

# SEEND COMMUNITY BUS

Charity Registration No. 1157309

VAT No. 188 807063

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Wiltshire  
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## SEEND COMMUNITY BUS REPORT 2021 TO 2022

### OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR

The mission of the charity is to provide transport in the rural areas of Seend and Bromham for those who have limited or no access to public transport. This service relies entirely on volunteers, not only to drive the vehicle but to keep it clean, monitor maintenance, keep proper records of usage, income and expenditure and liaise with service users and hirers. It also benefits from a good relationship with The MOT Centre at Bowerhill where Class 5 MOTs, regular safety inspections and general maintenance are carried out, sometimes at short notice.

The charity also benefits from a good relationship with Wiltshire Council and Community First who support all Wiltshire Community Transport Groups. As a member of the Wiltshire & Swindon Community Transport Association we are part of a broad, supportive group of organisations. We are also grateful to Seend Parish Council, not only for their financial support but also for keeping us informed of roadworks in the parish which may affect service routes.

After a year in which the operation was drastically reduced by lockdown, this year has seen a great improvement. Gradual lifting of regulations regarding social distancing enabled us to increase our services to the community. Passenger confidence has been slow to pick up and it will probably be some time before we see the numbers return to what they were before the pandemic. Many people shopped online last year and this will probably have a long-term effect on community transport generally.

As a charity which relies entirely on volunteers, we are always looking to secure a strong base of drivers. Without our drivers there would be no service. The Thursday Section 22 shuttle service to Devizes has not resumed because the volunteer who has driven it for a number of years reluctantly decided to retire. We are grateful to Malcolm for the hundreds

of hours he spent operating the service and totally respect his decision not to renew his D1 licence when he reached 80 years. The fact that we have, as yet, been unable to find a replacement for him highlights an issue which has been the subject of many discussions at CT Zoom meetings. The driver base for community transport is heavily dependent on people who have retired from their working lives and want to continue to make a useful contribution to society. This will become an ever greater problem because newly qualified drivers do not automatically have D1 entitlement. The cost to the CT sector in years to come to pay for potential volunteers to gain D1 eligibility will be considerable.

As last year, we have benefitted from regular Zoom meetings attended by other CT groups and hosted by Community First. A representative from Wiltshire Council has occasionally been in attendance and we continue to be kept informed about regulations and guidance for transport operators. Equally important has been the opportunity to compare experiences with other groups and to keep up the enthusiasm and morale in challenging times. Some groups have survived well, but one or two are on the brink of collapse. As it stands, Seend Community Bus is in a relatively strong position and we are confident that we will be able to operate for the foreseeable future.

## **SERVICES**

During the year, regular services have operated on school days to transport pupils to the local primary school. The team who drive on a rota system have driven a total of 2655 miles, catering for 4173 passenger trips.

The Monday local service to the village shop continues but is used, on average, by only two passengers.

The Tuesday shopping run to Melksham has consistently carried an average of six passengers. These are small numbers but the value of the service to those who use the service is huge. It is not just a shopper bus, but a social event.

We are continuing our hunt for replacements for Malcolm. Until we are successful in our search, the Thursday shuttle remains on hold.

The Section 19 day out to Salisbury was on hold for most of the year but, once social distancing restrictions were lifted, people were eager to book a seat on the bus. We decided to do a one-off run in December, as it is always the most popular run of the year. It was wonderful to see 15 passengers on board for the trip. The driver for the run was the Chair of Trustees, but we hope to find a regular driver so that we can resume a monthly day out in the near future.

All in all, services other than the school run covered 1364 miles, catering for 608 passenger trips (a return trip is regarded as two trips).

## **FUNDING**

Wiltshire Council again supported the charity with an annual grant of £3430, for which we are extremely grateful. To qualify for the Wiltshire Council grant The Trustees have to provide annual accounts and demonstrate that the service provided meets their criteria. To this end, a record is kept of the mileage for every trip made by the bus and the number of

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Established June 4<sup>th</sup> 2014 Charity Commission No. 1157309 VAT No. 188 807063

passengers it carries. CT groups have been assured by Council that they are determined to support the sector and we hope that they are able to continue to do so. Nothing is certain. Wiltshire Council also support us through the Concessionary Fares scheme. Monthly figures are provided by us and we are reimbursed accordingly based on a complex formula. They have continued to support us this year at pre-pandemic rates rather than actual figures. However, this is inevitably a temporary measure. Hopefully, by the time Council resume reimbursement based on actual numbers, we will be carrying more passengers.

Other funding is from donations. The Parish Council again showed their support and appreciation with a generous donation of £400.

In normal times, a substantial boost to our income is from private hirings. After much discussion we felt able to start hiring the vehicle again from August. There had been many enquiries from groups wishing to use the bus, and, with easing restrictions, the Theatre Club ran a trip to Newbury.

## **MAINTENANCE**

Weekly inspections of the bus are made by Graham, our in-house mechanic. He is a valuable asset to the charity with his skill and knowledge.

The MOT centre at Bowerhill carries out regular ten-weekly full safety inspections of the vehicle in compliance with the Section 19 and 22 Permit requirements and also undertakes any repairs and servicing needed.

## **CLEANING**

Anita organises a rota of local groups to keep the vehicle looking presentable. Co-ordinating the cleaning with the regular services and private hires is a little tricky. Sometimes people need prompting when it is their turn.

## **HIRINGS**

From the resumption of hirings in August there were 23 occasions when the bus was booked by local groups, scouts and guides. A local skittles team used the bus on 7 of those occasions for away games. Hirings accounted for a total of 965 miles and carried 316 passengers.

## **ACCOUNTING**

A meticulous record of accounts is kept using a system of spreadsheets. This system was examined and approved by HMRC shortly after we voluntarily registered for VAT. All the following figures are given excluding VAT. The accounting system automatically totals VAT on hirings and VAT relating to expenditure and these are recorded separately on the balance sheet. Quarterly VAT returns are submitted online via the HMRC website.

Full accounts are prepared annually and submitted to Wiltshire Council to support the Annual Grant Application and also for the Charity Commission. Accounts are also forwarded to Seend Parish Council as a courtesy in return for their annual donation.

## **EXPENDITURE**

Total expenditure for the year was £3606.13 compared to £2963.39 for the previous year.

1. Office Expenses were £21.65 compared to £62.49 last year. The only expense this year was ink for the printer.

2. There were no drivers or officers expenses claimed compared to £19.20 last year.

3. Insurance/Licences cost £1410.14 compared to last year's £1626.11.

4. Maintenance costs were £817.17, (£326.67 of which was for attention to the brakes) compared to £561.50 last year.

5. Fuel costs were £1204.13 compared to £512.55 last year, reflecting more than a 100 percent increase in vehicle use.

6. Medical tests for drivers who reach age 70 are paid for by the Charity and these vary in price depending on which surgery the test is carried out at. Fortunately, there is now a dedicated facility called D4Drivers based at WtL HGV driving school in Devizes where a D1 medical can be booked online and costs £55. Two of our drivers required D1 medicals this year and both were at D4Drivers at a total cost of £110.

7. For the second year running there was no need to hire another vehicle at any time.

8. Other costs were £43.04 compared to £173.34. W&SCTA again waived the annual £10 membership fee.

## **INCOME**

Total income for the year was £8964.80, very similar to last year's £8777.13.

1. Income from Hirings was slightly up from £442.45 to £667.25.

2. Bus Fares for the "School" Run were £801.25, slightly up from £715.00 last year. However, fares which parents had paid in advance the previous year were carried over because of the second lockdown. Calculating who had paid for fares that were unused and carrying them over was a considerable task, which Robin managed brilliantly.

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3. The only Service run fares were on the December Salisbury trip, which carried 15 passengers, who paid a total of £75
4. Bus Pass Reclaims were very similar to the previous year at £3507.40 compared to the previous year's £3559.65. Concessionary Fares repayments are made proportionately according to a complex formula. The average payment is £270 per month but quarterly reconciliation payments are made. For the last two years the same formula was used but referentially averaged based on the year 2019-2020.
5. Donations are made up primarily of a £400 annual contribution by the Parish Council. The rest is from hirers topping up the amount on their invoice. The total for the year was £400 from the Parish Council with £63.50 top-up donations.
6. The Wiltshire Council Grant was £3430 as it was last year. We are assured that this will be the rate for the coming year, but, in the light of ongoing spending cuts, will be reviewed annually and probably reduced in the future.
7. The surplus of income over expenditure for the year was £5358.67 compared to £5813.74 last year.
8. Interest on the deposit account was just £20.40, reflecting a drop in interest rates from last year when interest was £210.03.

## **SUMMARY**

The year has seen the Community Transport sector move toward some semblance of normality. All groups are experiencing reduced passenger numbers compared with pre-pandemic levels. We are fortunate to have an enthusiastic team of volunteers and a good relationship with our support network in the CT community, Wiltshire Council, Parish Council and the MOT Centre, who maintain our vehicle in excellent condition. We look to the future with confidence.

Financially we are in a healthy position. Having looked at other ways to safeguard our reserve fund we are agreed that we will stay with the quick access deposit account. To significantly increase interest income would involve tying a large portion of the fund up for at least three years. As we are looking to purchase a new vehicle in the near future, this would not be prudent. We decided to opt for easy access over increased return.

Issues which we will need to address in the coming year are very much the same as last year.

Finalising the specification for a replacement vehicle is a priority. Now we are able to meet in person as a team this should become easier. While the options for a greener vehicle are probably limited, we feel we should at least investigate all the possibilities. Paramount, however, will be to purchase a vehicle that meets the requirements of the

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service we operate. The vehicle must be as efficient as possible whilst still having the ability to carry 16 passengers on quite long journeys.

The recruitment of suitable volunteer drivers is a continuing concern for all CTA groups. This has been amplified by the pandemic. The majority of drivers are in the older age group and several CT groups have lost drivers who no longer feel confident about volunteering. Recruitment will become a matter of increasing urgency over the next few years.

For us as a group we need to focus on finding drivers for the Thursday Shuttle and the monthly Section 19 outings.

This concludes the annual report of the Trustees of Seend Community Bus.

Report dated 12<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Prepared by P. Wallis (Chair)

Seend Community Bus Accounts 2021 to 2022

Statement of income and expenditure (excl VAT ) 1/3/21 to 28/2/22

2020-21	Expenditure	2021-22	2020-21	Income	2021-22
62.49	Office expenses	21.65	442.45	Private hire	667.25
19.20	Misc including drivers expenses	0.00	715.00	School run	801.25
1626.11	Vehicle insurance and licences	1410.14	20.00	Service runs	75.00
561.50	Maintenance and Repairs	817.17	3559.65	Bus pass claims	3507.40
512.55	Fuel	1204.13	210.03	Bank interest	20.40
0.00	Medical tests	110.00	400.00	Donations and fundraising	463.50
0.00	Vehicle hire	0.00			
8.20	Postage	0.00	3430.00	Wilts County Grant	3430.00
173.34	Other	43.04			
2963.39		3606.13			
5813.74	Surplus carried down to General Fund	5358.67			
<u>8777.13</u>		<u>8964.80</u>	<u>8777.13</u>		<u>8964.80</u>

**General Fund movement for the year to 28/2/22**

<b>2020-21</b>		<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2020-21</b>		<b>2021-22</b>
67536.87	General Fund at Year End	72812.33	61890.68	Balance brought forward	67730.52
			5813.74	Surplus of income over expenditure	5358.67
			88.49	VAT collected on hirings	133.45
			-256.04	VAT on purchases	-410.31
			-167.55		-276.86
			-167.55		-276.86
<u>67536.87</u>		<u>72812.33</u>	<u>6753.87</u>		<u>72812.33</u>

**Balance sheet at 28/2/22**

31.24	Cash in hand	102.69	256.04	VAT reclaimed	410.31
2305.37	Cash at bank - current account	3555.44	-62.39	VAT to HMRC	-150.20
					260.11
65393.91	Cash at bank - deposit	69414.31	67536.87	General fund 28/02/22	72812.33
<u>67730.52</u>	Balance C/F	<u>73072.44</u>	<u>67730.52</u>		<u>73072.44</u>

Balance checker>>	0.00
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**Bank reconciliation 28/2/22**

<b>Balance from bank statement</b>	<b>3676.59</b>
Turnpike Account paid 1/3/22	-148.18
Uncleared payments in	
VAT repayed to SCB 05/03/22	27.03

<b>Adjusted bank balance (self-calculating)</b>	<b>3555.44</b>
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VAT RETURN BALANCE		
SCB to HMRC	HMRC to SCB	
	58.39	MAY
	134.10	AUG
	40.59	NOV
	27.03	FEB
<b>0.00</b>	<b>260.11</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>