

# Moving Forward: The future of passenger transport in Leicestershire

Community-Led Solutions – Ideas and Guidance



## Introduction

The county council recognises that it does not have all the solutions when it comes to accessing local facilities and services and is open to ideas from communities about designing and running transport services for the benefit of local residents.

Some community-led services might be:

- A social car scheme
- A car sharing scheme
- A car club
- A good neighbour scheme
- A community minibus scheme

More details about how to set up and run such schemes are provided in this document.

If a community decides that it wishes to look at other ways of serving its residents, the council will fund a Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service while those options are being developed. Any community-led solution could be run alongside or replace a DRT service, as long as the services are affordable and provide value for money.

The final part of this document provides an overview of Community Transport in the county and issues to consider before embarking on designing a new transport scheme.

As well as providing this guidance document, the council will offer support by attending meetings where possible and answer questions and queries by email or telephone.

Email [PTPS@Leics.gov.uk](mailto:PTPS@Leics.gov.uk) or call **0116 305 0001**

# Social Car Scheme

## What is a Social Car Scheme?

A social car scheme arranges for volunteers to provide transport for passengers using the volunteer's own car. Passengers become members of the scheme and pay the driver's out of pocket expenses (mileage costs) for the journey.

## How Is Demand for Travel Assessed?

Before considering setting up a car scheme, there is a need to understand what the demand is likely to be for the service. Undertaking a survey of users of the current bus service or holding a public meeting would help to determine what actual demand would be in terms of:

**Who** would use the service, e.g. young people, elderly and mobility impaired people, parents/carers with pushchairs, people travelling to work, etc.

**What** types of journey they would wish to make, e.g. access to shopping, healthcare, work and training, etc.

**Where** would people want to travel to, e.g. local shopping centre, doctor's surgery, local hospital, work, etc.

**When** would people want to travel, e.g. weekdays, weekends, daytime, evening, early morning / late night, etc.

Once the answers to these questions are determined, it will be possible to work out how many volunteers will be required to provide trips, as well as the times / days when their services are likely to be needed.

# How To Get Organised?

A car scheme can be set up and operated on a relatively informal basis. It is a good idea to have a simple constitution which sets out the main aims and rules of the scheme. To operate efficiently, a car scheme needs a management committee, a coordinator to take bookings and a team of volunteer drivers to provide the journeys.

## Management Committee

It is important to have a management committee to steer the scheme. Most schemes operate with a chairperson and secretary and possibly a treasurer, depending on the size of the scheme. Having driver and user representatives on the committee is also advisable to allow their views to inform decisions.

## Coordinator

A coordinator will be needed to deal with journey requests, quoting journey costs and contacting drivers to ask if they are able to provide the journey requested. This role could be a paid or volunteer role or a combination of the two. The coordinator role could be split across a number of volunteers.

## Volunteer Drivers

A scheme cannot operate without a team of willing, able and available volunteers to provide the journeys. There is no point in setting up a scheme until there are enough volunteers. This will depend on the hours the scheme will operate and the amount of time that each volunteer is willing to offer their services.

Drivers volunteer their time to help members of the scheme to make journeys and are reimbursed expenses to cover the cost of the journey so that they are not out of pocket.

## How To Get Started?

At the same time as getting a committee in place, publicising the idea of having a scheme should also be taking place. Other key tasks for getting started are:

- Publicise the scheme by producing a leaflet providing details of the scheme and how to use it. Use the leaflet to promote the scheme via local sources such as the parish magazine, village shop, pub, church, doctor's surgery and other community groups. It may be a good idea to do a leaflet drop around the community
- Create an email account if this is considered to be a suitable way to communicate with members
- Agree a booking / contact number for customers who need to use the service.
- Set up a booking system. This could be a logbook or computer spreadsheet in which journeys, driver and passenger details are recorded.
- Produce a passenger registration form to be completed in advance of making a first trip
- Have a list of drivers with their availability and contact details
- Produce a driver claim form for use by drivers to reclaim expenses
- Purchase receipt books so that drivers can give a receipt to the customer and hand the duplicate to the treasurer / coordinator
- Purchase a map to cover the scheme's operating area or ensure that the coordinator has access to online maps
- Open a community bank account for the sole use of the scheme

## **What Are the Set-Up Costs?**

A social car scheme should be inexpensive to set up. Upfront costs would be dependent on the costs of producing publicity materials, but likely to be just a few hundred pounds. Many schemes are then largely self-funding through the charges made to passengers for journeys.

## **What Sources of Financial Support Are There?**

The county council is only one potential source of start-up and ongoing funding. District, borough and parish councils may also have small funding pots to support local community initiatives. 'Funding Central' is a useful website for identifying potential funding opportunities and annual subscriptions are free for small organisations.

## **Who Can Be a Volunteer Driver?**

Anyone who holds a valid driving licence has the potential to become a car scheme driver. Age should not be considered a barrier. A declaration of good health should be obtained from every driver. The vehicle a volunteer drives must have a valid MOT, car insurance and be suitable for car scheme work.

## **How Are Volunteer Drivers Reimbursed?**

Volunteer drivers can be reimbursed for the running costs of their vehicle. HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) have established an Approved Mileage Allowance Payment (AMAP) rate of £0.45 per mile for the first 10,000 miles, then £0.25 per mile for every mile thereafter. It is not advisable to pay volunteer drivers more than the AMAP as any payment over this amount would be considered to be profit and subject to tax. It may also invalidate the driver's insurance and take the car's operation beyond car sharing and into private hire legislation.

## **How Should Passengers Be Charged?**

Fares set should not exceed the vehicle running costs for that journey. This suggests that fares would not exceed HMRC's Approved Mileage Allowance Payment. Fares, however, may include 'dead' mileage – the miles the volunteer drives to get to and from the passenger from their own home. If more than one passenger is carried at the same time, total fares paid must still not exceed the vehicle running costs. If a scheme intends to charge passengers an administration charge, it is advisable to charge a flat rate booking fee, separate from the pence per mile rate.

For simplicity and as most journeys will be common and made regularly, it may be best to establish a set of fixed tariffs for local journeys. This approach can greatly assist the running of a car scheme and the keeping of accurate financial records.

If a scheme decides to introduce a zone system for fares, care should be taken not to overcharge passengers making shorter trips, as the fare charged could be higher than the vehicle running costs for the journey.

## **What Legal and Insurance Issues Are There?**

Most insurance companies have accepted that participation in a social car scheme does not, for their purposes, constitute operating for 'hire or reward' and therefore a driver's standard insurance policy is adequate. Drivers should not have to pay additional premiums but should notify their insurance company of their involvement in the scheme. Drivers enrolling with the scheme should be asked for details of their insurer and to confirm that they have been informed about their voluntary driving.

Schemes should consider whether to provide the following insurance cover in addition to the driver's insurance:

- Personal accident cover for those involved in driving for the scheme
- Loss of no claims bonus and payment of excess policies for drivers
- Public liability insurance (to protect the interests of the passengers carried)

To comply with the law and avoid vehicle licensing issues, anyone wishing to book a journey must first register as a member of the car scheme. Volunteer drivers must only provide journeys that have been made through the scheme's official booking process.

Although clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is only necessary when individuals have regular contact with vulnerable adults or minors, it is advisable for the scheme to undertake a criminal record check for all volunteer drivers. The DBS makes checks for volunteers free of charge. The scheme might also want to include a safeguard in its constitution that it will not carry minors or vulnerable adults without them being accompanied by a responsible adult (other than the driver).

Car schemes should obtain and securely store volunteer driver and member data in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (2018). When a driver or member enrolls, they should be informed that the scheme will hold their details which will be used and disclosed only for the purposes of operating the car scheme and asked to confirm that this is acceptable.

## **Useful Contacts**

Community Transport Association - [www.ctauk.org.uk](http://www.ctauk.org.uk)

Voluntary Action LeicesterShire VAL - [www.valonline.org.uk](http://www.valonline.org.uk)

Funding Central - [www.fundingcentral.org.uk](http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk)



# Car Sharing

## What is a Car Sharing Scheme?

This is a scheme which connects people wishing to travel with people who are already travelling and have a spare seat in their car. The majority of registered car-sharers tend to live in urban areas but there is the potential for those living in more rural areas to benefit from car-sharing, particularly in areas where passenger transport services are limited.

## How Does it Work?

The scheme involves people registering on an online computer database to become members of the scheme, stating their journey and whether they are offering a lift or requesting one. The database allows users to search for other users making the same or similar journeys. When a suitable match is found, the running costs are divided between those travelling which acts as an incentive for sharing the journey.

All communication is made by members through the website's messaging system, or members can optionally provide a contact telephone number against their listing. An email is sent to the member automatically whenever another member views their contact number. Members do not have to agree to a car share request.

## Who Provides Car Sharing Schemes?

There are a number of service providers offering car sharing schemes, including Liftshare, BlaBlaCar and GoCarShare.

## Is There a Car Sharing Scheme in Leicestershire?

Leicestershire has a car sharing scheme, set up under the city and county council's Choose How You Move programme, called 'Choose How You Move Carshare'. The scheme covers the county area and Leicester.

## How Can the Scheme be Accessed?

Visit [choosehowyoumove.co.uk/carshare](https://choosehowyoumove.co.uk/carshare) to find someone making the same journey. It's free and there are cost savings to be made – as well as possible friendships. The scheme is provided by Liftshare enabling searches for car sharing opportunities in Leicestershire and beyond.

## Can Communities Join the Scheme?

Yes. The county council offers local community groups (and businesses) the opportunity to set up a FREE private Liftshare scheme, which can be accessed through [choosehowyoumove.co.uk/carshare](https://choosehowyoumove.co.uk/carshare). Please contact the county council for more details.

## Why Car Share?

Some journeys have to be made by car, but they don't always have to be solo journeys. Getting started is easy and the benefits will soon follow:

It's social. Sharing a journey means a chat and a laugh with a car share partner or partners along the way – that might make a Monday morning commute slightly easier!

It's easy. Once linked up with a car share partner or group, set out the arrangements that will make it work.

It'll save money. Joining up with others going the same way means sharing the costs of driving. Sharing a 20 mile commute could save around £1,300 every year! Find out how the savings add up with the savings calculator.

Cleaner air and fewer jams. More shared journeys means fewer cars on the road – that means cleaner air, shorter queues and a less stressful journey. If half of UK motorists received a lift on just one day a week, congestion and pollution would be reduced by 10%, and traffic jams by 20%.

## Useful Contacts

Choose How You Move Car Share  
Email [choosehowyoumove@leics.gov.uk](mailto:choosehowyoumove@leics.gov.uk)  
or call **0116 305 7786**

# A Car Club

## What is a Car Club?

A car club is a pool of cars for the use of local people. Members can hire the club's vehicles as and when they require. Car clubs give their members the flexibility of using a car for private or business journeys, without the costs of owning or maintaining one.

## How Does it Work?

Each car club either owns or leases cars that are then made available to the local community for short-term use. The club covers the cost of the insurance, tax and servicing of the vehicles with people usually paying an annual fee to be a member and a charge per hour to hire a vehicle when one is required. There is also usually a mileage charge, but fuel is included in the cost of the hire. Bookings can be made via a website or over the telephone.

## Where do Car Clubs Operate?

Car Clubs usually operate in urban areas; however, they have also been used to improve accessibility in rural areas, particularly in Scotland, operating in small villages such as Creetown in Dumfriesshire, as well as on the island of Bute. In this country, there is a rural car club in operation in Harbury in Warwickshire, which provides free transport to people referred by local social agencies, such as food banks, surgeries, child centres and others, in order for them to reach important appointments that would otherwise prove financially or physically difficult for them.

Car clubs are either run by local volunteers or supported by a local development body. Car clubs which have been set up in rural communities have required significant resource to promote their services, in addition to varying amounts of ongoing funding.

## **Is there an Organisation to Help Set up a Car Club?**

CoMoUk (previously known as Carplus and Bikeplus) supports the development of shared modes of transport. They provide guidance on setting up community and informal car clubs.

## **Useful Contacts**

CoMoUk - [www.Como.org.uk](http://www.Como.org.uk)

CoMoUk Community Car Clubs Handbook - <https://como.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Community-Car-Club-Handbook-2017-FINAL-1.pdf>

Harbury e-Wheels - <https://directory.warwickshire.gov.uk/service/e-wheels>

# Good Neighbour Scheme

## What is a Good Neighbour Scheme?

Good neighbour schemes are set up and run by communities to support people in need within their local area.

## What Kind of Help is Available?

Good neighbour schemes offer a range of services to people of all ages to help keep them safe and continue living independently. The services offered by schemes may include befriending, home visiting, caring for pets during holidays, shopping, household tasks, etc. Some schemes have their own transport elements with volunteers providing lifts to those who need them for a variety of different purposes, such as shopping and attending medical appointments. Many schemes are run at a parish level and are managed by a small group of volunteer coordinators.

## Who Can Use a Good Neighbour Scheme?

Anyone in the scheme's operating area. The service is open to all who have no one to help them, especially in times of need, or those who have limited mobility.

## How Much Will it Cost to Use?

Charges are usually only made for petrol and parking. There is no charge for transport within the local area. All other services are free. As these services are provided on a voluntary basis and there are some related costs, donations are appreciated.

## Is It Safe?

It is advisable for volunteers to have a Disclosure and Barring Service check, be insured by the scheme and carry photographic identification whilst delivering services for the scheme.

## How Is the Scheme Accessed?

A resident calls the scheme on the published telephone number. A coordinator will arrange for a volunteer to help. The coordinator will then phone the resident back to confirm which volunteer will call and at what time. It is likely that there will be fixed time periods for a coordinator to take calls.

## Are There Examples of Schemes in Leicestershire?

Good neighbour schemes have been set up in several locations with support provided by the Rural Community Council (Leicestershire and Rutland). Examples of these Good Neighbour Schemes which contain a transport element include Bottesford; Croft; Sharnford; and Whissendine.

## Useful Contacts

Rural Community Council (Leicestershire and Rutland) - [www.ruralcc.org.uk](http://www.ruralcc.org.uk)

### Good Neighbour Scheme Examples:

Bottesford - [www.bottesfordgns.org.uk](http://www.bottesfordgns.org.uk)

Croft - [www.croftgoodneighbours.com](http://www.croftgoodneighbours.com)

Sharnford - [www.sharnfordparishcouncil.co.uk/good-neighbour-scheme](http://www.sharnfordparishcouncil.co.uk/good-neighbour-scheme)

Whissendine - [www.whissendinegns.org.uk](http://www.whissendinegns.org.uk)

# Community Minibus Scheme

The law governing the operation of community transport services is currently being challenged in the European courts. In the past, community groups operating vehicles with more than eight seats on a 'not for profit' basis have been able to do so under a Section 19 or Section 22 permit. These permits are part of the 1985 Transport Act and were intended to enable community-based transport providers to operate on a 'not-for-profit' basis without the need to hold a Public Service Vehicle Operator's licence or PSV 'O' licence. Conventional bus companies must hold an 'O' licence which is more costly to obtain than a permit and requires operators to comply with more strict rules.

In the past, the law was interpreted as 'not for profit' operation being 'non-commercial' and the Department for Transport considered that Section 19 and Section 22 permit holders did not need to hold an 'O' licence. However, the legal challenge suggests that if an operator receives payment (fares and / or grant) to run a service, then they are operating in a commercial fashion - even if their overall aim is not for profit – and should hold an 'O' licence.

The Department for Transport consulted on the use of these permits in summer 2018, but a decision on how the law should be applied in the future has not yet been made. As a result, the county council is not in a position to assist community groups to introduce new community minibus schemes at this time. Once a decision has been reached, the county council will review its approach and update this guidance as appropriate.

## Useful links

Section 19 and 22 Permits: Not for Profit Passenger Transport Guidance (Updated 1 February 2018)

**[www.gov.uk/government/publications/section-19-and-22-permits-not-for-profit-passenger-transport/section-19-and-22-permits-not-for-profit-passenger-transport](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/section-19-and-22-permits-not-for-profit-passenger-transport/section-19-and-22-permits-not-for-profit-passenger-transport)**

Letter of Clarification from the Department for Transport Regarding Use of Permits  
**[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/662482/community-transport-permits-exemptions.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/662482/community-transport-permits-exemptions.pdf)**

# Community Transport (CT)

Community Transport (CT) operators provide a valuable service for members of the public with mobility difficulties who are unable to use local bus services, as well as rurally isolated people who do not have any transport of their own. These services are provided by community organisations, with much of the work being undertaken on a voluntary basis.

There are CT operators in each district and borough of Leicestershire. Some of these operate social car schemes, some operate minibus services and some operate both. The county council provides grant funding for those CT operators which provide 'Complementary Public Transport' or 'CPT'. CPT services are minibus and social car scheme trips for:

- individual members of the public with mobility problems who are unable to use local bus services, including frail elderly and physically disabled people, as well as those with less obvious disabilities. Individuals book a trip and a fare is charged
- rurally isolated people who do not have any transport of their own

CPT journeys include primary healthcare (doctor, dentist, optician, etc.) and shopping, which are two of the county council's priority journey types.

Some of the CT operators which provide social car schemes also receive funding from the health sector to provide trips to attend hospital appointments.

What all of the CT schemes have in common is the ongoing need to recruit new volunteers to administer and provide journeys. It might be that to avoid setting up a new organisation, simply working with a local CT operator to recruit residents to volunteer with them, could help to deliver the desired access improvements for a community's residents.

More information about Community Transport and the services available in Leicestershire can be found on the county council's Choose How You Move web site via this link [www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk/everyday/community-transport/](http://www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk/everyday/community-transport/)