

Withycombe Wheels Community Car Scheme – Report for Parish Assembly 2018

My apologies for not being able to present this Report in person. Since there are possibly a number of new parishioners present, I thought a short summary of how Withycombe Wheels works would be useful.

Withycombe Wheels was set up in 2004. Its aims are to enable people who do not have access to transport, to remain living in their homes. People may have had to give up driving and in rural areas where bus services are very limited, getting around, particularly to medical appointments, can be a real worry. It is run by a small committee, Chairman - Peter Humber, Secretary – Paul Wintermantle, Treasurer and Coordinator – Jean Humber. The AGM will be held in June/July.

Withycombe Wheels is a member of the West Somerset Car Scheme Partnership, an umbrella organisation, with influence, of all the Car Schemes in West Somerset from Stogursey to Porlock, Minehead to Crowcombe.

Car Schemes have the full support of Somerset County Council who offer discretionary concessionary fares to passengers holding a Travel Pass. Travel Passes offer free transport on buses at certain times of day but in West Somerset where there are limited services particularly in villages, there is limited opportunity to use these passes. At their discretion, SCC has agreed to pay half the fares of passengers holding these passes. This means the passenger pays half the fare and Withycombe Wheels claim the other half from SCC.

Our fares are –
return journeys within a 5 mile radius - £5.00
return journeys within a 10 mile radius - £10.00
return journeys Musgrove Park Hospital - 20.00

Passengers with Travel Passes pay half the cost eg £2.50 return to Minehead.
There is no doubt that SCC have tightened up the claims procedure (which is no problem).

Our drivers are volunteer drivers. They are paid £0.45/mile and all are DBS checked.

Over the years the majority of our passengers have been over 60 years of age and the journeys have been mostly for medical reasons. Other reasons have included shopping, social and, on one occasion, the vet! At least 48 hours notice needs to be given. Before using the service potential passengers must register and become members of the Car Scheme – cost £1.00.

The uptake of our service is very low at present but, as I say each year, for those few who use it, it is a vital service.

Jean Humber 2018