

## **Report to Environment and Community Panel**

### **West Norfolk Community Transport Project**

West Norfolk Community Transport Project was set up to provide a range of accessible door to door transport services for people with mobility problems including the elderly, frail and disabled and people who cannot access public transport. The aim of WNCTP is to provide services for people which contribute to increased levels of social inclusion. Vehicles have low steps and tailgate lifts for people in wheelchairs. People who use the service have to become members of WNCTP; membership is free.

WNCTP also operates satellite transport projects with strong local identities. Such as the Swaffham Transport Project (STP) which operates from the Community Centre at Campinglands, Swaffham. Swaffham services include Dial a Bus routes to Swaffham, Kings Lynn and Dereham; other services include the Castle Acre Community Car scheme and a similar operation in Downham Market. Flexibus services are operated from Shipdham.

WNCTP received funding from the BCKLWN, Breckland Council, NHS West Norfolk CCG, NCC and North Norfolk District Council. The annual budget is approaching £2 million and operates 68 vehicles and included in the fleet are 52 mini buses, 8 small vehicles, 2 buses, one van and a car. You will have spotted the livery which appears on an increasing number of the vehicles (along with a new driver uniform). Numbers fluctuate as vehicles are sold, replaced and the fleet increased in size as appropriate. A breakdown truck was purchased in the last financial year. Transport staff includes 62 drivers (including part time and relief), 13 passenger assistants, one trainer and three workshop operatives. Approximately 18 voluntary bus drivers and 54 volunteer car drivers help provide the service.

A new General Manager, Paul Ruskin, began at the charity in 2015 having previously held a senior management position with Norfolk Green.

### **Volunteers**

A group of over 50 volunteer drivers around the county provide essential services to vulnerable and isolated passengers these include transport for medical appointments (averaging 136 request per month), essential shopping, education trips and visiting family and friends. Volunteers drive their own cars or use one of the two community-based minibuses located in Docking and Downham Market.

### **Dial-A-Bus**

This remains a core service and provides a lifeline to many people living in rural areas.

### **Shopmobility**

This service commenced in 2003 and enables people to access the shopping areas

by hiring one of their motorised scooters or wheelchairs. The service is partly funded by the Borough Council which also help fund vehicles in the recent past. The charity also has a presence in Swaffham and has school and day centre contracts.

The Trustees have recently been bolstered by the addition of the ex-MD of Norfolk Green, Ben Colson.

WNCTP is very conscious that there are many calls on public and charitable funds (some 165,000 charities in the UK attempt to access the same funds as the organisation) and so is grateful to the Borough, County, NHS and members for continuing support whilst it strive to achieve its own funding through the services it offers.

I repeat my recommendation that BC invites a trustee such as Ben Colson, or the General Manager Richard Pengelly, to make a pre-Council briefing in the next 12 months.

I would like to thank the EC Panel for allowing me to represent the Borough Council (along with Cllr Nockolds) on the Management Committee for the past three years - I now pass the baton on to a new representative as I will not seek to continue for a further year.

Councillor Moriarty