



A Brief History of Ealing Community Transport (ECT)

Formed in 1979 as part of Ealing Voluntary Service Council, ECT started life with a couple of second-hand vehicles, providing a transport service to Ealing residents whose needs were not being met by other transport provision.

30 years later, ECT has grown into a leading social enterprise owned by the charity Ealing Community Transport providing high quality community transport services across the country.

1979 – Ealing Voluntary Services Council (EVSC) establishes a transport project in Ealing, after it receives several elderly vehicles from Ealing Social Services. These are operated on an ad-hoc basis by the EVSC's Manpower Service Commission Workers on what was then the Special Temporary Employment programme.

1980 – The project is renamed Ealing Community Transport and it receives a further four vehicles and inherits a number of journeys previously undertaken by Ealing Social Services.

– Funding obtained from the London Borough of Ealing to employ a full-time Transport Co-ordinator.

1982-83 – The project expands rapidly with the donation of further Social Services “ambulances” as well as the purchase of second hand minibuses on the open market; its Group Hire project for local community groups is well and truly established.

– ECT develops its expertise in the operation of very elderly second hand vehicles doing almost all its own maintenance, working from a tiny office in Valetta St in South Ealing with the “workshop” being out in the street.

1984 – Ealing Community Transport obtains GLC support to develop its workshop services more formally.

1985 – Ealing Community Transport secures the support of the then Mayor of Ealing, who spearheaded a campaign to raise funds for a new workshop in Acton in Berrymead Gardens, providing proper maintenance facilities.

1986 – Ealing Community Transport secures grant funding from LB Ealing to open an operating centre in Southall - its first recycling project, furniture reuse.

1987 – Ealing Community Transport incorporated as an independent organisation – an Exempt Charity registered as an Industrial & Providence Society (IPS).

1989 – Funding obtained from LB Ealing for the establishment of the Bollo Lane HQ in Acton. The organisation moves into new offices, workshop facilities and off-street secure parking.

1990 – ECT takes over the operation of an Asian Dial a Ride service and re-launches as Seva PlusBus, (based on the Camden model) – the first PlusBus service in

Ealing, providing a door-to-door service for older and disabled individuals who are unable to use public transport.

1992 – Ealing Community Transport establishes a driver training programme and recruits its first driver trainer. Fundamentals are introduced whereby all drivers undergo formal training prior to driving minibuses which stands true to this day.

1993 – ECT takes over Ealing Council's Youth Service Transport service, leading to the establishment of Greenford as an operating depot.

– Launch of Re>Paint project, one of the first of its kind in the UK.

– “Out & About” volunteer car scheme commences for individuals who are unable to use public transport.

1994 – establishment of Glaxo PlusBus following road closures in Greenford, funded under a section 106 agreement.

– Merger of “Out & About” car scheme into a Personal Transport service using minibuses based on the PlusBus model.

1995 – ECT starts its first 'green box' recycling pilot for homes in Ealing.

1996 – start of Ealing PlusBus with Bridge House Estates Trust funding expanding the Ealing PlusBus network to 3 vehicles.

– Adoption of MiDAS, Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme -driver training scheme launched by Community Transport Association in partnership with Hampshire CC. ECT's driver trainer becomes one of the first DATs (Driver Assessor Trainer).

– New recycling service for 72,000 homes in Hounslow.

– Establishment of trading subsidiaries – ECT Recycling and ECT Engineering

1997 – start of Acton and Rover PlusBus with Taxicard under spend completing a network of 5 vehicles covering the whole Ealing area.

– Fire destroys Furniture Project warehouse, grant funding is withdrawn and Furniture Project closes.

– ECT opens further recycling services in the London Boroughs of Lambeth, Ealing and Brent.

1998 – ECT starts its first recycling service outside London, in partnership with the Vale of White Horse.

1999 – withdrawal of PlusBus funding and the loss of 30,000 trips for 2000 registered older and disabled passengers. Replaced by a contracted inferior “Community Bus” operated by a commercial operator - subsequently ended due to low usage.

2001 – ECT sets up a new demand responsive transport service in partnership with Sure Start in South Northolt. The Sure Start PlusBus is a door to door minibus service for parents and children under the age of 5.

2002 – Ealing Community Transport creates a new subsidiary - ECT Group, which in turn owns all of ECT's trading subsidiaries. All Head Office functions and staff are transferred to ECT Group.



2003 – ECT starts its first mainstream bus service in partnership with Transport for London. Route 195 operates through Southall running from Ealing Hospital to Charville Lane in Hayes in a newly set up subsidiary ECT Bus.

– Community Transport operation and office moves to Greenford Depot.

– PATS (Passenger Assistance Training Scheme) introduced in Ealing with the first batch of certificates including an ECT employee.

– ECT saves doorstep collection services to 400,000 homes in the West Country after Avon FoE goes into receivership.

– ECT forms a partnership with the Northern Ireland charity Bryson House to provide recycling services in the province.

2004 – ECT is awarded a contract (using section 106 monies) to set up The Willow Tree PlusBus Service, a demand responsive transport service for those living on the isolated Islip Manor Estate.

– ECT acquires Dartmoor Railway and RMS rail engineering venturing into the world of 'Community Rail'.

– ECT wins the Clean & Green contract, providing recycling, refuse and street cleaning services to Ealing Council.

2005 – ECT Group, ECT Bus and ECT Recycling are awarded Community Interest Company status.

2006 – ECT wins a contract to deliver community transport services in Milton Keynes. Milton Keynes Community Transport, a new joint venture company is set up to deliver demand responsive, group and lunch club transport services in partnership with Age Concern Milton Keynes based on the PlusBus model.

2007 – ECT wins a contract to deliver door-to-door minibus service in partnership with Cheshire County Council. PlusBus services are launched for residents in Chester, Ellesmere Port and Neston.

– ECT commences provision of a number of drivers and vehicles to TfL for its Dial a Ride service.

– ECT wins a contract from LB Ealing to undertake a detailed feasibility study into developing a shopmobility scheme in Ealing Broadway town centre. Consequently, ECT become actively involved with the Steering Group for initiating and developing the service.

– ECT and Weardale Railway re-open the historic railway in the Wear Valley.

2008 – ECT, in partnership with Hackney Community Transport, wins a major transport contract with the Olympic Delivery Authority. E&HCT, a new joint venture company is set up to deliver the service.

– On 3rd June 2008, ECT Recycling CIC is acquired by May Gurney Limited from ECT Group CIC. Ealing Community Transport, the original charity continues to operate independently with a sole focus on community and public transport in West London, Milton Keynes, Cheshire and on the London 2012 Olympic Site in Stratford. Anna Whitty is appointed Chief Executive of ECT Group.



– In September 2008 ECT Group divests itself of its rail businesses, which were acquired by British American Railway Services (BARS), a new company established in the UK by Iowa Pacific Holdings.

– ECT's Cheshire operation is awarded '*Best UK Urban CT Operator*' by The Community Transport Association (CTA UK).

– ECT's operation in Cheshire is also awarded '*Best Business Start Up*' award by Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council and North West Regional Development Agency.

– Milton Keynes operation nominated for a National Transport award.

2009 – ECT Bus withdraws from the London bus market.

– ECT continues to consolidate activities and deal with "legacy" issues, investing heavily into its accounting and financial management.

– ECT operation builds on its strengths, so that it can flourish as a leading passenger transport charity.

– Ealing Community Transport seeks to change its company structure.

– Ealing Community Transport seeks to register with the Charity Commissioner.

2010 – Ealing Community Transport converts its corporate form into a company limited by guarantee, whilst remaining the same legal entity.

– Ealing Community Transport becomes a registered charity.

– Ealing Community Transport appoints new board of trustees and adopts a new governance structure.

– ECT and MKCT awarded the Social Enterprise Mark.

2011 – ECT tenders and is awarded a new contract providing the Willow Tree PlusBus service.

– ECT working in partnership with Go South Coast, successfully tenders for a number of contracts with Dorset County Council.

– ECT sets up a new operation under the subsidiary of Dorset Community Transport providing community transport, SEN, home to school and local bus services,

