

ECT News

Our Summer 2015 update for members of Ealing Community Transport

Tackling loneliness through community transport



Regular PlusBus user, Pia Chrystiuk, assisted by driver, Trevor King

We're delighted to bring you our Summer newsletter, in which we proudly feature our recent achievements. It has been a busy year for ECT. We've expanded our range of services to the local community, and with support from key partners, we are exploring ways that community transport can further reduce social isolation and loneliness among vulnerable and elderly people.

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Ealing Community Transport

part of ECT Charity – your leading
community transport provider

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Transport is more important than ever.

We believe that community transport helps to mitigate loneliness and isolation by providing older people with access to the outside world. It gives them the chance to go out and socialise, not only with their friends but also with fellow passengers and our friendly drivers. If you know anyone who could benefit from our door-to-door transport services, please get in touch.

As we enter Summer, we look forward to supporting local voluntary and community groups in Ealing so they can carry out their Summer activities.

At ECT, we recognise that financial conditions remain challenging but at the same time accessing affordable transport continues to be vital in fulfilling organisational objectives. We remain committed to providing local groups with a high-quality service at an affordable price and will endeavour to ensure that the impact of any rise in charges affecting vulnerable individuals is kept to a minimum, following the 100% deletion of ECT's grant from Ealing Council.

It is important to remind our members and passengers about ECT's innovative business model. In a post-grant era, transport contracts

represent ECT's primary income stream, providing a regular source of income. This ensures ECT's sustainability and therefore allows us to deliver our charitable activities accordingly. All our assets stay in the community for community use, at marginal cost, through our group transport and door-to-door PlusBus services.

Finally, we are excited to announce that after the enormous success of the Invictus Games (on the back of our London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic legacy), ECT will be providing accessible shuttles for the Rugby World Cup later this year. Look out for our green buses at Twickenham!

Chief Executive
ECT

PlusBus for Health: ECT's pioneering health transport pilot

At the end of last year, ECT launched a new service to transport semi-housebound passengers to GP surgeries. This service, funded by Ealing Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), is helping to reduce the number of GP appointments that are missed in areas around Ealing, saving valuable NHS resources and helping to deliver an integrated approach to care.

Launched in November 2014, the service is reducing the number of GP house calls and no-shows at surgeries, as well as reducing the overall number of hospital admissions. The service simultaneously improves the well-being of patients by providing the opportunity for them to leave their homes and increase social contact with others.

One PlusBus for Health passenger was able to attend her appointment without the need for her daughter to travel all the way from Surrey to help her. Another service user who has to visit her doctor once



Service user, Patricia Whitehurst, getting a helping hand from driver, Marita Thomas

a fortnight said: "I only live down the road, but without the PlusBus for Health service, I would not be able to get to the surgery because my legs are too painful. The service is so important for people like me."

This is a ground-breaking partnership between ECT, the GP practices and the CCG. We have worked hard together to create a very successful pilot and it is a fantastic example of how the community transport sector can help to deliver an integrated approach to health care not just in Ealing, but one that could easily be replicated across the country in both rural and urban environments.

"Without the PlusBus for Health service, I would not be able to get to the surgery"

By understanding the importance of promoting community transport as the viable solution, Ealing CCG has adopted an innovative approach, changing how things are done in the NHS. This pilot has shown how a small investment can go a long way and can save valuable resources whilst still offering a high quality service to those who need it most.

PlusBus in the community



ECT provides door-to-door journeys for people unable to use mainstream public transport due to mobility or other difficulties, or because ordinary public transport or other services have been withdrawn from their area. Individuals can use door-to-door transport for a wide variety of reasons, such as shopping, attending lunch clubs or healthcare appointments, visiting friends and family, and going on organised day-trips to local attractions.

In November last year, ECT launched its EASIE project (Elderly Accessible Service in Ealing) to provide transport for individuals who are especially isolated in their community and rarely leave their homes.

A volunteer who accompanied a 92-year-old PlusBus passenger on her first journey out of the house in more than two years shares her experience: “Initially Margaret was a bit scared being outside surrounded by so many people who were rushing around. She also remarked how much things had changed since she’d last been out. But after getting off the bus, she took a few steps and her confidence came back. We went to Marks & Spencer where she was thrilled to be able to choose her own food in the supermarket. It may seem like a small thing – but after years of having her food brought to her by someone else, it really made her day being able to walk down the aisles and make her own decisions.”

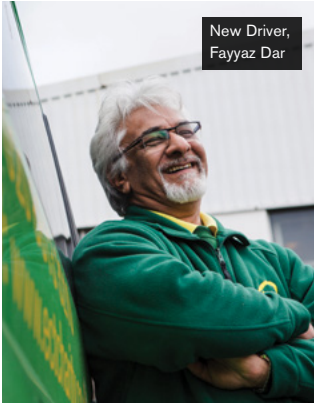
Do you know someone who struggles with buses, doesn't like taxis – yet could use specialist door-to-door transport?

Why don't you encourage them to get in touch with us or perhaps you could email us on their behalf. The ECT subsidised fare will be less than a taxi, but will provide that additional help that is required. The driver will meet the passenger at their door.

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Call us on **020 8813 3210** with your transport needs or those of someone you know.

Growing our talented team



We have seen lots of new faces walking through the depot doors in the last year, from drivers to members of the senior management team. As our operations have grown, we have carried out a significant driver recruitment push and have been joined by highly professional, friendly and caring drivers. We're especially pleased to have welcomed so many women drivers to the team.

Following the departure of our cherished Driver Trainer George Morris at the end of 2013 after 17 years with ECT, Jay Solanki picked up the reins and has continued providing training sessions for the Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS) making sure that all ECT drivers are suitably trained.

Creating local employment opportunities

In January this year, Lee Digby, aged 19, joined the operations team as ECT's first Apprentice.

In doing so, ECT became part of the '100 in 100 Campaign' launched by Ealing Council to encourage local businesses to create 100 apprenticeships in 100 days.

Lee, 19, decided he was not best suited to university and wanted to find work instead, something he found hard whilst his skills and experience were still limited.

After four months at ECT, Lee says: "The apprenticeship with ECT has changed my life completely. I struggled

before I joined ECT and found it hard to find a motivation or a goal, but now working here I feel happy to work and I am developing every day. I love that I am working for a charity helping elderly people who struggle to use transport. I live with my Nan, so the work I do relates to my home life because I am helping many others like my Nan, who are elderly and want to get out more. I feel blessed that I can offer people help who need it and it puts a smile on my face every time I make a phone call. I want this for the long run and my goal and ambition is to help the community change and become a better place."

Anna Whitty, Chief Executive of ECT, said: "From day one,



Lee has shown energy and enthusiasm. I am proud to see ECT providing opportunities for young people in the local area to learn new skills."

Continuing the London 2012 legacy



In September last year, ECT provided accessible transport for the Invictus Games, an international, multi-sport event hosted in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and Lee Valley Athletics Centre.

The competitors were wounded, injured and sick service men and women. The Games aimed to use the power of sport to inspire recovery, support rehabilitation, and generate a wider understanding and respect of those who serve their country.

ECT led the provision of accessible shuttle buses for both the Olympics and Paralympics during London

2012, making them the most accessible Games ever. This experience, combined with the organisation's social aims and social enterprise structure, meant that ECT was the obvious choice of partner for the Invictus Games.

For able-bodied people, the 20-30 minute walk (the so-called last mile) from the station to the venues was a pleasant stroll, but for those with disabilities, and their carers, it presented a difficult, if not impossible journey. A team of dedicated service controllers were posted at every stop, managing the demand responsive service to ensure that it met the needs

of spectators arriving and leaving each event. The service provided by ECT helped ensure this journey was easy, making the Invictus Games an accessible event for all.

Christopher Hawkings, shuttle bus passenger, commented: "We took my son who uses a wheelchair to the Invictus Games. The shuttle service from Stratford station was very efficient and all the staff we met were helpful and cheerful. It made what could have been a difficult journey so simple. We were very grateful for the service and would like to thank everyone involved."

ECT exists to ensure that those people who normally fall through the gaps of existing transport provision are able to get out and about and visit inspiring events like these. ECT's high-quality accessible transport allowed people with disabilities to attend an event that is extremely close to their hearts, giving them an opportunity to learn from and support those ex-service personnel who are inspiring recovery and generating a wider understanding of disability.

Our next sporting challenge: the Rugby World Cup this Autumn!

ECT is a Dementia Friend!



Dementia Friends is a national initiative that is being run by Alzheimer's Society. It is funded by the government, and aims to improve people's understanding of dementia and its effects.

In March, ECT was visited by a Dementia Friends Champion who spoke with office staff, drivers and passenger assistants about how we can all make a positive difference to people living with dementia in the community. We were given information about the personal

impact of dementia and what we can do to help.

We encourage other organisations to take part in this ground-breaking initiative. Following such a successful programme in the UK, Jeremy Hughes, CEO of Alzheimer's Society, has now pledged to work with charities and governments around the world to help establish Dementia Friends programmes. ECT is proud to be a Dementia Friends organisation.

What did we learn?

- Dementia is not a natural part of the ageing process.
- Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain.
- It is not just about losing your memory.
- It's possible to live well with it.
- There is more to the person than the dementia.

Hanwell Big Local and ECT!



Hanwell Big Local is one of 150 areas nationwide that receives money from the Big Lottery Fund. ECT has entered a partnership with Hanwell Big Local to provide subsidised door-to-door transport for those who find it difficult to get about in the local area.

The partnership covers the Gurnell, Copley and Cuckoo estates and will run for at least one year. It will also provide opportunities for drivers to learn how to drive a minibus by participating in the Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS).

The project aims to prevent isolation to individuals living in the Hanwell local area

Keeping group transport affordable



ECT's group transport service has been developed over the last 30 years as a direct response to the need for voluntary and community groups to access a collective transport facility to carry out their purpose-driven activities.

The service currently provides safe, reliable and accessible minibus group transport to more than 220 groups, including charities, voluntary groups and community organisations in Ealing, as well as schools and Ealing council departments.

ECT's charges have been deliberately affordable, cross-subsidised by a grant from Ealing Council and by ECT's other transport activities.

ECT's group transport service has also played an important role in helping to build, strengthen and integrate communities in Ealing. It does so by enabling local groups to function effectively and efficiently.

In April, Ealing Council confirmed that it has decided to terminate the current

commissioning grant agreement it has with ECT from 1st July. ECT will therefore have to review minibus hire charges in light of this recent development.

At ECT, we understand that affordability is a critical element of accessibility. ECT is committed to keeping transport in the community affordable to those who most need it, especially community organisations. The Group Transport project will continue but ECT will need to review its prices in due course.