

Partnership Working with ORCHYD

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HCT News

Reception: 9.30 am — 3.30 pm. 01895 277773 or E-mail: HCT@hillington.gov.uk

Another year has almost passed us by and we are looking at another cold winter. It only seems like weeks ago since we got over the long drawn out cold spell from last winter and it seems to be starting all over again.

Well how has Hillingdon Community Transport fared since last January? January 2010 was a disaster as far as income was concerned, with the number of cancelled bookings and I was concerned about using up our entire surplus in one month. Thankfully the weather abated, we got a few weeks work in and surprisingly February and March were busier than usual and we managed to make up our losses.

Between April and September business was good with plenty of bookings, which meant that lots of you got out and about and we hope you enjoyed yourselves.

Our Fleet
Currently we are operating thirteen minibuses, twelve which are fully accessible, plus a small bus (called an MPV), which can carry up to eight passengers or less with a wheelchair passenger.

Partnerships
We were fortunate to be able to gain access to a new sixteen seat/ wheel chair accessible minibus last July thanks to a partnership with one of our member groups' called ORCHYD. They are a local charity based in the Ruislip / Ickenham area, made up from a group of local churches. They have been running holidays for disabled children for the last forty years during August time and other activities during the year.

The partnership means that HCT can access this lovely new bus when not required by the group and in return we manage the bus and pay the running costs.

The bus was donated to ORCHYD in memory of Jessica Anne Johnson

Volunteers

We are all so lucky to have such a great bunch of willing people, who give up their time freely to drive on behalf of HCT and for many of our members. We currently have 15-20 willing souls.

From the April – September period we received 552 requests for volunteer drivers, which represents a huge amount of admin work for our receptionists Sheila and Julie who also deserve a huge thank you for their determination to try and fill every request. Unfortunately it is not possible to succeed every time and you can only ask the drivers so many times. But I am sure you will agree with me when I say that this is a fantastic effort on the part of the drivers and staff.

We are always looking to recruit more volunteers so if you know of a willing candidate please send them along. They will receive free MIDAS minibus training and become part of our team.

More Information: Colin Hanlon on: 01895 277774 or email: chanlon@hillingdon.gov.uk

MIDAS MATTERS

We currently have over 400 drivers on our data base, most of whom drive on behalf of their “own” group. Some are regular drivers but many only drive a few times a year and often forget the full procedure when taking out one of our buses. Please ask in the office for a reminder of what you need to do.

Since January of this year we have had access to under cover parking for ten of our buses thanks to an arrangement with the Council, so the “smaller” buses live here and the “larger” buses in the normal space in the car park.

Licence Checks

Good practice dictates that we should check all driving licences every twelve months, so we will be asking to see your licence, (both parts if a photo licence), and complete another driver registration form so that we can update our records.

Changes in Personal Circumstances

If during the year you have any convictions or changes in your medical condition/ medication it is important that you let Steve know in case this might affect your entitlement to drive a MINIBUS as more stringent rules apply. Failure to do so may mean that you are not covered by our insurance and could be personally liable in the event of any claim.

We would also like drivers to report any “occurrences or incidents/ near misses” so that we may learn from these and try and prevent future situations that may endanger our passengers our members or the public.

Refresher Training

This comes around every four years, from the date on your MiDAS certificate. Steve Charlton will ring you just prior to this to see if you wish to renew your entitlement to drive our minibuses, but remember you have three months “grace” beyond your expiry date.

Passenger Assistant Training (PATS)

We now offer training for people who travel with your passengers to assist them in various ways. This is to ensure they understand their role and offer safe assistance to your members. Training is tailored to suit your organisations specific needs and those of your passengers. This also represents a duty of care to your members and staff by offering the PATS training to them.

Minibus Emergency Evacuation Training (MEET)

Steve recently completed the training course to deliver the MEET course. The emergency evacuation training is not only for drivers but passenger assistants as well. It includes training in the event of a minibus fire, which is probably the worst case scenario.

You may be surprised to learn that each year there are some one hundred minibus fires in the UK.

For any information about the above or any other driving questions please contact:

Steve Charlton on: 01895 556370 or email: scharlton@hillingdon.gov.uk

Volunteering

If any of your drivers would like to do a bit a volunteer driving for us please ask them to get in touch. This can be particularly useful to drivers who don't drive minibuses very often.

For any information about volunteering please contact:

Colin Hanlon on: 01895 277774 or email: chanlon@hillingdon.gov.uk