

# TOGETHER

THE JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNITY TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

A portrait of Victoria Armstrong, a woman with long blonde hair, wearing a blue ribbed sweater and a gold hoop earring. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with green foliage.

## INTRODUCING CTA'S NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**Victoria Armstrong**  
talks about the  
challenges ahead

### FUNDRAISING ADVICE

Our advice on best practice  
when applying for grants

### CTA LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

Opportunities and vision  
for the sector

### COST OF LIVING CRISIS

An Update on CTA's  
AMAP Campaign

# THE ELECTRIC MINIBUS THAT TAKES YOU FURTHER



**Developed by GM Coachwork in partnership with Maxus, the eDeliver9 heralds the next generation of electric minibuses.**

Boasting a zero emissions output the electric **eDeliver 9** is perfect for low and ultra-low emission zones. A range up to 220 miles makes it an ideal inner-city transport solution that you can operate all day. With a 45 minute charging time your inconvenience is kept to a minimum.

Four seating layouts are available, including wheelchair access. Choose from 12 or 14 seats, and 9-10 seats with removable seats and electric passenger lift for wheelchair access.

**Get in touch to discuss your minibus requirements**

**Call** 01626 855050  
[hello@gmminibus.co.uk](mailto:hello@gmminibus.co.uk)

## KEY FEATURES

- High quality minibus conversion with VCA type approval
- Choose from 4 layouts, including wheelchair access
- WLTP range 185 to 219 miles
- 45 minute charging time (DC 80%)



## ABOUT THE CTA

The Community Transport Association is a national charity

that represents and supports providers of community transport: thousands of local charities and community groups who all provide transport services that fulfil a social purpose and community benefit. We are for and about accessible and inclusive transport. We help our members to remain relevant and responsive to key areas of public policy and to make a big difference for the people and families in the communities they work in. Our vision is of a world where people can shape and create their own accessible and inclusive transport solutions and our mission is to achieve this through championing accessible and inclusive transport, connecting people and ideas and through strengthening our members and raising standards.

## CTA CONTACTS

### Advice and information service

**Tel:** 0345 130 6195

**Email:** [advice@ctauk.org](mailto:advice@ctauk.org)

### Central office

12 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 1JF

**Tel:** 0161 351 1475

**Fax:** 0161 351 7221

**Email:** [info@ctauk.org](mailto:info@ctauk.org)

### Northern Ireland office

Room 110, City East, 68-72

Newtonwards Road, Belfast BT3 1GW

**Tel:** 028 9094 1661

### Scotland office

83 Princes St, Edinburgh EH2 2ER

**Tel:** 0131 220 0052

### South Wales office

We have decided not to return to a fixed office in south Wales, and our team continues to support members remotely. Please address any mail to our head office (address above) or contact Gemma on [gemma@ctauk.org](mailto:gemma@ctauk.org) to arrange a call.

### North Wales office

Suite 8, Conwy Business Centre, Junction Way, Llandudno Junction, LL31 9XX

**Tel:** 01745 356 751

## KEEP UP TO DATE WITH THE CTA



[www.ctauk.org](http://www.ctauk.org)



@CTAUK1



[facebook.com/ctauk1](https://facebook.com/ctauk1)

TOGETHER AUTUMN 2022

# Welcome



I am delighted to introduce my first edition of the Together magazine. In August of this year, CTA announced my imminent arrival to the organisation, and I am looking forward to beginning my role as Chief Executive of CTA on 19th September. I am extremely excited to be working with such a talented team of people, many of whom feature in this Autumn edition of Together, the journal of the Community Transport Association.

We are certainly in the midst of challenging times and I write more about this in my introductory article on page 8. We know that many of our members are finding it difficult to recruit and retain volunteers and we focus on this in more detail on page 20 along with exploring how our members are struggling with fuel costs (Page 14). This is, of course, linked to the wider AMAP campaign which is referenced throughout this edition. We also shine a spotlight and provide some fundraising advice on applying for grants from Michelle Clarke, CTA's Transport Strategy Lead (Page 16).

As always, thanks go out to all our stakeholders for continuing to pull together to deliver services, information, and support to those that need it most in these most difficult of times. I am looking forward to getting started and getting to know you all. Taking my time to build relationships with our members will be key to positively promoting and strengthening the sector going forwards.

Best wishes,

**Victoria Armstrong**

Chief Executive, Community Transport Association



## Book of Condolence

Remembering Queen Elizabeth II

Share your memories and messages of condolence at [ctauk.org](http://ctauk.org)



# FOR THE JOURNEYS YOUR COMMUNITY DEPENDS UPON, DEPEND ON US



The demand for your Community Transport service is on the rise.  
Unfortunately, so is the pressure on your operating budget.

## A smarter way to schedule your journeys could help...

CATSS is versatile transport scheduling software developed by CT operators for CT operators. It's perfect for a wide variety of vehicles, drivers and journeys and has been benefitting local authorities, health & social care services and schools nationwide for over 10 years.

### CATSS gives you:

- **Flexibility** - Built around your needs, your communities and the journeys you make.
- **Usability** - Training and support for everyone in your organisation that needs it.
- **Affordability** - No hidden costs, just simple and transparent pricing.

Discover all the ways you can depend on CATSS

T: 0300 302 1234

E: [enquiries@catss.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@catss.org.uk)

W: [catss.org.uk](http://catss.org.uk)



# Contents

## 06. NEWS

Driver licensing review call for evidence, more on our Tackling Loneliness Project and our Health and Social Care Strategy for Older People in Scotland.

## 08. INTRODUCING OUR NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE

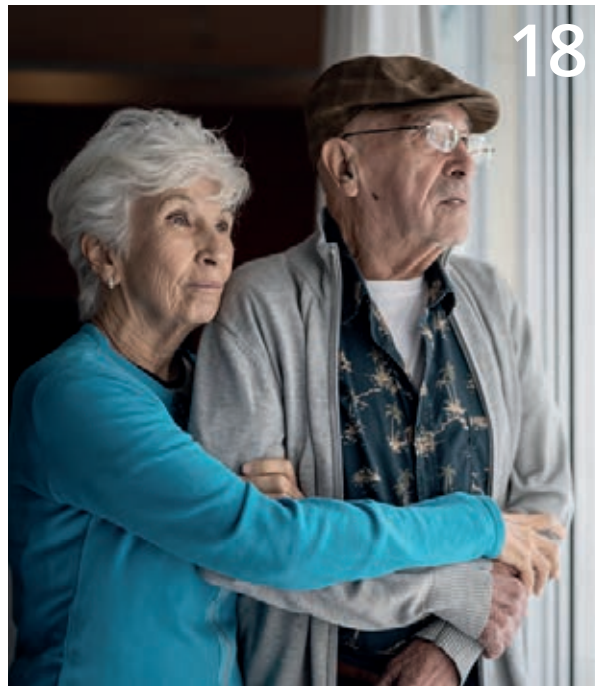
Meet Victoria Armstrong, CTA's new Chief Executive. Hear her story and discover her vision for the future of CTA and the wider sector.

## 12. BLUELIGHT – A SOLUTION FOR COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

A word from Bluelight UK and how they can provide many types of non-emergency patient transport vehicles in addition to ex Trust Ambulance Vehicles.

## 14. COST OF LIVING CRISIS: UPDATE ON CTA'S AMAP CAMPAIGN

Find out what we're calling on the Chancellor to do as fuel costs rise and how it could help many community transport operators across the UK.



## 16. FUNDRAISING ADVICE

Michelle Clarke, CTA's Wales Transport Strategy Lead shares her experience and advice on applying for grants.

## 18. COMMUNITIES IN CRISIS

Susan Dever of Coalfield Community Transport tells CTA how the cost of living crisis has impacted the community they serve.



**ON THE COVER**  
Meet CTA's new Chief Executive, Victoria Armstrong

**cta**  
community transport  
association

james pembroke  
media



## TOGETHER THE JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNITY TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

- **Editorial address:** 12 Hilton Street, Manchester M1 1JF t: 0161 351 1475 • **Managing editor** Alina Cohen e: alina@ctauk.org
- **Design:** James Pembroke Media, 90 Walcot Street, Bath BA1 5BG • **Printer** CPMK e: www.cp-uk.co.uk
- **Publisher** James Houston • **Design and Production Manager** Christina Richmond
- **Advertising** Hoby Abdel e: hoby.abdel@jamespembrokemedia.co.uk t: 0203 859 7097
- **Subscriptions** *Together* is free to members of the CTA. Non-members can buy a year's subscription (four issues) for £50

**DISCLAIMER** *Together* is published four times a year by the CTA. *Together* publishes a wide range of views which are not necessarily those of the CTA or its trustees. Neither *Together* nor the CTA accept responsibility for the views and advice expressed by contributors to *Together* or for errors in articles or advertisements in *Together*. Advertisers in *Together* are not endorsed by the CTA. *Together* tries to avoid inaccuracies; if readers believe that an error has been made, please contact the editor.

© CTA and its contributors. *Together* may not be reproduced in any form without the permission of the CTA, other than for research or review. ISSN 2515-4052

Community Transport Association UK is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. Registered in Cardiff no. 1985361

Registered charity no. 1002222  
Charity registered in Scotland no. SC038518  
**Chair:** Alan B Jones  
**Chief Executive:** Victoria Armstrong

# News

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE STRATEGY FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND – CTA'S RESPONSE

**A** few weeks ago, Team Scotland were delighted to help STV News share the stories of Coalfield Community Transport's passengers with the nation in a report that was both heart-warming and heart-breaking.

Betty, a regular user of their door-to-door shopping service in East Ayrshire, said: "It lets me go for my messages once a week. If it didn't exist, I'd never be out the house. It's the only time I'm out, that's me till next Thursday."

That's the power of Community Transport. We bring people and communities together and tackle exclusion, isolation and loneliness, especially among older people. As you'll hear me say often in the coming weeks and months, Community Transport is so much more than just a minibus.

The local charities, community groups and social enterprises of Scotland's Community Transport sector are at the heart of their communities. The services you provide often represent the only accessible, affordable means for older people to get out and about – especially if they've got a disability or live in a remote, rural or island place.

CTA shares the Scottish Government's ambition to make Scotland 'the best place in the world to grow old'. We therefore welcomed the Scottish Government's work on co-producing a Health and Social Care Strategy for Older People with Scotland's older people and the third sector organisations which deliver advice, services and support to meet their needs.

Our consultation response – which you can read on our website – sets out how we believe the Community Transport sector can work with the public sector to meet the transport needs of older people,

because access to amenities, education, employment, family and friends, health & social care and other public services is so important for physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Our submission makes the following key points:

- **Community Transport supports Scotland's older people to live happily, healthily and more independently for longer in their own homes and communities.**
- **Many older people rely on Community Transport to access amenities, education, employment, family and friends and health & social care, which improve physical and mental health and wellbeing**
- **A lack of funding from the NHS and Health & Social Care Partnerships for Community Transport schemes which provide non-emergency patient transport results in missed appointments, higher costs and worse health outcomes and inequalities experienced by older people**
- **Accessible, inclusive transport in their local community should be considered an integral part of holistic, person-centered care packages for older people**
- **Health, social care and transport services should be aligned. A more joined-up, strategic approach to non-emergency patient transport is required.**

Read our consultation response in full on our website at [cta.uk.org/blog](https://cta.uk.org/blog).

If you have any feedback to share or want to get involved in shaping CTA's policy positions, contact [david.kelly@cta.uk.org](mailto:david.kelly@cta.uk.org)

### WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

**We'd like to extend a warm welcome to the newest members of the CTA:** Antz Kidz Activity Centre Ltd, Richard Wellesley Memorial Transport Group, Touch of Love Outreach, Amesbury CE Primary School, R.I.O.T, The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, Trowridge Area, Community Link Scheme, Woodcote Volunteers, York Christian Youth Holidays, Cumbria Community Transport, 276 (Chelmsford) Squadron Royal Air Force Air Cadets, 2nd Cranham Scout Group, Autism West Midlands, Cambridgeshire Peterborough Combined Authority, Commonwork Trust, Hour Community, Kilbride Congregation Of The Presbyterian Church In Ireland, New Life Church Tameside, St Georges School Edgbaston, West Glenmoriston Community Company, Chilton Foliat Primary School, Erskine Stewarts Melville Schools, Farnworth and Kearsley Events Team Ltd, Gwelfor Community Concern Urban Aid, Hatherleigh Community Bus, Herefordshire Ludlow and North Shropshire College, High Borrans Outdoor Education Centre, Highlands School, Knowsley Enterprise Academy, Lowestoft and Yarmouth RUFC Limited, Poltair School, Rushton Parish Council, Sherburn Visiting Scheme Supporting Seniors, Teenworld C.I.C, We Are Plas Madoc, Wild Things!, Winchmore School, Welcome to CTA!

### WELCOME TO THE CTA TEAM!

**SINCE THE LAST** issue of Together we've been joined by three new members of the CTA team – our new CEO, Victoria Armstrong; Nicky Newman, our new Tackling Loneliness Administrator; and Paula Salazar, our new Development Officer for England South. We're thrilled to have them on board!

# DRIVING LICENSING REVIEW – CALL FOR EVIDENCE

**C**TA are asking all members and the wider Community Transport sector to complete this and share their views. This will directly impact organisations where drivers (volunteers or staff) are currently required to hold a category D1 licence to drive your mini bus.

CTA have been discussing this issue with DfT for some time and are pleased that we have this opportunity to gather the evidence and impact that any changes would have for the Community Transport sector. Our Director for England has fed



into the development of this call and we will be hosting an event with DfT in August to enable an opportunity for members to share their views directly with policy makers.

While CTA will be submitting a response, we ask that each member submits their evidence directly to DfT. The full call for evidence information can be found at [ctauk.org/blog](https://ctauk.org/blog), here, you can

complete the survey and download a full list of FAQs'.

The call for evidence period began on 5 August 2022 and will run until 28 October 2022. Please ensure that your response reaches them before the closing date.

If you operate under a Section 19 or 22 Permit when you complete this form your views will be anonymised and shared with us at CTA.

## TACKLING LONELINESS THROUGH CT PROJECT

**C**TA recently secured £498,000 from the DfT Tackling loneliness through transport fund. There are three strands to our funded project:

1. A Grants Plus programme, providing practical support from CTA, to accelerate the set up and progress of the community transport pilot projects.
2. A Peer Network will bring pilot projects together on a regular basis to share best practice, identify learning from the projects, and draw out common themes and critical success factors from the projects.
3. The Knowledge Building. The emphasis is on cascading knowledge and learning throughout the wider network of operators in England (and across the sector as a whole).

What we hope to gain from the project:

- A clear understanding of the support operators needs to develop tackling loneliness projects
- A greater understanding of the effectiveness of different delivery models in tackling loneliness interventions in relation to the community transport sector
- Insight into how community transport helps reduce social isolation and loneliness amongst volunteers

£405k will fund 18 pilot projects and support the sharing of knowledge around community transport loneliness interventions. Learning from the project could potentially help operators across the UK to unlock further resources from funders in the future.

During June and July we received applications from CTA members to be

part of this project and deliver pilot projects within their communities.

We received 48 applications worth £1.2m and were able to support 18 of these. The bids were assessed against the core criteria and we also worked to ensure that there was a mix of delivery models, beneficiaries and regions across England. We will now be working collectively over the next 10 months to showcase the impact that community transport can have on Loneliness.

If you have any questions or want to link with the project please contact Sean Ray, Tackling Loneliness Coordinator – [sean@ctauk.org](mailto:sean@ctauk.org)



### MORE INFORMATION

Please contact [info@ctauk.org](mailto:info@ctauk.org) for further information



## OUR VISION

# INTRODUCING CTA'S NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Our new Chief Executive, **Victoria Armstrong** shares her story and her vision for the future.

## A little bit about me...

**Earlier this Summer I was thrilled to be appointed as the new Chief Executive of CTA and I am looking forward to taking up this role on the 19th of September.**

I have spent almost two decades working in the voluntary sector and my most recent position was Chief Executive of Disability North; a regional disability charity promoting independence, inclusion and choice for disabled people and their families across the North of England. I was attracted to CTA because of its mission to ensure accessible and inclusive community transport for all. Accessibility and inclusion are, and have been, significant drivers in my career to date and during the recruitment process it was clear that they chimed with the ethos of CTA. I know from experience that there are

many barriers facing people and their communities which means that they are not always included in society as they should be, and that people can't always access the services and amenities they need to live their lives. The reasons for these exclusions are complicated but they are often rooted in poverty, disability, age, gender, geographical location, sexual orientation, ethnicity and/or religion. The list is not exhaustive, but when an individual or community face one or many barriers to inclusion, it is detrimental to our society because people are prevented from contributing fully and reaching their potential. I have worked for, and led, a range of voluntary sector organisations and initiatives which tackle exclusion on some level. This has included (but certainly not limited to!) providing support to disabled people who are not having their care needs met, supporting people with mental health problems who would like to volunteer, and providing free legal advice to people who cannot afford a solicitor and qualify for Legal Help. As Chief Executive of CTA I bring a unique combination of skills, experience, and dedication to the role and I hope to learn a great deal more from our existing staff team and members in the coming months. Some of you may have already read a short interview with me which went out on social media earlier in the summer, but I hope this article gives you a little bit more of a flavour about who I am and how I will be approaching my new role as Chief Executive of CTA.

**“There are many barriers facing people and their communities which means that they are not always included in society as they should be”**

**“What we do makes such a significant impact on the people we support but there is simply not enough funding or time for us to run all the services”**

## Looking forward: challenges and opportunities

The challenges facing the voluntary sector have always been significant because money is often tight; funding for projects can be reactive and/or short-lived; equally deserving organisations or groups are in competition with one another for funding; and we can experience a great deal of frustration because we know that what we do makes such a significant impact on the people we support but there is simply not enough funding or time for us to run all the services, groups and initiatives that we feel so passionately about. That said, I think the UK can be extremely proud of the important work we do, our community spirit, our willingness to help and often give up our time voluntarily to make a difference. It is this spirit that we

### **“We are living in a precarious world with many challenges but a key purpose of CTA is to represent and support our members”**

wholeheartedly believe in at CTA, we see it through our staff and the work of our members every day, and it is this strength of community spirit that will get us through the difficult times ahead.

You only have to read or watch the news for ten minutes to know that the UK is currently in a state of flux with rising inflation and fuel costs. This uncertain economic climate is already negatively impacting most CTA members as many of our members' reserves have been eaten away during the pandemic. In July, CTA led a campaign to call upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer to tackle the spiralling fuel crisis which is damaging the voluntary sector throughout the UK. We asked the Chancellor to increase the Approved Mileage Allowance Payment (AMAP) to reflect inflation in his upcoming Autumn budget. CTA joined forces with ten other charities from England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland to request an immediate review of the AMAP rate. We know that this is such an important issue for members because the current AMAP rate no longer fully covers volunteering expenses. Volunteers are key to our sector and more so now as we experience a cost of living crisis. This is a pressing issue covered in more depth elsewhere in this edition of Together. I look forward



to continuing to work with our members and other charities to ensure that our voice is heard and fight hard to influence policy making in this area to secure, as far as possible, the best outcome for the community transport sector.

Amid the worrying financial landscape, we are also faced with environmental

concerns and the decarbonisation agenda. Whilst I am sure all of us agree that taking care of our environment is a priority, the situation is complicated from a community transport perspective. CTA responded to DFT's consultation on ending the sale of non-zero emission minibuses in May of this year and outlined the key challenges facing the sector. We called for a roll out of charging points throughout the UK, highlighted the current cost and availability of zero-emission vehicles whilst emphasising the current lack of suitable vehicles being manufactured. In summary, if the infrastructure is not in place for the community transport sector and our future needs aren't considered during the roll out of the decarbonisation agenda, we risk being left behind. I am keen to work with members on this issue so that we can articulate what needs to be done and have a seat at the table in discussions on how that will be delivered.

We are living in a precarious world with many challenges but a key purpose of CTA is to represent and support our members. We do this in so many ways,



including advice, training, publications, advocacy, and events throughout the UK. I look forward to growing my knowledge and expertise so that we are best placed to empower members who I know are so passionate about social inclusion, access, mobility, and choice. We are certainly stronger together and this is where we will find opportunities to influence change. I am ready to set to work on using my knowledge, expertise, and skills to influence policy making at both regional and national level to ensure that we are strongly represented going forward in all the areas I have mentioned and more.

### My vision for CTA and our future

Whilst we all face many significant challenges (and opportunities) in a post-Covid world it will be my job to provide strong leadership to steer us through it all. As you read this, you may be thinking, "That's all well and good - we know the issues the sector faces, but how exactly does Victoria intend to approach all of this?" It's always difficult when someone asks you about a vision for an organisation because in a good organisation, the vision doesn't simply belong to one person. It's even harder writing this at a time when I have not yet begun in post! Therefore, I would like to tell you a little about what I intend to do in my first 6 months.

From the moment I began the recruitment process I have been researching CTA. When I was appointed I continued this research with growing excitement, knowing that I would soon have the opportunity to work with you all. I have led a lot of research, consultancy, and project development/management in my career; I believe that I have only been successful because I have carried out this work collaboratively. This means that I intend to spend lots of time listening to our staff, our board, and of course, our members. To begin with, I don't have much



of an agenda or preconceived idea of how this work will be carried out because we don't build relationships with agendas, we build relationships by getting to know one another and having conversations. I want to know what you want to tell me and from that I will begin to ask questions. Every single one of the conversations will, in part, formulate the basis of what I (and others) often called a 'perception audit'. Ordinarily, organisations will commission a third party to conduct this audit, but as I am new to the organisation and have lots of experience of doing this, it is only right I lead on this work, given I will be the one responsible for implementing the outcomes. What will follow is a strategic plan in which every single member, staff, and board member will know where they fit, and in doing so we will have a clear plan going forward. For me this role is all about building strong relationships, having deep knowledge of the issues impacting our members to influence policy change, and leading our staff team to come up with the best ways and means of supporting you.

One example that comes to mind is the forthcoming transformation of MiDAS. This is something that I know is eagerly anticipated by our members and I look

forward to working with the staff at CTA to ensure this is fit for purpose and that the transition is a smooth one. This is simply one of the ways we will continue to support you, as well as listening to your changing needs so that we can develop services and initiatives that are fit for purpose. We are also introducing a new CRM system which will mean a more positive experience for our members in terms of how you engage with us.

Like any other voluntary sector organisation, CTA must continue to demonstrate its impact and worth so that we can influence policy and services where it matters most and to realise our vision of a world where people can shape and create their own accessible and inclusive transport solutions. To do this, I will be leading the team at CTA to work for the benefit of members, non-members and community transport users who are affected by different policies, legislation, and political agendas, so that we can strengthen our recognised role as the voice of community transport across the UK.



#### MORE INFORMATION

Please do reach out for any further conversations via [info@ctauk.org](mailto:info@ctauk.org).



**65 Plate Peugeot Boxers**

**Wheelchair Accessible Minibuses**

**Choice Available – As low as £8500 + vat**

**Tel: 01942 888 800**

**Email: [sales@bluelightuk.co.uk](mailto:sales@bluelightuk.co.uk)**



## TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS

# BLUELIGHT UK – A SOLUTION FOR YOUR COMMUNITY TRANSPORT PROJECTS

**Bluelight UK** explains how they can provide transport solutions for our sector.

**W**hen it comes to ambulances there are few that understand the market better than **Bluelight UK Ltd.**

The company has been remarketing end of lease ambulances for over 20 years now. Simon and Julie Forster, together with their son, Matthew set the business up to supply quality ex NHS Trust vehicles to the private sector, charities, NGOs and export clients. Since then the company has grown year on year and is now firmly recognised as the “go to place” for well maintained, ex Trust ambulance vehicles. Their customer base spans the globe and they are an invaluable supplier to the NHS. In addition to this Bluelight UK also supplies brand new front line ambulances and many types of non-emergency patient transport vehicles.



**“We are receiving an increasing number of non-emergency patient transport service vehicles which have proved successful in both private and public sectors”**

The Covid 19 pandemic, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and other factors have all contributed to increased lead-times on new conversions which can take up to 12 months from concept. End of lease vehicles have great appeal for cost savings and short to medium term supply issues. Bluelight UK's stock of vehicles are all approved second stage conversions, meaning they have been either IVA tested or have type approval.

“We are receiving an increasing number of non-emergency patient transport service vehicles which have proved successful in both private and public sectors,”



commented Simon. “These Peugeot Boxer PTS vehicles have wheelchair lifts and wheelchair seats as well as air conditioning, heating, ventilation, wipe clean interior panels, window blinds and many other features. They represent excellent value for money for use in community transport, nursing homes and as well as home to school contracts and are readily available at our depots in Ashton and Atherton near Manchester.”

## **i MORE INFORMATION**

If you are looking for wheelchair accessible vehicles for your organisation, you really need to speak to the team at Bluelight UK on 01942 888800 or contact [sales@bluelightuk.co.uk](mailto:sales@bluelightuk.co.uk). Details of their vehicles can be found here: [www.bluelightuk.co.uk](http://www.bluelightuk.co.uk)



# COST OF LIVING CRISIS: UPDATE ON CTA'S AMAP CAMPAIGN

We're calling for the Chancellor to act on record fuel prices before it's too late

**T**he UK's cost of living crisis has been one of the biggest stories of 2022. The COVID-19 pandemic, supply chain disruption and Russia's war against Ukraine have all combined to send inflation soaring to levels unseen since the early 1980s, causing real damage to the Community Transport sector and some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Record fuel prices and rising labour, maintenance and equipment costs mean that many Community Transport operators

and other third sector groups are struggling to make ends meet, retain their volunteers and deliver their essential services. We hear reports from CTA members across the UK every single day of drivers who can no longer afford to volunteer, exacerbating existing and acute shortages in many communities.

Our research with CTA members indicates that:

- 98% rely on volunteer drivers to some extent

- 65% report worse volunteer recruitment and retention over the last 6 months
- 32% have already been forced to cut back services
- 65% have already been forced to increase prices or raise fares

There is a real risk that some Community Transport schemes may not be able to continue beyond this winter – or that services become unaffordable for hard-pressed passengers. We know that this would be a disaster for the people and communities who rely on our sector to access amenities, education, employment, family and friends, health & social care and public services. It would mean:

- Lower levels of COVID-19 and seasonal flu vaccinations this winter, especially among the most at-risk groups
- Higher levels of missed GP and hospital appointments, worsening patient outcomes, extending NHS backlogs/ waiting times and increasing costs for taxpayers
- Intensified demand for stretched statutory services delivered by the public sector, from the NHS and social care to local authorities and Job Centres
- Reduced autonomy and mobility for older and disabled people, exacerbating existing injustices and inequalities
- Fewer younger people with access to school, college, university or work
- Increased transport poverty and inequality across the UK, especially in rural, remote and deprived communities

This scenario is avoidable. But only if the UK Government acts now to tackle the fuel costs crisis, protect Community Transport schemes and deliver a fair deal for volunteers as part of a meaningful and urgent package of measures to curb spiralling inflation.

Earlier this year, we joined forces with ten charities from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to form a new campaign. We've been leading this coalition and spearheading its call for HM Treasury to deliver an inflationary uplift to the Approved Mileage Allowance Payment (AMAP) in the fast-approaching Autumn Budget.

The AMAP of 45p per mile (for the first

10,000 miles) is the maximum level at which volunteer drivers can be reimbursed without any impact on their tax obligations or benefit entitlements, any need to complete a self-assessment tax return or the requirement to provide additional, detailed and often complex evidence of expenses. Many – though by no means all – Community Transport operators use this rate to try to cover their volunteers' expenses. We know that some of you cannot, because of limited budgets.

## Inflationary Uplift

However, the AMAP rate itself no longer covers volunteers' expenses. It was last reviewed in 2012. Since then, so much has changed and the cost of motoring has increased by over 36%, according to research by the RAC. The current rate is archaic, untenable and unfair. It needs to be increased to reflect the extraordinary levels of fuel price inflation in recent months and years.

We believe that an increase in the AMAP rate would:

- **Protect vital Community Transport schemes at no cost to HM Treasury**
- **Keep volunteering accessible and affordable for all**
- **Reduce the administrative and financial burden on volunteers**
- **Avoid unnecessary new red tape for small charities and community groups**
- **Create additional flexibility for the third sector to respond to the cost of living crisis**
- **Signal the UK Government's commitment to the voluntary sector and Levelling Up**

This is an important and pressing issue not just for the Community Transport sector, but for all parts of the third sector and

beyond, because the AMAP rate applies to all volunteers and employees. At CTA, we're proud to have built such a broad, diverse and inspiring coalition of charities serving so many communities and representing so many volunteers across the UK to amplify our collective voice and magnify our campaign:

- **Communities 1st**
- **National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA)**
- **National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)**
- **Royal Voluntary Service**
- **Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)**
- **Scottish Volunteering Forum**
- **Volunteering Matters**
- **Volunteer Now**
- **Volunteer Scotland**
- **Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA)**

Jen Reston, Chair of the Scottish Volunteering Forum, said: "Our members are reporting that volunteers are leaving their roles due to the cost of living crisis and soaring fuel costs.

"This is making volunteering unaffordable for people which is not acceptable. It then impacts on the ability to deliver services, meet commitments and support those in need of services."

Judith Stone, Assistant Director of Volunteering at WCVA, said: "At a time of great hardship for many, we are deeply concerned seeing outdated AMAP rates creating a barrier to volunteering.

"Volunteer drivers offer their time and skill for free, often creating a lifeline for the most vulnerable, especially in geographically isolated and rural communities. Rising fuel

## "There is a real risk that some Community Transport schemes may not be able to continue beyond this winter"

costs should be covered by a revised AMAP rate which ensures volunteers are not out of pocket."

We've been working together as a coalition to raise awareness, inform policymakers and influence politicians. We've met with Ministers and officials from HM Treasury and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, as well as the Scottish Government, the Northern Ireland Executive and the Senedd Cymru. We're proud to have won significant mainstream media coverage for our campaign – from STV News at Six in Scotland to The Nolan Show on BBC Radio Ulster – and to have secured the support of the Welsh Government.

Your support has been vital too. So many CTA members have been part of this campaign, answering our survey to help build our evidence base, contacting your local press to raise awareness and writing to your local MPs to ask them to lobby the Chancellor. Thank you!

Now it is up to the Chancellor to act in the Autumn Budget before it's too late, so that Community Transport operators and volunteers can continue to do what they love at a time when they are needed more than ever.

## OUR RESEARCH WITH CTA MEMBERS INDICATES THAT:

**98%**

rely on volunteer drivers to some extent

**65%**

report worse volunteer recruitment and retention over the last 6 months

**32%**

have already been forced to cut back services

**65%**

have already been forced to increase prices or raise fares



### WHAT NEXT?

Visit our AMAP Campaign Hub: [www.ctauk.org/amap-campaign](http://www.ctauk.org/amap-campaign)

Use our template to write to your MP:

<https://bit.ly/3bNxhxe>

Tell us how the cost of living crisis is impacting your service, volunteers and users: [hello@ctauk.org](mailto:hello@ctauk.org)

BEST PRACTICE

# APPLYING FOR GRANTS

**Michelle Clarke, CTA's Wales Transport Strategy Lead,**  
shares some tips when applying for grants



## Making a little go a long way

Making a little go a long way is second nature for community transport organisations, and what the sector achieves is inspiring. Fundraising can be challenging at the best of times and there is understandable concern at present over the cost of living crisis and how to make finite resources stretch even further. The search for financial sustainability can be like looking for the pot of gold at the end of a rainbow. This is not unique to the community transport sector, as 58% of charity leaders cited their top challenge as 'generating income and achieving financial sustainability' (Charity Landscape 2022 Report, Charities Aid Foundation).

## Diversifying income

Diversifying income is an integral part of good governance and increases the ability to withstand any financial shocks. Income can be generated from several sources including: grants; government funding; online fundraising; public donations and regular individual giving; legacy gifts; trading; and securing corporate partnerships and sponsorship. It is good practice to periodically review sources of income and consider whether there any new income streams could be developed. As with all fundraising activities, monitor the time and resources invested against the return on investment.

## Viewing financial sustainability as an opportunity

Reviewing financial sustainability is not simply an exercise in reducing organisational risk. It is an opportunity to consider ways to operate more strategically, invest in staff and volunteer

development, improve technology, and refocus on your organisation's mission. Community transport operators have always demonstrated resilience and positivity, and these attributes are vital when thinking about how to critically assess sustainability and build on opportunities.

### Applying for grants – some tips

Fundraising through grants is just one aspect of income generation, but can have a good return on investment. A few tips are shared here:

#### Basic housekeeping

When a funder undertakes due diligence checks on your organisation, it is important that they feel reassured. Some questions to consider before applying for grants include

- Are all organisational policies up-to-date and signed off by the Board? Do policies have clear review dates? Is there a staff / volunteer training record linked to key policies such as Safeguarding?
- When was your organisation's governing document last reviewed? Take stock periodically to check any changes in mission or charitable objects.
- Have your submissions to regulators, such as the Charity Commission or Companies House, been filed on time? There can be genuine reasons for late filing, so address it in the grant application.
- Your website is a shop window, so does it provide an accurate reflection of current services and inspire people to get involved as volunteers, supporters, and funders? Does it demonstrate impact through testimonials and case studies?
- Assess the overall impression of how your organisation comes across in your annual reports, website and social media accounts, and check for consistent messaging across communication channels and content.

#### Understanding your community

Whilst it is important to outline the need in your community, it is equally important to help funders to understand about the positives in your community

- So don't just tell them about challenges, highlight any strengths as well. For example, when describing rural isolation and transport poverty in an area, also convey the strong sense of community evidenced by the number of local volunteer drivers recruited from the area, or the long history of partnership working between your organisation and other agencies.
- Tell the funder about your organisation's track record in supporting / working alongside the community – show the expertise you have. Include statements of support from partners, reference any awards your organisation has achieved, and if your organisation has been consistently funded by the health board or local authority for many years, mention that as well.

#### Communicating impact

A grant application is an opportunity to clearly describe the difference your service makes to people's lives

- The application process is more about persuasion than description. Why is your work important? What excites you about your organisation at the moment? There is so much that community operators should feel very proud of, so tell your story with confidence.
- Funders look for positive and passionate organisations that can describe their impact in a community. What information do you gather to check the change you are making? It is important to be able to quantify / evidence your impact. Is there an Impact Report, a short video summary, an infographic?

#### Think about how you will share any learning

Funders are interested in organisations that can identify learning and are willing to share it

- Consider from the outset how you'll monitor and evaluate the work, how you will share any learning with stakeholders, and how you will use any learning to develop and further refine your organisational activities or approach. Being honest

## "Fundraising through grants is just one aspect of income generation"

about challenges, weaknesses and how to address them – shows that you understand what will make the organisation stronger.

- There is a move towards 'working in the open'. The community transport sector already works in a transparent manner, generously sharing information with other operators, so communicate this to funders – state that you will share learning through any local networks or CTA's Advice Drop In.

#### Reference your longer-term planning in any grant application

If you're applying for short-term funding describe how will work be embedded into the organisation

- Funders can be concerned about creating dependency, so explain how you will identify and secure additional resources or find ways to generate income.
- One approach may be to request a tapered grant where the amount is front-loaded then reduces each year as other income is secured. For example, offering free or heavily subsidised services in the first year, then introducing charges in subsequent years.

#### Finally

Focus on what you have in common: consider the funder's programme aims and your organisation's mission and draw parallels between the two. Funders like confident organisations and they are there to fund social change. To do this, they need your organisation and the incredible work it does within your local community.



IMPACT ON THE SECTOR

# COMMUNITIES IN CRISIS – FUEL, LIVING AND VOLUNTEERING

We find out from [Susan Dever at Coalfield Community Transport](#) how record fuel prices and inflation are impacting their services and users

**“Retaining current volunteers will be difficult as they see fuel costs continue to rise, it is costing them more to volunteer than they are getting reimbursed.”**



**Q How is the cost of living crisis impacting the people and communities you serve in East Ayrshire?**

**A** People are worried how they are going to manage their living expenses and what impact this will have on their income. Incomes are already stretched for many people, with inflation predictions as they are, this is added worry for people and how they will cope throughout the colder months. It's also a worry if this is the costs now, it will never come down so the situation won't get any better if incomes don't keep up with inflation. Communities cannot thrive if people don't spend money and partake in local activities. Communities and groups will begin to feel and see the visible impact of the cost of living crisis if immediate intervention is not taken.

**Q How are record high fuel prices impacting Coalfield Community Transport and the services you provide (i.e. cutting back services, raising fares)?**

**A** We have absorbed the increase due to funding levels remaining the same throughout Covid which allowed us to build reserves we had never been able to have. The trustees have set aside contingency to continue to absorb these increases for now,

however this will be looked at the end of the financial year and if prices are not reducing, we may have to consider cutting the amount of services we provide or raising our rates which would be a detriment to our groups and members who are already at breaking point.

**Q Is the cost of fuel impacting your volunteer recruitment/retention?**

**A** Retaining current volunteers will be difficult as they see fuel costs continue to rise, it is costing them more to volunteer than they are getting reimbursed.

**Q Why do you support CTA's campaign calling on HM Treasury to increase the AMAP rate?**

**A** I support the campaign because it is well overdue. Transport costs are increasing every year, in particular this year. They will not come down; fuel costs may reduce slightly but the trend seems to be we are expected to just get on with it. Repairs and maintenance costs are also rising year on year. If you want someone to volunteer or use their car for work use this must be allowed to be recompensed at a reasonable rate to cover the costs. A volunteer car scheme is a project we would like to introduce however the figures don't



stack up. This is a barrier to me starting a project in the area as I know volunteer recruitment would be low based on the current rate. We have stopped using staff cars for work use, we now use a company bus as staff don't feel it's worth using personal cars due to compensation levels.

**i MORE INFORMATION**  
To find out more visit our website:  
[cta.uk.org](http://cta.uk.org)

# Have you considered making your charity digital?

Digital transformation has been sweeping the globe as technology has become more efficient and accessible.

As a specialist in charity insurance, we understand that digitalisation is a daunting task if it comes with a cost – a difficulty when you rely on funding and donations.

We have compiled some useful tips to help your charity navigate change, including:

- How to make the most out of your website
- Growing your social presence
- Ways to upskill your team



Visit the blog to find out more:



Get in touch:

 **0333 234 1146**

 **ctainsurance@endsleigh.co.uk**



**Endsleigh Insurance is the approved insurance partner for Community Transport Association members**