

# ECT in Cheshire News

Our latest update for members

## A celebration of the value of community transport



Regular Plus Bus passengers Neil Jarvis (left) and Raymond Ashworth (right)



**ECT in Cheshire**

part of ECT Charity – your leading community transport provider

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## A message from our General Manager



### Hello to all our passengers and welcome to our newsletter!

It's been another busy year for us here at ECT in Cheshire and I'd like to thank you all for using our services. We are proud to serve so many members of our community and I hope that you have enjoyed your journeys with us. The team at ECT in Cheshire has grown considerably over the

last year – thank you for giving our new staff such a warm welcome.

Our mission is to provide top-quality, safe, affordable, accessible transport for the community we serve. In this newsletter, we are delighted to look back at some of the highlights of our year, both here in Cheshire and for our umbrella organisation ECT Charity. Don't miss the very special news about our programme of free Christmas trips – part of our commitment to our charitable objectives.

On a practical note, I also wanted to take this opportunity to remind passengers who take regular journeys, that if you need to cancel a trip one week, please let us know as

far in advance as possible. The sooner we know you don't need a trip, the easier it is for us to offer your space to another passenger. We totally understand that sometimes you may need to cancel on the day of travel, but where possible, please let us know in advance! Rest assured that a single cancellation will not jeopardise your regular slot.

Please remember that if there is something you are not sure about, please just give us a call and ask. We are here to help! Finally, on behalf of all of the team at ECT in Cheshire I would like to wish you a very happy Christmas. We look forward to seeing you very soon!

**Ian Dibbert**, *General Manager*



The growing ECT in Cheshire team

## A Christmas gift from ECT

This year, we are delighted to offer a selection of special Day Trip services over the Christmas period.

The Christmas schedule includes outings to Tweed Mill, Manchester Christmas Market and Bridgemere Garden Centre – the perfect opportunity for some last minute Christmas shopping or catching up with friends over a mince pie!

As a thank you to local residents for your support, we are offering these trips free of charge. There is a limit of one return trip per passenger, so make sure you don't miss out and book your place now!

See the table below for our Christmas schedule. We hope to see many of you on one of the outings!



Date	Destination	Open to
6 December 2016	Tweed Mill	Chester residents
7 December 2016	Manchester Christmas Market	Ellesmere Port and Neston residents
8 December 2016	Bridgemere Garden Centre	Chester residents
13 December 2016	Tweed Mill	Ellesmere Port and Neston residents
14 December 2016	Manchester Christmas Market	Chester residents
15 December 2016	Bridgemere Garden Centre	Ellesmere Port and Neston residents

To book a place on a Day Trip, please call 0151 357 4420



# Why community transport matters



The *Why Community Transport Matters* report (above)



PlusBus passenger Ronald Wright, assisted from his front door by driver, Simon Williams

Over the last year, our umbrella organisation ECT Charity has been advocating the role that community transport can play in reducing social isolation and loneliness among vulnerable and elderly people, and the role it can play as an important solution to the challenge of budget cuts for public services.

As part of our commitment to this, we have been working on two new ways to demonstrate the positive impact of accessible transport. Our goal is to be able to show commissioners the value of the benefit we provide and highlight how worthwhile community transport is as an investment.

The first measure we have developed, in partnership with

the global consultancy firm Deloitte, explores the economic cost of loneliness and isolation. The research shows that the cost of loneliness and isolation on the public purse is significant – as much as £2.9 billion per year. Using Deloitte's model, we calculated that community transport schemes have the potential to save health and social care agencies in the UK up to £1.1 billion, as well as reducing pressure on public services and helping older people remain active members of society.

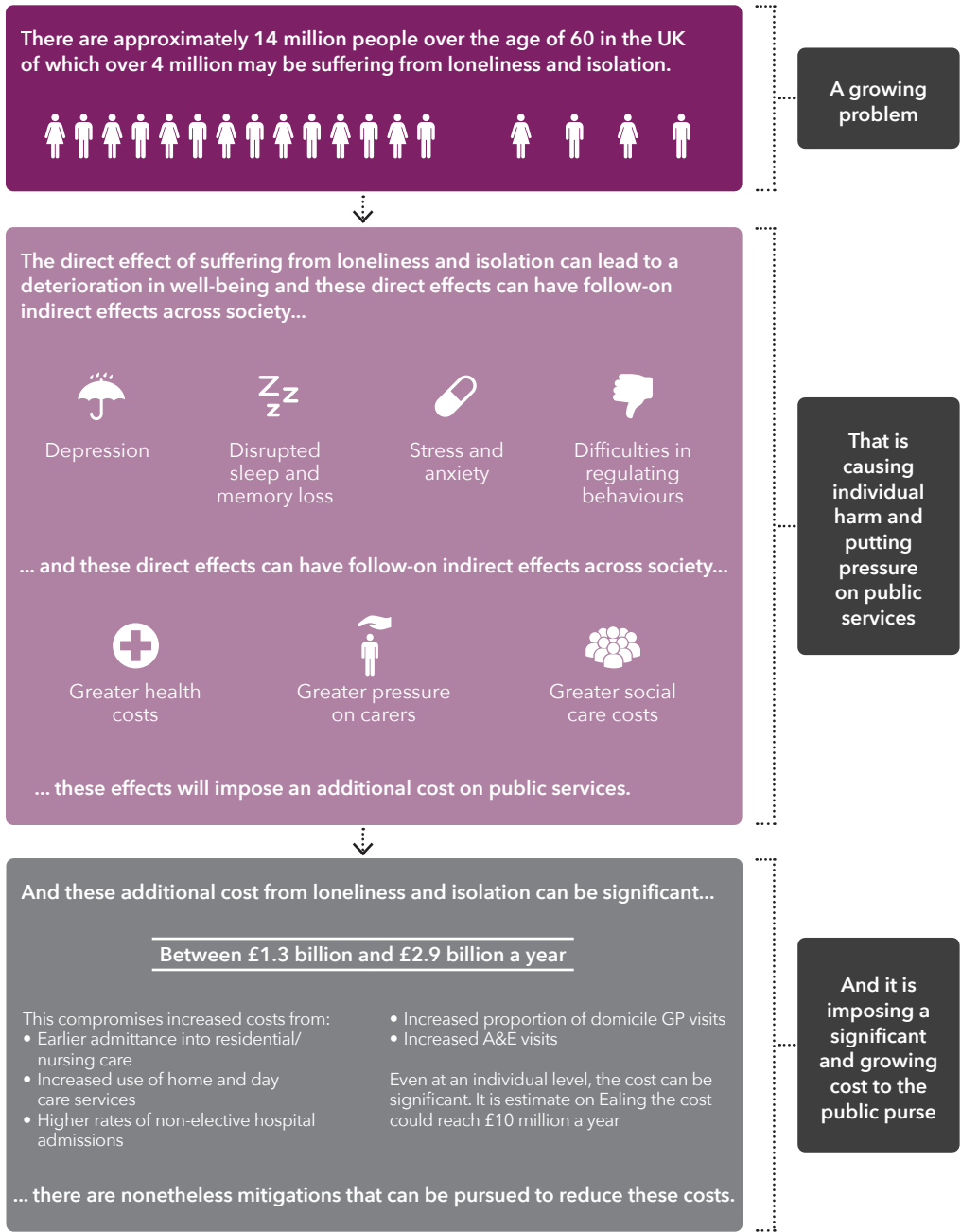
We have also spearheaded the development of a methodology

***"Community transport schemes could save up to £1.1 billion for health and social care agencies"***

to calculate our social value. We initiated this because we feel it is essential that commissioners understand the financial value of the social benefit provided by our services.

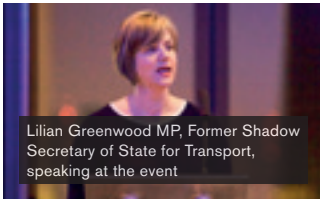
These two measures form the basis of our report *Why Community Transport Matters*. We launched the report in January 2016, in London's City Hall, as part of our commitment to share our knowledge with the wider sector. We were incredibly proud to demonstrate the positive impact of accessible transport and launch the report with the support of high-profile

*Continues on page 6*





Anna Whitty (right), CEO of ECT, with Antonia Orr (second right) and Geoff Warren (second left) of ECT, co-authors of the report, with steering group members Andrew Kelly, Kathleen Lyons (Westway CT) and Manuel Button (Wandsworth CT)



Lilian Greenwood MP, Former Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, speaking at the event

To download the report, watch our video about *Why Community Transport Matters*, or find out more, visit [www.ectcharity.co.uk/projects](http://www.ectcharity.co.uk/projects).

For printed copies of the report *Why Community Transport Matters*, please email [info@ectcharity.co.uk](mailto:info@ectcharity.co.uk)

Continued from page 4 speakers from the health, social care, disability and transport sectors, including Lilian Greenwood MP, Former Shadow Secretary of State for Transport.

By sharing these lessons, we hope other community transport operators can begin to measure their own social value and together we can persuade commissioners nationally that we add value beyond the simple fulfilment of a contract.

We have been privileged to work with Cheshire West and Chester Council, who

have been forward-thinking in their willingness to invest in community transport for many years. Our research highlights how worthwhile this commitment has been. Deloitte's model shows that health and social care costs associated with loneliness and isolation in West Cheshire are over £17 million a year, with the potential of community transport schemes saving up to £6.8 million of these costs.

In addition, using our new methodology, we have calculated that ECT in Cheshire's community

transport services bring an annual social value of over £250,000.

These figures show the true partnership between ECT and Cheshire West and Chester as we work together to achieve our aims of sustainably improving the health and wellbeing of the people in our community. We hope that the success of the partnership here in Cheshire and our work to quantify the positive impact of community transport will together help local authorities all over the UK to look afresh at community transport organisations in their area.

In one year in Cheshire West and Chester:



A group transport passenger is helped on to a bus by passenger assistant, Karen Jones



PlusBus Day Trip service helped passengers get out and about over the summer

## ECT reduces isolation over the summer

Getting away over the summer can be tricky for many elderly, disabled or isolated people, as mainstream transport services do not accommodate their specific needs. Public transport can be a challenge, especially for those with mobility difficulties, contributing to their loneliness and isolation.

Over the summer, ECT in Cheshire helped individuals in the Chester, Neston and Ellesmere Port area get out and about by offering Day Trips to visit places of interest on accessible vehicles.

This summer's schedule included outings all over the North West of England and Wales, including the romantic Cholmondeley Castle Gardens, Llandudno (Wales' largest seaside resort), Tatton Park, Port Sunlight, Arley Hall & Gardens

and many more – there was an outing of interest for everyone!

93-year old Joan Kidd, who visited Tatton Park and Arley Hall, said: "I think the Day Trips are a really good idea, I find them really valuable. I no longer drive anywhere unless it's really close to my home, or unless someone else was kind enough to take me. The service enables me to get to places that I couldn't now otherwise get to."

85-year old Maureen Spence, who visited Arley Hall and the Priory, said: "These trips are a really lovely thing, they open my eyes to things just on my doorstep. I live on my own, and when I went to Arley Hall I met a lady on the same trip and we ended up as really good friends. She thanked me for the friendship and the good time that we had."

"The drivers are wonderful, always pleasant and very helpful. Knowing that you are being dropped off at your own home and not having to get a bus home means that all the tiredness is taken away, which is very helpful. If the service did not go door to door, I could not go out at all. I live in a very remote, rural area and the local buses do not run very frequently. Without ECT, we are stuck."

Anna Whitty, Chief Executive of our umbrella organisation ECT Charity, said: "The needs of some individuals in our community are such that holidaying away from their homes is not an option. These Day Trips provide a wonderful opportunity for them to get away and enjoy a short break, and then be returned safely home at the end of the day."



Regular PlusBus passenger Peter Stewart uses the service to get out and socialise

## 95-year-old passenger holds on to dancing shoes with ECT

Maintaining your independence can be a challenge for some people as they grow older. However, ECT's door-to-door PlusBus service allows elderly members of the community to get out and about, and in the case of PlusBus passenger Peter Stewart, enjoy a spot of dancing!

At 95 years-old, Peter has been using the PlusBus service since its launch in 2007. His friend lives on the opposite side of Chester and the two of them have been

using the service to visit each other and socialising for years.

Commenting on the service, Peter said: "I use the PlusBus solely for socialising - when I want to go out for a meal, or when I want to go out for a dance. The service is an absolute godsend. I live on the outskirts of Chester and can only get out when the PlusBus can take me. Without the service I would have to get a taxi, which is very expensive, so I would be stuck in the house. They pick me up from

my front door and drop me home again afterwards.

"It's always a pleasure to deal with the team – they are excellent people, very obliging and good fun to be around."

Ian Dibbert, General Manager at ECT in Cheshire, said: "Mr Stewart is a testament to living life to the full, and to how community transport can help older members of the community maintain their independence."



Anna Whitty outside No.10 Downing Street with community transport colleagues

## ECT Charity recognised in Queen's Birthday Honours and Number 10 reception

In June 2016, we were delighted to announce that our Chief Executive, Anna Whitty, was awarded an MBE in the Queen's 90th Birthday Honours List! The honour was awarded to Anna in recognition of her major contribution to community transport, both locally and nationally.

Anna has overseen the delivery of a range of innovative community transport services for individuals and groups in Ealing, where ECT Charity – ECT in Cheshire's umbrella organisation – began its life nearly 40 years ago. In recent years, she has steered the charity to work with local authorities and other partners including Cheshire West and Chester.

On a national stage, Anna has driven a series of high-profile engagements that have put community transport in the spotlight for its quality of service and the positive impact it can make. These began in 2012, when ECT Charity co-ordinated all the accessible transport for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, with more than 20 different community transport operators – making it the most accessible Games ever.

Sir Peter Hendy CBE, former Commissioner, Transport for London and current Chair of Network Rail, said: "Under Anna's leadership, ECT Charity has matured into a hugely successful organisation with high quality operations both

in London and elsewhere, as well as, with her personal involvement, helping make a huge success of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. She and ECT Charity have set the highest standard for the provision of accessible transport and raised the level of understanding of the benefits of this with Government and other major opinion-formers nationally."

Patrick O'Keeffe, Chair of ECT Charity, said: "This award recognises the spirit of Anna Whitty, and the team spirit and commitment that she has fostered across the organisation, in delivering high quality transport services to the most vulnerable and isolated people across all sectors of our community."

### A visit to Number 10

Anna Whitty also had the great privilege of attending a reception hosted by David Cameron, the then Prime Minister, at Number 10 Downing Street to celebrate "Keeping Britain Moving".

Fellow transport and community transport leaders also attended the reception in April. The opening speech was delivered by Patrick McLoughlin MP, then Secretary of State for Transport, who highlighted the important work conducted by the transport sector.

In his speech, David Cameron recognised the issue of isolation in our communities, and the crucial

role that community transport organisations play in helping address this problem.

Speaking about the event, Anna commented: "The general public, as well as colleagues in other parts of the transport sector, wrongly assume that having 'community' in our name means that we form part of the local council. However, as independent charities, community transport organisations provide transport for people who fall between the gaps of statutory transport provision. Many of our passengers are house-bound individuals and so we can make a huge difference to these lonely and isolated members of our communities."

She continued: "It struck me that in a room full of people working in the transport sector, community transport was seen as an equal partner to mainstream transport services. We stood tall and proud amongst fellow transport colleagues."

"Times are challenging for public sector budgets, but we have an opportunity to show that community transport can be the solution for the commissioners and policymakers who want to build services that deliver quality, at the same time as supporting those in our community who are most in need."

At this Number 10 reception, community transport mattered!



PlusBus passenger Ronald Wright helping us to see why community transport matters



A group transport passenger is helped on to a bus by passenger assistant, Karen Jones

**ECT in Cheshire** is part of ECT Charity, a social enterprise which is committed to delivering high quality, safe, accessible and affordable transport services to local communities.

**Our current services include:**

- **PlusBus** – providing door-to-door journeys in Chester, Ellesmere Port and Neston, for individuals who are aged 80+ and/or have mobility difficulties. Journeys are available between 9am and 11pm on Mondays to Saturdays, and between 9am to 6pm on Sundays (subject to availability).
- **Day Trips** – helping individuals to visit local places of interest on accessible vehicles.
- **Group Transport** – providing minibuses to voluntary and community groups, with a professional driver.

**Contact us**

**Bookings and general enquiries: 0151 357 4420**  
(open 9am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday)

**Cancellations: 0151 357 4425**  
(if you need to cancel, please let us know as soon as possible)

**Emergency: 0151 357 4429**

**Email: [cheshire@ectcharity.co.uk](mailto:cheshire@ectcharity.co.uk)**



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