



The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service

The MBE for volunteer groups



Making a difference through Community Transport

Community Transport has been offering low-cost minibus hires to not-for-profit community and faith groups for over 30 years. Since February 2022 we have been providing a monthly transport service to Holy Trinity Church in Leverstock Green, to support their mission to combat loneliness and isolation amongst the community. We asked Revd Lizzie Hood, Team Rector, as well as parishioners, what the service means to them.



"The minibus opens the possibility for people who wish to come to church, but who are less mobile, the opportunity to do so"

Revd Lizzie Hood, Team Rector Holy Trinity Church

Why did the Church set up this transport service?

Revd Lizzie Hood shared "one of the main issues we face in Leverstock Green is isolation and consequent loneliness. Therefore the focus of our outreach work is building a social network within the community, for those recently bereaved as well as for newcomers and those who find themselves alone for whatever reason. We have weekly midweek worship on Wednesdays, and on the 3rd Wednesday of the month it is followed by coffee and time to chat. Post-lockdown this has been an ideal opportunity for us to welcome those who are more vulnerable and concerned about Covid as it is much quieter than Sunday services. On average we have



10-20 people present, whereas on Sundays about 2/3 of our 100 strong congregation have returned to worship. Before the pandemic people would walk, drive or take a bus to church, but during that time some people have lost the confidence to leave their homes after shielding for so long, and some have simply lost their fitness and are no longer physically able to walk or get into a car. We realised that about a dozen of our regular members are no longer able to attend independently."

"The minibus service has provided the ideal solution. We could arrange for volunteers to collect people in their cars, but the minibus makes it much easier, safer and more practical to organise, particularly for those who use walkers or wheelchairs. And the added bonus is that it's very sociable - the passengers are very cheery by the time they've had a natter on the bus and reached church! It is so important that people can continue to worship and nurture the spiritual life that sustains them in these difficult times. And they love meeting their friends and making new ones. It helps build confidence and reduces isolation. It meets everyone's needs".



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The Impact for Pauline & Mary

"We can both walk fairly well but since Covid I am quite anxious about walking anywhere on my own," said Mary. "Pauline has a wheeled walker, but the pavements are quite uneven, so walking is very difficult for her. We speak to each other on the phone but coming to this service is the only way we get to see each other. The minibus has made a huge difference to our lives. We were regular church goers, and this is the only way for us to get to church."



The impact for Pamela

"Three years ago, I had to give up driving due to my deteriorating eyesight. I've been coming to Holy Trinity church for as long as I can remember; over 47 years. Being able to come on the minibus is absolutely wonderful and is the only occasion I get to come to church, meet other people and receive Holy Communion. This means such a lot to me".

The minibus service is more than a practical way for congregants to practice their faith, it is an opportunity to mix and mingle with friends, increasing independence for many and tackling loneliness. The importance of worship to faith communities cannot be underestimated, so any initiative to break down barriers has a positive impact on individuals' wellbeing.



We have a fleet of 10 minibuses available to hire either with a volunteer driver or as a self-drive hire. Many groups and organisations use the service to either get members to a meeting place as with Holy Trinity Church or to enhance the members' life with a trip out. If you are interested in finding out more or wish to discuss how community transport can support you, please contact Deborah Fogden, Community Transport Manager at deborah@communityactiondacorum.org.uk or 01442 212888.

As Revd Lizzie Hood said, "give some thought as to what kind of support your particular local community needs, and consider whether using Community Transport might be a practical way to achieve your aims."

Holy Trinity is able to fund this service thanks to a small grant from Cllr. Andrew Williams as part of the Hertfordshire County Council Locality Fund. Cllr. Williams told us, "I was pleased to be able to support the congregation at Holy Trinity Church with this award. Our community in Leverstock Green is close knit and so initiatives like this that allow all of our community to come together are so important."