



**FENLAND ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY TRANSPORT LTD**

5 Martin Avenue, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 0AY

Telephone: 01354 661234 - Fax: 01354 661235 - Email: [contact@fact.gb.com](mailto:contact@fact.gb.com)

Rachael Edwards  
BSOG Team  
Department for Transport  
Bus Service Operators Grant  
D/06 Ashdown House  
Sedlescombe Road North  
St Leonards on Sea  
East Sussex  
TN37 7GA

29 NOV 2016

25<sup>th</sup> November 2016

Dear Rachael Edwards,

Further to your letter dated the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2016 reference the ongoing allegations made by the Cambridge Bus Coach and Taxi Association (CBCTA) regarding the eligibility for the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) for Fenland Association for Community Transport (FACT), Huntingdonshire Association for Community Transport (HACT) and Ely & Soham Association for Community Transport (ESACT).

I enclose the evidence as requested to confirm our eligibility and therefore the support for our BSOG claims.

**Fenland Association for Community Transport (FACT)** is an Industrial and Provident Society, registration number 26756R. Founded in 1989. The rules governing these societies are the IPS Act 1965 and subsequent amendments. FACT's Rules and Memorandum of Articles makes clear that the object of FACT is operating transport services for the "benefit of the community". We operate the same as the many, and much larger, IPS Community Transport operators throughout the country. These transport services are delivered without a view to profit.

Below is Section 2, headed **Objects** from FACT's Rules and Memorandum of Articles;

**2 Objects**

*The Association shall have the object of operating transport services for the benefit of the community that will:*

- a) To operate transport services for the benefit of the community and the advancement of education, the protection of health in accordance with the aims of Fenland Association for Community Transport.*
- b) To serve its members on a non-profit making basis.*

If you value our services and wish to make a donation, however small we would be most grateful

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- c) To provide Dial-A-Ride services in the Fenland area for people who find it difficult or impossible to use conventional buses, either through mobility difficulties or through lack of access to transport.*
- d) To provide Group Hire services to voluntary and non-profit making groups in the Fenland area.*
- e) To assist local authorities and other such bodies in the execution of transportation for the benefit of the community.*

**Huntingdonshire Association for Community Transport (HACT) is a registered charity No - 1151445.**

**Charitable objects/activities:-**

WE WILL BE PROVIDING TRANSPORT TO VULNERABLE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY, THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO TRANSPORT. WE INTEND TO OPERATE EDUCATION CONTRACTS AND ASSIST LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND OTHER SUCH BODIES IN THE EXECUTION OF TRANSPORT SERVICES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY. GROUP HIRE TRANSPORT TO VOLUNTARY AND NON PROFIT MAKING GROUPS IN THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE AREA.

**Ely & Soham Association for Community Transport (ESACT) is a registered charity No - 1161583.**

**Charitable objects/activities:-**

TO PROVIDE A COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SERVICE FOR SUCH INHABITANTS OF EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND THE SURROUNDING AREA WHO ARE IN NEED OF SUCH A SERVICE BECAUSE OF AGE, SICKNESS OR DISABILITY (MENTAL OR PHYSICAL) OR POVERTY OR A LACK OF AVAILABILITY AND SAFE PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES.

TO PROVIDE GROUP HIRE SERVICES TO VOLUNTARY AND NON-PROFIT MAKING GROUPS IN THE EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT AREA.

TO ASSIST LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND OTHER SUCH BODIES IN THE EXECUTION OF TRANSPORT SERVICES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY. ASSIST THE WORK OF ORGANISATIONS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE PROTECTION OF HEALTH.



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We have three websites that detailed our transport services;

<http://www.fact-cambs.co.uk/>

<http://www.hact-cambs.co.uk/>

<http://www.esact-cambs.co.uk/>

In summary we deliver the following types of journeys;

- Dial-a-Ride (known as Ring-and-Ride for HACT) is a door to door service and will transport our members to locations within the stated destinations. Our drivers offer assistance to individual passengers in boarding and exiting the vehicle as well as being transported safely during the journey. There are many reasons our members would use these services such as shopping, health appointments, visiting friends, socialising etc.
- Dial-a-Ride/Ring-and-Ride also provides additional door to door services to regional towns and cities such as Ely, Peterborough, Kings Lynn etc. We also offer day trips to coastal resorts, historical places, shopping and garden centres.
- Dial-a-Car is specifically aimed at individual people who live within the Fenland area (FACT) and have no other means of transport. It is a needs based service and is utilised for appointments such as doctors, opticians, hospitals, visiting relations etc. It will travel to any destination that our Dial-a-Ride service does not cover, meeting specific time-based needs.
- We offer a door to door service for members to enjoy luncheon outings some coupled with visits to garden centres.

We also deliver;

- Day care centres (social care, respite and special education needs) some contracted through local authorities.
- Education (mainstream and special education needs) contracted through local authorities.
- Group hire (with our drivers) to local community groups/non-profit organisations whose activities are concerned with social welfare, recreation, cultural or similar purposes.

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### **Dial-a-Ride/Ring-and-Ride**

Dial/Ring and Ride is ethos and heart of our Community Transport Organisations. I am attaching our Dial a Ride and Ring and Ride timetables which show the extensive services that are being delivered throughout Fenland, Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire, for our members. Fenland has an area of approx 220 square miles, Huntingdonshire approx 350 square miles and East Cambridgeshire approx 170 square miles, totalling over 700 square miles of Cambridgeshire.

Some of these areas are very deprived and have a high population of elderly people with limited or no public transport available to them. This is a vast rural area of which our members can be very remote. Local services are very sporadic and have resulted in many people becoming isolated and socially excluded from their community life. Many local post offices, surgeries and corner shops have closed meaning that people must travel further in order to access the things many of us take for granted. Our services allow members to do their weekly shopping, catch up with friends and attend medical appointments. They have the chance to become active members of their community be it from attending a bingo session to visiting a friend in a care home. FACT has approx 1,400 members, HACT approx 700 members and ESACT approx 300 members that are in some way reliant on our door to door services.

We have a service level agreement in place with Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC). The funding provided from CCC to FACT, HACT and ESACT is a vital contribution to the overall costs of providing the services below:-

- To provide and operate transport services for people who find it difficult or impossible to use conventional buses, either through mobility difficulties, age or through lack of access to transport
- To provide Dial/Ring a Ride services across the geographical area of Fenland, Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire
- To provide Group Hire services to voluntary and non-profit making groups.
- To serve its members on a non-profit making basis, i.e. to provide affordable services.



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**Dial-a-Car Service**

This service is specifically aimed at individual members who live within the Fenland (FACT) and Huntingdonshire (HACT) areas, whom have no other means of transport. It is a needs-based service and is utilised for appointments such as doctors, opticians, hospitals, visiting relations etc. It will travel to any destination that our Dial-a-Ride service does not cover, meeting specific time-based needs. This is a pre-bookable service and we charge separate fares for this. The vehicle is not available for hire as a whole. We do not carry the general public. Pricing is set to recover the running costs of the vehicle, depreciation and general wear.

**Group Hire**

Our vehicles are available (with driver only) to local community groups/non-profit organisations whose activities are concerned with social welfare, recreation, cultural or similar purposes. They must be group members of FACT, HACT or ESACT to use this service. Examples of this can be a local blind club going to an evening event, Women's Institute group going to the theatre, local students living in rural areas paying for a door to door school route (non-eligible for BSOG), local knitting club visiting a museum etc.

**Contracted Services with local Authorities**

We deliver tendered contracts on behalf of the local authorities. These range from Special Needs, Adults with learning difficulties, Day centres, Respite and Education, (Education non-eligible for BSOG). Despite our involvement in commissioned and contractual services I would like to stress, that we are first and foremost Community Transport Organisations, targeted at those with least means and the most need.

**Categories of persons being taken on these journeys**

**The Dial a Ride/Ring and Ride Membership Process:-**

Residents of the community must fit a certain criteria to the register for the Dial/Ring a Ride. The Dial/Ring a Ride is not available to the general public. To become a member there is a small annual subscription (FACT - £10, HACT - £15, ESACT - £10) and they have to meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The public transport is very limited in the area which you are living

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- Public transport does not meet your needs ( e.g. hospital appointments, dentist, etc.)
- There is no public transport available
- You have no access to a car during the day
- You have difficulty using public transport due to your disability or fragility

When the completed, self-certifying membership form is received at FACT/HACT and ESACT office, the following steps is taken:

- The form is stamped with the date it has been received.
- The application form is then looked at carefully to ensure it meets the criteria. Any incomplete forms or aspects of the application that require clarification, we ring the applicant to discuss.
- The original membership form is then allocated a membership number written along with the date they joined and what area they live, to put them in the correct area zone.
- We then send out a welcome pack. This pack contains a unique membership number, having this number identifies who we are talking to when making a booking as well as capturing their personal needs e.g. using/bringing a wheelchair, scooter, shopping trolley, walking aid etc.
- If the new member has indicated that they have an electric wheelchair or scooter we would arrange for a home visit to ensure that the wheelchair and equipment is suitable/compatible with our transport. The information collected at the visit would be completed on a Risk Assessment form which is then supplied to the driver.

Our services are those used mainly by:-

- persons aged 60 years or more
- disabled persons - for this purpose, a person is disabled if he or she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities
- persons in receipt of income support
- persons in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance
- persons suffering a degree of social exclusion by virtue of unemployment, poverty or other economic factors, homelessness, geographical remoteness, ill health, or religious or cultural customs
- persons who believe that it would be unsafe for them to use any public passenger transport services
- carers or persons under 16 years of age accompanying any of the above

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As requested we enclose copies of our permits which are being used in our vehicles.

I cannot stress how important the financial support that we receive from BSOG is to our organisations. We are a lifeline to our members. Lots of the people on our trips are wheelchair users and have other forms of disability and would not get a chance to get out and about especially to further afield destinations such as coastal resorts, without FACT, HACT or ESACT.

Our population is getting older; approx 25% of our residents are pensioners, which are predicted to increase to 41% by 2024. 1 in 7 pensioners in Fenland live alone, some in isolated areas with no modes of transport. This means that many older residents face challenges in accessing services, maintaining an independent lifestyle and continuing to connect with others in their communities which are crucial to living a good quality of life.

I hope that this clarifies and satisfies the necessary evidence in respect of our transport services that you require to continue awarding our organisations with the Bus Service Operators Grant.

In April this year, one of our Board Members, Steve Shannon, contacted you to clarify the rules around claiming educational based journeys, to which we mutually agreed to disallow from that point onwards. In a recent conversation we raised the points about educational based journeys that reside in rural areas i.e. are they claimable and what is the definition of rural area. We look forward to receiving your response.

We are awaiting four permits (ESACT applied for August 2016) to enable us to register a route which is due to commence early January 2017, we understand that these permits are on "hold" pending this information being received. We would be grateful if you could give this your urgent attention given the time scales involved. (Julie Johnston is our contact at DfT).

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Jo Philpott", written in a cursive style.

Mrs Jo Philpott

Manager

FACT, HACT and ESACT