OXFORDSHIRE PARISH TRANSPORT
REPRESENTATIVES GROUP

Note of Meeting held at County Hall, Oxford
on 28th February 2017 at 1.30pm

1   **Apologies for Absence**
     These were received from the following Parishes:

Aston Upthorpe/Aston Tirrold	Little Milton
Bodicote	Marcham
Claydon	Old Marston
"Cotswold Line"	Oxford City (North Ward)
Deddington	Piddington
East Hagbourne	Risinghurst and Sandhills
Fifield	Shiplake
Hinton Waldrist	Stratton Audley
Kidlington	

2   **Parishes Attending**

Berinsfield	North Moreton
Bletchingdon	North Newington
Buckland	"Oxfordshire Neighbourhoods Partnership"
Chilton	"Oxfordshire Good Neighbour Schemes"
"Community First Oxfordshire"	South Moreton
Dorchester	Stanton St John
Eynsham	Thame
Forest Hill with Shotover	The Haseleys
Grove	Wallingford
Hampton Gay and Poyle	Warborough and Shillingford
Hanborough	Watlington
Henley	Woodstock
Hook Norton	Wootton (Abingdon)
Kirtlington	Chris Robins – Chair of Group
Milton-under-Wychwood	Philip Earnshaw – Oxfordshire County Council

3   **Appointment of Minute-taker for the Meeting**
     Malcolm Leeding offered to do this, in the absence of Helen Oldfield (Deddington) who usually
     carries out the role.

4   **Notes of Meeting held on 6th September 2016**
     These were received and **agreed** as correct.

5   **Parish Transport Representatives List**
     The Chair reported that, after significant work, he had completed an up-to-date List of
     Representatives. This would be emailed to all current Group members.

     Resolved to place on record the thanks of the Group for the work done.

6   **Points raised from Apologies**

(a)   Report on services in Fifield;

(b)   Report on services in extreme North of County may benefit from the fact that Warwicks CC are still supporting services and some of the benefit may rub off in Oxfordshire.

7   **Update from Oxfordshire County Council (Mr Earnshaw) - Points Made:**

(a)   In general, the Council were still supporting Community Transport, for instance driver tuition;

(b)   They were looking at developer support for bus services (Section 106) and related issues;

(c)   School transport issues/funding/encouragement of bus operators;

(d)   The need for DBS checks (Disbarring Disclosure Scheme) on drivers of school transport was also under discussion;

(e)   It was intended to develop a more regular relationship with bus companies. Would it be an idea to invite an operator to meetings of the Group?

8   **Comments from Mr Gowers**

He outlined work done in the Blackbird Leys Parish Council area and in Kidlington/Yarnton/ Begbroke to replace a withdrawn service.

Generally, there were various ways of supporting Community Transport. In practice, obtaining funds was sometimes easier than obtaining volunteers to manage the provision.

9   **Points Made by Parishes, and Answers**

(a)   **South Moreton:**
Have bus companies been approached to extend term time services to school holidays? The County Council had raised the issue, but had not so far got the progress it was hoping for.

(b)   **Watlington:**
Precise powers of Parish Councils to support/manage bus services needed clarifying. (Clear advice had been issued by Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils in November 2016 to all councils regarding both commercial bus companies and the County Council's Comet service, and powers available under the Local Government and Rating Act (1997).)

(c)   **Stanton St John and Forest Hill with Shotover**:
These councils, together with two others, had been operating a "Comet" scheme for three months. It had been welcomed by those using it, but there were some practical issues that needed resolving. A group separate from any of the Parish Councils had been set up to manage it, and all Parish Councils had supported it financially.

It was agreed that a "Comet" representative attend a future meeting to discuss working arrangements of all their services.

(d)   **Leafield:**
Has thought been given to altering services in the Leafield/Charlbury area, particularly as use of Charlbury station, and hence its car park, had increased?

Discussions were in train (no pun intended) with Pulhams about this and issues regarding Carterton/Milton-under-Wychwood/Burford/Minster Lovell.

(e)   **Hook Norton:**
What scope is there to enable "hail and ride" services to be more widely used in rural areas, which could benefit bus companies?

This had been discussed, but "commercial imperatives" was frequently mentioned by bus companies.

(f)   **Berinsfield and others:**
What account has been taken of any impact on the road network of increased traffic because of fewer buses and more cars? Pedestrian access needed at more remote bus stops.

The Council are constrained by funding levels but, if such impacts arise from development, this might be relevant.

10   **Use of Concessionary Bus Passes**
It was noted that these could not be used on the "Comet" service. There had been some sales resistance, but perhaps not as much as could have been expected. (Please see next item.)

11   **Community First Oxfordshire – Presentation by Toby Warren:**

Community Transport Filling the Gap
In the last year a number of new and existing Community Transport schemes have started to fill the gap:

- **Chipping Norton Shuttle Bus** – Carries 120 passengers a week and numbers are at a level that almost meets running costs;

- **Our Bus Bartons** – The service took 1,362 passengers on timetabled services in the first quarter of operation;

- **Witney Town Service** – The service has been taken over by West Oxfordshire Community Transport who started operating the service on 30th January

- **Going Forward Buses** – Replacement bus service from Goring to Wallingford;

- **The Eynsham Link** – A voluntary service where registered drivers travelling from local villages to, or past, Eynsham look out for people standing at bus stops who want a lift to Eynsham;

- **The UBW (Uffington, Baulking and Woolstone) Minibus** – Wantage service now collects in Sparsholt and Westcot on Wednesdays only.

Community First Oxfordshire's Role

- Community First Oxfordshire supports the 60+ Community Transport (CT) schemes in the County;

- We offer Oxfordshire's only comprehensive local support service for CT groups and develop and mentor new and existing CT schemes;

- We have brokered free volunteer driver parking at Oxfordshire hospitals;

- We offer umbrella Public Liability Insurance for CT schemes;

- Transport is not just a rural issue and we were asked to set up an Oxford volunteer driver scheme to take elderly and frail City residents to medical appointments.

Funding Community Transport

- Oxfordshire County Council – £1,000 start-up grants, also just over £2,000 of one-off 'impact fund' remaining; helps with driver training, refunds concessionary bus fares (if service is scheduled, 'Section 22');

- District and Parish Councils;

- Local Charitable Trusts;

- Section 106 contributions – Faringdon Community Bus has received developer funding;

- Big Lottery Fund;

- Crowd funding and fundraising events.

Other Considerations

- Is there a real need?

- Lots of volunteers required!

- Minibus sharing

- The Oxfordshire Comet service

- A volunteer driver scheme

12   **Use of Good Neighbour Schemes**
Attention was drawn to the valuable work done by the Good Neighbour Scheme and volunteer link-up, based in Witney.

13   **Date of Next Meeting**
Agreed to be held in June/July. To be confirmed.

14   **General (Addendum)**
The Chair and the Minute-taker agreed after the meeting that the issues raised and the nature of questions seemed to justify the wish of PTRs to continue with the Group as an important part of the infrastructural assets of the County.