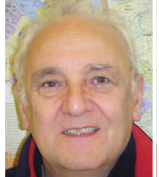
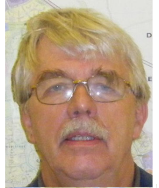


Given how much snow we had just a month ago, it's probably still too early to say that spring's here, but the weather definitely now seems to be getting brighter! And in terms of other positive news, it's great to be able to launch our Day Trips for 2009, and to confirm that the new Health Connect service will start in May.



At the same time, the increasing pressure of demand on PlusBus has led us to apply new limits to certain aspects of the PlusBus service, as explained on page 3. We're also pleased to introduce five new CT Drivers, all of whom have now completed their training. Glen, Graham, John, Paul and Phil will usually be working on a casual basis, but will also cover some evening / weekend shifts.



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**If you'd like this newsletter in
large print, please call 266950**

Snow!

During February, we saw some of the heaviest snow we've had for almost 20 years. Inevitably, this disrupted our services, and on a number of days we weren't able to operate any buses at all.



We tried to advise customers as far as possible what the position was each day, and we appreciated the fact that the local radio station (Heart Radio) included our information in their travel bulletins - in the event of further bad weather, do please tune into 103.3fm to find out whether or not we're able to operate.

Towards the end of the first week of the snow, we did operate a limited service for those people who'd been stuck indoors and were running out of food - as shown in the picture above!

PlusBus demand continues to be extremely high, and the service is pretty much full.

Email Bookings

It can be very difficult to get through on the Bookings Line now, so we'd suggest that anybody who has access to email may find it easier to request bookings by email instead...

transport@mkct.org.uk

Please note that no services will be operating on Good Friday (10 April) or Easter Monday (13 April); our Bookings Line will also be closed on these dates. There will be a normal service on the Saturday and Sunday of the Easter weekend.

PlusBus Demand

The demand for PlusBus continues to be very high, with more trips being requested than we can meet. With new members regularly joining the service, and existing ones requesting additional bookings, there is a danger of the service becoming completely over-loaded.

From the end of March 2009, we've had to introduce new restrictions on both membership and regular trips. These are explained below;

- ⇒ We will no longer be accepting new members, even if they are technically eligible for the service.
- ⇒ We will no longer be accepting requests for any extra regular journeys, meaning that all bookings will need to be made on a casual basis.

Neither decision has been taken lightly, and we're sorry for any difficulties these decisions will cause. Once there are extra resources available, we will be able to start accepting new members and regular bookings again, however this may not be for several months.

Health Connect

In May, we'll be launching a new service to and from healthcare facilities, called Health Connect. This benefits from SEEDA (that's the South East of England Development Agency) funding, and is aimed particularly at rural areas.

The service will;

- ⇒ operate to any healthcare facility in Milton Keynes and nearby towns, including Bedford, Northampton and Oxford.
- ⇒ be available to anyone who would otherwise find access to hospital difficult.
- ⇒ generally charge lower fares than would be the case using a taxi (from £4 to £10 single).

A new User Guide is currently being produced, and can be sent to anyone who's interested.

*The new
Health Connect
service will
improve access
to healthcare.*

Thrift Farm

We're delighted that our current contract to operate journeys to and from Thrift Farm has been extended by six months, taking it through to September 2009. At that point, the service will be re-tendered, and of course we hope to win it back!

Group Transport

Our Group Transport service lets community or voluntary organisations hire a minibus, with driver, for their own use. Recently we've taken groups of residents out to restaurants for lunch, and sports clubs to tournaments or fixtures; we also run a regular shuttle service for the Christian Centre in Oldbrook, and many other trips.

If your group needs to arrange transport, it might be worth thinking about the Group Transport service. There's a User Guide which we can send to you with more information, or you're welcome to email us with any queries.

Special offer!

How about arranging a lunchtime trip for your group?

During May and June, you can book a return trip on certain Wednesdays for just £35! That's 30% off our normal prices!

- ⇒ Travel to any destination in Milton Keynes, maybe a pub, garden centre, or one of the lakes, picking up from one single point.
- ⇒ Choice of two sets of times - out at 11am and back at 1:30pm, or out at 11:45am and back at 2:15pm.
- ⇒ Use of a 10-seater vehicle, with space for 1 wheelchair and 2 trolleys or frames.

Please note that any booking is subject to availability; requests can be taken a maximum of 21 days in advance.


Lunch Clubs

Since February, MKCT has been planning the schedules for Lunch Club transport (previously this was done by Age Concern). We've been aiming to keep customers fully up-to-date with the times they can expect their bus, and to communicate any changes promptly. Whilst we try to keep journeys consistent, new members starting do mean that we need to make small alterations every month.

If you use the service and have any queries about it, please do get in touch with us. It would also be appreciated if you could call 266955, in advance, to cancel on any particular week that you can't go.

*During 2009,
we'll be
offering over
40 Day Trips,
to around a
dozen different
destinations!*

**Our day trip programme
for 2009 starts at the
beginning of May.**



**Check out the outline
plans or call us for more
information.**

Day Trips

2009

Saturday Trips

On most Saturdays, we'll be offering a trip to a local place of interest. Destinations include many of the favourites from last year, such as Woburn Safari Park or Waterperry Gardens, as well as a few new trips - including Woburn Oyster Festival! The vehicles on these trips will usually have space for more mobility aids, but are still likely to fill up quickly. Prices are from £8 to £16 per person.

Wednesday Trips

Roughly every other Wednesday, we'll be arranging a longer-distance trip, maybe to the seaside or to London. These trips will normally have limited space for mobility aids, and are expected to book up quickly. Prices are from £16 to £20 per person, depending on the trip.

Other Trips

We'll be running other short trips, including Olney Market and the Millennium Country Park. There will also be an evening trip in the summer months, which will take you through the local countryside and stop at a village pub.

If you're interested in these trips, please ask us to send you a full leaflet about our day trips, or collect one from your driver, if you already travel with us.



MKCT is a “social enterprise”, basically meaning we don’t have to make a profit for shareholders.

31 Burners Lane

Kiln Farm

Milton Keynes

MK11 3HA

Bookings:
01908 266950

Cancellations:
01908 266955



Drop-in Afternoon

On Wednesday 6 May, we’d like to invite you to drop in and see us at the Centre for Integrated Living (in the City Church) between 2pm and 4pm.

We’ll have displays and information available about all of our services, including Day Trips, Group Transport and PlusBus. Members of staff will be available to answer your questions, and to receive your feedback. We also hope to have a vehicle available for you to look at.

The afternoon is for anyone who’s interested in community transport, whether as a user, care worker, or member of the public. It’s also a good chance to meet the people you might speak to over the phone!

There’s no need to book a place - simply turn up on the 6th anytime between 2pm and 4pm!

Wednesday 6 May 2009 @ CIL