



Annual Report

The Friendly Transport Service (Shropshire)

**2021
- 2022**



Contents

Page 2	Foreword by our Chair, Allison Richards
Page 3	About us
Page 4	Our Core Services
Page 5	Good Neighbour
Page 6	Shifnal Shuttle
Page 7	Out and about together
Page 8	Addressing the side effects of the pandemic
Page 9	School Contracts
Page 10	Groups and journey statistics
Page 11	Fundraising
Page 12	Financial Report
Page 13	Looking forwards....(our aims for the next financial year)

Foreword from our Chair, Allison Richards

After the extremely challenging times we faced during the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdowns, the Friendly Bus team started the financial year 2021/2022 with hope on the horizon. In March, the schools re-opened and the 'Stay at home' order ended. During the following months, most of the constraints imposed by the government were gradually relaxed.

The focus for us was clearly to resume all our usual activities, including operating the Schools' contracts, minibus trips and the community car scheme, but we felt that we had to do more. Many of our members had lost both their confidence and their mobility during the periods of enforced isolation. We decided to try and help them to address these issues with our 'Socially Active Project'.

This was primarily financed by a substantial grant awarded to the Friendly Bus by the Postcode Community Trust. A three-pronged approach was devised to create opportunities for our members to meet, socialise and have some stimulation away from their own homes:

1. Swimming - exclusive use of the local pool every week for an hour
2. Outings - initially to open-air locations, such as parks and garden centres
3. Befriending - including accompanied walks

The take-up of these activities was encouraging and the feedback very positive. I would like to thank all in the Friendly Bus team; staff, volunteers, donors and trustees for once again identifying a need in the community and offering our members a superb service in response.

This year we celebrate the 20th Anniversary of The Friendly Bus and can reflect on the organisation's progress. We are also marking the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and this brings to mind the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service that was presented to us. The citation explained that the service is:

"a key weapon in defeating the risks and effects of social exclusion in the remote southeast of Shropshire ... an 'exemplar' organisation, citing ... its 'power to change communities'.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to ensure that this continues to be the case.

About us

The Friendly Bus is a registered charity "The Friendly Transport Service" (1131707), supporting our communities in Broseley, Much Wenlock and Shifnal (and their surrounding areas).

Trustees

Christopher White
Allison Richards
David Marriott
Margaret Dutton
Elizabeth Mars
Janet Robinson
Nigel Porter
Sue Cotton
Terena Hutchings

Office Staff

Marie Monk-Hawksworth (CEO)
Julie Brazier (Operations Manager)
Caroline Nicholls (Training & Transport Manager)
Laura Cooper (Communications Manager)

Paid drivers / Passenger assistant

Rob Aston (driver)
Nachhattar Singh Thiara (driver)
Graham Sockett (driver)
Gareth Millington (driver)
Helen Gough (SEN Passenger Assistant)

Volunteers

We currently have 41 in Broseley, 18 in Much Wenlock and 8 in Shifnal.

Most of these are drivers and passenger assistants but some are fundraising or good neighbour



Throughout the covid-19 pandemic, we continued to meet the needs of our members to get to their medical appointments including nearly 150 journeys for covid-19 vaccinations.

Getting people out and about to combat loneliness remains our top priority for one of the 2 key 'at risk' groups identified by Social Prescribing data. Transport is essential, and for those who cannot drive, public transport or taxis are their alternatives. However, when these aren't available or cannot be accessed, the individual is isolated and often does not fulfil basic human needs.

As the lockdown restrictions began to relax at the start of the 2021-2022 financial year and members had received their double covid vaccinations, we were gradually able to resume our remaining core services. After our members were unable to leave home for so long, all

our trips (weekly shopping trips and outings) were in high demand with multiple buses often being needed.



**Our
volunteers
are not
just**

drivers. They're the first face our member may have seen in over a week, the first person they've spoken to, they provide mental support and a holding hand to a worrying appointment.

(Key elements of the Prevention Agenda).

Out and about together

We have the following vehicles in our Fleet:

- 7-seat car
- 8-seat minibus
- 11-seat minibus
- 15-seat minibus
- 16-seat minibus
- 16-seat minibus on long-term loan for Shifnal Shuttle use.

Sadly the Renault minibus has had to be scrapped, so we bought a new 8 seat minibus in to replace it.

We continue to provide transport for our members to a wide range of activities:



Good neighbour

Weekly Shopping Trips

- Telford retail parks and town centre.
- Shrewsbury Meole Brace (now including Percy Throwers to keep up with demand to go there!)
- Markets such as Bilston, Ludlow and Penkridge.
- Much Wenlock High Street.

Regular Clubs:

- Cinema Club.
- "Move it or lose it" fitness class.
- Bingo at Broseley Social Club.
- Jackfield Monday Club.
- Let's Get Together.
- Lunch Club at The Fox in Much Wenlock.
- Lady Forrester's Day Care Centre.

Outings/Leisure trips

At least 3 each month and at least one funded if possible.

As a community transport charity, helping to meet the transport needs of our members will always remain our core priority. However, before the pandemic, other needs had been identified.

Having piloted elements of a Good Neighbour Scheme during the pandemic, we officially launched additional services to help our members, in July 2022.

Introducing our new Good Neighbour Scheme!

We have new services. As well as taking you to your medical appointment by car, here's a useful summary of all the ways we can now help you.



Regular bus trips to local retail parks and Supermarkets.



Leisure trips to garden centres, parks, seaside towns etc.



Dial-a-ride to your local high street, visit the hairdressers, meet a friend etc.



Shopping and prescription collections if you're unable to leave your home.



Supported walks to rebuild your mobility and confidence.



Collect/return your library books if you're unable to get out.



Help keep you safe - replace smoke detector batteries and lightbulbs.



Clean windows inside, light gardening duties (mowing, pruning), etc.



Regular phone calls or face to face visits from a matched volunteer to chat and check how you are.



Transport to social groups including the Broseley Cinema Club.



Shifnal Shuttle

Having hired a minibus in preparation of this new service, it remained unused when the pandemic hit. This was relaunched during the 2021/2022 tax year with new artwork and in partnership with Shifnal Town Council.

The project has recently recruited four new volunteers, who are currently being trained so that we can start providing this new service to the residents of Shifnal and surrounding areas.

Shifnal Shuttle
Local transport service, supporting our community
Call 01952 881145
In partnership with Shifnal Town Council
Managed by The Friendly Bus

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED NOW!

New local transport service supporting our community
in Shifnal Town Centre and surrounding areas

"The new service is great! I don't have a car but live remotely. I can now take my toddler to a playgroup, get to the GP surgery and cinema. My elderly parents can be more independent too. They can now shop for themselves at the supermarket and meet their friends for a coffee and chat in the High Street!"

Shifnal Shuttle
Call Friendly Bus on 01952 881145 between 9am and 1pm Monday to Friday
In partnership with Shifnal Town Council
Managed by the Friendly Bus
Registered charity 133707

Volunteers needed!

Who is the service for?
We're here to help everyone in the Shifnal Community who can't access public transport.

"Being a volunteer driver is fun, sociable and helps to keep me active since I retired. I find it so rewarding and love meeting everyone!"

Do you have a driving licence, friendly nature and some free time now and then?

Call Friendly Bus on 01952 881145 between 9am and 1pm Monday to Friday.

MIDAS Driver training, DBS check and supportive team provided.

16 seat minibus
Accessible to everyone

Accessibility lift - Grab handles
Seat belts - Regular safety checks

Supporting local community groups....
We can help schools and other organisations bring members to meetings, events and trips!

How do I join?
Simply call Friendly Bus on 01952 881145 between 9am and 1pm, Monday to Friday.
Friendly Bus are managing the Shifnal Shuttle, in partnership with Shifnal Town Council.

Addressing side effects from the pandemic

We recognised the side effects of the pandemic on our members which included loneliness, isolation, reduced mobility and reduced quality of life. We successfully applied for funding from The Postcode Community Trust, a grant-giving charity funded entirely by players of the People's Postcode Lottery. Our Socially Active grant of £5,860 was awarded to meet the following objectives:

- Help our vulnerable or elderly users regain their mobility that has deteriorated during lockdown and or improve their physical health; plus
- Provide much needed opportunities for social interaction and support.

This funding has enabled us to include at least one free trip each month to make us accessible to everyone, and subsidised other trips such as visiting the seaside!

Supported by players of



Awarded funds from

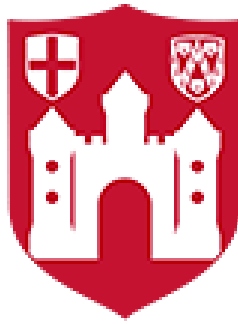


We've also provided weekly swimming sessions for members to have exclusive use of the pool and free transport, funded by the grant.

School Contracts

We continued to meet our school contract obligations with Shropshire Council throughout the pandemic to provide journeys to/from:

- Wightwick Hall School
- Bridgnorth Endowed School
- Oldbury Wells School



Groups

Groups journeys have increased throughout the year as lockdown restrictions ease. The majority of Group journeys have been for local schools on day trips.

Journey statistics

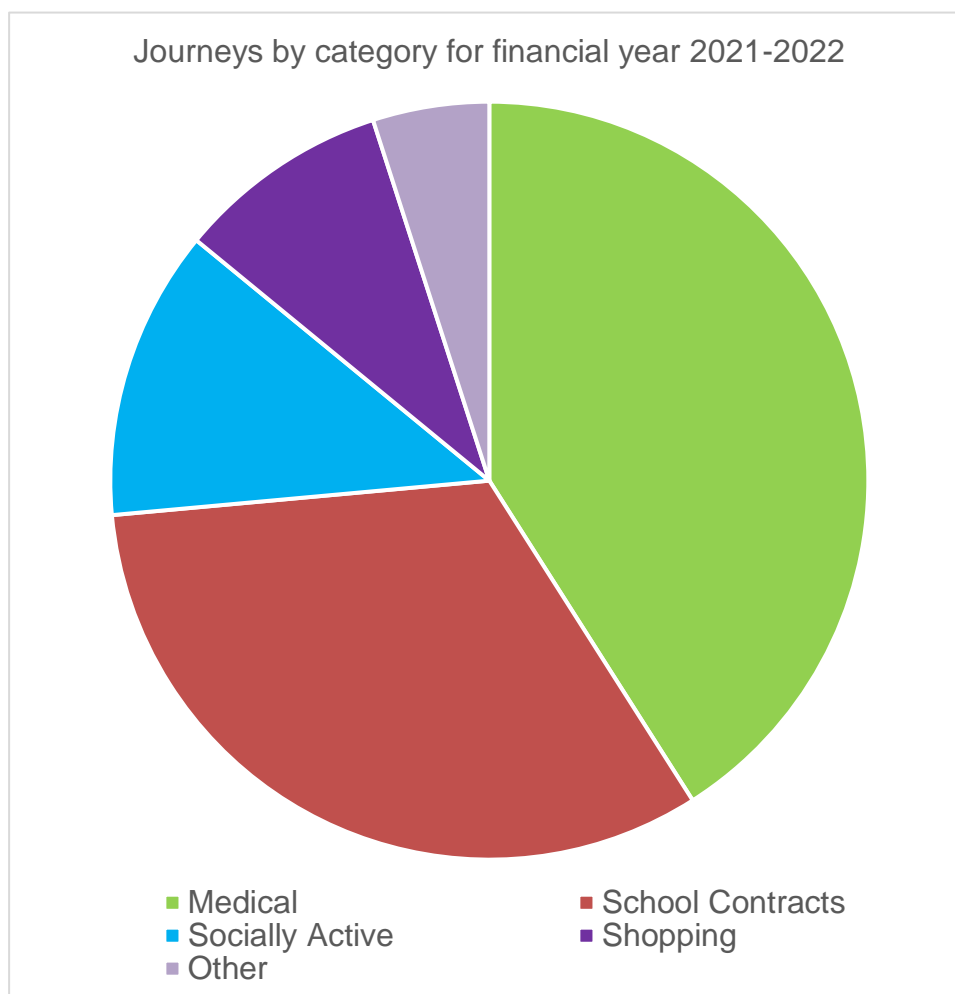
1,568 (41%) journeys were medical related.

1,246 (33%) journeys were school contracts.

474 (12%) journeys were related to our Socially Active project (including exercise classes and trips).

348 (9%) journeys were for shopping.

190 (5%) journeys came under the 'other' heading (including funerals, polling station, personal business etc.).



Fundraising

A big thank you to our dedicated fundraisers who tirelessly support us. As well as raising money they also help to raise our profile around the towns.

We have a regular stall at Much Wenlock Market on the first Friday of every month. A big thank you to Blandine, Carol, Ann and Marion who help with this. We have raffle tickets for our monthly hamper available along with homemade cards and crafts made by the kind Una.



Our members have been very generous this year, supporting us throughout covid and when our minibus was vandalised. In total we have received £5,353 this year. Thank you to everyone who has supported us!

Financial Report from our Treasurer, Margaret Dutton

Another strange year but one where we could see the light at the end of the tunnel. Our main income was from the school contracts which enable us to carry out our core activities.

We also received funding from Shropshire Council for both Broseley and Shifnal, Furlough payments from the Government, Lost Fares Grants, a grant from Broseley Town Council and the Millichope Foundation.

We raised additional income from delivering Midas Training to other organisations and thanks go to Caroline for all her hard work organising and delivering the training.

We received £5,353 in donations this year. We had very generous donations from passengers and volunteer drivers to whom we are very grateful.

We were also able to start fund raising again and we raised £744 from raffles at the Pop-up Markets, Broseley Lights Switch on, Much Wenlock Christmas Fayre and the sale of cards made by one of our volunteers. Thanks go to everyone involved in these events.

As our activities started to return to normal so our costs increased. Our biggest expenditure as always was on staffing and vehicle running costs.

We made an operating profit of £17,085. However, we did have capital expenditure as we bought two minibuses, one to replace our old minibus which was vandalised and one for the Shifnal Project.

Outside of our normal activities, we were involved in the bid for a grant from Shropshire County Council which funded Broseley Bounces Back which in turn was used to run the Pop-Up Markets. The Friendly Bus were paid to administer the markets and Marie and Laura put in a lot of effort to make them a success.

We were also involved in organising the Welcome Back Party which was enjoyed by many of our members. This was funded by Broseley Town Council.

I am pleased to report that we have ended the year in a healthy financial position.

Income and Expenditure Accounts to 1st March 2022

Income		2022		2021	
Grants					

	Shropshire Council	38932		49842	
	Other Grants	23490		35713	
	Other income	7480			
Service	Shropshire Community Cars	3701		3009	
	Friendly Bus Fares	119872		92104	
	Subscriptions	2490		960	
	Donations to Service	5353		5348	
Fund raising		744		91	
Bank Interest		24		188	
	Total Incoming Resources	202086		187255	

Expenditure		2022		2021	
Employment	Wages, tax , NI, Payroll	114202		105227	
Expenses	Shropshire Community Cars	2134		3127	
	Volunteer Costs	763		465	
Shifnal	Vehicle Hire	216		6653	
Vehicles		35946		26838	
Office	Rent Rates and Service Charge	3600		3600	
	Insurance	1149		1355	
	Repairs and Maintenance	49		155	
Admin	Printing Postage and Stationery	2238		1702	
	Telephone and Internet	2238		1422	
	Fixtures and Fittings			1194	
General	Catering and Room Hire	482		74	
	Fees and Subscriptions	120		156	
	Accountancy Fees	855		822	
	Fund Raising Expenses	115		215	
	General Expenses	196		143	
	Other	4622		2213	
	Depreciation	16076		5165	
	Disposal of assets				
	Total Resources Expended	185001		160526	
	Difference between income and expenditure	17085		26728	
	Total funds brought forward	118115		91387	
	Total funds carried forward	135200		118115	
	Current assets	103,826		510119	

A copy of the financial statements for the year ended 1st March 2022, as prepared by our accountants for Companies House is available to any member who requests it. The accounts presented above are a simplified version of these accounts which highlight information likely to be of interest to members.

Looking Forward

Throughout the last financial year, we've recruited 35 new members (i.e. people that

have never been a member before). From 1 January 2022 to June 2022 we've received a 15% increase in the number of new members finding and joining Friendly Bus.

Our aims for the next financial year will therefore focus on:

- Meeting the increased demand for all our services.
- Obtaining sufficient funding to continue ensuring our services are accessible to everyone, including our Socially Active project.

We're also applying for funding to help us reach people who don't currently use our services but would benefit from them. If successful, this project will focus on reaching out to....

- Anyone with long-term health conditions or disabilities, regardless of their age.
- Men who are often reluctant to ask for help despite struggling with loneliness.

As always, to achieve any of this we rely on us recruiting and retaining our wonderful volunteers.