

## Community Transport Schemes in Argyll and Bute

There are a range of groups across Argyll and Bute ranging from car schemes using volunteers with their own cars, to outfits owning 8 accessible minibuses with well-trained, paid drivers. A couple of summary points that may be of use to the ACPG to consider when establishing what they require for Oban:

Paid staff are often necessary. Of the 6 groups that Argyll & Bute Council provide direct grant funding to, all of these employ some sort of paid coordinator or administrator, usually part time. A paid coordinator provides accountability, and ensures that all clients and drivers/volunteers/employees have a single point of contact in regards to organising what can be a complex mix of journeys and needs. Paid drivers are also used by many of the groups to provide a reliable service – many clients with dementia or Alzheimer's appreciate a consistent friendly face, which can be hard to achieve with volunteers, although not impossible.

Buying vehicles is not always best. Often one of the first items considered by new community transport groups is how to purchase a people carrier or minibus. In reality assessing what is required first is best, as utilising volunteers with their own cars and paying a mileage rate, or hiring one of the Council minibuses can provide a more cost effective solution. There is an example of the latter on the island of Luing, where the local shopping club hires the school minibus and provides a Community Transport service for the residents.

The below is by no means an exhaustive list of community transport providers, they include some of the best and cover the various forms community transport can take across Argyll:

North Argyll Volunteer Car Scheme (NAVCS). They provide subsidised journeys for their clients using volunteer drivers (who are reimbursed by the group at the HMRC approved mileage rate) and employ a paid part time coordinator. They cover the community council areas of Seil & Easdale, Luing, Kilninver & Kilmelford, Gelnorchy & Innishail, Avich & Kilchrenan, and Taynuilt.

Interloch Transport. This organisation operates throughout Dunoon, wider Cowal and on Bute and has primarily paid staff (manager, coordinator and drivers/assistants) using small wheelchair accessible minibuses. They come out to meet and assess client's needs before they are registered to use the service, so that they can cater for any specific requirements. In addition to transport services they will do shopping for customers and collect prescriptions – something to consider is the possibility that Community Transport needs in Oban might not simply be regarding transport.

Ulva Ferry Community Bus – this outfit operates a Section 22 demand responsive community bus service on the North West of Mull. A Section 22 community bus service is different from the groups mentioned above as it can carry fare paying passengers like a normal bus service and your concession cards are accepted. This however requires more work and expense than the options above.

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