

**Milton Keynes
Community
Transport**

ISSUE 06

JULY 2009

Day Trips

Group Transport

HealthConnect

Lunch Clubs

PlusBus

Thrift Farm

Tower Drive

In June 2009, MKCT celebrated its third birthday, and it's striking how much things have moved forward since we launched in 2006. On the left, you'll see the seven services which we now operate - we started with just three!

Of course, there are a lot of challenges still, and on pages 6 & 7 there are details about the restrictions that currently apply to the PlusBus service, due to the heavy demand.

More positively, page 5 lists the Day Trips planned for up to September, and explains how the trips will work for the autumn. On page 2 there's a summary of the HealthConnect service, which launched recently.

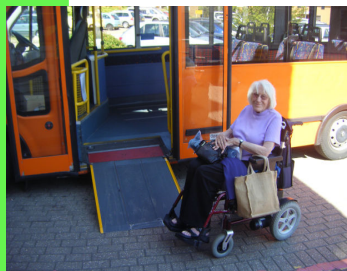


On Saturday 8 August, we'll be running our biggest day trip so far, with at least three buses going down to Southend-on-Sea!

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

HealthConnect

Our trial HealthConnect service is now fully up and running, offering people door-to-door transport to hospitals and other healthcare facilities, including



those outside of Milton Keynes. The service is available in many of the rural areas around Milton Keynes, from where there's limited public transport, and of course accessible vehicles are used for each journey.

So far, we've taken people to Nuffield Hospital in Oxford, Stoke Mandeville & Milton Keynes General. Leaflets are available from drivers, in many GP surgeries, or can be sent by post on request.

Many people find accessing healthcare difficult; HealthConnect aims to help with this.

- ⇒ £5 single per person for journeys to Milton Keynes Hospital
- ⇒ £10 single per person for journeys to hospitals further away
- ⇒ Bookings can be made up to 21 days in advance, by phone (266950) or email (transport@mkct.org.uk)
- ⇒ Pick-ups available within the Milton Keynes area and in many nearby towns and villages.
- ⇒ Leaflets available on request.

Our annual Customer Survey takes place during July, and forms are being sent out with the copies of CT News that are posted out to all members. This gives everyone a chance to air their views on different aspects of our service, and to answer some specific questions. Please do return your form to us by 7 August.

Punctuality



In recent months, we've been making a particular effort to ensure that our buses arrive punctually for each and every customer. This is in response to certain complaints we had about vehicles turning up early, and we're aiming to get to the point at which all customers can be confident that their bus will arrive during their confirmed 20-minute slot - not earlier, and not later. We hope that, once this has fully settled down, we'll be able to provide a consistently punctual service to all our customers.

Group Transport

If you're involved in a community or social group, you can hire one of our accessible minibuses (with driver) for your own exclusive use. Charges start from just £25 per vehicle for a single trip within Milton Keynes.

email transport@mkct.org.uk for more details

Staff News

At the start of May, **Craig Scotney** joined us as our fourth Operations Controller. He's working with



Dean, Ian and Ola, supervising the day to day operation of all our services. Between them, the Operations Controllers schedule journeys, support drivers and escorts, carry out assessments for passengers who may need additional support, and deal with issues that arise. It's a busy and varied job, and Craig will be a valuable addition to the team. He's previously worked in a supervisory role at Starbucks and in an internet café, and he's looking forward to getting out and meeting as many users as possible.

*Everyone at
MKCT wishes
Ola all the best
with her first
child!*

Ola Bodger is currently expecting her first child, and will be going on maternity leave from 5 October. Ola started with MKCT in 2006 as a Customer Services Assistant, providing help and support to passengers in the City Centre. She's now one of our Operations Controllers, working alongside Craig, Dean and Ian. We wish Ola all the best, and hope to see her back in 2010!



Day Trips

Since the start of May, we've been running regular day trips, to destinations including Cotswold Wildlife Park, Southend and Olney. Many of the trips have proved extremely popular, although we've switched one or two destinations to reflect higher or lower demand than we expected. The trips already



confirmed for August and September are shown below - please call or email us if you'd like to book a space.

Our day trip plans for the autumn will be launched on 14 September, and you'll be able to book on any of those trips from that date. Please note that, in a change from the current arrangements, payment will be needed at the time of booking (this can be refunded, minus an admin fee, if you cancel at a later date). Brochures will be available from your driver or by calling the Bookings Line from 14 September.

AUGUST

Sat 1st Bourton-on-the-Water
 Wed 5th Southend
 Sat 8th Southend
 Th 13th Country Park
 Sat 15th Woburn Safari Park
 Wed 19th London
 Sat 22nd Hatton World
 Th 27th Olney Market
 Sat 29th Cotswold Wildlife Pk

SEPTMEBER

Wed 2nd Southend
 Sat 5th Waterperry Gardens
 Th 10th Country Park
 Sat 12th Oyster Festival
 Wed 16th London
 Sat 19th Woburn Safari Park
 Th 24th Olney Market
 Wed 30th Bourton-on-the-Water

PlusBus

The demand for PlusBus continues to be very high, and from April 2009 we unfortunately had to bring in a number of further restrictions to manage this. These are explained below and to the right.

We appreciate that these will be frustrating, and we'd far prefer to be able to offer everyone a journey. The limited resource available makes this impossible, but we're continuing to talk to Milton Keynes Council (who fund the service) about how the demand can best be managed.



There are currently a number of restrictions on the PlusBus service

New Members

At present, we're not accepting any new members on the PlusBus service. This is because we're already unable to meet the demand from existing members.

Individuals who would meet the criteria for joining PlusBus can instead complete an application form for the TaxiCard service (offering discounted taxi fares) and this will automatically place them on the list to join PlusBus once membership reopens.

Regular Journeys

We're currently unable to accept requests for new regular journeys. This is because further increasing the number of regular bookings would make it even more difficult for customers to secure casual bookings.

This means that at present anyone wishing to travel with PlusBus will need to make a casual booking, unless they already have a regular journey set up. Casual bookings can be requested up to 7 days in advance, by either email or phone. Please remember that we have a limit of forty booking requests each day, and these are allocated on a "first come, first served" basis; quite often we've taken all the requests we can do by lunchtime, and have to turn away further requests.

In the longer-term, we'd like to be able to resume taking new regular bookings, however it's unlikely this will be in the near future. It may also be that a rationing system for regular journeys is introduced; we'll explain any changes in future newsletters.

There are no regular journeys on the August Bank Holiday (Monday 31 August) on any of our services. It's possible there may be a limited PlusBus service available for casual bookings only; please call from mid-August to confirm.



MKCT trades as 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

transport@mkct.org.uk

CT Forum

On Friday 18 September, we’ll be holding a CT Forum, which follows on from our Drop-in Session in May. This time, we’ll be making a short presentation, explaining a little about MKCT in general and then with more detail about our PlusBus service. After the presentation, there will be a chance for people to ask questions, as well as some refreshments.

It’s an opportunity to find out more about MKCT and how we can help you, as well as a chance to meet the people you speak to on the phones (most of our Operations Controllers will be there, along with some of our managers and directors).

The CT Forum will take place in the Guild Hall of the Church of Christ the Cornerstone (opposite Marks & Spencers in the City Centre), from 11am. The event is open to anyone interested in community transport, where as a user, support worker, or in any other capacity. There is no need to book a place - please just turn up on the day!