

# cta

community transport  
association

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## Dolen Teifi Community Transport

# Brechfa Electric Vehicle Pilot Project

Living in a rural community has many benefits – wide open spaces, fresh air and beautiful natural scenery, to name just a few. Rural life, however, does have its challenges, not least the availability of transport. For those who don't own a car, and who don't have a regular bus service or anyone to rely on for transportation, people living in rural communities can suffer from transport poverty.

This was the case in the Brechfa Forest area, north of Carmarthen, in West Wales. The Brechfa area is very rural with limited public transport available to local residents. It can be difficult, for example, for people to get to a GP appointment or to a local hospital to visit friends or family, if they don't have a car. In May 2018, a local windfarm community fund consultation report found that transport was a real problem for local people in the Brechfa area and highlighted the difficulties people were facing when they needed to get to essential services and opportunities. As an established community transport operator in Carmarthenshire, Dolen Teifi Community Transport were approached to submit an application for funding to the windfarm community fund, working in partnership with local stakeholders, including CTA's Connecting Communities in Wales team.

The Connecting Communities team, were able to support Dolen Teifi to write the application for funding, outline different models of delivery and attend stakeholder meetings. In the Autumn of 2019, £81,000 in funding was approved to deliver a two year, electric multi-purpose vehicle (MPV) pilot project. The pilot enables people to access the project either via a community car scheme model, supported by volunteer drivers, or via a car club approach, enabling people who need to privately access short term car use to get to essential services, facilities and the places they need or would like to go to.

The project will also be complimented by the availability of a Dolen Teifi, 16 passenger seat minibus, which will be available for community groups in the area to get to club meetings, outings and day trips, when the project vehicle is not large enough to accommodate a group. The project will have an extremely positive impact on the lives of people living in the area and will remove long term transport barriers for many in the local community.

“Service users have told us that before the project was established, people really did struggle to get to essential services because public transport, depending on which community you live in, is too infrequent or non-existent in some places or at certain times of the day,” said Rod Bowen, Dolen Teifi Community Transport Development Manager. “In general, if you didn’t have a car and couldn’t call on family or friends to take you to places, you were generally stuck.

“The project also enables people to stay better connected to friends and family and stay in touch with social opportunities, and we know from talking to our service users that there has been a reduction in loneliness and isolation and improved individual wellbeing as a result of the project. The pilot also represents a unique opportunity for Dolen Teifi Community Transport to test new technology by operating an electric MPV for the first time and assessing the benefits compared with a diesel MPV. The feedback gained from volunteer drivers and passengers will be interesting in terms of their experiences and how we can use electric vehicles moving forward”.

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## About Connecting Communities in Wales

The Connecting Communities in Wales project is run by the Community Transport Association and funded through the Welsh Government Rural Communities Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government, and aims to support community transport in Wales through creating new partnerships, bringing funding into the sector and creating new transport networks.

**You can find out more about Connecting Communities in Wales at [ctauk.org/CCIW](http://ctauk.org/CCIW).**

