



Okehampton District Community Transport Group

September 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

Consideration of the Ring & Ride and Community Car Services in your Parish Precept.

The Okehampton District Community Transport Group (ODCTG) exists to serve the older or more disabled members of our community by providing them with the means of getting about when they are unable to use either their own or public transport. We are very proud of our service, which has been in existence for 33 years.

Our Ring & Ride fifteen-seat minibus, which can cater easily for wheelchair passengers, does daily trips to and from Okehampton from different locations each day. All our passengers tell us how grateful they are for this service. For some it is the only day they get out of the house to meet other people.

Due to the increase in demand we now have two wheelchair accessible vehicles which are used for visits to doctors or hospitals, and also to supplement the minibus for other trips.

For those who prefer a more personal one-to-one service to get them to the doctor's or hospital or any social visits there is the Community Car Scheme which is provided by volunteer drivers using their own cars. Again our passengers express their appreciation of this service without which they would have great difficulty. As so many of our clients are in rural locations we run up a lot of 'dead' miles which we need to pay the driver but which the passengers do not pay for, to try and help those who find it difficult to pay for transport out of their income.

In 2016 we purchased a 15 seater minibus which we are using as a community bus, available to groups as well as our own lifestyle trips. The trips run each Tuesday and we also have Saturday and Sunday trips when we have an available driver. It is regularly booked by groups such as the Parkinsons, MS Group, local Church and youth groups. We keep the costs as low as possible, just covering our costs, however we do need to obtain funding for the ongoing insurance and regular servicing costs.

The demand for our car scheme continues to increase each year putting our service under pressure. We currently have over 1800 individual clients registered with our scheme plus we provide assistance with local care homes and facilities.

We have continued to have a huge increase in the number of new clients registering for our services which in turn has increased the number of requests we are receiving. Unfortunately this has led to us having to decline some bookings as our volunteers can only do so much! This is very disappointing to us and we are doing our best to recruit more volunteers to enable us to cover as many as possible.



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STATISTICS

Ring & Ride - The annual figures have started to return to normal with 889 passengers being taken shopping into Okehampton and 12719 miles covered from April 2022 to March 2023.

Lifestyle Trips - These trips have become popular with an increase in new clients and people wanting to take advantage of a day out now that restrictions have been removed, we have taken 666 passengers to various destinations, covering 7464 miles. Often we have had to put on an extra vehicle so that we don't disappoint anyone.

We also had 30 private hires for our bus.

Volunteer Car & Wheelchair Accessible Scheme

April 2022 to March 2023

We carried 3130 passengers, 149 in wheelchairs on 5210 journeys. We received 642 cancellations and were unable to help 232 requests, mainly due to the extremely short notice provided but also the high demand on our volunteers. Our drivers covered 97658 miles and donated 8500 volunteer hours assisting our clients.

This scheme costs £26000 per year to run.

We cover a very rural area of approximately 274 square miles with transport out of our catchment area to healthcare appointments.

We currently have 30 clients registered in your area, some of whom use us on a regular basis for the Ring and Ride shopping bus, for Wheelchair Accessible Transport, our Volunteer Car Scheme and lifestyle trips

Devon County Council and West Devon Borough Council currently provide funding to ODCTG, although DCC have not increased this in over 10 years and WDBC cut the grant by 50% last year and there are no guarantees that this funding will be available in future years. We do appreciate that in the present financial climate your Council may find it hard to finance all it wishes to do, but it is also now that we desperately need your support more than ever if we are to keep up our vital services. The general increases in all costs and especially the seemingly unstoppable rise in that of fuel means that our services are running at a loss. If your Council has supported us in the past, our most grateful thanks and the hope that you will be able to continue to do so. If not please, please, try and help us this year. Our budget is closely monitored by Devon County Council and they have approved our business plan for the forthcoming year. Our accounts have been filed with the Charity Commission on time every year and are available to view online.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, and to consider our request. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to know more about us or you would like one of us to come and do a presentation at one of your meetings.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Sue Wonnacott
Manager