric minibus.

Moreover, EVs are generally heavier than vehicles with internal combustion engines, creating shortages of qualified EV drivers. While drivers who passed their test before January 1997 will hold a D1 licence which allows them to drive these heavier vehicles, drivers who passed after this date are restricted vehicles of up to 3.5 tonnes (or 4.25 tonnes if they are accessible).⁵

Q7 Do you support CTA's call for the Scottish Government to increase its investment in the Community Transport sector's transition to zero-emission fleets?



Funding for EVs was identified overwhelmingly by respondents as a priority. In 2021, we identified a 'net zero funding gap' of nearly £90m.⁶ Investment has begun to be scaled-up through the Plugged-In Communities Grant Fund 2023/24 and Phase 2 of the Scottish Bus Zero Emission Challenge Fund (ScotZEB2). The delivery of this new funding fell outwith the timeline of our research, but will make a positive impact on the number of zero-emission buses, minibuses and cars in the sector. However, demand remains high for funding for EVs, which is consistently and heavily over-subscribed, and costs continue to rise.

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/publications/section-19-and-22-permits-not-for-profit-passenger-transport/section-19-and-22-permits-not-for-profit-passenger-transport#drivers-of-permit-vehicles

⁶ <https://cta.uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/More-Than-a-Minibus-CTA-2022.pdf>

COMMUNITY BUSES

The bus is Scotland's most popular mode of shared transport, with 75% of public transport journeys being completed by bus. More than a third of the Scottish population – over 2.3 million people – can now enjoy free bus travel. Disabled people and their carers, people over the age of 60 and, since January 2022, young people under the age of 22, are eligible. In the first year, young people made almost 45 million free bus journeys.⁷

However, much of the country has suffered from local bus cuts in recent years as the network has shrunk. Some service frequencies and routes have been deemed 'commercially unviable' by commercial bus operators despite large fare rises due to a challenging operating environment, reductions in public subsidy and lower levels of patronage after the pandemic. Many operators have reduced or withdrawn their services – some by more than 10% in 2023 alone – leaving communities to pick up the pieces.⁸

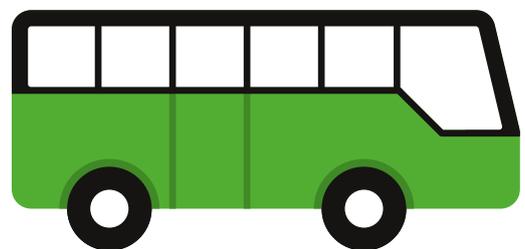
The impact on a community can be devastating, especially in a remote, rural or island area. With no public transport, access to education, employment or public services can be cut off. 64,000 homes in Scotland now have no access to a regular bus.⁹

Community-owned buses bring buses back into local hands and give communities control over public transport in their area. This is especially important in communities which may have been overlooked, underserved or abandoned by commercial bus operators.

More than 1 in 10 non-profit operators in Scotland deliver a Community Bus Service.¹⁰ Community buses are scheduled services with regulated stops, specific timetables and paid drivers which closely resemble other local buses provided by any other operator, whether commercial or municipal.

They differ from other Community Transport services in that they are open to everyone, including tourists, visitors and all of the general public, and delivered under a Section 22 permit, whereas most of the sector's work is more targeted at the needs of specific groups under Section 19 permits.¹¹

CTA offers comprehensive advice, information and support to local groups to help them expand the local bus offer, provide a sustainable alternative to the car or respond to the withdrawal of local bus services by setting up Community Transport services which can plug the gap. Community buses can replace what was lost or take up former bus routes, while also harnessing the energy and support of local residents and grassroots volunteers to encourage them to leave the car at home and choose the bus.



⁷ www.transport.gov.scot/news/one-year-of-free-bus-travel-for-u22s

⁸ www.route-one.net/bus/funding-review-sought-in-scotland-after-bus-support-cuts

⁹ www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-tayside-central-63345158

¹⁰ <https://ctauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/More-Than-a-Minibus-CTA-2022.pdf>

¹¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/section-19-and-22-permits-not-for-profit-passenger-transport/section-19-and-22-permits-not-for-profit-passenger-transport

Climate Action Strathaven



Strathaven is a small town to the south-east of Glasgow with a population of around 7,000 people. Research by Climate Action Strathaven found that over 2,000 cars were leaving Strathaven across a 3-hour period on an average morning. Meanwhile, an online survey asked local people if they would be more likely to use public transport if it was cheaper, faster and more comfortable to use – 85% of respondents agreed.

In October 2022, CAS launched a new Community Bus Service open to everyone between the South Lanarkshire town, where there are many multiple car households, and the city centre of Glasgow, a 50-mile return trip, to encourage modal shift away from single-person private car journeys.

Until CAS introduced the new scheduled 3C service, taking public transport into Glasgow wasn't a viable option for most commuters. They would need to take a much longer (both in terms of time and mileage) route via Hamilton or East Kilbride, which would involve multiple modes of transport, and could take upwards of two hours at peak time.

Thousands of passengers have been transported since its launch, because CAS have successfully provided a reliable, accessible and affordable public transport option. It has opened up employment opportunities further afield, while also improving health and wellbeing across the area as a result of better access to social, recreational and sporting events.

The 3C will have a positive long-term impact on car use and congestion in the town. In its first 6 months, the service saved more than 70 tonnes of CO₂. Over 80% of passengers said that they would have used a car to do either all or part of their journey from Strathaven to Glasgow.

Alison Harley

Programme Manager, Climate Action Strathaven

How has your community bus service improved your local community?

"We have given our community a stress-free way of getting in and out of Glasgow... and free travel to many students."

What one piece of advice would you give other Community Transport operators?

"Look and listen within your community – build a service that they need and want. It's tough, so be prepared to work hard. You'll also need to acquire technical knowledge to follow the regulations."

What role can Community Transport play in getting Scotland to net zero?

"Community Transport leads to less cars on the road, which we know will reduce air pollution."

What is needed to help more communities like yours to take climate action?

"Our Eco Hub is open 6 days a week. We don't look at it as 'our hub' it is the 'community's hub'... The power of word of mouth plays a very large part."

"Fabulous service – and what a fast way to travel in and out of Glasgow city centre."

Ingrid, 3C passenger



ELECTRIC VEHICLES

An integral part of Community Transport operators' contribution to decarbonising Scotland's transport sector is through their transition to zero-emission fleets, greatly reducing the carbon footprint of their services by eliminating tailpipe emissions.

Scotland's highly decarbonised grid based on renewable energies like onshore and offshore wind, tidal, hydro and solar power makes Electric Vehicles (EVs) a particularly attractive and sustainable option.¹²

Aberdeen is home to Scotland's first hydrogen bus fleet.¹³ However, the cost and complexity of supply means that buses or minibuses fuelled by hydrogen remain outwith the Community Transport sector's reach. It is likely that hydrogen will largely remain a viable option only for larger vehicles with heavier loads over longer ranges. EVs are anticipated to remain the future of passenger transport.¹⁴

Community Transport's transition to EVs is well underway. In 2022, we revealed that 12% of the sector's nationwide fleet of buses, minibuses, MPVs, vans and cars was electric compared to just 2% of all road vehicles and around 16% of the overall bus fleet in Scotland.¹⁵ However, to reach 100%, we identified that a 'net zero funding gap' of nearly £90 million would need to be closed.

New vehicles are a significant outlay for most Community Transport operators due to their non-profit status and the need for alterations and modifications to ensure accessibility. The even higher up-front costs of new EVs is prohibitive for many operators and particularly challenging for smaller groups.

While the average cost of a new diesel minibus in the UK is currently around £75,000, electric minibuses can be 50% more expensive at an average of £100,000 plus. Similarly, the higher average cost of an electric car or MPV (over £50,000), electric van (over £50,000) or electric bus (around £500,000) remains prohibitive for many Community Transport operators. Our research suggests average vehicle prices for the sector have increased by around 17% over the last 12 to 18 months.

The extension of the Plugged-In Communities Grant Fund and the inclusion of Community Transport in ScotZEB2 are positive steps forward from Transport Scotland to begin to close the net zero funding gap. However, this investment, while important and impactful, represents only a drop in the ocean given the scale of the challenge.

Transport Scotland should build on the success of these funding opportunities and scale-up investment in Community Transport's transition to EV, empowering more operators to decarbonise their fleets and more communities to take climate action. The sector's funders and partners should deliver new and scaled-up financial support which helps operators to purchase EVs and decarbonise their fleets.



¹² <https://scotland.shinyapps.io/Energy>

¹³ www.firstbus.co.uk/aberdeen/plan-journey/zero-emission-mission/hydrogen-buses

¹⁴ www.mckinsey.com/industries/automotive-and-assembly/our-insights/hydrogen-the-next-wave-for-electric-vehicles

¹⁵ <https://ctauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/More-Than-a-Minibus-CTA-2022.pdf>

Community Transport Glasgow



Community Transport Glasgow (CTG) is one of Scotland's largest Community Transport operators by fleet size and passenger numbers – and was one of the first to transition to an all-electric fleet.

CTG's journey to net zero began in 2018 with the development of a fleet replacement strategy, which would move each of their fleet of 16 high mileage diesel or petrol minibuses, to a fully electric fleet. They worked with the Energy Saving Trust to review its fleet, establish the most appropriate replacements for each vehicle and calculate the total cost.

CTG were successful in securing funding from a variety of sources, including £1.2 million from Scottish Power Energy Network's Green Economy Fund, as well as from SIS Loan Finance, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and Keep Scotland Beautiful. This enabled them to invest in a fleet of 16 EVs, including a mixture of accessible and standard minibuses, MPVs, a van and a car.

The new fleet has enabled them to improve local air quality in Drumchapel, Easterhouse and Shettleston and comply with Glasgow's new Low Emission Zone. CTG carry around 83,000 passengers every year, which equates to around 150,000 journeys. They have reduced their CO2 emissions by an incredible 285 tonnes between 2020 and 2023 with their EVs.

In 2021, CTG had the honour of contributing to Glasgow's hosting of the COP26 climate summit, using their new fleet to provide low-carbon and accessible transport for delegates from around the world to and from COP26 venues across the city.



Graham Dunn

Manager, Community Transport Glasgow

How have your EVs improved your local community?

"Moving to an electric fleet enabled CTG to survive... We're now able to provide a better, more accessible service with less polluting vehicles to some of the most deprived communities in Scotland."

What one piece of advice would you give other Community Transport operators?

"It's important that you ensure that you are able to install, or have access to, the EV charging infrastructure. You may have to increase your electricity supply, which can be expensive."

What role can Community Transport play in getting Scotland to net zero?

"Community Transport can lead the way by moving to EVs and getting people out of their cars by providing transport solutions to local communities."

What is needed to help more communities like yours to take climate action?

"Funding, advice and better and more affordable EV charging infrastructure."

"CTG's EVs are absolutely beautiful. They're much more reliable than the minibuses that were provided for our group previously. We just can't believe our luck!"

Lena, Eastenders Stroke Club

CAR CLUBS

For more than a century, cars have increasingly dominated our way of life, leaving an indelible mark on Scotland. Private car use is fuelling highly negative impacts on carbon emissions, air quality, road safety, congestion, accessibility and physical and mental health and wellbeing.

And yet private car ownership has traditionally been associated with attractive ideas like freedom and independence. However, this is increasingly being questioned by models of shared transport like the car club, which offers an exciting, growing and more sustainable alternative.

In its broadest sense, a car club is simply a group of people who arrange to share a car or cars. Members can access vehicles on a 'pay-as-you-go' basis, typically as a short-term rental, from convenient local locations such as dedicated on-street bays, car parks or train stations. They are a useful tool for people who occasionally need a car for a journey. Most car clubs are open to anyone to join to hire the shared vehicles, which it owns and operates, while 'closed loop community car sharing' allows a group of people to share between themselves.¹⁶

Car clubs empower people to only pay to use a car when they need it and encourage them to reduce their overall number of journeys by car. Membership subscriptions include fuel, cleaning, servicing, MOTs, insurance and breakdown cover. 78% of car club members in Scotland report saving money compared to owning or leasing a car.¹⁷

Car clubs are a critical part of the modern sharing economy, enabling local people and communities to maximise collective use of shared assets and resources. The average car spends 96% of its lifetime parked and is only in use 4% of the time.¹⁸ Car clubs support the reallocation of road space to create more accessible and sustainable places with better infrastructure for walking, wheeling and cycling. Scottish car clubs have 'freed up' 9 hectares of land so far by reducing the overall number of cars.¹⁹

The Scottish Government's commitment to reduce car use by 20% by 2030 will require investment in a massive expansion of community-owned car clubs, which are a highly effective intervention to reduce private car ownership, prevent forced car ownership and tackle car dependency.²⁰ In 2022, each car club vehicle in Scotland displaced an average of 15 private cars.²¹

It is a fast-growing part of the Community Transport sector, with 10% of operators in Scotland now running a car club.²² Local, community-owned car clubs can reach more communities than the market, which may not identify commercial viability in smaller or more rural places. Deeply embedded in the community, they are well-placed to change local travel behaviours and habits.



¹⁶ www.hiyacar.co.uk/closed-loop-car-sharing

¹⁷ www.como.org.uk/documents/car-club-annual-report-scotland-2022

¹⁸ www.racfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/standing-still-Nagler-June-2021.pdf

¹⁹ www.como.org.uk/documents/car-club-annual-report-scotland-2022

²⁰ www.transport.gov.scot/our-approach/environment/20-reduction-in-car-km-by-2030

²¹ www.como.org.uk/documents/car-club-annual-report-scotland-2022

²² <https://ctauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/More-Than-a-Minibus-CTA-2022.pdf>

LEAP Car Club



Local Energy Action Plan (LEAP) is an 'energy action charity' working across Renfrewshire to advance environmental protection, sustainability education and community participation. LEAP established a community-owned car club back in 2012 to meet local transport needs, reduce car ownership and cut car costs for users.

However, there were challenges. One was the administrative burden of setting up and operating the scheme and the associated costs. To mitigate this, LEAP has installed telematics in the vehicles to simplify the billing process, as well as secured funding from Energy Saving Trust, Renfrewshire Council, Paths for All and others. It has remained necessary to supplement hire income with additional sources of funding to ensure a financially sustainable model for the project.

LEAP Car Club provides its members with pay-as-you-go 24/7 access to five electric or hybrid cars across three locations in Lochwinnoch, a small village, and Linwood, a larger town.

People can join by paying a membership fee and security deposit and thereafter only pay for the time that they use the car. Users do not have to pay for fuel, maintenance, insurance, breakdown cover or cleaning. Membership offers 'all the convenience of a car without the hassle and expense of owning one'. By partnering with Linstone Housing Association, it has also provided subsidised, low-cost access to a car to residents and enabled staff to utilise the vehicles as pool cars.

LEAP Car Club now has over 60 members which cover nearly 15,000 miles every year. Members report being able to sell their own car or not purchase a second car for their household thanks to the project, reducing private car ownership and tackling car dependency.

Mike Callaghan

Charity Manager, LEAP Car Club

How has your car club improved your local community?

"We've provided environmental and financial benefits to the communities we serve and socially inclusive access to low-emissions vehicles."

What one piece of advice would you give other Community Transport operators?

"Do your research on best practice and take a full view of the options available... and the challenges that exist in setting up a new scheme."

What role can Community Transport play in getting Scotland to net zero?

"Continue to support low-emission shared transport. Lobby for increased funding for the sector and for changes in the challenging insurance landscape."

What is needed to help more communities like yours to take climate action?

"Greater shared knowledge and more funding to make these projects viable."

"The car club is fantastic, always with a friendly helper at the end of a phone... Great idea."

Gemma, user



WALKING & WHEELING

Scotland's National Transport Strategy commits to prioritise sustainable travel behaviours through implementation of the 'Sustainable Transport Hierarchy', which reflects the environmental impact of different modes.²³ The higher up the pyramid, the better for our planet.

Walking and wheeling sit at the top of sustainable transport hierarchy, reflecting the fact that travelling by foot or on wheels does not create any carbon emissions. Each mile walked saves 276g of CO2 compared to driving a car.²⁴

Walking and wheeling (along with cycling) are key parts of 'active travel', which refers to journeys which are fully or partially 'people-powered'. Walking and wheeling is an inclusive concept which refers to all pedestrians, whether they walk unaided, use a mobility aid like a cane or frame or use a wheeling aid like a wheelchair or mobility scooters.²⁵ Accessibility is at the heart of the mission and vision of Community Transport.

Walking and wheeling has massive benefits for physical and mental health and wellbeing and the Community Transport sector can play a positive role in promoting and facilitating it for everyday journeys. Community Transport operators are helping to create '20-minute neighbourhoods' across Scotland in which residents can meet their 'day-to-day needs' (such as their school, library, shop, pharmacy or workplace) within a 20-minute walk, wheel or cycle of their home.²⁶

Many groups organise educational or historical walking tours and run regular walking and hiking groups to bring local people together. Others are custodians of local active travel paths or offer mobility and wheeling aids like electric-powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters for rent to help older and disabled people get out and about. Some work alongside organisations like Living Streets to 'campaign for a better walking environment and inspire people to walk more', whether by reducing local speed limits, setting up a low-traffic 'School Street' or tackling pavement parking.²⁷

Far too many of our communities' infrastructure prioritises cars over people and are hostile to walking and wheeling, from uneven or narrow pavements to high levels of traffic congestion and air pollution. Concerns about safety while walking or wheeling are a significant barrier, especially for women, older people, disabled people and children.

The Scottish Government needs to turn its commitment to the sustainable transport hierarchy and to 20-minute neighbourhoods into reality in partnership with communities. We must make every village, town and city in Scotland an accessible, attractive and safe place for everyday walking and wheeling for everyone.



²³ www.transport.gov.scot/active-travel/developing-an-active-nation/sustainable-travel-and-the-national-transport-strategy

²⁴ <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/an-introduction-to-the-sustainable-travel-hierarchy>

²⁵ www.transport.gov.scot/publication/active-travel-strategies-guidance-for-completion/active-travel-is-walking-wheeling-and-cycling

²⁶ www.gov.scot/publications/local-living-20-minute-neighbourhoods-planning-guidance

²⁷ www.livingstreets.org.uk/about-us/our-organisation

Partnerships for Wellbeing

Partnerships for Wellbeing is an Inverness charity which has been promoting health and wellbeing in the community since 2004 and is a major promoter of active travel locally and regionally. It delivers accessible transport services for older and disabled people, 'health walks' and volunteering opportunities to keep people active, connected and healthy. It now also runs the fantastic Inverness Festival of Walking and Wheeling.

Partnerships for Wellbeing offer 12 different health walks which meet on a weekly basis across the inner Moray Firth area, including Inverness. These groups are community-based and led by a volunteer walk leader who has received Paths for All safety training.

Participants tend to be older, retired people who are looking for a weekly social event that is also a way to stay fit and healthy. In some cases, participation is the result of 'social prescribing', with the walks recommended by a doctor as a way to alleviate obesity, diabetes, stress or other physical or mental health challenges.

In May 2023, Partnerships for Wellbeing hosted the first-ever Inverness Festival of Walking and Wheeling with the tagline: 'Happy to Stroll, Ready to Roll!' Across 8 days of activities and events, the festival celebrated beautiful Inverness as 'the perfect city for walking, wheeling, cycling and active travel'.

Thirty groups and organisations from across the city worked together with support from Paths for All and the National Lottery to deliver guided walks and cycles, talks and tours, podcasts, bicycle repair and maintenance classes, Nordic walking trips and taster sessions of off-road mobility scooters, e-bikes and road bikes.

Jeff Zycinski

Manager, Partnerships for Wellbeing

How have your walking projects improved your local community?

"Our projects offer excellent volunteering opportunities and training... Walkers become aware of active travel routes, which they might use in their daily life. Our festival actively promotes environmentally-friendly travel for walkers and cyclists."

What one piece of advice would you give other Community Transport operators?

"It's easier to find funding for vehicles than it is to find volunteers!"

What role can Community Transport play in getting Scotland to net zero?

"Our Community Transport services help to reduce individual car ownership."

What is needed to help more communities like yours to take climate action?

"Easier means of funding electric vehicles and recognition that rural communities need different solution from urban areas. Many charities lease or rent premises that may not have suitable plug-in points."



CYCLING

More than two centuries ago, a simple machine was invented which is now one of our most accessible, affordable and effective tools in the fight against climate change: the bicycle!

Electric and hydrogen vehicles will help decarbonise transport, but modal shift is even more important. We need to leave the car behind and walk, wheel or cycle more. Over half of journeys in Scotland are less than 5km. Many of these everyday journeys to school, work or the shops could be more quickly, safely and sustainably made by bike. Research suggests over 41% of short car trips could be replaced with active travel, removing 5% of car-related carbon emissions.²⁸

Cycling is a zero-emission transport mode. Switching from a car to a bicycle saves 150g of CO₂ per kilometre. However, research shows that cycling not only reduces carbon emissions and air pollution, but also increases life expectancy, reduces the risk of cancer, depression and obesity and boosts the economy. Cycling prevents 6,500 deaths every year in the Netherlands – where more than 25% of all journeys are by bike – and delivers health benefits worth over 3% of Dutch GDP.²⁹

Cycling is better for the health of the individual, the environment and the community. It increases social connections and reduces isolation by facilitating day-to-day interactions which cannot happen when people are isolated in their private cars.

Cities like Amsterdam and Copenhagen – where nearly two-thirds of everyday journeys are by bike – have long led the way, but Paris, Ljubljana, Berlin and others are catching up by rapidly expanding their networks of segregated cycle lanes. Why not Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen next?

Scotland's Community Transport sector is working to accelerate modal shift and make cycling accessible, affordable and attractive for everyone, regardless of age, disability, gender or income. More than 5% of our 353 Community Transport schemes are now related to cycling.³⁰

Local operators across the country are offering the sale, short-term hire, long-term rent or ongoing sharing of all kinds of bicycles – manual bicycles; e-bikes for longer journeys and commutes; tricycles, trikes and 'step-through' bikes, particularly for older and disabled people with mobility restrictions; mountain bikes for off-road leisure activities; and cargo bikes for local businesses and households to transport goods, furniture and supplies – or even children and pets! Some groups are also providing advice, training and support, as well as creating new safe cycling routes in their area, to give people the confidence, equipment, skills and infrastructure they need to cycle.

Transport Scotland says that 'funding for active travel in Scotland is now at record levels' and the Scottish Government has committed to spend 'at least £320 million, or 10% of the total transport budget, on active travel by 2024–25'.³¹ This investment needs to support community-led climate action, harnessing the significant potential of local groups in our cities, towns and villages to get people out of their cars and onto bikes.



²⁸ www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0965856417316117?via%3Dihub

²⁹ www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/cycling-better-mode-transport

³⁰ <https://cta.uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/More-Than-a-Minibus-CTA-2022.pdf>

³¹ www.transport.gov.scot/active-travel/developing-an-active-nation



Women On Wheels

'The world of everyday cycling', says Shgufta Anwar, 'is dominated by a white male demographic'. It is much less common for women to cycle for travel and leisure, especially women of colour. But the innovative Glasgow charity she founded is out to change all that.

Women on Wheels is a community cycling hub of women, for women and by women. Based in Govanhill in the city's Southside, the most diverse community in Scotland, they deliver a range of cycling activities to support women at whatever stage of their cycling journey they are on to empower them to cycle independently whenever and wherever they want. They offer a safe and fun space for women to come and try cycling to build their confidence and skills.

They deliver a wide variety of exciting and inclusive services tailored to the needs of local people – learn to cycle sessions to get women pedalling for the first time; confidence building rides to improve skills; bike maintenance classes to teach women how to fix their own bikes; a cycle touring programme; a bike 'lending library'; mountain biking taster sessions; and bespoke events and activities for local community groups.

All of these activities empower women in all their diverse forms to get on a bike, cycle more and feel the joy of cycling – which, in turn, has massive benefits for the local environment, their physical and mental health and wellbeing and community cohesion.



Shgufta Anwar

Founder, Women on Wheels

How have your cycling projects improved your local community?

"Women on Wheels has supported over 200 women from our local community to get cycling or to get on a bike this year. It's helped to make our community a nicer, healthier place to spend time."

What one piece of advice would you give other Community Transport operators?

"If it is something you are passionate about, and there is a need and gap for it in the local community, then give it a go!"

What role can Community Transport play in getting Scotland to net zero?

"We can reduce carbon emissions, air pollution and traffic congestion as well as promote a healthier, more affordable and more enjoyable way to travel, which fosters a sense of community."

What is needed to help more communities like yours to take climate action?

"More funding to community groups to encourage active and sustainable travel options... More safer segregated cycling and walking infrastructure."

"When I started coming to Women on Wheels, I didn't know how to confidently pedal a bike. I didn't have a car and wanted to get places quickly. I have taken part in a lot of activities... I now feel confident to cycle around the city by myself."

Bahar, Women on Wheels user

DEMAND RESPONSIVE TRANSPORT

Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) brings together some of the advantages and characteristics of conventional bus services with the more flexible features of taxis to meet the needs of passengers in a more efficient and innovative way.

DRT provides shared transport to passengers between their desired location and destinations at pick-up and drop-off times of their choosing. There is no fixed timetable and routes may be dynamic and flexible too within the designated area of operation. Journeys can be booked online, by phone or with an app, like taxis, while vehicles are shared with other passengers going to the same destination or in a similar direction.³²

There are many different names for DRT – from ‘on-demand transport’ to ‘paratransit’ – and many different models of DRT. It is increasingly referred to as ‘Digital DRT’ as more advanced technologies and apps are utilised to digitise and improve the dynamic routing of vehicles, scheduling of drivers and experience of passengers.³³

DRT is not new, however. Community Transport operators have been delivering successful ‘dial-a-ride’ schemes for decades, since at least the early 1980s. It has long been integral to the sector’s mission and remains among the most common type of Community Transport service. In 2021, 1 in 4 operators in Scotland delivered some kind of DRT.³⁴

Typically, operators use minibuses and target the service at specific groups in the community, such as offering ‘door-to-door’ or even ‘door-through-door’ transport for older people and disabled people to get to the shops, attend GP and hospital appointments or visit family and friends. It combines flexible, shared transport with an accessible, person-centred approach. However, National Entitlement Cards cannot be used on DRT services (which are typically run on Section 19 permits) by the older people and disabled people who rely on them.

DRT has a significant role to play in delivering a Just Transition to net zero which ensures rural communities and older or disabled people are not left behind. DRT generally operates in places where there are few or no conventional bus services from municipal or commercial operators, plugging gaps in the public transport system. It can offer a cost-effective alternative to fixed route services in a less populated or lower demand area.

But it can also support fixed route services where they do exist by acting as a ‘feeder service’ which replaces private car use or large numbers of single occupancy car journeys. It facilitates integrated, multi-modal travel and connects passengers to bus stops or train stations in other parts of the public transport network. Moreover, DRT services can operate on optimised routes and only when requested, thereby reducing overall mileage and fuel consumption compared to fixed route services.³⁵



³² <https://theroutingcompany.com/newsroom/the-truth-about-drt>

³³ www.como.org.uk/ddrt/overview-and-benefits

³⁴ <https://ctauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/More-Than-a-Minibus-CTA-2022.pdf>

³⁵ www.gov.uk/government/publications/demand-responsive-transport-local-authority-toolkit/demand-responsive-transport-local-authority-toolkit

Handicabs Lothian



Handicabs Lothian (HCL) has been providing accessible DRT for people with mobility challenges in Edinburgh and across the Lothians since 1982.

HCL's Dial-A-Ride service provides door-through-door transport for people of any age with mobility challenges. It takes passengers wherever they want or need to go 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Additional assistance is available at the start and end of a journey, such as helping people with getting their coat on, locking their door or walking out safely to the vehicle. Similarly, HCL's Dial-A-Bus service provides door-through-door transport to local shopping centres and supermarkets. It supports wheelchairs users and people of all ages with limited mobility.

HCL has converted 15 of their Euro 5 diesel buses to be as clean as Euro 6 standards. All of their drivers complete fuel-efficient driver training to reduce fuel consumption and tailpipe emissions.

In February 2022, HCL expanded its climate action by establishing an internal 'Green Committee' to address the environmental impact of all areas of the charity's work, not just its vehicles. It involved the representation from across the workforce from the start, from drivers to Trustees, with a focus on building buy-in from everyone and on implementing practical changes.

An action plan was developed and agreed, including a 'clear and concise environmental policy'. It has changed staff behaviours and culture. HCL has successfully reduced waste, increased recycling, reduced use of paper and energy and bought the most sustainable equipment and products.

Elizabeth Campbell

Service Development Manager, HCL

How has your work improved your local community?

"We've raised awareness about the importance of becoming more environmentally-friendly and shared information and updates... with our staff, volunteers, Board and members."

What one piece of advice would you give other Community Transport operators?

"Have a focus and a plan. Ensure staff and volunteers can participate. Remember it's an ongoing process."

What role can Community Transport play in getting Scotland to net zero?

"By its very nature, Community Transport benefits the environment through providing group transport and shared journeys. Our Dial-A-Bus is a good example."

What is needed to help more communities like yours to take climate action?

"Community Transport can play a key role, but it needs huge investment not only in vehicles, but also charging points and training."

"Being part of the Green Committee has been really positive. I've been involved in discussions and suggested practical changes which can make a difference. We're already seeing positive outcomes."

Alexis Brown, Finance Officer, HCL



CAR SHARE

For two-thirds of car journeys in Scotland, there is only one person in the vehicle. Meanwhile, 29% of households have access to two or more cars, yet 28% of people live in households without any access to a car, whether due to cost, disability, geography or choice.³⁶ Equally, many people on low incomes are unfortunately forced into car ownership, because of a lack of affordable transport alternatives for travelling to work, school or study.

Car-sharing – when two or more people, formally or informally, share a car and travel together for the whole, or part, of their journey – is a useful tool to address these challenges and inequalities, reducing the number of single occupancy car journeys, widening access to transport and making better use of under-utilised vehicles without increasing congestion or pollution.

Car-sharing is sometimes also known as ‘lift-sharing’, ‘car-pooling’ or ‘ride-sharing’. It has a long, informal history of bringing family, friends, colleagues and neighbours together through word of mouth and small acts of kindness for shared transport. Cars are often shared for regular and specific journeys, such as commuting to work, often by people who each have a car but travel together to save costs.

However, more formal and organised structures have emerged in recent years to facilitate car-sharing by matching ‘car-sharers’ with people hoping to travel the same or a similar journey. The largest platform in the UK is Liftshare, a social enterprise dedicated to solving ‘the world’s mobility problems through sharing’, based in Norwich and with tens of thousands of local users in communities across the UK.³⁷

Community Transport operators are well-placed to either create a car-sharing group for their community or to promote existing platforms and encourage residents to use them. The more local people who actively use and support car-sharing schemes, the greater extent to which the problems of forced car ownership and car dependency can be tackled.

Meanwhile, 15% of Community Transport operators in Scotland run Volunteer Car Schemes in which local volunteer drivers use their own vehicles to help their neighbours and local residents from across the community to get where they need to go.³⁸ Cars can be shared by multiple passengers and reduce the need for multiple trips.

Typically, these services are focused on the transport of older and disabled people to health and social care sites, such as GP surgeries, pharmacists, hospitals and respite accommodation – but rarely with any funding or support from the NHS.

Car-sharing and volunteer car schemes can empower more people to live locally without their own car, perhaps for the first time in a more rural or remote community, and reduce their car use and overall carbon footprint.



³⁶ www.transport.gov.scot/publication/transport-and-travel-in-scotland-2017/5-motor-vehicles-traffic-and-driving

³⁷ www.liftshare.com/uk

³⁸ <https://ctauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/More-Than-a-Minibus-CTA-2022.pdf>

Upper Tay Transport



Upper Tay Transport, based in their Community Transport Hub on Aberfeldy's high street, is a remarkable, multi-faceted project. It is managed by Tay Valley Timebank, which is dedicated to creating a resilient, cohesive community through supporting other community groups and advocating for 'active citizenship and good neighbourliness'.

Upper Tay Transport work holistically to improve transport in Highland Perthshire and to 'encourage everyone to travel sustainably where possible' in a poorly connected area where private car ownership is high. They deliver a range of excellent services – like their Community Lifts programme, guided cycling groups and bike loan scheme – while always promoting other sustainable travel options to reduce local car dependency – such as local bus services and car sharing through LiftShare.

Upper Tay Transport's Community Lifts programme is a strong example of a volunteer car scheme serving a rural community in Scotland. It involves volunteers with their own cars 'offering to drive members of the community to appointments, to visit friends, go shopping, link with public transport or whatever else they might need to do'.

People from Glen Lyon to Loch Tay to Ballinluig can use the scheme, enabling them to live in a remote town or village without having to own their own car. It has empowered older and disabled people to maintain their independence and mobility, as well as access hospitals and public services, even if they are not able to drive.

LiftShare is a national digital platform which enables 'people who are going places to offer lifts to people who need to go places!' Lifts are organised directly by users and drivers who are signed up locally. As Upper Tay Transport say: 'If we have enough people signed up locally, this becomes a real alternative for people who need to get from place to place. You will be helping the planet at the same time.'

Eileen Merry

Hub Manager, Upper Tay Transport

How have you improved your local community?

"By providing more transport options, we're enabling people to get where they need to go – work, study, appointments, community activities – in a more affordable way. We're reducing isolation and inequalities to make our community healthier."

What one piece of advice would you give other Community Transport operators?

"Invest in your staff and volunteers."

What role can Community Transport play in getting Scotland to net zero?

"Community Transport providers make thousands of trips a day, so for every journey we make in a cleaner vehicle, we are delivering what people want, and doing our bit to save the planet."

What is needed to help more communities like yours to take climate action?

"Engagement – really getting people involved."



CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Community Transport is at the heart of community-led climate action

Community Transport operators are at the heart of their communities – and Community Transport solutions are at the heart of community-led climate action. Local charities, community groups and social enterprises are ideally placed to design and deliver cost-effective, impactful and innovative transport solutions. They can tailor ideas and interventions which will reduce carbon emissions, reduce car use and accelerate modal shift to meet local needs and secure local support.

2. Community Transport is an essential partner to deliver a Just Transition to net zero

Community Transport operators across Scotland are working to make sustainable transport services accessible, affordable and attractive to everyone. Community-owned buses, car clubs, electric vehicles, DRT and walking, wheeling and cycling projects are empowering people to take climate action regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, geography or income. Community Transport is an essential partner for national and local government to deliver a Just Transition to net zero. They should work with and invest in Community Transport to harness its full potential and ensure that no one and no community is left behind.

3. Community Transport operators are transitioning to zero-emission fleets – but need more investment

Community Transport operators have accelerated their transition to zero-emission fleets with 18% of the Scottish fleet now electric. Significant progress has been made

since 2021 when 12% of Community Transport vehicles were electric thanks to support from government and funders, including the Plugged-In Communities Grant Fund and ScotZEB2. However, as prices rise, the sector still faces a 'net zero funding gap' of nearly £90m to fully decarbonise the national fleet. Investment needs to be scaled-up to enable more operators to purchase EVs, especially minibuses.

4. Community Transport services should be integrated into Scotland's public transport network

Community Transport plays an essential role in plugging gaps in Scotland's public transport network by expanding its reach with new services, connecting to bus, ferry and rail and providing first/last mile connectivity. These local services need to be better integrated into the wider network to deliver seamless, sustainable and multi-modal journeys. Community-owned buses, car clubs and DRT should be included in journey planning apps and websites like Traveline Scotland.

5. Communities require more practical support to achieve net zero

Local charities, community groups and social enterprises require further technical advice and tailored support to help them to not only decarbonise their transport services, but to also develop holistic net zero plans for all of their operations as well as the whole community. This should build on the advice, information, resources and training available through CTA's Climate Action programme and the Growing Climate Confidence platform hosted by SCVO.

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CTA takes responsibility for all of the content of the report, including any errors.

Join the Conversation

Follow us on Twitter @CTAUK1 and join in the conversation with #ActLocal and #MoreThanaMinibus.

Further Information

Please visit www.ctauk.org/climateaction or email us at scotland@ctauk.org.

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