



Burghfield & Mortimer Handybus

(Registered Charity Number 1170252)

Annual Report 2020/21

REMIT

Burghfield and Mortimer Handybus provide a Community Minibus Service for the local areas of Burghfield, Mortimer, Aldermaston, Sulhampstead and Upton Nervet in the county of West Berkshire. The service is provided by two 10/12 seater minibuses which have been modified to provide easy access, including passenger lifts to enable wheelchair bound passengers to be carried. The service operates to help those with limited mobility and people who are unable to use, or do not have access to, public transport.

OPERATION

The service is provided on a not for profit, voluntary basis and operates under a Section 19 Bus Permit in accordance with Transport Act:1985. The service relies financially on Grants from West Berkshire Council and local Parish Councils plus for each journey made passengers are asked to make a small contribution towards running costs.

OBJECTIVES – 2020/21

1) “Whilst the minibuses are not operating we will explore other options to provide community support to our existing passenger base.”

*Like many organisations our services suffered considerably due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and the various lockdowns the country experienced. We were forced to remove our minibuses from services at the end of March 2020 and, apart from a few restricted services during a window between Sept 2020 and Nov 2020, they remained out of service for the whole year. Overall the trips we made and the passengers we carried were **90% down** on the previous year. Whilst we were unable to operate our minibuses we did however continue to provide help and support to a number of our regular passengers. Throughout the lockdown periods individual volunteers did shopping for many of our regular elderly passengers who were isolating. We also carried a few passengers to vaccination and hospital appointments during the lockdown periods. As lockdown has eased we have slowly re-introduced our minibus services, albeit with restricted numbers carried, and within Government Covid-19 safety guidelines.*

2) “To seek financial options and support to ensure that we are able to manage financially during the pandemic crisis without the income of passenger contributions.”

A lack of services and trips had a drastic effect on the passenger contributions that we received (£686 versus £8822 previous year). Even though we were not able to run the services, some ongoing vehicle costs still occurred – insurance, minibuses safety checks, minibus annual service and MOT plus some essential maintenance repairs needed on one Minibus. Net result was a forecast for a considerable reduction in our reserves. To offset these financial shortfalls we set up a funding request project, via a local Charitable Platform. This proved to be successful and we received a number of donations which went a long way to cover most of the missing passenger contributions. The overall state of the Charity remains financially strong.

3) "To maintain our minibuses, volunteers and operating structures so that we are in a position to immediately recommence services as soon as it is practical and safe to do so.

We have continued to be active in the community during lockdown (see above) and have maintained regular contact with most of our passenger base. We have continued to update the local community in general with regular updates via various Parish newsletters. This visibility has also led to additional passengers showing an interest in our services, once it is safe to do so. We have also been fortunate that two new volunteers have stepped forward to offer their services. These recruits build up the organization numbers to 16 active volunteers meaning we have the ability to expand our services to include additional shopping trips and more social trips once the situation allows us to safely do so. To accommodate the few trips we were able to make we had to revise the travelling conditions within our minibuses to ensure we conformed to the Government guidelines with regards to the Pandemic. A full risk assessment was carried out and a number of seats in the minibuses were removed to ensure social distancing, face masks and hand gels were provided and the minibuses were given a deep clean after each trip. Having established this routine the intention is to continue in this vein for the foreseeable future because our passengers are predominantly the elderly members of the community.

FINANCE

See accounts.

The Charity is dependent on its funding from grants, donations and contributions from the passengers we carry. Once again our local County Council provided us with a Community Transport Grant and we were able to claim the Department of Transport Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) based upon passengers carried the previous financial year. Because of the Covid-19 Pandemic the number of trips we were able to make was drastically reduced from 504 trips and 3128 passenger journeys the previous year down to 71 trips and 227 passenger journeys this year. This obviously had a major impact on our Income with a reduction of travelling passenger contributions of £8,136 in the year. Offsetting this the reduced number of journeys being made meant we saved £3,000 in Fuel costs compared to a normal operating year. In addition we were faced with some major mechanical work on our minibuses incurring additional expenses of £2,000. and even with our successful funding project we still finished the year with a net £1,610 deficit. With the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, services are now slowly re-commencing and It is anticipated that this financial shortfall is a one-off situation.

The overall financial state of the Charity is healthy with no outstanding liabilities. We have a Current Bank Account balance which will cover one year of operating costs and a healthy Savings Fund building towards a replacement minibus. With the continued support from West Berkshire Council and our local Parish Councils and passenger services now beginning to slowly return to pre-Covid-19 levels, the outlook, both financial and operationally, is encouraging.

THE FUTURE

The nationwide pandemic had a major effect to us with operating services having to be suspended for most of the year. We have decided to step away from Covid-19 restrictions in a cautious and careful way with our priority to keep passengers and volunteers as safe as possible. With some levels of social distancing still being practiced the number of passengers carried on each trip will initially be reduced. This will have a financial effect on the operation with the loss of passenger contributions but we hope to cover this by increasing the number of individual trips we can offer.

The challenge over the next twelve months will be to ensure the organisation remains active so that we are in a position to provide services in what will undoubtedly be a “new norm” for many of our elderly and less able members of the local community.

Prior to lockdown demand for Community Transport services with our operation was growing. With two operational minibuses, a stable financial position and a dedicated band of volunteers we anticipate the Charity will continue to provide and grow these services.

The primary objectives for 2020/21 will be –

- i) Continue to provide our services to the elderly and disabled members of our community in a safe and secure way.
- ii) To increase the number of volunteers and passengers so that we can maximize the use of our minibuses.
- iii) To maintain control on our finances such that any shortfall in Grants or passenger contributions are made up by other fundraising activities. The overall financial objective is to increase the fund for a minibus replacement – something we may have to do in the near future.

Burghfield and Mortimer Handybus are extremely grateful to all its funders, supporters and volunteers without whom we would not be able to continue with providing this service. We thank you all and hope that you will continue this valuable support into the coming year.

P.I.CHURCH
Chairman of Trustees
November 2021

BURGHFIELD & MORTIMER HANDYBUS
(Charity Number 1170252)

RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st MARCH 2021

<u>2020</u>	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Payments</u>	<u>2021</u>
£8,822.50	Passengers Fares	686.56	£2,610.56	Bus Expenses	4,801.21
£7,084.28	Grants	7,430.14	£3,506.78	Fuel	493.53
£2,470.87	Donations	6,231.41	£2,209.96	Insurance	2,202.19
£107.14	Deposit a/c interest	41.10	£1,231.43	Operational Expenses	1,292.13
			£1,229.61	Volunteer Expenses	10.65
			£6,340.00	Minibus Depreciation	7,200.00
£18,484.79		14,389.21	£17,128.34		15,999.71
			£1,356.45	Deficit/Surplus for year	-1,610.50
£18,484.79		£14,389.21	£18,484.79		£14,389.21
£61,198.16	Accumulated surplus 01/04/2019	62,554.61			
£1,356.45	Add surplus for the year ending 31/03/2020	-1,610.50	£8,151.65	Current Account Balance at 31/03/20	9,094.59
			£20,126.24	Replacement Bus Saver Account	25,167.34
			£18.45	Invoices not yet paid	0.00
			£528.27	Cash Float	152.18
			£750.00	Fuel Genie Deposit	750.00
			£28,980.00	Minibus Asset DK67 CVN	23,780.00
			£4,000.00	Minibus Asset YF59 YVA	2,000.00
£62,554.61		£60,944.11	£62,554.61		£60,944.11