

**The Connections Bus Project
Charity No 1050122**

Annual Report (December 05 – November 06)

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Trustees of the Connections Bus Project 2005/6

Chair person	Paul Manser
Treasurer	Chris Barrett
Secretary	John Gooch
Trustee	Sarah Summers

Project Manager	Alan Webb
Independent Examiner	Susanne Favell

2. Structure, Governance and Management

Type of Governing Document – Constitution adopted on 12 September 2001.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees to the Management Executive Committee

Trustees are appointed/reappointed annually at the AGM in Oct/Nov.
Criminal Record Bureau checks are carried out prior to commencement of trusteeship.

Additional Governance Issues

The Connections Bus Project Management Executive Committee

Chairman and Trustee	Paul Manser
Secretary and Trustee	John Gooch
Treasurer and Trustee	Chris Barrett
Human Resources Advisor and Trustee	Sarah Summers
Youth Worker Advisors	Pete Gillings Kirsty Lothian
External Representative and Advisors	Susannah Harris Mark Peck
Project Manager	Alan Webb
Senior Administrator	Fiona Swan

Terms and Conditions for Employment of Staff

Criminal Records bureau checks are carried out prior to commencement of employment. These checks are carried out again every three years. All staff must agree to work to the following policies of the Charity.

Policies

The Connections Bus Project implements the following policies, all of which are reviewed annually.

Child Protection Policy; Data Protection Policy; Equal Opportunities Policy; Confidentiality Policy; Ethical Policy; Health and Safety Policy; Substance use and misuse policy; Anti bullying policy; Dealing with Issues policy.

A Risk Assessment is carried out termly for the bus and before any new activities are undertaken

3. Objectives and Activities

The Charity's objects ("the objects") are-

- (1) to advance the education and training of persons in rural Cambridgeshire and surrounding areas who are in need and unlikely to gain employment, in particular through the supervised provision of services and facilities not otherwise provide by the employment services.
- (2) to provide recreational facilities to persons in rural Cambridgeshire and surrounding areas who are in need of such facilities by reason of their youth in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving their quality of life.

Summary of Main Activities in 2005/06.

The Connections Bus Project is a registered Charity based in Histon near Cambridge. This was started in 1995 in response to a car crash in which three local young people were killed. The Project works with young people who are at risk or who are hanging around on the streets, by providing a programme of recreational, educational and personal development opportunities. Based around a double decker bus, the project acts as a mobile youth club/drop-in facility. It operates in the villages surrounding Cambridge where there is little or no youth provision.

Currently the bus visits the six villages of Comberton, Oakington, Bassingbourn, Willingham, Cherry Hinton and Haslingfield. It can be found in these villages between 7 and 9pm, and in Haslingfield between 4.30 and 6.30pm. The bus is open to any young person aged between 11 and 19 years. On average the bus sees around 20 young people each evening, both male and female. This year the bus has over 400 members. During the summer holidays we also run daytime sessions, visiting up to 4 further villages. The Project is also considering approaches made to it to increase the number of villages and communities it serves

A newer replacement bus, purchased with funding from the National Lottery, was introduced in March 2006. This bus is equipped with five computers, a satellite internet connection, stereo equipment, a television and videos for entertainment. It has a large resource base of information on such subjects as sexuality, health, relationships and drugs awareness. Information is available to take away and the staff are available to discuss problems with the young people. Youth leaders run crafts, teambuilding games and information sessions. There is a new topic for discussion on board the bus every few weeks. We aim to stimulate and challenge young people on issues affecting them and their community.

4. Achievements and Performance

Spring Term

Not an easy term by any means. A lot of hard work was put into keeping the old bus going until the arrival of the new, as well as the obvious work involved in preparing the new bus. This term also saw the end of nearly 2 years of work in Fulbourn. The start of a permanent youth club in the village and the transfer of the young people from the bus to the club enabled the project to start work in two more villages (Bassingbourn and Foxgloves) on alternate Thursday evenings.

Summer Term

The introduction of the new bus was beginning to show with record numbers of young people and by the end of June we had over 400 members with weekly attendance reaching the 100 mark.

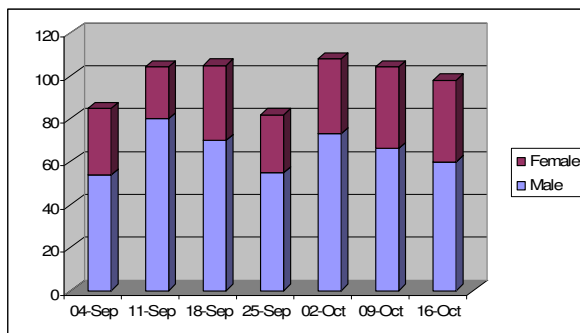
Summer Holidays

As with last year we decided to concentrate on using the bus rather than arranging a large number of trips. This included our regular evening villages and the addition of 5 other villages during the afternoons.

The continuation of visits to our regular villages was welcomed by the young people and parish Councils and helped us to keep a continuity going through the holidays resulting in higher attendance in the Autumn Term. As a result of our afternoon visits to new villages we have another village asking for us to visit during the term time.

Autumn Term

Weekly attendance



Attendance as mentioned has remained high during the beginning of the term and our programme of crafts and educational quizzes has continued to be popular with the young people.

A number of youth workers have had to hand in their notice and adverts are currently being placed to enable the

employment of replacement workers and new workers to enable the bus to operate on a 5th evening.

5. Financial Review

Introduction

April 2005 to March 2006 (Accounts Examined and Submitted)

The accounts for last year are a 14 page document, because they have to conform to the new Charity Commission standard format. Also, because our annual income last year was over £100,000, they have to use the longer format required for Accrual Accounting. Next

year I propose to go back to the simpler Receipts and Payments Accounting report, which is more straight-forward.

The figures in the accounts are totally dominated by the money we spent on our new bus. Here are the income and expenditure figures (with the previous year's figures in italics).

Income 2005-6	<i>(2004-5)</i>	
Grants and donations £36k	£36,046	<i>£49,190</i>
Fees £8k	£7,839	<i>£8,964</i>
Interest etc £1k	£763	<i>£543</i>
New Bus Big Lottery Fund £79k	£79,013	
New Bus other donations £12k	£12,150	
Sale of old bus £1k	£1,040	
Total	£136,851	<i>£58,697</i>
"Normal" income	£45,688	<i>£58,697</i>
"New Bus" income	£91,163	<i>nil</i>
Expenditure 2005-6	<i>(2004-5)</i>	
Staff wages £37k	£37,287	<i>£36,538</i>
Servicing, Ins, Fuel £8k	£8,283	<i>£6,254</i>
Office rental and expenses £3k	£3,022	<i>£2,623</i>
Activities support £2k	£2,369	<i>£2,603</i>
Travel expenses £1k	£1,169	<i>£784</i>
Equipment, repairs, materials £2k	£1,759	<i>£6,416</i>
New Bus £75k	£75,427	
Total	£129,316	<i>£55,218</i>
"Normal" costs	£53,889	<i>£55,218</i>
"New Bus" costs	£75,427	<i>nil</i>

Total Income last year, at £137,000, was the highest we have ever had.

But £91,000 of this was earmarked for spending on the new bus – purchasing, equipping, and the ongoing costs of paying for the new satellite internet connection.

The amount of income for “normal” bus activities was down to £46,000, compared to £59,000 the previous year. Part of this reduction was cutbacks in grants from Councils, and part was that grants which the previous year were for general costs were, last year, earmarked for “new bus” costs.

The income from fees was also slightly down, because the old bus was off the road for a while.

Total Expenditure last year was also a record amount, at £129,000.

£75,000 of this was spent on the new bus. By the end of the financial year we still had outstanding work on the new bus to pay for, and money was kept in hand for ongoing equipment and new running costs.

The £54,000 spent on “normal” bus costs was slightly down on the previous year, mostly because we spent less on repairing the old bus.

Because we hadn't finished spending the “new bus” money, our **Total Reserves** went up from £34,000 at the start of last year, to £41,000 at the end of last year. But since £16,000 of this was earmarked for the new bus, the reserves actually available for “normal” bus costs fell to £25,000. This represents about five months normal running costs, which is a reasonably healthy amount of reserves.

April 2006 to September 2006 (first half of this financial year)

Here is how the money has come in and been spent since April this year.

Bus Project Income and Expenditure 2006-2007

	Income in previous month	Expenditure in previous month	Cumulative Income	Cumulative Expenditure	Reserves
01 Apr 06			£0	£0	£41,053
01 May 06	£6,900	£5,234	£6,900	£5,234	£42,720
01 Jun 06	£10,344	£10,970	£17,244	£16,204	£42,093
01 Jul 06	£3,418	£4,623	£20,662	£20,827	£40,888
01 Aug 06	£0	£4,345	£20,662	£25,172	£36,543
01 Sep 06	£9,227	£4,705	£29,889	£29,877	£41,065
01 Oct 06	£5,804	£5,786	£35,693	£35,663	£41,083

There is still £7,000 left which is earmarked for the new bus – so our “normal” reserves have gone up during the first half of the year from £25,000 to £34,000. So our financial position at the moment is still reasonably healthy. We have a bid in for a large grant from the Young People's Fund – if this is successful, we should still have a reasonable level of reserves by the end of March next year. We expect our total expenditure this year to be about £62,000.

Principal Sources of Funding

During 2005-6, our major source of income was the National Lottery, with their grant of £79,013 to purchase and equip a new bus.

The next largest source of income was the local councils – Cambridgeshire County Council, and South Cambridgeshire District Council. Together these provided £22,350, mainly for staff costs.

The next largest source of income was fees from users of the bus services – mainly Parish Councils. The total amount of fees received was £7,839.

The J. Paul Getty Jr. Charitable Trust gave us grants totalling £5,500.

These four sources generated 84% of our income during the year.

Policy on Reserves

The project aims to maintain a minimum reserves level of about £30,000 – which represents approximately six months normal running costs. Funds are kept in a Barclays Business Reserve Account.

This allows us time to react in a controlled manner to any changes in our funding support from year to year.

6. Plans for 2006/07

1. To continue our efforts to fund and recruit an additional full time youth worker to support the project manager in developing the programme of activities.
2. To develop further the Young People's Committee, or equivalent, to ensure effective communication between the Management Committee and the users of the project's services.
3. To liaise with other providers of similar services and where appropriate, develop arrangements with them to fully capitalise on the expertise and facilities available from the project.

7. Declaration

Signed on behalf of the Charity's Trustees

Signature

Full Name

Position

Date