

## Thornhill & District Community Transport

### Minutes of Meeting (including AGM) held on Tuesday, 07/06/2016, at 7.15pm at Thornhill Friendship Club

**Present:** David Kerr, Gordon Neilson, Jenny Bourne, Ronnie Gibson, Geordie Muirhead, Rab Cook, Robin Robertson, David Dick, Jock Scott, Davie Hastings, Ian Walker, Alison McMillan.

**Apologies:** Joan Neilson, John Maxwell, Mary Newbould

#### 1. Welcome.

- GN, chairing, welcomed everyone; especially new volunteer driver Alison McMillan.

#### 2. Apologies for Absence

- As listed above.

#### 3. AGM:

##### a. Minutes of Previous AGM

- Proposed accurate: JB; Seconded: DD

##### b. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

- None

##### c. Annual Report

- GN presented the Annual Report, to be lodged with OSCR. This Report was approved, subject to a couple of minor amendments. Final version annexed.

##### d. Financial Report

- DD presented the end of year Financial Report (annexed). He also made the following observations:
  - i. 'Donations' includes a payment of £11,000 from Thornhill Community Council from Mrs Adam's Legacy, which is intended to go towards the bus replacement fund.
  - ii. S.19 Rebates are now being received, accounting for the increase in 'Refunds' in the income side.
  - iii. 'Misc refunds' on the Expenses side includes some £700 for times when we have hired other vehicles in; either on occasions when ours has been out of action, or when two vehicles have been required.
  - iv. Although the 'Designated Reserve Fund' (Bus replacement fund) is stated at £44,279.41, a further transfer of surplus cash has just been made and the fund now stands at approximately £50k.
  - v. £2500 was received from ANCBC towards the purchase of the Ticketer machine.
  - vi. There is an irreconcilable difference of £1.00 in the accounts, which neither DD nor Annette Beagrie (who inspected the accounts) could trace, but it is expected that this will not give OSCR a problem.

##### e. Election of Office Bearers

- All Office Bearers (GN, Chairman; DK, V/C & Secretary; DD, Treasurer; JB, Bookings Secretary; RG, Bus Manager) re-elected by universal consent.

##### f. AOCB

- None.

##### g. AGM closed.

#### 4. Minutes of Previous (Quarterly) Meeting.

- Proposed accurate: JB; Seconded: RR

## 5. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

- None not arising anyway.

## 6. Financial Report, incl review of charges

- Finance had been discussed within the context of the AGM. DD added that:
- He remained happy with our scale of charges.
- The windfarm grants we had received to support our scheduled routes had now ceased and would be unlikely to be repeated, but one grant had supported the purchase of the ticket machine, which we must now start to use. He had prepared a letter to be handed out to passengers who use the scheduled services, asking them to bring their Entitlement Cards, so we can recover their fares from Transport Scotland. We had held off issuing these until we had a definite date by which drivers would be trained, but that is now imminent (see below). GN proposing to take photos of the first use of the ticket machine on Friday, 24/06/2016 for newspaper article.
- DK proposed clarifying our published rates. We currently offer an advantageous rate for 'children's groups'. Some time ago, we had discontinued our 'schools' rate. DK was of the view that the original intention was to benefit children in our particular catchment area and that this rate (we should make clear) is only on offer to groups (Scouts etc) within Thornhill & District and, perhaps also Moniaive & District, in view of our close co-operation with CVCT. *Agreed* that a Scout group (say) from Dumfries would be charged at our normal, adult, rate.

## 7. 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector, D&G

- DK had signed us up to this umbrella organisation. Turns out that GN had also signed us up some time earlier, but 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector D&G had not noticed this duplication! They may have access to funding and some expertise. IW cautioned that some of the statements they had put out, and meetings he had attended, showed they had little grasp of Community Transport and the legislation under which we operate; also that their ambitions were to have an amalgamated Community Transport system throughout D&G. DK was aware of some of this from experience with 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector D&G's interaction with St John's. He had also, for some time, been making returns to D&G's Strategic Transport surveys along the lines that we would be willing to help where we could, but the retention of our own identity and autonomy as an organisation set up, and supported, by Thornhill people was not negotiable.

## 8. Licence Check

- Since the changes to DVLA's system of checking licences, the paper counterpart is no longer valid. We have usually checked everyone's licences at the time of the AGM, but this is now quite troublesome as we have no devoted office staff and not all of our drivers are online etc. And there are dates, notifications etc which it would be easy to miss. D&G employees (such as DK) are asked to grant a mandate to Licence Check, who are a commercial outfit and who can monitor drivers' DVLA profiles and notify us of impending significant dates and of any penalty points, medical declarations etc. DK had expected this to be a very expensive service, but, in fact, Licence Check will offer us this service for £150 annually and monitor up to 20 drivers (more than we have). DD was happy, from the financial point of view, for us to purchase this service. *Agreed* to set up an account with Licence Check. DK will circulate Mandate forms once available.

## 9. Ticketer

- Machine has arrived and needs to be used. DK will run training for GM, RC, RR, JB, AM and MN (if latter available), 19.15 on Wednesday, 22/06/2016, in WHA car park. GN will take photos of the 'maiden voyage' the following Friday!

## 10. MiDAS

11. Since IW is no longer able to offer us MiDAS training, DK had spoken to ATI and to a training company, Advanced Training Services. ATI charge £60 per driver and have a fairly fixed training programme, based around Lockerbie/Lochmaben and it can prove difficult to get all our drivers in one place. Advanced Training Services offer both MiDAS training and 'Train the Trainer' courses and seem to be willing to come to us; to combine training for us with other organisations and to negotiate about prices. Our new volunteer driver, Rolf Buwert, unable to with us this evening, has expressed a willingness to train as a trainer, which would give us a much better chance of maintaining all of our MiDAS qualifications. Rolf is a trained (albeit retired) police driving/motorcycle instructor. Cost of his initial training might be £1500, though it sounds as if Advanced Training Services would be willing to negotiate on that price, given Rolf's prior experience and we might also (as ATI do) be able to offer training 'on' to other CTAs. *Agreed* that we would look further into this and possibly go ahead at about that figure. IW also noted that Lothian Community Transport (Edinburgh) offer good courses as well.

## 12. Bus Report

- The bus is in good health at present, though the leading back door, despite treatment some time back, is rusting again, as are various other places. This is inevitable, given its age, but it is noticeably in better shape than similar models of the same vintage.
- There had been a problem, recently, when one of the timing belt pulleys had started to collapse while DK was driving for Spring Fling. Fortunately, we had managed to borrow the Moniaive bus (the trip was in Moniaive at the time) and continue with that. Keir Garage had picked up our bus and promptly repaired it within a couple of days and we had been able to use the Moniaive one to cover our commitments meantime. This is one of the few times in recent years when some part of the basic vehicle (as opposed to peripherals like the lift etc) has failed and this, also, is a reflection of its increasing age (though not mileage, currently about 87k).
- The existing vehicle will be 10 years old this time next year and though it is, for its type, a very low mileage example, it is beginning to manifest some age-related problems (notably rust). The bus replacement fund, as previously noted, is now standing at some £50k and GN, DK and DD propose we should now start thinking about a new bus.
- DK noted that, despite this vehicle's extreme troublesomeness when new, and some things we wouldn't do again (such as the plug door), this particular bus stands up extremely well, in terms of specification, fittings, layout etc. and is a tribute to George Walker's efforts in designing it. Whilst, for well rehearsed reasons, we wouldn't use Courtside again (our very own vehicle still appears on their website, nearly 10 years on!), we would want a bus of very similar design to this one. We had considered another VW Crafter –vs- a Mercedes Sprinter. There is a Mercedes service agent in Dumfries, which would be an advantage, as trips to Lookers VW in Carlisle are time-consuming and Lookers have not always seemed very efficient. The bus converters visited by GN (see below) had not expressed a preference in favour of one vehicle over the other, but had said that they were the only two makes worth considering. Reviews DK had read said that, for very high mileages (not relevant to us) Sprinters lasted better, but that both vehicles were better than anything else available.
- GN had accompanied ATI on a trip to two bus converters in Yorkshire. We had previously made enquiries of Gleneagles in Cupar, but they no longer build buses. ATI have recently bought two new buses from another converter in Devon (not Courtside) but had decided against using them (both distance and quality issues) for their next purchase. They had investigated a number of other bus builders and these two (O&H and Excel) were their finalists. They had also been Gleneagles' recommendation to us.

GN, DK & DD had felt we could benefit from ATI's experience and expertise in specifying and so it had proved.

- GN summarised various findings:
  - Get quotes by Christmas time for bus to be available by summer time.
  - Lead time for construction is about 14 weeks.
  - Crafter/Sprinter (either) are the only base vehicles worth considering.
  - Sliding door, whether powered or not, is a finger trap hazard. Powered ones are vulnerable to well-intentioned wrenching by passengers.
  - Best bet is access via the existing front passenger door (as with our previous bus); also allows more space for internal wheelchair lift.
  - Internal wheelchair lift is less vulnerable to corrosion, seizing etc.
  - Hydraulically operated steps considered the best option.
  - Go for rear air con unit in preference to opening windows.
  - Budget for space for 2x wheelchairs only. More rarely needed.
  - Consider specifying all-age belts.
  - Parking sensors –vs- camera
  - Neither converter at all keen on offering a trade-in.
- JB noted (as did DK) how useful the over-cab storage area is. Few other buses seem to have one.
- IW offered assistance with a list of other converters, some based in Scotland; various models of specification, seats, lifts etc. *Very welcome.*
- GN has looked into capital funding. ATI seem to have had substantial funding from Morrisons.
- *Agreed* we were happy to start the process of acquisition of a new bus.

### **13. AOCB**

- The quarterly check had been missed, what with JB's absence and the mechanical breakdown. JB will book it in in the next couple of weeks.
- JB offered thanks for those who had looked after the diary and done her driving duties in her absence. Everyone pleased to see her back and looking so well.

### **14. DONMs 2016/17:**

- Tuesday: 13/09/2016, 13/12/2016 [this will need to be changed to January]; 14/03/2017; 13/06/2017 (to include AGM) proposed.

### **15. Presentation to Jock.**

- GN paid tribute to Jock's many years of service; his reliability, adaptability and his willingness to step in at short notice. He will leave a very large gap amongst the drivers, but we are delighted he will be remaining a member of Thornhill Community Transport. There followed a small presentation to Jock.

### **16. Meeting Closed.**

**Annexe 1:**

**Thornhill & District Community Transport**

**Trustees Report 2016**

(Reporting Period : April 2015-March 2016)

### **Office Bearers**

Chair - Gordon Neilson; Vice-Chair and Secretary - David Kerr; Treasurer - David Dick;  
Bus Manager - Ronnie Gibson; Hire Bookings - Jenny Bourne

The bus continues to provide a valuable community service for those who have limited access to private transport; where the service limitations of the public bus service public are problematic; or where wheelchair access is not possible. The group plans to maintain this service into the next financial year.

The bus management committee has met on four occasions in the course of the year as planned. No further meetings were required.

### **Report on Minibus LJ07PYF**

The bus continues to operate reasonably reliably commensurate with its age. The quarterly inspection schedule has proved to be helpful in identifying faults at an early stage annual maintenance expenditure was in line with 2014-2015 at just over £4,000. It has again been noted that the group's efforts to maintain the bodywork in good condition has been noted by servicing technicians. It is proposed to work towards replacing the bus in mid 2017.

A donation of £11,000 has been received from Thornhill Community Council to assist with the purchase of a replacement vehicle.

### **Ticketing**

The issue of recovering income from the Scottish Government for the carriage of clients with concessionary fare card holders has now been resolved. A grant of £2,500 has been received from Annandale & Nithsdale Community Benefit Company to assist with the purchase of a hand-held ticket machine and concessionary card reader. Previously this income was recovered from a wind-farm grant. This grant is now no longer required.

### **Driver Team**

There are currently 12 drivers of which most are MiDAS trained. Efforts to recruit further drivers is an essential on-going activity.

### **Bus Usage**

Hire Charges continue to be monitored but remained static during the year.

A total of 72 scheduled service runs were undertaken and 63 hires (70 in 2014/2015) were recorded in the financial year. The bus travelled 10,817 miles (9918 miles 2014/2015).

Gordon Neilson

Chair

June 2016

## Annexe 2: Financial Report

Name of Charity - *Thorahill and District Community Transport*  
 Scottish Charity Number SC021023

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### Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st March 2016

	2016 £	2015 £
<b>Receipts</b>		
Hires	£ 5,243.71	£ 5,032.90
Tins	£ 939.65	£ 818.27
Donations	£ 13,611.75	£ 3,864.20
DGRG	£ 1,057.81	£ 1,139.18
Interest		
Refunds	£ 3,116.60	£ 1,881.54
Misc		£ -
<b>Total receipts</b>	<u>£ 23,969.52</u>	<u>£ 12,736.05</u>
<b>Payments</b>		
Fuel	£ 2,372.37	£ 2,793.27
Maint's	£ 4,402.62	£ 4,443.11
Ins/tyfl	£ 1,236.21	£ 3,014.79
Drivers Expenses	£ 345.00	£ 340.00
Stap & Posts	£ 33.00	£ 2.00
Medical fee	£ 105.00	£ 105.00
Misc.	£ 943.58	£ 958.60
Refunds	£ -	£ -
Tachograph Card	£ -	£ -
Travel Expenses	£ -	£ 20.00
		£ -
<b>Total payments for charitable activities</b>	<u>£ 9,437.78</u>	<u>£ 9,676.77</u>
<b>Other payments:</b>		
Gratuity:		
Transfer to Reserve Fund	£ 11,000.00	£ -
<b>Governance costs:</b>		
Advertising AGM		
<b>Total payments</b>	<u>£ 20,437.78</u>	<u>£ 9,676.77</u>
<b>Surplus/(deficit) for year</b>	<u>£ 3,531.74</u>	<u>£ 3,059.28</u>

**Statement of Balances as at 31st March 2016**

	2016	2015
	£	£
<b>Bank and cash in hand</b>		
Opening balances	8953.95	5894.87
Surplus/(deficit) for year	3511.74	3058.26
Irreconcilable difference	1.00	0
Closing balances	12486.69	8953.85
<b>Reserves</b>		
Unrestricted funds	0	0
Restricted funds	0	0
Designated Reserve fund	44279.41	33000.00
Closing balances	<u>44279.41</u>	<u>33000.00</u>

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf

Chairman