Welcome to the CTA Wales News Bulletin. The first quarter of 2016 (and the last of the financial year) has been and gone in a flash! It’s been a busy and exciting few months so take a look below to see what’s been happening – we are pleased to present some good news stories. Also, as we begin to look ahead to the next financial year it’s time to think about what it might hold, both for the CTA and for the sector as a whole – check out ‘What’s on the horizon?’.

Warm regards,

Siân Summers-Rees

Director for Wales
National Assembly for Wales’ Enterprise and Business Committee launched their inquiry report at Senedd on the 17th March 2016.

CTA Wales facilitated the attendance of VEST who brought service users from Adamsdown Day Centre. VEST was able to showcase their new bus - which got its TV debut several times the next day. The service users enjoyed themselves and were able to talk to the AM’s about the importance of CT to them. We all tucked in to the tea and welsh cakes after the launch as the fantastic service users got their point across – “the CT services that VEST provide is their lifeline”.

CTA Wales were pleased to be able to have significant input into a report put together by the National Assembly for Wales’ Enterprise and Business Committee. The report, entitled ‘Bus and Community Transport Services in Wales’, addresses how we can improve the provision of accessible and inclusive transport across Wales. Many of CTA’s recommendations were taken on board. See Siân’s blog, which looks at some of the report’s recommendations and discusses what they might mean for the future of accessible and inclusive community transport across Wales.

‘Volunteer Recruitment Day’ - Gorseinon Community Car Scheme.

In December 2015, CTA Wales working in partnership with City & County of Swansea held a ‘volunteer recruitment day’ on behalf of Gorseinon Community Car Scheme. Gorseinon Car Scheme is run totally by volunteers and provide much needed car transport for elderly and/or disabled Gorseinon residents. Most journeys are provided to enable people to get to hospital appointments at nearby Morriston and Singleton Hospitals, but other journeys undertaken include trips to the doctor’s surgery, shopping excursions or social journeys. The car scheme desperately needed volunteers to help provide cover and support for the scheme co-ordinator due to the considerable increase in demand for their transport services over the last year.

To support Gorseinon Car Scheme the CTA Wales’s development officer for South West Wales and City & County of Swansea’s Community Transport Officer jointly set up a community transport information stall within Asda Supermarket in Gorseinon, Swansea. Throughout the day, a considerable number of people stopped to talk to the officers to find out more about the Gorseinon Car Scheme. The officers were pleased that many people knew about the scheme and expressed how valuable the scheme was to many vulnerable people within the local community. At the end of a tiring day, and after the officers losing their voices, Lynda Rice, scheme co-ordinator, was pleased to receive the news that twelve people were seriously interested in volunteering and had left their details for follow up meetings to be arranged to discuss training and to find out further information. There was interest in both driving and office volunteering opportunities. This locally targeted approach to recruiting volunteers was clearly very effective and another volunteer recruitment day is planned for Spring 2016.

CTA Wales brings together stakeholders to enable dedicated community transport parking bays to be provided at key hospital sites.

CTA Wales has played an important role in bringing together stakeholders to help end the difficulties faced by operators when dropping off or picking up their service users at Morriston and Singleton Hospitals in Swansea. At Morriston hospital for example, recent infrastructure changes, staff working pattern amendments and visiting hours changes, had all served to make the parking situation worse for operators. In addition, recent changes have meant that community transport organisations no longer qualify for a Blue Badge in Swansea. The changes can often mean that passengers who do not have their own individual badge are faced with long walking distances to/from the hospital car park. Drivers from community transport operators were frequently reporting that service users were getting stressed as a result of the parking issues, with passengers worrying that they would not be able to find the driver or the vehicle again once their appointment had ended.
In January 2016, CTA Wales organised a meeting between Swansea and Neath Port Talbot operators and Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board (ABMU) to discuss the parking difficulties and provide examples of some of the parking issues that have been experienced. At the end of a very positive meeting, ABMU agreed to provide four dedicated community transport parking spaces at Morriston Hospital and two spaces at Singleton Hospital. Operators have to provide the registration numbers of their vehicles to ABMU so that parking permits can be issued thereby minimising any un-authorised parking. In addition, operators have also been granted use of staff short stay parking bays (where they can park as long as they need to) at Singleton Hospital, free of charge.

It is anticipated that the changes will make it easier for operators to park much closer to the hospital’s entrance, improving accessibility for service users. Service users will also feel more reassured when finishing their appointments as they will know exactly where their driver has parked.

These changes have been seen by local community transport schemes as a major step forward in providing appropriate access to hospital sites for the whole community. CTA Wales extends our thanks to Joanne Jones at ABMU who has made it possible!

Non-Emergency Patient Transport (NEPTS) – more good news.

CTA Wales has been working hard to increase the opportunities for operators who wish to get involved in the delivery of NEPTS – we have been really pleased that some organisations have already benefitted from the opportunity to run pilots. In January the Welsh Government accepted the NEPTS Business Case. The Business Case further cements CT’s important role in the delivery of NEPTS (and in transport to health generally). We hope to see more opportunities for CT in the future. Additionally our next step is to start to look at developing integrated projects and plans with the Wales Ambulance Service NHS Trust and
the health boards to address the increasing demands on CT services from patients who do not fall under the NEPTS eligibility criteria.

CTA Wales and AMVYCP were pleased to be asked to attend an event with the Deputy Minister for Health, Vaughan Gething (photo below). See below a link to the WG press release on plans for an overhaul of Non-Emergency Patient Transport in Wales.

http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/health/plans-overhaul-non-emergency-patient-10737026

Dewis Cymru presents an opportunity to raise awareness of community transport services in Wales.

Dewis Cymru is the IT information initiative sponsored by the Welsh Government, which has been piloted in North Wales. Dewis Cymru is also the pan-Wales version of each Local Authority’s Single Point of Access, and most Local Authorities have recruited Third Sector network co-ordinators. Dewis Cymru will be rolled out to the rest of Wales in June 2016. Those logging onto the website will be able to find services, activities, advice and support available in their local area. CTA Wales has registered CT Online with Dewis Cymru and we would encourage all community transport organisations to register their services on Dewis Cymru.

CTA Wales hopes that Dewis Cymru, and The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act discussed below, will present a good opportunity to improve partnership working to ensure that gaps in service provision and unmet need are recorded and passed to commissioning bodies.
If any CT organisation would like help with Dewis registration please get in touch with us at CTA Wales.

CTA Director for Wales meets the Vale 50+ Strategy Forum Transport Task Group.

The CTA Wales Director was invited to the Vale 50+ Transport Task Group as a guest speaker. Siân did a presentation about community transport – it fuelled lots of interesting discussions and questions. Siân went on to highlight the excellent services in the Vale of Glamorgan area – Greenlinks, East Vale Community Transport (EVCT), Dinas Powys Voluntary Concern, VEST Community Transport and Age Connect Good Neighbours scheme. Don Read, the Vice Chair of the forum and trustee at EVCT, also contributed to the presentation and spoke of his past experiences of volunteering for EVCT as a driver and a trustee.

A toolkit for Strategic Trustee (and Volunteer) recruitment

In response to the difficulties faced by many organisations to secure trustees and volunteers, CTA Wales has created a recruitment toolkit for Community Transport organisations. The toolkit provides a step by step process and easy to use tools and templates that will help you develop a strategic approach to the recruitment of trustees and volunteers. After successfully piloting the toolkit with a couple of organisations and receiving favourable feedback, the toolkit is now available on our website entitled ‘Finding the right people - A toolkit for Strategic Trustee (and Volunteer) recruitment’. You can find it here: www.ctauk.org/in-your-area/wales.aspx.

Please feel free to provide us with feedback – we hope you find it useful. Please contact us if you would like additional support or assistance in the use of the toolkit.
Featured services.
Please feel free to send us details of any new services.

O Ddrws i Ddrws and its Costal Bus service.

The Llŷn Coastal Bus service, funded by the Coastal Communities Fund, Natural Resources Wales and the Santander Foundation, will run four days a week in 2016. This bus service was first run in 2015 and it was also the first time O Ddrws i Ddrws had run a Section 22 service. In preparation they visited the Green Dragon bus service in Pembrokeshire, saying: “We are very grateful for all their advice and support on how to run a flexible routed service which really helped us to develop the coastal bus route”.

The service operates on the beautiful Llŷn peninsula – being the unique selling point of the service as it’s a wonderful walking holiday destination in the heartland of Welsh speaking Wales. The feedback received on the service has been extremely positive. The only negative is that the project is totally dependent on outside funding and therefore the future financial sustainability of the service remains a concern. However the project has definitely helped O Ddrws i Ddrws reach new markets and they have also seen an increased usage of the established Door to Door serviced and more community groups registered. Most recently they have run an ‘Access to Health’ pilot project and, with CTA's help, are now in discussions with the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust. O Ddrws i Ddrws has also benefited from core funding from the Scottish Power Foundation for the last three years which has also been of considerable help to them. These are all positive developments that stem from O Ddrws i Ddrws’ commitment to find new ways of working – congratulations from CTA Wales.

Wheels to Work scheme launched to help Swansea residents.

The City and County of Swansea launched its Wheels to Work scheme on the 18th March. The council has purchased six scooters, thanks to Welsh Government funding and financial support from Unilever. Those who sign up for the scheme pay a weekly fee to hire the scooter. The fee also covers tax, insurance and maintenance of the scooter, as well as some training which is provided by the council's road safety team.

Cllr David Hopkins, Swansea Council's Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, joined Edwina Hart AM, the Welsh Government's Transport Minister, to launch the scheme.

Cllr Hopkins said: "This is a fantastic scheme that helps support people who are having difficulties using existing transport methods to either get to work or attend training courses."
Community transport is about being innovative and looking at the needs of a wide cross section of residents”.

What’s on the horizon?

Possible EU funding proposal

CTA Wales would like to inform you that we are in the process of developing an application for funding.

The focus/title for the project was agreed with the Welsh Government to align with current priorities. The content of the proposal and the method of delivery was developed to align with these priorities whilst integrating measures that would address many of the key issues faced by the CT sector. This is an exciting prospect as there is an indication that the project could receive up to 5 years of funding, providing some degree of stability that is often rare.

We want the views and needs of the sector, stakeholders and partners to be reflected in the project objectives and the finer details of how the project will be delivered. Any responses will also help build up the evidence of need that will support a positive evaluation of the project by the Wales European Funding Office.

Please feel free to contact us to discuss the project or complete the proforma which is available on our website at http://www.ctauk.org/in-your-area/wales.aspx

All eyes will be on the Assembly in May when elections for the fifth term of the National Assembly take place.

In May, all eyes will be on the Welsh Assembly elections and, whatever the result, Wales will have additional powers over transport – but what additional powers?

Currently the National Assembly for Wales has powers concerning highways and transport, yet it doesn’t have responsibility for bus registration or regulation. The Draft Wales Bill, published in October 2015, does transfer some further powers to Wales, although many argue that it doesn’t go far enough with regards to transport devolution. Some advocates within the transport sector argue that in order for the Welsh Government to achieve its objective of an integrated transport system then further devolution of powers are required. The Draft Wales Bill published in October 2015 is not the end of the story - the devolution of more transport powers to Wales might still happen. On 28th February the Welsh Affairs Select Committee published a report on its scrutiny of the Draft Wales Bill, which identified significant issues with the draft Bill. In a statement on 29th February the then Secretary of State for Wales, Stephen Crabb, responded by announcing a pause in the development of
the Bill and a change in approach to the drafting of some of its key provisions. Fast forward to March – and on 7th March the First Minister of Wales published the Government and Laws in Wales Bill, in effect an alternative Draft Wales Bill. The Bill provides for an immediate change from a conferred powers model to a reserved powers model. We are not constitution experts but we conclude that will enable the devolution of further transport powers. See the alternative draft bill here: 
http://gov.wales/about/cabinet/cabinetstatements/2016/governmentandlaws/?lang=en

Local government re-organisation.

In June 2015, the Welsh Government published its long-awaited map for the future configuration of Wales’ 22 local authorities and proposed reducing the number of local authorities to 8. The impact of this legislation should not be under estimated. The Welsh Local Government Association commented that: “The Draft Local Government (Wales) Bill is potentially one of the most significant and far-reaching pieces of public service reform legislation since devolution”.

Many have long recognised the need for public service reform however there remain radically different views within local government, political parties and across the Assembly itself. Some disagree as to whether a compelling case has even been made for reorganisation at all and question whether reorganisation should occur during a period of austerity. Crucially, opinion remains extremely divided on what the future shape of local government should be if reorganisation does occur.

Not everything is uncertain in Wales, however! There are two pieces of exciting new legislation which could impact positively on the community transport sector.

Firstly: the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015. This Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It will ensure that public bodies listed in the Act focus more on long term issues; that they work better with people, communities and each other; and take a more joined-up approach. The legislation has been hailed as pioneering, with Nikhil Seth (Director of Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs) at the United Nations saying ‘what Wales is doing today the world will do tomorrow.’

The aim of the Act is to help create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future and to make sure we are all working towards the same vision. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals: a prosperous Wales; a resilient Wales; a healthier Wales; a more equal Wales; a Wales of cohesive communities; a Wales of a vibrant and thriving Welsh Language; and a globally responsive Wales. We’re confident that community transport could play a key
role in supporting public authorities to meet these goals and CTA Wales is starting to think about how we can support the community transport sector to capitalise on this opportunity.

Secondly: the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act which will come into effect from the 1st April 2016. This Act provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support and carers who need support, all aimed at transforming social services in Wales. The Act changes the way people’s needs are assessed and the way services are delivered: people will have more of a say in the care and support they receive. It also promotes a range of help available within the community to reduce the need for formal, planned support which the CTA hopes will lead to improved partnership working between local authorities and the community transport sector.

So, despite all the uncertainty and challenges, we can look forward a future that we think will hold great opportunities for community transport. Once again we thank you for all the difference you are making to communities in Wales and look forward to working with you in next financial year.

Warm regards,

Siân Summers-Rees

Stay in touch! You can follow us on Twitter, keep-up-to date with our blog or sign up to our fortnightly news brief.

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