



Melksham & District Link
E-Newsletter
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Message from the Chairman.

I hope you are all enjoying the summer, even if the heat does get a bit much at times. Those of you who came to the Link Volunteers lunch enjoyed good weather and good company and, from the feedback, enjoyed themselves. Sadly, there was only about a third of our volunteers who made it, which suggests to me, that for whatever reason, we haven't got this one right? Any suggestions as to what, when and where would be appreciated.

Some dates for your diaries.

Saturday 3rd September the Melksham Food & River Festival will be held in King George V Park. We will have a stall there with the aim of recruiting more volunteer drivers and your assistance will be needed.

Thursday 8th September at 1730 a Melksham Link Special General Meeting will be held via ZOOM. Hopefully you have received the email notifying you of the meeting and its purpose.

Thursday 13th October the Melksham Link AGM at the Riverside Club. Our current Secretary, Heather Newman, will not be standing for re-election meaning that there will be a vote to fill this and other management committee positions. I am thankful to those who have already volunteered to fill these positions (Katherine Mills-Secretary, Liz Rowley-Vice Chair and Phil Davies-Assistant Treasurer), though of course it is open for any further nominations.

I look forward to seeing you all at these events.

Stay safe and Kind regards

Richard

Bristol Clean Air Zone

Richard Bell has already sent out an email regarding the above.

Please see below re the Bristol Clean Air Zone that commences **on 22nd November 2022**. If a ticket is issued it will be to the driver of the vehicle not the Client. To ensure compliance it will be the responsibility of the Link Driver to register at the relevant hospital to claim exemption from the charge. Thanks.

The following information is from the support team at Bristol Clean Air Zone.

We have a number of temporary exemptions that mean you won't have to pay the charge.

Temporary exemptions are available for residents in the zone, people working within the zone and earning less than £26,000 a year, Blue Badge holders and **patients attending hospitals in the zone**. Applications for exemptions will open before the zone starts operating. Temporary exemptions will last until the end of March 2023.

For hospital exemptions, your volunteers will be able to register their vehicles at reception when attending appointments to claim the exemption. If they are driving a blue badge holder, they can also claim an exemption for these journeys and can apply for this online.

We also have a financial support scheme for people with uncompliant vehicles. If you earn less than £27,000 a year you'll be able to apply for financial support to upgrade your vehicle to one that won't be charged. People who volunteer more than 12 hours per week within the zone can also apply. The vehicle can be second hand as long as it complies with the Clean Air Zone. As a rough guide:

- **Charges will not apply to Euro 4, 5 and 6 petrol vehicles (roughly 2006 upwards)**
- **Charges will not apply to Euro 6 diesel vehicles (roughly end of 2015 onwards)**

You can apply for this now on our website: [Clean Air Zone financial support - bristol.gov.uk](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/clean-air-zone/financial-support)

Please use the link below to see if your vehicle is exempt. The majority of the newer cars will be exempt, so many of the link drivers will not need to apply for the exemption, however, you must check first to ensure that your car is exempt!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/streets-travel/bristols-caz/charges-and-vehicle-checker>

Online Donations from Clients

Some of our clients donate online for their journey rather than use a brown envelope. Drivers record this accordingly on their expenses sheet. Can we also ask the driver to inform our treasurer Richard Clark when this happens, if possible on or near the day of the journey. Richard will require the name of the client, date of the journey and destination. Richard checks the online bank statement regularly and doesn't always know what the online transaction relates too. Thank you

Welcome Pack for Clients

The new A5 welcome leaflet is now available. We shall be sending these out to all new clients just to clarify what we do and don't do. Copies are available from Richard Bell

Summer Lunch Picnic



Photo of Link Volunteers at the summer picnic recently. The sun shone and a good time was enjoyed by all. Thank you Richard for your hospitality.

Special General Meeting via Zoom

Our current constitution states that we must hold an AGM not less than 12 months nor more than 15 months after the previous one.

This invariably means that each year the AGM is getting later and later and could soon be around Christmas time.

It really is a technical thing but as a registered charity we need to comply with our constitution. So, to resolve this issue we would like to amend the constitution so that an AGM can be held not less than 9 months nor more than 15 months after the previous one. This will legitimise our next AGM, due to be held on Thursday 13th October, which is only 11.5 months after the last one.

Richard Bell sent out an email giving formal notice of a Special General Meeting to be held via ZOOM on Thursday 8th September at 1730. It is anticipated the meeting will last no longer than 5 minutes.

The only motion to vote on is the following: -

The first sentence of Rule 5.1 of The Melksham & District Link Scheme is amended to read as follows 'The annual general meeting of the scheme shall be held not less than nine months and not more than fifteen months from the previous annual general meeting'.

Richard B will send out a Zoom invite nearer the time but please join the meeting to cast your vote.

AGM Date followed by Cheese & Wine: Save the Date

This Year's AGM will be at the **Riverside Club from 7pm to 9pm on Thursday 13th October**. We will not be having a speaker this year but will have Cheese & Wine following the formalities.

All the necessary paperwork will be sent out prior to the meeting.

New Clients

There has been a couple of cases recently where a new client believes that their very first journey is free and hasn't put a donation in. We do not know where they heard this, but it isn't true. All new clients should be given a brown envelope for their donation as usual.

Parking for Link Volunteers

Just a gentle reminder to all drivers not to assume that Link Volunteers have free and unlimited parking at all medical establishments. The rules and regulations at each establishment must be followed, if in doubt please ask at the reception. Parking information about some hospitals is listed in the drivers handbook. Not all hospitals are the same!

Community First is currently compiling a list of parking instructions for many of the hospitals that we visit and once available will be shared with the drivers.

If in doubt please ask.

Drivers Availability

Just another reminder to all drivers to let the duty coordinator know on the Monday of your availability for the following week, including weekends. It's one call/text/email for you whilst it can be 20 or more for the coordinator. A big thank you to those who do give their availability in a timely fashion. This one thing makes it so much easier for our coordinators and they really appreciate it. Thank you.

Clients on Benefits Claiming Travel Expenses?

Historically Link has issued a receipt to clients who wish to claim travel expenses from hospitals. I don't know where the practice originated from but it involves a lot of work for coordinator, treasurer and driver, and is actually unnecessary.

The NHS Website explains the procedure and there is a link to it on our website.

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/help-with-health-costs/healthcare-travel-costs-scheme-htcs/>

Basically, the client needs to take their appointment letter and proof of entitlement, via a qualifying benefit, to the hospital reception or nominated office to claim a refund of travel expenses.

They do not need a receipt from Link; indeed, it may not be strictly legal for Link to issue a receipt when a donation has not actually been made. This is particularly so as donation amounts are anonymous.

Any client requesting a receipt should be advised of the above.

Recruitment Posters



We have recently had some vibrant A4 & A5 recruitment posters printed.



We shall be placing these in surgeries, supermarkets, the campus and other suitable venues. If you can think of other places that will display them then please contact Dee.

We are always after more drivers.
Thank you.

Starters and Leavers

A big welcome and thanks to the following new volunteers who have started recently

- Alan Webb – Driver

Farewell and thank you to these volunteers who have resigned recently.

- Martin Matthews – Driver