

More Than Just a Journey – Community Transport Podcast from The Transport and Health Integrated research Network - THINK

Transcript

00:00:01 Speaker 1

Hello you are listening to a podcast from the Transport and Health Integrated Research Network, also known as THINK, with your Host today, Amy Nicholass and Dr Lucy Baker.

Think is a collaboration between Aberystwyth University and Public Health Wales, funded by Health and Care Research Wales. This is the introductory podcast in a series about Community Transport and is called 'More Than Just a Journey'.

We spent about a week recording people who both provide Community Transport services and those who use them in and around Pembrokeshire, so that they could explain what Community Transport means to them.

This was then given some academic context with the input from a researcher on Community Transport.

We had many enthusiastic contributors to the recordings, and alas, we couldn't squeeze them all into the short podcast, which is why we decided to create a whole series of them of which this is just one. Despite not being able to use all the material everyone's story informed our understanding of the passion that fuels Community Transport and the editing choices we have made.

So today you're about to hear the voices of Emma Bingham from the Community Transport Association chatting with Debbie Johnson from Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations, providing an overview of Community Transport in the Pembrokeshire area.

You'll hear from Robert Hagan from Manchester Metropolitan University, who will provide insight from his position as a researcher on Community Transport, who has carried out research in Northern Ireland.

00:01:20 Speaker 1

You'll hear voices of the customers of the Dolen Teifi Community Transport in calendar skill who use the service when negotiating the hilly terrain and as a car replacement to enable young people to get around and to support community projects.

00:01:32 Speaker 1

Kelly Lowther from Pembrokeshire Integrated Voluntary organization team known as Pivot and Country Cars who's a wheelchair accessible driver, coordinator and volunteer, and Bob, a relatively new driver with Royal Voluntary Service, will both provide their insight on being drivers.

00:01:48 Speaker 1

You'll hear the enthusiastic customers of the Flesci Bws run by the Pembrokeshire.

00:01:52 Speaker 1

Country transport that services Saint David's and from Sue the coordinator from Pembrokeshire and Tenby area for country cars.

00:01:59 Speaker 1

So without further ado, over to Emma from the Community Transport Association to explain a bit about what Pembrokeshire is like for those listeners who have never been before.

00:02:24 Speaker 2

Pembrokeshire is rural county, although it does have mainline bus services and some trains.

00:02:31 Speaker 2

If you live outside of those bus lines, it can be very difficult to access transport, especially if you're in rural.

00:02:38 Speaker 2

Villages out of the way, where traditional bus services do not run any longer, or they run just once a week.

00:02:46 Speaker 2

Community Transport, because of the nature of what it does is flexible, inclusive and accessible and is able to access people who may struggle to find other forms of affordable transport in the area.

00:03:00 Speaker 2

They will go out to the very rural areas of Pembrokeshire and and pick people up at a time they're choosing and take them to where they need to be.

00:03:09 Speaker 2

I mean, I go back to the fact that there's transport at the beginning and there's transport at the end, but in between that there is so much more.

00:03:15 Speaker 2

With Community Transport, there are these conversations, there is this laughter, there's this joy.

00:03:21 Speaker 2

There's can be sadness.

00:03:22 Speaker 2

Yes, but.

00:03:24 Speaker 3

Connection, connection with people, isn't it?

00:03:26 Speaker 3

I'll not just connecting from place to place.

00:03:28 Speaker 2

And it's more than a journey.

00:03:30 Speaker 2

Every trip that Community Transport takes is more than a journey and you know, volunteers and transport operators get to know these passengers.

00:03:40 Speaker 2

And as they move through their transport journey with us, we move with them.

00:03:46 Speaker 2

We flex with them.

00:03:48 Speaker 2

And so we support them right until the point that they no longer need.

00:03:54 Speaker 2

And transport operators do that because they understand how important it is. Keeping people from being isolated, enabling socially social interaction and connection, connecting people with the communities that they may have lived in for 50 to 60 years and have lost that connection because they just can't access the group a mile down the road.

00:04:16 Speaker 3

To say the number of times that you'll take people you know, Dial-a-Ride service, or take somebody that hasn't travelled with us before.

00:04:22 Speaker 3

To, you know, friendship circle or group like that and and you'll get them through the door and then.

00:04:27 Speaker 3

Oh, as Mrs. Thomas that I haven't seen for 20 years and and delivered her baby that you know and you get all of that stuff, you know, going on.

00:04:35 Speaker 3

But before you know, when you pick them up from their home, they were kind of closed in, hadn't really spoken to anyone. You know, the number of people that we take out that only leave the house to go to medical appointments and nothing else.

00:04:49 Speaker 3

Yeah, and so to. Kind of just. Just open out the four walls and you know, give people a bit of. Kind of access. To normal life is is really powerful.

00:04:58 Speaker 2

And I think one of the interesting things about Community Transport is that volunteers are very invested in what they do because they still see the real impact of what they do.

00:05:10 Speaker 2

You know, it's not always about the Big moments, but it is just about taking somebody every week and just having those ordinary conversations that we all take for granted that somebody may only have on that journey.

00:05:23 Speaker 2

You know what did you watch on the telly?

00:05:25 Speaker 2

Have you listened to music?

00:05:27 Speaker 2

You know?

00:05:27 Speaker 2

How's your daughter?

00:05:29 Speaker 2

But that person may have not had that conversation with anyone else that week.

00:05:33 Speaker 2

So although it is about connecting communities and people to these activities, it's also just about showing someone that their life is valued through conversation and connection, which is something that when you live that life all the time. You underestimate how it is to not have anyone to say.

00:05:56 Speaker 2

Ohh I heard this amazing thing on the radio yesterday.

00:05:59 Speaker 2

Or did you see that funny thing on TV?

00:06:01 Speaker 2

Or I've gotta tell you about the Robin in my garden, because that journey may be the only journey that they have to have that connection.

00:06:09 Speaker 2

And and you don't get that on a public bus.

00:06:14 Speaker 2

And you don't get that little extra support when that driver knows actually today.

00:06:19 Speaker 2

Say you can't take your shopping in today.

00:06:22 Speaker 2

That driver needs to do that for you, because next week you might be able to, but this week you can't, so they'll do it for you.

00:06:29 Speaker 2

And drivers and volunteers go above and beyond, and we saw that during COVID, you know, PIVOT -that kept running and it kept running with the core of volunteers doing it and a remarkable amount of work to support people who were isolated and lonely to begin with.

00:06:50 Speaker 2

But at least when they went home from hospital, they had someone to go with to talk to.

00:06:57 Speaker 5

At what point do people kind of come to need to use Community Transport?

00:07:03 Speaker 5

Is there anything that happens through peoples lives?

00:07:06 Speaker 5

So are there any kind of patterns that you find where people come to rely on Community Transport?

00:07:13 Speaker 6

So for many of the individuals, they probably would have had a car or some of them would have anyway, but they would either have been individuals who themselves didn't drive.

00:07:26 Speaker 6

They had been become bereaved and their ten of my 11 interviewees were women, and many of them. Didn't drive themselves.

00:07:39 Speaker 6

They had been reliant on their husbands driving them, but their husbands had now passed away or there might have been one or two instances where they weren't driving anymore.

00:07:49 Speaker 6

And so they were reliant on other individuals to transport them.

00:07:55 Speaker 6

And on that basis, actually and and they felt also that they didn't want to be reliant on, say, for example, sons and daughters coming and transporting them or even family friends or neighbours transporting them.

00:08:08 Speaker 6

They wanted to make decisions for themselves and so the Community Transport scheme was actually very useful in in that sense in terms of being able to access something that they could choose and they would be in charge of how they used it to a degree anyway.

00:08:26 Speaker 9

Sometimes you feel you can't ask people because you don't want to be a burden.

00:08:29 Speaker 9

I think you've just said.

00:08:29 Speaker 8

That's right, that's right, definitely.

00:08:30 Speaker 9

That didn't you?

00:08:31 Speaker 5

Earlier, with your family as.

00:08:33 Speaker 9

Well, yes, actually, yes, yes.

00:08:34 Speaker 8

I do because they're working all day, and then perhaps I've got my milk and thought that mine really.

00:08:39 Speaker 9

Yes. Well, I don't know.

00:08:42 Speaker 9

Yes, I'm the same.

00:08:43 Speaker 8

And yes.

00:08:45 Speaker 8

And you'd think you're intruding on their private, you know they get home from work, you know how you feel, you just wanna relax.

00:08:55 Speaker 10

And there's people there without any family at all.

00:08:58 Speaker 10

Yeah, yeah, yes.

00:08:59 Speaker 10

Not round here.

00:08:59 Speaker 10

I mean, I've got family, obviously, but they're miles away.

00:09:01 Speaker 9

When I first came here, the only alternative was the chap who does airports and he's down opposite CKs and he lost interest doing local business.

00:09:11 Speaker 8

Yes, all I've learnt is there's one man called Nigel.

00:09:15 Speaker 10

There's Nigel now. But if you're down there now. And you've gotta come back. It's £3.00.

00:09:16 Speaker 8

Yeah, I've heard of him.

00:09:17 Speaker 8

But I've only used him once.

00:09:23 Speaker 9

Yeah, that's right.

00:09:24 Speaker 9

And I wanted a Chinese meal the other night and Tony had already gone down for his so I couldn't ask him.

00:09:32 Speaker 10

Don't they deliver now?

00:09:34 Speaker 9

They used to, but they don't now.

00:09:35 Speaker 8

Spar deliver. They're pretty. Good. Yeah, yeah.

00:09:39 Speaker 9

That's Nigel there and he said it's £3.00 to go and pick up Chinese for you or whatever, yeah.

00:09:47 Speaker 10

Well, it's like you've been there, been bringing you back.

00:09:51 Speaker 10

It's alright going down, but coming back.

00:09:53 Speaker 11

Yes, exactly.

00:09:55 Speaker 11

For us living in this half of the town, getting to the surgery when the surgery say was down at the bottom walking to the surgery wasn't a problem. Getting to the surgery now is so it's quite a deterrent to actually go to the to the, to the, to the doctor's surgery.

00:10:15 Speaker 5

Where is the Surgery now?

00:10:16 Speaker 11

It's on the top of the hill, on the, on the, um.. It's quite a nice center and it's been extended, but it's on the top of the hill.

00:10:26 Speaker 5

So it's the incline is it?

00:10:27 Speaker 11

The inclines and it's quite far to walk as well.

00:10:31 Speaker 11

It's beyond my range and it it, so it has to be by car that I get there.

00:10:36 Speaker 11

So I depend on my neighbour across the road to take me.

00:10:39 Speaker 12

What this Dolen Teifi Community Transport has done, it's brought people to feel a sense of belonging within that community.

00:10:47 Speaker 5

How many of them are you transporting to like the rugby? Is it in the minibus like?

00:10:52 Speaker 13

Well, but that's the good thing, because we've been without a car for 11 months now. We can transport either there's seven seaters that we use constantly as we can give lifts to more boys then and then it makes you feel better about asking for lift. Then for more people and also going out to game and it's just much better for the environment, more people you know can share lifts and so forth and it's just normalizing that.

00:11:22 Speaker 13

The minibuses as well. We run a local theatre group so we could use the minibus to take people who couldn't walk up and down the hills here so we could just do even short journeys and running the food bank as well here in Llandysul we could go down to Morrisons and pick up all sorts of food and so forth to come. And we run Plantos we collect and share kids clothing locally so we could go around and collect all sorts of stuff in one of the buses as well. Llandysul Paddlers have many buses locally as well, and they're fantastic, allowing the community to borrow the minibuses. So it's very much a community feel there is a structure, but being very aware of justice your everyday life, things are not too controlled and strict. Where I can take the dog in the vehicle, just make sure that I hover up after.

00:12:29 Speaker 5

Can you just describe a bit more like why , why this autonomy is so important to people to maintain that through their later life?

00:12:38 Speaker 6

Yeah, I think it it's to do with own freedom of choice.

00:12:43 Speaker 6

Being able to do things for yourself, knowing what you want to do and and having the freedom to do it it.

00:12:52 Speaker 6

It's things that we take for granted all the time.

00:12:54 Speaker 6

But whenever perhaps you have lost, either you've lost your driving license or your mobility has become so restricted that it becomes quite difficult even getting from the front door to the bus if you like, or to somebody else's car.

00:13:12 Speaker 6

Having the ability to choose what you can do is really important and really valuable, and it really builds on individuals' sense of being able to do things for themselves, sense of self esteem as well.

00:13:29 Speaker 6

So having that choice is really important.

00:13:32 Speaker 11

One of the things I like doing is speaking is going down in the in the car and talking about things on the way.

00:13:39 Speaker 11

It's nice, nice social thing to do.

00:13:41 Speaker 11

Quite, quite enjoy the conversation and and getting out because I had a , yeah, I ran into a tree at 60 miles an hour and and in the car and hit the hit the tree and broke my back and had fun then, in Heath Hospital and all sorts of things and decided that the reason I the the reason I hit the tree at 60 miles an hour because I I dozed off while I was driving one a nice Sunday afternoon when it was, and so I thought, well, I I won't renew my license because it might happen again.

00:14:24 Speaker 11

And so I I decided not to drive, which you gather is quite a restriction and I'm a Geologist.

00:14:33 Speaker 11

Yeah, well, no.

00:14:34 Speaker 11

You don't retire as a Geologist and so where I want to go is up quarry up tracks up farm tracks onto the mountain and look at at outcrops and I can't do that anymore, so I don't get out of the house very much.

00:14:52 Speaker 11

I don't, you know, going shopping is not a not a pleasurable activity.

00:14:56 Speaker 11

I do it when I have to usually have a lift with somebody.

00:15:01 Speaker 11

So I don't get out of the house very much.

00:15:04 Speaker 11

And so, uh, I don't use public transport because it's with with sticks and and things.

00:15:12 Speaker 11

But I'm I'm.

00:15:13 Speaker 11

I'm due to have a hip operation sometime in the future.

00:15:18 Speaker 11

And so I walk about on sticks which is a bit painful.

00:15:22 Speaker 11

So the the, the, the.

00:15:24 Speaker 11

Office of Dolen Cymru is at the limit of my range, so that's difficult as well.

00:15:34 Speaker 11

And so going on the so public transport is not really a pleasurable activity at all.

00:15:41 Speaker 11

So I tend to stay at home.

00:15:45 Speaker 2

You know, I remember having.

00:15:47 Speaker 2

A lady who went and had her hair washed every week.

00:15:51 Speaker 2

Hairdressing. I used to think.

00:15:52 Speaker 2

Well, honestly, why is she using her one trip to go to a hairdresser?

00:15:55 Speaker 2

Don't understand it because she had no one to wash her hair and she couldn't do it herself.

00:16:01 Speaker 2

So that was the only time in the week that she had her hair washed.

00:16:04 Speaker 2

Now of course, once I understood that, I saw how important that was.

00:16:09 Speaker 2

But of course, when you just hear it, I'm going to the hairdresser every week. You think well, why don't you go shopping? Or to the doctor.

00:16:15 Speaker 2

But that was the most important thing to her.

00:16:17 Speaker 14

It's a weird it's a weird thing.

00:16:19 Speaker 14

You come away feeling like you've really achieved something you've really given back to your community when you've taken somebody that you can see hasn't been outside for so long and you can see the joy on your face.

00:16:32 Speaker 14

It really does repay you.

00:16:34 Speaker 14

As I said, it's not money in the bank and it doesn't pay the bills.

00:16:40 Speaker 14

Your mental Wellness.

00:16:42 Speaker 14

Oh my God.

00:16:43 Speaker 14

Just try it because for me it has literally changed my life.

00:16:48 Speaker 14

I take him home and he's had a great time and it's lifted his spirits.

00:16:53 Speaker 14

It stopped him thinking about the prognosis that he's got and they've got to see each other once a week and it's incredible and it's the most special moment and I love it.

00:17:05 Speaker 14

And it's funny and I hear their funny stories.

00:17:09 Speaker 14

And and trust me, what goes on in the van stays in the van and I have heard.

00:17:15 Speaker 14

Some incredibly funny stories from many different people that tell me all kinds of things and it just makes me smile every day and I hear incredibly sad things, but we always manage to have a chuckle.

00:17:31 Speaker 14

And then for two weeks we literally did 2 journeys.

00:17:35 Speaker 14

Every day.

00:17:36 Speaker 14

And now she's picked up, sadly, because we only have two cars.

00:17:43 Speaker 14

We can't do that every day as we would like.

00:17:46 Speaker 14

So now it's gone down to once a week.

00:17:50 Speaker 14

But he did get to see his wife, and it had a ripple effect.

00:17:53 Speaker 14

It wasn't just for him.

00:17:54 Speaker 14

His family were able to feel.

00:17:57 Speaker 14

Less stress knowing that they could rely on us that we could get him there.

00:18:02 Speaker 14

They hadn't got to worry about how we, you know, not only have they got the added worry and sadness that their their mum is poorly and possibly is at end of life.

00:18:13 Speaker 14

They've also got the added worry of, well, how can we get dad there?

00:18:17 Speaker 14

How is Dad feeling? Dad's feeling really stressed because he can't get to the.

00:18:20 Speaker 14

Hospital to see his wife of 60 years and it's 60 happy years.

00:18:26 Speaker 5

You know, do you enjoy driving?

00:18:29 Speaker 15

Yes.

00:18:30 Speaker 5

Yeah, I imagine that's quite an important part of volunteering for that.

00:18:36 Speaker 5

What would you say in terms of encouraging other people to do a volunteer role like this to drive?

00:18:43 Speaker 15

And once you're retired, I suppose you do less mileage.

00:18:48 Speaker 15

I think most people you know when they retired, do less mileage.

00:18:51 Speaker 15

And so it keeps your hand in as you mentally slow down and physically slow down, it keeps you skilled, you like and driving.

00:19:03 Speaker 15

As opposed to going off and you end up with the people that don't like driving now or don't need to become Sunday drivers or something like that.

00:19:04 Speaker 5

That's a good point.

00:19:11 Speaker 15

Weekend drivers.

00:19:16 Speaker 15

You're meeting interesting people chatting to them, obviously.

00:19:22 Speaker 15

You're helping them.

00:19:25 Speaker 15

Which gives you self satisfaction, really.

00:19:27 Speaker 15

And they're appreciative of people who are appreciative of what you're doing and that always helps in any job.

00:19:34 Speaker 9

Through this?

00:19:37 Speaker 4

Yeah, we've been stuck.

00:19:39 Speaker 4

Absolutely yes, that's it in a nutshell.

00:19:42 Speaker 12

Yeah, yeah.

00:19:43 Speaker 9

It's only these ones it gets us.

00:19:46 Speaker 5

I suppose the only other option would be a taxi.

00:19:48 Speaker 5

Would it to get into?

00:19:49 Speaker 5

The town, if you're on your place.

00:19:50 Speaker 4

I'm going to pay £10 from.

00:19:51 Speaker 5

Yeah, yeah.

00:19:51 Speaker 9

My house to here.

00:19:54 Speaker 1

That's ten quid.

00:19:55 Speaker 1

How would you get around without it?

00:19:57 Speaker 4

My neighbors are very good.

00:20:00 Speaker 4

But I don't want, you know, this gives me my independence.

00:20:03 Speaker 4

Absolutely gives me my.

00:20:04 Speaker 4

And that is, you know, that is what is good.

00:20:09 Speaker 4

And it gives me a lot of.

00:20:11 Speaker 4

A boost because it's quite insular, living in a in a village where you know, yes, we interact with the neighbours but it's quite nice to have somebody different to chat to twice a week and just. That doesn't affect you know, you can chat away and not have any. It doesn't affect them if I have a a moan about something you know. Which I do, you know.

00:20:42 Speaker 4

But they're very, as I say, very accommodating in all ways.

00:20:45 Speaker 4

No well, I I really couldn't do without the service, you know, basically because it's.

00:20:54 Speaker 4

You know, it just does give me my independence because my husband started having seizures about seven years ago and he had to give up the car and everything.

00:21:05 Speaker 4

So we were had not long moved out there because we lived in St. Davids before and we'd moved out and it was. Well, it was disaster for us.

00:21:18 Speaker 4

And then somebody said, well, why don't you use it, was then the Bws O Bobl you know and I said ohh, you know I was bit reluctant sort of.

00:21:27 Speaker 4

Do I need to, you know?

00:21:29 Speaker 4

But I did need to.

00:21:30 Speaker 4

And then when this took over, this is a better, you know, it's it's a good service because it's flexible and it's, you know, they do.

00:21:40 Speaker 4

They're very, very accommodating and the boys are all brilliant, you know, and they've become friends.

00:21:47 Speaker 4

That's what's good about it is that.

00:21:49 Speaker 4

They're all such nice lads that you know you become well.

00:21:54 Speaker 4

They become part of your your routine, really, you know.

00:22:01

I wouldn't go out at all if they didn't come for me.

00:22:08 Speaker 4

Margaret is 100 next week.

I suppose she's told you, has she?

00:22:13 Speaker 5

It's quite the social thing, isn't it, this bus?

00:22:14 Speaker 16

We need it. Yeah, definitely.

00:22:14 Speaker 5

It's best.

00:22:16 Speaker 16

I'd be lost without it now, would you?

00:22:19 Speaker 5

You didn't drive then, did you, ever ?

Pardon?

Speaker 5

Did you used to drive a car?

00:22:22 Speaker 16

Mix of voices on the bus:

No

I did, only packed it up this last year

But still this is very good now..

00:22:30 Speaker 16

Now takes us shopping sometimes or whatever, you know..

00:22:40 Speaker 5

It's genuinely, genuinely

00:22:49 Speaker 14

Do you use it any other time?

00:22:50 Speaker 16

No, I have to start.

00:22:55 Speaker 16

I can't walk down as far as here anymore.

00:22:57 Speaker 16

You're lucky you aren't far from St Claire's.

00:23:07 Speaker 16

I'm absolutely breathless.

00:23:09 Speaker 16

That's heart trouble.

00:23:13 Speaker 1

So it sounds like it really helps you all get out and about, you get out your houses and get some exercise.

00:23:38 Speaker 1

So does it help with the sense of independence?

00:23:40 Speaker 1

Does it give you a sense of independence?

00:23:42 Speaker 16

Oh, yes, yes, I'm at my husband's.

00:23:46 Speaker 16

But he he won't take me down here.

00:23:49 Speaker 5

Is he still driving?

00:23:51 Speaker 13

He's driving.

00:23:52 Speaker 13

Not very far though anymore.

00:23:56 Speaker 16

So busy isn't it?

00:24:02 Speaker 1

And what do you think of the drivers compared to regular bus drivers?

00:24:06 Speaker 1

Pretend he can't hear you.

00:24:08 Speaker 16

You're lovely.

00:24:08 Speaker 16

He's marvellous.

00:24:09 Speaker 16

He's honest to.

00:24:10 Speaker 16

God, he's got the patience of Job.

00:24:12 Speaker 16

He'll wait for anybody if they're not ready.

00:24:14 Speaker 8

And help them and help them.

00:24:15 Speaker 16

He'll wait for you.

00:24:16 Speaker 16

Even if it's to change if you've forgotten.

00:24:23 Speaker 5

So we're in a in a care home at the moment.

00:24:25 Speaker 5

Or what would you call?

00:24:26 Speaker 11

Well, well, independent living, isn't it or?

00:24:28 Speaker 8

It's independent living.

00:24:30 Speaker 8

Yeah, it's called a sheltered accommodation.

00:24:33 Speaker 10

That's right.

00:24:34 Speaker 8

That is the term for it.

00:24:34

OK.

00:24:36 Speaker 5

It's perched on pretty much, almost vertical cliff face.

00:24:39 Speaker 8

Yes, yeah.

00:24:41 Speaker 10

It actually it's built in the wrong place.

00:24:43 Speaker 8

But we've got views.

00:24:44 Speaker 10

You've got views like this.

00:24:45 Speaker 10

This, you know, I can't even manage that.

00:24:46 Speaker 8

Beautiful sky at night.

00:24:49 Speaker 10

I can't at all.

00:24:49 Speaker 5

So, do you use this Dolen Teifi quite a bit to get down into the Llandysul town itself?

00:24:56 Speaker 8

That's the, that's our only transport.

00:24:59 Speaker 8

Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's all we've got.

00:25:01 Speaker 8

We've got no bus service as such.

00:25:03 Speaker 8

Yeah, right, you know.

00:25:03 Speaker 10

No more bus service around here whatsoever.

00:25:08 Speaker 5

Was there ever a bus service?

Speaker 8

Yes, it was because.

Speaker 5

So it would go around and up and kind of.

00:25:10 Speaker 8

Ah, not really around the village, no

00:25:12 Speaker 8

It was either from here to Cardigan, or here to Newquay.

00:25:18 Speaker 8

Which was nice because it was seaside.

00:25:21 Speaker 8

And you could get out for the day and come back.

00:25:26 Speaker 8

And from here to Carmarthen, which is the next big town, should you need extra shopping or clothing or shoes or something?

00:25:36 Speaker 5

Is that seaside bus still running? Do you know?

00:25:38 Speaker 8

No, it isn't.

00:25:40 Speaker 8

No, we've got nothing or.

00:25:41 Speaker 10

There's no buses at all now.

00:25:45 Speaker 8

Because that's one of the reasons I moved here because I gave up driving because I couldn't drive anymore.

00:25:53 Speaker 8

But the Bwcabus does work. It would.

00:25:53 Speaker 10

Not from here

00:25:56 Speaker 8

It would work if they came up here and picked us up.

00:26:00 Speaker 10

But they won't.

00:25:56 Speaker 8

But , no,

Speaker 1

So you have to go down the hill and walk back later?

00:26:07 Speaker 9

And that's the sticky bit, because if I could get from here down the hill to the bottom of the pavement.

I could go anywhere I want to in Wales.

00:26:16 Speaker 10

And it's coming back, you see?

00:26:16 Speaker 9

but I cannot go down that steep hill.

00:26:21 Speaker 6

In fact, one of one of the things that some of the participants did talk about, especially those who had been bereaved, were they had a period of time where they were almost like.

00:26:30 Speaker 6

It's almost like they were choosing to isolate or or they didn't want to go out.

00:26:33 Speaker 6

They just wanted to stop things.

00:26:34 Speaker 6

And actually the the Community Transport was a way of emerging from that period of bereavement.

00:26:41 Speaker 6

If you like that, actually.

00:26:42 Speaker 6

OK, this is.

00:26:43 Speaker 6

I'm ready to meet the world again.

00:26:45 Speaker 6

How do I do that?

00:26:46 Speaker 6

Well, actually, I can use this particular transport scheme and get out and about.

00:26:51 Speaker 6

So I think thinking through those ideas of of people reengaging after maybe a a difficult time like a bereavement like a mobility issue or a physical health issue, physical health declines, thinking through those readjustments is quite useful.

00:27:11 Speaker 5

Yeah, it's an interesting kind of value that we don't often think about in terms of transport or research or planning.

00:27:17 Speaker 5

Transport is actually what it means.

00:27:20 Speaker 5

In terms of just looking after people's well-being in a different way, like how important mobility is.

00:27:25 Speaker 5

At at these points in your life like you say in overcoming grief.

00:27:30 Speaker 3

So Bus Buddies is all about helping people that need extra support to travel on public and Community Transport services.

00:27:36 Speaker 3

The idea first came about because some of our Dial- a- Ride drivers in Pembrokeshire we're telling us about passengers that they were worried about, so either they were worried that when they drop them at Tesco's to do their shopping, they would just seem to be really struggling and confused and they turned up to pick them up outside the house.

00:27:55 Speaker 3

Either they took a long time to come from the door to get to be ready to come on the bus or they were kind of confused and weren't ready at all to get on the bus.

00:28:04 Speaker 3

And so obviously the driver who's arriving on a Dial-a-Ride service with a bus full of passengers. Can't then go inside somebody's house and help them find their coat and put their shoes on. And you know, there just isn't the time and the service and it's not fair on the other passengers.

00:28:18 Speaker 3

So we get to the point where you know, with some passengers, the Dial-a-Rides drivers will be saying "I'm not sure we can carry on taking Mrs. Jenkins, but we're really worried that if Miss Jenkins doesn't join the ride this is the only social contact she has in the week and it's the only time she gets out to do her shopping, and she doesn't have any local family. We're worried about what will happen if we can't take her."

00:28:41 Speaker 3

So what can we put in place basically to help Miss Jenkins carry on travelling?

00:28:46 Speaker 3

Because from our perspective, the best option would be to enable people to use mainstream public transport because our Dial-a-Ride services are typically only running a couple of days a week, whereas if we can help people to access a mainstream bus service that's running everyday then that gives a lot more options.

00:29:01 Speaker 3

And to be fair to the best operators in Pembrokeshire, they've all been very supportive of working with Fflewsi.

00:29:07 Speaker 3

Know people just assume.

00:29:08 Speaker 3

But you know, because everyone can travel by bus, that people will.

00:29:13 Speaker 3

And I don't think that's necessarily the case.

00:29:14 Speaker 3

And kind of last week, our bus buddies team and our training course, they were involved with the crucial crew projects and how much which works with year five and six children in schools and and they they were doing bus safety training.

00:29:27 Speaker 3

But I think that, you know, there's opportunities to broaden that really in terms.

00:29:30 Speaker 3

The kind of travel, training and everybody could benefit from that.

00:29:33 Speaker 3

You know, we've talked locally about people from Pembrokeshire that where there aren't loads of US services maybe go to university in a bigger city, there's ample public transport there.

00:29:43 Speaker 3

But if you're not usually before or you don't really know where to start necessarily, so kind of some of that kind of opening people's minds to the possibility.

00:29:50 Speaker 7

And how she used to do the volunteering coordinator, she died.

00:30:02 Speaker 7

And I basically took over from her.

00:30:04 Speaker 7

I used to say you like, you know, this is voluntary work.

00:30:06 Speaker 7

It's taken over your life and it was getting more and more and I can understand why.

00:30:13 Speaker 7

I mean it.

00:30:13 Speaker 7

It's great.

00:30:14 Speaker 7

I love.

00:30:14 Speaker 7

It I really do love doing the volunteering.

00:30:18 Speaker 7

You get such.

00:30:20 Speaker 7

You, when you like helping people, you get such satisfaction out of it.

00:30:25 Speaker 7

You really, really do.

00:30:27 Speaker 7

And I mean, I'm the best thing since bloody sliced bread.

00:30:29 Speaker 7

I really am.

00:30:30 Speaker 7

They just love me to bits.

00:30:32 Speaker 7

I have one user.

00:30:34 Speaker 7

She was on the phone this morning.

00:30:35 Speaker 7

I love you, Sue.

00:30:36 Speaker 7

I love you.

00:30:37 Speaker 7

Thank you, Sue.

00:30:38 Speaker 7

Thank you, Sue.

00:30:39 Speaker 7

I'm going to send you some biscuits.

00:30:41 Speaker 7

We'll get them to the driver, you know.

00:30:44 Speaker 7

But yeah, it just makes it all worthwhile. And again

00:30:48 Speaker 7

You've got the users that haven't had to use anybody or anything, and then the partners died and they're having to, they've got nobody and then they have to make a big step because they've got to ask for help, which is really alien to them.

00:31:03 Speaker 7

And they get on the phone and, you know, they come out with this very long spiel.

00:31:08 Speaker 7

About why suddenly they've got to ask for help.

00:31:15 Speaker 5

You're in demand Sue!

00:31:19

Is this a quiet day?

00:31:21 Speaker 7

Yeah, I don't know how to turn it off then.

00:31:25 Speaker 7

And then.

00:31:27 Speaker 7

So then they'll explain why they are having the need to use the car.

00:31:31 Speaker 7

And of course then they'll get like a bit emotional because the partners have died and they don't know they're going to get to the Withy Bush hospital for this appointment, that they really, really need to get to so I get all the information off them.

00:31:44 Speaker 7

And I'll say it right, I'll put it in the book.

00:31:47 Speaker 7

I will phone you a couple of days prior to your journey and I will let you know who the driver is and what time I'm going to pick you up.

00:31:53 Speaker 7

And it's happened quite a few times.

00:31:55 Speaker 7

This person has broke down in tears because it's just a huge relief of stress and everything.

00:32:02 Speaker 7

You know that they go, you know, they're.

00:32:03 Speaker 7

Saying like, not been sleeping.

00:32:05 Speaker 7

I've been so worried.

00:32:06 Speaker 7

I don't know how I'm going to get there.

00:32:07 Speaker 7

Can't afford a taxi.

00:32:09 Speaker 7

You know, I just didn't know I was going to get there.

00:32:12 Speaker 7

And I can sleep again now.

00:32:14 Speaker 7

You know something as little as that.

00:32:19 Speaker 7

So yeah.

00:32:20 Speaker 7

I do find it very rewarding and I do enjoy doing it.

00:32:26 Speaker 3

We start with what the issue is and then we design the service to solve that problem rather than kind of saying here is our bus network. "Use it. Or don't . You know ? Community Transport always starts from a different point.

00:32:44 Speaker 2

And I think in Pembrokeshire, what we're really lucky because we've got a really good network of operators that when things begin to be like warm spaces, transport becomes part of the natural conversation.

00:32:55 Speaker 2

It's not the "ohh we forgot transport" and that's something that's really important in Pembrokeshire is that we've embedded really good practice so that people consider transport.

00:33:05 Speaker 2

Whenever they do something so that we can enable as many people as possible to access whatever they want to do in whatever way they want to do it.

00:33:13 Speaker 2

And be inclusive and accessible at every step, and that's the absolute basis of what Community Transport is.

00:33:31 Speaker 1

Thank you for listening to the 'More Than Just a Journey' podcast from the Transport and Health Integrated Research Network, a collaborative project between Public Health Wales and Aberystwyth University.

00:33:41 Speaker 1

If you'd like to listen to more in the podcast series, please visit think.aber.ac.uk and remember to think! because transport and health are very much interconnected. Thank you.