



Epping Forest Community Transport Annual Report Dec 2018-Nov 2019



Enabling Independence

Executive Summary

Chair

Report from the Chair – Richard Bassett

For Year Ended November 2019.

Epping Forest Community Transport incorporating Harlow Community Transport (EFCT), like all other community transport schemes again had a difficult year. Funding is always tight and we are grateful to Essex County Council and Epping Forest District Council for their continuing support and grants. I also would like to thank all our volunteers and staff for going the extra mile and it is lovely to see the letters of thanks from the passengers.

This year we again saw passenger numbers close to a hundred thousand demonstrating the vital service we provide to the community and without it could face social exclusion of great difficulties doing everyday tasks.

The scheme has seen a continuing increase in the cost of fuel, rising costs for vehicle maintenance as some of the vehicle fleet is ageing. EFCT accounts for 2018/2019 again show a deficit. The scheme is fortunate that it still had reserves to cover the shortfalls as such, we have worked to reduce our overheads and have taken some steps to merge administration between the two schemes. We have also needed to review some of the services we provide and also to introduce new schemes to increase revenues such as the Hi-Bus in Harlow. We also have provided bus services such as the C392 for the rural locations and these are seen as vital to many people.

EFCT are looking at ways to provide new services from new sources. EFCT has continued the partnership with Chigwell Parish Council in providing a bus service for the residents of Chigwell.

There is much to celebrate and be optimistic about. As I mentioned above, passenger numbers are up and EFCT are providing a wider range of services, and this is all down to the people who work tirelessly every day to make sure that the buses run. I would like to pay tribute to all the members of staff and volunteers who have worked so hard and contributed so much over the last year, and for so many years. This organisation is a credit to you all.

I would like to thank all the members of the Board of Trustees who have given so freely of their time. I would specifically like to thank Matt Patterson our Treasurer who has brought his financial expertise to enable us to manage better our finances in these hard times. The Board remains very much committed to working to erase the deficit and ensuring this scheme has a long-term future.

Running this organisation is very much a team effort but I cannot fail to mention Angela Canham individually, who's dedication and leadership has been fantastic and without whom this Community Transport scheme would not be what it is today.

Ultimately it is the passengers who EFCT must thank for supporting our service. You are always at the forefront of our minds, and the reason that EFCT run the service at all. All the effort is worthwhile when the staff receive the messages and kind words of thanks, and that is what gives us the inspiration to move forward.

Treasurer

Report from the Treasurer – Matthew Patterson

For Year Ended November 2019.

Income

The income from services provided and grants from Local Authorities is £575,243 which is an increase of £21,654 (3.7%) over 2018. The largest slice of the increase in income comes from grants which has increased by £18,825 due to mixture of one-off grants: from ECC Initiative, Harlow Partnership, EFDC recycling reward, Nazeing Parish. Unfortunately, the Scheme was unable to retain Ongar Academy contract meaning for the financial year the Scheme saw a reduction of £31,753 within income relating to education. From the outset the Scheme worked on alternative income streams through HI-Bus, knowing that we would see a reduction of income for the financial year if action was not quickly taken. This new initiative was able to increase Shopper Bus income by £42,344, totally offsetting income loss from Education and Social Car.

Expenditure

The expenditure from services provided totalled £642,996 with staffing cost being £412,653 and non-staffing cost being £230,343. Overall, there was really effort this financial year to minimise non staffing cost as much possible throughout the Scheme. This combined with the sale of a high maintenance bus and the buying two bus that are low maintenance: meaning scheme was able to save £25,376 (9.9%) in non-staffing costs. However, the Scheme has been impacted by the external labour market pressure meaning the Scheme need to act quickly to ensure it ability to retain staffing level at a level that the Scheme could still function at. This meant the Scheme has had to increase the hourly rate to match the labour market rate in the final couple months for the financial year. This has meant that the Scheme has incurred additional £21,099 (5.4%) for financial year.

Deficit

The deficit for this year for the combined schemes was £81,015. The biggest driver of the loss is the depreciation, amortisation and other similar costs at £37,019 (45.7%). The trustees for the past few years have, in attempt to maintain low fares and contract prices, not applied depreciation to costing believing the fleet could handle a few years before the replacement is required. The trustees now believe that it's time to refresh capital expenditure and therefore depreciation will now start to be built back into fares and contract prices.

The remaining £43,996 of the deficit is driven by the increase in staffing cost and loss income due to the inability to facilitate services owing to lack of staff/volunteer resources at the time. These two issues are interrelated and with the 5.4% investment into our staffing cost should allow the scheme to retain a reasonable staffing level and therefore no future potential loss income from staffing shortages.

Manager

Report from the Manager – Angela Canham

For Year Ended November 2019.

This year:

- The need for more volunteers remains a challenge. The charity is reliant on volunteers and as the service grows more volunteers are needed.
- Harlow's Integrated Shopper Bus (Hi Bus) started service on Monday 13th May 2019. This service has facilitated our income.
- C392 Shopper Bus Route: An additional stop was requested from passenger's; the route now runs from Hoddesdon to Harlow. This started on Monday 2nd September 2019, the passengers are delighted as this gives them access to more essential services.
- HSB01 shopper bus route Donation: the passengers & residents of Fitzwilliam Court "Thanked the charity for all the hard work and give a donation for £250.
- Chigwell Parish Commuter bus service: A meeting was held with Chigwell Parish Chairman, on 6th August 2019. If EFCT wish to carry on the commuter service it would be EFCT's decision, however no funding would be available to EFCT from Chigwell Parish Council. EFCT have full use of both minibuses as per SLA (EFCT will be the registered keeper and Chigwell Parish Council will be the registered owner of the Chigwell Parish Council vehicles).

The charity is grateful to:

- EFCT is grateful that ECC have continued to fund Community Transport schemes at the existing level for three years.
- Epping Forest District Council for continued funding and support to the organization.
- The support given from Town and Parish Councils has been vital to the organization.
- Harlow Council for a discount towards accommodation.

The team work extremely hard, continuing to improve the provisions for Epping Forest and Harlow's community. The office team of four staff and two volunteers organise on average over 8,600 passenger journeys each month, using paid drivers and volunteer minibus/social car drivers.

I would like to say thank you to all employees, volunteers, who have continued to show loyalty and dedication over the past year, going the extra mile enabling passengers to maintain their independence.

The Board of Trustees, in steering Community Transport in the right direction.
This organization is a credit to you all.

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Highlights/achievements

On the 29th October, Epping Forest Community Transport attended Epping Forest District's Recycling Rewards awards ceremony, coming 3rd place and receiving a donation.

Recycling Rewards is a scheme run by Local Green Points, who partner with local authorities to provide schemes that aim to motivate residents in the area to recycle more and waste less. Residents collect 'green points' which gain them vouchers for shops. By earning green points residents also receive money to donate to one of the local charities supported by the scheme.

Recycling Rewards members voted for the charity they would like to support. Topping the leader boards for 2019 were:

Waltham Abbey – £700 donated to Epping Forest Community Transport

Loughton – £550 donated to the Epping Forest Food Bank

Epping – £325 donated to Safer Places

Buckhurst Hill – £175 donated to The Chigwell Riding Trust



Some of the district's most remarkable people had their moment in the spotlight on Friday 15 March at Epping Forest District Council's Civic Awards ceremony 2019 at the Marriott Hotel in Waltham Abbey.

Hosting the event Chairman of Epping Forest District Council, Richard Bassett welcomed guests, including 2 Deputy Lieutenants of Essex saying: "There are so many people who do so much for this district, and I am so proud to present the awards. My congratulations to all people nominated – you are all winners."

Peter King is a driver and administrator at Epping Forest Community Transport where he has been since November 2007. He is a professional, caring, conscientious and highly motivated person and the passengers adore him.

Peter was presented with Citizen of the year highly commended award in recognition of his commitment to the local community of Epping Forest.



Statistics

The team supported 98,692 individual passengers Journey's and voluntary groups to experience freedom of travel.

Epping Passenger Journey Numbers Financial year 2019/20												
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Dial A Ride	276	310	326	327	226	228	267	248	186	228	196	128
Group hire/Brokerage	516	492	709	509	505	225	263	159	211	149	128	118
Social Car	221	249	261	284	279	228	216	246	168	233	214	136
Shopper Buses (section 19)	792	608	1345	1022	163	1174	2000	2231	1681	1879	1587	241
Shopper Bus Section 22 Routes	1361	1538	1725	1725	1624	1529	1429	1407	1417	1192	1091	1309
Education	808	1247	1331	1096	0	1116	1178	1497	868	911	616	845
Total passenger numbers	3974	4444	5697	4963	2797	4500	5353	5788	4531	4592	3832	2777

Harlow Passenger Journey Numbers Financial year 2019/20												
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Dial A Ride	135	125	119	125	130	76	89	72	100	131	113	70
Group hire/Brokerage	698	768	837	656	414	460	760	599	823	272	239	197
Social Car	292	344	287	282	220	205	215	170	84	123	115	53
Shopper Bus Section 22 Routes	1404	846	1606	1747	1577	1363	2445	2315	1904	2056	2158	1926
Clubs	0	0	110	399	488	355	412	515	410	328	406	595
Education	360	549	657	580	0	955	906	980	813	1508	1133	1240
Total passenger numbers	2889	2632	3616	3789	2829	3414	4827	4651	4134	4418	4164	4081

Please Note: The above statistics are in line with Essex County Council Financial Year Apr 2019-Mar 2020.



To Beverly, Mandy, James, Hannah and all at Epping Forest Community Transport. Many, many thanks for your exemplary care and kindness to my husband Cyril during the past few months. With fond good wishes, Valerie.





Epping Forest Community Transport is supported by:



Working in partnership with:

