

TOGETHER

THE JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNITY TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION



BACK FOR GOOD

Highlights from CTA
Scotland Conference 2022

TACKLING LONELINESS

How our project is helping
community transport operators

ONE COMMUNITY FOR ALL

What it feels like to work for a community orientated
organisation serving the whole of the UK

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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.

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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 to arrange a call.

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TOGETHER WINTER 2022

Welcome



As I welcome you all to this edition of the Together magazine, I find it difficult to comprehend that the festive season is almost upon us. Where did this year go? Since beginning in post as Chief Executive in mid-September I have been taking a lot of time to get to know the staff, trustees and our members. I view this exercise as a way of 'taking the temperature' of the organisation and thank you to those members who were able to complete the survey. I am

looking forward to telling you more about my findings and our plans as a result of this work, but I will leave that for next time.

In this edition you will find highlights of our CTA Scotland conference (page 10), along with links to the presentations for those who were unable to make it. I had the pleasure of spending my very first day as Chief Executive of CTA at this conference and it was such a great introduction to the organisation and the important work of our members. There is also a fantastic article on our recent launch of the Western Valleys project (page 12) which has the capacity to be transformative in terms of both the climate emergency and the cost-of-living crisis. The social impact of the sector is very much at the heart of our membership and in this edition, you will find more details on our project which seeks to tackle loneliness through community transport (page 18). Finally, myself and the team here at CTA wish all our members and their passengers all the best for the festive season. We really appreciate all the work you do each and every day, and for making the sector such an outstanding place to work.

With best wishes

Victoria Armstrong

Chief Executive, Community Transport Association

FOR THE JOURNEYS YOUR COMMUNITY DEPENDS UPON, DEPEND ON US



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ON THE COVER

A community focused organisation working for everyone

cta
community transport
association

james pembroke
media



TOGETHER THE JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNITY TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

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News



CTA APPOINTED TO TRANSPORT MINISTER'S SCOTTISH BUS TASKFORCE

Our Director for Scotland, David Kelly has been appointed to the new Bus Taskforce by Jenny Gilruth MSP, Scotland's Transport Minister, to represent CTA, our members and our passengers.

The Taskforce has been convened to address the immediate challenges facing the bus sector as we recover from the impact of COVID-19 and navigate the worsening cost of living crisis. It is Chaired by the Minister and includes representatives from Transport Scotland, the Office of the Traffic Commissioner, small and large commercial bus operators, local government, regional transport partnerships, bus passenger organisations and, of course, CTA.

The Taskforce's first meeting was held virtually on 6th October with a focus on the Network Support Grant (NSG) and NSG Plus, which are important sources of funding for 35% of CTA members in Scotland, according to our recent research. NSG is the successor to the Bus Services' Operator Grant (BSOG) in Scotland and NSG Plus is a temporary elevated level of funding due to the pandemic and its

aftermath. It had been due to come to an end on 9 October, but the Minister has now committed to finding ways to extend it for a few more months to hand the bus sector a financial lifeline during difficult times.

"I know our sector's financial challenges and will continue to make the case for fair funding for Community Transport," said David. "The second round of the Plugged-In Communities Grant Fund will help some operators, as would an extension to NSG Plus. But we also want to increase the number of people benefiting from Community Transport to raise fare income and diversify sources of funding."

Whether you deliver a Community Bus Service or operate a Volunteer Car Scheme, we'd love to hear from you to shape David's input into the discussions and decisions of the Bus Taskforce and its Sub-Group on Community Engagement.

- 1. What are your priorities for the Taskforce?**
- 2. What issues should we raise with the Minister?**
- 3. How can we work together to increase patronage on your service, reduce driver**

WELCOME TO THE CTA TEAM!

Since the last issue of Together we've been joined by three new members of the CTA team – Chanelle Dwyer, our new Development Officer for England North, Paula Becerra, our new Development Officer for England South and Liam Baker, our new Training and Development Coordinator. We are thrilled to have them on board!

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We'd like to extend a warm welcome to the newest members of CTA:

Getting Better Together Ltd, Former Forces Support, Kyle & Lochalsh Community Trust, Muirhouse and Flemington Community Interest Company, 1st Castleside BP Scouts, The Bridge of Don Brigade, Infinite Oasis Care, Lancing Community Transport (LCT) Limited, North Shropshire Community Transport, The Caxton Youth Organisation, Appleton Wiske Minibus Club, Teesside and District Society for Blind, Continuing Care North East Fife, The Garve and District Development Company, Methodist College, Worthing District Scout Council, 1st Bramhall Scout Group, Glenfarg Community Transport Group, RockSolid Dundee, Stomping Grounds Forest School North East CIC. Welcome to CTA!

shortages in our sector or improve community engagement locally?

Send David your thoughts via email at **david.kelly@ctauk.org** with the subject line 'Bus Taskforce'. Or arrange a conversation and get in touch with one of the team to schedule a call or a meeting.

Your views will be critical in being a strong voice for the Community Transport sector in these important discussions with the Minister and the Taskforce. This is your chance to influence government and key stakeholders at the highest level.

CTA SUBMIT AMAP AUTUMN BUDGET REPRESENTATION 2022

Ahead of the fiscal event or 'mini-budget' on Friday 23 September, CTA submitted an Autumn Budget Representation to HM Treasury setting out our proposal for an inflationary uplift to the current Approved Mileage Allowance Payment (AMAP) rate for volunteer and paid drivers, which is archaic, untenable and no longer fit for purpose.

Since Spring 2022, we have been leading a coalition of 11 intermediary organisations and charities from across the UK's voluntary sector who have proudly joined our campaign for a Fair Deal for Volunteers. We have presented to and discussed our proposal with senior officials at HM Treasury, as well as elected politicians of all parties and the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive.

We believe that rising inflation and record

fuel prices are damaging Community Transport operators across the UK. Many are struggling to deliver essential services. Our research with CTA members suggests that:

- 65% report lower levels of volunteer recruitment or retention in the last 6 months
- 32% have been forced to cut back services
- 65% have been forced to increase prices or raise fares

High motoring costs are putting essential volunteer-run transport services at risk. Inflation threatens to make volunteering unaffordable for many. If some Community Transport and other charitable schemes cannot continue, it will mean; declining health due to missed vaccinations and medical appointments, fewer young people with access to education, and increased transport poverty across the UK.

However, this scenario is avoidable. An inflationary uplift to the current AMAP rate of 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles – which has remained static since 2012 – would protect vital charitable services, mitigate the cost of living crisis, and keep volunteering accessible for all.

If you would like to find out more, or talk to us about our campaign, please email hello@ctauk.org.

Thank you to our coalition partners for their support for our campaign – Communities 1st, National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA), National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), Royal Voluntary Service, Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), Scottish Volunteering Forum, Volunteering Matters, Volunteer Now, Volunteer Scotland and Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA).

WESTERN VALLEYS TRANSPORT PILOT LAUNCH

Gemma Lelliott, our Director for Wales had the opportunity to get together with people from across south Wales at the launch event for the Western Valleys transport pilot at Parc y Scarlets, Llanelli, a few weeks ago.

This project, which originally emerged as a priority from the work of Welsh Government's Valleys Regional Taskforce, has evolved and grown with the support of

Welsh Government's Household Support Fund, with four community transport operators working with their communities to design and pilot new, sustainable, and inclusive transport options across parts of Swansea, Neath Port-Talbot, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion.

It's a really exciting time for the transport sector in Wales, and at CTA we have a clear vision of what we want to achieve, much of which is being

piloted here. We want to see sustainable funding going into public and community transport which also considers how active travel can be integrated for those able to use it. A decarbonised fleet, connected with communities who own the energy that powers the vehicles, and are run by operators who



collaborate and share their learning and expertise. We want to see members of the community shape the services they use, so those services can adapt and evolve to ensure they carry on meeting the needs of local people. And we want to see recognition from across the public sector that accessible transport can be a key enabler for success.

Turn to [page 20](#), where you can find the full story and more information on this fantastic initiative.





POSITIVE TEAMWORK

WORKING TOGETHER FOR OUR MEMBERS

Our Director of People and Operations, **Stuart Bowler**, discovers what makes the Community Transport Association a great place to work.

It has been a busy 12 months at CTA with many new faces joining us to strengthen our team. As Director of People of Operations, I have witnessed the journey we have been on and feel a real sense of pride with the steps we have made. Clearly the positive staff experience at CTA is a result of our collective commitment to each other.

Across all five of our directorates we have new and enthused staff to compliment the years of experience we retain in key areas of our work. All staff here at CTA have renewed their commitment to serving you as

members, aligning themselves closely to our mission to ensure that community transport is accessible for all.

However, these changes have impacted our internal ways of working and the relationships that have served the organisation so well. Therefore, it has been critical that our board of trustees has recognised the value in real investment in our people to ensure that they can continue to serve you, our members and stakeholders.

Following the appointment of our new CEO, there has been excitement and a redoubled determination from our staff

to really look back on how we can better meet the needs of our members and the sector in which we operate. Work is being done across the organisation to ensure that we support CTs, give them a voice and tell the remarkable stories that describe how individuals and groups in their communities ensure that everyone has the chance to connect and access local services.

CTA for me has always been a great place to work but with the influx of new staff and the feel-good factor this brings I was interested to find out what was underpinning this positivity and productivity.

I simply asked staff old and new “What does it feel like to work at CTA?” The themes that were fed back to me can be summarised as satisfaction, pride, support, autonomy and flexibility which I have tried to unpack a little below.

Staff reported a real satisfaction with the challenging nature of their work which has kept them engaged and determined to build resilience into our organisation. CTA is undergoing significant change internally with a new staff cohort, member database, our new England directorate and of course the MiDAS transformation. The complexity of these changes has required much determination and attention to detail from our staff who have not shied away from ensuring that we are as robust and effective as we have ever been.

This increased productivity has also led to a growth in our grant funding which we distribute to our members in the form of cash lump sums. The tackling loneliness fund is a recent example which we were proud to distribute, to help CT providers reduce isolation for some of the most vulnerable members of society. There was a tangible sense of pride from the England and Wales teams that were instrumental in the application and distribution of these monies.

Moreover, increased enquiries through our advice line as more of you develop your services following the pandemic is another source of pride for CTA staff. Our new development officers engage with pride and satisfaction and continue to ensure that you can do your work efficiently and safely. Your positive feedback around your experience with our advice line helps our staff to see the impact of their work and drives further their motivation and our commitment to you.

This commitment is replicated in our organisation where high internal customer service standards are the norm. We have developed a culture of ‘What can I do to help you?’ Despite our dispersal around the UK our staff have found ways to keep in touch with various Teams channels that focus on wellbeing, updates and problem solving. Staff have taken the view that new recruits should be onboarded gradually and nurtured in to their roles. Staff have reported how there is a genuine sense that



“The themes that were fed back to me can be summarised as satisfaction, pride, support, autonomy and flexibility”

the group has the required knowledge to provide effective assistance or the ability to know where to get it from. All of this provides for an environment where we can simply get on with our work.

CTA has undergone significant change especially at senior management level which has led to some important knowledge leaving the organisation. This is why recruitment has focused on skilled, aspirational, driven and productive people that want to develop personally and professionally, can learn quickly, and show the leadership needed to galvanise what we do. I am delighted to report that our leadership group, like the rest of our organisation, enjoys the autonomy to express themselves and pursue their own ideas on how value can be added to our members and the sector. A good example of this is the mapping work being done

in Scotland and the recent survey data gathering views for members. Being able to set and manage workloads and work flows, performance objectives and priorities with the support and guidance from our cohesive leadership group. This is a recognised plus for our organisation which has led to high levels of productivity and enjoyment.

Laying the ground for an autonomous workforce is our emphasis on flexibility. We recognise that staff have lives outside of work and take a holistic view to the welfare of our employees. Staff have reported flexibility as a clear advantage of working for us. Having a core day that staff can use to structure their overall hours has helped with child care, caring responsibilities and medical appointments.

Our hybrid and remote approach to working helps our business and individual staff to reduce costs, helping with the current cost of living crisis whilst increasing productivity. This brings together our staff across working groups to ensure that all of our work is being done. Colleagues overwhelmingly prefer this way of working and have expressed satisfaction in the way this enables us to fulfil our ambition for a greener environment.

Underpinning our colleagues’ experience at work is a set of generous and progressive policies that provide flexibility for employees to find a good work life balance. Supporting time off for dependants, flexible working for those with caring responsibilities, time off for volunteering and for study are all examples of opportunities taken by staff to ensure they can feel supported whilst they grow with us.

Our challenge now is to harness this strong staff engagement and add further value to the sector which is something our incoming CEO is already well underway with, instilling confidence in our staff and our trustees with her focus on planning and priorities. Now is an exciting time to be part of this organisation and the conversation around how we can really support community transport operators.



MORE INFORMATION

Please do reach out for any further conversations via info@ctauk.org.

RECONNECT, LEARN, INSPIRE

BACK FOR GOOD: CTA SCOTLAND CONFERENCE 2022

David Kelly, CTA's Director for Scotland, reflects on our first in-person event north of the border since 2019

We missed out on many things during the pandemic, not least the chance to get together with old friends, make new ones and collectively put the world to rights. I know how important human connections and in-person interactions are to the people who work in Community Transport and the people who rely on all you do for the common good.

In my first few weeks in this job last year, I lost count of the number of times I heard this from CTA members across Scotland. They told me how much they valued opportunities to connect and network with their peers and colleagues. They explained how critical direct face-to-face contact with politicians, funders and stakeholders can be to success. And they even recalled how much they used to enjoy visits from the friendly CTA team.

So, it was clear from the very beginning that reviving our Scotland Conference for the first time since 2019 would be a major priority for operators and for us in 2022. After months of planning and preparations, we were delighted to be able to pull it off and convene CTA members, Transport Scotland officials, local authorities, funders and key stakeholders for a sold-out day of debate and discussion in the Fair City of Perth.

We had a strong turnout at the newly refurbished Station Hotel with 55 people making the journey from 14 Scottish local authorities – including CTA's new CEO, Dr Victoria Armstrong, who made the trip north



from Newcastle on just her second day in the job. We also welcomed six exhibitors and funders to engage with members – Paths for All, Energy Saving Trust, Age Scotland, Community Learning Exchange, Community Enterprise and ALISS (A Local Information System for Scotland).

As you might expect at our first post-COVID live event, there was a real energy and enthusiasm in the room. One attendee told us afterwards: 'It was so nice to be together again in-person and interact with other operators, because we've not seen each other for such a long time.'

Our agenda was packed with ten speakers on three panels and across five sessions tackling head on the biggest issues and

challenges of the day, from driver shortages and recruiting volunteers to transitioning to Electric Vehicles and adopting new technologies.

We had expected to be joined by Jenny Gilruth MSP, Scotland's Transport Minister, but unfortunately a last-minute change in her parliamentary schedule due to the Queen's funeral scuppered our best laid plans. However, we were pleased to hear from Bettina Sizeland, Transport Scotland's Deputy Director for Bus, Accessibility and Active Travel, in the Minister's stead.

She spoke warmly about how much the Minister and her officials value the close partnership they have developed with us at CTA. She praised the amazing work that our

“It was so nice to be together again in-person and interact with other operators because we’ve not seen each other for such a long time.”

members do every single day, especially in helping some of Scotland’s most vulnerable people and communities to weather the storms of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis.

It was also welcome to hear her commitment to work with us on improving non-emergency patient transport, which remains one of our biggest concerns in the face of a lack of funding from and partnership working with the NHS in many parts of the country.

We learned a lot from the day as a new team – and I hope all of our delegates did too. For me, there were four big takeaways:

- **Funding is your top priority:** Many members expressed concern about future funding for our sector, especially with inflation so high and the cost of living crisis worsening. Our More Than a Minibus report’s top recommendation – which argued that the Scottish Government and local authorities should protect funding for Community Transport and deliver fair, multi-year funding which contributes to core operating costs and matches inflation – really resonated with delegates.
- **Demand is rising:** With the world opening up after the pandemic and yet more bus service cuts being threatened across the country, it’s clear that many of our communities are being failed by commercial bus operators and our public transport network. Several delegates explained the damage proposed network

changes or cuts would have where they live – and worried about whether local Community Transport operators would be able to fill the gap. We need to focus on giving the right advice, resources and support to charities and community groups which need to expand their services or even set up new Community Transport schemes.

- **We need to think differently about volunteering:** Several speakers provided lots of useful hints and tips for improving the ‘volunteer offer’ and ‘volunteer lifecycle’. We all need to think more creatively about how to recruit and retain volunteers in a really changing environment. We need to challenge ourselves to reach out to under-represented communities and beyond our comfort zones to tackle racism and to promote equality, diversity and inclusion. Volunteering should be for everyone!
- **Now’s the time for climate action:** We heard from several speakers about the exciting opportunities, as well as some of the challenges, for our sector in making the journey to net zero. Transitioning to all-electric fleets is just one part of the picture. There’s so much potential for Community Transport operators to help people and communities to reduce their own carbon footprints. We can learn from what’s worked well elsewhere to develop new active travel or car club projects which reduce car use, eliminate air pollution and make our cities, towns and villages better, greener places to live.

We chose Perth as our location, because it’s 90 minutes from 90% of Scotland’s population by road or rail. We’re committed to improving the inclusivity of our events, as well as reducing their carbon footprint, by choosing venues which are easily accessible by public transport. But we’re also committed to serving all of Scotland, so we’ll be taking our annual conference on tour in the years ahead to new towns and cities.

After a difficult few years, I’m proud that our Scotland Conference is a permanent feature of the CTA calendar once again. I’m already looking forward to the 2023 edition – which we hope will be even bigger and even better.

We’re back – and back for good!

CTA SCOTLAND CONFERENCE 2022: AGENDA

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

- **Bettina Sizeland,**
Transport Scotland

#MORETHANAMINIBUS: CTA’S MAPPING SCOTLAND PROJECT

- **David Kelly,** *CTA*

PEOPLE MAKE COMMUNITY TRANSPORT: TALENT, TRAINING AND VOLUNTEERING

- **Rachel Milne,**
North East Transport Training
- **Katy Penman,**
Volunteer Scotland
- **Aekus Kamboj,**
CEMVO Scotland

JOURNEY TO NET ZERO: CARS, CARBON AND CLIMATE ACTION

- **Emma Burtles,**
Upper Tay Transport
- **Graham Dunn,**
Community Transport Glasgow
- **Dearbhla Mullin,**
Energy Saving Trust

FUTURE OF TRANSPORT: DDRT, MAAS AND TECH TRENDS

- **David Smith,**
Fuse Mobility
- **Scott Wilson,**
Radio City Association



SPEAKER PRESENTATIONS

You can download all of our speakers’ presentations from our website at www.ctauk.org/scotland-conference-2022-review.



SUPPORT IN THE WESTERN VALLEYS

IT'S NOT ABOUT BUSES. IT'S ABOUT PEOPLE

Our Western Valleys Transport Pilot Launch

As CTA members know all too well, a lack of transport, or poor quality and inaccessible transport, can have a substantial impact on your quality of life, your economic and social opportunities, and the type of activities you can get involved with. This can lead to people being stuck driving a car – even when they can't actually afford to – or becoming isolated and excluded from a range of opportunities, across a whole range of areas, including employment, education, health, and social and cultural activities.

With investment from Welsh Government's Household Support Fund, CTA's team in Wales have developed a transport pilot designed to help people overcome these barriers through sustainable shared transport options in the Western Valleys region. Deputy Minister for Climate Change with responsibility for transport, Lee Waters MS, joined CTA Cymru and project partners at Parc y Scarlets in Llanelli to launch the Western Valleys Transport pilot in September, which will support people on low incomes across the Neath, Swansea, Dulais, and Aman valleys, and disconnected communities in Carmarthenshire and

Ceredigion. Helping people get to work, school, training, health, and social appointments, and connecting with public transport and active travel routes, this project will help many more people make the change to sustainable transport.

CTA's Director for Wales, Gemma Lelliott: 'We've worked with some of south Wales' community transport experts to develop new services and enhance existing ones, to provide targeted support to communities through accessible and inclusive decarbonised transport services that connect people with work, education, health, and social activities, and the

mainstream public transport network. This will contribute to reducing inequality, increasing opportunities for people to connect across communities, and tie into existing developments and investment around active travel, transport to health, decarbonisation and access to work.

‘One of the very first community transport passengers I met when I started working at CTA described her house as a ‘beautiful prison’ – since her husband died, she had been trapped at home because of the lack of buses, as she couldn’t drive herself and the taxis in her area were far too expensive for anything except the most essential journeys. This project will allow community transport operators to pilot new, sustainable services which will help those who feel trapped and disconnected from their local community, even as the cost of living crisis creates more pressure for people managing on low incomes.’

Lee Waters told us: ‘Improving transport links in communities is not just about improving services but about changing the lives of people across Wales and this is an excellent example of how investment in tackling climate change has far broader community benefits.’

‘Making low carbon transport options more accessible, attractive, affordable and easier to use is not only the right and responsible thing to do for the environment, but also plays a vital part in connecting communities. This is a critical intervention, because it’s not about buses. It’s about people.’



“We’ve worked with some of south Wales’ community transport experts to develop new services and enhance existing ones”

Like the Minister, at CTA we believe that transport is a social justice issue, and is about so much more than just getting from A to B. Thinking holistically about the ways in which transport – or the lack of it – can impact on all aspects of our lives, supporting more people to make the switch to sustainable transport modes has never been so important.

In Gemma’s speech at the launch, she told partners: ‘I spend a lot of time thinking about how to improve services for the people I’ve met since I first started working in access and inclusion more than a decade ago. For example, people like Mark, a young man who is blind and has a learning disability, who wants to go out to gigs with his friends. Beth, who was made redundant due to the pandemic and has struggled to find a new job because she doesn’t have a car. Andrew, an older man who lost his sight due to macular degeneration, and didn’t leave his house for more than 18 months



THE PROJECT’S AIMS

The Western Valleys project was funded in early 2022, with Welsh Government investing more than £1.1m to support communities as we recover and move beyond the impact of Covid 19. The project’s aims are to:

- Support low income families and individuals to access employment, education, training, support and leisure opportunities in the Neath, Swansea, Dulais, and Aman valleys, and in disconnected communities in Carmarthenshire & Ceredigion, through sustainable shared transport

- Improve cross-valley connectivity, bringing people together and reducing journey times
- Develop and improve EV infrastructure to enhance the network of available charge points without being forced to rely on commercial providers
- Connect and integrate with other transport modes to enable behaviour change and modal shift, getting people out of their cars and using sustainable travel options



(before Covid shielding and lockdowns hit). And Alison, who works full time and also cares for her elderly mum.

‘As you can imagine, without an integrated, accessible transport system, people like Mark, Beth, Andrew and Alison could easily fall through the cracks. As we navigate a new reality in the wake of Covid 19, it has never been so important to safeguard and develop transport solutions that truly work for the communities we serve. And with the opportunities created by Welsh Government through Llwybr Newydd and Bws Cymru, we have never been better placed to deliver an effective, more affordable, more inclusive, and more integrated local passenger transport network that can meet the needs of *all* passengers and be the first and best choice for making a journey.

‘If we are serious about getting people out of private cars, and about supporting those who are currently cut off from their communities, we need a transport system that works for every part of a person’s life. We are not just parts of an economic system, we are unique individuals with a huge variety of needs and interests – our transport services need to reflect and enable that. If we want to reshape travel habits, we need to see every prospective

“We all need to see the public transport network as a viable and accessible option”

passenger as someone of value. Whatever the reasons for your journey, your mobility support needs, your preferred journey time, or your income bracket, we all need to see the public transport network as a viable and accessible option, even if it is only for some of the journeys we make.

This is all part of why I am so passionate about community transport, and why we think this project is so important. Our partners have worked collaboratively with the communities they serve, to develop solutions that actually meet peoples’ needs. New services are being piloted in parts of Wales that have historically had very little commercial transport on offer, and will strive to connect people in innovative ways. Building links and a decarbonised network that connects Valleys, towns and

villages, health settings, public transport interchanges, schools and colleges, rural and urban communities, employers, and tourist attractions, this community-led pilot has the potential to deliver not only significantly better transport for people living across South West Wales, but also a huge range of data that helps us in making better decisions and planning better services for the whole of the country. As the project evolves, services will change and new connections will develop as different priorities emerge. It’s going to be a challenge which the whole project team is committed to approaching with positivity and transparency, so we can learn collaboratively, rapidly and iteratively.’

In Lee’s speech at the launch, he spoke urgently about the climate crisis and the need to make deep changes to our habits as a nation. With such a significant proportion of Wales’ carbon emissions coming from transport, the whole sector has to make radical changes. However, Lee also focused closely on the importance of access and inclusion: ‘We know that the bottom 20% of household incomes are spending over a quarter of their household income on transport and running a car. Because they’re forced to have a car, because it may be that there isn’t really a viable option to



get to work or to get to the shops because we build things in inaccessible places. But we don't talk about transport poverty in the same way we talk about fuel poverty.

'For me, this agenda isn't *just* about climate change, climate change is an urgent necessity. We have to have [change], otherwise we're doomed frankly. I'm not being dramatic. This town will be underwater in 40 years' time unless we do something urgently. But for me, it's not just about climate change, it's about social justice. The things we have to do, that we must do to tackle climate change, are also things that make people's lives better and help people on the lowest incomes. Together, I think there is a sweet spot of taking things to make our communities better, help make people's lives better as well as making sure there's a planet to hand on to our children.'

After a really productive period developing closer working relationships with officials and Senedd Members, it's really exciting to see those relationships translating into innovative approaches to supporting the community transport sector. We know our members are embedded in their communities and understand the barriers and the challenges people experience, so they are uniquely placed to coproduce solutions that tackle

these barriers in practice. CTA has had so much support from the Welsh Government to get to this point, it can't be overstated how important it is to be trusted to work in this innovative, flexible, community-led way, and how grateful we are for the opportunity to do so. We're really looking forward to sharing this progress with the CTA teams across the UK, and exploring how this work can be built on, scaled or replicated, to support the community transport sector to really step up as an equally important part of an integrated and sustainable passenger transport network.

It's a really exciting time for the transport sector in Wales, and our members have helped us to shape a clear vision of what we want to achieve, much of which is being piloted through this project. **We want to see sustainable funding going into public and community transport which also considers how active travel can be integrated for those able to use it. A decarbonised fleet, connected with communities who own the energy that powers the vehicles, and are run by operators who collaborate and share their learning and expertise. We want to see members of the community shape the services they use, so those services can adapt and evolve to**

ensure they carry on meeting the needs of local people. And we want to see recognition from across the public sector that accessible transport can be a key enabler for success.

Accessible, inclusive and integrated transport systems are transformative, and they are key to tackling both the climate emergency and the cost of living crisis. We are really excited about the potential for the future, and looking forward to connecting and collaborating with our partners across the public, private, and third sectors, to build more opportunities for everyone in Wales to make the change to sustainable shared transport.



MORE INFORMATION

Find out more about our delivery partners:

Awel Aman Tawe: egni.coop/current-project/awel-aman-tawe/

DANSA: www.dansa.org.uk

Dolen Teifi: www.dolenteifi.org.uk/index

Upper Amman Valley Community Transport: www.canolfanmaerdy.co.uk



AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

TIPS FOR GREAT STORYTELLING

Michelle Clarke, Wales Transport Strategy Lead,
reflects on the importance of storytelling

“Tell me the facts and I’ll learn. Tell me the truth and I’ll believe. But tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever.”

We all know the importance of gathering data and using it to demonstrate the value and effectiveness of our work to supporters, funders, volunteers and other interested parties. Facts and figures are vital, and can be used in different formats, such as infographics and charts, but when

we really want to engage an audience, storytelling is essential.

Think back to the last time you felt moved by hearing something at work. Chances are it was a story about one of your passengers, a comment or quote from one of your volunteers, or a thank you note explaining the difference your service has made to someone’s life. Stories captivate us on an emotional level and are easier to remember than facts, and because they are memorable

they are easy for your supporters to share with others.

If you’re trying to engage, influence or inspire others, you can use storytelling to establish your brand, provide a human face to your services and online presence, and make information relatable. Community transport organisations have so much inspirational material at their fingertips, and can use it to inspire supporters, to share key messages and to communicate your organisation’s values.

Top tips

1 Develop a culture of storytelling within your organisation – don't wait until you need to prepare an annual report or complete a monitoring form to gather case studies and stories. Instead, build storytelling into routine processes to collect great stories throughout the year, or at regular calendar intervals, such as collecting stories to share during Volunteers Week, Trustees Week, or other awareness weeks. Engage staff, trustees, volunteer drivers, and the people using your services, to either share their own stories or to help gather content. You could appoint volunteer Content Creators or you may have a staff member with a flair for identifying and communicating stories.

2 You may want to hold a workshop with staff, trustees and volunteers to outline the basic principles of storytelling and generate ideas for content. It can be helpful to bring in external expertise as part of any session, such as a photographer to provide an overview of visual storytelling, or people with skills in video production. A small financial outlay for such expertise can be worth it if staff and volunteers feel equipped to produce focused, impactful content as a result.

3 Develop a simple communications plan and think about who you want to engage through your stories. Who are your priority audiences? What do they care about? What problems do they have that you can offer a solution to? For example, if trying to recruit new volunteer drivers, you could ask your existing drivers what

motivated them to join your organisation and why they stayed. If they say they wanted to do something worthwhile, or meet new people, reflect this messaging in your storytelling. Ask if you can use their photos and words, or a 1-minute video of them talking about the reason they love volunteering, on your social media platforms.

4 Consider using simple tools and templates to gather good stories. Instead of focusing on what you do, focus on why it matters. Emphasise impact by talking about how your work improves or changes lives. For example, a great story can be developed from asking someone, such as a passenger or volunteer, three simple questions. 'Before': what was the person's situation before they got involved with your organisation. 'During': how did the person get involved with your organisation. 'After': how is their life is different as a result?

5 Keep stories positive and ensure a consistent organisational 'tone' when developing storytelling content. Community transport organisations often deal with difficult subjects, and whilst you don't want to shy away from these, it is also important to leave people with a sense of hope and feeling inspired by the work you do. You also want to empower people, so carefully communicate any barriers and issues, and work with people to represent their stories with dignity.

6 Start with the story and then think about the best format for it and mix your media. There's no one 'right way' to

"Emphasise impact by talking about how your work improves or changes lives"

communicate stories, so you might want to start with your content storyboard and then think about whether it is best communicated through writing, photographs, short videos, spoken word, or animations. With audio-visual content it is important to think about the sound design and how music feeds into the imagery. If you are posting stories on your website and social media, the analytics function can help you to check audience engagement with the stories.

7 Stories are not just for your external audiences and stakeholders, but for staff, volunteers and trustees too. **Share your stories widely so that everyone involved with your organisation feels motivated, enthused and inspired.** Stories can also help make your internal stakeholders feel part of something bigger and you can encourage them to share stories across their own networks as well.

8 What next? Don't leave your supporters wondering what they can do to help. **Finish with a clear call to action** – this could be a request to donate, to volunteer, to sign up to an event or e-newsletter. Aim to create optimism, a sense of action and a belief that we can all make a difference.

Reminder – check consent

Tell compelling, honest and authentic stories. Although you may need to edit stories, don't be tempted to reword them in your organisation's language as the impact will be diluted. Ask and record the consent of anyone featured in your storytelling, and ensure they know where their story will feature and how long it will be displayed, for example, on your website, social media or in your publications.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

TACKLING LONELINESS THROUGH COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Take a look at how our Tackling Loneliness Project is supporting community transport operators to develop their work and prepare for the future.

The project

Our Tackling Loneliness through Community Transport project supports operators to extend their reach, deepen their impact, and create volunteering opportunities for people at risk of experiencing social isolation and loneliness. It seeks to support and help in developing the work the pilot projects are doing, with learning drawn out for wider application across the sector. The learning from the project could also potentially help operators across the UK to unlock further resources from funders in the future.

The main principles are: to ensure that pilot projects reach under-represented groups who have little or limited access to services; prioritise smaller organisations; and fill the gaps rather than duplicate work. The grant has been administered directly to the 18 operators, and additionally, 900 members in England will have access to the Tackling Loneliness resources developed as part of the project through a Knowledge Building hub. The project has provided grant funding of £405k to the 18 pilots and CTA are supporting them to share the knowledge gained around community transport loneliness interventions.

The Context for bid

Having administered grants schemes throughout the UK, CTA identified the need for a Grants Plus model, recognising that smaller CTOs may need additional wraparound support for projects to deliver the best outcomes and have longevity. A core

strategic aim is to strengthen the community transport sector, enabling operators to future-proof their organisations and continue supporting beneficiaries through high quality services, and accessible locally-tailored transport solutions.

There are three strands to our project:

A **Grants Plus programme**, providing practical support from two CTA staff

members, the Tackling Loneliness Coordinator and the Administrator, to accelerate the set up and progress of the community transport pilot projects.

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.



"Age UK Trafford - Trip to Bents Garden Centre. They all enjoyed it and although they didn't know one another at the start of the trip they were exchanging phone numbers at the end of the day - so that's what it's all about."

Ann Marie Jones, Chief Exec Age UK Trafford.

FEATURE TACKLING LONELINESS PROJECT



"We took a two-hour Canal boat trip then went to Wildside Activity Centre for fish and chips. Around 10-15 people attended and it was very enjoyable. Even those who were a little shy engaged well."

Helen Brown, Campaigns and Grants Manager, Beacon Centre for the Blind.

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 learn 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

The 18 Pilots are now set up and delivering their sessions and activities. <https://cta.uk.org/tackling-loneliness-through-cta-project/>

As part of the project we have regular 1-2-1's with each pilot to discuss their progress and look at the overall aims/objectives and see how we can help facilitate each with their needs, agree the targets/outputs for the projects and to get the best outcome for those beneficiaries the pilots will be working with.

Alongside this we also have a requirement for the pilots to take part in regular updates of the data from the project, this information is collated in partnership with DfT, so we are making sure it is collected in a way that can be mapped consistently. The 1-2-1s and the data collected allow us to help personalise the monitoring and response to each of the pilots, building a picture and data around how

they are working with their core beneficiaries. This data has already gleaned really useful responses and we've been able to map some of that here: tinyurl.com/mufxs3s8

We have also delivered some of the Peer Support sessions that will run across the length of the pilot scheme. The pilots feed into what these sessions will be; networking, themed training or looking at ways to be sustainable after the funding period ends. These sessions have been really well received so far and we are hoping to build on that with more of these as we progress.

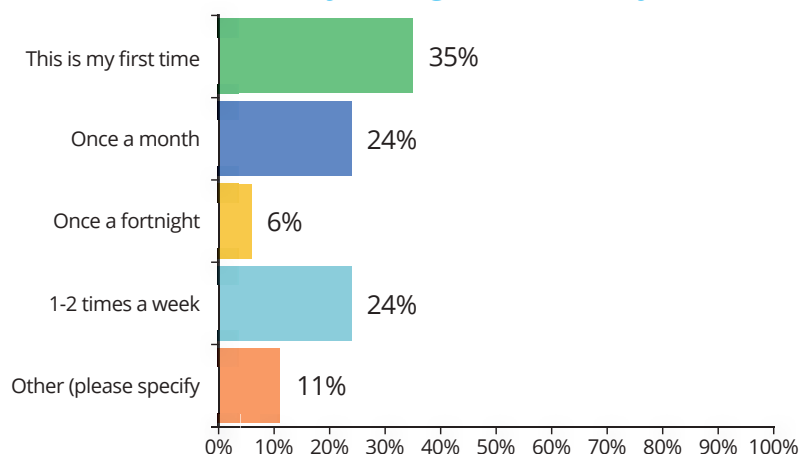
The sessions are a mix of in-house 121's and online peer learning activities with external providers. We had a really positive response

to our recent Funding session with the pilots and the feedback has meant that we can add more knowledge building as we progress and identify any needs to aid in the success of each of these brilliant pilot schemes.

The data is important, but seeing how these pilots are truly interacting with, and the difference they are making to the people they are working with has really brought to light what is at the core of the project to me. It's fantastic to see how we are all making positive changes in people's lives. I've worked in the charity sector for over 20 years and it never fails to move me how important the work on the ground and in the heart of communities they are part of, is to the individuals they connect to.

It's also really exciting to see the project move forward and the next stage for us at CTA is to bring all of that work and data to life via our Tackling Loneliness webpage. We hope to have this available soon, and as part of this we've been encouraging the pilots to bring their projects alive through media - providing photographs and/or video clips, and website links to places, events and activities that their beneficiaries have been involved with/visited. It's from these images and stories that we can really see how much the interactions and activities have helped people return to social outings and move forward from the pandemic and how these wonderful pilots are tackling loneliness in their communities.

How often are they using community transport



See more responses from our survey in partnership with DfT here: tinyurl.com/mufxs3s8

SCOTLAND

MORE THAN A MINIBUS: A NEW VISION FOR COMMUNITY TRANSPORT IN SCOTLAND

Our new map and report are changing perceptions of our sector, writes **David Kelly**, CTA's Director for Scotland

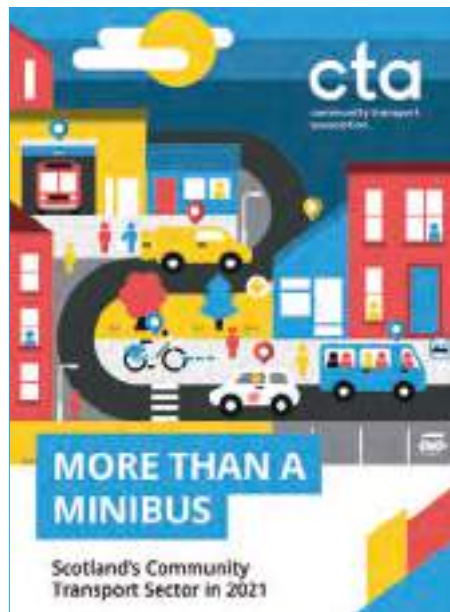
'We've banned the word 'niche'. Let me explain...

There are lots of myths and misconceptions out there about Community Transport. Many of these are held and spread by people who don't quite 'get it' or haven't engaged properly with our sector. 'It's only rural'. 'It's just for older people'. 'It's always volunteers'. Or, as someone put it to me upon learning of my new job: 'Oh aye. Minibuses and that?'

But some of these partial or archaic ideas are actually perpetuated – perhaps unwittingly and with the best of intentions – by us: the people and communities who know and love what Community Transport does to make Scotland a more accessible, inclusive and sustainable place to live. People kept telling me: 'We're only small. There's a lot we can't do. Our sector is, ahem, niche.'

Our More Than a Minibus report – published in early September of 2022 – is all about tackling these presumptions and prejudices head on, reframing what Community Transport in Scotland is, who we are for and what we can do to change the perceptions of politicians, policymakers, funders, stakeholders and the wider public. We want everyone to know how amazing, diverse and impactful our sector really is.

We're proud that Community Transport's core passenger demographic is older people – but lots of young people rely on our services to get to school, college, university or work. The minibus is indeed



an icon of the sector – but more than one in three Community Transport vehicles are something else, from cars and MPVs to buses and electric bikes. It's true that we're often small charities, community groups and social enterprises working in local areas – but nationally, we're a big player with a massive reach.

In 2021, CTA's 166 members across Scotland transported over 802,000 passengers, completed over 809,000 journeys and travelled nearly 5.2 million miles – hardly 'niche'. They delivered 353 Community Transport schemes from Group Vehicle Hire and Dial-a-Ride to Community

Bus Services and Car Clubs. While nearly half of operators ran just one scheme, one in five operators reported running five or more.

Our report is packed full of new data and evidence, which was revealed by our research, to back this up. The More Than a Minibus report was one of two key outputs of our Mapping Scotland project in partnership with Transport Scotland and CTA members based north of the border. The other was the first ever interactive, online map of Community Transport in Scotland, which is a great resource to find services and support.

Community Transport in Scotland has historically been perceived as a primarily or even exclusively rural phenomenon. However, our research underlines that community-led, not-for-profit transport services are needed and delivered in urban as well as rural and island communities from north to south, east to west.

Around 44% of our members are based in rural communities, but urban (34%) and island (10%) communities are also very well represented. There is demand for Community Transport in all parts of Scotland. One in five CTA members are in the sprawling Highland region, which is Scotland's largest and one of its least densely populated local authorities. The sector is also strong in Glasgow (12%), Aberdeenshire (9%), Perth and Kinross (7%) and Edinburgh (7%).

Proportionally, Community Transport is most common in Orkney, where there is

KEY FINDINGS



166
operators



4
new operators



7.2%
operated no
transport
schemes in 2021



Over
802,000
passengers



Over
890,000
journeys



Over
5.18m
miles



353
Community
Transport schemes
across Scotland



78%
are charities

30%	Group Vehicle Hire
24%	Dial-a-Ride / Door-to-Door / Demand Responsive Transport
22%	Transport to Health & Social Care
13%	Medication, Prescription or Shopping Collection service
11%	Community Bus Service
10%	Car Clubs and Travel Share
5%	Bike / e-Bike Hire



63%
secondary purpose
operators

37%
primary purpose
operators

FEATURE MORE THAN A MINIBUS

one operator for every 3,200 people. Not far behind is Highland, where there is one operator for every 6,924 people, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (8,833 people) and Argyll and Bute (9,492 people).

Community Transport is significantly under-represented in Fife – a significant council area with a large population, many rural communities and unmet transport needs – where there are just two operators in total or one operator for every 187,065 people. A small number of operators in West Lothian (183,820 people) also serve large numbers of people.

From our research, it is clear that Community Transport in Scotland is concentrated in areas with:

- **Complex geography**, especially rural, remote and island communities
- **Unmet transport needs** in areas let down or left out by our public transport network
- **Community leadership** thanks to local people and communities stepping up to design, build and deliver their own solutions
- **Council backing** because local councillors and officers see our sector's value

One in two operators served older and disabled people and over 68% of Scotland's Community Transport fleet is accessible. But more than one in four served children and young people, including through Schools Transport.

There are significant challenges though with a massive 92% of operator reporting that they did not attract young volunteers in 2021. Nevertheless, Scotland's Community Transport sector is an important economic factor which builds community wealth, supports access to employment and creates more than 1,100 jobs.

Community Transport is leading the way to net zero – 12% of the sector's national fleet is electric or hybrid, compared to just 2% of all road vehicles in Scotland. However, the sector faces a net zero funding gap, as the higher upfront capital costs of EVs are prohibitive for most operators. Our research estimates that £87.4m of investment is likely to be required to decarbonise the sector. We need the Scottish Government to build on the Plugged-In Communities Grant Fund to close this gap.



Funding clearly remains a huge challenge for our sector, especially as the cost of living crisis worsens and inflation rises. 36% of operators have a gross annual income of under £25,000 and 33% rely on just one source of funding. We're fighting for fair funding for Community Transport which contributes to core costs and rises with inflation across Scotland. This is one of our report's 9 recommendations for change.

Community Transport is so much more than a minibus. We change lives and transform communities. We bring people together, builds community wealth and tackles big problems like climate change, poverty, inequality, exclusion and loneliness. We innovate with cool and exciting approaches, from e-bikes to car clubs. We're on the frontline of the cost of living crisis and accelerating the transition to net zero to end Scotland's contribution to climate change.

Who you calling 'niche'?



MORE INFORMATION

You can view our new Map of Community Transport in Scotland or download our new More Than a Minibus report from www.ctauk.org/mapping-scotland-project.

FESTIVE GREETINGS

FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS...

A few of us here at CTA, would like to wish our wonderful community all the best over the winter holidays and a very happy new year.

Sending all of our members and your passengers the very best for the festive season and warmest wishes for 2023 – I am looking forward to working with you all in the New Year.

Victoria Armstrong

Community transport never really stops of course, but I sincerely hope you all find some time for a well-earned festive rest to help you carry on your fabulous work through next year.

David Dawkins

Thank you for everything you've done this year in tough times. We hope you have some time to reflect on all you've achieved and to enjoy a wonderful Christmas and Hogmanay. Here's to 2023!

David Kelly

I really hope each and everyone has a joyous and wonderful holiday time. You all do such amazing work in your communities and I wish you love and lots of happiness in this year and the next!

Sean Ray

Have a wonderful holiday period, rest up and take care of yourselves and thanks for the work you are doing in your communities, it really makes a difference.

Stuart Bowler

Nadolig Llawen from Wales! Have a peaceful and restful festive time. Thank you for all your hard work.

Emma Bingham

I wish all our members a brilliant holiday period! The vital work you, your staff, and your volunteers have done in 2022 has been inspiring. Here's to 2023 and to continuing to make a difference.

Josiah Deakin

I'm proud of all the work our members have done this year providing community transport and I look forward to working with you all towards further success in the New Year. I wish you all joyful winter break full of peace and warmth. Merry Christmas!

Chanelle Dwyer

Merry Christmas and Happy New year to all! 🍷

Hana Hicks

FEATURE FESTIVE GREETINGS

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all the wonderful Northern Ireland members. It has been an absolute pleasure working with you over the past 12 months; your work within your local communities is unbelievable, dealing with a challenging set of circumstances but always working to find ways to deliver the best service for the communities you serve. Thank you for all the support you have given me in my first year as the CTA NI Director, and I look forward to seeing what 2023 will bring us all.

Noeleen Lynch

It's the most wonderful time of the year, and during this time we would like to extend our admiration and gratitude to all of you, our members, who have contributed to make this year one to remember. We appreciate you and send you our best wishes for a joyous holiday season and prosperous new year in the Christmas spirit. Feliz Navidad!

Paula Salazar

"It's a lifeline", "They always go the extra mile", "I don't know what I would do without them" – these are just some of the comments I've heard from community transport passengers this year. You are all amazing – you work with such care and concern for the people you support, and the kindness you show people touches their lives. Never forget that. Thank you very much for all you do, and remember that CTA appreciates each and every one of you! Wishing you all the very best for the New Year.

Michelle Clarke

Wishing you all the timeless treasures of Christmas – the warmth of home, the love of family, and the company of good friends.

Tracy le Roux

I feel so lucky to be part of a sector which makes a real difference to peoples' lives every day. It's such a privilege to work alongside operators who not only keep turning up and working with determination every day, but are also constantly innovating, adapting, developing new partnerships and finding new solutions to make sure people can connect with their local community. Thank you for everything you've done this year, and Merry Christmas. We can't wait to see what 2023 will bring!

Gemma Lelliott

That's a wrap on 2022! Thank you to all of our members and their brilliant staff, volunteers and passengers for making Community Transport such an exciting sector to be a part of. Best wishes for the holiday period and Happy New Year when it comes!

Lara Henderson

Wishing all those working in their communities to tackle loneliness, a blessed and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Nicky Newman

I'd like to wish all CTA members and their clients a happy and healthy festive period. Sending lots of love from me and baby Mitchell! I have only just started my maternity leave and am looking forward to seeing you all again next year.

Nicola Mitchell

Wishing everyone a very happy festive season, filled with joy, love and quality time with family and friends. I have spent this year hearing the amazing stories of all our wonderful members, all the work they do for their communities, changing their lives for the better. I can't wait to see what 2023 has in store!

Alina Cohen

Are you overdue a **cyber risk assessment?**



With supporting your clients for community transport at the heart of everything you do, it can be catastrophic for your organisation to suffer a cyber-attack.



To reduce the risk of disruption of your community's access to vital public services and employment, it is important to put into place the right protection measures.

Learn more about cyber risk assessments:



Get in touch today:  **0333 234 1146**  **ctainsurance@endsleigh.co.uk**

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