NEWSLETTER

Winter 2026

A belated Happy New Year to you and your families – we hope you've had a good start to 2026. Thank you for all your support not only through using the service, but through the feedback, compliments, and donations that have come through to the service over the past few months.

In this Edition:

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North Herts & Stevenage Community Transport Service Booking/Enquiry Line, open Monday to Friday, 10am - 2pm
Tel: 01462 689402
Email: transport@nhcvs.org.uk

Team members, Jon - Manager, Melanie – Coordinator, Opal – Office Volunteer - Mondays & Heather, Office Volunteer -Fridays and Helen – Social Media Volunteer

The Stats

Year of 2025

Journeys	Miles	New Clients
4513	102,047	344

Highlights of 2025

- **Miles of Impact:** Our incredible volunteers drove a staggering **104,000 miles** this year — that's more than **four times around the circumference of the world**!
- **Recruitment Success:** We were delighted to welcome **9 new volunteer drivers** to the team.
- **Growing the Team:** This year we were pleased to introduce **Heather**, our Volunteer Administrator, who supports the team in the office every Friday, and **Helen**, our Social Media Volunteer, who has been creating some wonderful Facebook posts.
- **Talks & Events:** The team has been busy out and about, attending **Volunteer Fairs**, **International Day of Older People**, **OPAL**, and **Silver Street Meet** events.
- **Community Transport Week:** In October, we proudly celebrated **Community Transport Week**, recognising and thanking our volunteer drivers for the vital work they do.
- **Ending the Year Together:** We rounded off the year with our **Volunteer Christmas Party** — a well-deserved opportunity to thank our amazing volunteers for their continued time, dedication, and support.

Let's Talk about Social Isolation

🌿 Why Loneliness Matters in Later Life

Loneliness becomes more common as people age due to life changes such as retirement, bereavement, reduced mobility, and shrinking social networks. Older adults—especially those over 75, are particularly vulnerable. In England alone, more than 2 million people over 75 live alone, and over a million go more than a month without speaking to a friend, neighbour, or family member.

🧠 Mental Health Impacts

Loneliness isn't just an emotional experience; it has measurable effects on mental and physical health.
Persistent loneliness is strongly linked to poor mental health and can worsen existing conditions.

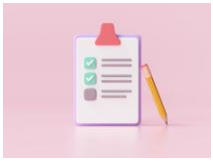
💔 Physical Health Consequences

Social Isolation is linked to greater risk for cardiovascular problems and strokes.
Loneliness can worsen physical decline, creating a cycle that further limits social contact.

🌞 What Can Help Reduce Loneliness

- Regular social contact (community groups, befriending services, intergenerational programs)
- Physical activity, which boosts mood and encourages social interaction
- Technology support to help older adults connect digitally
- Therapeutic support, such as counselling for

Age-related loneliness is not inevitable—targeted support can significantly improve wellbeing.



Social & Leisure Survey Results

Thank you to everyone who shared their views in our Social & Leisure Survey. Your feedback clearly showed how important social and leisure activities are to you.

Getting to social clubs and groups topped the list of what people wanted most from a community transport service.

Clubs and groups play a vital role in helping people stay connected to their community and reducing social isolation.

The service is launching its new ***Transport for Connection*** service, recruiting volunteers to support individuals with weekly journeys to social clubs and groups.

If you'd like support getting to a local club, please contact the team to **register your interest** and we'll be in touch when this service becomes available.

Or, if someone you know would like to become a **Volunteer Driver** for this campaign, give us a call on **01462 689402** or email: **transport@nhcvs.org.uk.**

TRANSPORT
FOR CONNECTION

Meet the Volunteer

Robert has been part of our Community Transport Scheme since 2021, bringing fantastic local knowledge and a wealth of experience—particularly when it comes to navigating journeys into London.

■ What made you first decide to get involved with community transport?
After retiring, I found myself spending time at home on the computer —my wife would say far too much! Although being busy, I needed to do something useful, and feel like I was making a real difference, beyond the various bits of volunteering I already did. Community transport seemed like the perfect fit: it got me off my chair and out into the community, meeting people face-to-face.

■ What do you enjoy most about volunteering as a driver?
The conversations are definitely the highlight for me. Every client has a different view on things.

I've discovered places that I never would've known about— I wandered into a museum that I'd just discovered online the previous night. I'd been researching what I might do while waiting for my client to complete their long appointment. It feels like I'm always learning something new, whether it's about local history or just from chatting in the car.

■ Is there anything surprising or unexpected you've learned from the role?
I've built up a large collection of coffee shop loyalty cards, including one for Regents Park in London - it being a nice place to visit when going to a large London hospital. I never imagined that volunteering would turn me into a bit of a coffee connoisseur! (In my opinion the coffee shop at the QE2 hospital definitely does the best Chocolate muffins!)

Another surprise has been just how much organisation goes on behind the scenes. Scheduling the bookings can get pretty complex, and I've started experimenting with Artificial Intelligence to reduce the manual effort required to schedule my transport bookings alongside all the other activities I do and the availability of our car. I never expected that volunteering would help me learn about new technology, but it's made the job even more interesting—and, hopefully, a lot easier.

Booking Tips: Making Your Journey Easier

We know how important it is to make booking your trip as easy as possible. Here are a few tips to ensure your next trip goes smoothly:

- **Book Early**: To secure your booking, we recommend booking at least 10 days in advance. This helps us ensure the availability of a volunteer driver. Please do not book with the volunteers directly.
- **Know Your Pickup Details**: When booking, make sure to specify your destination, appointment time and any special instructions (e.g., if you need assistance or have mobility aids).
- **Out of Area?** We are, unfortunately, unable to register anyone outside of Hertfordshire County, please call the team and we be happy to signpost you to the most appropriate services.
- **Please do leave a message!** We will respond to all messages left within our opening hours (10a.m until 2p.m Monday to Friday).
- **Cash Payments:** It is often helpful for our volunteers if you have some small change when paying for the mileage.

Useful links

Please find a list of useful resources, information and links to other services that may interest you.

Community Transport Hertfordshire is an online resource designed to help you find local community transport services across Hertfordshire County.
https://www.communitytransportherts.org/

TRANSPORT
FOR CONNECTION

North Herts & Stevenage Community Transport Scheme

Do you or someone you know have limited mobility and need help getting to day centres, support groups, clubs and activities? We're **here to help**.

We provide a reliable and friendly car service for less able residents living in North Herts and Stevenage. Our trusted team of volunteer drivers help get people to where they need to be, door-to-door, without worry and with assurance and peace of mind.

Keeping connected, independent and involved in community life, helps promote positive health and positive mental wellbeing. Our vital service can be a lifeline for many, where other forms of transport are not possible.

For more information, call 01462 689402
or email us at transport@nhcvs.org.uk.
Alternatively visit our website at:
www.nhcvstransport.org.uk.

Community
transport

Providing a reliable and friendly
car service for less able residents

CVS
North Herts
& Stevenage

A project managed by
North Herts & Stevenage CVS.
Registered Charity Number 1097796.
Company Registered Number 4693569.