

TOGETHER

THE JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNITY TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

CTAUK.ORG | SPRING 2023

cta
community transport
association

TAKING THE TEMPERATURE OF CTA

Dr Victoria Armstrong,
CTA's Chief Executive

**HARTING MINIBUS
MARKS 50 YEARS
OF SERVICE**

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ENGLAND**

**MORE THAN
A JOURNEY
IN WALES**

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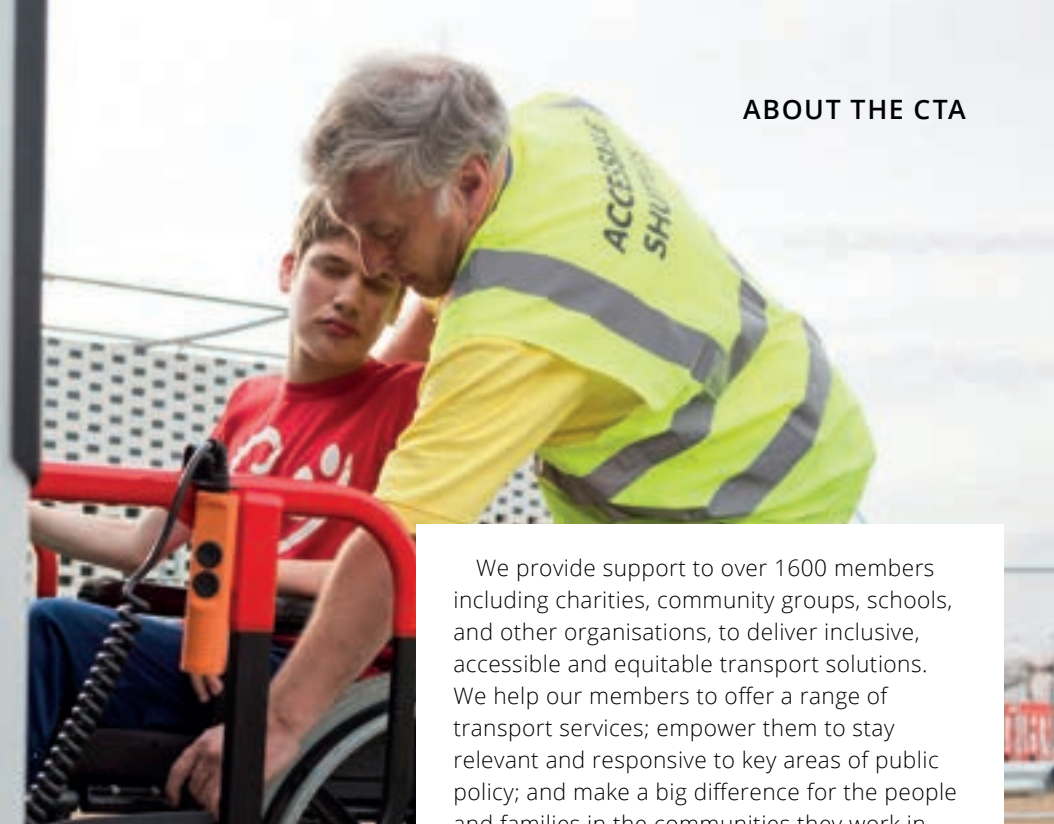
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ABOUT THE CTA



We provide support to over 1600 members including charities, community groups, schools, and other organisations, to deliver inclusive, accessible and equitable transport solutions. We help our members to offer a range of transport services; empower them to stay relevant and responsive to key areas of public policy; and make a big difference for the people and families in the communities they work in.

The CTA provides advice, training, and resources to help members run their services effectively, and advocates for the needs of the community transport sector at a national level.

In addition to supporting community transport providers, the CTA engages in research and policy work to promote the needs of the community transport sector.

This includes advocating for increased funding and recognition for community transport, as well as highlighting the benefits of accessible and inclusive transport services for society as a whole.

One of our priorities is to improve social inclusion and mobility for people who may be isolated or disadvantaged in their access to transport. Usually, when people think of Community Transport, they assume it's only for the elderly and disabled. However, CT caters to a wider range of people. Our services include transport solutions for young people, ethnic minorities, and everyone that cannot access public transport or private vehicle. We are also committed to promoting sustainable and environmentally friendly transport options in local communities.

We envision a world where communities everywhere can champion their own accessible and inclusive transport solutions and for this reason, we will continue to champion, connect, support, and grow a thriving community transport movement in all parts of the UK. ●

About CTA

Leading a thriving community transport movement

EVERY YEAR, in all parts of the UK, millions of people are supported by thousands of community transport staff and volunteers to stay independent, participate in their communities and access vital public services and employment.

The Community Transport Association (CTA) is leading a thriving community transport movement in the UK. As a membership organisation, CTA provides leadership, learning, and enterprise support to member organisations so they can deliver innovative and flexible transport solutions to achieve social change in their communities.

"We provide support to over 1600 members including charities, community groups, schools, and other organisations"

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Chief Executive: Victoria Armstrong



Taking the temperature of the CTA



Dr Victoria Armstrong,

Chief Executive, reflects on joining the CTA and her findings from talking with Staff, Trustees and Members

WHEN I FIRST JOINED the CTA as Chief Executive in September last year, I was keen to make use of my 'outsider status'. I understood that the CTA had undergone many internal changes and that the CT sector and our members had taken many blows resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic and the recent cost of living crisis. I quickly set about an exploratory consultation with staff, trustees, and members to get to the heart of what you:

- like about CTA
- think we could do better
- understand as the CT challenges and
- would like CTA to prioritise over the coming 12 months.

I thank members who responded to the survey and those who had a one-to-one conversation with me. My (often virtual!) door is open to any of you who want to get in touch to chat.

As I have had some time to reflect upon my findings, I am sharing them with you. This is not a one-off exercise - it is a way of 'checking the temperature' of the CTA. The findings will influence a draft plan for the way forward

for CTA in 2023-24 in which staff, trustees, members, and stakeholders will be involved in appropriate, meaningful, and relevant ways.

My findings

The staff here at the CTA are a very talented bunch with an unrivalled passion for the CT sector. Whilst there has been a higher-than-usual staff turnover in recent years, staff felt this had now settled down, and you can see a short profile of our current team in this edition of Together. Our staff team feels that the CTA is an excellent organisation with a positive working culture where staff can work autonomously, feel supported, and bring their best versions to work.

The conversations with staff brought into focus the internal work we need to do on some of our policies, procedures, and communications, along with revamping how we organise ourselves going forward. This effort will ensure that the nations can work together more effectively and use the passion amongst our staff team to put it to good use for the benefit of our members.

Our trustees also reported that they enjoyed bringing their varied skills and experience to the role and using them to impact the community transport sector positively. Trustees like using their knowledge and expertise to make a positive difference. However, there was also recognition that the CTA need to be more strategic in how we use our position to influence the sector and support our members.



A CT volunteer driver helping a passenger get off the minibus

The members who responded to the survey, and in the subsequent conversations I have had, reported that they very much appreciate the advice and support they receive as members of the CTA and that the CTA was a good national representative voice for the sector. Members also valued peer support and networking opportunities due to being part of the CTA. Members also identified areas they felt we could do better as an organisation. One of them is reviewing our current membership structure and the associated benefits. Other respondents felt that the CTA could do more to use our influence, particularly regarding the importance of CT in health and social care provision.

Members would like the CTA to be an even stronger voice for the sector to raise a deeper awareness of CT and its benefits. Understandably, many of you also looked forward to better understanding how the MiDAS training will be transformed. It was no surprise to learn that our members' most significant challenges relate to funding and ensuring your services are sustainable during these uncertain times, particularly given the seemingly diminishing pool of volunteers and drivers throughout the sector.

As you will appreciate, this is a very brief snapshot of the findings from this piece of work, but it has provided us with a more straightforward direction for the next financial year, 2023-24.

Next steps

The findings from my exercise have been shared with the CTA's board, senior management team, and staff. I have developed an internal structure to complement our existing one, which will harness the organisation's floating capacity and encourage collaboration. We have set up four internal working groups to be established in April 2024, focusing on the four main areas of CTA's work.

The groups are as follows:

- 1 Membership, members and permits, led by Caroline Whitney (Director for England)
- 2 Advice and support, led by Gemma Lelliott (Director for Wales)
- 3 Evidence, influencing and policy, led by David Kelly (Director for Scotland)
- 4 Training, led by Noeleen Lynch (Director for Northern Ireland)

As part of the work in each of these groups, the CTA will:

- Launch a full membership review later this year (this will include a review of this magazine, so look out for an e-mail link to a survey shortly so you can have your say).
- Continue to develop our resources and support for members.
- Work to be a stronger voice for the sector.
- Continue our work on the MiDAS transformation with plans to launch the new and improved version in January 2024.

There is, without a doubt, a lot of work to do, and I will be working with our staff, trustees, and members to develop a new strategic vision for the organisation to be launched in April 2024. I am confident that with your continued support and the passion within the team, there will be many exciting developments this year, including the CTA bringing back our annual in-person conference and awards for late 2023 – so watch this space! ●



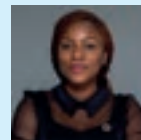
“With your continued support and the passion within the team, there will be many exciting developments this year”

News

All that's happening in community transport

Meet the team

New face Kevwe Oghide
on making a difference
Turn to page 22



CTA Conference in Wales

Our Wales Conference held in March was a day of shared learning, networking, support, and development opportunities, as we explored the future of community-led, accessible, inclusive and sustainable transport networks for Wales.

Focusing on people living in Wales who rely on inclusive transport networks and the social value that is created through community-led transport, discussions explored the importance of local knowledge and place-based development; the future of integrated and demand-responsive services; tackling loneliness and improving well-being, and decarbonisation, alongside a range of lightning talks and breakout sessions.



Launching the England forums

WE LAUNCHED the ConneCTing England and Regional Programme in January. In each Regional Forum, the community transport sector met with partners to ensure our communities have access to sustainable and inclusive transport.

ConneCTing England: Northwest forum

The conneCTing forums were launched this month, with the first event bringing together the CT sector and partners in the North West. To positively influence CT in the North West, the discussion prioritised the need to connect with key decision makers, integrate CT within the health and social care system and share knowledge, experience, and good practice to learn and enhance CT in the future.

ConneCTing with partners

Community Transport is gaining greater

visibility among local, regional and national partners as CTA takes further steps to build and develop beneficial relationships with the Sub National Transport Bodies (STB). Not sure what STB is? Click to find out.

Other partnership footprints:

- Engaging with TfN on CT's role in social inclusion and the need for increased funding
- Showcasing the value of rural transport at Transport East's workshop
- Highlighting the vital role of CT in filling gaps in the public sector network.



Celebrating Plugged-in Communities

WE'RE DELIGHTED that 18 Community Transport operators across Scotland will benefit from £1.6 million of new funding to purchase Electric Vehicles (EVs) after being successful in the second round of the Plugged-In Communities Grant Fund.

Congratulations to the 12 CTA members who were successful:

- Annandale Community Transport (Dumfries and Galloway)
- Buchan Dial a Community Minibus (Aberdeenshire)
- Coalfield Community Transport (East Ayrshire)
- Connect Assynt (Highland)
- Forres Osprey Bus (Moray)
- Galloway Community Transport (Dumfries and Galloway)
- Island of Hoy Development Trust (Orkney)
- Larkhall and District Volunteer Group (South Lanarkshire)
- Lismore Community Transport (Argyll and Bute)
- Ross of Mull and Iona Community Transport (Argyll and Bute)

- Sanday Afternoon Club (Orkney)
- Transport for Tongue Ltd (Highland)

[Read the testimonials on our website.](#)

We're now calling on Jenny Gilruth MSP, Scotland's Transport Minister, to build on the success of the first two rounds of Plugged-In Communities, empower more communities to take climate action and continue to support the Community Transport sector's journey to net zero in 2023/24 by delivering a third round next financial year with scaled-up investment. We've written to the Minister and you can download the letter from our website.

The level of need and the scale of demand in the Community Transport sector has been strongly demonstrated. The second round was significantly over-subscribed with a total of 52 applications worth over £7 million, more than 4 times the total value of the Fund.

CTA is relaunching the advice drop-in sessions

Dear Members,

I am excited to share with you our efforts to rebrand our advice drop-in sessions. We believe that these sessions can be much more than just a place to get advice - they can be an opportunity for peer-to-peer support and community building for our members.

We recognize that our members face unique challenges and that the support of peers who understand those challenges can be incredibly valuable.

Our goal is to make these sessions more engaging and interactive, and to foster a sense of community among all of us who are working to improve transport services in our communities.

By rebranding these sessions and emphasizing the importance of peer support, we hope to create a more welcoming and collaborative environment for all members.

We appreciate your ongoing support and look forward to your feedback as we continue to evolve and improve our services.

Best regards,

Lead, CTA Advice & Support
Gemma Lelliott.



Since the launch of the new England directorate in April 2022 the CTA has been focused on ensuring that we are tackling the issues that are important to the CT sector in England. A key theme through all the feedback we have had is the important role for the CTA in connecting and promoting the sector, sharing good practice, and ensuring that CT has the right visibility with stakeholders to retain and attract the investment it needs to be sustainable.

To do this effectively the CTA needs to work collaboratively with CT providers and stakeholders, creating opportunities for discussion, debate and action that lead to enhancements for the sector. To facilitate this, we have developed our **conneCTing England** model.

ConneCTing Regionally

It's been barely two months since we launched the **conneCTing England** and Regional Programme, and we are starting to see the potential power of these forums to improve community transport services and increase collaboration between CT operators and our stakeholders in England.

Our vision for the forums is to strengthen the voice of CT operators in England and put it forward to influence policies at national levels. We are working to ensure that key stakeholders, including local transport authorities, NHS England, DfT, Sub national transport bodies

and transport influencers, can join some of these forums to hear first-hand from CT operators and take actions that promote and invest in the community transport movement.

Through the regional forums, CTA hopes to promote better understanding and communication between CT stakeholders in England and to develop practical solutions to the challenges faced by community transport.

The CTA England Directorate will also use these forums to update the sector and stakeholders about best practice and new developments. Sharing this information is essential to safeguard a thriving and integrated CT sector which enables people to access vital services, social connections, and opportunities. We hope to see active participation from CT providers and stakeholders across England so we can all work together as a collective to address the current and future challenges of the sector.

We also welcome CTA members and stakeholders from all our nations to engage in regional forums where cross boundary work takes place. ●

i MORE INFORMATION
Read about the England forum on our website
cta.uk.org

Key priorities

Below is a summary of key priorities and actions for the first four **conneCTing** regional forums. CTA will contact CT providers and partners to address the priorities collectively.

NORTH WEST

- Creating case studies to share lessons learned from past and current projects to enable the sector to learn from each other.
- Improving knowledge and support for vehicle procurement, including funding for electrical infrastructure and vehicles.

WEST MIDLANDS

- Working together to investigate the potential for an improved and connected shared booking system and potentially collaborating on a West Midland wide funding bid.
- Improving awareness and understanding of the role and value of CT with strategic stakeholders including local authorities to maintain and increase investment in CT services.

YORKSHIRE & THE HUMBER

- Increase awareness and understanding of the use of Section 19 permits for small vehicles, working with key stakeholders including DfT and the OTC to ensure they are fit for purpose to support the sustainability of the sector.
- Working with Highways partners in rural areas to increase visibility of CT routes so that roadworks/closures have as little impact on communities as possible. transport sector's USP. Our drivers undertake journeys with care and empathy, so we are working to ensure that passenger engagement and care are sufficiently captured in the MiDAS training.



Showcasing the impact of community transport on reducing loneliness in England

It is no news that loneliness is a growing problem in England, with recent studies showing that over 3 million people often or always feel lonely. While loneliness can affect people of all ages, it is particularly prevalent among older people who may have lost friends and family members and have difficulty getting out and about.

For many people, being able to attend social events, such as clubs or groups, is essential to staying connected with others. However, if someone is unable to drive or if there is no public transport available, it can be challenging to access these events. Community transport solves this problem, ensuring that people can attend social events and meet others in their community.

Since May 2022, the Community Transport Association has been supporting 18 pilots through the Tackling Loneliness through CT project to develop an evidence base for how transport policies can reduce the number of people feeling lonely in communities across England. The learning from the project could also help CT operators across the UK to unlock further resources from funders in the future to continue to help tackle loneliness.

We've been amazed by the profound stories from passengers and volunteers who have benefited from the Tackling Loneliness campaign. Beneficiaries have shared stories of how the scheme has helped reduce social isolation, promote independence, and improve access to services and activities.

The TL scheme provision includes befriending support, digital inclusion support, bus buddies to encourage greater

confidence to travel and door-to-door accessible transport to and from social groups and well-being activities.

The extra support provided by these services enable people to have the same access to opportunities as those who can access public transport. This includes community transport services tailored to the needs of people with learning disabilities or dementia; and volunteering opportunities assisting people in making new support networks.

A snapshot of the data up to December 22 reveals:

- The total miles travelled by all participants is 363,111.
- 636 (49%) of all participants have a long-term condition or disability.
- Participants that accessed transport for journeys—71% are Female and 29% male.
- 93% of participants accessed transport, while 7% were volunteers.
- When looking at the baseline data provided on levels of loneliness, there was a difference depending on whether the services were delivered in rural vs urban areas.
- Overall, people in Rural areas showed lower levels of loneliness, with only 11% feeling lonely often/constantly compared with 20% in Urban areas.
- 61% of rural respondents felt that accessing CT positively impacted their feelings of loneliness, isolation and companionship.



"BA21 is a veteran who retired seven years ago. He relocated to Spain initially but moved back due to Brexit. He wanted to give back to the community and also socialise. Since he desires to help the veteran community, we've been delighted to provide him with essential training, including MiDAS. Now, BA21 feels confident to move our passengers out and about."

BASSETLAW ACTION CENTRE

CTA encourages Community Transport Operators to 'loneliness-proof' their operations and activities – for example, through volunteer recruitment and support, considering the importance of a 'warm welcome' for people who are lonely, exploring how this applies from first contact to later reception from volunteers and drivers.

Since the project kicked off, we have received tremendous feedback from passengers impacted by the campaign.

One of the questions we've asked is, 'how has the TL scheme impacted passengers?' ●

Transforming MiDAS

– Planning now for the future

Noeleen Lynch,
the Director for
Northern Ireland,
currently overseeing
the training
department for
CTA, discusses CTA's
vision for MiDAS and
ongoing plans to
transform it to adopt
better quality and
best practices

I started the role as CTA's Technical Transformation Lead for MiDAS in April 2022. Taking on this responsibility was a natural fit for me – my background before joining CTA was working in different leadership roles within a corporate organisation, and I previously led the development and implementation of complex training programmes for staff. I was keen to bring that expertise and experience into the transformation of MiDAS. I was very intrigued to learn not only about the training programme but also about its history and how it came into existence. In doing so, I gained an in-depth understanding of the importance of MiDAS for the community transport sector and CTA's role within that.

**“This is the first time
MiDAS will be reviewed
thoroughly and
comprehensively”**

Midas training programme for minibus drivers has been an intrinsic part of the community transport sector since its inception in 1997. At that time, the guiding ethos was “By the sector for the sector”. We are undertaking this transformation of MiDAS, and this ethos remains the same but for a sector that has evolved and developed significantly over the past two decades. In 25 years, this is the first time MiDAS will be reviewed thoroughly and comprehensively. There have been minor amendments made every two years with content added by a series of “training supplements”. However, forensic reimaging of MiDAS training and delivery hasn't happened until now.

What's been happening

CTA has been working over the past 12 months with Hampshire County Council (the original developers of MiDAS) and Motability (a national charity to enhance the lives of disabled people with transportation solutions and charitable grant programmes) to transform the MiDAS offering. We have been listening to the feedback we received from the community transport sector, MiDAS trainers, and training

**“MiDAS training
programme for minibus
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community transport
sector since its inception
in 1997”**

experts and are working hard to ensure MiDAS offers up-to-date, flexible, responsive, and passenger-focused training that is credible and accessible with inbuilt quality assurance.

MiDAS transformation so far

There is great pride within the community transport sector and amongst drivers, as they often go over and above what is required to deliver a caring journey. The passenger's sense of safety and comfort is considered with the ‘small things’. For example, supporting the passenger to the seat if they need it, being patient and kind to passengers if they need extra assistance or being friendly and someone to chat to. CTA will continue to ensure that those drivers training in the accessible module have adequate knowledge to secure wheelchairs safely and confidently. That said, CTA's ambition is to move beyond the role of safely securing wheelchairs to developing user-led designed accessibility training. That new and enhanced training programme will be in the pipeline for launch in 2024.

The transformation work of MiDAS so far has focused on the MiDAS Standard Minibus Training, consulting with training design experts to develop e-learning content to create an improved and modern learning experience. We are also working to ensure that the practical part of the transformed MiDAS continues to give minibus drivers the skills and confidence to drive a minibus safely,

legally, and with care. We have an editorial board set up with experts from the UK, and we look forward to introducing you to our board of experts in due course. They include DAT trainers with years of expertise overseeing and reviewing ongoing transformation. Whilst we have achieved a lot, we have much more to do. Between now and the launch of MiDAS at the beginning of Jan 2024, we plan to work with and develop relationships with the DAT trainers across the UK. CTA acknowledges that there has been little connection between the Association and these trainers over the years. We want to change that and work to develop an informative, supportive and collaborative relationship from now on, ensuring that those trainers who are on the front-line delivering training have the skills and knowledge to provide training that is effective and credible to train drivers across the UK to deliver safe, legal and caring journeys.

MiDAS vision

For the transformation of MiDAS to be successful and to create a transformed training offering that is credible, engaging, and sustainable for the future, we must adapt and change how things are done. We will deliver training in three parts: (1) learner-led online training through the CTA learning management system (2) One-to-one Enhanced practical training/coaching (3) One-to-one Practical assessment. The practical part will be delivered in the minibus. The trainers can do what they do best and coach and teach driving techniques and skills through demonstrations, technique walk-throughs and role-play scenarios tailored to the driver-passenger profiles and geographical area of driving. We are aware this may feel like a significant change for learners and trainers alike; but please be rest assured CTA will upskill DATs across the UK in this new way of training, ensuring they have the essential skills and knowledge to be able to deliver this enhanced practical training when we launch in Jan 2024. We will inform learners on how to access and be supported through this new delivery model. ●

The role of MiDAS

MIDAS's purpose will remain to equip minibus drivers to deliver safe, legal and caring journeys. Passenger safety and the safety of road users and the general public are and will continue to be the key to MiDAS training. The legal obligation remains vital; it is essential that drivers understand their legal responsibility when taking on the job of driving a minibus, be it a full-time job or on a more casual basis, such as group leaders who take a group of school kids to a football match. Finally, caring journeys are the community transport sector's USP. Our drivers undertake journeys with care and empathy, so we are working to ensure that passenger engagement and care are sufficiently captured in the MiDAS training.

i MORE INFORMATION

For any follow-up questions or if you would like to register to be involved in the MiDAS pilot in the Summer 2023, please email training@ctauk.org

CTA's response reflected in Transport Scotland's STPR2

David Kelly, Director for Scotland, explains how CTA has directly impacted the long-term future of the whole Scottish transport system

Influencing policy takes time. It can be a complex and protracted process with steps forward and backwards. Success is far from guaranteed, but persistent, positive engagement and transparent, convincing messaging can make a huge difference.

This is why we were elated to see our recommendations cited in the final STPR2, published in December 2022, highlighting CT's role in improving better connectivity and accessibility for residents in Scotland.

The Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) is essentially a policy bible that informs Scotland's transport investment for the next 20 years (2022-2042). It provides evidence-based recommendations on which Scottish Ministers can base future transport investment decisions.

In the first draft of STPR in 2008, CTA observed that the crucial role of community transport as an effective means of delivering 'flexible options' like DRT and MaaS, which disappointingly, was not captured, propelling us to submit our response (published on our website) in April 2022.

STPR1 contained a total of '29 transport investment priorities, with significant pledges to deliver exciting and even transformational projects which are now a reality – like the Forth Replacement Crossing (now the Queensferry Crossing) and an extensive programme of rail electrification along key routes (such as the Edinburgh to Glasgow via Falkirk line and the Stirling/Alloa/Dunblane lines).

Gaps in STPR1

While there have been successes, there have also clearly been disappointments and setbacks. STPR1 aimed to reduce carbon emissions 'to tackle the issues of climate change, air quality and health improvement' – yet since 2008, Scotland's transport emissions have hardly changed. Transport had become Scotland's largest emitter during a period when massive investment in renewables largely decarbonised our energy generation. Much of STPR1 focused on building more and bigger roads which, unsurprisingly, only fuelled private car use.

Likewise, there were commitments to give the Scottish people 'value for money for an alternative to the car' with high-quality, affordable public transport. Yet, the cost of buses and trains has only risen.

Demand-responsive transport and community car schemes were briefly cited in the STPR1; community transport was not recognised as a national priority nor included in any of the 29 investment priorities.

CTA's representation in STPR2

Over a decade later, the STPR2 was launched, with a lengthy review process that started in 2019 and was concluded nearly three years later with the publication of the final version in December 2022.

In January 2022, Transport Scotland published a draft STPR2 as part of the final round of consultations, which included a call for written evidence. The draft STPR2 contained 45 significant recommendations to Scottish Ministers, including headline-grabbing commitments to a Glasgow Metro and some encouraging signs for the Community Transport sector.

Recommendation 20 committed to investing in Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) and Mobility as a Service (MaaS) 'in locations where conventional fixed route bus services may not be suitable or viable, flexible options'. It recognised this could have particular benefits for non-emergency patient transport. However, it needed to identify the essential and existing role of Community Transport. We've been clear that 'MaaS for all' can only be delivered in partnership with our sector, its operators and its drivers.

Recommendation 26 pledged further investment in the decarbonisation of Scotland's bus network, including a welcome 'extension of existing funding criteria to include vehicles used for home-to-school and community transport. However, we believed that this recommendation lacked recognition of the specific financial challenges and vehicular needs of the Community Transport sector, as well as the limited supply of Electric Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (eWAVs).

In April 2022, CTA submitted its response to Transport Scotland's consultation on the draft STPR2, raising these critical issues. The representation called for amendments which would lead to:

- Investment in DRT services by CT operators.
- Inclusion of CT services in MaaS pilots and projects.
- More financial support to decarbonise the CT fleet to match the scale of public investment in the commercial bus sector's transition to net zero.

In September, CTA also published our More Than a Minibus report, which provided new data and evidence on the diversity of our sector and the scale of its 'net zero funding gap' to strengthen our case. Data and evidence from our members helped a great deal.

Transport Scotland published the final STPR2 with significant amendments to recommendations 20 and 26, as CTA had proposed.

The new and improved Recommendation 20 cited the 'important' role and potential of Community Transport as an effective

means of delivering 'flexible options' like DRT and MaaS. It also called for capital funding to 'support pilot schemes and demonstration projects to establish how DRT and CT services can provide improved public transport connectivity and integration'.

Reiterating the need for funding for Community Transport to purchase Electric Vehicles to be scaled up, the updated Recommendation 26 noted that 'further policy development may be required to ensure a fair and just transition to zero-emission buses across all operators'. The focus is now not just on commercial bus services but on non-profit operators too.

All in all, these changes were highly significant and very heartening. Our representations have been listened to and have resulted in meaningful amendments to the content of the STPR2. These recommendations will shape Transport Scotland's policies and the Scottish government's investment for many years to come, benefiting generations of Community Transport operators, staff, volunteers and passengers.

Influencing policy takes time, and success is far from guaranteed – but this one was definitely, as Biden would say, 'a big deal!' ●

“There were commitments to give the Scottish people' value for money for an alternative to the car' with high-quality, affordable public transport”

Recommendation 20: before and after

| Recommendations | Recommendations |
|--|---|
| <p>20 Investment in Demand Responsive Transport and Mobility as a Service</p> <p>Targeted investment to make it easier for people to travel, particularly those without access to a car, can help promote equality through faster access to jobs and services.</p> <p>In locations where conventional fixed route bus services may not be suitable or viable, flexible options, such as Demand Responsive Transport (DRT), perhaps supported by Mobility as a Service (MaaS) and smart technology where appropriate, can be used to provide improved public transport connectivity.</p> <p>This would be important in addressing the marked differences in public transport provision between and within regions.</p> <p>STPR2 recommends that pilot schemes involving DRT and MaaS draw on innovative solutions, international best practice and smart technologies. These schemes will help to establish whether scarce existing resources could be better utilised across the public network, home to school transport, special educational needs travel and non-emergency patient travel, either on the basis of fixed route services or through flexible routing.</p> <p>Meets key objectives:</p> <p>Climate Accessibility Health Economy</p> | <p>20 Investment in Demand Responsive Transport and Mobility as a Service</p> <p>Targeted investment to make it easier for people to travel, particularly those without access to a car, can help promote equality through faster access to jobs and services. In locations with low bus network connectivity, or where conventional fixed route services may not be suitable or viable, flexible options such as Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) and Community Transport (CT) – supported by Mobility as a Service (MaaS) and smart technology, where appropriate – can be used to provide improved public transport connectivity.</p> <p>This would be important in addressing the marked differences between and within regions.</p> <p>STPR2 recommends that capital funding is used to support pilot schemes and demonstration projects to establish how DRT and CT services can provide improved public transport connectivity and integration without increasing the need for revenue support. This would draw on innovative solutions, international best practice and smart technologies.</p> <p>This funding would help to establish whether scarce existing resources could be better utilised across the public network, home-to-school transport, special educational needs travel and non-emergency patient travel, either on the basis of fixed route services or through flexible routing. The potential to better inform people on journey options through the use of MaaS would also be considered.</p> <p>Meets key objectives:</p> <p>Climate Accessibility Health Economy</p> |

CT in Wales is putting people at the heart of service

Gemma Lelliott, Director for Wales, talks about how CTA is helping operators to work collaboratively, developing opportunities and engagement events

I feel fortunate to be approaching my fourth anniversary of joining CTA. I am so proud to be associated with our sector and the people who work in it. Your incredible work and determination to impact lives in your communities is inspiring. It is always a joy to attend events, raise the CT profile, and amplify your amazing work!

When I talk to people about my job, the fundamental thing I come back to again and again is that transport has the power to be a great enabler, empowering people to live the lives they want without being forced to rely on a car. But now, the lack of inclusive and accessible transport disables people across Wales every day. If you're on a low income, are disabled, are older, live in a rural area, need to make multi-stop journeys or travel at 'non-core' times, or have caring responsibilities, it's clear that the public transport system was not designed for you.

Welsh Government, and their delivery partners, including the CTA, are determined to turn that on its head. We are working collaboratively and positively to put people at the heart of planning and delivering a transport system that will once again be a true public

service. While we all recognise that it isn't going to be easy, especially looking down the barrel of a cost-of-living crisis and yet more austerity to come, it has become imperative to transform a transport network that not only serves us now but also preserves the well-being of future generations, there is no time to lose.

Guided by our members and with the support of the Welsh Government and Transport for Wales, below are some initiatives we have kicked off to enhance and expand integrated provision that helps CT providers to achieve their full potential.

Working well

In Wales, CTA is helping CT operators evolve and upskill through training and engagement events for Welsh CTA members. Our Working Well series brings together expertise, learning, and skills from CTA, our members, and a range of partners and focuses on core skills and development areas, including funding, supporting volunteers, and safeguarding.

We hosted a Working Well session at our Cymru Conference – More Than Just a Journey – on 15th March in Aberystwyth and plan to have more sessions in the summer and autumn, so if you have suggestions for support or how training would help you to develop and take on new opportunities, let us know at michelle@ctauk.org.

Service 'Blueprints'

We are working with our member network and some of our third-sector partners to develop

blueprints for community-led transport delivery, drawing out the best of the existing community transport network and making it easier and more accessible for communities to design their solutions in a way that integrates with the networked routes of the future.

Interested in setting up a volunteer car scheme but unsure where to start? Worried you might need the specific insurance for your new wheels-to-work scheme? Are you looking to expand into community dial-a-ride services or take on a fflecsi contract? From e-bikes to MPVs, minibuses to car clubs, there is so much potential to grow community-led transport options. We want to ensure that the emerging network is built on a solid foundation of best practice and is accessible and inclusive to anyone who hopes to use it. Starting with a 'car scheme in a box' concept, we are developing resources, toolkits, templates, and training which will build on our members' knowledge, skills, and experience to grow new services that are fit for the future.

Development, funding, and projects

The team continues to provide operational and strategic support to the operator network across Wales, from long-established members looking to innovate and grow to community groups thinking about transport for the first time, and every level in between! Welsh Government funding enables us to support our member network and external organisations. We are determined to continue supporting the sector to achieve its full potential and take up every opportunity.

In addition to our core-funded work, CTA is developing and taking forward several place-based, community-led, multi-modal projects in partnership with groups and organisations from across Wales who share our passion for access and inclusion, including:

- Western Valleys (Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Swansea, and Neath Port Talbot, featured in the last edition), focusing on affordable transport options that integrate with services and other transport modes – funded by Welsh Government's Household Support fund.
- Transport to Health in Aneurin Bevan (Newport, Monmouthshire, Torfaen, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, south Powys), which focuses on growing accessible and sustainable transport options for people

“We are working collaboratively and positively to put people at the heart of planning and delivering a transport system that will once again be a true public service”

across Gwent to access health settings (funded by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board).

- Social inclusion through community-led transport (North Wales), exploring how the transport network across the north needs to grow and evolve to meet broader travel needs, particularly for those with additional support needs (funded by the Transport and Health Innovation Network, Aberystwyth University).

We have also been approached by some external partners seeking the support of CTA and our member network to develop new approaches to tackling transport barriers in their communities, including Swansea, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Cardiff. We are excited to explore more community-led projects and how they all tie to the wider CT sector with proper funding and support. If you would like to chat about opportunities in your community, let us know on gemma@ctauk.org.

Finally, funding always comes up as a support need when we talk to members. While we continue to push for industry recognition, we also continue to work closely with operators to support them in exploring their funding and wider operational needs.

One operator told us: “Even if the bid isn't successful, I want to thank you for helping me think about structural changes to the organisation. The process we've gone through has been as useful as help with the application. Before, we were running things in a way that was, well, I'm going to say ad hoc, and these meetings have made me think about working differently. Thank you!” ●

Managing your CT service during the cost-of-living crisis

Michelle Clarke, Wales Transport Strategy Lead, writes about the importance of good governance during difficult times

With the cost-of-living crisis on the heels of the pandemic, many community transport providers are, understandably, concerned about the impact of the current situation on their passengers. Similarly, CT operators report increased service demand and higher operational costs. The combined effects of spiralling energy prices and rising costs for other goods and services may mean that operators' outgoings are increasing more than predictions. The Charities Aid Foundation, for example, has reported that over 80% of not-for-profit organisations need help with the increased cost of utilities for their venues. Inflation is reducing the value of charity reserves and donations. Pro Bono Economics calculates that a £100,000 grant will be worth just £88,100 by 2024.

Community transport providers are experts at making the most of every penny and adapting to changing circumstances, as demonstrated during Covid-19. The cost-of-living crisis is another challenge the sector will face with fortitude.

Some actions that may be helpful to consider are;

Developing financial well-being policies for staff

Retaining staff is always a key priority, and even more so now, as the cost-of-living crisis may mean people look for

higher-paying jobs to try and offset the higher costs they face. With the growing awareness that financial worries can negatively impact people's physical and mental health, it would be helpful to consider how your staff team might be affected. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) recommends that organisations have an employee financial well-being policy, which contains three core elements: payment of a fair and liveable wage, support for in-work progression, and financial well-being education and support. Another suggestion is to review roles and look for ways to increase flexible working options to help retain staff.

Building in extra time for regular financial health checks for your organisation

It is good practice to ensure your Board has regular access to critical financial information to maintain a good overview of the organisation's financial health. Any health check will include a review of the organisation's reserves policy to check it is still fit for purpose - if reserves are close to or below the recommended level, the Board may need to consider investment strategies and how to minimise any further fall in value. With internal checks, it is a good idea to connect regularly with your significant funders to keep them informed about rising operating costs in case grant or contract budgets need to be re-profiled.

Keeping a clear focus on your north star goals

North star goals are the impact your organisation wants to make or your mission. Keep the north star goals in mind when making decisions. Reviewing an organisation's financial sustainability is not just about managing risk but an opportunity to operate more strategically, build on infrastructure, invest in staff development, improve technology, and refocus on the vision. Is this a timely moment to revisit your strategic or business plan? If external assistance is helpful, you could start with your local government-funded Business Support agency for free advice and consultancy.

Listening to your beneficiaries

When thinking about refocusing services or doing things differently, consider the views of your beneficiaries. How will their lived experience and invaluable insight shape any revised business plan? A good question is: 'do the proposed changes to services have legitimacy?' Is there a clear thread between what beneficiaries are saying and your actions? As a starting point, it could be helpful to conduct a needs analysis with beneficiaries and use this as the basis for the Board's decision-making.

Prioritising investment in key resilience measures

It might seem counter-intuitive to talk about spending money during a cost-of-living crisis. Still, it could be a good time to consider investing in resilience measures such as good governance and leadership, digital transformation, and staff development. Ask which of those measures will make the most significant difference over the long term and what will happen if you don't invest.

Reviewing your fundraising function

When did the Board last review whether the organisation allocates sufficient time and resources to fundraising? Fundraising might be one task within a long list of functions in the Manager's role, with limited time for researching grant,

"Retaining staff is always a key priority, and even more so now, as the cost-of-living crisis may mean people look for higher-paying jobs"

contract and tender opportunities or funder stewardship. As competition for funding increases, consider how you can invest more time, people and financial resources into generating income.

Looking for new collaboration opportunities

Community Transport excels at working in partnership with other organisations. Are there any additional opportunities to work with others to coordinate efforts and share costs, skills and expertise to deliver services? Do a simple 'collaborative landscape analysis' to identify all the services supporting your beneficiaries within your locality and create a clear picture of who is operating in the same space as your organisation. Are there potential new partners with whom collaboration could help meet your organisation's mission more effectively or make better use of resources? Can training be shared, offices co-located, or resources pooled to secure services or staff that neither organisation could afford? Or could other working arrangements be put in place which increases access, participation or diversity in services?

Despite all the challenges currently facing the voluntary and community sectors, community transport operators are creative, visionary change-makers who are unafraid of a challenge, and stepping forward to support communities is ultimately what the industry does best. ●

Social media footprints





Four villages, **Harting Minibus** and 50 years on

Gus, a Peugeot, and Poppy, a Fiat, are the current vehicles

Harting Minibus marks five decades of serving four communities in Hartings and making remarkable impacts on people's lives

Harting is a group of four villages nestled at the foot of the South Downs in West Sussex, close to the Hampshire border. South Harting, West Harting, East Harting and Nyewood (effectively north Harting) were among the very first villages in England to set up their own minibus service. This year marks 50 years since the formation of a Harting minibus service following the ending of public bus services through the four villages.

In 1973 a committee was formed to replace the lost public bus services with one run by the community. £1,000 was provided by the committee of the Harting



Festivities, as their annual village fete is known, to which an anonymous £600 one-year loan was added, enabling them to buy the very first bus – a bright yellow, diesel-engined Ford Transit, christened Daffodil.

The law at that time had not, understandably, been amended to cope with such pioneering practices as a community bus service. It was quickly discovered that charging fares would not be legal under existing laws unless the volunteer drivers became fully fledged public service bus drivers, a far too expensive process for the soon-to-be functioning bus fleet of one!

The committee decided that the bus services should be run without charging the passengers. However, the passengers happily made voluntary donations - unrelated to their use of the bus, which would have made their payments quite illegal!

Records show that Daffodil's first scheduled run was at the end of May 1973, an expanded form of which is still performed today.

The law finally caught up with Harting's example, and in 1981, the Minibus Act was passed; among the changes was one that fares could now be charged.

Those very early years were worrying financially, but the establishment and development of the Mwinibus Tote (a lottery with cash prizes) helped solve these occasional crises. By the early/mid-1990s, some 700 subscribers were paying 8 pence per week; the Tote still runs today, and a 10 pence per week subscription remains, although the number of subscribers has diminished significantly from what it was.

Daffodil was followed by a couple more vehicles (Bluebells 1 & 2), but it was not until 1987 that the first 'proper' coach-built 16-seater was purchased, costing £22,000.

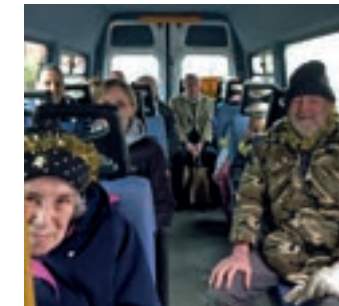
The minibuses continued to be run by a Parish Council sub-committee until 2016, when it was realised that new legislation changes precluded the Parish Council from running a community transport service. A Community Interest Company (CIC), separate from the Parish Council, was incorporated to take over the running of the buses and continues to do so today (by 2016, the fleet had doubled - yet another Ford Transit accompanied by a Mercedes).

Harting's legacy services

An important service provided by Harting's minibuses is the school run, taking school children to and from the local school over the county border in Petersfield, which saves the equivalent of over 7,000 individual parental car journeys every year – that's a very positive contribution towards the villages' attempt to become carbon-neutral.

Since its inception in 1972, the operation and management have been run entirely by volunteers - drivers, managers, and maintenance staff are all unpaid, the only exceptions being the professional garage services which need

Left: Villagers rely on the volunteer-run minibuses for daily life, including shopping trips, the school run and staying connected with friends and family



to be carried out every ten vehicle weeks, plus breakdowns if any. Those maintenance charges, motor and business insurances, fuel costs and driver instructor training costs are significant sums which are covered by passenger fares, grants and payments by West Sussex County Council for school transportation, private hire bookings, the Tote, occasional private grants and generous sponsors.

The organisation's lifeblood has been the community and its volunteers throughout its existence. In the 50+ years since community transport was merely an aspiration and then a reality, the community has kept the show on the road. And finding sufficient volunteers is no easier now than it has been throughout the decades. Much has changed in society over the last 50 years. They currently operate with the bare minimum of drivers needed to keep it running, particularly for the school runs. Thankfully, the current volunteers have responded by increasing their availability, for which they are owed a debt of thanks. Still, the company is today, as always, in need of fresh volunteers.

As to the future, who knows? If one had asked the local schoolchildren fifty years ago what minibuses would look like today, they would have conjured up images of vehicles flying through the air! Ask today, and they are more conscious of carbon emissions and sawier about spending limitations, so they probably imagine minibuses looking not unlike today's, only driverless and powered by hydrogen. The directors of Harting Minibus CIC keep an open mind, but they suspect that their community minibuses, in whatever form, will still be required fifty years from now, with today's school children running the show. ●

“The organisation's lifeblood has been the community and its volunteers”

Meet the CTA team

Read what drives us, our role within CTA and our passion for the Community Transport Sector



VICTORIA ARMSTRONG
Chief Executive

I have spent most of my career in the voluntary sector and am honoured to lead the CTA, an organisation with such an important social purpose. I am looking forward to leading the organisation in the coming years so that we can amplify the voices of our members by showcasing and supporting the vital work of the Community Transport sector across the UK.



CAROLINE WHITNEY
Director for England

I am pleased to lead the new England Directorate at CTA. I bring years of experience representing and supporting member organisations. Our England team is working to ensure that our services reflect the voice of CTA members. My priority is to promote and champion CT's interests with partners, shape and develop policies, and strategically position CT within the transport sector.



DAVID KELLY
Director for Scotland

I lead CTA's work in Scotland, from community engagement and development to policy and public affairs, as well as our evidence and influencing activities across the organisation at a UK level. I'm proud to use my experience in politics, government, and think tanks to fight for accessible, inclusive and sustainable transport for all.



GEMMA LELLIOTT
Director for Wales

With more than 13 years of experience in access, inclusion and tackling poverty, I am very passionate about community-led solutions that are accessible to everyone. As CTA's Director for Wales, my aim is to empower our team to take a positive partnership approach to develop relationships and coproduce strength-based solutions that help communities to thrive.



NOELEEN LYNCH
Director for Northern Ireland

As CTA's Director for Northern Ireland, I provide strategic support to our NI members through community engagement, CT development, and raising the sector's profile. I am also very much involved in policy and public affairs work involving CT, in addition to leading the UK-wide transformation of the MiDAS training programme.



ROGER GOODWIN
Director of People and Operations

I have recently joined CTA and I look forward to learning more about CT and the incredible work of you, our members. I have spent most of my career in the 3rd sector and previously worked for a Disabled Peoples Organisation where I championed innovative internal processes. I look forward to applying my knowledge to elevate CT and working with the team at CTA to achieve this.



KEVWE OGHIDE
Marketing and Communications Manager

I am delighted to work in a sector that makes an incredible difference in the lives of people that otherwise would have been left behind. I am using my over ten years of storytelling and development communications skills to amplify the impact of community transport in connecting people as well as its immeasurable impact on the broader society.



SEAN RAY
Tackling Loneliness Coordinator

I've been with CTA for two years, as part of the England team as a Development Officer. This year, I have also taken responsibility for another project as the 'Tackling Loneliness Through Community Transport' coordinator in England. Working for CTA has been a great opportunity to learn about all things community transport and work with the people who drive these groups forward.



JOSIAH DEAKIN
Policy and Research Officer

I am passionate about policy and politics and have experience working in these environments, including interning at an MP's office. In my role at the CTA, I work with the country directors to ensure that the voice of community transport is heard in policy discussions through various methods, such as campaigns, consultations and producing data.



CHANELLE DWYER
Development Officer, England North

I am the Development Officer for the North and Midlands at CTA. I am excited to be a part of a sector that works together to provide the best outcomes for all service users. I am here

to support providers and collaborate with stakeholders to bring the best possible solutions to the region. I am eager to share my knowledge and skills to help drive positive change for providers across the region.



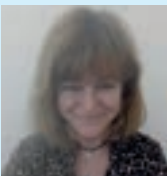
PAULA JULIANA SALAZAR BECERRA
Development Officer, England South

I am passionate about sustainability, urban-rural networks and territorial development. As a CTA DO, I've had the opportunity to interact with members of the sector and see how their services have a positive impact on their communities. I am always ready to assist CT providers with their development needs and to establish new relationships with stakeholders in the region.



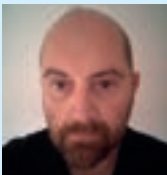
EMMA BINGHAM
Senior Development Officer, Wales

I very much enjoy my role as Development Officer at CTA. My work involves supporting organisations to develop and sustain inclusive and accessible transport solutions that meet their community's needs. I am lucky to work in such a way that supports communities to work together. By doing so, we create opportunities for community transport to grow and thrive.



MICHELLE CLARKE
Wales Transport Strategy Lead

It's a joy to work with so many brilliant values-led organisations across Wales. My job involves policy work related to the Wales Transport Strategy and seeking opportunities to highlight the role of community transport within wider agendas. I particularly love co-developing funding bids to help operators bring in additional income and future-proof their amazing services.



DAVID DAWKINS
Wales Transport Strategy Implementation Officer

Representing CTA, I am fortunate to be amongst passenger transport policy in Wales. It is the talk of the UK transport planning profession - the Welsh Government is the first in the UK to adopt strident policies putting the well-being of communities in front of passenger transport logistics. My professional life has been in passenger transport, from volunteer driver to service director; it has shown me that communities come first and then the transport provision, which is precisely what CTA is.



LARA HENDERSON
Development Officer, Scotland

I am inspired by the dedication and enthusiasm shown by CT operators across the UK. With a background in housing and a keen interest in social equality, inclusion and sustainability, I'm proud to work in a sector that prioritises social values and takes a people-centred approach to development. I am happy to support and learn about and from you.



DUNCAN CLARK
Development Officer, Scotland and Northern Ireland

The most Northerly located member of the team, I have a background in Central Government, Membership Organisations and the Third Sector. Making things better, more joined up and valued. It's my pleasure to work in a sector that is making a tremendous impact in promoting social inclusion.



ALINA COHEN
Marketing and Communications Executive

I am responsible for the delivery of

communications to the whole CTA network. I have been here since 2021, and I am constantly amazed by the dedication and passion of the sector. It is an honour to tell the stories of our wonderful members and see how much of a difference they make to the communities they serve.



TRACY LE ROUX
Senior Administrator

I joined the CTA in 2008 and have been involved in all admin aspects, from processing MiDAS orders and membership applications to printing permits. I have seen a lot of changes in the past 14 years and am proud to be part of, even if in a small way, working with our members to help and support their communities.



NICKY NEWMAN
Projects Administrator

I have been with CTA since July 2022 working principally as the project administrator on the 'Tackling Loneliness Through Community Transport' in England. I have recently been appointed as the project administrator for the 'Western Valleys' project in Wales, as well as supporting on other Welsh projects.



JENNIFER BEST
Administrator

I've been with the CTA for two years. Helping with the day-to-day admin of MiDAS.

Incoming, we've got **MICHELLE KELSALL**, as the new **Development Officer for Wales**

