

Annual Report

2016-2017

Community
Connexions



A message from our Patron—Anne Cadbury OBE JP DL

Last year saw Community Connexions focus solely on community transport and provide vital transport services to the most vulnerable in our communities.

Since then the charity has seen considerable growth across Gloucestershire and now covers 5 out of the 6 Districts. This has brought its own challenges, particularly the issue of providing services to rural areas. The challenge has been met through collaborative working with strategic partners and communities and includes the provision of 'shopper' buses serving these isolated communities. Shopping excursions help keep people independent and reduce social isolation and loneliness. Their impact upon people's quality of life should not be underestimated.

Recent government decisions will put further demands on the charity in the coming 12 months but I am confident Community Connexions will continue to meet the demands placed upon it and enrich the lives of those who need it most.





Cavus Batki (Chair of the Board) and Paul Riddick – CEO

Community transport remains a life-line for the most vulnerable in our communities. Our services can help reduce the problems of social and rural isolation, improve the quality of life of our customers and tackle loneliness. Community Connexions, with the support of our partners and Gloucestershire County Council, now covers most of the county and we have vehicles stationed at Stroud, Cirencester, Fairford and Tetbury as well as our established bases in Cheltenham and Gloucester. Our Mission is to provide services where they are most needed and this has led to the growth of our 'shopper' routes – providing (usually) rural communities with access to local services such as supermarkets.

We can only provide these vital services through our staff and volunteers – a dedicated group of people whose professionalism we admire and applaud. We have witnessed first-hand how they go the extra mile to ensure our customers have a comfortable and enjoyable journey. An example of this kindness was demonstrated recently when a volunteer was in the Transport Office signing off for the day. A telephone call was received from a customer saying they had been delayed at a hospital appointment and so had missed their lift home. Without hesitation the volunteer said he would take the customer home. It is this selflessness which encapsulates the ethos of our charity.

Our charity has made good progress over the past 12 months and we are pleased with the direction and pace of change. However we are aware there are further challenges ahead of us in the coming 12 months, including changes to legislation, a new volunteering strategy, funding and a fares and I.T. review to name a few.

Gloucestershire County Council has also indicated it would like us to move towards a seven day a week operation to meet the needs of customers and partners (e.g. the NHS which is also extending its service provision times), and this will present a fresh set of opportunities for the organisation. We have met a number of charities whom we hold in high esteem and we know we can work collaboratively with them, and other partners, to meet those challenges for the benefit of all. We shall also seek the views of our customers on how we should shape our services to meet changing demands.

So we have had a good year and we are in a strong position to respond to the demands placed upon us.



Cont:

Cont:

Our people; We would like to thank our staff and volunteers for their hard work and determination to provide and improve services across the county. Recent staff and volunteer surveys have provided us with the feedback to make this organisation even better.

Outlook; Our future plans include responding to public demand in terms of expanding local services in rural areas, implementing a refreshed volunteer strategy, completing a review of our fare structure and ensuring we comply with changing legislation (e.g. General Data Protection Regulations).



Robert Barker —Treasurer

Annual Results:

The financial year 2016/17 was a record year for income for the charity at just under the £1m. Sound budgetary control and efficient operational management ensured that costs continued to be contained, allowing the generation of a welcome surplus. Added to our reserves, it means we are now in a securer financial position to be able to continue to provide our vital services.

Performance; A budget surplus is the result of expanding our services across the county and making efficiency savings, and despite no increase in grant funding., we have continued our policy of leasing vehicles which will ensure the average age of the fleet reduces over time whilst simultaneously controlling our maintenance costs.

Audit


Our annual audit went smoothly - no significant errors or operational weaknesses were identified.

Employees


- The organisation scores well in keeping general commitments to employees
- Providing you with a reasonably secure job **76%**
- Providing you with fair pay for the work you do **83%**
- Ensuring fair treatment by managers and supervisors **88%**



All employees feel appreciated by their immediate colleagues with whom they work most closely with **83%** feeling valued by managers.



Training levels in the organisation are high with only **18%** of employees not having attended any form of training in the previous 12 months




Trust and confidence is generally high in both line managers (**76%**) and senior managers (**70%**) with (**88%**) believing that managers and supervisors treat them fairly




75% of staff think the organization is paying at the right market level



People are proud to say who they work for (**75%**) and would happily recommend CCX to a friend (**76%**)



The average work/life balance for employees was **6.9** with one lucky person scoring **10!**



Volunteers

The results will be used to inform and refresh our volunteering strategy in line with strategic objectives and gives us evidence that we can use for future funding bids. As the response rate was so high (**79%**) we can be sure that our statistics are meaningful.

People Survey



81% receive a good level of training and support

99% recommend volunteering with Community Connexions



Improvements in scheduling have been recognised.



91% felt valued or highly valued.



93% volunteering has positive impact on them.



Scheduling and communications are seen as key areas needing additional improvement.





**Bev Hemming,
Business Development Manager**



Lisa Stearns, Transport Manager

Last year we reported 'more of the same' but this year we have definitely gone up a gear (no pun intended).

We have been working closely with communities to deliver the services that meet transport needs that they themselves have identified. This has not been without its challenges, sometimes due to insufficient resources to meet the ever increasing demands made on our service across all areas of operation.



Earlier in the report the development of our very successful, ever increasing shopper services has rightly been celebrated. None of them would have come to fruition without the considerable input and promotion from local residents and communities determined to alleviate the problems that social and rural isolation bring.

We are fortunate to have advocates in some communities who are pro-active in recruiting more volunteers. They work with us to develop, design and deliver increased services. How wonderful it would be if we had a 'super supporter' in every community in which operate, that way we could ensure that we reach all of those who could benefit from community transport whilst gaining volunteers to help deliver in their locality. We believe that this is the way forward and that our refreshed volunteering strategy will enable us recruit the volunteers needed to help us to raise funds, awareness and increase our service delivery capabilities.

We were able to recruit three dedicated and talented Interns from the University of Gloucestershire's School of Business. Two made considerable advances to the work of our fare review and one refreshed our marketing images, some of which have been used in this report. One liked it so much he returned to volunteer in two different capacities!



Our customers are extremely important to us and it is gratifying that the feeling is mutual!

Gloucestershire Young Carers – We have received some lovely feedback about your driver Simon.....'what a jolly nice chap he is and how he took the time to introduce himself....the young people all looked very comfortable and were enjoying his company.'

Mr V. said what an excellent journey he had today in Tewkesbury and how grateful he was that we had managed to fit him in at short notice. He said he would recommend us to anyone else that he knows.

Mrs Hall - My family and I would like to thank you all so much for taking us on holiday. If it was not for you my grandson, who has cerebral palsy, would not have been able to go!

Carole James –The service you all provide is second to none and helps my Mum to stay independent and have a social life. Without people and services like yourselves her life would be pretty bleak. So if you will forgive my gushing email – you are all pretty amazing so a big hug to you all and thank you!

Mrs Ogden – I have just been on your 72SN shopper for the first time and I think it is a wonderful help and thoughtful that your driver Mark went and collected all the trolleys for us all on the bus and returned them when we had finished. Brilliant service!

Our small team often goes the 'extra mile' giving their own time freely to take part in fundraising, social and promotional events – even donning some extremely dubious outfits for the cause!

Race Night

Gloucester Carnival

Passenger Christmas Party



14,174 passenger
journeys to day

centres



223% INCREASE
in bus service
passengers

2016-17 HIGHLIGHTS



Our vehicles travelled 308,617 miles



40 additional volunteers and staff recruited

119,798 BOOKINGS TAKEN



**875 individual
passengers and**



**73 new
groups registered
to use our services**



**35% increase
in passenger
trips for
educational
purposes**

12% subsequently
cancelled by the
passenger - an **8%**
improvement on the
previous year



1766
Passengers
journeys



The average
age
of an adult
passenger is
78.7 years young!



51

**volunteer
drivers**



15,110

passengers



169,310

miles