

## **Potential Community minibus acquisition?**

As per my comments at the last PC meeting and the subsequent emails that have been circulated since then and replied to (thanks to both Nick Taylor & Rick Robinson for their very valid responses which were circulated to all), I have undertaken some further research into how this minibus would need to operate within our community.

### **Important point 1:**

Because of its size and, more importantly its weight, this bus requires the driver to hold the D1 category on their licence which means they must have obtained their full licence prior to 1<sup>st</sup> January 1997. It is possible for drivers with just the B category to upgrade to a D1 but this requires them to undergo a training course and since sending round my last email I have been in contact with a guy called Richard Munford who is the minibus driving assessor that we use at School. He has given me the following information regarding the upgrading from a B licence to a D1:

To obtain a D1 licence you need to apply for a provisional PCV licence which includes taking a PCV medical (cost of £100 or so).

Take a PCV theory test and hazard perception.

Then approximately 3 days training and test.

You are looking at the best part of £1,200 if you pass everything first time.

Then medical every 5 years from 45.

Anyone over 70 will need to take a medical every 3 years to keep their D1.

Anyone under 43 or so would not have a D1 group unless they had taken a Ministry test.

(just to clarify the age reference above – if someone was born in 1979/1980 they would have had to have passed their driving test at the age of 17 – and prior to 1<sup>st</sup> January 1997 in order to automatically hold the D1 category on their licence – then you need to add on the 26 years that have elapsed between 1997 and 2023, thus giving a lowest age limit for drivers of at least 43 years of age)

Can we seriously expect any potential drivers from community organisations who would like to use the bus but don't have the required licence to undertake this training at their own expense and I'm not sure that we as a PC would want to 'sponsor' anybody to upgrade?

### **Important point 2:**

The other thing that Richard Munford pointed out to me is that the operating of this minibus would be subject to the regulations of section 19 of the Transport Act 1985.

Now I do know a bit about this because at my school we are subject to section 19 and this means that each of our minibuses has to be regularly inspected. In the case of vehicles less than 12 years old this inspection has to take place every 10 weeks, for vehicles over 12 years old it's every 6 weeks. Our proposed 06 bus would, therefore, fall into the latter category. These inspections are not just 5 minute jobs, we use CCM in Cranleigh and if we take a bus to them first thing in the morning we rarely get to collect it before mid-afternoon and the cost of each inspection, including VAT, is £86.40. Not only would someone have to take our minibus to a garage (and there's nothing locally we could use) but the driver would either have to stay for the duration of the inspection or arrange to get picked up and dropped off again when the inspection was complete.

This would be quite an onerous task and as far as I'm concerned this section 19 requirement is pretty much the 'final nail in the coffin' for this idea! Personally I don't think it's worth contacting local community groups at this stage because all we might do is 'build up expectations' only to dash them! We can have a fuller discussion at the November meeting but my view is that the idea is untenable and we can forget about it, certainly for the time being anyway?

Doug