

For Immediate release

A volunteer led community transport operator in North Oxfordshire celebrates its first birthday party this month.

“OurBus Bartons is unique in Oxfordshire as a response to the massive cuts to Public Transport that hit last year” explains Chairman, Ken Caldwell. “It was the result of the initiative and hard work of villagers in Middle Barton. In our first year, we have enabled our community to make over 5000 timetabled passenger journeys from Middle Barton, via surrounding villages, to local Transport hubs, Health Centres, Shopping outlets. On top of that, we have added routes, bought a second vehicle, agreed our first sponsorship deal with Deddington Farmers’ Market and made a small surplus. It is truly humbling to be a part of something so special.”

Passenger representative Sheila Tumman agrees. “OurBus Bartons is a lifeline for us villagers. It gets people to work, to the doctors or to the shops. A lot of us would have had no choice but to move home without it. It also works with the village school and community groups and is out on hire most weekends. Everyone knows the bus and the drivers and wave and smile when they see it.” The drivers are amazing, freely volunteering their time and skills. They really care about what they do.”

“We’re very proud to have achieved so much in our first year. Setting up was a real challenge,” Ken explains. “We went to our Parish Councils and applied to local charities for most of the start-up funds we needed. Local benefactors came forward and helped us at just the right time. We’ve had valuable support, but sadly, no major investment, yet, from local or national Government.”

“We’re hoping to have a great second year too” Ken adds. “Now we have delivered a reliable service for a year, we want sustainability. We are working towards getting our first brand-new bus in the next nine months. We always need more volunteer drivers and people with skills to help run the organisation. If you would like to get involved, or find out more about what we do, come along to our birthday party at the Middle Barton Sports and Social Club on Sunday 24th of September between 12:30 and 2 PM or visit our website: www.ourbusbartons.org.uk or Facebook page: www.facebook.com/OurBusBartons/

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