

Proposal for an Additional Community Bus

Offer from KCC: Donation of 2015 Fiat Ducato Accessible Minibus with Tail Lift

1. Background

Kent County Council has offered to transfer ownership of a 2015 Fiat Ducato 14 seat minibus, fitted with a tail lift to support wheelchair access, at no asset cost to the Town Council.

The vehicle has historically been used for community transport purposes and presents an opportunity to enhance local accessible travel provision within Faversham. Having use of a spare vehicle rather than having to hire one would be beneficial, particularly in the case of a breakdown or technical issue with our main vehicle.

The acceptance of this offer would not prevent the Town Council from making a grant application with KCC for a new vehicle. I believe however, that rejecting the offer would not send positive messages to KCC when we make our funding bid for the next vehicle.

The offer was discussed at the Active Travel Committee on 2nd April 2026. It was agreed to seek approval from Full Council.

2. Financial Implications

While there is no capital purchase cost, there are running costs to factor in.

2.1 Road Tax (Vehicle Excise Duty)

Annual Cost

Road Tax £345

2.2 Maintenance Budget

Given the vehicle's age (10 years) and specialist equipment (tail lift), a prudent annual maintenance budget is required.

Cost Category Estimated Annual Cost

Routine servicing £300 – £600

Repairs (tyres, brakes, etc) £800 – £1,500

Tail lift servicing & inspection £300 – £600

MOT & compliance £60 – £100

Vehicle Livery/Branding £750

Total Estimated Annual Maintenance Cost:

£2,500 – £3,000 (recommended planning figure)

2.3 Additional Financial Considerations

The following costs are not included above but will need to be met from existing or identified budgets:

Insurance: £3,529.59 is the total annual premium for this year from our insurer, QBE.

Fuel

3. Operational Considerations

- The tail lift enables wheelchair-accessible transport, expanding inclusivity.

- The vehicle could be a back-up for our normal service vehicle – there is a possibility that when our current lease vehicle is returned in February 2027, we will have a gap before the next vehicle is delivered.
- Be hired to local community groups –

We have volunteers who would help with community group hire.

There are options for hire charges, examples are:

Wealden Wheels charge £2 per mile with a volunteer driver provided.

Sheppey Wheels charge £149 for a half day hire, £198 for a full day hire.

- The vehicle could be sold and funds raised reinvested as there are no terms attached to the donation.
- The seats could be removed, and it could be used by the Facilities Team as an additional van.

4. Risks

Risk Mitigation

Age-related mechanical failure Maintain contingency budget

Tail lift repair costs Regular servicing and inspection

5. Options

Option 1: Accept the Donation

- Gains a valuable community asset at no capital cost
- Requires commitment to ongoing revenue expenditure

Option 2: Decline the Donation

- Avoids ongoing costs and operational responsibility
- Missed opportunity to enhance the Faversham Hopper.

6. Recommendation

That Faversham Town Council agrees to accept the donation of the 2015 Fiat Ducato for use as a spare service vehicle to support the Faversham Hopper, and to hire to community groups when required.

RG

09.04.26