

**Established 1991**

***Excellence in Community Transport***

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February 2024

Dear Dial-a-Ride member,

Following up on my letter dated 6th October 2023 and our AGM held on 20th October 2023, I wanted to update you on the current situation.

Throughout last year and into this year, we have engaged with Woking Borough Council (WBC) and Surrey County Council (SCC) to try and find a way of continuing the current dial-a-ride service you have all become accustomed to. There have been many ups and downs along this road; however, it has become clear that neither WBC nor SCC can help fund the service. We have looked at options from sponsorship to grant funding, but unfortunately, we have been unable to identify suitable grants or secure sponsorship. We have highlighted the situation on BBC Radio/TV/Sky News, The Guardian and the Woking News & Mail newspapers and pleaded the case for continued funding to the WBC Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

We have met on several occasions with our local MP, Jonathan Lord, who provided great support to us by attending our AGM, facilitating meetings with both Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council and championing our cause. Jonathan's support throughout has been vital, and we are extremely grateful to him.

The permits we operate under prevent us from cross-subsidising one service with additional funds achieved from another service; therefore, any dial-a-ride service we operate must be self-funding or part grant-funded.

As we move into this New Year, the planned funding cut by WBC and our increased operating costs mean we have little option but to close the current dial-a-ride scheme as of the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. I realise this will be devastating news to many of you, and I can only assure you we have done all we can to save the current scheme.

Whilst Woking Borough Council has been unable to provide funding for the dial-a-ride scheme, we are grateful to the Council for agreeing to allow us to remain in our offices at the Red House, Brookwood, and for agreeing to lease us minibus parking off Cherry Street, Woking. Savings achieved from not moving offices will help fund a vehicle to operate on a Community Day Centre service to Hale End Court. In addition, we will also be able to operate a reduced dial-a-ride service within Woking Borough.

As we have not been able to secure any funding from SCC or WBC from 1st April 2024, we plan to introduce a new self-funding dial-a-ride scheme for Woking residents. To achieve this, we regrettably must apply a membership fee of £26.00 per annum, payable in advance annually on 1st April; there will be an option to pay this fee biannually (£13.00 on

WOKING COMMUNITY TRANSPORT LTD

RED HOUSE, CEMETERY PALES, BROOKWOOD, WOKING GU24 0BL

WCT is a registered society (no. 27313R) under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 and as such is a not for profit organisation run for the benefit of the community.

1st April and £13.00 on 1st October). We can hold journey fares at their current rate by introducing a membership fee.

Unfortunately, introducing a membership fee is not enough to cover the loss of funding; therefore, the new service will only operate between 9:30am and 2:30pm Monday to Friday and will be restricted to Woking Borough only.

Due to the time it takes to travel to hospitals outside of the borough and the need to maximise local journeys, we will regrettably be unable to provide transport to the following hospitals:

- St Peters
- The Royal Surrey
- Ashford

We deeply regret that after 32 years of good and dedicated service, we have been forced into making the very difficult decision of reducing the service you rely on and have become accustomed to.

Should you wish to become a member of the new dial-a-ride scheme, you will be required to pay the annual membership fee by the 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2024. Details on how to pay are attached. You can also contact the office via the following means:

Email [enquires@wokingbustler.org.uk](mailto:enquires@wokingbustler.org.uk)

Tele: 01483 744800

Yours sincerely

*G Padfield-W*

Guy Padfield-Wilkins MCGI  
Managing Director & CEO  
Woking Community Transport (Bustler)

Page 2

WOKING COMMUNITY TRANSPORT LTD

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Woking Community Transport Ltd is registered as an Industrial and Provident Society with exempt charitable status.

Registered Number 27313R.