

Bassetlaw Action Centre's new minibus from Department for Transport grant takes its first group of passengers to local garden centre.

Bassetlaw Action Centre has taken receipt of a brand new community minibus after they were awarded a grant from the Department for Transport.

The new minibus has been built to order to suit the needs of the community and is fully accessible for wheelchair users and those with limited mobility due to the tail lift fitted at the rear. There is also a handrail and a lower step for access at the front the vehicle. The vehicle can take up to two fixed



wheelchairs and has space to store walking frames etc.

Lynn Tupling, Chief Executive of Bassetlaw Action Centre said "This is a fabulous resource for Bassetlaw residents to benefit from and we are delighted to have taken delivery of our new vehicle. We were involved right from the design stage to the finishing touches to ensure that the minibus perfectly meets the needs of our clients. It was really important to us that we are able to carry passengers comfortably, whatever their level of mobility."

The minibus made its first passenger journey this week to a local garden centre. Mrs X a local resident was one of the passengers on the trip, she said "the new bus's seats are lovely and comfortable, there is lots of space on the bus and I had a lovely panoramic view out the window"

The addition of this vehicle means that Bassetlaw Action Centre now has three vehicles available to the community – two accessible minibuses and an accessible MPV. These vehicles are driven by volunteer drivers registered with the centre who have undertaken the required MiDAS training (Minibus Driver Awareness Training).

The three vehicles owned by the centre complement the Community Car Scheme which has been running for over 20 years across Bassetlaw with volunteer drivers using their own vehicles.

The minibuses are operated by Bassetlaw Action Centre under a section 19 minibus permit which makes them available for hire to not for profit community groups.

The centre also run day trips using their vehicles which individuals can book on to and a full list of trips is available from the office or via www.bassetlawactioncentre.org.uk. All groups and individuals must be registered with the centre in order to use the minibuses, MPV or community car scheme.

Staff at the centre will be able to advise further which vehicle will best suit the needs of an individual or group looking to book transport.

Contact Bassetlaw Action Centre on 01777 709650 for more details.

This news article was published under the 2010 to 2015 Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government:

New funding for minibuses to community transport operators in rural and isolated areas.

Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin has announced that hundreds of vital community groups from across the country will receive additional support. £25 million will be made available to provide hundreds of new minibuses to community transport operators in rural and isolated areas.

The scheme will support voluntary organisations as they provide vital services for people in rural communities with limited transport choices.

The new fund means that organisations who already provide a service to the local community can bid for a minibus. Smaller operators and those who help out in rural areas will be favoured in the scheme.

Announcing the scheme Patrick McLoughlin said:

As a rural MP I know how important community bus providers are and how much they matter. These groups help keep rural communities alive and independent.

We want to do all we can to support local voluntary operators who help out in these areas. This large amount of money is to help those who already do so much to support their community.

Bill Freeman, Chief Executive of the Community Transport Association, said:

This is good news for community transport. Our own research shows that many organisations, particularly smaller ones serving their immediate neighbourhoods, struggle to put aside money to replace vehicles. This will come as welcome news to them, and will enable them to continue to improve the lives of many vulnerable and isolated people by offering them accessible and affordable transport.

The fund is focused on existing voluntary and third sector organisations that already have a permit to run not-for-profit services of benefit to the local community.

Each bidder can apply for one vehicle and will need to undertake that the vehicle will be used only for voluntary services and will not be used to compete for bus service contracts.

This new scheme sits alongside the government's strong commitment to commercial bus operators, which is a growing industry. Full details of how the scheme will operate and the information charities will need when applying will be set out shortly.

News desk enquiries

Press enquiries 020 7944 3021

Out of hours 020 7944 4292

Public enquiries 0300 330 3000

The second round of the community minibus fund is now open to schools and community groups who will benefit from £2 million for minibuses.

This money, part of a £25 million funding pot, will improve the everyday lives of people in rural communities by providing vital links to medical services, shops, and social events.

The first round of the fund has already been allocated to more than 300 charities and community groups across England, and will pay for more than 350 minibuses.

The second round of funding, which closes on 2 December 2016 will be managed by the Community Transport Association, the membership association for community bus operators across the UK, who will provide advice to all bidders.