

# Our Car Your Car

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***Our Car Your Car (OCYC) car club, was the first of the Carplus/Rural Transport Partnership supported projects to launch in the North of England. The club is centred in the towns of Slaithwaite and Marsden in the Colne Valley to the North West of Huddersfield.***

## **Key Lessons of the Project**

- The community group that first envisaged the car club were keen on the idea from the outset. This made the task of setting up the car club a much simpler task.
- The group formed an active and committed steering group to carry out much of the development process.
- The group had strong links to their Local Authority, which smoothed the path toward raising implementation funding.
- Prior to the launch date and for a significant time after the club employed a very keen and capable development worker, who was central to its success to date.
- Bus and rail services in the valley are of a high standard for a rural area, giving a viable transport alternative to complement the car club for those people that are considering giving up their car(s).

## **Location Information**

The Colne Valley runs from the outskirts of Huddersfield to the high Pennines. It is a steep sided valley with a narrow floor that is fairly intensively developed with 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century mill buildings and housing. Much of the traditional woollen industry has now gone, and only a small part of this employment has been replaced with modern industries and services. Most employment is found in neighbouring Huddersfield, or across the Pennines in Oldham or Manchester.

Although the area is classified as rural, it has an urban feel, and has an unusual mix of characteristics that can belong to both groupings. The most important of these is that the valley, (unlike most rural areas in England) has excellent rail and bus links to surrounding centres. It is now becoming clear that this is an important factor in the early success of OCYC.

## **Development History**

The car club was initiated by a local community trust who formed a steering group of interested individuals led by an enthusiastic officer of the trust. They commissioned and raised funds for a feasibility study in the valley, which showed on completion, that a car club was a viable proposition. However, around this time the local trust was unable to give the project any further development input. However, almost immediately the Penistone Line Partnership (PLP) stepped in to continue the work. The PLP is a community rail partnership, whose main aim is to help develop the use of the Penistone line between Huddersfield and Sheffield. The group also operate a mini bus, which acts as a feeder service for the railway from villages nearby. The PLP see the car club as an important addition to their community transport plans for the area.

The PLP employed an enthusiastic and capable car club worker in February 2003 who was based in the Colne Valley and worked from home. The club was launched in the March of 2003, with the first two years funding support being met by Kirklees Borough Council and the Rural Transport Partnership.

## Operational Issues

The club lease four Vauxhalls, a Corsa, an Astra and a Zafira are based in Slaithwaite, with the second Corsa being based in Marsden. The Slaithwaite cars are based in a restaurant car park in the centre of the town making access to the cars easy for all members. A few members need to use local bus services to access the cars, but most are within easy walking distance. The Marsden car is parked off street in a private car park.

The club employ the Drive-IT car access and booking system. This has proved to be a success as time spent on admin and invoicing by the worker has been kept to a minimum, thereby releasing her time for more important development tasks. The cars are booked either by phone or internet, or by using the in car Drive-IT terminal.

Tariff	
Private Membership	£90/yr per annum
Registration fee	£25 (one off fee)
Joint/Family Membership	£90/yr (max 2 persons, both paying reg. fee)
Community group m'ship	£90/yr (all users of cars to pay reg. fee)
Business membership	£200/yr (all users of cars to pay reg. fee)
Hourly charge (all cars)	£2.00 per hour
Mileage fee (all cars)	£0.10 per mile

By February 2004 OCYC had 22 registered users with one corporate member. As is common with the early adopters of a car club, many of the new members did not originally own a car, and use the club vehicles on odd occasions when public transport is inappropriate to their needs. However the club has reported that a new family member has now *sold their family car* as the club vehicles meet all of their car use needs.

## Future Plans

The OCYC club is enjoying a period of growth as enthusiasm for the idea in the valley spreads. They are now making plans to hold a feasibility study for a car club in the town of Penistone (to the South of Huddersfield) and intend to examine the idea of expanding into to the villages of Meltham and Holmfirth.

## Club member quotes

Lynda Poole – **Sold her family car after joining OCYC.**

*"I have always been environmentally aware..... I inevitably failed to use public transport until I didn't have a car parked in front of my house. However I would never have given up my car unless I had one in the car club to fall back on. I now use public transport – trains and buses – much more".*

## Contact Details

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