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Thornhill & District Community Transport

Minutes of Meeting held on Monday, 22/01/2018, at 7.15pm at Thornhill Friendship Club

Present: David Kerr, John McNaught, David Dick, Robin Robertson, Rab Cook, Ronnie Gibson, John Green, Alison McMillan, Earl Smith, Rolf Buwert, Janis Dick.

Apologies: Keith Walker, Mary Newbould, Greg Parker, Ewan McMillan, Geordie Muirhead.

1. Welcome.

- DK, Chairing, welcomed everyone and performed introductions; particularly welcoming new member, Earl Smith.

2. Apologies for Absence

- As detailed above

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

- Approved as read. Proposed: Rolf Buwert; Seconded: Rab Cook.

4. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes – incl. s.22 permit

- **W** DK outlined the position with regard to our s.22 permit. A new permit had now been received (within the past week); but we had applied for it in early November, the old one expiring in late November. There had been repeated delays in issuing it; we had been told we had used the wrong form (the one downloaded from the Traffic Commissioners' website); been asked supplementary questions as to whether we were operating for profit...and generally been given the impression that it would depend upon the whim of the Commissioner as to whether our permit would be reissued. This is known to be a problem for CT organisations throughout the UK. It seems that there may be a new broom within the Traffic Commissioners' office in Leeds, who is seeking to re-interpret the existing law. The matter had been raised with David Mundell, MP and there is much discussion of this within the CT media. The UK Transport Select Committee has also looked into the matter and, in outline, reported that they see no evidence either that CT groups are siphoning business away from commercial operators, or that CT provided services are any less safe than those provided by commercial operators. Also, that the loss of the services CT provide to communities and individuals up and down the country, whilst somewhat hidden, would be incalculable. Some groups have had trouble with the re-issue of their s.19 permits, but Dumfries & Galloway Council (who issue these) had made no trouble about renewing ours in the autumn. The CT media also suggest that the next target in the Commissioner's sights seems to be the D1 entitlement upon which we all depend. The Transport Select Committee has already issued a finding that, were CTAs obliged to train drivers specifically for a replacement D1 entitlement, many of the smaller groups would simply disappear. We should probably not have operated our s.22 services whilst the wrangling over the permit was ongoing, but we had taken the view that we were entitled, as a matter of the law, as it



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currently stands, to a s.22 permit, so had chosen not to disrupt our services. And, fortunately, there had been no problem. We are considering making a complaint to the Ombudsman over what appears to be arbitrary treatment by the Traffic Commissioner.

- No other matters arising.

5. Financial Report, incl review of charges

- DD reported as follows:
 - Had we lost our s.22 entitlement it would have cost us some £150/mth in revenue.
 - Otherwise, there is not much change in our situation: Hires are down about £150; fuel correspondingly down about £66; maintenance is up about £200 and there will be an annual service bill shortly. Over the year, maintenance is up about £600, but these should be the final months that we have LJ07 PYF and it has required several major items over that time. Over the year, we should break even or make a small surplus.
 - We had agreed that the transport we provided to allow people to attend JB's funeral would be free of charge.
 - DD happy with current financial position and our rate of charging.
- DD invited questions, but there were none.

6. Staffing

- DK paid tribute to Jenny Bourne, who had died in December. We knew she had been a highly efficient Bookings Secretary, but it was becoming increasingly clear how much actual driving she had also done; now we were having to find cover for the many jobs she did, week by week. A much valued member of Thornhill & District Community Transport; and who is, and will be, sadly missed.
- Despite the sad loss of JB and also, less recently, Gordon & Joan Neilson, we are in a better position than we might be, having managed to recruit a number of new drivers, including, most recently, Earl Smith, who is very welcome. JD thanked everyone for their co-operation as she gets to grips with looking after our bookings.

7. Development

- Nothing further, meantime.

8. Licence Check

- Working well. Nothing to report.

9. Ticketer

- Also working well, but drivers are asked to note that, when issuing tickets, the machine defaults to the next stop; and our passengers inevitably travel the whole route. Care needs to be taken, therefore, that passengers embarking at Thornhill are booked all the way to Dumfries, and not just to Gatelawbridge, for example.

10. MiDAS

- RB is in process of drawing up a training schedule. There will be a classroom session, where we will try to have everybody attend at once; and then RB will accompany each individual driver, over time, on one of their regular trips; building in, if necessary, any additional small tests or manoeuvres. His efforts in this regard; particularly the very large time commitment, much appreciated.

11. Bus Report (see graphic below)



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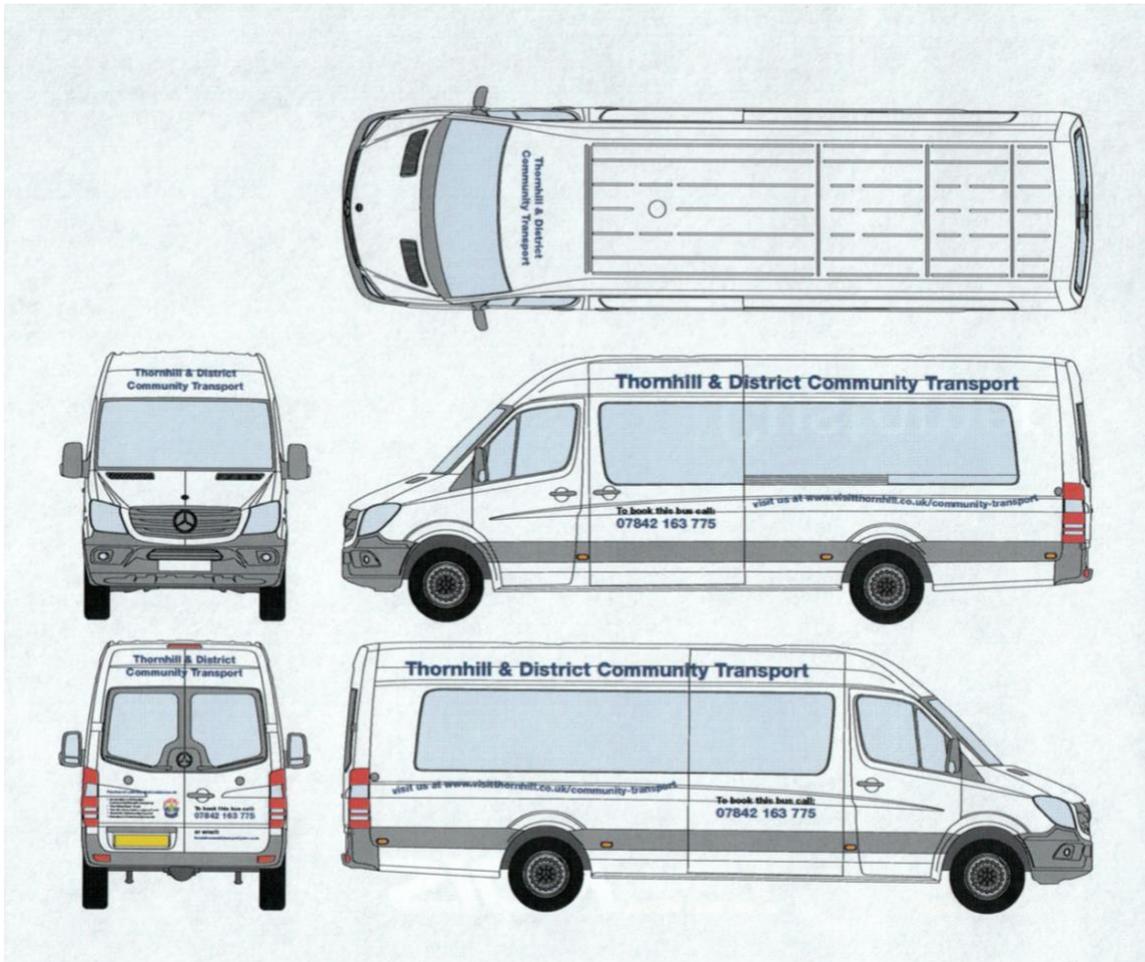
- A claim had been received, in respect of a piece of minor damage we had caused to another vehicle in a car park, and which the driver had not noticed, at the time. The insurers will deal with the matter. No visible damage to our bus.
- Insurance has been renewed at much the same cost as last year.
- LJ07 PYF is entering what should be its final month or two with us. It is requiring more maintenance, consistent with its age, but is generally still reliable and good to use.
- The new bus (diagrams of graphics below) is expected in early to mid March. There had been some anxiety when it had not arrived with TBC in Dungannon on 21/12, as had been promised, but they had confirmed it had arrived early in January. Once built, it will need to return to Ciceley in Carlisle for a final pre-delivery inspection.

12. AOCB

- None

13. DONMs 2017/18: Tuesday: 13/03/2018; 19/06/2018 (to include AGM) proposed.

14. Meeting Closed



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