



THE FRIENDLY BUS in BROSELEY & MUCH WENLOCK

About the Service

We are a not-for-profit service operated mostly by local volunteers and we became a registered charity last July.

The Friendly Bus provides fully accessible transport for people in the Broseley and Much Wenlock areas in our two mini buses, which are both able to carry wheelchairs. We also operate a community Car Service which helps people get to appointments and other individual activities.

Launched in 2002, it has since grown to provide a comprehensive service in the buses, and cars, for everyone who is unable to access public transport.

In 2009 we won a Lottery Bid which has meant that the service can carry on for at least another 5 years with a new bus and two paid members of part time staff. (Marie and Julie who started in post in September).

We now have over 200 individual and group members who regularly use the service. We can provide a 'ring and ride' service but we also operate the buses with regular journeys. The Licence we currently operate under requires our passengers to be Members (membership is a nominal £3 per year).

We take people on weekly shopping trips into Broseley, Much Wenlock and also Wellington and Telford Town Centre; there are also weekly trips to the Bingo and other activities where people can meet up and socialise. We also operate daily transport for the local After School Club and Beavers on a Saturday.

Due to a recent change in Funding, our Passengers can use their bus passes on most of the journeys or alternatively a small charge will be made.

The kind of things that people say about the service:

"This is an ideal door-to-door Friendly Bus Service for people like me who haven't got a car to get about, meet friends, have a snack and shop as well".

"My enjoyment of the Friendly Bus is, not only getting out to different places, but meeting and making new friends. It makes a lonely day into a very happy day".

"Words cannot really express how thankful I am for the Friendly car service, it makes such a difference to the quality of life".



Shopping with the Friendly Bus



Setting off on a ski-trip to Telford!

'Growing the Service'

We are currently in the process of 'growing' the service. We have engaged around 15 new drivers over the last 6 months, trained 6 of these to become mini bus drivers and have enrolled around 30 new members. The number of group membership bookings are also on the increase. We also carry out more 'one off' journeys such as for the Poetry Festival and a Youth event with the National Trust in Much Wenlock.

We welcome ideas for new journeys from our Members and we have introduced new regular monthly trips to both Wolverhampton and Penkridge Markets for them.

Due to this increase in demand we have requested that the Lottery consider bringing forward the capital grant element of our bid to enable us to purchase a new 16 seater mini bus within the next few months (rather than in 3 years time). Their response has been positive so far and we are now awaiting final written approval.

With 3 mini buses in our 'fleet' we will have a much increased capacity and we are very keen to expand the service into new areas of the communities we serve. We provide a regular service for many of the older members of our community and we will continue to grow this sector and have introduced just today a journey to a new 'Extend Exercise' class in Broseley. We are also hoping to re-establish our Swimming Group.

Working with Others

As well as these services, we are also keen to engage with other groups too. We provide transport for a Special Needs Beavers group on a Saturday and also daily transport for the local After School Club, but we feel that younger people, both as individuals and as parts of groups are under-represented currently on our membership.

We have been networking with local groups, Council officers and representatives to try and establish some new contacts to help us achieve these goals but it has been difficult to get out and about because of the demands on our time from the day-to-day running of the service.

It is therefore a great opportunity to be able to come and meet with you this evening so we can tell you what we are about and discuss how we could possibly work together to identify opportunities for us to transport people to activities and events they would otherwise have difficulty attending.

We had previously been approached regarding the possibility of providing transport to the new Leisure facilities based at William Brookes school and this is definitely something we would be keen to explore, together with any other ideas anyone here tonight may have.

Thank you.

Marie Monk-Hawksworth –Project Manager

Julie Brazier – Project Co-ordinator