



Dear Councillor

8th August 2012

*Re **sedcat** – your community transport*

sedcat (South East Dorset Community Accessible Transport) is a new charity which provides a door-to-door shopping service in the Bournemouth area; this is known locally as the BAT Bus. This service is operated solely for the elderly and those with a physical or sensory disability who are unable to use a conventional bus service.

sedcat operate three projects:

- The BAT Bus
- Community Cars
- Shopmobility at Boscombe and Castlepoint Shopping Centre in Bournemouth.

Four mornings a week The BAT Bus collects members from their homes to help them with their weekly shopping needs. They can choose from the following drop off points.

- The Sovereign Centre, Boscombe
- ASDA, at St Pauls Roundabout in Bournemouth
- The Castlepoint Shopping Centre in Bournemouth (Top Mall outside M&S and Shopmobility)
- TESCO in Castle Lane, Bournemouth.

For members of the Bat Bus who have difficulty with walking, the bus drops off at Shopmobility in the Sovereign Centre and Castlepoint Shopping Centre where mobility equipment can be hired. Shopping is loaded onto the bus before members embark for their return trip. An annual £6 membership fee is collected, with an additional £5 for each return shopping trip.

The BAT Bus is a purpose built minibus with a ramp and accessible steps. As well as seated passengers, it can also accommodate a number of manual/power wheelchair users. The BAT Bus friendly and helpful driver collects members from their homes; if necessary, help is always offered especially with shopping.

sedcat also run weekly afternoon outings and alternate Saturday full day outings to places of interest. For each outing, as with the shopping trips, members are collected from their homes. For elderly people who live alone and find themselves isolated their world can suddenly start shrinking and all physical and mental wellbeing starts to suffer. The outings offer a chance to make friends, get out and about and feel part of the world again.

The benefits of using the BAT Bus are far reaching and vital for the more vulnerable who live in the Bournemouth community.

- Quality of life is improved and depression and loneliness are seriously reduced.
- Confidence to leave home in the knowledge that the BAT Bus is a safe and secure mode of transport
- Improving social inclusion by going out on the outings

Without the BAT Bus calling many members would have no means of shopping for themselves.

By using the BAT Bus and Community Cars, the elderly and disabled have more chance of staying in their own homes and keeping that precious independence. Both services cover the whole of Bournemouth; in particular we try to target the more deprived areas i.e. Boscombe, Springbourne and East Howe. There are many members who only leave their home when the BAT Bus or a Volunteer driver calls. Currently, membership of the BAT Bus stands at 450 members. Bournemouth is noted as having an aging population; at the last national census the population for the over 60s was 21% with Bournemouth having 26% of their residents aged over the age of 60.

sedcat also operate Community Cars, a voluntary car scheme which helps the elderly and those living in the Bournemouth area who are unable to use public transport, but still need to make essential journeys. Volunteer drivers, using their own cars, offer a door to door service for members to help them access much needed services.

As part of our campaign to attract new members and seek out those in our community who would benefit most from using the BAT Bus, Community Cars and Shopmobility we would be grateful if you could circulate our leaflets and information around your Council wards. We can arrange for a supply of leaflets to be sent to you (a copy is attached in this email).

If you would like to find out more about community transport, please email me at alison.morrison@sedcat.org.uk or look online at www.sedcat.org.uk . Alternatively, you can call into the Shopmobility unit at Castlepoint or Boscombe or telephone on 01202 534027/399700.

Yours sincerely

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