

## A Brief History of ECT Charity

### Summary

Formed in 1979 as part of Ealing Voluntary Service Council, Ealing Community Transport (“ECT”) started life with a couple of second-hand vehicles, providing a transport service to Ealing residents whose needs were not being met by other transport provision.

Thirty-seven years later, ECT has grown into a leading charity and highly regarded social enterprise providing high quality community transport services across the country.

### Timeline

- 1979** • Ealing Voluntary Services Council (“EVSC”) establishes a transport project in Ealing, after it receives several elderly vehicles from Ealing Social Services. These are operated on an ad-hoc basis by the EVSC’s Manpower Service Commission Workers on what was then the Special Temporary Employment programme.
- 1980** • The project is renamed Ealing Community Transport (“ECT”) and receives a further four vehicles and inherits a number of journeys previously undertaken by Ealing Social Services.
  - Funding obtained from the London Borough of Ealing to employ a full-time Transport Co-ordinator – Stephen Sears.
- 1982-83** • The project expands rapidly with the donation of further Social Services “ambulances” as well as the purchase of second hand minibuses on the open market. Its Group Hire project for local community groups is well and truly established.
  - ECT develops its expertise in the operation of very elderly second hand vehicles doing almost all its own maintenance, working from a tiny office in Valetta St in South Ealing with the “workshop” being out in the street.
- 1984** • ECT obtains support from the Greater London Council (“GLC”) to develop its workshop services more formally.
- 1985** • ECT secures the support of the then Mayor of Ealing, who spearheaded a campaign to raise funds for a new workshop in Acton in Berrymead Gardens, providing proper maintenance facilities.
- 1986** • ECT secures grant funding from the London Borough of Ealing to open an operating centre in Southall – its first recycling project, furniture reuse.
- 1987** • ECT incorporated as an independent organisation – an Exempt Charity registered as an Industrial & Providence Society.

- 1989** • Funding obtained from London Borough of Ealing for the establishment of the Bollo Lane HQ in Acton. The organisation moves into new offices, workshop facilities and off-street secure parking.
- 1990** • ECT takes over the operation of an Asian Dial-a-Ride service and re-launches as “Seva PlusBus” (based on the Camden model). This is the first PlusBus service in Ealing, providing a door-to-door service for older and disabled individuals who are unable to use public transport.
- 1992** • ECT establishes a driver training programme and recruits its first driver trainer. Fundamentals are introduced whereby all drivers undergo formal training prior to driving minibuses which stands true to this day.
- 1993** • ECT takes over Ealing Council's Youth Service Transport service, leading to the establishment of Greenford as an operating depot.
  - Launch of Re>Paint project, one of the first of its kind in the UK.
  - “Out & About” volunteer car scheme commences for individuals who are unable to use public transport.
- 1994** • Establishment of Glaxo PlusBus following road closures in Greenford funded under a section 106 Agreement.
  - Merger of “Out & About” car scheme into a Personal Transport service using minibuses based on the PlusBus model.
- 1995** • ECT starts its first “green box” recycling pilot for homes in Ealing.
- 1996** • Start of Ealing PlusBus with Bridge House Estates Trust funding expanding the Ealing PlusBus network to 3 vehicles.
  - Adoption of Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (“MiDAS”), a driver training scheme launched by Community Transport Association in partnership with Hampshire County Council. ECT’s driver trainer becomes one of the first Driver Assessor Trainers.
  - New recycling service for 72,000 homes in Hounslow.
  - Establishment of trading subsidiaries, ECT Recycling and ECT Engineering.
- 1997** • Start of Acton and Rover PlusBus with Taxicard under spend completing a network of 5 vehicles covering the whole Ealing area.
  - Fire destroys Furniture Project warehouse, grant funding is withdrawn and Furniture Project closes.
  - ECT opens further recycling services in the London Boroughs of Lambeth, Ealing and Brent.
- 1998** • ECT starts its first recycling service outside London, in partnership with the Vale of White Horse.
- 1999** • PlusBus funding withdrawn and the loss of 30,000 trips for 2000 registered older and disabled passengers. Replaced by a contracted inferior “Community Bus” operated by a commercial operator (subsequently ended due to low usage).

- 2001**
- ECT sets up a new demand responsive transport service in partnership with Sure Start in South Northolt. The Sure Start PlusBus is a door-to-door minibus service for parents and children under the age of 5.
- 2002**
- ECT creates a new subsidiary, ECT Group, which in turn owns all of ECT's trading subsidiaries. All Head Office functions and staff are transferred to ECT Group.
- 2003**
- ECT starts its first mainstream bus service in partnership with Transport for London ("TfL"). Route 195 operates through Southall running from Ealing Hospital to Charville Lane in Hayes in a newly set up subsidiary ECT Bus.
  - Community Transport operation and office moves to Greenford Depot.
  - Passenger Assistant Training Scheme ("PATS") introduced in Ealing with the first batch of certificates including an ECT employee.
  - ECT saves doorstep collection services to 400,000 homes in the West Country after Avon Friends of the Earth goes into receivership.
  - ECT forms a partnership with the Northern Ireland charity Bryson House to provide recycling services in the province.
- 2004**
- ECT is awarded a contract (using section 106 monies) to set up the Willow Tree PlusBus Service, a demand responsive transport service for those living on the isolated Islip Manor Estate.
  - ECT acquires Dartmoor Railway and RMS rail engineering venturing into the world of 'Community Rail'.
  - ECT wins the Clean & Green contract, providing recycling, refuse and street cleaning services to Ealing Council.
- 2005**
- ECT Group, ECT Bus and ECT Recycling are awarded Community Interest Company status, one of first in country.
- 2006**
- ECT wins a contract to deliver community transport services in Milton Keynes. A new joint venture company "Milton Keynes Community Transport" ("MKCT") is set up to deliver demand responsive, group and lunch club transport services in partnership with Age Concern Milton Keynes based on the PlusBus model.
- 2007**
- ECT wins a contract to deliver door-to-door minibus service in partnership with Cheshire County Council. PlusBus services are launched for residents in Chester, Ellesmere Port and Neston.
  - ECT commences provision of a number of drivers and vehicles to TfL for its Dial-a-Ride service.
  - ECT wins a contract from London Borough of Ealing to undertake a detailed feasibility study into developing a shop-mobility scheme in Ealing Broadway town centre in partnership with The TAS Partnership. Consequently, ECT becomes actively involved with the Steering Group for initiating and developing the service.
  - ECT and Weardale Railway re-open the historic railway in the Wear Valley.

- 2008**
- ECT, in partnership with Hackney Community Transport, wins a major transport contract with the Olympic Delivery Authority. A new joint venture company, “E&HCT”, is set up to deliver the service.
  - On 3 June 2008, ECT Recycling CIC is acquired by May Gurney Limited from ECT Group CIC. ECT, the original Industrial and Provident Society and exempt charity continues to operate independently with a sole focus on community and public transport in West London, Milton Keynes, West Cheshire and on the London 2012 Olympic Site in Stratford. Anna Whitty is appointed Chief Executive of ECT Group.
  - In September 2008, ECT Group divests itself of its rail businesses, which were acquired by British American Railway Services (BARS), a new company established in the UK by Iowa Pacific Holdings.
  - ECT’s Cheshire operation is awarded ‘*Best UK Urban CT Operator*’ by The Community Transport Association.
  - ECT’s operation in Cheshire is also awarded ‘*Best Business Start Up*’ award by Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council and North West Regional Development Agency.
  - Milton Keynes operation nominated for a National Transport award.
- 2009**
- ECT Bus withdraws from the London bus market.
  - ECT continues to consolidate activities and deal with “legacy” issues, investing heavily into its accounting and financial management.
  - ECT operation builds on its strengths, so that it can flourish as a leading passenger transport charity.
  - ECT seeks to change its company structure and register with the Charity Commissioner.
- 2010**
- ECT converts its corporate form into a company limited by guarantee, whilst remaining the same legal entity on 1 April 2010.
  - ECT becomes a registered charity.
  - ECT appoints new board of trustees and adopts a new governance structure.
  - ECT and MKCT awarded the Social Enterprise Mark.
- 2011**
- ECT tenders and is awarded a new contract providing the Willow Tree PlusBus service.
  - ECT working in partnership with Go South Coast, successfully tenders for a number of contracts with Dorset County Council.
  - ECT sets up a new operation under the subsidiary of “Dorset Community Transport” (“DCT”) providing community transport, home-to-school routes, transport for those with special educational needs (“SEN”), and local bus services.

- 2012**
- ECT appointed lead partner by Olympic Delivery Authority (“ODA”) for delivery of Accessible Shuttles during London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics for ticketed spectators.
  - DCT involved in launch of the Bus2Go service, offering outings for people in remote villages.
  - New corporate branding launched whereby “ECT Charity” is to represent the ECT group of companies whose parent company, ECT, is both a company limited by guarantee and a charity registered with the Charity Commission.
  - The new brand launch coincides with the publication of “Transport for Communities” and an event with special guests including Lilian Greenwood MP (Shadow Transport Minister), Stephen Pound MP and Leon Daniels, TfL.
  - ECT Charity appoints 200 additional customer-focused staff during London 2012.
  - As lead partner, ECT Charity works in partnership with 24 Community Transport operators around the country to provide the Accessible Shuttles during London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics. The project involves 150 vehicles and 750 drivers who provided 100,000 journeys under ECT’s direct management.
  - DCT provides Accessible Shuttles for Weymouth sailing events and was highly acclaimed.
  - ECT wins UKBUS Awards special award for the planning and execution of bus and coach transport for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
  - DCT expands operations into Bournemouth winning new school passenger transport contracts with Bournemouth BC.
  - ECT Charity’s Board of Trustees appoints new Chair, Patrick O’Keeffe.
- 2013**
- ECT awarded the Carmen Award of Merit by the Worshipful Company of Carmen for the delivery of wheelchair accessible shuttle services for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. ECT performance was praised for delivering “the largest operation of its kind ever attempted”.
  - ECT Charity selected for the second cohort of the Deloitte Social Innovation Pioneers programme.
  - Anna Whitty, Chief Executive of ECT Charity is shortlisted for Charity Principal of the Year in the prestigious Charity Times Awards.
  - ECT Charity marks one year since the London Olympics and Paralympics with a special report celebrating its gold-standard performance providing ‘Accessible Shuttles – “Setting gold standards – Our legacy from London 2012 and beyond”’.
  - ECT Charity formally launches “Setting gold standards” by presenting a copy to Boris Johnson, Mayor of London
  - ECT Charity and partners present “Setting gold standards” to Transport for London.
  - ECT Charity presents “Setting gold standards” to Norman Baker MP, Transport Minister.
  - DCT wins a significant number of SEN and home-to-school routes in Dorset.
  - ECT’s operations surpass 100 vehicles.
  - ECT Charity joins the On Purpose programme offering Associate placements developing the next generation of social enterprise leaders.

- 2014**
- DCT provides shuttle services for Abbotsbury residents during road closure.
  - ECT Charity's 2012 Accessible Shuttles project shortlisted for Transport Team/Partnership of the Year in London Transport awards.
  - Anna Whitty, Chief Executive of ECT Charity wins FTA's Everywoman Director of the Year award.
  - ECT provides a shuttle service to Hatton Road residents in Hounslow during a month long closure under ECT's first Local Service Permit.
  - DCT takes on additional depot space next door to its offices for its growing operation.
  - MKCT's door-to-door PlusBus contract comes to an end as the council decides to take the service in-house. All staff transfer to the council under Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981 ("TUPE").
  - ECT Charity closes its Milton Keynes operation after 8 years in the area.
  - DCT expands its operation into Cornwall with two SEN school routes.
  - ECT provides accessible shuttle services to the Invictus Games held at Lee Valley and the Olympic Park.
  - ECT commences its first Day Centre contract with London Borough of Ealing for clients attending Michael Flanders Centre.
  - ECT enters into a partnership with Ealing Clinical Commissioning Group ("CCG") delivering a community transport pilot (PlusBus for Health) taking semi-housebound patients to their community appointments.
  - ECT in Cheshire moves to larger depot premises.
- 2015**
- ECT significantly extends its Dial-a-Ride routes operated on behalf of TfL, including weekend services.
  - ECT starts its EASIE (Elderly Accessible Service in Ealing) project for isolated older people offering transport opportunities.
  - ECT's operation in Cheshire tenders and wins a new 5-year contract building on its existing door-to-door PlusBus service providing a more integrated transport service for Cheshire West & Chester.
  - DCT commences its first contract for Borough of Poole.
  - ECT develops a community transport health pilot with Ealing CCG, providing transport to GP surgeries, decreasing missed appointments, saving GP house calls and improving well-being. The pilot is hailed as a great success as it quickly gets extended across Ealing.
  - ECT assists England 2015 with the planning of accessibility at the Rugby World Cup.
  - ECT delivers accessible shuttles for spectators to Twickenham and Olympic Park stadiums during the Rugby World Cup event.
  - ECT updates its Values which better reflects the type of organisation we are, what we aspire to be, the principles that guide us and the culture we have fostered. This is shared with staff in a new publication "ECT Charity: Our Values".
- 2016**
- ECT Charity launches "Why Community Transport Matters" (#whyctmatters), an amalgamation of two ground-breaking studies led by ECT Charity to help community transport organisations around the UK demonstrate their social value. The report includes Deloitte analysis of the costs of loneliness and isolation and the potential benefits of community transport across UK and Ealing.
  - ECT Charity celebrates its successful accessible shuttle operation at 2015 Rugby World Cup with a special report – "A winning team – Community transport triumphs at the Rugby World Cup".