

OKEHAMPTON & DISTRICT COMMUNITY TRANSPORT GROUP

AGM - 18th JULY 2019

CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

Our community minibus is being used for our Saturday and weekday Lifestyle Trips and also for group bookings, including the Parkinsons Group, Mariners Away, Communities Together and the Winkleigh Forget-me-not and social groups. Our lifestyle trips have become more popular and on several weekends we have had to run two buses to fit everyone in. We are offering a wider choice of destinations and days of the week to try and suit more clients. We decided to continue to subsidise the cost of these trips for another year following successful fundraising, to allow as many clients as possible to benefit.

We are grateful to BVS for their continued sponsorship of our community minibus.

There has again been an increase in demand for our services again this year, this is putting increased pressure on both the drivers and administration to try and fulfil all the requests received and at the current time we do need more drivers to help keep the service running smoothly, including some willing to drive our wheelchair accessible vehicles although we have successfully recruited several new drivers during the last year, we have several who are currently not available due to personal commitments, holidays etc. We would particularly like drivers in the South Zeal, North Tawton and Chagford areas. We receive many very short notice appointment requests and these along with the many cancellations at short notice increase the pressure as they are more time consuming to organise. We recorded 131 journeys which we were unable to cover due to short notice or lack of volunteers and 730 cancellations.

Our car drivers work under very difficult conditions on a regular basis, with parking at the hospital sites at a premium and traffic busier than ever, they need to allow plenty of time for travel and helping clients to their destinations, with many appointments being delayed, they can often find themselves waiting for several hours. We really appreciate their dedication to the service and know that the clients do too!

Statistics for the year ending 31.03.19 show that our Voluntary Car Scheme carried out 6574 passenger journeys covering 111,470 miles! Our wonderful volunteers also gave over 10561 hours of their time. Our Ring and Ride took 1462 passengers into Okehampton for shopping, covering 19793 miles. Our lifestyle trips carried 599 passengers for 5308 miles and we took 25 groups out which travelled 2132 miles. Our Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles undertook 258 journeys with 610 passengers and covered 10530 miles. The cost of running the car scheme was £26,000, this is after fares are taken into account so this money has to be found from fundraising and grant applications.

We held a cream tea to show our appreciation to the volunteer drivers in June at The Old School Tearooms in Belstone. We also had a Christmas Meal, attended by a large proportion of our drivers and partners. Liz and I hosted a lunch for 4 of our retired drivers who between them had driven for us for over 46 years.

I nominated two volunteers to attend the West Devon Community Voluntary Service cream tea at Roadford Lake during Volunteers Week.

I nominated two people for Devon County Council Volunteer Awards this year, one has been chosen and will be attending the ceremony following the AGM, photo and details to follow on the next newsletter!

As always, thanks must go to Mark for doing such a tremendous job, Mark also keeps all our vehicles looking clean and carries out regular checks to ensure safety and comfort for our clients and undertakes the wheelchair training for our volunteer drivers.

We are still awaiting the result of the Section 19 Permit consultation so are working hard to put things in place in case we need to have an O licence, so that we can continue to offer the same services, there will of course be

extra costs involved to us and a lot more paperwork and administration. We are taking over the DCC bus that we have had on a package deal until now, this arrangement is until we can fully fund the purchase of another bus for ourselves as the current vehicle is 9 years old and has a lot of maintenance issues which we can't afford to continue to pay. We have already started to fundraise for this 15 seater minibus, more details to be shared with you soon.

We continue to work closely with a number of agencies, healthcare providers and care facilities to provide transport for both medical and social requirements.

The 100 Club continues to be popular, currently we have 195 members.

We held coffee mornings in October and March and a Bingo in April. . We have been particularly grateful this year for the generosity of our clients, who have donated a number of items for us to sell via social media, at car boot sales and in our Pop up Shop which we ran for a couple of months which was very successful. We are hoping to have another shop when we can find suitable premises. We are grateful for the generosity of Frances Luxton who allowed us the use of her empty shop in The Arcade.

We recently held a quiz, which was kindly hosted by The White Hart, Bridestowe who also provided the winners and losers prizes. Thanks to Bob Tolley who was the questionmaster, Lyn Evans for organising the event and to many of our supporters for the donations for the raffle. ODCGTG drivers and friends took part in 4 teams with £225 raised for our funds.

We have also received cheques and support from several local groups, many following talks, including: Insight, The Moorland Group, Castleham Coffee Morning, The Phoenix Group, Fairplace Friendly, Parkinsons, Mental Health Peer Support Group.

I continue to work with both the Devon and Southern Area Car Forums, Transitions Project (Previously Advice West Devon), Volunteer Organisers Forum, Okehampton Health and Wellbeing Alliance and other groups to share knowledge and information to ensure we provide the best service for our clients. I have attended Parish Meetings and to give a presentation and promote our services. Liz and I have also attended events such as the Okehampton Medical Centre open day, PPG Coffee morning, Community Wellbeing Event at Hatherleigh, Okehampton Primary School Parents Evenings, Forget-me-not Coffee morning. I attended the Community Transport Roadshow and we retain good connections with other CTA groups in the County, many of whom have been to our office to look at the Optimise system and who are now happy to be also using it.

We were chosen by the Co-op to be one of their charities for the year which runs from October to October which has been another boost to our fundraising efforts.

We were the recipients of the Green Token Community Matters scheme in Waitrose in March.

We have enrolled with the Paypal Giving Fund recently and received £107 so far.

We have just completed our fundraising to replace one of our wheelchair accessible vehicles, with grants from: Okehampton United Charities, Matthews Wrightson Charity Trust, Okehampton Lions, Waitrose Community Matters, Okehampton Inner Wheel, Friends of Okehampton Hospital, Cllr James McInnes, Co-op Community Fund and Okehampton Show. The vehicle has been ordered and we are eagerly anticipating delivery. We will arrange publicity for this as soon as possible.

We are grateful to both the Okehampton Times and Oke Links who have allowed us press coverage of events and news affecting our services.

We recently launched our new website which was designed by Simon Hill of Moorsites, we are grateful for his help and pleased that we have had lots of great reviews already.

Our Facebook page continues to attract more viewings and is now a very useful way of keeping clients up to date with information.

We have two forthcoming events, unfortunately on the same day - Lakeside Care Home have their Summer Fair on Saturday 3rd August from 12 - 4pm and they have chosen us as one of the beneficiaries of the funds raised this year plus the West Devon Mayor, Tony Leech is holding a coffee morning in the Charter Hall from 9 - 12, with funds being raised for the three community transport providers in West Devon.

Thank you to:

Liz Westlake who has covered the office for me (sometimes at very short notice) when I have to attend meetings or events and for all her help with fundraising.

Robert Humphry and his successor who continue to audit our Bus Service Operators Grant claim twice a year.

Tony Hazel at Carmel who have provided us with relief drivers on a regular basis .

The team at Optimise, our database system, which continues to expand and allows us to work efficiently.

Christine Munkenbeck for her crafts which she sold on our behalf for 6 months.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of our Committee for their support over the last year, especially Graham Harding.

Sue Wonnacott

Co-ordinator