

Summer with



WEALDEN · WHEELS

Enjoy a Trip Out!

We're running trips to popular destinations from

**CHALLOCK, CHILHAM, CHARING,
EGERTON, PLUCKLEY & SMARDEN**

EXCLUSIVELY FOR WEALDEN WHEELS MEMBERS

Thursday 2 nd July • Rye	£7*
Thursday 30 th July • Whitstable	£7*
Thursday 27 th August • Hastings	£9*
Thursday 24 th September • Rye	£7*

Trips arrive at your destination around 10:30am,
leaving for home at 2:30pm

Advance booking is essential and payment
must be received prior to your trip.

Book your seat by ringing **01233 840000**

It's first come, first served - so book now!

*Prices shown are per person return

WEALDEN · WHEELS

Community Transport for Local Villages
The Old Granary, Pevington Farm, Pluckley, Kent TN27 0PF

Spring
2015

Welcome to your Spring newsletter. Read on for some exciting news..!

Fingers crossed

The Government recently announced a £25 million fund to provide new minibuses for Community Transport operations such as Wealden Wheels.

Mandy, our 17-seater, is now over 10 years old and we have therefore applied for funding for a new minibus equipped with a wheelchair ramp and better passenger access. We hope we will be successful. Keep your fingers crossed for us!

Keep up to date with all the latest news on our website and Facebook page.

Give us a ring

Millie, Mollie, Mandy and Mo look forward to getting out and about now the better weather is on its way.

Please call us to check availability before booking your trip, but don't leave it too long, the girls' dance cards are filling up!



Members only

We're delighted to announce a new venture for Wealden Wheels – a trip to the historic town of Rye and its market.

This is a new venture for Wealden Wheels and one that is available exclusively to members of Wealden Wheels.

Please see overleaf for full details and ring us to book your seat!

We hope to repeat this trip and also go to other destinations such as the seaside in the summer.

If there's somewhere you would like to go that you think other members would be interested in, please let us know.


Training Update

We mentioned in your last newsletter that all our volunteer drivers are being trained on the MIDAS – the 'Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme'.

We're delighted to say that one of our drivers, Gavin McDonald, is shortly to be trained to become a trainer and assessor. He will then train our drivers 'in house' rather than us using an outside company.

He will also provide regular refresher training as required. This will not only save us money in the long term, but ensure that our drivers reach the very high standards expected by Gavin - thanks Gavin!

Please email us with your email address, it will help us to save money on postage.

For regular updates follow us on Facebook. 

Wealden Wheels is your village community transport initiative and is supported by your parish council.

New Year New Pricing Strategy

We guess it's a fact of life, but not a very nice one that prices tend to go up far more frequently than we would like!

The membership fee to join Wealden Wheels hasn't increased for some considerable time, and fees for trips were only marginally increased last year.

We are pleased to announce that membership rates and hire fees for all members who live within the six parish councils areas who very generously support Wealden Wheels are not to be increased! The six parish councils are Challock, Charing, Chilham, Egerton, Pluckley and Smarden, and we are very grateful for their continued support of Wealden Wheels.

The new member and renewal rates for those outside these areas have been increased from January this year and a higher rate per trip is also in place.

Self-drive hire rates have not been increased and remain competitively priced for all our members, resulting in a considerable saving if you can provide a driver from within your organisation. Please contact us for more information.

We hope that despite these increases, you agree with us that Wealden Wheels continues to provide excellent value for money when meeting your group or family's transport needs.

We need volunteers!

Wealden Wheels is a not-for-profit community transport initiative. To ensure we are able to deliver our aims, we need more drivers... **yes, this means you!** If you have a little spare time to join our merry band of volunteer drivers, we'd love to hear from you. Please call Liz or Chris for a chat so they can give you a flavour of what's involved. **Drivers are always in great demand!**

A trip to the Ancient Cinque Port Town of Rye and its Market



An exciting new service for our members!
Thursday 26th March



Pick-ups from:

**Chilham, Challock, Charing,
Egerton, Pluckley and Smarden**

Arriving in Rye at 10.30am

Leaving Rye at 2.30pm

**Only £5 per person
return!**

Open to individual members of your
organisation or club.

Please book direct with us on **01233 840000**
(advance booking is essential)

We hope to make this a regular service and
offer our members trips to other destinations.

Watch this space for more outings!

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**Winter
2014/2015**

'TIS THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY' WITH WEALDEN WHEELS!

Welcome to your winter newsletter from Wealden Wheels. Sorry for alluding to Christmas in November, but having seen signs for Christmas fayres and Christmas goods in the shops already, at least we're not the first!

If you're planning your Christmas outing, please call us to book your transport.

At the time of writing, November and December are starting to look busy with Christmas shopping trips to Bluewater, Hempstead Valley, Bromley and Tunbridge Wells.

Minibuses are booked to take members to their Christmas lunches at various locations around the county. We also have transport booked for trips to Tunbridge Wells, Dartford, Cranbrook and Canterbury for Christmas concerts and the good old Christmas favourite, the pantomime... 'oh no you don't, oh yes we do'!

To avoid disappointment, please call us as soon as possible to book your minibus!

We've had a busy few months since our last newsletter, with trips to the seaside including Whitstable, Eastbourne, Hastings, Hythe and Dungeness.

Other destinations included Teapot Island in Yalding, Leeds Castle, Bodiam, Rye, Rochester, Faversham, Kew Gardens and Calais.

We were also pleased to help the local primary schools with their inter-school Olympics... like we said, a busy few months!



Above: Students from St. Mary's, Chilham, with their haul of 'Olympic' medals.

Above left: Mollie enjoying the sea air at Dungeness.

Opposite: Mandy in front of Derek Jarman's house at Dungeness.



“Hi. Just a note to say thank you very much for the excellent service on Saturday. Alan was a perfect gentleman and had great patience in putting up with our delays and extra stop. We really appreciate the service you guys offer.
Keep up the good work.”

Training and Safety Matters

By the time this newsletter reaches you, we will have started refresher training for our drivers. This marks the first step towards attaining 'Midas' – the Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme accreditation.

Part theory and part practical, it will confirm what we already know - that you're in safe hands! First aid training will be next!

The minibuses are also getting lots of attention. Here they are ready for their weekly checks, performed by another of our much appreciated volunteers.



A short history of Wealden Wheels

We're delighted to say our membership continues to grow and we thought some of our newer members would be interested in knowing a little about the history of Wealden Wheels.

Wealden Wheels came into existence in 2003, a community transport not for profit company operating in the Weald of Kent.

It was set up to provide affordable transport to its members in rural areas.

In April 2004 we acquired our first minibus and started providing transport. In the course of our first year, our membership grew to nearly seventy groups, organisations and families.

A second vehicle was delivered to Wealden Wheels in March 2005, swiftly followed by a third to help with the ever increasing number of trips our ever increasing number of members were arranging!

And so, ten years on Wealden Wheels is still going strong and a huge thank you is owed to you, our members, for your support over the years, and to our volunteer drivers who give up their time to drive for us.

Wealden Wheels would not exist without either!

We need volunteers!

Wealden Wheels is a not-for-profit community transport initiative.

To ensure we are able to deliver our aims, we need more drivers... **yes, this means you!** If you have a little spare time to join our merry band of volunteer drivers, we'd love to hear from you. Please call Liz or Chris for a chat so they can give you a flavour of what's involved. **Drivers are always in great demand!**

“ Politeness and patience. A very big thank you for Saturday night. Chris was wonderful and patient. We love you too much to even think of travelling any other way!! ”

Thank you for your continued support

2014 has been a time of change at Wealden Wheels.

Thank you for your support of your community transport initiative throughout the year; we look forward to your continuing support next year! Thank you to our great team of volunteers

We wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous 2015.

We'll be in touch next year with more news and ideas for your trips out.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS
FROM THE BUSES MILLIE,
MOLLIE, MANDY AND
MO AND ALL AT
WEALDEN WHEELS!**

Please email us with your email address, it will help us to save money on postage.

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**Summer
2014**

ENJOY SUMMER WITH WEALDEN WHEELS!

**Welcome to your summer newsletter from Wealden Wheels.
It's been a hive of activity since our last newsletter. Here's a flavour of
what we've been up to..!**

In April two of our minibuses provided a shuttle for invited guests at the investiture of the High Sheriff of Kent...best bib and tucker and an extra polish for the buses! We conveyed residents of several local care homes to the Rare Breeds Centre, Lathe Barn in Hythe, Batemans and Dungeness.

We also took our members to various destinations including Groombridge Place, Riverhill Himalayan Gardens, Kingfisher river trip in Waterringbury, Great Dixter, Brighton and even further afield to Arras in France!

This is just a flavour of the trips we've undertaken in the last few months. A big thank you goes to our drivers who give up

their time to drive for us and our members. Drivers are always in demand, and we would love to hear from you if you have a little spare time and would like to help. Please give Liz or Chris a call for a chat to see what being a driver for Wealden Wheels involves.

Our membership continues to expand, and we'd like to wish our new members a warm welcome to Wealden Wheels – we have already met some of you, and look forward to driving for the remainder of you soon!

The Wealden Wheels' diary is filling up with trips booked during the summer months, so if you're planning a trip for your group or club, don't delay in booking the venue and giving Wealden Wheels a call to check on bus availability.

If you're not sure where to go, maybe the suggestions overleaf will help!

Kingfisher River Trip



Millie in Arras.

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For Garden Lovers...

There is a wide range of gardens to enjoy, in fact there's something for everyone! Some of these gardens are only open to the public for a limited number of days, so please check with the venue before booking your minibus.



TRAM HATCH GARDENS

Charing Heath A three-acre garden with an orchard, a rose garden, ponds, and refreshments (pre-book).

www.tramhatchgardens.co.uk
Telephone: 01233 713373



OLD BLADBEAN STUD GARDENS

Bladbean A series of five interlinked gardens spread over three acres, each with its own purpose and theme.

www.oldbladbeanstud.co.uk
Email: oldbladbeanstud@sky.com



HOLE PARK

Rolvenden A fifteen-acre garden with views over Kentish Weald. Groups are welcome with a range of catering options in The Coach House.

www.holepark.com
Telephone: 01580 241344

For History Lovers...



GODINTON HOUSE & GARDENS

Ashford An ancient estate surrounded by magnificent parkland with beautifully restored house and gardens.

www.godintonhouse.co.uk
Telephone: 01233 643854



BELMONT HOUSE

Faversham A magnificent neo-classical house, beautiful gardens, a splendid collection of clocks and watches and a tea room! Open to groups Tuesday and Thursday, April to September.

www.belmont-house.org
Telephone: 01797 890202



BODIAM CASTLE

East Sussex An archetypal 14th century moated castle with ruined interior - a glimpse of medieval splendour.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/bodiam-castle
Telephone: 01580 830196

Why not arrive at Bodiam in style - on a steam train from Tenterden on the **Kent & East Sussex Railway**. www.kesr.org.uk • Telephone: 01580 765155.

For Animal Lovers...



BUTTERCUPS GOAT SANCTUARY

Boughton Monchelsea Dedicated to the welfare of over 130 goats. Summer Visitor Days each Sunday; Family Days on the first Sunday every month, plus special arrangements for group visits.

www.buttercups.org.uk
Telephone: 01622 746420



WILDLIFE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Smarden Dedicated to breeding of endangered big cats. They currently have over 50 big cats including tigers, lions, leopards and cheetahs. WHF will be opening to the public on 17th, 18th, 19th & 20th July (advance booking required).

www.whf.org.uk
Telephone: 01233 771915



KENT WILDLIFE TRUST

Kent Kent Wildlife Trust is a conservation organisation covering Kent and Medway, dedicated to protecting wildlife. They have five visitor centres throughout Kent and run a large number of events.

www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk
Telephone: 01622 662012

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Spring
2014

IT'S ALL CHANGE AT WEALDEN WHEELS!

Welcome to your newsletter from Wealden Wheels. We may have seemed a little quiet lately, but it's been a hive of activity!

The last couple of months have seen some changes in the office.

We said goodbye to John Bridger in December, and in January Kevin Parry retired.

We wish them both well, and thank them for their hard work at Wealden Wheels. They will be missed, but hopefully not for long as both have promised to return to do some driving for us!

We have two new members of staff, Liz Reid and Chris Housman. Liz has joined us from The Kent & East Sussex Railway where she was the Railway's Events Co-ordinator, she organised the events and the Railway's volunteers to help her run them!

Chris has been a stalwart volunteer for several years and we welcome more involvement from him in the day to day running of Wealden Wheels.

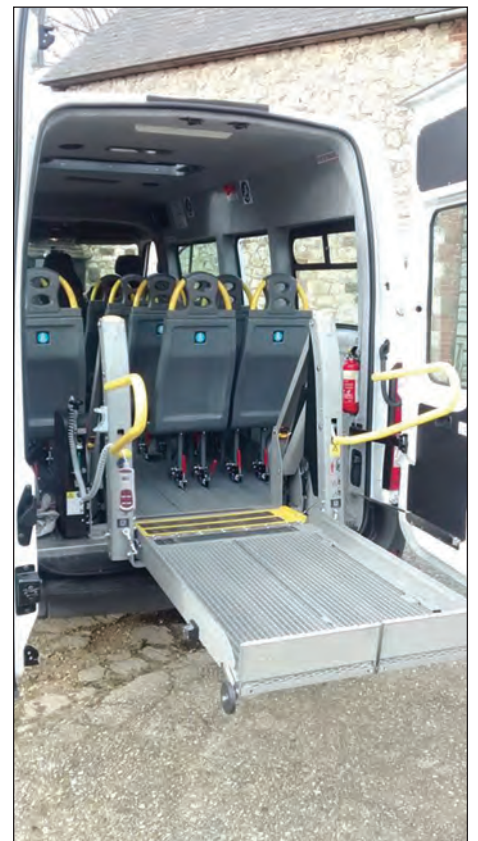
John and Kevin will be a hard act to follow, but Chris and Liz will do their best!



Mollie - our brand new Minibus.

As well as our new members of staff, we've also got a new minibus! Mollie is a brand spanking new 13-seater addition to our fleet.

Seats can be removed to accommodate two wheelchairs. She also has an electric tail lift to facilitate easy access for passengers with mobility problems.



We need volunteers!

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If you have a little spare time to join our merry band of volunteer drivers, we'd love to hear from you. Please call Liz or Chris for a chat so they can give you a flavour of what's involved.

Drivers are always in great demand!

Here are three other vehicles which you may prefer for your trip.

MILLIE



A Ford Tourneo which has nine seats including the driver.

MO



A VW Caddy which has five seats including the driver and wheelchair access via a rear ramp.

MANDY



Suitable for our larger village groups with seventeen seats including the driver.

So that's the fleet... all you need to do is decide where you want to go! Here are a few ideas to whet your appetite...

If you like steam trains:*

Kent & East Sussex Railway, Tenterden

www.kesr.org.uk

01580 765155

Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railway, Hythe

www.rhdr.org.uk

01797 362353

Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway, Sittingbourne

www.bwlr.co.uk

01622 884254

If you're green fingered:*

Bybrook Barn, Ashford

www.bybrook-barn.co.uk

01233 631959

Tenterden Garden Centre, Tenterden

www.tenterdengc.co.uk

01233 758510

Dobbies Garden World, Ashford

www.dobbies.com/find-a-garden-centre/ashford

01233 619360

If you fancy a trip down memory lane:*

The Mill Toy & Pedal Car Museum, Northiam

www.themilltoymuseum.com

01797 253803

Kent Battle of Britain Museum, Hawkinge

www.kbobm.org

01303 893140

Lashenden Air Warfare Museum, Headcorn

www.lashendenairwarfaremuseum.co.uk

01622 631799



Picture courtesy of Kent & East Sussex Railway

There's a trip out there for everyone, so why not give Liz or Chris a call to discuss your requirements. Our buses are competitively priced, but if you're able to supply your own driver, there's a considerable saving to be made.

***Please check opening times before arranging your transport!**

If you're receiving this newsletter by post, please email us with your email address to help us save on postage.

Find us on **Facebook**.



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