

TOGETHER *IN TRANSPORT*

NEWS & INSIGHTS FROM THE COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SECTOR

MAY 2026 | ISSUE 3



TOTNES BUS AIDS UKRAINE

After a year off the road, Totnes and Rural Community Transport's oldest bus has been donated to Ukrainian Action Team Devon. No longer cost-effective to run locally, the 18-year-old vehicle will be restored and repurposed for use in Ukraine.

Based in Stoke Gabriel, the team delivers aid convoys every six to eight weeks, supplying vehicles and essential support. Since March 2023, they have sent nearly 100 vehicles and vital aid to Ukraine in 25 convoys.

NEW MERCEDES VOYAGER LAUNCHED

The new GM Coachwork Mercedes Sprinter Voyager is a premium 17-seat minibus combining comfort, accessibility and durability. Available with side or front entrance options, it offers flexible layouts with wheelchair access for up to six passengers. Built on the trusted Mercedes Sprinter platform, the Voyager features a high-specification interior, advanced safety systems and practical design, making it a dependable choice for community transport operators.



FUNDING
OPPORTUNITIES
INSIDE

Spotlight on community resilience

Welcome to the May edition of Together in Transport, bringing you the latest stories from across the community transport sector. From services launching across the UK to vehicles supporting communities in Ukraine, this issue highlights the resilience and impact of the sector.



Inside, you'll also find funding opportunities supporting essential transport services and examples of the positive difference being made in local communities.

If you have a story, project update or funding success to share, we'd love to hear from you.

Emma Cooper
Editor

emma.cooper@
gmcoachwork.co.uk



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ISLE OF MAN SERVICE ENDS AFTER 40 YEARS

A community transport service supporting young people with additional needs on the Isle of Man has ended after nearly 40 years. Run by Rushen Round Table since 1988, it provided weekly journeys to Phab Youth Club, helping members access social opportunities and build confidence.

The initiative grew into a vital service, later introducing a dedicated vehicle known as 'The Red Bus'. However, declining volunteer numbers and the ageing vehicle have brought it to a close. Its legacy lives on through the many lives it enriched and the strong community spirit it fostered.

GET A FUNDING BOOST

Multiple grants are open now to support running costs, staff training, and transport needs for community organisations across the UK.

Stagecoach Giving for Good Community Fund 2026

Grants of up to £500 for small charities
Applications are reviewed monthly

Community Foundation Wales (Wales only)

Fund for Wales: up to £2,500 a year, for 3 years, for grassroots organisations with an income under £100,000.

Bernard Sunley Foundation

Grants of up to £5,000 to charities of income below £1m
Applications welcome year round

The Hedley Foundation

Grants of up to £5,000 to charities of income below £1m (CICS are excluded)
Applications welcome year round



SUPPORTING COTSWOLD COMMUNITIES

A Queen's Award-winning community bus service in the Cotswolds has received new support through sponsorship from Savills Cotswolds. The Villager, established in 1982, is a volunteer-run service providing essential transport across 54 villages and supporting around 450 passengers each week. It helps connect rural communities with shops,

medical services and nearby towns using a fleet of small minibuses.

Now operating six vehicles, the service continues to expand its impact across the north Cotswolds, including areas around Stow-on-the-Wold, Chipping Norton, Moreton-in-Marsh, Burford and Witney, ensuring vital rural connections remain in place.

COMMUNITY GRANT FOR SCARBOROUGH DIAL-A-RIDE

Dial-a-Ride has been awarded over £4,800 by Scarborough Town Council's Community Grant Award Scheme. This funding will allow them to upgrade their bus safety and accessibility features, including new mechanisms to secure wheelchair and mobility aids and reversing cameras

**Got a story?
Drop us a line**

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FIRST AND LAST MILE BOUNCES BACK

First and Last Mile, based in Oxfordshire, is launching a new Saturday bus service for a five-month trial to give young people access to local leisure facilities. This has been funded by the Low Carbon Hub and approved by Oxfordshire County Council and will be a welcome addition to the weekly shopper bus routes the charity currently operates.

The non-profit organisation, run by volunteer drivers, has faced a turbulent few years, nearly closing in June 2025 before securing council funding to continue. A crowdfunder earlier that year surpassed its £10,000 target, raising over £12,000.



RESTORING VITAL CONNECTIONS

A new minibus service is restoring transport links for residents in the Knightwood and Valley Park area of Hampshire following months of campaigning. The service now connects local communities with Chandler's Ford, Hiltingbury, Velmore and Eastleigh during the week.

Funded through local authority and government grants as well as community partners, the two-year pilot follows the withdrawal of previous bus routes that left gaps in public transport. The fully accessible service offers capped fares, free travel for concessionary pass holders, and connections to key rail and retail hubs across the region.

NEW ACCESSIBLE MINIBUS PROVIDES LIFELINE FOR PASSENGERS

A community transport group in Cumbria has introduced a new accessible Mercedes Sprinter minibus to support residents with mobility needs. Funded by Mid and South Copeland GDF and The Cumberland

Investment Fund, the vehicle can carry up to 16 passengers, including space for two wheelchair users.

The volunteer-run Muncaster Microbus has operated for 30

years, providing door-to-door transport, including regular shopping trips. The new vehicle ensures the continued delivery of this essential service, which many passengers rely on as a vital transport lifeline.

ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT GOES ELECTRIC

Beeline Community Transport & Wellbeing Hub, based in Moray, Scotland, has added a new electric Ford E-Transit minibus, converted by GM Coachwork, to its fleet. This was made possible through the Plugged-in Communities programme and supported by the Energy Saving Trust

Fitted with a passenger lift for two wheelchair users, the vehicle breaks down transport barriers for people with disabilities and limited mobility. It will connect riders to essential services, social activities, and health-promoting opportunities across Moray.



RIISING FUEL COSTS PUT SERVICES UNDER STRAIN

A Shropshire community transport service may face cutbacks if fuel prices continue to rise. The Mayfair Community Centre's Ring and Ride scheme supports around 300 people and delivers up to 13,000 journeys a year, providing essential access to medical and social appointments.

Fuel costs have increased significantly, putting pressure on already tight budgets and depleting reserves. While operators are keen to avoid raising fares or reducing services, they warn that scaling back may become necessary if costs remain high, despite hopes that prices will stabilise.



community transport association
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Get in touch today. GM have been building minibuses for community transport groups since 1988.

Give us a ring about your next minibus

Lee Jones

Business Development Manager
lee.jones@gmminibus.co.uk
Call 07894133217

Richard Betts

Business Development Manager
richard.betts@gmcoachwork.co.uk
Call 07483 604728

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NEW PEACEPLUS BUS LAUNCHED

A new community minibus has been delivered to the Greater Shantallow Area Partnership as part of the PeacePlus-funded Skeoge United programme. Supporting peacebuilding and community cohesion in the Skeoge area of Derry, the initiative delivers cultural activities, wellbeing support and family programmes while strengthening connections across the city and neighbouring communities.

