



Impact **REPORT**



2023-2024

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Data in this report is for the timeframe 1 March 2023 to 29 February 2024 unless stated otherwise

NOTE FROM OUR CHAIR

Alison Richards

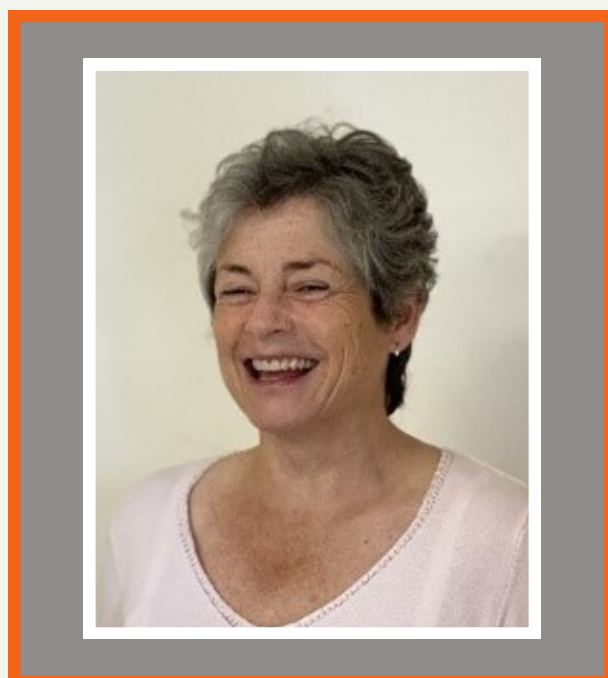
The Friendly Bus provides community transport. We offer travel by minibus and cars in and around Much Wenlock and Broseley *for* our community and *by* our community.

The service was originally inspired by a need that was not being met. There was a recognition that many older and vulnerable residents of both towns were without transport and consequently might be feeling more isolated and lonely than if they could get out and about. The community stepped up. The community being local people who saw the problem and committed to doing something about it themselves, to help their neighbours.

That was how the Friendly Bus organisation was born and the first bus was secured with a generous donation. It has since grown phenomenally over the last twenty years.

In our third decade, our ageing fleet of minibuses is becoming a problem. The cost of repairs and maintenance are escalating to the point where it would be more sensible to invest in one or two new vehicles. Once again, we are asking the local community to help... because the need has not gone away - in fact it increases year on year.

We still want to be there for those who don't have access to transport. There are essential journeys such as medical appointments, but we also provide journeys for more sociable reasons.



These include trips to friends and relatives, a swimming pool or an exercise class as well as days out to retail outlets, markets and tourist attractions. They provide independence, enrichment, fun and socialisation.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who works hard for our cause, be it as an employee or volunteer. You are extraordinary people, prepared to go the extra mile to enrich the lives of others.

This year, we also have another message - a heartfelt request. Whether you're a member, a volunteer, an occasional passenger, or perhaps the relative of one of our members, this message is for you. Or you might be a local resident who has their own transport today, but may not have this in years to come. This request is for you too.

Please donate to help us buy a bus or two, and you'll raise thousands of smiles by keeping The Friendly Bus on the road.

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



Barry Hansford



Dave Marriot



Sue Cotton



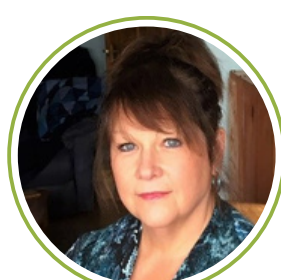
Heather Armstrong

TRUSTEES

OUR OFFICE TEAM



Marie



Julie



Laura



Ian



Caroline

School contracts

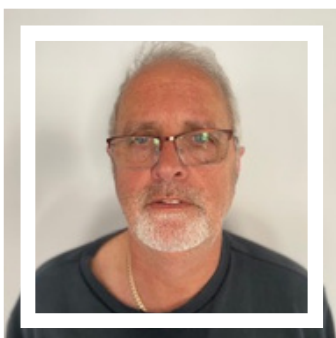
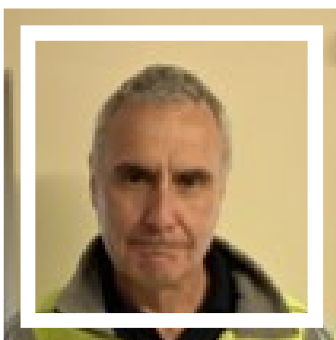
Providing school transport helps to support our other operations.

From September 2022 to July 2023 we were contracted to drive several routes to Bridgnorth Endowed School and retained the contract for Wightwick Hall School.

For the academic year September 2023 to July 2024 we were awarded five contracts from Shropshire Council's Passenger Transport Group.

We transport children to and from Bridgnorth Endowed School, Worfield Primary school and William Brookes. However, the contract for Worfield primary was short-term for one academic year to support the council when local a transport firm, went into administration.

In January 2024 we handed back the contract for William Brookes as we'd successfully been awarded the 5-year SEN contract for Severndale Specialist Academy.



COMMUNITY CAR JOURNEYS

TOTAL
3,710

(up 1,388 from
last year)

At a Glance



Medical

2,760



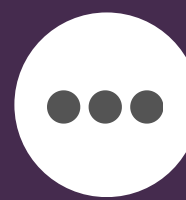
Exercise
& Welfare

666



Good
Neighbour

108



Other

176

Top three journey types in each category



1,562

Hospital

900

Doctors

212

Dentist



132

Visit friends &
family (care home,
hospital etc)

474

Exercise

60

Mental
wellbeing



36

Food
delivery

54

Prescription
collection

18

Shopping



56

Personal business
(banking,
solicitors etc)

62

Hairdressers

38

Funeral

Data collected from 1
March 2023 to 29
February 2024

MINIBUS JOURNEYS

1,636

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



468

Groups & school trip
bookings

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

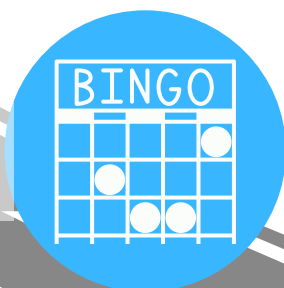


582

Shopping trips

Clubs & exercises classes

280



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

The feedback suggested some different choices of venues

We have put on different destinations such as stately homes and gardens and castles.



306

Social trips



65 of our 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, Shrewsbury Indoor Market, Much Wenlock High Street, Madeley shops.

SOCIAL TRIPS

Maws Craft Centre, Oakgate Nurseries and Garden Centre, Whittington Castle, The Mere at Ellesmere, RAF Cosford Museum, The Boat Inn at Jackfield to see Ian's jazz band 'The Rhodian Cooper Trio', Ludlow, Leebotwood, Church Stretton, Trentham Shopping Village, Cuan Wildlife Rescue Open Day & Dog Show, Barmouth seaside, Dobbies Garden Centre at Donnington, Cuan Classic Car and Craft Fair, Llandudno seaside, Broseley Scarecrow Festival Tour, Bridgnorth High Street and market, Bridgemere Garden Centre, Attingham Park - Christmas decorated mansion, Broseley Lights Tour, Bridgnorth Garden Centre, Carboot sales at Priory Hall in Much Wenlock (in aid of Friendly Bus), Mere Park Garden Centre, Attingham Park grounds.

About our members

81%

of service users said Friendly Bus enhances their wellbeing.

1,167

Passengers on our system (minibus & community car users). This is up **354** from last year

89

New members (have never been a Friendly Bus member before). This is up **41** from last year



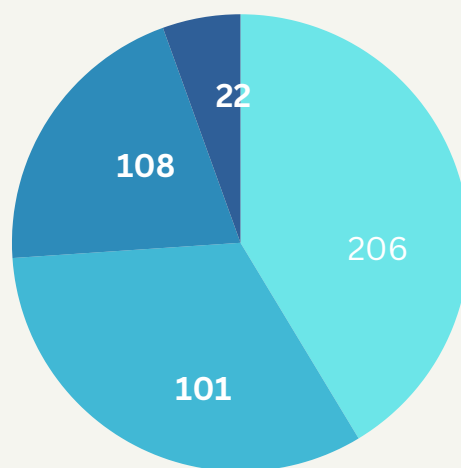
95% told us they wouldn't be able to receive the same level of support without us, or that they would struggle.



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/scooter
- Other (eg blind, needs assistance)



Members that don't use our services told us...

"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."

Keeping in touch...



8,044

phone calls



3,175

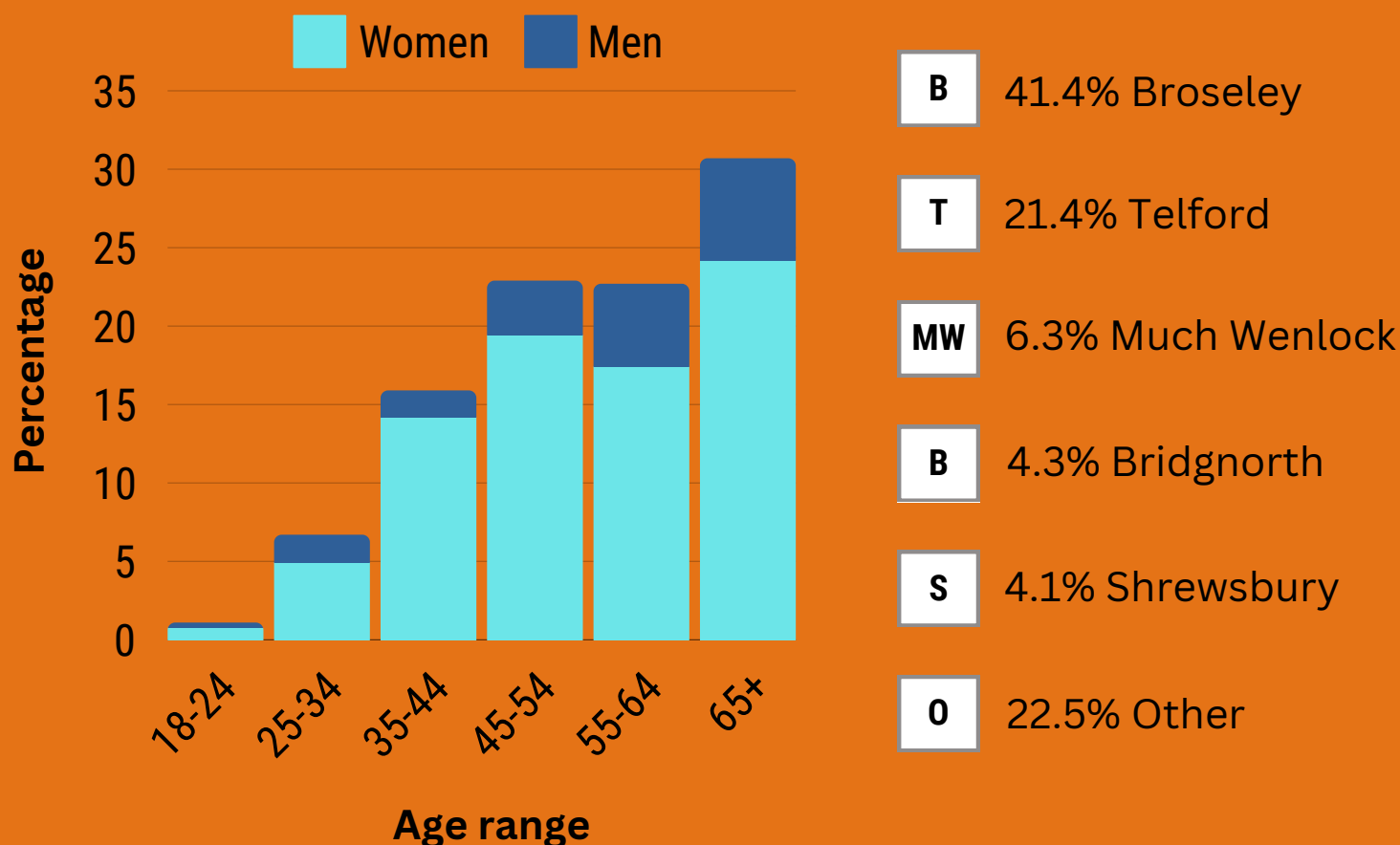
newsletters sent
to members



760

Facebook followers

Followers by age, gender & location



3.9K total interactions (100.4% increase on last year)

16.1K total reach (60% increase on last year)



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. It has since grown steadily.

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, garden centres and to the seaside in the summer.



62

Members



6

Volunteers



176

**Trips
(for 446
passengers)**



206

**followers
(83% 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

11,713 hours given by our volunteers over the year - over **200** hours each week.



Our volunteers

Without them, we wouldn't be able to do what we do.

93 Volunteers in total



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

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Volunteer activity	Hours
Community car drivers	4,638
Social trips	3,784
Group bookings	1,872
Newsletter team	125
Fundraising team	178
Befrienders	1,116



Some of our volunteers

**Thank you for all that
you do!**

Keeping our fleet on the road

KDZ 16 Seater Peugeot

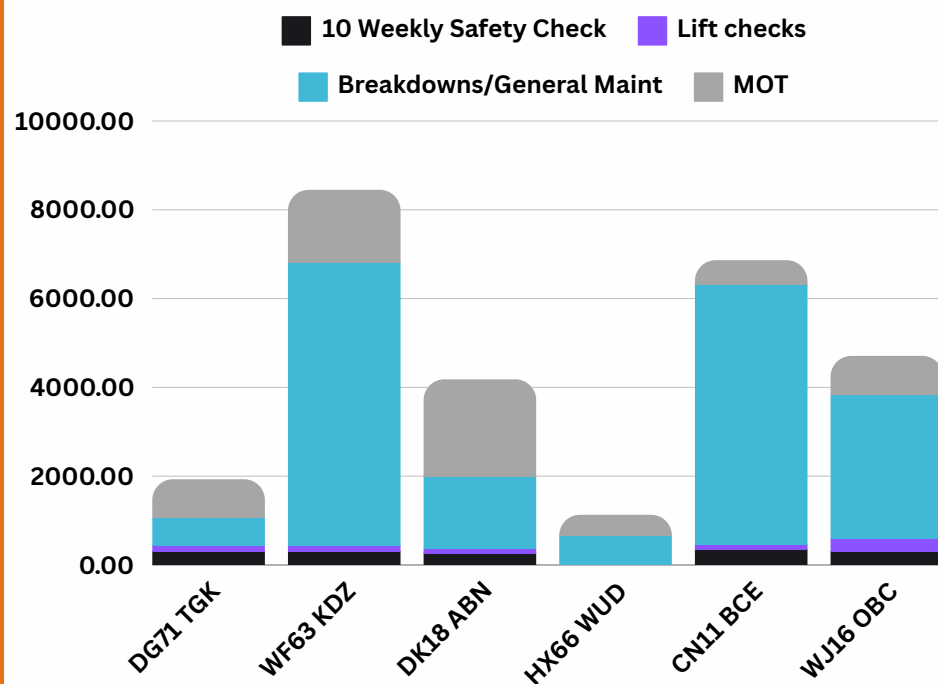
BCE 15 Seater Mercedes

OBC 11 Seater Peugeot

TGK 8 Seater Peugeot

WUD 7 Seater Ford Galaxy

ABN 16 Seater Peugeot
(Shifnal Shuttle)



VEHICLE MAINTENANCE COSTS

Totals spent

- £1,507: 10-week safety checks
- £784: Lift checks
- £18,387: Breakdowns & general maintenance
- £4,579: MOTs

Total cost to keep all vehicles on the road:

£23,024* This is **DOUBLE** the costs for year's costs.

*Excluding road tax and insurance

MINIBUS DRIVER AWARENESS TRAINING



STANDARD

8 Trainees



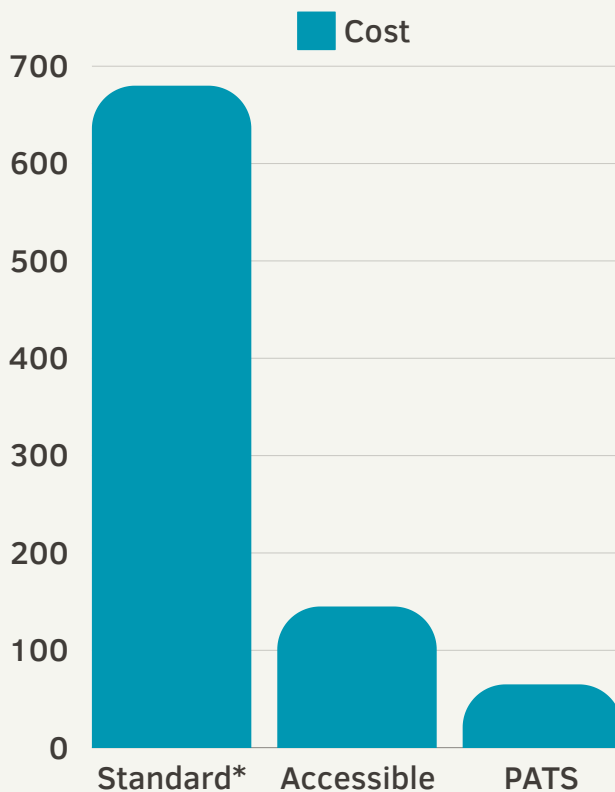
ACCESSIBLE

1 Trainee



PASSENGER ASSISTANCE

1 Trainee



*£865 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

£680

Savings - driver training

£135

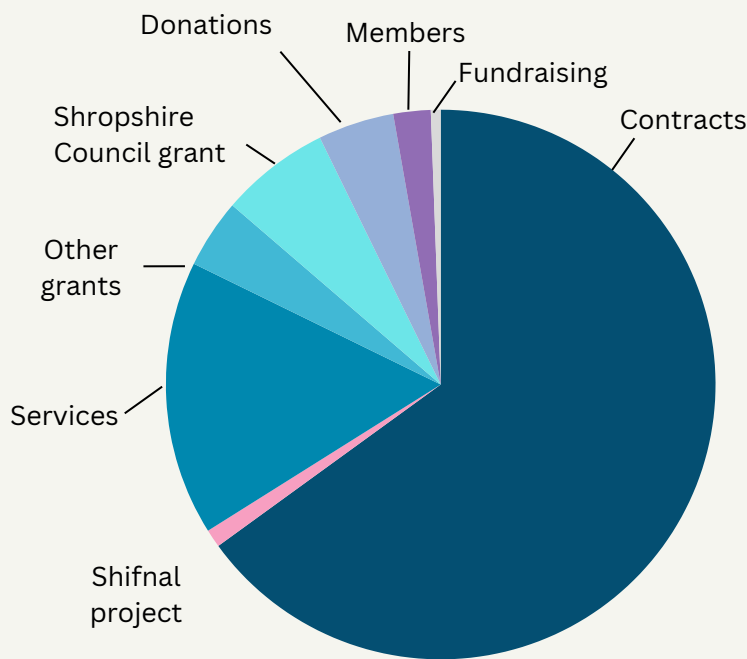
Wheelchair training income

£50

Passenger Assistance income

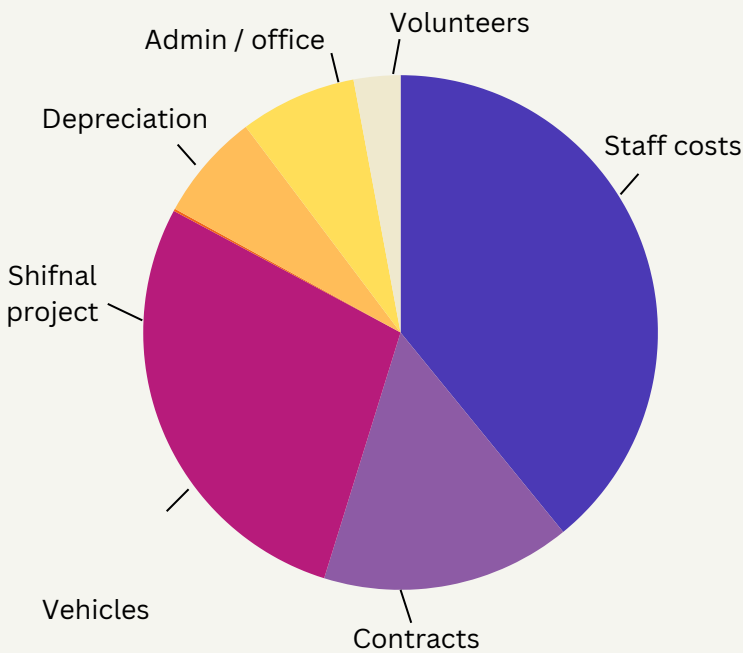
INCOME & EXPENDITURE

The new trend emerging in 2023 has continued, 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, it's becoming increasingly harder to manage these and the social value of our services is not being taken into consideration by Shropshire Council when assessing the bids.

EXPENDITURE As with most organisations, our 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 £4,074 - down again from last year...

<div>£1209</div> <div>Broseley Town Council - to support our services</div>	<div>£615</div> <div>McCarthy & Stone- to subsidise trips (esp seasonal outings)</div>	<div>£2,000</div> <div>Millichope - to support the delivery of our service</div>	<div>£100</div> <div>Blakemores - to support our Services</div>	<div>£250</div> <div>Much Wenlock Town Council - to support our Services</div>
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Income & Expenditure Accounts

1 March 2023 to 29 February 2024

Income		2024 (£)	2023 (£)
Grants	Shropshire Council	11,931	38,932
	Other Grants	4,074	14,061
	Other income	9,059	4,572
Services	Shropshire Community Cars	5,613	4,180
	Friendly Bus Fares	160,556	141,605
	Subscriptions	4,055	3,615
	Donations to Service	8,282	7,316
Other	Fundraising	2,035	1,025
	Bank Interest	1,144	286
Total Incoming Resources		206,749	216,502

Expenditure		2024 (£)	2023 (£)
Staff costs	Employment Wages, Tax, NI, payroll	139,091	123,580
Expenses	Shropshire Community Cars	4,944	3,584
	Volunteer costs	1,408	777
Vehicles	Running costs	59,077	43,965
	Vehicle Hire for new contract	11,024	
Shifnal	Car hire	361	774
Office	Rent, Rates, utilities, Insurance	4,786	4,350
	Repairs and Maintenance	1,663	1,465
	Fixtures and fittings	242 250	456
	Printing Postage and stationery	4,121	
Admin	Telephone and internet	4,365	3,010
	Catering and room hire	986 120	2,799
	Fees and subscriptions	1,035	861
	Accountancy fees	768	505
	Fundraising expenses		900
	General expenses		103
	Other		1,488
	Depreciation	340	328
Total Outgoing Resources		251,391	205,520
Difference between income and expenditure		(44,643)	11,254
Total funds brought forward		148,324	137,069
Total funds carried forward		103,681	148,323
Current assets		86,300	115,281

A copy of the financial statements for the year ended 1st March 2024, 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.



Seven community transport (CT) projects serve all areas of Shropshire and form the Shropshire Community Transport Consortium (SCTC).

The Consortium aims to share good practice, improve standards and raise awareness of the role and activities of CT in Shropshire. As part of their work to raise awareness, SCTC have produced an **Impact Report**.

Our collective impact in Shropshire



Supporting over 2000 members

85%
Over
65



50%

Have a physical or sensory **disability**

327,472
Miles



51,690
Passenger journeys

Only 2.5%

Would cope without CT

Almost 40% would find travel very difficult

Despite increasing demand for services, 100% of our surveyed members are happy with services, but want more on other days at other times

JOURNEY TYPES



31.6%

Shopping



22.6%

Social



20.6%

Healthcare



12.5%

Leisure



7.4%

Education & Employment



4.9%

Personal business

Community organisations

102

use our services (including schools and care homes). Over 40% use them at least monthly.



80,000

Individual passenger journeys

82.6%

Said CT is essential to all or some of their members participating in their activities.

Over half want to see services expanded.



£3,620,107

Social value in 2022/2023

High value:

Every £1 spent on delivering services creates benefits worth between £5.09 to £5.30.



CT generates savings between **£2.1m** and **£61k** in health costs each year.

£989,125

Spent by passengers in Shropshire whilst using CT services.

HELP US BUY A BUS!

www.justgiving.com/campaign/thefriendlybus

Our fundraising campaign to buy a bus or two, launched in May 2024.

Our current fleet of vehicles have driven over 40,000 journeys! In 2023 we let our members down, when our vehicles broke down and were off the road.

This isn't just an inconvenience....

- It's "making do" with what's in the cupboard.
- It's back to loneliness. Helplessness. Boredom.
- It's quiet. Depression. Sad.

But you can keep our members smiling.
YOU can make the difference.

....And we need you NOW!



AND YOU'LL RAISE THOUSANDS
OF SMILES!



SCAN ME



Ways you can help

- You can **donate** by sending us a cheque to 'The Friendly Transport Service', pop into the office or give your donation to your next driver. Alternatively, you scan the QR code to the left to donate online.
- **Join an exciting new Fundraising Team** to help organise events to raise money for us!
- **Complete a sponsored activity or run an event** in aid of us. We'll support you and promote the event - in fact, we'll be your biggest supporters!
- **Talk about us and our campaign** to your friends and family and please tell them what our service means to you!

Thank you to everyone who has donated and supported us - together we'll get there!

Key points from 2023-2024 and looking ahead to 2024-2025...

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

This year has seen demand for our services continue to grow. 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 health and social care costs could be mitigated.

The Shropshire CT Consortium

commissioned consultants to produce a collective **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 the emerging **Integrated Care Plan**.



Marie Monk-Hawksworth, CEO

An Infographic showing the overall impact across Shropshire is included in this report and shows some huge numbers!

These reports will help to ensure that relevant public sector bodies have a greater understanding of what we do. But 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 has been utilised to inform a consortium bid to the **Motability Grant fund**. This is for the provision of replacement vehicles, running costs and training for Volunteers.

We've also continued to work with the Community Transport Association (CTA) which is the national body representing CT. We've assisted in their research for a sector-wide Impact Study for the whole of England (to be published later in 2024).

Looking ahead to 2024-2025.....

Staff from the CTA came along on one of our shopping trips to meet passengers and help design the questionnaire which was used to help gather data. I also had the pleasure of speaking at the **CTA National Conference** at the NEC where I got to talk about the Friendly Bus and also all the work I do with the Consortium.

Our main focus for 2024-25 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.

Friendly Bus will also continue to work with other voluntary and community sector organisations in the county to develop strong relationships and joined 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.

Our 'HELP US BUY A BUS' campaign!

In order to safely and effectively deliver our services we also need to replace at least 2 of our ageing minibuses.

This report highlights the increasing demand for our services but also the increasing costs needed to keep the vehicles on the road. The maintenance has more than doubled since the previous year and we are having to use up our charitable reserves, which is not sustainable.

Marie



cta
community transport
association

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 again, Broseley Town Council, Much Wenlock Town Council, McCarthy & Stone, Millichipe Foundation, A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd, Sheinton Fete, Broseley Women's Institute, Much Wenlock's Women's Institute and many more. Lots of individuals have gifted both large and small sums. Several members or volunteers have asked for donations to Friendly Bus instead of receiving birthday presents! Thank you to you all - every penny really does count!

THANK YOU

FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT



The Friendly Transport Service (Shropshire) is a Company limited by guarantee, registered in England & Wales No. 4770291.

Reg. Charity No. 1131707

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