

Thornhill & District Community Transport
Scottish Charity SC021023
Minutes of Meeting
held at 19.15 on Thursday, 02/04/2015 Gladstone Hall, Penpont)

***Present:** Gordon Neilson, David Dick, Jock Scott, Davie Hastings, Rab Cook, Robin Robertson, Ronnie Gibson, Jenny Bourne, David Kerr*

***Apologies:** Robin Paisley, Greg Parker, Allan Douglas, Keith Walker, Joan Neilson*

- **Welcome**

- GN, chairing, welcomed everyone.

- **Apologies for Absence**

- Noted above

- **Minutes of Previous (Quarterly) Meeting**

- Accepted as a correct record: Proposed: JB; Seconded: DD.

- **Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

- DK reported that, having been unable, so far, to recruit enough new drivers to supplement our existing team, he had reluctantly concluded that we could not, at this point, take on the Alzheimer's Scotland commitment, though we could continue to try to get ourselves into a position where we could. He had advised Lesley Muirhead of this. She had thanked us, nonetheless, for trying.
- Incorporation: still on DK's To Do list, but nothing further at present.

- **Financial Report, incl review of charges**

- DD presented his report. In summary, finances are healthy at present and he is happy with the scale of charges the way they are.
- The overall number of hires is down on last year, but the average value per hire is up, so hire income has, in fact, risen.
- That said, much of our current surplus is due to grants received, notably from Closeburn Community Council. The grant from Clyde Windfarm is specifically to support a set of hires, namely the scheduled routes, the Closeburn grant more in the nature of a donation. We should be looking to increase the amount of business we do.
- Clyde Windfarm are unlikely to give us a third grant to support the scheduled routes. GN reports that we are one of relatively few CTAs who

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operate s.22 routes. Both DK and GN had tried to contact the Ticketer company, who supply hand-held ticket machines and the software to send the data to Transport Scotland, but had got nowhere much. We will continue to pursue this, but the s.22 routes may well be in jeopardy if this cannot be resolved. Transport Scotland have not proved helpful either.

- **Bus Report**

- Quarterly Inspections (apart from being a quasi-legal requirement) are proving their worth in anticipating problems and also meaning the bus passed its MOT with no difficulty recently.
 - Maintenance costs are rising - up £1,000 on last year. To an extent, this is inevitable, given the increasing age of the bus, though there have been a couple of one-off items: some damage to bodywork and also to the heater ducting and exhaust, caused by recent floodwater.
 - Some more bodywork maintenance (outbreaks of rust) needs doing now. Also, the parking sensors are continuing to give trouble. Some have been replaced recently; seems more may need doing.
 - That apart, the bus is reliable and fairly trouble-free. It probably has a pretty easy life for a vehicle of that design and should keep going for some time. There is no specific plan to replace it at present. It is evident that grants, at present, are only available to replace much older vehicles in much poorer condition. ATI have recently replaced two of theirs, thought to be 03 Reg or earlier and with many hundreds of thousand kms on them. ATI thought also to retain someone, specifically, to apply for grants (a time-consuming process). DD and GN both report that Community Councils will soon benefit from new windfarms coming on stream with attendant funding. There are also some moves to get the various local community councils to band together for larger projects (replacement community bus would be one such). GN, meantime, proposes putting together a pack, justifying what we do, and which could accompany any future funding application.
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- **New drivers needed.**
 - DK reported that the recent recruitment had not been quite as successful as he had hoped. We have added several new drivers, but there is still some training required and most of the recent recruits still work to a

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greater or lesser extent, or have family commitments. We are, therefore, fairly well covered for evening and weekend activities, but daytimes are more of a problem and several of our star performers (those drivers who do most of what we do) are, themselves, over 70.

- The youngest drivers with D1 on their licence will now be about 38. Anyone below that age would need, specifically, to undertake D1 training (expensive and a low pass rate). This seems, largely, to be an EU move to limit the size of buses volunteers can drive. The UK seems one of the few countries left with a D1 category. Thanks to Ian Walker, DK has viewed a couple of 16-seat conversions which are under the 3500kg limit. They were far less well-appointed than our current bus. When it comes to replacing our bus, we will have to decide between a smaller bus of similar spec to the present one, or a similar sized, but more basic, one. The fitting of accessibility equipment raises the weight limit somewhat, but our existing bus is still above that limit.
- In any case, what we need now is some more recently retired drivers, who would be available during the day. A couple of individuals came to mind, who would be approached.

- **Future Plans**
- Largely dependent on securing more volunteers, as discussed above.

- **MiDAS refreshers; further training...**
- Some still to be done.

- **AOCB**
- GN advised that he had attended a day-long CTA Scotland training day and had reported the salient points back to DK and DD. There had been a great deal about the legal framework for the operation of CTAs, but we are already complying with most of it. GN also noted that we already claim BSOG (Bus Service Operator's Grant) for our s.22 routes and it now seems we can do likewise for our s.19 work (i.e. most of the rest of what we do). It seems the decision was taken some years ago that this would be too time-consuming (like registering for VAT), but might, in fact, be financially worthwhile. GN will pursue further.

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- OSCR: The details for the OSCR report are pretty much ready; just awaiting inspected accounts; and will be submitted after the AGM
- Importance of daily checks, particularly tyres, emphasised.

- **DONM:**
- Tuesday, 07/07/2015 (incl AGM), at Friendship Club, Thornhill.

- **Meeting Closed.**