

## Upper Tweed Community Council – Pilot Bus Project, 2016

### Application for grant from Clyde Borders Community Fund

The Upper Tweed area is poorly served by public transport. The main existing provision is an infrequent bus service (Monday-Saturday) from Broughton to the nearby towns of Biggar and Peebles, where people wishing to travel further afield need to change buses. In 2015 the Upper Tweed Community Council organised a pilot scheme of four free bus trips from Tweedsmuir and Broughton direct to Edinburgh, using funding from another source. The trips took place on the second Saturday in July, August, September and October. There were 127 return passenger journeys, which we judge to have been reasonably successful for a local population of around 900 people, and many compliments were received. Passengers completed questionnaires which have enabled us to gather information about the bus services which travellers would like to see in future.

In 2016 it is proposed to run another pilot scheme of four trips, where people would no longer be able to travel free but would have to pay a subsidised charge (around £5). There will for the first time be a trip to Glasgow (which is particularly difficult to reach by public transport) in July and a Christmas shopping trip to Edinburgh in December. Both of these result from suggestions which passengers in 2015 entered on their questionnaires. There will be two summer trips to Edinburgh, one in June and one in August for the Festival. There will be no trips in September or October, where the demand in 2015 was much less than in July and August, when a 53-seat coach was fairly full. Passengers will again be asked to complete questionnaires.

Once this second pilot scheme has been completed, it will be possible to make firm judgements about the sustainability of such trips in coming years, and in which months they should be held. We envisage that it might be possible to use the information gained to seek sponsorship from a variety of sources for trips in 2017 and later, and we hope that another organisation might be willing to organise such trips, rather than the Community Council.

For 2016 a quotation has been received from Barc Coach Hire of £1,335. In addition it will be necessary to incur marketing expenses (production of leaflets, posters and tickets, etc.) estimated to cost roundly £260 (based on 2015 costs). As we have no other sources of income from which the costs could be met, we should therefore like to apply for a grant of £1,600. It is impossible to calculate how much revenue will come from charges, but at a conservative estimate (allowing for some people to be put off from travelling because of the charges, and allowing for a fee to be paid to the shop which will sell tickets) it may amount to around £250, in which case the actual total net cost would amount to around £1,350 and the balance of the grant received would be refunded to Clyde Borders Community Fund once the project has been completed.

Barc will bear their own insurance costs, and we will ask to see their insurance documents to confirm that their cover is in force. As in the case of 2015, we will ask the Scottish Borders Council to arrange for public liability insurance under their block policy for Community Council activities.

CGL, January 2016