

# COUNTY MEMBERSHIP SCHEME - ARUN UPDATE

December 2021

## [Actions for 2021-2022](#)

A review of the community transport offer in Arun, including ideas on development via the County Membership Scheme and additional WAV provision

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## Where we started: January 2021

By way of a comparative framework, we've chosen to look at Bus Support Operator Grant (BSOG) eligibility as a basis for service provision. While BSOG, as a fossil fuel-based subsidy, is due to be phased out, the eligibility criteria is still a useful set of principles.

In Arun, Community Transport Operators (CTOs) serve some BSOG-eligible groups well and largely ignore or are ignored by others (who feel community transport 'isn't for them').

The full BSOG eligibility criteria (our emphasis in the middle) covers:-

- People aged 60 or over
- Persons of all ages, who are physically or mentally impaired and persons assisting them
- People on income support
- People on job seekers allowance
- **People of all ages, suffering a degree of social exclusion by virtue of unemployment, poverty or other economic factors, homelessness, geographical remoteness, ill health, or religious or cultural reasons.**
- People of all ages, who believe that it would be unsafe for them to use any public passenger transport services.
- Carers or children under 16 years of age accompanying any of the above

CT provision in Arun does a good job of helping the elderly and supporting health provision. Some CTOs also do a good job mitigating rural location or helping people with disabilities and/or their carers but there is a lack of wheelchair-accessible vehicles (WAVs) in the district.

## Where we're going: December 2022

Through the County Membership Scheme (CMS) we aim to encourage associate member CTOs in Arun to support:

- People aged 60 or over.
- People of all ages living with disabilities, whether physical, learning or both.
- People of all ages, suffering a degree of social exclusion by virtue of geographical remoteness, ill health, or religious or cultural reasons.

Through the County Membership Scheme (CMS) we will help full member CTOs in Arun to deliver services for the above groups and encourage them to support:

- People aged 60 or over.
- People of all ages living with disabilities, whether physical, learning or both.
- People of all ages, suffering a degree of social exclusion by virtue of unemployment, geographical remoteness, ill health, or religious or cultural reasons.
- People of all ages seeking to access programmes that support wellbeing and mental health.
- People of all ages, who believe that it would be unsafe for them to use any public passenger transport services.
- Carers, support workers or children under 16 years of age accompanying any of the above
- Low Emission (Mode 6 or better) fleet infrastructure strategies

**We believe this is a better reflection of what achievable best practice in 2021-22 should look like, achievable under short distance (and non-commercial purposes) exemptions.**

## County Membership Scheme benefits to CTOs

### Associate members

- Quarterly Forum invitation to discuss issues with peers
- Regulatory and compliance help
- Support with fleet management policies
- Help running transport surveys in your area
- Access to CMS Development team
- Support with Access to Training

### Full members

- Quarterly Forum invitation to discuss issues with peers
- Regulatory and compliance help
- Support winning local authority contracts (SEN school runs, adult social care etc.)
- Support with vehicle-leasing via WSCC and others
- Support with fleet management and servicing
- Support with bid-writing and grant applications
- Support with HR issues
- Help running transport surveys in your area
- Access to CMS Development team
- Support with Access to Training.

Membership has no financial cost – the CMS is funded by local authorities like (but not limited to) Arun District Council who are invested in securing the availability of community transport operations in a more sustainable way (financially and environmentally).

CTO members of the CMS are, however, expected to be able to demonstrate commitment to deliver best practice, at the level appropriate to their membership.

## Goal of the CMS for Community Transport Sussex

Our overall aim is help create an improved network of community transport minibus provision delivering best practice for its communities.

Ideally, this will be achieved by CT organisations in Arun and across West Sussex adopting a shared vision of best practice while maintaining independent delivery of that best practice, reflecting their status as independent organisations and their expert local knowledge of their area of operations.

Alongside community-based low / ultra-low / zero emission MPV/WAV car provision, this will help create an integrated, robust community transport network in West Sussex that is economically and environmentally sustainable by c. 2025-2030. That is the ultimate goal we are working towards and believe the CMS can help deliver.

## Activities across West Sussex relevant to Arun

CTS has mapped out CT provision across West Sussex, conducted gap analysis and has previously shared those documents with WSCC officers. The latest version of the mapping is now available.

In parallel, CTS has also engaged with a national charity to propose a long-term timeline to place electric WAVs for community use at Parish hubs and village halls across West Sussex. This is on track towards reaching the pilot stage in 2022.

During the pandemic CTS has also engaged with NHS Sussex Commissioners to co-ordinate its Vaccine Travel Support Group response. Our team is now taking calls and booking journeys (using community transport providers and private hire transport providers) for those eligible to receive support in travelling to their Covid 19 vaccinations across East and West Sussex.

## West Arun (Walberton to Pagham, south of A27)

In our first look in January 2021, we identified West Arun is an area of concern due to a lack of accessible vehicles providing community transport in the area.

Arun's most prominent CTO is Arun Community Transport (ACT), a thriving (although largely grant-dependent to date\*) volunteer car scheme based out of Littlehampton in East Arun.

*\*The scheme has recently published a fare charging structure that may make it less grant dependent going forwards.*

At last check in, the scheme has 13 active volunteer drivers. While some do cover West Arun settlements such as Pagham, Aldwick, Bognor Regis and villages around Yapton, the scheme is weighted more towards East Arun and its only WAV is also based in Littlehampton.

Similarly, the CTS South Coast depot at Worthing nominally covers West Arun for medical appointments but most of its dial-a-ride bookings are in Worthing, Adur and East Arun.

Pagham and District Residents Association takes its members shopping and to various social activities in a wheelchair-accessible minibus. The PDRA is, however, yet to offer dial-a-ride or dedicated medical appointments. Following the Chichester and Arun CT forum event in November, we have engaged the PDRA about developing a dial-a-ride service in 2022 and hope to form a good working partnership with them. PDRA and ACT have also expressed an interest in working together around Bognor Regis, and we will try and help that partnership develop into service delivery.

West Arun is also home to the Community Minibus Association 5 Villages. The local co-ordinator runs shopping services, which have been postponed during the pandemic and was still advertised as postponed at time of writing. When active, the service supports over 60s in the villages of Walberton, Fontwell, but, unfortunately, does not use an accessible minibus so the service is limited to those with a good level of mobility.

CTS has engaged with WSCC about running a hybrid bus/taxi or Dynamic Demand Responsive Transport service from Barnham to Chichester, travelling through the West Arun villages between the two en route. This proposal has been submitted for funding from central government, and we await the outcome.

West Arun, thus, is an area where residents may have access to limited community transport services at best and where those living with disabilities affecting, especially wheelchair users, may struggle to access accessible transport. CTS intends to take steps to improve access to community transport reflective of its stated intention to deliver best practice.

The area would also benefit from more robust EV charging infrastructure to help support efforts to bring in ultra-low or zero emissions vehicles.

## Central and North Arun (Arundel and all settlements North of A27)

If West Arun has limited community transport services, that is even more true in the rural area north of the A27.

Around Arundel, Warningcamp + Burpham the main provider of services is Angelcare Community Transport. Unfortunately, this is actually a commercial care provider with two WAVs – and a charging system that is closer to a taxi service than a community transport operator.

At last check-in, however, 10% of the journeys undertaken by the provider were for residents in the community while the other 90% were for its care customers so I have chosen to call this service commercial dial-a-ride. The travel manager there will offer WAV transport to people in its area of operations if they feel they cannot travel any other way – but at commercial rates.

While Arun Community Transport would like to serve the area, it has not yet recruited local drivers that would allow it to offer services at low cost, given its per mile charging system.

Findon and Clapham are covered by the CTS South Coast depot at Worthing + Arun Community Transport

Slindon has its own village community bus service, which is a scheduled shopping service three days a week that can cater for wheelchair passengers. It is also available to hire to local groups/.

EV infrastructure in Arundel would be an aid to introducing community e-car clubs in this area, which may be a possible solution to increasing WAV presence without the need to invest significantly in accessible minibuses.

## East Arun (Atherington to Ferring, south of A27)

This is actually a fairly well established area in community transport terms, with dial-a-ride available from CTS South Coast (Worthing depot) and Arun Community Transport being based in Littehampton, with its own WAV based in this area too.

Rather than develop new services, our aim here is to foster and encourage a collective desire to deliver best practice among the CTOs operating in the area.

EV infrastructure throughout this area is also considered desirable to us, to aid future fleet renewal and encourage the adoption of EVs through car clubs featuring electric cars. Wick, in particular, is considered interesting as a potential community e-car club site.

The presence of a WSCC depot at Clapham also offers future possibilities of enhancing the existing community transport infrastructure with increased minibus service provision and possible fleet upgrades.

## Actions taken and next steps

CTS has looked at how best to extend its South Coast operations around Bognor Regis and the surrounding areas from Pagham to Middleton. Presently, we have proposed working in partnership with Arun Community Transport and are now exploring a potential partnership with the Pagham and District Residents Association.

With plans to work alongside WSCC at Drayton Depot delayed, we have adopted a temporary strategy to provide passenger services that support our partnerships with Age UK, MIND and the Royal Voluntary Service in Arun.

While it is still intended, eventually, to lease suitable low-emission or better vehicles from WSCC via an arrangement with London Hire, we are currently preparing to re-wrap two of our vehicles and move them to Bersted Park Community Centre. We have engaged with Arun Community Transport to work in partnership to book these vehicles via their office team.

This will enable us to at least provide a limited service while we continue to work on establishing a presence at Drayton depot. We also have the option of developing our partnership with Sussex Clubs for Young People to address the issue of a permanent base in the area in the mid to long term.

As part of our partnership with Arun Community Transport, we will also encourage them to extend their car scheme coverage westwards.

In August and November 2021, we worked with Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester (VAAC) to host Community Transport Forum events for CTOs and other interested parties to start building a relationships with (and between) CTO colleagues and interested parties in the area. At the November event, we outline our vision of best practice in community transport and the CMS membership criteria, which was well received by attendees and has led to some good talks about how services can be developed in West Arun and across district lines in South East Chichester.

In April 2022, we are planning to host a third forum in Arundel to discuss our transport survey findings and how new services may best be delivered.

In Central and North Arun we are in the process of running transport surveys with Arundel town council, Clapham Parish Council and are discussing doing so with Slindon Parish Council. A summary of the results will also be shared with Arun Community Transport to aid their planning and can be provided to Arun District Council on request.

In East Arun we are in the process of running transport surveys with Rustington and Angmering parish councils and in West Arun we are working with Barnham and Eastergate parish.

We also intend to engage other parishes early in 2022 as survey results come in and can be demonstrated have helped service development.

While we believe we can establish a data-driven plan, if it is not possible we will implement a slow expansion of our current service provision: this will focus on moving westwards along the coast from CTS Worthing depot towards Pagham, via a temporary base in Bognor Regis, and then Northwards to East Chichester (around the A259 and B2166), operating out of Drayton depot, and finally back eastwards (around the A27) back through West Arun to Arundel. At all stages we will be sympathetic

towards and supportive of CTO colleagues, although we do remain committed to delivering our vision of best practice.

We think that CTOs in East Arun would benefit from access to specific-subject area professionals who can support growth, for example, in funding, marketing, fleet management, HR and regulatory compliance. CTS has a number of those skills among its own team that we can consider making available on demand and has also identified a potential commercial partner to train affiliated CTOs in fundraising and bid-writing.

With the pandemic moving towards (hopefully) its last winter, we are moving out of the planning phase for 2021-22 and into the development and delivery phase of new CT services in the areas discussed here. The County Membership Scheme will be an important asset to the wider CTO community in Arun and to CTS specifically to secure delivery of our view of best practice across the county.

#### [Best outcome in West Arun 2021-22](#)

A combination of active car scheme and accessible minibus provision offers a broader range of passenger services reflecting our vision of best practice in community transport.

We believe the combination of CTS accessible vehicles and Arun Community Transport will help mitigate the lack of current provision in West Arun caused by the unsuccessful merger of Arun Co-ordinated Community transport and Sammy Community transport.

An appropriately-sized community transport network is created through a CTS depot in Drayton working in partnership with Arun Community Transport (and other existing CTOs). This is supported by WSCC, Chichester District Council and Arun District Council through the County Membership Scheme.

In the mid to long term, additional funds are found to support environmentally sustainable car transport initiatives through the provision of 'zero emission' electric-powered WAVs based at parish hubs / village halls. It is expected that it will take a coalition of local authority funding, philanthropic bodies and other grant-giving actors to build something transformative in this space although we can report there is interest from national charities in funding trials of such schemes as early as next year.

#### [Best outcome in North Arun 2021-22](#)

Following completion of its transport survey, Arundel Town Council engages with the CTS Community Forum hosted in Arundel next April and a coalition of CTOs commits to develop an appropriately-sized community transport network based in but not limited to Arundel in its coverage of communities in Arun based north of the A27.

In the mid to long term, additional funds are found to support environmentally sustainable car transport initiatives through the provision of 'zero emission' electric-powered WAVs based at parish hubs / village halls in the area, similar to West Arun.

### Best outcome in East Arun 2021-22

Our travel surveys create a data-driven approach to supporting and enhancing the established community transport schemes already operating in East Arun.

Through the County Membership scheme and local voluntary aggregators, we create a network of CT professionals and subject expert volunteers that offer on demand advisory services around funding, marketing, fleet management, HR, regulatory compliance to help CTOs determined to deliver best practice in the area of East Arun

In the long term, The WSCC Clapham depot eventually also serves as a key resource to support service expansion for affiliated CMS members, or indeed CTS-supported charities, through providing an avenue for fleet renewal via vehicle-leasing. We would like to see this model be first proven successful by the engagement between CTS and Drayton Depot.

DOCUMENT ENDS.