

Training Solutions for Community Transport
Ref No DG12 Application Ref 10
Year 1 Leader report

This transport project started out in 2009. The Society could never have anticipated the number and range of groups and individuals who have participated in the scheme.

The vehicle has travelled 15,108 miles since the project started. The number of bookings to date is 180. This equates to an average miles per trip of 84 miles. 43 volunteer drivers have been trained to the Midas standard as required by the permit held by the Society.

During the year 2008-2009 the Society joined the Community Transport Association. Communication with other projects has been most beneficial on keeping updated on rules & regulations for community transport.

Progress has been steady.

35 community groups are now members of the Transport project. The initiation of the Society dayhopper group has led to an increase in membership to the Heritage Society. Due to the recent changes on the weather conditions group bookings have increased so much that on several occasions there have been instances of double bookings. These occasions are not enough to justify purchasing another vehicle. There can be no doubt that the community transport project has benefitted many people and groups in Upper Nithsdale. Based on the booking information school children and elderly people have benefitted most. The Society had thought that groups from Sanquhar and Kirkconnel areas would be the limit for availability to use the project. A group from Wanlockhead joined up and the Nithsdale Rotary club have also joined. The information I have at the moment suggests that this Rotary group covers the most of the Nithsdale area. Three individuals with mobility problems have managed to go on shopping trips for the first time in years. These people have been able to meet up with old friends.

The ability of the transport co-ordinator to communicate with individuals and groups about transport issues has been very good. After each trip the min-bus is checked out to see if any personal materials have been left. The vehicle is also checked for any damage and cleaned out internally. At the present time "word of mouth" contact from passengers has promoted a lot of bookings.

Up until the increased costs on fuel charges the scheme was pointing towards sustainability. The numbers set out in the application relating to participation in training programmes are nearing completion.

Due to changes in disclosure Scotland rules relating to transporting children and vulnerable adults some groups have had to ensure that their chosen driver has to obtain an enhanced disclosure.

The Society has always tried to respond to the needs of the residents. A monthly open meeting is advertised and held in the village. Any member of the community can attend these meetings to get updates on any work the Society undertakes. Listening to what the residents are not happy with and trying to respond to ideas ensures that our group has the support of the community. A survey sheet is now being issued to each transport user for feed back on project. One item that has created extra demand on our transport services was the decision of the Scottish Co-operative Society to close down the store on the village Main Street. The elderly members of the community were unable to access a retail shop for their essential day-to-day food requirements. The transport co-ordinator started to organise trips to supermarkets.