

Project Background

Current stage of project:

Volunteer-run community bus providing timetabled service to 50 villages around Penrith running into Penrith Town & also Carlisle (1x per week). Frequency of service varies between villages. Also offer minibus & driver for hire and day excursion programme.

Vehicle type, number & capacity:

Four diesel minibuses (3x Mercedes Sprinter 1x Fiat Ducato). Two are wheelchair accessible (1x 17-seat and 1x 16-seat) and two non-wheelchair accessible (1x 17-seat, 1x 16-seat). No standing.

Transport operator:

Ran by a group of 35 volunteers (inc. 25 drivers). Buses are serviced and maintained at bus base in Langwathby. Safety inspections and MOT conducted by W&F Council.

Main service users:

Residents of the villages served, predominantly elderly and female. Also tourists, visitors, and children.

Integration with other transport:

Services connect with buses at Penrith & Carlisle, and trains at Penrith (on request).

Duration of project:

Fellrunner has been running since 1979 and celebrates 50yrs in 2029!

Fellrunner Village Bus

Location: Langwathby, Penrith.

Contact: www.fellrunnerbus.co.uk

Governance/Funding Organisational structure:

Registered charity & limited company with Board of Trustees (5 people) & Company Secretary.

Responsibility for day-to-day running:

Running overseen by Chairman, Kevin Gilloway, who has volunteered for 35yrs.

Sources of funding:

Main funds from ticket sales (£25,000 in 2025), either cash or concessionary bus pass reclaim (paid 70% of a single fare for bus pass journeys). Donations, gifts, grants & income from driver/bus hire & day excursion service top-up funds. W&F Council supports purchase of replacement buses.

Financial model:

Fellrunner owns the buses and replaces them when they reach 7yo.

Promotion & Innovation

Marketing strategy:

Website, local press & village magazines, bus stops, Tourist Information Centre, and bus user apps. Partnerships with Lowther Castle, the Pot Place, and Acorn Bank. Raising awareness is still a struggle.

Digital services used:

No digital booking currently.

Reflection

What has worked well so far:

Fellrunner is a lifeline for those without transport. We are an "operator of last resort" when commercial services are withdrawn.

What has been learned:

There is no such thing as the perfect minibus—it is always a compromise between accessibility, space, and suitability for longer journeys.

Future plans:

Carry on doing what we do, without competing with commercial operators.

St Mary's Hospice

Location: Ulverston (main site), Barrow-in-Furness & Ambleside.

Contact: www.stmaryshospice.org.uk

Project Background

Current stage of project:

Volunteer driver patient transport scheme with plans to develop a community offer in South Lakes. Offered to service users of the Hospice without their own transport.

Vehicle type, number & capacity:

Six petrol cars (Hyundai i10, Skoda Kamiq, Kia Ceed, Toyota Yaris, Peugeot 208 & a new car (TBC)), **a 6-seater minibus** (Renault Trafic) with 1 adapted wheelchair space, **two diesel vans** (Renault Luton and Renault Trafic).

Transport operator:

Staff and volunteers. Maintenance by in-house estates team and local garage (Ulverston).

Main service users:

Patients and hospice service users.

Integration with other transport:

No, stand-alone service.

Duration of project:

Around 10 years, ad-hoc.

Governance/Funding Organisational structure:

Part of hospice service.

Responsibility for day-to-day running:

St Mary's Hospice staff.

Sources of funding:

The service is funded entirely by grants and donations. Journeys are free currently. We wish to understand how we can expand the offer but still be able to fund this.

Financial model:

Vehicles are owned and maintained by St Mary's Hospice.

Promotion & Innovation

Marketing strategy:

This is not a formally advertised service & is only offered to service users without transport. Hospice comms & marketing, social media & word of mouth help with this promotion.

Digital services used:

No digital booking currently.

Reflection

Future plans:

To maximise the impact of our current fleet. We wish to continue to develop an efficient and effective service connecting people with, or bringing services to them. We hope to buy an event bus to achieve this. We are keen to find ways of expanding the service while still offering equitable access but generating the income required to sustain the operation and core services.

Border Rambler Rural Transport Services

Location: Brampton & Carlisle.

Contact: www.borderramblerbus.co.uk/

Project Background

Current stage of project:

Border Rambler bus service was developed in response to the withdrawal of the local bus service and subsidy in rural parts of Carlisle. The service has now been running since 2015 and with two routes: the BR1 (Carlisle Airport-Carlisle) and the BR3 (Brampton - Gilsland Circle).

Vehicle type, number & capacity:

One minibus (Citroen 2.2ltr diesel)- 16 seat capacity.

Transport operator:

Ran by a group of volunteers with maintenance carried about by the local garage.

Main service users:

Regular use by local residents (using NoW cards) and tourists/Hadrian's Wall walkers.

Integration with other transport:

The BR3 service is synchronised with Stagecoach 685 Carlisle - Brampton service, allowing service users to access the city centre and vice versa.

Duration of project:

Border Rambler has been running for nearly 11 years (since September 2015).

Governance/Funding Organisational structure:

Border Rambler is a registered Independent Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

Responsibility for day-to-day running:

Running overseen by volunteer trustees.

Sources of funding:

Main source of income and funding for day-to-day operation comes from English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) reimbursement as well as occasional cash fares. Lottery/Council grants are used to purchase new vehicles. Journeys are paid for using NoW cards/cash.

Financial model:

Border Rambler buys, owns and runs its own vehicles.

Promotion & Innovation

Marketing strategy:

Website, leaflet drops, bus stop information, word of mouth.

Digital services used:

No digital booking currently. Website used to promote service/routes.

Reflection

What has worked well so far:

We provide a personalised service for regular passengers, many of whom live in isolated areas and would otherwise be without transport.

What has been learned:

Happy to talk with anyone about what we have learned over the past 10 years!

Future plans:

We are hoping to purchase an additional vehicle and recruit more volunteers so that we can run more routes and service more people.

Sustainable and Integrated Transport for Ullswater (SITU)

Location: Ullswater Valley

Contact: www.situcumbria.org.uk/

Project Background

Current stage of project:

SITU is an established service and has expanded from only operating on weekends/bank holidays July-Oct in 2023, to include a daily service in July/August and May half-term by 2025.

Vehicle type, number & capacity:

One minibus (diesel, 16-seater), hoping to expand to two minibuses in 2026 with a seated capacity of 17 and a standing capacity of 6.

Transport operator:

Stagecoach hold responsibility for the bus, the driver, and vehicle maintenance.

Main service users:

The main service users are visitors with healthy adoption by local residents and employees of local businesses too.

Integration with other transport:

The SITU model centres around integration with other non-car transport. The bus links with other bus services, Ullswater Steamer piers, and signed footpaths (Eamont Way & Ullswater way). Looking to link with existing car parks in 2026 to establish a 'park & ride' offer.

Duration of project:

Entering fourth year of operation.

Governance/Funding Organisational structure:

SITU is now a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) but for the first 2.5 years was ran in conjunction with another local community charity.

Responsibility for day-to-day running:

Running overseen by trustees & volunteers.

Sources of funding:

Grants, fares, donations, and pledges from local businesses. Passengers pay a fixed fare (Government cap) per journey which is subsidised through grants, donations & pledges. Fares alone do not cover the rate paid to Stagecoach currently.

Financial model:

We pay Stagecoach a daily rate to provide & run the bus.

Promotion & Innovation

Marketing strategy:

Timetables at bus stops, posters, website, Instagram. Assistance from local businesses is crucial for disseminating information.

Digital services used:

No digital booking currently. Timetables shown on SITU & Stagecoach websites.

Reflection

What has worked well so far:

Taking a step-by-step approach with each year being a pilot for the next, while having a long-term vision. Relationships & support networks with local businesses/community.

What has been learned:

Go step-by-step but think about sustainability in the long-term, not just each year. Think innovatively about funding mechanisms.

Future plans:

Offer more links to other forms of non-car transport to realise our vision of a sustainable and integrated transport system for Ullswater.

Project Background

Current stage of project:

Cuckmere buses is a well-established community transport service with a fleet of minibuses operating over 20 weekly timetabled services, as well as summer leisure services, and private hire.

Vehicle type, number & capacity:

Eight minibuses (Euro 6, diesel)- 16 seat capacity. Potentially looking to purchase a ZE minibus funded by the Local Authority.

Transport operator:

Ran by volunteers- nearly 50 trained drivers and 8 additional volunteers who support with running. All drivers are trained in house and re-assessed every 4 years.

Main service users:

Mainly local residents without other bus services looking to access shops, appointments, or other activities.

Integration with other transport:

We connect with commercial bus operators and train services where we can. Our shopping services offer connections so that passengers can transfer to another bus to reach larger centres.

Duration of project:

The service has been operating over 45 years.

Cuckmere Buses

Location: Berwick, East Sussex.

Contact: www.cuckmerebuses.org.uk/

Governance/Funding Organisational structure:

Cuckmere buses is a company limited by guarantee and a charity.

Responsibility for day-to-day running:

Running overseen by volunteer trustees/directors.

Sources of funding:

Ticket fares are the main source of income.

Financial model:

Purchase/lease our own buses and run them ourselves through our own permits. Maintenance is carried out by a nearby independent garage.

Promotion & Innovation

Marketing strategy:

Website and social media, timetables at local bus stops.

Digital services used:

No digital booking currently. Website used to promote service/routes.

Reflection

What has worked well so far:

We work with our LA to coordinate services with other operators and have good relations with other operators as a result. We do our best to take on new work offered.

What has been learned:

Don't overstretch yourself- reliability is key. Think like a passenger- clean buses, comfortable seats, friendly drivers.

Future plans:

Establish relations with new combined authority/Mayoral candidates to ensure continuity of support and funding, particularly through ENCTS pass scheme.

POD Calder Valley Shared Transport Limited



Location: Upper Calder Valley, Calderdale, West Yorkshire

Contact: www.pod-caldervalley.co.uk/

Project Background

Current stage of project:

Launched in 2024, POD is a community-owned car-sharing club which offers a fleet of cars to hire. Since then, POD has had 769 bookings covering 31,000 miles across 5 cars.

Vehicle type, number & capacity:

Five cars (three Yaris hybrids, two hybrid Corolla estates which are dog friendly).

Transport operator:

POD operates the service through its manager and volunteer team. All bookings and hire are managed by the POD app which is provided through membership of the Mobility Factory (TMF), a European co-op supporting car clubs.

Main service users:

Local residents- currently 94 people are signed up.

Integration with other transport:

All cars are positioned near to footpaths and bus stops to allow users to use the cars as a link between other forms of transport.

Duration of project:

POD was set up in August 2024 and had its first users in February 2025.

Governance/Funding Organisational structure:

POD is a Community Benefit Society (co-op).

Responsibility for day-to-day running:

Running is overseen by 1x paid part-time manager and 20 volunteers (including 6 Directors on the POD Board).

Sources of funding:

POD received a capital grant of £100,000 to purchase its 5 hybrid cars. Further grants of £18,000 have been obtained to support revenue, including funding for disability adaptations. Starting to become financially sustainable through revenue gained from subscriptions (£6/per month), hire (£5.75/per hour) and mileage (30p/mile) charges.

Financial model:

POD owns, runs, and maintains its own vehicles.

Promotion & Innovation

Marketing strategy:

Regular use of social media, leaflets (particularly in the beginning). Networking, including being active in relevant networks/forums.

Digital services used:

All booking and billing is done through the POD app.

Reflection

What has worked well so far:

Enthusiastic volunteers & teamwork; operating as a co-op; joining the Mobility Factory, enabling us to have our own app and booking/billing system.

What has been learned:

Optimism is critical! Community & volunteer ethos underpins success. Board capacity- keep recruiting for key skills.

Future plans:

Sign up 15 more users, start consultation & grant applications to increase fleet in other nearby towns & communities. Provide the EV/hybrid part of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority plans for mobility hubs.

Western Dales Community Bus Service Ltd

Location: Sedbergh & Kirkby Stephen

Contact: www.westerndalesbus.co.uk

Project Background

Current stage of project:

Western Dales Community Bus Service Ltd operates scheduled services 5 days per week linking Sedbergh with Kirkby Stephen, Dent, and Kendal and providing connections with other transport services for people in rural areas. Private hire is also available for community groups.

Vehicle type, number & capacity:

Two minibuses (Diesel, 16-seater, both wheelchair accessible).

Transport operator:

Volunteer drivers for WDCBS. Drivers are given free training upon starting.

Main service users:

Mainly older residents but the Saturday service also attracts some younger locals. Many passengers depend upon the service to travel around the local area due to age, sickness, disability, or lack of car access.

Integration with other transport:

Link to Dent Station, Kirkby Stephen Station, Oxenholme Station, and Kendal Bus Station.

Duration of project:

WDCBS has been running for 14 years.

Governance/Funding Organisational structure:

WDCBS is a limited company and registered charity.

Responsibility for day-to-day running:

WDCBS has 1x paid part-time Operations Manager. Oversight of activity is through the Board of Directors for the company and charity Trustees (all voluntary). There are also 16 volunteers who drive or support operations.

Sources of funding:

Fares, private hire bookings, grants, and passenger donations. Journeys are paid for via a fare (£3 cap for a single).

Financial model:

WDCBS owns, runs, and maintains its own buses.

Promotion & Innovation

Marketing strategy:

Website and leaflets as well as connections with Tourist Information Centres and local community groups.

Digital services used:

No digital booking service currently.

Reflection

What has worked well so far:

Listening to our passengers.

What has been learned:

It is ok to change what you deliver in order to meet the needs of the community.

Future plans:

We are currently fundraising for a new bus.

Northern Fells Group Community Transport

Location: Northern Cumbria

Contact: www.northernfellsgroup.org.uk/transport

Project Background

Current stage of project:

Northern Fells Community Transport operates a door-to-door service across 7 Parishes in Northern Cumbria where public transport is limited/unavailable.

Vehicle type, number & capacity:

One minibus (7-seat) and **one** VW Caddy Maxi (5-seat) – both accessible to wheelchair users.

Transport operator:

Volunteer drivers with vehicles maintained and managed by Northern Fells Group through professional servicing, insurance, and compliance systems.

Main service users:

Mainly older residents, people with disabilities, carers, and rural residents without access to a car. Journeys include medical appointments, shopping, social activities, lunch clubs, dementia groups, and community events.

Integration with other transport:

We act as a feeder service, helping people to reach bus stops, train stations, and transport hubs in towns/cities such as Wigton, Carlisle, and Penrith.

Duration of project:

The service has been running for several years and continues to grow in demand.

Governance/Funding Organisational structure:

The service is ran by Northern Fells Group, a registered charity.

Responsibility for day-to-day running:

Northern Fells Group Transport Coordinator manages day-to-day running with operations overseen by Northern Fells Group Trustees.

Sources of funding:

Grants, donations, and small passenger contributions. Most journeys are part-subsidised to prevent cost becoming a barrier to accessing the service.

Financial model:

Northern Fells Group owns and runs its own vehicles, covering fuel, insurance, servicing, and replacement costs.

Promotion & Innovation

Marketing strategy:

NFG website, social media, village agents, GP surgeries, community groups, partner organisations, and word of mouth. Printed materials for those not online.

Digital services used:

Bookings are taken by phone and email and recorded digitally.

Reflection

What has worked well so far:

Having friendly, local volunteers and reliable, professionally-managed vehicles. We integrate with wider community support including groups, activities, and health services.

What has been learned:

Drivers provide an invaluable source of social interaction for many isolated residents.

Future plans:

Grow capacity, replace vehicles when needed, and explore lower-emission options while keeping the service affordable and accessible.

Valley Wheels

Location: Lorton, Loweswater, and Buttermere Valleys

Project Background

Current stage of project:

Valley Wheels is an informal WhatsApp group of friends/neighbours to offer/request a lift. was established in Summer 2025 following a community survey to understand the need and interest around transport for locals. Over time, the group has grown from 10 to 30 members.

Vehicle type, number & capacity:

Mixed- uses members' own private cars. There are currently 26 people in the group with their own car.

Transport operator:

Volunteers using their own private cars.

Main service users:

The local community, particularly retired residents and those without access to cars.

Integration with other transport:

We do not link in with other transport, however information is posted about seasonal bus services when they are operating.

Duration of project:

The group has been running since May 2025.

Governance/Funding Organisational structure:

The group has no formal organisational structure and is made up entirely of friends/neighbours in the valleys.

Responsibility for day-to-day running:

A member of the local community is the WhatsApp group admin and has responsibility for admitting new members/managing posts. Lift arrangements are agreed between the individual needing a lift and the driver.

Sources of funding:

The group does not require any funding in order to run.

Financial model:

Members do not charge for lifts provided.

Promotion & Innovation

Marketing strategy:

Word of mouth, sometimes the local Church newsletter.

Digital services used:

All communication and arrangements are done via WhatsApp.

Reflection

What has worked well so far:

We help local people without transport to reach nearby towns. We also help to reduce duplication of journeys by sharing lifts.

What has been learned:

Consult the community first. Start small and pilot. For those without phones, we used friends of people without phones to post requests on their behalf.

Future plans:

Depends on creativity, needs, and ideas of volunteers.

The local school has a minibus which could be hired to do larger group trips but this may become a separate initiative.

The 106 Bus Partnership

Location: Penrith to Kendal

Contact: www.106bus.co.uk

Project Background

Current stage of project:

The 106 Bus Partnership was formed in 2015 by a group of 10 Parish/Town Councils situated along the A6 from Penrith to Kendal to support the reinstatement of the 106 bus route along this stretch of road after the service was cut by the Council. It receives additional support from Eden Housing Association and Kendal BID. The service runs two days per week, linking communities with Penrith and Kendal town.

Vehicle type, number & capacity:

32-seat bus supplied by the coach company.

Transport operator:

Buses are supplied by Kirkby Lonsdale Coaches.

Main service users:

Mainly local residents needing to access Penrith or Kendal.

Integration with other transport:

The 106 service links passengers with Penrith or Kendal town where they can access other buses/trains.

Duration of project:

The Partnership has been operating since 2015 after the original 106 service was cut by the Council.

Governance/Funding Organisational structure:

The Partnership is a registered charity.

Responsibility for day-to-day running:

The Partnership is ran by volunteers but day-to-day operation is managed by Kirkby Lonsdale Coaches.

Sources of funding:

Fares and fundraising as well as Parish precept.

Financial model:

The delivery model is based upon Transport for London- we commission a commercial operator who charges a flat day rate. Fares are used to offset the cost of running with additional fundraising carried out to cover any funding gaps.

Promotion & Innovation

Marketing strategy:

Website, Friends of the 106 Group newsletter, Facebook groups.

Digital services used:

No digital booking service in place.

Reflection

What has worked well so far:

We have managed to maintain a vital bus route for the local community for over 10 years, helping them to access key services.

What has been learned:

The service originally operated over 3 days. We tried increasing this to 5 days but this was not sustainable. To keep running over COVID, we reduced to two days and have maintained this model as we have the same number of passengers across the 2 days as when running 3 days, but without the additional costs of running the extra day.

Future plans:

We are hoping for WAF Council to re-commission the service after March 2026.

Keswick Eco Car Club

Location: Keswick

Contact: www.sustainablekeswick.org.uk/keswick-eco-car-club/

Project Background

Current stage of project:

Keswick Eco Car Club was established by Sustainable Keswick has been running for 12 months as a local, membership-based initiative that provides access to a self-service, pay-as-you-drive, fully electric vehicle.

Vehicle type, number & capacity:

1 x 5-seat electric vehicle (Hyundai Kona).

Transport operator:

Sustainable Keswick owns and maintains the vehicle. Charge My Street provide the electric vehicle charging point. The booking platform is operated through Derwent Valley Car Club who also handle insurance for the Club. Members of the car club support with inductions and car cleans etc.

Main service users:

Service users are mainly from Keswick and the surrounding villages. Sixteen people are currently members.

Integration with other transport:

The car is hosted at the Quaker Meeting House in Keswick which is located very near to the local bus station.

Duration of project:

The car club has been running for 12-months.

Governance/Funding Organisational structure:

The car club is operated by Sustainable Keswick, a registered CIO.

Responsibility for day-to-day running:

A volunteer at Sustainable Keswick support the day-to-day running with bookings handled through a platform provided by Derwent Valley Car Club. Strategic direction is provided by Sustainable Keswick Trustees.

Sources of funding:

The car club was set up through a combination of grants. Users are also charged an annual membership fee as well as hire charges (£5 p/hour or £40 p/day)

Financial model:

Day-to-day running costs are covered by an annual membership fee and hire charges. The model currently breaks even.

Promotion & Innovation Marketing strategy:

Local news outlets, Sustainable Keswick mailing lists, social media, and local events.

Digital services used:

Bookings are handled through a platform provided by Derwent Valley Car Club.

Reflection

What has worked well so far:

Members of the local community without a car are now able to access services and important events. Reduction in carbon emissions.

What has been learned:

There is a lot of planning and work involved—you need committed volunteers, support with business planning, the right organisational structures, and potentially legal/tax advice.

Future plans:

We are considering setting up a CIC to reduce risk to Sustainable Keswick when we take over financial aspects of running from Derwent Valley Car Club. We also hope to scale up to 2 vehicles.

Friends of the X112 Bus

Location: South Lakeland & Furness Peninsula

Contact: www.blueworks.uk.com

Project Background

Current stage of project:

Friends of the X112 Bus was set up in 2014 to save the route 11 and X12 bus services in South Lakeland and Furness after the services were cut by the Council. The group has since expanded to cover the X70, X60, and X7 routes, providing routes to services for rural residents who otherwise would be without transport.

Vehicle type, number & capacity:

Mix of 8- and 16-seater mini buses.

Transport operator:

Buses are supplied by Blue Works Buses and Taxis.

Main service users:

Local residents in the Barrow, Ulverston, Coniston, Broughton, and Askham areas. Particularly those who are elderly, disabled, or isolated.

Integration with other transport:

The bus routes link people with nearby towns where they can access other forms of transportation (bus or train).

Duration of project:

The group has been operating since 2014 after the route 11 and X12 services were cut by the Council.

Governance/Funding Organisational structure:

The Friends of the X112 Bus is a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

Responsibility for day-to-day running:

The Group is ran by volunteers but day-to-day operation is managed by Blue Works.

Sources of funding:

Fares, fundraising, and grants. We offer a monthly direct debit donation scheme to help fundraise for the service.

Financial model:

Fares are charged to service users with additional fundraising to cover any gaps.

Promotion & Innovation

Marketing strategy:

Website, Friends of the X112 Bus Facebook page, leaflet drops to the local community, word of mouth.

Digital services used:

No digital booking service in place.

Reflection

What has worked well so far:

Community spirit, having a reliable operator, and being able to bring people from isolated communities together.

What has been learned:

Finding funding can be tough. Recruiting volunteers is challenging, particularly the next generation of drivers when many younger people are less reliant on the bus service.

Future plans:

More fundraising for the service. We hope to keep moving forward but also plan to work on contingency planning so we can revise the services we offer, if money gets scarce.