



Co-production Community Transport Podcast from The Transport and Health Integrated research Network

Transcript

00:00:02 Speaker 1

Welcome to this THINK podcast. As part of our Community Transport Series, we visit Pembrokeshire, fairly rural County in SW Wales.

00:00:11 Speaker 1

I'm Lucy Baker, a researcher in mobility and transport health, and my colleague Amy Nicholass also producing the series is a project officer for the Transport and Health Integrated Research.

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The THINK project is funded by Health and Care Research Wales and is a collaboration between Public Health Wales and Aberystwyth University.

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In this episode, we're exploring Co-production in its role in delivering sustainable transport services that are accessible for everybody.

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We're looking at the role of community transport providers in developing and establishing maintaining Co-production and developing collaborative models.

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They work very closely with communities

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and they respond to needs in the community, delivering options that aren't really economically viable for commercial operators.

00:01:01 Speaker 1

We're going to speak to Rod Bowen from community transport organization Dolen Teifi. Dolen Teifi operate across mid-Wales and they started out from Llandysul, which is where we'll be visiting to speak

to Rod, but also to meet people who use community transport there and what this hub has brought to them.

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We're going to start off from a point raised by Gemma Lelliott.

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Gemma is the Director for Wales of the Community Transport Association.

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She mentions the CJC's as a point of collaboration. These are the Corporate Joint Committees the Welsh Government established fairly recently as a way of delivering regional transport planning.

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[Gemma] As the CJC's come into force and we have this kind of regional overarching view of developing this transport network for Wales, is that, actually this is an opportunity to deliver that in practice. We can support them to work collaboratively to co-produce and co-design these networks with the communities that are going to be using them because we know where that's being done

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You see a significant increase in the number of people who are using public transport.

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[Lucy] And you can listen to this conversation in full on another episode in a podcast series. But here what Gemma's saying essentially, is that one of the reasons why community transport has been so successful in improving people's access to key services and improving their social networks is because it's co-productive.

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Its approach involves the community in everything that it does and we want to see what we can learn from community transport in terms of moving this co-productive approach elsewhere in mainstream transport planning and transport networks.

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So we're going to move now to Rod.

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Rod Bowen is the Transport Development Officer in Dolen Teifi, Rod is going to give us his thoughts on co-productive approaches and what can be gained from them.

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And he's going to introduce a case study, the model of the community transport hub.

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[Amy] Is there anything you think mainstream public services for transport could learn from?

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Your hub model or how could this be rolled out more widely?

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[Rod] It's it's the demand is there.

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There's no doubt that demand for transport is definitely in our society today.

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We've got an aging population, more specialist needs in, you know, getting around and so on, maybe wheelchair.

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They may need more help to get in and out from the vehicles or even to get back into their own homes.

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And so on.

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The distance that services are provided increasing as well.

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So as for learning, I think co-production I think is probably the area that we really need to be investigating a society.

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You know we

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all understand there's less money coming in from central government because of the various reasons, you know that

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faces us these days.

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But the reality of it is the volunteer sector, if it's set up properly, we can actually contribute to the visions, maybe of the local authority or maybe the local health board, or wherever that may be.

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But by bringing money that may not also readily available from, you know, government or whatever.

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So what we specialize in is actually trying to listen to what's needed out there, but provide a service on the back of that.

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[Amy] What would you like to see differently happening then?

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I'd really like to see the communication channels coming down to delivery rather than talking about it many years ago as part of our organization where we had lots of talk about creating policies and documents and so on.

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We spent lots of money on that, but in reality, little of that money filtered down to the people

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who need the service.

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The end user is the person that you want to actually help.

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Uhm, and talking about it, making policies doesn't always get to that particular point, but I realise that that is

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part of the process.

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[Lucy] Who are the key actors in this co-production model, would you say?

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Certainly the local health board, certainly Welsh Government.

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It's about basically looking at the different organisations that you know the different state bodies would create that would gain the most you know from this Coproduction model.

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And what kind of changes do you think we need in the health side of things to make this

work a little bit better.

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Difficult without upsetting

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anyone, that is [laughing]. I think that the changes that need is that

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the health boards need to see what's out there.

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First of all, we've got to understand what's out there.

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The Commissioners of Services normally would, when they actually have transport, because they commission the transport services from the taxi operators, commercial operators, Welsh Ambulance service or wherever that.

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Maybe the community transport element has not been looked upon as an area of development as far as I'm aware of, or certainly we don't get this impression as operators. In a sense now as an operator we are, you know, particularly bushy tailed in the way that we actually develop our services.

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And the reason for that is because we understand that our customers

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need to be mobilised and they've got little or no other options.

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Whereas I think sometimes regarding the Commissioners, the services required they they're very good at commissioning stuff, but they don't really put that money in the right places.

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that make sense and I think like quite seriously mean this, because if community transport was looked upon as a partner that needed

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it's capacity built to deliver services,

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and were going in a certain type of way that satisfied the health board

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would, I think, would include both parties and the general public.

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We would you know, gain immensely from it.

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And what I really mean from that is the fact that we could, you know, a recognition that there's money needed to build the capacity of the community transport sector, but ultimately at the end of the day, it's a two-way partnership where the community transport sector

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is able to actually provide services at the level and the you know in the scope that is required from the health boards.

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[Lucy in studio] And in terms of how community transport is delivered on the ground with the community in mind, Dolen Teifi and perhaps other community transport providers work in the same way, have a concept or a model called the Community Transport Hub. Rod's going to explain where this concept came from.

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When Action for Mental Health came to talk to Deolen Teifi about expanding services to Carmarthenshire,

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you know, we had to decide where we're going to operate it from. From here on were we going to operate it in hubs in different areas and that's where the hub concept came from basically, because it just happened, it just seemed to be quite a natural thing to do because people living in Carmarthen and so on weren't going to come to just to pick up a bus.

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And we were using the

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whole project was about buses at the time in the mental health sector.

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And because of that development, because of the way we developed that hub concept at that time, we've carried on doing that because basically what we found with hubs was the fact that people that say the areas where the vehicles were placed and kept

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and the groups that used them then started to consider those vehicles as their own.

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So it became the Carmarthen bus.

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It became the Llanelli bus and there was some community ownership in it then and so on, so it was good.

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So we developed it with the mental health sector, but we also had to make it sustainable, we developed it with piles of non-for-profit community groups. So

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the mental health sector groups were using it about 38%.

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of the time and the rest of the usage was coming from the community. So for instance, you know, it could be mixed-use.

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It could be a school using it first thing in the morning to take kids swimming.

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It could be a uh community group taking it out for lunch in the afternoon and it could be the local darts team taking it out

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in the evening.

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[Lucy] So when you say hub that means something like the vehicle is stationed there?

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So one of the things a hub needs is a place to keep the vehicle overnight securely?

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So will it be a community organisation with an interest, with a mobility need and they can securely keep one of these vehicles and let people come and access it?

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It is and it isn't right.

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The Hub concept was developed in the sense regulated around the fact that there were multiple groups within that area that have been

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identified as users in that area that had a transport issue.

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And when we go and work with those communities, they're the easiest communities to work with because basically we got, they've got an interest in having transport solution and

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they will also help us work and work out where it's best to actually place the vehicle.

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Key handling is a big problem.

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You know.

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You could, if you're not careful, we could from my past experience with community transport many years ago, key handling was one of the things that was a greatest barrier for a lot of groups and organisations.

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So we either have key boxes at these locations.

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These locations could be anything from a Community Center down to the Welsh.

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Ambulance service, it could be anywhere really.

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We create hubs where we can actually safely put a vehicle.

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And it's accessible to as many people as a wider range of time as possible.

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So it's important, you know, for a football club, for instance, maybe to pick up the vehicle at 9:00 o'clock in the morning.

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So the keys

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gotta be available. So the the key handling internally, it would be a partnership between a local garage.

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It's open at 6:00, o'clock in the morning.

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Until about 10 at night and the vehicle is parked next door in the Brennan Traton Country Club.

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But you can't have casual users?

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Everyone has to be signed up?

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We we operate under section 19 permit and that means that we're regulated by the fact that we are a provider of services for non for profit groups. All our drivers because we've got a vast amount of drivers will need to be formally trained in some form umm what we call Midas.

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Which is basically Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme.

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That type of course, because it is

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something we provide for at a cost and free of charge and one of the reasons for our success in finding volunteer drivers is the fact that we we we work with a wide range of groups that need our minibuses to travel and take groups of people.

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But when we talk to these groups, initially when they first find out about us,

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we also ask them to help identify drivers.

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And because of that, we could we find there's quite a large throughput of drivers that come through the system.

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So we could, for instance, at the moment we've got a pilot project working in Llanelli on the Western Valleys with electric vehicles and the project works at the moment. But it is finding at least 40 drivers per month for us. So we're training

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up to 40 drivers per month now up to the middle standard. Of those 40 drivers, 90% of them will only drive for the organization that they've affiliated themselves to.

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So maybe the Scouts, maybe the school or whatever that may be, but there's about 10%, maybe a little bit less depending on the area that will actually drive for anybody.

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And those are the people then we use for groups that do not have a driver or individuals that need access to services.

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[Lucy] How is that changing their existing kind of mobility situation?

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Transport is something that we

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need in rural

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and urban settings, right?

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But the barrier to

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the delivery of some projects is transport, so we're going.. when people put in for a grant, normally they're looking at transport, but they looking at probably buying their own vehicle to transport people and over the last 5-6 years we've taken over asset from projects that have come to an end.

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That they weren't sustainable at the end of the grant.

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So we've taken on 6 vehicles because of that and it's but but what we've been able to do with the type of model that we deliver as a Community Hub is basically a more sustainable vehicle in that area.

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What we'd like to call, we call them Community Hub Hub Plus. Hub is basically working in the Community 'Hub Plus' is basically

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taking people to other things that they may need to get further away from where they live, but

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we also like to think we we leave a community legacy as well.

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So for instance when we get grant funding in, we look at purchasing vehicles by capital and that then ensures as long as I do my work properly in creating the workload for that vehicle in the community, it just about guarantees that

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it will be there for the next 10 to 12 years.

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[Amy] Of the potential hours that each vehicle could be in,

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what sort of percentage of maximum capacity do you think we've got up to?

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You really focus on maximising that, don't you?

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[Rod] Yeah, definitely.

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It varies.

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We've got we've got a mixed bag of usage for the vehicles or mini buses for instance, the 16 seater fully accessible maybe out three times a day and that would vary depending on the group and where they're actually heading towards and what the purpose was.

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I would say to you probably at capacity,

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you know, and we're talking about daylight hours from 7 till around 5 at night then.

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We'd probably have about, I don't know, 75% adequate use and 25% where we could actually find other work for it.

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But the difficulty is is you know you could you if you volunteer and you take the vehicle out right, you got to bring the vehicle back and you've got to be there at that time for the next person to take the vehicle out.

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So we've got to have these.

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I had a classic example many years ago where the mental health group were going to Cardigan to visit something in Cardigan it ended up they ended up in Tenby.

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Right.

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Like no.

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Well nobody knew this except for the GPS system

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when I went to look for it.

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But they were supposed to be back at 5:00 o'clock at night because it's another group taking it out. That's 6:00 o'clock. Right. But there was still in Tenby at 5:30!

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[Lucy] Is there any way that you'd be able to run a service like this one successfully if the drivers are all salaried?

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No it's your operating costs.

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Yeah, we don't have any employed drivers at all.

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Of all, all our drivers are fully volunteers.

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And basically we get that sense, how we are able to keep our costs down to our community.

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is by investing heavily in the electric vehicles, because that's brought our operating costs down by a third, which we pass on then to to the people that use

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It. hmm.

00:15:58 Speaker 1

Are E-bikes fitting into this kind of hub concept at all?

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Yeah, they are of a sort.

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I thought E-bikes were going to be .. I really honestly thought that probably

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tourism is about the only thing that we'd be able to actually sell our e-bikes to or get the, you know, get the customer usage for from.

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But it's turned out

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we were a bit more proactive than that, so we started loaning our vehicles [e-bikes] out to different organisations that had a particular use for the bikes.

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They already said, you know, we wouldn't mind trying that out to see how it works.

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And that's what we did because basically we could we were able to then gather data around the loan.

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Vehicles - or bikes- and once you getsto grips with the costings and the operating costs of those.

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And that's been very successful for us and we've got Llanelli County Council asking us for a bike, for a refugee Ukrainian refugee, and she's going to be able to

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get to

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work and what we've found now is

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what the cost base is.

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Because the problem is the cost can be the barrier

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for lots of people in utilising your services and bikes are no different.

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[Lucy] We caught up with a family in Llandysul to see how they're using the electric vehicle.

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[Serive user] Because we've been without a car for 11 months now

00:17:21 Speaker 6

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, from more people and also going out for the game and it's just much better for the environment, more people you know can share lifts and so forth and it's just normalising that. 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 a short journey.

00:17:53 Speaker 6

We are running the food bank as well here, so we could go down to Morrisons and pick up all sorts of food and so forth to come, and be then dropped-off.

00:18:06 Speaker 6

We collect and share kids clothing locally so we could go around and collect all sorts of stuff in one of the vans as well. It's very much just a community feel.

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There is a structure, but being very aware of just

00:18:24 Speaker 6

your everyday life, things are not too controlled and strict.

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Where I can take the dog in the vehicle, just make sure that I Hoover up after! They are really, really just chilled. And, you have to be like that in a rural area really, where people, have obstacles. Something that changes the way you're thinking about something that's not as easy and it will work.

00:18:52 Speaker 1

It must be way more expensive travelling around all these places in rural area as well now? Because you've got all the extra fuel costs. The fuel has gone up recently. Is this electric vehicle that you're able to use here as well?

00:19:03 Speaker 6

Yeah. So it's 45 pence a mile. My husband is from Cardiff and his parents and family live in Cardiff and we go and support Welsh football a lot. And that's problematic because the design just for short journeys. So not 145 miles so you do sometimes stop for electricity on the way down to Cardiff. The infrastructure is really lacking at the moment for us to go further.

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Well, we'd like to hear from the boys about what difference it makes you having access to the transport?

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Basically, it sounds like you wouldn't have a car unless you have the service is that correct, yeah?

00:19:51 Speaker 5

I'm eleven and I live in Llandysul and I use the Dolen Teifi van to go to school and rugby trainings and football trainings and so forth.

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So how important is it for you to go to rugby?

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It is very. Football training not so much, but rugby, yeah.

00:20:08 Speaker 8

Very, very, very.

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So it's been good has it? Being able to access this vehicle?

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Yeah, yeah, yeah.

00:20:21 Speaker 8

It's more fun to go down to rugby games and trainings with more in the car or the Dolen Teifi van.

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You can do that cause it's about 7 seats and...

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How long is the journey?

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Do you take it .. You must take it for away games as well, right?

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If you go home, but then it depends where you go and this Sunday we're going to Fishguard to play a game so..

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Yeah, it's time to have a bit of a laugh isn't it?

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(Lucy in studio) And it wasn't only recreational journeys that the family were using the vehicle for.

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It takes 25 minutes to walk up to school and this time of the year there's a lot of rain and stuff and it's up a hill, so you can just use the Dolen Teifi just to go.

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This family offers an example of how we can be thinking about community transport hubs in the future.

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It's not only older people or people who have complex mobility needs or community groups who can use these kind of hubs and vehicles.

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It's giving an opportunity for rural communities, particularly to kind of move away from this dependency that we have on private car use.

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(Lucy to Rod) You see anything working, like it could be voluntary based or something, that has been more like a local shuttle service or something where you can flag it down off the street?

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(Rod) Yeah, there's many types of services that communities can operate, right, OK. And that could be dial-a-ride services on the section 19 permit or on the section 22.

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You can actually do a hail and ride type service which is very similar to a bus service and really great.

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But the problem is in running a 22 service is the fact that you will be faced with a similar problem at the lower scaling costs of whether or not you've got enough passengers using your services because you don't know they're going to be there at the bus stop that day.

00:22:19 Speaker 4

But we've been piloting in the Swansea area now in Clydach with Swansea CVC and we've got a group of people that basically negotiate their journeys Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday. There are 13 people waiting to be transported, but they've all made that as a collective.

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So basically we could. We are quite happy to actually provide that service, but we're assured there's gonna be people there to actually utilise that service.

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And to do that, we need a community.

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Don't you need people to know each other and to be speaking to each other?

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But that's the beauty of it, isn't it really great?

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Because basically you provide a service where people collectively come together.

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They may not know each other, but nevertheless what it wants to do is they've started that journey.

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We could literally.

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And then they are starting to talk to each other and they start to communicate to each other.

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They start to actually think about each other.

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And we got examples of people who go to come on buses and they, they say well, well that's strange. John hasn't come this week.

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We could, for whatever reason, I'm really concerned about John, and they then make contact with him to make sure that he's right.

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So it's it's about inventing society in some sort of way in communication.

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Well, it is not as if you can tell, but you know we've got young carers groups that we've been carried going over the last few years and it's the young community young carers. It was about basically picking up young carers that have been identified to the system and taking them out of the family context and then taking them to a youth club or whatever and the youth to transport them individually with the care support officers, but that was costly because they were coming from all sorts of different directions and we said about the project and applied it to them, which basically allowed the youth workers' support workers to be trained to drive the minibus and then they would use a minibus, then to collectively collect them all the way down the route back to the youth club and what was noticeable as soon as they'd done that...

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None of these young carers were known to each other as they were being collected.

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But once the service got established.. on the way down and on the way back, they were collectively talking to each other so they were socialising a lot more. Talking about different things that are more important to them and so on and what it was doing was breaking down barriers, reinventing society.

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I think that car has really made us more individual beings like we just become used to just travelling by ourselves or within our family household.

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Then we've lost

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the connections around us.

00:24:57 Speaker 4

We certainly have and we've become more insular or isolated you know whatever that correct term is, but you know we're not going to reinvent the wheel.

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We'd go with problem wheels.

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We've got a very broken wheel at the moment.

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And you know, and then again that's, pardon the pun again, isn't it because it's you know what we're talking about, but the reality of it is [broken] but there's plenty of opportunity from it as well.

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It's just about redesigning to be appropriate, but the reality of it is, you know, if we don't redesign, we could have a much more isolated, much more isolated communities [living] individually.

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Communities, some of age, that just can't get anywhere.

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Yeah, yeah.

00:25:33 Speaker 1

(Lucy and Amy visiting sheltered accommodation) So are we in a in a care home at the moment?

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Or what would

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you call it? Well, independent living is it or?

00:25:39 Speaker 7

It's independent living.

00:25:41 Speaker 7

Yeah, it's called a sheltered accommodation.

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That is the term for it.

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OK.

00:25:47 Speaker 1

And it's perched on pretty much, an almost vertical cliff face?

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Yes, yeah, yeah.

00:25:52 Speaker 7

The wrong place but we've got good views

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like this you know, I can't even manage there..

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Sky at night.

00:26:00

Can't can't at all.

00:26:00

00:26:01 Speaker 1

So do you use community transport quite a bit to get down into the Llandysul town itself and that hill?

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That's our only transport.

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Yeah, that's all we've got.

00:26:12 Speaker 7

We've got no bus service as such, you know.

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No service around here whatsoever.

00:26:16 Speaker 1

Was there ever a bus service to town?

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Yes, it was because..So we would go around.

00:26:21 Speaker 7

Ohh, not really round the village.

00:26:23 Speaker 7

No, it was either from here to

00:26:26 Speaker 7

Cardigan, or here to Newquay.

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Which was nice because it was seaside, and you could get out for the day and come back.

00:26:37 Speaker 7

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

00:26:47 Speaker 1

Is that seaside bus still running?

00:26:49 Speaker 7

No, it isn't.

00:26:50 Speaker 7

No, we've got nothing not for a few years and

00:26:55 Speaker 7

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

00:26:56 Speaker 7

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

00:27:03 Speaker 7

And yeah,

Speaker 1

Does the Bwca Bus work here?

But the Bwca bus doesn't work here. It would work if they came up here and picked us up.

00:27:10

But they won't.

00:27:11 Speaker 7

But no.

00:27:13 Speaker 3

You have to go back later.

00:27:14 Speaker 7

Go down the hill and you walk.

00:27:17 Speaker 9

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 in Wales, but I cannot go down that steep hill.

00:27:27 Speaker 7

Yeah. Coming back, you see?

00:27:31 Speaker 1

(Lucy in the studio) The Community transport users at Llandysul are demonstrating the kind of challenges that they face in terms of their mobility, particularly with declining bus services, but also in terms of negotiating the kind of hills that are around in that area of mid-Wales.

00:27:51 Speaker 1

But I think one of the really positive things that is coming out of community transport at the moment is the way that it's bringing communities together.

00:27:58 Speaker 1

So not only in terms of the physical space of the vehicle itself, where people might be having conversations that they otherwise wouldn't have, but also in terms of strategically thinking about what kind of solutions might be suitable for their needs as a community. So discussing where they need to go and working together to volunteer to put themselves forward to take people's children to school for example, or to the rugby, and having the flexibility to be able to hire a vehicle so the community coming together where there isn't necessarily another option, but also to move away from the dependency that they have on the private car.

00:28:39 Speaker 1

And to create solutions that suit them in partnership with community transport organisations who are collaborating with the Welsh Government and with their help to improve people's transportation with the community in the heart of everything they do.

00:28:56 Speaker 1

Thank you for listening to this podcast episode on Co-Production and Community Transport from THINK.

00:29:01 Speaker 1

There are three more episodes in the series that you can explore on community transport.

00:29:06 Speaker 1

One is More than Just a Journey, which is a soundscape of many people involved in and using community transport, describing what it is, how important it is and how it contributes to our transport provision.

00:29:18 Speaker 1

There're also episodes on community transport and access to healthcare and digital futures in Community Transport.

00:29:24 Speaker 1

Do check them out.

00:29:25 Speaker 1

We hope you'll find out more about what we do by exploring our website for resources or signing up to receive news about our events and networking and collaboration opportunities.

00:29:34 Speaker 1

And you can follow us on Twitter @transporthealth.

00:29:38 Speaker 1

Finally, many thanks to everyone who has contributed to the interviews in the series. Goodbye for now.

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