

Rewarding Industries 2025



Case study: Welsh Border Community Transport

HOWDEN

Keeping communities connected across North Wales

About WBCT

Welsh Border Community Transport (WBCT) is one of the longest-established community transport charities in Wales. Founded by local councillors with a single vehicle, WBCT has grown to become an essential service provider for vulnerable residents in Flintshire and surrounding areas.

Under Ian McDermott’s leadership since 2018, the charity continues to provide crucial mobility services while navigating the complexities of funding, volunteer retention, and post-COVID recovery.

Challenges

WBCT faces a range of challenges that limit its capacity to grow and meet increasing demand. Despite receiving core funding from the Welsh Government and National Lottery, the charity operates on a tight budget, with limited financial flexibility to expand services, particularly staffing.

This is compounded by consistently high demand, which leaves the organisation fully booked and unable to take on more journeys without additional resources. Volunteer turnover has also been an issue, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the departure of many long-standing volunteers and made recruitment for specific time slots more difficult.

Additionally, marketing remains a significant challenge. With no dedicated department, promotional efforts fall to the Operations Manager, whose time and expertise are stretched thin. Meanwhile, there is an opportunity for the charity to refresh its website and build a cohesive strategy to boost visibility and attract new supporters.



Resilience and innovation

During the pandemic, WBCT showed adaptability, securing emergency funding and pivoting to food and prescription deliveries. Post-pandemic, careful cost management and community goodwill have helped the charity bounce back without raising fares, which has been essential for protecting accessibility in a region that relies heavily on subsidised transport.

While WBCT doesn’t currently benefit from corporate partnerships, the charity is open to exploring these, including logo placements on vehicles in exchange for financial support, an untapped opportunity for future sustainability.

Culture and community impact

Despite the pressures, Ian describes WBCT as a “happy place” with low staff turnover and a strong sense of team spirit.

Long-term staff and volunteers foster consistency, and community referrals through well-being services and social workers keep the client base growing.

Looking ahead

Ian emphasises the need for professionalisation across the charity sector. He believes small charities like WBCT could significantly benefit from marketing expertise, strategic partnerships, and broader operational thinking to ensure long-term sustainability.

Upcoming developments in Wales’ transport strategy and discussions with the Community Transport Association may shape new directions for WBCT.



Get in touch

Mark Fisher, Associate Director, Charity and Not-for-Profit

T: +44 (0)333 234 1358

E: mark.fisher@howdeninsurance.co.uk

www.howdenbroking.com/charity

Howden UK Brokers Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority No. 307663. Registered in England and Wales under company registration number 02831010. Registered Office: One Creechurch Place, London, EC3A 5AF. Calls may be monitored and recorded for quality assurance purposes.

HUBL-CC-CNFP-012-0625