



BORDER RAMBLER RURAL TRANSPORT SERVICES CIC



OUR PROJECT THIS YEAR

Here at Border Rambler we have had an exciting year since we were awarded funding from the National Lottery Community Fund.

In outline, our year kicked off on the 15th of February with the fantastic news of funding being given to us for the provision of a new minibuss to allow us to continue and improve our support to those living in isolated rural settlements in the Brampton, Gilsland and Carlisle areas.

Whilst waiting for the money to be allocated to our bank, we scoured the various minibuss suppliers throughout the United Kingdom, finally choosing a modified Citroën Relay from GM Minibuses of Newton Abbot.

Delivery was made on the 21st of September. Our volunteer drivers then all attended familiarisation training on the 2nd of October. There was no doubt at all that the volunteer drivers were delighted with the new minibus, but importantly, they all agreed that our passengers would find the minibus more comfortable and provide easier access. The bus then entered service and was an immediate success; we have had nothing but praise from our passengers.

As part of the process of obtaining funding from the National Lottery Community Fund we wanted to share our success with others in the community. We did this at a local beauty spot, Lanercost Priory near Brampton, on the 10th of November. The new minibus was the focus of the launch, but we were delighted to have been joined by many of our regular passengers, our local MP and Cumberland Council leaders and, of course, our volunteer drivers. The launch was a great success and was extensively covered by local TV, radio and newspapers.



The minibus is now in regular use and Cumberland Council has agreed to support by taking on mandatory periodic safety inspections and maintenance. As a result of the arrival of the new minibus, Border Rambler has not only been able to continue its service to isolated rural settlements, but has achieved and progressed in other areas, more of which later.

HOW HAVE WE INVOLVED PEOPLE FROM OUR COMMUNITY IN OUR WORK

From the outset, once we received notification of our successful bid for funding from the National Lottery Community Fund, we have endeavoured to include our volunteer drivers and our passengers in the planning process.

Our first thought was for the safety of our passengers, so this is where we sought the views and experience of our volunteer drivers. Their input shaped what we eventually opted for in the design of the new minibus. Accordingly, we have included several extra features which have contributed to the increased safety of our passengers. Chief amongst them is the inclusion of sturdier seats and comfortable safety belts. Additionally, we have ensured that the controls within the bus are the easy to use, including a camera system that allows the driver visibility of all around the outside of the minibus and inside the minibus. Equally important is the visibility for the driver, which was enhanced by the high driver's seat and large windows giving excellent all around views.

Next, we turned to our passengers who gave their views on their needs. Easy access was important, so our new minibus features a wider entrance and a deeper step to allow a much easier way to get on and off. Once on the minibus, although the seats are sturdy, they are comfortable, with a better and easier to use seatbelt. Given that we serve a rural population which experiences extremes of weather, we have installed an improved heating system and, for the summer, an air-conditioning system. In the last few months, the improved heating system has been much appreciated.

A wider aspect of the result of obtaining our new minibus has been the potential to expand our services to other local isolated rural communities. We are in active communication with Cumberland Council regarding the potential to expand our routes. In fact, only the other day we received an enquiry which asked:

“ Is it possible that you might be extending your route to runs to include pick up in Brampton into Carlisleyour more personal service would really help those with disability/sight problems etcthank you”.

We have also included the support of our local MP in highlighting the need to support those in isolated rural communities. This invaluable support has led to our service being mentioned several times in debates within the House of Commons. Having this sort of support has also increased our visibility within the local community, which in turn, has brought us more passengers who, in the past, felt as if though there was no way to break out of the isolation they felt.



WHAT DIFFERENCES HAVE WE MADE

The most obvious difference we have made as a result of obtaining funding from the National Lottery Community Fund has been in the increased safety and comfort of our passengers. We, as operators, feel significantly more confidence in what we are doing, and comments from our passengers show that they have appreciated the benefits (already outlined) which the new minibus has brought.

A significant difference has been brought about by the publicity we received when we celebrated the launch of our new minibus on the 10th of November. Our exposure on local TV, Radio and newspapers has led to an increase in the number of passengers who, for various reasons, were not fully aware of the service we offered. We have now even more regular and loyal passengers.

What has been surprising but most welcome is that the increased publicity has seen a significant increase in new volunteer drivers, in fact, a 50% increase. This helps in ensuring that current volunteer drivers are not expected to give up too much of their valuable time, but also ensures the continued viability of our organisation. This has given confidence to our passengers and to other local organisations that support our operation.

WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

Our overall, and by far the greatest part of our year, has been very positive. The process of procurement took longer than we expected but it did give us the opportunity to carefully ensure that the new minibus met the needs demanded by us and, importantly, the passengers.

The new minibus has been welcomed by all involved, in no small part due to their involvement in the decisions about what the design of the minibus should take.

With a high profile launch, publicised by TV, Radio and newspapers, the service offered by Border Rambler has been spread to an even wider audience. As a consequence, we are seeing an increase in passengers, which is most welcome. A spin-off has been that our passengers, mainly older women, have widened their circle of friends and associates. It was a pleasure to see them gathered together and discussing how Border Rambler has helped them whilst taking afternoon tea together at the new minibus launch in November.

Whilst we were well prepared to seek maintenance support for the new minibus through our own means, we were pleasantly surprised to find that the mandatory periodic safety checks and essential maintenances are to be carried out by the staff of Cumberland Council. This has been of great help as it offers us the assurance that we are carrying out our duty of care to our passengers and drivers to the highest standards.

Unexpectedly, we were delighted to have received so many new volunteer drivers, which will help the service continue and possibly expand. It has also meant that the local community has a greater knowledge of our service.

HOW WE ARE CHANGING WHAT WE DO

Having now been operating our routes for some nine years, we are a trusted and regular part of the rural transport network for Cumbria, in particular, the Cumberland Council area. If commercial operators cannot or will not operate in a given area in north Cumbria then we are the go-to operators. We are currently in discussion with Cumberland Council regarding the potential to develop some more routes to isolated rural communities to the south of the A69, as the current commercial operator may reduce their commercial services.

If there is a need to establish more routes then there may be a need to have more than one minibus, so this will be an issue which we would open with the National Lottery Community Fund in the future.

We have also expanded our work to include advice and support to other parties who are actively looking at starting their own community rural support network in other parts of the county; we are, and have been, keen to advise and to share our experience.

WHAT WE HAVE SPENT THIS YEAR

Purchase of Vehicle:

Cost: £72,000 paid with:

NLCF grant: £55,000 Cumbria CC grant: £15,000 BR reserves: £2,000

Running the Service:

2022/23: Fare income (excl. grants): £12,408 Costs: £13,723

2023/24 to date: Fare income (excl. grants): £9,033 Costs: £9,703



SUMMARY

This has been an exciting and satisfying year for Border Rambler. The whole process of successful bidding to the National Lottery Community Fund, the consultation with interested parties and the final delivery of our new minibus has been one great episode after another. We now have a safe, comfortable and welcoming vehicle which meets the needs of passengers and drivers alike.

Our sincere thanks to all those who have helped us in this process and we hope that in the future we can once again work with the National Lottery Community Fund.

THANK YOU

George McGarr OBE
TRUSTEE

Stephen Higgs
TRUSTEE

Border Rambler Rural Transport Services CIC

Border Rambler Rural Transport Services. C.I.O.

Income	June	July
Cash fares Banked		114.50
NoW Card Remit. From CCC BR1	678.94	642.42
Hires		
NoW Card Remit. From CCC BR3	297.97	302.95
ENCTS Fares		
Repayment from HMRC		
Grant Income		699.00
Total Income	976.91	1758.87
Expenditure		
Ticketer Hire		
Mini Bus Hire CCC	851.20	940.00
Mini Bus Hire CT		81.90
Insurance		
New Bus		
Web Site		
HMRC		
Companies House		
General Expenses	174.41	664.55
Telephones		
HP Instant Ink	2.99	2.99
Charitable Donation		
DVSA		
MEETING EXPENSES		
Total Expenditure	1028.60	1689.44
Income over Expenditure	£51.69	£69.43

Accounts 2022-2023

August	September	October	November	December	January
300.00	300.00		110.00		106.00
675.62	600.09	636.61	776.88	595.94	662.34
331.17	428.28	127.82	140.27	93.79	71.38
	3600.00	15000.00			
1306.79	4928.37	15764.43	1027.15	689.73	839.72
			162.00		
519.20	985.60	474.40	575.20	464.80	401.60
499.96					137.41
	515.45				
		40.00			25.00
	25.00	196.35	90.75	21.96	42.00
20.00					
2.99	2.99	2.99	2.99	2.99	2.99
18.50		100.35	34.00	14.00	20.00
1060.65	1529.04	35.00	702.94	503.75	629.00
£246.14	£3,399.33	£15,729.43	£324.21	£185.98	£210.72

February	March	April	May	Totals
166.50	107.50	146.50	108.00	1459.00
592.62	715.46	694.00	840.00	8110.92
84.00	59.00			143.00
126.99	187.58	258.00	329.00	2695.20
				0.00
				0.00
				0.00
				0.00
				19299.00
970.11	1069.54	1098.50	1277.00	31707.12
				0.00
				162.00
464.80	599.48	795.84	921.60	7993.72
				719.27
				515.45
		9500.00		9500.00
82.00	220.00	15.00		382.00
				0.00
				0.00
18.00	91.30	637.20		1961.52
			30.00	50.00
2.99	2.99	2.99	13.99	46.88
				0.00
		13.00		
29.00	51.00	125.35		392.20
596.79	964.77	11089.38	965.59	21723.04
£373.32	£104.77	£9,990.88	£311.41	10912.17

Minus Grant Income

12408.12

Minus Grant
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