



Impact **REPORT**



2022-2023

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NOTE FROM OUR CHAIR

Winston Churchill said:

'It is wonderful what great strides can be made when there is a resolute purpose behind them.'

This report demonstrates what great strides have been made by The Friendly Bus organisation over the last twelve months. Following the previous years of lockdown, it would have been challenge enough to restore our services back to pre-pandemic levels. It is clear from the following pages that we have gone further and now offer even more, to more people, in more areas.

Our aim is to support our communities with a wide array of services, all underpinned by providing community transport. Through this, we also hope to reduce loneliness and isolation. To quote, "It's so much more than taking people from A to B".

Of course, it is about helping members with essential journeys such as medical appointments and shopping trips. More than that though, it is also about enabling our passengers to get out and about and foster social connections. We can take them to visit friends and relatives, to an exercise class or swimming session. They might make new friends during a day out on a 'social trip' to the coast, a bustling market or a retail outlet.



There is only one good way to find out if what you are offering is what is needed and wanted - that is to ask your clients. We did this at the beginning of 2023 and are using the feedback to shape our plans. Two-thirds of our members use our services weekly or monthly and nearly half said that they would not be able to receive the support they need without us.

Speaking as a community car driver, I can echo the sentiments expressed by my fellow volunteers - I love meeting members and being able to make a difference.

It is often said that without volunteers, The Friendly Bus would not be able to do what we do. That is true and the support from Shropshire Council, donors and the Board of Trustees is also key. However, none of this would be possible without such a dedicated, willing and capable team of employees, so thank you for your hard work, and for the good humour along the way.

Alison

INTRODUCTION

"The 2011 census showed that Shropshire has a higher percentage of over 65 year olds than the national average. Conversely the rate of under 25 year olds is lower than average."(Shropshire Council)

Our aims

We're a registered charity 'The Friendly Transport Service' (1131707), supporting our communities in Broseley, Much Wenlock, Shifnal and surrounding areas.

Our aims are to help:

- reduce loneliness and isolation in our communities for those that are elderly, vulnerable, isolated or have disabilities by providing community transport; and
- support our communities by providing 'Good Neighbour help' such as the collection of prescriptions, shopping and library books, a befriending service and help staying safe in the home.

This enables people to retain their independence, autonomy and provides social opportunities and enrichment.

Our services

- Regular minibus trips to local retail parks, supermarkets, home stores and markets.
- Community car journeys that prioritise getting people to their medical appointments.
- Social trips to tourist attractions, garden centres, seaside towns and places of interest.
- Transport to local social groups and fitness classes.
- Shopping, prescription and library book collections.
- Light bulb and smoke detector battery changes.
- Light gardening help such as mowing and pruning.
- Internal window cleaning.
- Regular phone calls or face-to-face visits from a matched volunteer to chat as part of our befriending service.

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT...

...IT'S SO MUCH MORE THAN TAKING PEOPLE FROM A TO B.



OUR COMMITTEE

CHAIR



Alison Richards

TREASURER



Margaret Dutton

CEO



Marie Monk-Hawksworth

SECRETARY



Liz Mars



Nigel Porter



Dave Marriot



Sue Cotton



Heather Armstrong

TRUSTEES

OUR OFFICE TEAM



Marie



Julie



Laura



Ian



Caroline

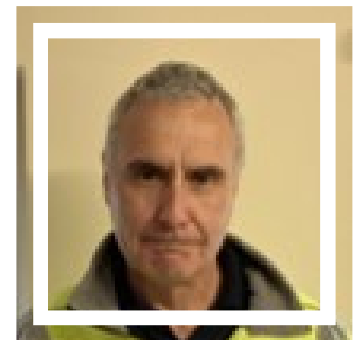
School contracts

Providing school transport helps to support our other operations.

For the academic year September 2021 to July 2022 we were awarded three contracts from Shropshire Council's Passenger Transport Group. This was to transport children to and from Bridgnorth Endowed School, Oldbury Wells School and Wightwick Manor School.

From September 2022 we were no longer contracted for Oldbury Wells School but gained additional routes for Bridghnorth Endowed School and retained the Wightwick Hall School contract.

Our contracted school drivers are pictured to the right. Our pool of relief drivers also provide ad-hoc cover to ensure continued provision.



COMMUNITY CAR JOURNEYS

TOTAL
2,322

At a Glance



Medical

1,698



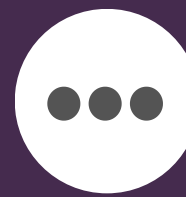
Exercise
& Welfare

402



Good
Neighbour

132



Other

90

Top three journey types in each category



842

Hospital

584

Doctors

130

Dentist



160

Visit friends &
family (care home,
hospital etc)

126

Exercise

116

Mental
wellbeing



56

Food
delivery

44

Prescription
collection

28

Shopping



44

Personal business
(banking,
solicitors etc)

26

Hairdressers

10

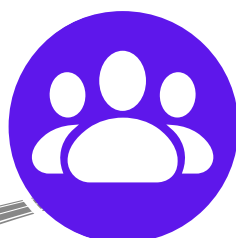
Funeral

Data collected from 1
March 2022 to 28
February 2023

MINIBUS JOURNEYS

1,256

All members that provided us with their feedback, confirmed they felt **safe** on our trips and **supported** getting on/off the minibus.



406

Groups & school trip
bookings



410

Shopping trips

Feedback consistently showed the trips most favoured are to outdoor venues, in particular markets, the seaside and garden centres.

Most found the destinations accessible but seating for a rest remains a priority, which we'll continue to consider when planning future trips.

280

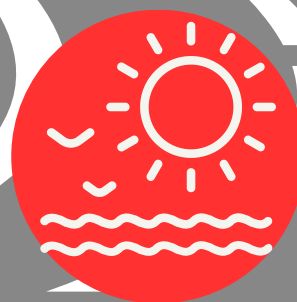
Clubs & exercises classes



The feedback suggested some (albeit relatively small) demand for shorter trips.

There are a number of reasons this was mentioned such as our member being a carer for a loved one at home, having a dog they can't leave for long or needing to take medication.

We'll take this into consideration when planning future trips and promote them as being shorter.



160

Social trips



39 of our 80 Social Trips were free using
funding as a Co-op Local Community Cause

Some of the places **we visited last year....**

SHOPPING

Lidl, Aldi, M&S Food Hall, Sainsbury's, Tesco, Asda, Morrisons, Poundstretcher, Ikea, The Range, Telford Town Centre, Meole Brace Retail Park, Wrekin Retail Park, Forge Retail Park, Boundary Outlet, Penkridge Market, Bilston Market, Ludlow & market, Much Wenlock High Street, Madeley shops.

SOCIAL TRIPS

Barmouth seaside, Cavalier Centre, Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway, Bridgnorth Garden Centre, National Memorial Arboretum, MAWS Craft Centre, RAF Museum Cosford, Percy Thrower's Garden Centre, Cuan Wildlife Rescue Open Day, Little Wytheford Farm - sunflowers, Dobbies Garden Centre, Shropshire Hills, The Albrighton Trust Moat & Gardens, David Austin Roses, Llandudno seaside.



About our members

81%

of service users said
Friendly Bus enhances
their wellbeing.

813

Passengers on our system
(minibus & community car users)

48

New members (have never been
a Friendly Bus member before)



95% told us they wouldn't be able to receive the same level of support without us, or that they would struggle.

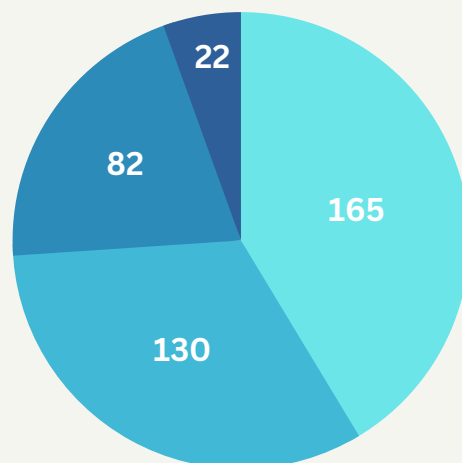


Nobody rated our services negatively.

98.5% rated our services as **Good** or **Very Good**. 1.5% rated them as **OK**.

MOBILITY AIDS

- Walking stick
- Walker/rollator
- Wheelchair
- Other (eg blind, assistant dog etc.)



Over 65% use our services at least monthly - the majority use us weekly.

The cost of our services does not seem to be a barrier to the 13% of members that don't use them.

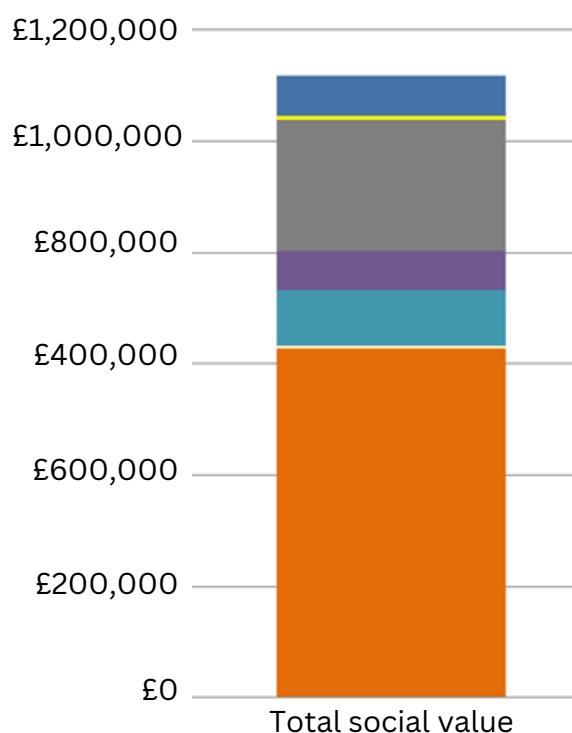
100% of our respondents rated our services as '**very reasonable**' or '**just right**'. Funding helps us to subsidise our services to "cushion" price increases (e.g. fuel hikes).

"We don't currently use you but want to support you because you're a vital service to older people who don't drive."

"We don't need to use your services just yet...we just like to know you're there in case we do."

OUR SOCIAL IMPACT

"Social Value refers to the wider financial and nonfinancial value created by an organisation through its day to day activities in terms of the wellbeing of individuals and communities, social capital created and the environment." Local Government Association



Our total social value £1,117,316

- **£71,124** Increased independent living
- **£8,484** Reduced direct healthcare costs
- **£234,168** Primary "social" trip, leisure, sport, education, shopping, health and other trips
- **£70,932** Increased affordability of trips for voluntary/community groups
- **£99,767** Increased volunteering
- **£5,088** Improved skills of staff and volunteers
- **£627,754** Reduced indirect healthcare costs

Outcomes	How we meet the outcome	Value £
Increased independent living	Shopping trips	71,124.16
Reduced direct healthcare costs	Hospital and non-hospital health trips	8,483.84
Increased social interaction	Social trips, leisure & sport, education, shopping, health and other trips	234,168.00
Increased affordability of trips for voluntary / community groups	Total affordable group trips	70,931.60
Increased volunteering	Operations, office, senior management & governance.	99,766.57
Improved skills of staff and volunteers	MiDAS standard, aaccessible, PATS, first aid	5,088.00
Reduced indirect healthcare costs	All trips	627,753.60

Proud to make a difference

QUOTES FROM OUR MEMBERS...

"Just thank you. Without Friendly Bus my world would be a lot smaller."

"It's not just the Friendly Bus vehicles that give us joy, it's the wonderful support and service that's given to us all. Thank you"

"I just want to thank you all, for you what you do. I love using the Friendly Bus. I feel lucky to be a member, I really do."

"I don't know what I'd do without you, as I don't drive any more due to injuries. Everyone is so kind and friendly. I love the trips out and don't have to depend on family taking me out."

"I came to live in Broseley in 1985 but I did not know many people until I gave up driving and came on the Friendly Bus."

"The drivers are a Godsend for me. You all are wonderful - the office too."

"A very good service. All volunteers and staff - I thank you for running this wonderful service. It's a wonderful part of my life."

"Your drivers are really good and very helpful. They always help me into the car."

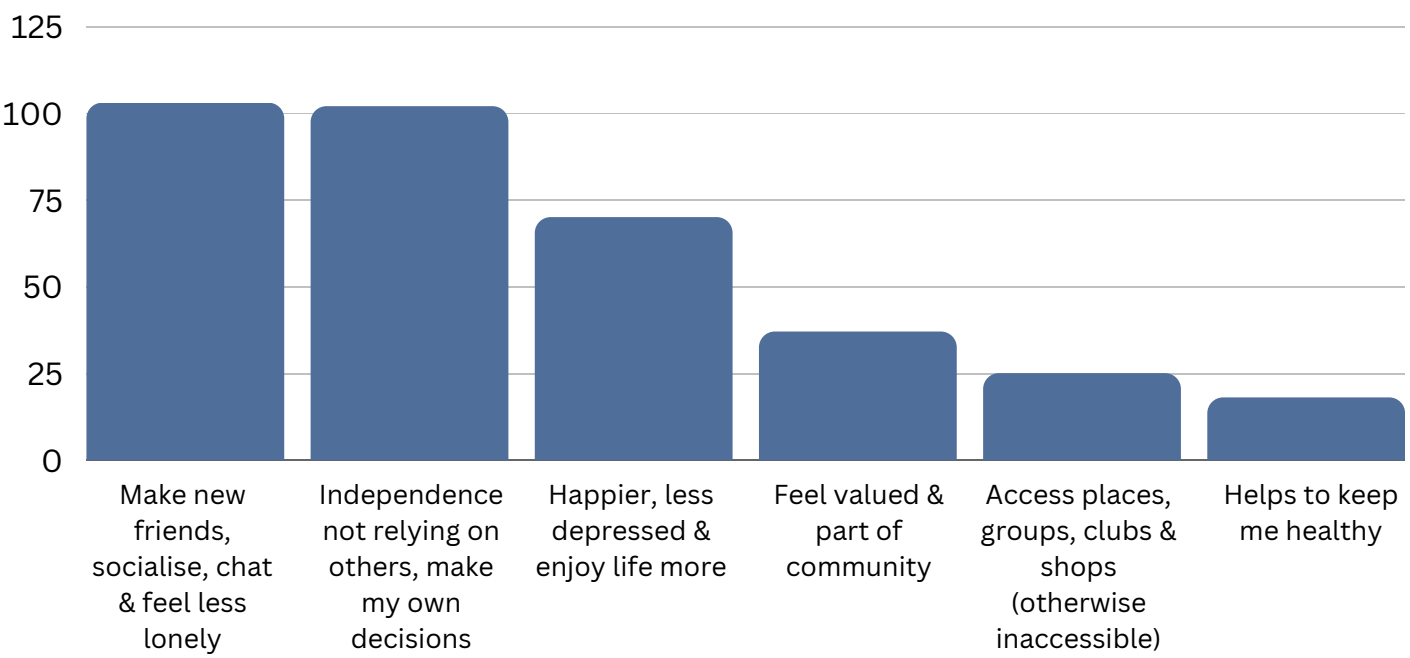
"I'm still in my first year of membership but I've already extended my circle of friends in Broseley."

"You make us feel very cared for and well supported."

"You mean everything to me."

"You are the lifeline to the world outside my home"

WHAT FRIENDLY BUS MEANS TO OUR MEMBERS



Keeping in touch...



8,007

phone calls
(approx. 160 per
week)



1,526

newsletters sent
to members



627

Facebook
followers

Facebook page followers by gender, age and location

B

42.4% follow from
Broseley

T

24.20% follow from
Telford

MW

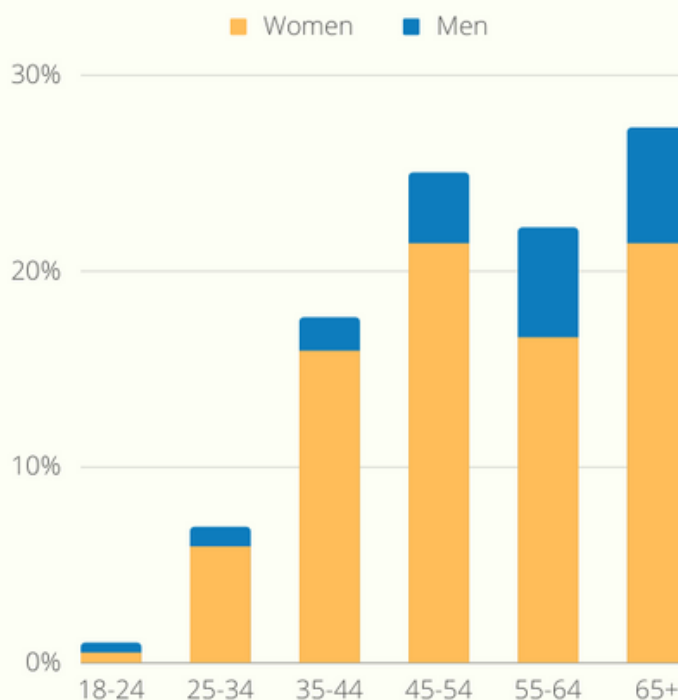
4.90% follow from
Much Wenlock

B

4.80% follow from
Bridgnorth

S

4.80% follow from
Shrewsbury



Average post reach 2,528 individuals. Average post engagement is 501 individuals.



SHIFNAL
SHROPSHIRE

In September 2022 we began managing the Shifnal Shuttle, in partnership with Shifnal Town Council.



Shifnal Shuttle

The first launch of the Shifnal Shuttle in 2019/2020 was halted by the covid-19 pandemic. In 2022 the Friendly Bus purchased a (Peugeot) minibus for the project which has a lift at the rear and can accommodate wheelchairs - making it accessible to everyone regardless of their mobility.



The shuttle is available to anyone without access to transport in Shifnal and surrounding areas. The service is still relatively new but continues to grow by number of members and volunteers.

Every Tuesday the service goes to Telford (retail parks, shopping centre, supermarkets etc). Every other Friday the service goes to Shifnal High Street and on alternating weeks we vary the destination to places such as Newport, Wellington Market, Madeley etc.

FROM SEPTEMBER 2022 TO 28 FEBRUARY 2023....



55

Members



3

Volunteers



33

**Trips
(for 163
passengers)**



1,279

**followers
(87% female)**

OUR VOLUNTEERS

"WITHOUT THEM, WE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO DO WHAT WE DO"

"I Just love volunteering.

It helps to keep me busy, otherwise I start to get lonely. I love meeting the members and chatting to them and I can see what a difference it makes to have my support when they're feeling anxious on our way to an appointment."

Community
car driver

9,667 hours given
by our volunteers
over the year -
almost **200** hours
each week.



93 Volunteers in total



Volunteer activity	Hours
Community car drivers	4,748
Social trips	2,992
Group bookings	1,624
Newsletter team	125
Fundraising team	178

Some of our volunteers also help at events to raise awareness of us and fundraise.



"Volunteering provides a unique opportunity to hear the stories of people I would otherwise never get to meet. Hilarious, tragic, mundane and fantastical tales waft over me from the back seats as we pootle along.

Driving the minibus often feels more like driving a time machine!

Minibus driver

Some of our volunteers



Keeping our fleet on the road



KDZ 16 Seater Peugeot



BCE 15 Seater Mercedes



OBC 11 Seater Peugeot



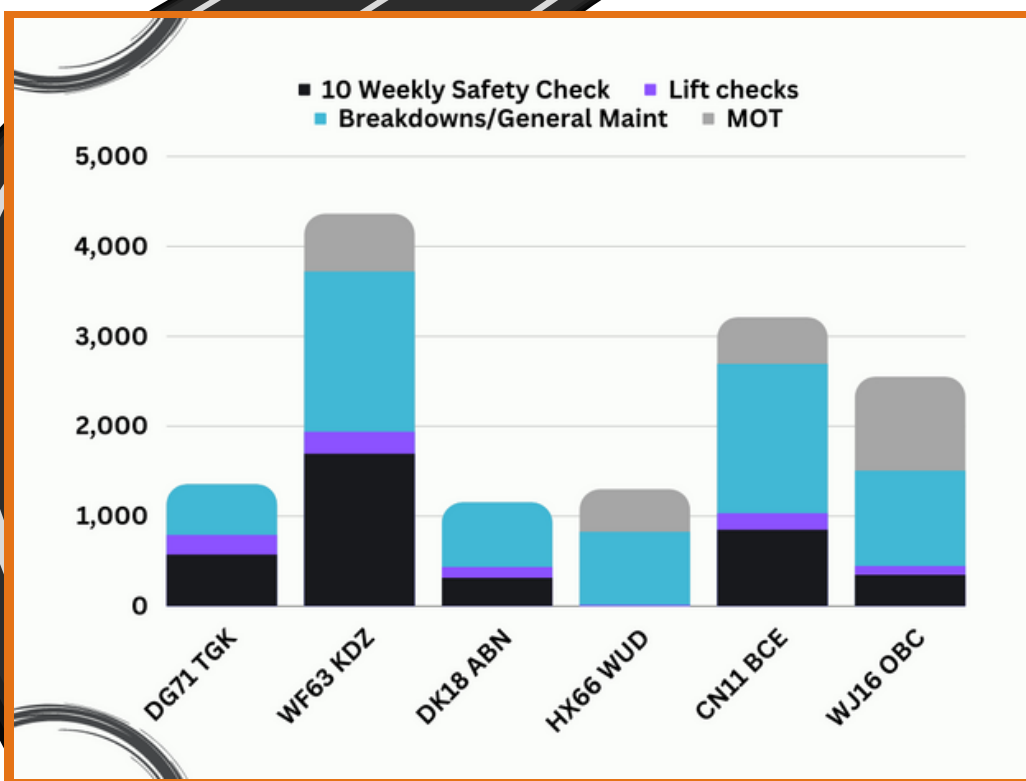
TGK 8 Seater Peugeot



WUD 7 Seater Ford Galaxy



ABN 16 Seater Peugeot
(Shifnal Shuttle)



VEHICLE MAINTENANCE COSTS

Totals spent

- £3,764: 10-week safety checks
- £867: Lift checks
- £6,579: Breakdowns & general maintenance
- £2,669: MOTs

Total cost to keep all vehicles on the road: £12,733*

*Excluding road tax and insurance

MINIBUS DRIVER AWARENESS TRAINING



STANDARD

12 Trainees



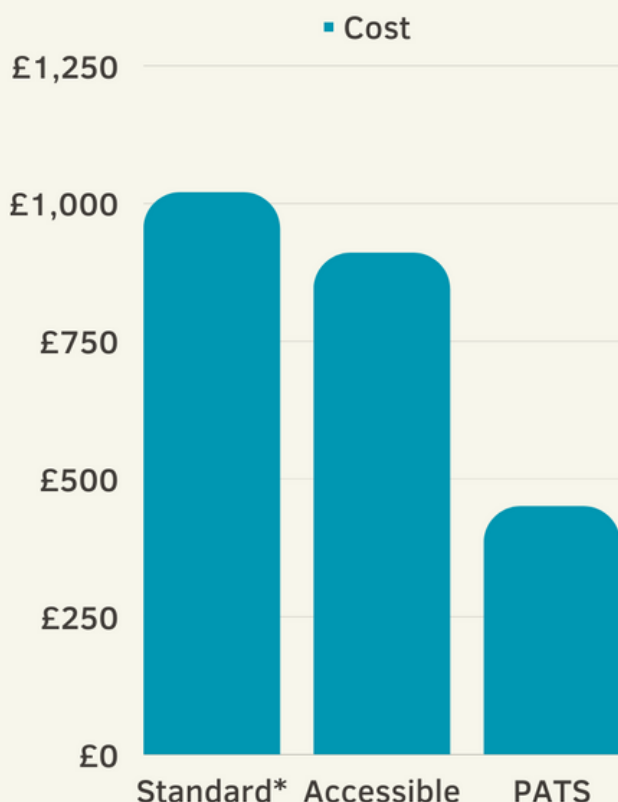
ACCESSIBLE

10 Trainees



PASSENGER ASSISTANCE

7 Trainees



*£1,020 saved by training internally

As a registered training agent for the Community Transport Association's (CTA) MiDAS Scheme, we're able to train our volunteers in-house.

This saves us money and also enables us to generate a small amount of income by providing training for other community transport organisations and local taxi companies.

Income & savings

£1,020

Savings - driver training

£910

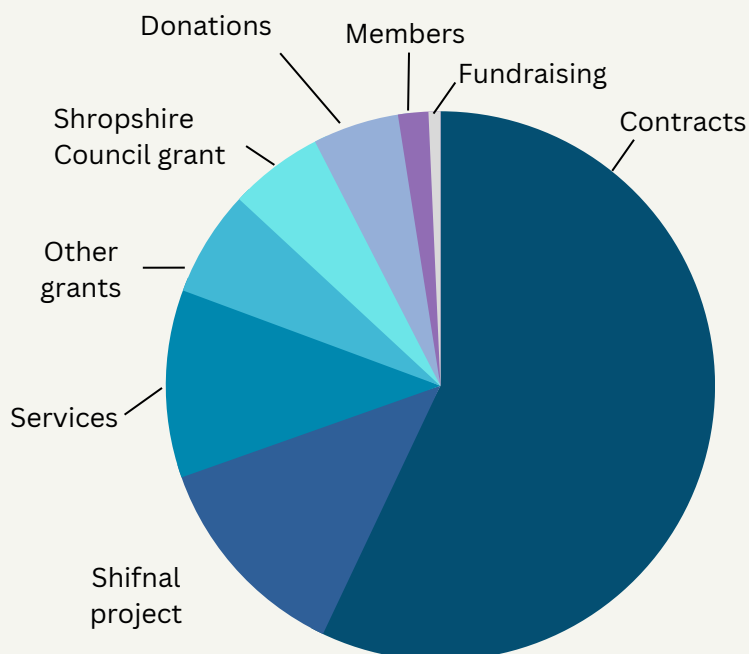
Wheelchair training income

£450

Passenger Assistance income

INCOME & EXPENDITURE

We've seen a new trend emerge in 2023, with members requesting donations in lieu of birthday gifts or holding a birthday raffle at their party. This continues to boost our donations pot - thank you to everyone who has chosen to do this for us!

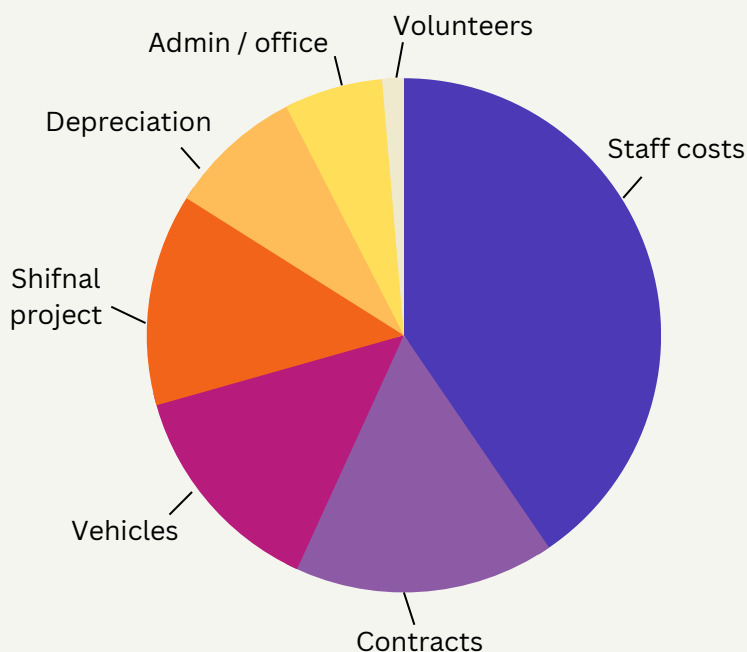


INCOME

The majority of our income comes from the home to school contracts we're awarded from Shropshire Council. However, with so many private sector companies now also bidding for these it's becoming increasingly harder to compete and the social value of our services is not being taken into consideration.

EXPENDITURE

As with most organisations, the biggest cost is for staff, however without our dedicated and fully trained team we could not support our users as we do.



GRANTS

Total of £5,488
- 26% less than last year...

£500

Barchester - to buy a new wheelchair

£2,903.64

Co-op - to subsidise trips (ensuring they're accessible for everyone)

£2,000

Millichope - to support the delivery of our service

£84.38

Amazon Smile (this scheme has now ended)

Income & Expenditure Accounts

28 February 2022 to 1 March 2023

Income		2023 (£)	2022 (£)
Grants	Shropshire Council	38,932	38,932
	Other Grants	14,061	23,490
	Other income	4,572	7,480
Service	Shropshire Community Cars	4,180	3,701
	Friendly Bus Fares	141,605	119,872
	Subscriptions	3,615	2,490
	Donations to Service	7,316	5,353
Other	Fund raising	1,025	744
	Bank Interest	286	24
Total Incoming Resources		216,502	202,086

Expenditure		2023 (£)	2022 (£)
Employment	Wages, tax, NI, Payroll	123,580	114,202
Expenses	Shropshire Community Cars	3,584	2,134
	Volunteer Costs	777	763
Shifnal	Vehicle Hire		216
Vehicles	Vehicles	43,965	35,946
Office	Rent Rates and Service Charge	4,350	3,600
	Insurance	1,465	1,149
	Repairs and Maintenance	456	49
Admin	Printing Postage and Stationery	3,010	2,238
	Telephone and Internet	2,799	2,238
	Fixtures and Fittings		
General	Catering and Room Hire	861	482
	Fees and Subscriptions	505	120
	Accountancy Fees	900	855
	Fund Raising Expenses	103	115
	General Expenses	1,488	196
	Other	328	4,622
	Depreciation	16,520	16,076
	Disposal of assets		
Total Resources Expended		205,248	185,001
Difference between income and expenditure		11,254	17,085
Total funds brought forward		137,069	118,115
Total funds carried forward		148,323	135,200
Current assets		115,281	103,826

A copy of the financial statements for the year ended 1st March 2023, as prepared by our accountants for Companies House is available upon request. The accounts presented above are a simplified version of these accounts which highlight information likely to be of interest to members.

Key points from 2022-2023 and looking forward to 2023-2024...

As this Annual Report shows, Community Transport (CT) is so much more than travel from A to B.

Our recent survey has shown that many of our users see our services as a '**lifeline**' and through getting out and about with us they '**can live better lives**'. CT enables older people to remain independent and engaged in society, removing barriers that would otherwise exist. As a result, people are more able to continue their normal lives; maintaining social links, addressing their personal needs and accessing relevant services. Importantly, we provide unique services which are not filled by traditional operators in the public or private sectors.

Our users often require additional support in leaving their home and accessing the services they require. CT facilitates this in a cost-effective manner, enabling a wider range of people to get about. Vehicles are specially adapted. Dedicated staff and volunteers are trained to meet our users' accessibility, safeguarding and safety needs. Making vulnerable people feel comfortable and confident travelling are key objectives for community transport.



This year has seen demand for our services return to pre-covid levels and beyond. In order to meet this growing demand of lonely and isolated people and an increasing need to address this issue from a public finances perspective, prevention and early intervention must be the key priority. Friendly Bus, and other CT groups, are building a track record of addressing both the causes and consequences of loneliness and isolation and can play a leading role in tackling the social and economic costs.

Indeed, studies suggest that over a third of the cost of the health and social care costs could be mitigated.

The Shropshire CT Consortium has commissioned consultants to produce an Impact Report which clearly demonstrates how the activities of CT in Shropshire support the objectives of the Shropshire Plan 2022/25, the Integrated Care Strategy 2023 and emerging Integrated Care Plan. Two versions of the Impact Report will be produced, one focused on the County Council objectives (transport, economic growth, net zero and inclusion) and the other focussed on the objectives of NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin (Health, Social Care and Inclusion). It will also take account of the emerging Local Transport Plan 4 and any other relevant Council policies or plans.



These reports will help to ensure that relevant public sector bodies have a greater understanding of what we do and also help steer our services towards the outcomes and health benefits identified by these statutory funding bodies where they also meet the needs of our own users.

In addition, the data gathered will also be utilised to inform a consortium bid to the **Motability Grant fund**. This will be for the provision of replacement vehicles, running costs and training for Volunteers.

We have also been liaising with the Community Transport Association (CTA) which is the national body representing CT. We have assisted in ongoing research into CT's role in providing Home to School Transport (which we do with our council contracts). Many CT groups across the country are expected to utilise such contracts to help support their core CT services due to the drastic cuts in grant funding. Friendly Bus would not be able to operate without bidding for and winning these contracts as our grant now only represents 5% of our annual income.



However, we are in close competition for these contracts with the private sector operators and our added social value is not taken into account. It is a high-risk strategy and there are concerns for the sustainability of this approach, hence the need for our Impact Reports to gain support from the funding bodies.

Our main focus for 2023-24 will remain on helping as many people as possible access the essential services they need, as well as helping them live happy, healthy independent lives filled with fun and laughter. An important element to achieve this is recruiting new volunteers to meet the increased demand for our services.

Effective communication is now more important than ever. We're launching a new website which will showcase our services and achievements more clearly and we'll be developing a secure login area for our volunteers to access resources and training materials.

Friendly Bus will also continue to work with other voluntary and community sector organisations in the county to develop strong relationships and join up working with each other and statutory services. As the Chief Executive Officer, I sit on the Board of Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly and I'm the current Chair of the Shropshire Community Transport Consortium.

Marie Monk-Hawksworth

Chief Executive Officer



We've had a blast!



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Thank you to all our volunteers, community supporters, members and everyone who has donated to us this year.

Thank you to the Co-op at Ironbridge for choosing us as a local community cause last year, Much Wenlock's Women's Institute, Broseley C of E Church, Wenlock Bakery and Selina Graham, Shropshire's High Sheriff for 2022.

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT



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