



Shopmobility South Gloucestershire Chair's Sept 2023 Report

Dear Member / Carer

It was with sadness that our long-standing Trustee Pauline Sealey passed very recently, having served on the committee for many years and who was a member of the service.

Pauline obtained her own scooter, which was her only means of getting out and was often seen within the shopping Centre.

Pauline was very popular within the community and would often promote the importance of using a mobility scooter.

We welcome our new Trustee Linda Banister who joined us over a year ago. Prior to joining us Linda served as a Councilor with Sodbury Town Council and brings considerable experience and enthusiasm to our team. Linda has been prioritizing marketing our service and providing long arm support to our volunteers whilst Sheridan was away.

We have had a rather turbulent year with Sheridan having been taken ill requiring an eye operation two months ago. I am pleased to report Sheridan has been making steady progress with his sight.

Sheridan's absence unfortunately coincided with IT problems with our newly installed phone making it impossible to receive or make phone calls. People were therefore unaware that we were not providing a normal service during this time, and I apologize to those who made a journey to find the office closed. As of writing we are still trying to rectify the issue as a matter of urgency.

We are most grateful to our volunteers Tony and Sarah who were able to provide a skeleton service whilst Sheridan was away.

Securing funding has been particularly challenging this year as many external grant providers have been prioritizing funding to those effected by the cost-of-living difficulties many are experiencing.

People using the service remain below 50% compared to pre Covid levels and the aforementioned cost of living may be a factor.

We are also aware that more people have acquired their own mobility scooter which we view as a positive outcome as people can derive the benefits of their use 7 days a week.

We are certain that the service will be required in the future as the age of the population will continue to increase over the next couple of decades.

As of writing we have registered over 85 new members since Sept 2022. We have registered 2,050 people since we started operating in April 2006.

People continue to value the service, and this is reflected in the very positive responses we receive via our annual questionnaire.

We celebrated the inception of Shopmobility, South Gloucestershire when the first meeting was held 20 years ago in 2003. We held a celebratory event at the library that was well attended with bespoke cakes produced and tea and coffee made available.

I would like to thank our vice chair David Bell who works tirelessly to promote our service in the press and local handbooks and Linda Banister who has been promoting most notably via our Facebook page. I would also like to thank Steve Major (Treasurer) Wully Perks Trustee and Christine Howard Trustee for their contributions to the project.

Our continued appreciation goes to Dick Whittington who provides us with extensive knowledge and advice on a variety of issues.

Our current opening hours remain Tuesday, Thursday and Friday between 09:30 and 4pm. We would like to open on either a Saturday or Monday, but this will be dependent on acquiring new volunteers. We are actively seeking new volunteers and have intensified promotion to this effect.

We remain grateful to WECA, (West of England Combined Authority) who have provided a small grant and have continued to reimburse us for any bus pass holders who use the service and have extended reimbursement to all English bus pass holders.

We would like to convey our continued thanks to Yate, Doddington and Sodbury Councils and the funding provided by South Gloucestershire Councilors for supporting us with grants over the years we have been operational.

We would also like to express our continued appreciation to Yate Library in providing us a peppercorn rent and Yate shopping Centre for allowing us use of the garage to store and charge our mobility scooters, as without these facilities we would be unable to operate a service. Our final thanks go to Pearce Brothers for servicing our mobility scooters at a reduced cost.

Our AGM will be held on Thursday 12th OCT at Yate Library commencing 2.00 pm and wish to welcome anyone who wants to attend as we value any contributions people may wish to make.

Janet Biggin

Alderman J. Biggin
Chairman Shopmobility
South Gloucestershire