



# Okehampton District Community Transport Group

## NEWSLETTER – November 2023

### Introductions

As this will be my first newsletter I thought I would start it off by properly introducing myself, although at the time of writing it has been nearly 7 weeks of being in post, and you've all made me feel so welcome, I feel like it's been longer (In a good way!). When we first moved to Devon, with 4 young kids back in 1996 we lived up at Parklands, Okehampton, and at the time the station was very much closed! So, to see it open, winning awards and being popular with users is fantastic progress for Okehampton, and the future of its transport links.

We now live in Northlew and it is very much a family-do. With Dan – my son running the Green Dragon, and in the same year that he became landlord (2014), Mum & Dad moved from Surbiton to Northlew, and bought a place just across the square from us. Sadly Mum died last year and since then me & Steve have taken on the

care of my Dad, which has been a real adjustment for all of us. At the time Mum died, I was working at Tavistock Area Support Services (TASS) and despite the fantastic support the team & trustees gave me, sorting out a care routine with Dad, and dealing with grief, it became clear to me, that just for the time being, I really needed to concentrate on family & home.

Fast forward to just over a year later, and as soon as I saw the post at ODCTG, it felt the right time to get back out to work again. My experience working in the third sector, started in 2008 when I was involved with managing the local Credit Union, in Okehampton, then I managed our local community shop, in Northlew and then of course I was at TASS. All of these organisations rely on the time, effort and commitment of volunteers, and it has been an absolute pleasure and humbling experience working alongside them.

The volunteer Trustees have been extremely welcoming and supportive and share a collective goal on what ODCTG's future could hold, and it will be a privilege to help them deliver that and be part of the team. So with introductions out of the way, let's get to the more interesting content!

The core of ODCTG is of course the drivers, without whom, we would be twiddling our thumbs and our community would be without a facility to take passengers to crucial medical appointments or the pleasure of a social outing. I see how dedicated they are to their passengers, in the excellent service that they deliver, with professionalism and a caring attitude. So a massive thank you to them.

### Our Winners.....



### September:

1<sup>st</sup> – Ann Davey

2<sup>nd</sup> – Ursula Radford

3<sup>rd</sup> – Jane Wood

### October:

1<sup>st</sup> – Carolyn Osborne

2<sup>nd</sup> – Diana Butler

3<sup>rd</sup> – Marlene Mahoney

### November:

1<sup>st</sup> – Ann Weaver

2<sup>nd</sup> - Keith Grant

3<sup>rd</sup> – Betty Welham

Well done & thank you all for taking part, this helps to support the service we offer. If you would like to join the 100 Club, contact the office on 01837 55000. For £12.00 annual membership you could win a share of the prize fund each month.

### Ring & Ride

Storm Ciaran tried it's best to halt the ring & ride bus, but Mark safely got those who needed to get into town, there and dry, well done Mark!

### Trips

All of the trips have been very popular, and with some having long reserve lists that we could fill the bus twice! So with that in mind we are delighted that there will be another trip to Durrant House, in Bideford.

The next newsletter will be before Christmas and this will include the January & February trips

*(Bookings will not be taken until we have published the details) Bookings are, as always, first come first served, this*

includes the reserve list. As we get into the winter months, we may have to cancel at short notice.

## December 2023 Trips

### December

3/12/23 – Sunday Lunch, Durrant Hotel, Bideford

4/12/23 – (Monday) Blackdown Garden Centre

14/12/23 – (Thursday) Exeter Christmas Market

19/12/23 – (Tuesday) Endsleigh Garden Centre

The coffee morning held on the 7<sup>th</sup> October, was a great opportunity for me to meet some of you that use our services and some of our drivers. A brilliant £579 was raised. Thank you to all who helped out, a fantastic effort, and a lovely time was had by all. Next one will be in Spring 2024!

## Community Transport Week

Community Transport Week was held from the 16<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> October.

Celebrating all things Community Transport, it was a great opportunity to share our service users' experiences and what this service means to them. As well as to highlight what motivates our volunteer drivers, and why volunteering for us is such a great practical way to help your community.

One of our service users penned the following lovely poem. Here it is if you missed it on our social media pages.

*Ring and Ride is the service I seek  
That takes me out Thursday for shopping each week.*

*A kind happy driver we have who's named Mark  
Who cheerfully drives his bus into Glebe Park.*

*We collect the 'Springfield' ladies who come on the bus,*

*All seated safely without any fuss.*

*We arrive in Okehampton at half past nine  
Enough hours to do shopping and, for me, that's fine.*

*My pension buys shopping and a few extra things  
Then, collected at Waitrose me, back home he brings*

*Stacked up with my shopping bags,*

*(For Mark, such a chore!)*

*But it's lovely 'cos he brings them right into the door.*

*What would we all do, if this was to end?*

*Because, during this time, we've all made a friend*

*And, it's lovely to feel free, one day of the week*

*So I say 'thank you' to Mark and Ring o Ride bus*

*For taking us shopping and so good to us.*

*Soon - we shall have Friday outings again,*

*Whether it's sunshine or whether it's rain,*

*Transported to places, some old and some new*

*With always something pleasant to view.*

*This jolly service is needed no doubt*

*Because, without it some would never get out.*

*Long may R & R be with us for sure -*

*Without these nice trips life would be such a bore.*

## Social Media

We have a new Facebook page @OkehamptonandDistrictCommunityTransportGroup (note the 'and' is spelt out).

Please like and follow us for updates and photos.

We've also joined Instagram @Okehampton Community Transport, please follow us there too.

Please check out a brilliant video put together by Amanda one of our trustees, which reflects the heart of our service.

## Events

Pop into the Charter Hall on the 21<sup>st</sup> November and join us at the Okehampton Community Wellbeing Fair.



**Okehampton Community Wellbeing Fair**

Come, Find Out,  
Join The Conversation

Local Services  
Community Info  
Health  
Volunteering  
Benefits  
Housing  
Refreshments

Tuesday 21st  
November 2023  
10am-2pm

**Charter Hall**  
Okehampton EX20 1HN

For info please contact  
billie@westdevoncvcs.org.uk

Devon County Council  
Okehampton United Charities  
West Devon CVS  
Charity Number 1119730

For those who haven't seen it we are hoping to show our Community Transport Video, it really does showcase our work well and is worth the watch.

## Help us, Join us, Support Us

There are many ways you can support your local Community Transport Group.

- \* Advocate for us in your local community – contact Paula for details 01837 55000
- \* Legacy – to ensure others are able to receive our services, remember us in your will
- \* Donations

## Current Volunteering Opportunities



We are always looking for volunteer drivers, so please contact us if you would like to find out more. Specifically, we need more Wheelchair Access Vehicle (WAV) trained drivers, using our own vehicles. Please let us know if this would interest you.

We also need to increase our volunteer drivers in these areas:

- \* Beaworthy & Halwill
- \* Lydford & Bratton
- \* Northlew
- \* Whiddon Down

Contact [office@odctg.co.uk](mailto:office@odctg.co.uk) to have an informal chat about what's involved.

### Ring & Ride - Destinations

If you live in Okehampton or the surrounding area you can travel with ease from your own front door by using the Okehampton Ring & Ride bus service.

Monday: Sticklepath – Okehampton

Tuesday: Winkleigh – Okehampton

Wednesday: Bridestowe – Okehampton

Thursday: Hatherleigh – Okehampton

Friday: Halwill – Okehampton

### Ring & Ride – Fares

Rural Areas to Okehampton £6.00

Okehampton town service £4.00

*Please pay the driver your fare  
when you get on the bus.*

### Ring & Ride - Bookings

1. Ring the office between 08:30-4:00, Monday – Friday, at least a day before you want to travel.
2. Please be ready for 09:00am. You will be picked up from your home, but it might be a little bit later. Please be patient.
3. If you would like to travel on Monday please call the office on the previous Friday at the latest. We might not pick up weekend messages in time for you to be booked on the Monday bus.

### Next Issue

The next issue will be out just before Christmas and will include the trips we are now planning for January & February (weather permitting).

Also in the next issue we will include...

- \* A focus on volunteer driving with a driver's experience
- \* A passenger's story – why it matters
- \* An update on the back office team
- \* Christmas quiz fun

If you have ideas for the newsletter please send an email to [office@odctg.co.uk](mailto:office@odctg.co.uk)

To help us reduce costs, if you received this newsletter by post but would prefer an electronic version, drop us an email requesting future copies to be emailed, and we will add you to the emailing list.

If you have received this newsletter but would like to be taken off the mailing list (either post or email) please let us know.

**Stop press \*\*\* Stop press \*\*\* Stop press**

To allow you time to plan appointments please note the following Christmas arrangements;

The office will Close at 4pm on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> of December and re-open at 08:30 on Tuesday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 2024. During this closed period, we will where possible, fulfil appointments which are made before the office closes.