

Wivey Links

The Wivey Link Newsletter

Issue No 27 - Winter 2020

Here for you



To all our Wivey Link Customers

An end of year update

We hope that all of you, our lovely customers are keeping well and to let you know we are missing you all. We cannot wait to get back to some sense of normality, driving you out and about as we always have done. As you well know, the Coronavirus pandemic has had widespread impact and brought distress and hardship to many. Wivey Link has of course been affected too with our service reduced to "essential travel only" and, as a significant proportion of our income comes from fares, we have been hit extremely hard financially. We were glad of some support in the Chancellor's April package but that has not been enough to cover our losses to date and as the pandemic drags on, our losses continue to mount up.

Services: To meet this really tough financial challenge, we decided to operate with just two vehicles and have taken the other three off the road to save on costs associated with road tax, insurance, MOTs, fuel and servicing. Alongside that, the WAP Directors have reluctantly accepted the fact that we will have to abandon our planned purchase of a second Ford Transit which was ordered, with deposit paid, last December, before the pandemic hit us and we were all locked down. It was always planned to eventually dispose of the two 'elderly' Citroen Dispatch vehicles which you will all be familiar with as we would by now, have had the two Ford Transits in their place. We all realise that it will take many months before we have any semblance of normality and therefore just cannot afford to run the same fleet of vehicles that we had before all this started. Wivey Link has only a limited source of funds and despite receiving the grants allocated by the Government, Somerset County Council and Somerset West & Taunton Council, this recent 2nd lock-down with possibly more to follow, with or without a vaccine, will stretch us even further.

Staffing: We have furloughed two office based, part-time staff. However, Jill and Caroline, although now working from home, have cut their working hours. If you need to contact the office and speak to them, the normal numbers (01984 624666 and 01984 624777) are still operational and either Jill or Caroline will respond to you, but from home. The phone lines are open 9am to 3pm, answerphone outside these hours.

Drivers: For those of you who have asked the question, we only have about 12 volunteer drivers working at the moment, enough for the two vehicles on the road. Quite a few of our drivers are over 70 and for obvious reasons wish to isolate. Therefore some of your favourite faces are just not around at the moment.

New Fares Structure: To make our fare structure more realistic for all our customers, we are changing the way we calculate our fares. Our current fare structure has always been based on 5 fare zones, centred on Wiveliscombe. This has been our model of fare charging since Wivey Link started, back in 2002/03 but is now not fit for purpose as our journeys take us all over the 10 Parishes and beyond, with some fares not really covering our running costs for the distance travelled. Rather than increase fares across the board, we are therefore planning to move to a fairer system, a simpler 'mileage' fare structure, based on the distance you actually travel. This will entail many changes to our Wivey Link booking system which will take some time to implement before we can go 'live'. Please note that although this will involve an increase to most fares, no-one will have a steep, unacceptable rise, as it is obviously not our intention to put you off travelling with us—we need you all!

None of this will happen at least until April 2021 so for now, things stay the same.



Office Open: 10.30am until 12.30pm Monday to Friday | Saturday Closed

Tel: Office 01984 624777 Wivey Link 01984 624666 Email: communityoffice@wiveliscombe.com www.wiveylink.co.uk

Wiveliscombe Area Partnership - Charity 1132983

An end of year update (contd)

Bus Passes: Another thing of course to consider is that those of you with a bus pass will continue to be subject to a reduced fare as long as you travel after 9.30am, as we can claim the difference from Somerset County Council. A message therefore to those of you without a bus pass, assuming you are of eligible age, is to apply to the Council. If you need advice, Jill or Caroline are here to help you. Just ring them. For those of you who have access to the internet, you can apply here....

www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/concessionary-bus-passes

Registration: To those of you who have not been able to travel with Wivey Link since the start of the pandemic, we miss you all! So we can make it up to you for all the time lost, we will be extending all current Wivey Link registrations by an extra four months. We will automatically extend your registration so don't worry if you haven't been contacted individually.

Donations and Legacies: Finally as well as fares and grants, Wivey Link also relies for income on the generosity of passengers and the public, and we are always grateful for donations and for the kindness of those who remember us in their wills. We thank you all.

Recycling:

As previously mentioned, we are only able to take limited recycling at the present time. Since the 1st September we are only taking milk bottle tops for recycling following this guidance: -

- All bottle tops for recycling must have a 2 or 4 inside the recycling triangle on the inside of the top
- All tops must be washed and fully dried
- We will only accept GREEN, RED, BLUE and BLACK tops
- There are bins for each colour just inside the office door on the left hand side
- Please do NOT put any recycling through the office letterbox
- Anyone bringing in tops unsorted will have to sort them into the bins themselves. This will avoid office staff having to handle the tops.

You can also give your bottle tops to your driver, if the driver is happy to take them, but they must be correctly sorted into bags for each colour to avoid the need for office staff to sort them out.

We are also able to take old ink and toner cartridges, old mobile phones and spectacles (no cases), and used stamps.

We are no longer accepting crisp packets or toothpaste tubes. These can be taken to Wiveliscombe Primary School.

The Community Office:

Due to the limits being placed on the number of people who have to socially distance in the Community Office, there are no visits or surgeries being held. This situation will continue to be reviewed, following Government guidelines. This includes the Police, Town Council (Saturday mornings), Village Agent etc.

Please note that the hours shown at the bottom of this newsletter are not relevant during the 2nd lock-down as the office is closed, at least until the 2nd December. We then hope our times of opening will be as shown at the bottom of this page. If you need to visit the office after this date, please ring first when Jill or Caroline will be able to advise you.

Christmas Office Hours: Please note that the office will be closed from lunchtime on the 24th December and will open on Monday 11th January, assuming of course that we are not subject to another lock-down!



The Trustees, Staff & all the volunteers at the Community Office & Wivey Link would like to thank everyone for their support over this last, difficult year & wish you all a very Happy Christmas & a peaceful New Year.



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