

TROWBRIDGE AREA COMMUNITY LINK SCHEME

Registered Charity Number 1075506

CHAIR'S AND TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024

The AGM is upon us once again, this being my opportunity for me to thank all of you volunteers for the hard work and wonderful support you give us. It's always encouraging for the coordinators when we are regularly complimented by our clients for the service you drivers, with your smiling faces, provide to the Trowbridge area. Being the only voluntary organization of its type in the BA14 area does mean that we are not only taken for granted by the medical profession but also taken advantage of. Typical phone calls from surgeries and even from the community and district hospitals, saying "We have a patient who needs transport," adds to the pressure.

Furthermore, this year has proven just how much we are a victim of our own success in that word of mouth continues to bring a steady stream of new clients. The large residential blocks, such as Raleigh Court, Florence Court and others, must by now see almost all of their residents now being our clients. We've been blessed with a number of new volunteers joining us over the last year. This relieves much of the pressure of work, particularly at times when a number of drivers and coordinators are not available due to holidays, family commitments or illnesses. Therefore, both the minibus and the car transport workstreams, and the coordinators, constantly see new recruits.

Once again this year, the minibus has proven to be a resounding success. Nicola will provide a more detailed report on the minibus workstream shortly.

Future plans were mentioned in my report this time last year. These included the transferring of our database over to the Wiltshire County cloud-based system. Due to ongoing pressures, this is still under planning. Similarly, transferring our Link phone to a new contract is currently under review while the current contract with O2 is proving to be an obstacle. Some minor problems arose with the Link mobile where we were only able to accept incoming calls, following these up with replies on our own mobiles - annoying but not that great a difficulty. If the new IT system does get up and running, it will enable the drivers to access and complete their Expenses online and submit them, virtually by the press of a button, to the Treasurer at the end of the month. You'll also be able to log on at any time to check your own trip list and to check your own absences. Training in its use will be provided.

Our overall financial situation in the year 2023 to 24 has been satisfactory and stable. We have just about broken even, I believe, thanks in part to the annual core funding provided by the town council. Sandra will give further details of our financial status for 2023 to 24 shortly. I must emphasize that certain aspects of training must be given to ensure the safety of clients, drivers and escorts. Primarily, training in manual handling, as given by Jane earlier, is essential in that some of the walking aids and wheelchairs can be very heavy and unwieldy, posing a risk to the handler. For the AGM Minutes, any volunteer not here today will still be required to attend Jane's presentation.

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The reason we're here - For Our Clients

Our aim is simply to help people in need, mostly the elderly and those with disabilities, for whom using public transport and taxis is not a feasible option. Our clients remain our priority, after all it's the reason we are providing this door-to-door transport facility at an affordable for them, with considerate, compassionate and caring drivers, with escort when in the minibus, and with a much-reduced time for them because their driver is ready to take them home with the minimum delay time. Many of our clients live a lonely, as you'll be aware, and the Link coordinator and the driver, and escort, can often be the only person they've spoken with or seen for a while, hence their deep breath and you, the driver, giving them a thorough listening-to during their journey. For clients going to hospital appointments, they can be stressed enough for them with their impending appointment without them having to worry about transport there and back again, so I think a major impact we provide is to distract them from their transport worries.

In addition to providing volunteer drivers to take the client to doctor's, dentist's, physio, optician's and hospital appointments, we also offer minibus drop-offs to, and collection from clubs, shopping trips, picking up food packs from the food bank and even a befriending service for people who suffer from loneliness.

The subject of donations is something we've chatted about quite a few times. We inform our clients of the approximate cost of the trip that we pay our drivers and add that if they can cover that cost it would help us to continue our service. We do emphasize that if they can't afford this then simply put what they can afford into the envelope. We do understand how some suffer from financial hardship. It is still vital we continue to provide them that service, no matter their financial situation - we shouldn't judge their situation. We're a charity and the money placed in the envelope is a donation, not a charge. Contrary to the Good Practice Guide, which states that Link may operate a tariff system for long distance drives outside of Wiltshire County, we rarely actually do so.

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About our Volunteers Our Coordinators.

What do they do? Client phones in on the Link phone with a request for a volunteer driver with a car, giving the appointment details. Coordinator answers, takes the details; selects drivers that may be available that day, phones the drivers in turn until one agrees, gives details to driver, phones client to confirm driver's name and pick-up time. # That's how it works on a good day! It's not always that straightforward but it usually works out in the end. Rare are the times we can't arrange a driver. We don't quite have enough coordinators to cover each day of the week, and things can turn a bit pear-shaped when holidays and illnesses require individual coordinators to work two or even three days in a week. In short, we are constantly looking for new coordinators and despite encouraging noises from interested people, we are not very successful. However, the good news is that a nice lady called Penny has recently said she will join us very soon. One of our drivers, Sue Collins, who only recently joined us, has stepped in a few times recently after just a couple of training and practice sessions, when we were desperate for someone to help us with co-ording. I would like to give my thanks to all the coordinators, and to Sue, too, for the

often-long days sitting at the laptop and trying to keep cheerful when the phone rings.

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Our Drivers.

These stalwart, dedicated volunteers are those at the front line of our service. Those who use their own cars and their time, and those that drive the minibus and act as escorts, deliver our service direct to our clients. As I mentioned just now, the clients regularly state their appreciation of the charm and friendliness of these stalwart volunteers, along with gratitude for the quality service that our drivers provide. Occasionally, a driver will bring to our attention that a client is suffering from hardship or a challenge they may face in caring for themselves in their own home. For times such as this we have a Safeguarding policy, thanks to Jane, that the drivers should all have a copy of.

Drivers also run foul of parking and clean-air zone wombles, resulting in the imposition of fines. Therefore, as our volunteer drivers are pivotal in delivering high-quality services to the clients, as such, it is the Committee's responsibility to provide all the support that the drivers require, including trying to overcome these random challenges that changes to hospital parking gives us. All the coordinators and members of the Committee will join me, I'm sure, in thanking our Drivers and the minibus escorts, for their sterling efforts in covering the tasks that we ask of them. Despite the pressure, they make our work as coordinators a pleasure.

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Introducing you to the members of the Management Committee:

Our Management Committee is a cohesive team that meets every quarter. They conduct a vast number of hours in the management of the scheme, as you can see on the audit form in your AGM pack, including advising me of the problems and successes. Presently the committee is comprised of: -

The Chairperson: That's me! I took over the position 7 years ago and have been privileged to chair the 3-monthly committee meetings. I started off as a driver in 2012, had to stop due to health constraints so became a coordinator in 2015. I have been fortunate to experience just about all the aspects of the Link scheme. I would like to personally thank the Committee and Coordinators for being patient with me in these few years, and all you volunteers for making my position pleasurable. When coordinating, I take the opportunity to pass on driving tasks to my wife Jane. Both supporting me and, more importantly, supporting all of you, are:

Our Vice-Chair, Nicola Blackmore continues to demonstrate her valuable knowledge and experience. However, her crowning glory is the challenge she originally took on when taking over the community minibus. She shows tireless dedication and perseverance with her primary appointment as **Minibus Operations Manager**, often under extremely challenging conditions. Towards achieving this success, she receives regular valued support from Sandra. Nicola is also a minibus driver. Despite passing over her driver recruitment post to Margaret and Maureen, Nicola continues to doggedly pursue the hospital parking

issues despite receiving conflicting or changing messages from the hospital parking wombles. Ably assisted by Sandra, she has accessed a plethora of funding sources.

Our Treasurer, Sandra Fry, in her first year in post has been challenging for her, particularly with her support to the minibus, and I have seen how she has risen to the pressures admirably. Sandra has been able to secure our access to the deposit account, at last, after problems encountered by the previous treasurer. She ably supports both streams of Link activities, those being the minibus operators and the car drivers, she has ensured that all expense payments are made promptly, client donations are banked regularly, and proper records are maintained, while supporting the challenging financial aspects relating to the minibus management. Overall, this demanding post has been pivotal for TACLS in ensuring finances are managed and claims are paid promptly.

Our Secretary, Maureen Brent, often works tirelessly redirecting emails from me, taking the minutes at our AGM and the quarterly committee meetings, and writing out the excellent minutes of our meetings. Together with Sandra, they provide us with the vittles at our coffee mornings. Maureen also fits in coordinating once a week, meanwhile loading poor Chris, her husband, with driving tasks. She efficiently manages the responsibilities of **Recruitment and Volunteer Support Officer**, which includes organizing the interviews, DBS aspects, and more

Our Chief Coordinator, Margaret Goodall, continues in the post as our Chief Coordinator while driving as a volunteer too. Her many years with the scheme make her the most ideal person to hold the post where she leads from the front with a tenacity that keeps the business of coordinating so effective. She is also in the enviable position of being able to load her husband, Peter, with driving tasks.

Our Deputy Treasurer. This post was held by Bill Cox, although he recently retired due to personal reasons. On behalf of the Committee and members, we thank him for his contribution both as the deputy treasurer and, of course, as driver, a position he held on and off for many years. and wish.

Our Minibus Facilities Officer, Tony Ryan, apart from being a valued minibus driver, also holds the vital appointment that ensures the minibus' maintenance, thus ensuring its optimum availability.

Communications Officer, Brett Davies juggles his time between being a trainer for the Samaritans, coordinating for TACLS and somewhat demanding family matters. While assisting Sandra, he showed his quality when the feasibility of upgrading the Link database and migrating it onto the County website was first proposed. Meanwhile, he has been looking into upgrading the current mobile phone arrangement.

Our Safeguarding Officer, Jane Boyce. She developed this post of Safeguarding Officer since being co-opted onto the Committee as a result of the pandemic. Before her retirement from the NHS, her degree qualifications and appointment as the Health and Safety Services Manager at the RUH gave her immense knowledge and experience that she has since used to our benefit. She stepped back from the committee membership, continuing to provide valuable safeguarding advice to the committee until such time a nomination for the

Safeguarding Officer is received. She has produced the written safeguarding policy and has provided training documentation.

Health and Safety Adviser, Jane Boyce. She developed this post of H&S Adviser since being co-opted onto the Committee as a result of the pandemic. Before her retirement from the NHS, her degree qualifications and appointment as the Health and Safety Services Manager at the RUH gave her immense knowledge and experience that she has since used to our benefit. She will continue to offer H&S advice, ensuring the risk assessments are managed and followed.

Our Other Committee Members: Lynn Hitchcock has been very busy as a driver until recently, taking on local trips with a few a little further afield from time to time. She willingly helped with TACLS events as well as providing ideas and support at our committee meetings. Unfortunately, she is suffering from health problems at the moment. Our thoughts and best wishes go with her.

Press and Publicity Officer, Sue Holt. Although she's not actually a committee member because of her many other commitments, she continues to promote TACLS through letters and articles in the Wiltshire Times and has been instrumental over recent years in having leaflets and posters produced. So effective have they been that our coordinators often hear from new clients and, on occasion, from prospective volunteers that discovered us thanks to these leaflets and newspaper articles. Her efforts has greatly assisted Nicola, and then Maureen, in recruiting more volunteers.

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Open Forum: I shall hold a brief Open Forum in a moment (I stress 'brief'). We shall do our best to answer any questions or concerns you may have. Aside from the Link volunteers, I would like to mention:

John Freeman, our independent examiner and the external organization that give us advice and support should we request it:

The Link Project Team -It is based with Community First in Devizes. Its website is www.wiltshirelink.org.uk. Finally: I would like to thank all members of TACLS who make my post as Chairman enjoyable and fulfilling.

THANK YOU, EVERYONE.

Trowbridge Area Community Link Scheme

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2024

	As at 31/03/2024		As at 31/03/2023	
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
Computer: Cost	2261		2261	
Computer: Cumulative depreciation	2260		2260	
		1		1
Equipment: Cost	545		545	
Equipment: Cumulative depreciation	544		544	
		1		1
NET FIXED ASSETS		2		2
CURRENT ASSETS				
Cash at Bank: COIF Deposit Account	17687		16867	
Cash at Bank: CAF Current Account	16844		12218	
Cash at Bank: Minibus Account	21251		4578	
NET CURRENT ASSETS		55782		33663
TOTAL ASSETS		55784		33665
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year (Link)		5446		373
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year (Minibus)		16673		4578
BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD				
Link		34533		29087
Minibus		21251		4578
TOTAL		55784		33665

Trowbridge Area Community Link Scheme

Receipts & Payments Report for the Year Ended 31st March 2024

	Year ended 31/03/2024	Year ended 31/03/2023	category
RECEIPTS			don't print
Grants Received			
Town Council	1000	1000	1
Other Grants	0	0	
Total Grants	1000	1000	
Donations			
Donations - Clients	35656	35614	3
Donations - Volunteer Drivers	0	0	4
Donations - Other	3699	0	5
Total Donations	39355	35614	
Other Income			
Fundraising/proceeds from events	27	15	6
Expenses overpayment (21/22)		122	4
New Year Meal	487	581	7
Bank Interest (current + deposit a/cs)*	846	316	8
Total Other Income	1360	1034	
Bequests	0	700	700
TOTAL RECEIPTS	41715	38348	
PAYMENTS			
Volunteer Driver Expenses	32517	32758	9
Meetings & Events	345	437	10
Insurances	500	461	11
Telephone Expenses	311	325	12
Admin. - Postage, Printing and Stationery	1172	718	13
COVID-19 expenses		55	19
Miscellaneous expenditure	393	239	14
Advertising and Publicity	0	86	15
Examiner's Fees and Accountancy	38	28	16
Bank Charges (current a/c)	301	257	17
New Year Meal	692	851	18
Equipment	0	1760	21
TOTAL PAYMENTS	36269	37975	
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) for the year	5446	373	

*Current a/c interest £26, Deposit a/c interest £820

TACLS Community Minibus

Receipts & Payments Report for the Year Ended 31st March 2024

	Year ended 31/03/2024	Year ended 31/03/2023
RECEIPTS		
Grants Received	8279	4650
Donations	2201	300
Client Payments	14271	4468
TOTAL RECEIPTS	24751	9418
PAYMENTS		
General Costs (Insurances, training etc.)	2111	1890
Running Costs (petrol, mileage)	3432	1846
Maintenance/repairs	2273	963
Administration (stationery, printing etc.)	262	141
TOTAL PAYMENTS	8078	4840
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) for the year	16673	4578



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of

TROW BRIDGE AREA COMMUNITY LINK SCHEME

On accounts for the year ended

MARCH 2024 Charity no (if any) 1075506

Set out on pages

BALANCE SHEET, TWO R+P REPORTS

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below*) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed: J G Freeman

Date: 27/01/2025

Name: J G FREEMAN

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):

—

Address:

17 BERKELEY ROAD
TROW BRIDGE
WILTS BA14 9DX

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

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