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Social enterprise identification mark launched to boost profile

Community transport social enterprises could be eligible to use a new symbol of identification, being launched in November.

A new branding regime will include a mark for those social enterprises that make more than 50 per cent of their income from trading along with a campaign to spread awareness of social enterprise.

The mark will be based on the social enterprise mark developed by south west social enterprise network Rise.

The idea behind the project is to enable social enterprises to trade more easily with each other, to promote socially-aware businesses to consumers and service users and to promote social enterprise to public

service commissioners. The mark will be launched with an accompanying awareness campaign.

The branding, which has been developed by the Office of the Third Sector in the Cabinet Office and the Social Enterprise Coalition (SEC), will be launched on Social Enterprise Day on 19 November.

Steve Wyler, director of the Development Trusts Association, is chair of the 14-member social enterprise identifier project steering group that was set up to find a way to brand the sector with professional marketing advice from the government's Central Office of Information.

He said: 'These identifiers will enable our movement to conquer the lack of

awareness and understanding that has been such a barrier to us.'

Dai Powell, chair of the CTA and chief executive of transport social enterprise the HCT Group, said: 'It is one of the most important things we can do as a movement, but we need to act now, and we need to get it right.'

The branding project was deemed necessary after research last year by the government's Central Office of Information found that only 20 per cent of those people most likely to support social enterprise knew anything about it.

SEC estimates there are 62,000 social enterprises in the UK.

To find out more, visit www.socialenterprise.org.uk ■

Volunteer of the issue

It's a 100-mile round trip from Cookstown in Northern Ireland to Belfast but driver Joan O'Donnell (pictured, right), 58, loves to drive. And, according to passenger John McFarland (pictured, left), 74, and Cookstown Rural Community Transport manager Brigid Scullion, Joan's warm personality and great chats make for an enjoyable trip.

Joan: I've been a driver for five years now. I had some free time and I wanted to volunteer for something. I enjoy driving and meeting people so community transport seemed right. I get a great deal of satisfaction out of the fact that something I enjoy doing helps ease the lives of others.

John: I've been using community



transport for eight years. I had a stroke and the doctors told me that trying to travel by bus by myself would be dangerous. Whenever I phone up and say I need to go to the doctor or the hospital or the local luncheon club or the shops they're always there for me.

Joan: Today I've got seven people to drive, including John who lives three-and-a-half miles out of town, but I

certainly get more out of it than I give to it. I enjoy being out and about and I enjoy the variety of the drives and the people you meet.

John: I'm very glad Joan is my driver, she's a grand woman, because we talk about football and my beloved Gunners [Arsenal].

Joan: Some people enjoy a chat more than others but we have good chats with John.

Brigid: Joan's too modest. She's a brilliant communicator and can talk about anything. She's a very pleasant and caring lady who enlightens everyone around her.

To nominate a volunteer to feature in CTA Journal and to be entered into Volunteer of the Year 2009, contact Gemma Hampson on 020 8533 8891 or email gemma@ctajournal.org

Awards galore at Wales conference

Grass Routes made an impact at the awards presented at the CTA's Wales annual conference in October.

Grass Routes, which is a Monmouthshire County Council-run section 22 service, won community transport operator of the year and Trevor Phillips, who helped set up the service, was named volunteer of the year.

Betsan Caldwell, the CTA's director in Wales, said: 'The judges felt that Grass Routes was an example of a forward-thinking approach to the delivery of a rural service and they felt Trevor had been instrumental in putting forward the initial idea to the local authority after identifying a need in his local area.'

Grass Routes also runs a registered local bus service and has seen passenger numbers increase by 50 per cent in the last year.

The award for partner of the year, sponsored by the South West Wales



The Welsh award winners (left to right): Ceri Rees of best partner Pembrokeshire County Council, Richard Cope of best operator Monmouthshire County Council, volunteer of the year Trevor Phillips of Monmouthshire County Council's Grass Routes, MIDAS driver of the year Anthony Slater of Neath Port Talbot Borough Council and MIDAS runner up Oliver Jones of Dolen Teifi

Integrated Transport Consortium, went to Pembrokeshire County Council.

The *Fit for the Future* conference, held in Llandudno, examined how the Local Transport Act 2008 would affect

operators in Wales, hosted a panel discussion featuring cross-party Welsh Assembly members and heard from Dr Brian Gibbons, the minister responsible for public transport. ■

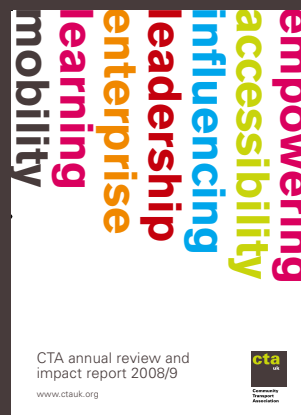
CTA meets CPT

In November, the Department for Transport (DfT) hosted a meeting between the CTA and the Confederation of Passenger Transport UK (CPT), which represents the commercial bus, coach and light rail industries.

The meeting was called in response to concerns expressed by smaller commercial passenger transport operators that community transport operators were acting in a way that represented unfair competition.

There was a full and amicable discussion on some aspects of the issue and the DfT offered supportive views. The CPT asked the DfT to look at how various EU regulations have been implemented into UK law. The DfT will be looking at the CPT viewpoint and the CTA will be providing information to the CPT about the way in which community transport operates with a view to agreeing a way forward. The CTA will continue to monitor the situation on behalf of its members. ■

Annual review



The *CTA Annual Review and Impact Report 2008/9* is out now.

The publication outlines how the CTA is working across the UK to support its members to deliver accessible and affordable transport to achieve a fairer society. It sets out how the CTA has performed against the priorities outlined in its Strategic Plan.

See www.ctauk.org ■

Website revamp

The CTA is revamping its website, www.ctauk.org, as part of its ongoing investment in online member services.

The improved website will be redesigned in December. The work is being led by CTA director of finance Nigel Bagshaw and ICT officer Anthony Finn.

With the website now receiving more than 1,000 visits a week, the CTA's chief executive Keith Halstead said the new approach was necessary.

'We want to respond to that high number of visits,' he said.

'It's about having more e-based resources rather than printing publications. It means we can be more environmentally friendly, but it's also about creating a better service for our members, who can get all the information they need whenever they need it.'

New information about section 22 will be available online in the CTA's new professional services section, which already has more than 100 subscribers. ■



Problem solvers

Are you facing a community transport problem? Perhaps you're assessing the implications of recent legislation or considering the specifications of a new vehicle. Whatever your community transport poser, *CTA Journal* can help.

Our problem solver, Amanda Howard (pictured), is a member of the CTA's advice and information team. Every day the team members field enquiries from across the UK's community transport sector and have

a wealth of knowledge and experience to draw upon.

If you have a problem that you'd like solved on this page, please write to Problem Solvers at *CTA Journal*, 26 Gransden Avenue, London E8 3QA.

“Our small school accepts donations from parents towards our school fund. We also run non-uniform days for which the pupils pay a small amount of money. We operate a minibus to take our students out on non-educational trips. The cost of running the vehicle is subsidised by the school fund. What do we need to do to ensure we are operating legally?”

Where there is a direct fare paid by the pupil or on behalf of the pupil that allows them to travel, this is defined as “hire or reward”. An indirect fare or donation which gives the “right” to travel (whether the “right” is used or not), is still a form of hire or reward and needs an operator's licence to be legal.

If yours is a private profit-making school then any transport will need to be operated under a PSV operator's licence, following all the conditions that are related to this. Further information on this type of operation can be found in *Public Vehicle Operator Licensing Guide for Operators* (PSV 437-01) which is available from the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) website.

All the drivers of the minibus would need to hold a full D or D1 entitlement, which is gained by taking a second test. The minibus would need to be maintained to PSV standards and some journeys may fall under EU drivers' hours rules and would need the use of a tachograph.

However, if the school is a local authority school or one with charitable status, you can operate using the legal framework of section 19 of the Road Traffic Act 1985 which has recently been updated by the Local

Transport Act 2008. A section 19 permit allows an eligible organisation to operate MPVs (vehicles with up to eight passenger seats) and minibuses (vehicles with between nine and 16 passenger seats) although the operating rules for each are slightly different and advice should be sought from the CTA's advice and information service.

The driving licence requirements for minibuses changed in 1997 which sometimes causes confusion. Drivers who passed their car test before 1 January 1997 automatically gained a D1 entitlement with a restriction code of 101. This means they can drive a section 19 permit vehicle as a volunteer or a paid member of staff. Drivers who have passed their car test on or after this date no longer gained the D1 (101) although they can drive a section 19 permit vehicle if they meet all the following criteria:

- They are 21 or older, but no older than 70 years old unless they pass a PCV medical
- They have held their B entitlement for at least two years
- They don't tow a trailer
- They receive no payment or other consideration for driving the vehicle other than out-of-pocket expenses
- The minibus has a gross weight not exceeding 3.5 tonnes, or 4.25 tonnes including any specialised equipment for carrying disabled passengers.

The Department for Transport and the Department for Education and Skills issued guidance in 2006 for teaching staff who hold post-1997 driving licences, although this is yet to be tested in law. This states that as long as these teaching staff don't have

driving duties in their contract and receive no extra overtime pay then they meet the fourth requirement of the list above. If all the other points are also met then they can drive the school minibus. This guidance is in the advice and learning section of the CTA website.

You should be aware that as of 1 October 2009 VOSA has the power to impound a vehicle if they suspect it is being operated illegally for hire or reward. They can even sell it or have it destroyed.

VOSA can also give a fixed penalty notice if the driver is not complying with drivers' hours or if the vehicle is overloaded. The driver will be held responsible for compliance with the necessary inspections and defect reporting procedures. It is therefore very important that schools ensure their drivers undertake a documented walk-around check prior to driving the vehicle and that there is a defect reporting system in place as outlined in VOSA's *Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness*. If your teaching staff drive an unroadworthy vehicle they could be given a range of fixed penalties up to £200.

The CTA has devised a Frequently Asked Questions advice leaflet for schools, colleges and universities operating minibuses. This can be used in conjunction with our *Annual Minibus Management Checklist*. Both of these can be found in the advice and learning section of the CTA website. ■

The CTA has a membership package designed for schools, colleges and universities called Safe and Legal Educational Transport. Joining the CTA will keep you up to date with important legislation and allows the CTA to issue section 19 permits to you. Further information on 0161 351 1475.

The CTA advice and information service

To contact an expert adviser in the CTA's advice and information service, call 0845 130 6195 (9am to 5pm) or email advice@ctauk.org. In Northern Ireland, call 028 9094 1661 or email gerry@ctauk.org. There are many leaflets available in the advice and learning section of the CTA's website www.ctauk.org. CTA Ireland manages its own service for the Republic of Ireland.