



## Community Action Dacorum Community Wheels Minibus Hire Policy



### INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the procedures and code of conduct for hiring minibuses operated by Community Action Dacorum (CAD).

Community Wheels is the minibus hire service delivered by CAD. The minibuses are available for hire to non-profit making community and voluntary groups in Dacorum.

All user groups must be working for the benefit of Dacorum residents and in line with the objects of CAD to take advantage of the minibus hire. A preferable rate of hire is available to affiliated members of CAD.

A minibus cannot be hired by an individual or a member of the general public or be hired for activities (or as part of activities) which are profit making.

Whilst on hire, a minibus can only be driven by someone who is on the CAD Register of Drivers.

A minibus may be hired by a group member on either a self-drive basis (when the hirer nominates a driver from our *Register of Drivers*) or with-driver basis (when the hirer requests us to nominate a driver from our *Register of Drivers*).

### MINIBUSES

There are 11 minibuses in the CAD Community Wheels fleet.

Eight minibuses are fitted with passenger-lifts and have removable seats to allow the carriage of passengers in wheelchairs. Two buses have an extendable ramp for wheelchairs.

The passenger capacity of the fleet ranges from 12-16.

N.B. The maximum number of seats is reduced when carrying passengers in a wheelchair.

Each minibus is equipped with:

- Wheelchair clamps (accessible vehicles only)
- A first aid kit
- Two fire extinguishers (accessible vehicles only)
- Procedures for breakdown or accident and out of office contact details
- Fuel card

### BOOKING THE MINIBUS

Bookings are subject to vehicle availability. The with-driver minibus hire service is provided by volunteer drivers. The number of with-driver hires that CAD can carry out will vary from time to time because of the fluctuating size of the volunteer pool.

Please give as much notice as possible when making a booking. Full details of pick up and destination (including post codes) must be provided at the time of booking.

Bookings can be made via the Booking Form on the CAD website or e-mailing us at [deborah@communityactiondacorum.org.uk](mailto:deborah@communityactiondacorum.org.uk) or by telephoning the office. Bookings MUST be made in writing and should state dates, times, whether an accessible vehicle is required, seating capacity, collection point, destination etc. It is important to be accurate about the number of passengers travelling in wheelchairs.

It is important that careful consideration is given to the times for which you wish to hire the vehicle, especially the return time. This is to ensure that you have the vehicle long enough to complete your journey, but also that you do not keep it unnecessarily when other groups could be using it. If, for example, you have booked a vehicle until 5.00 p.m., then it must be returned by this time. If you think you may be unavoidably delayed in returning the vehicle, please telephone the CAD office/out of hours contact number.

Keeping a vehicle longer than the pre-booked return time could render the user liable to financial (or other) penalties. In the event of an accident, breakdown or unavoidable circumstances this does not apply.

Please note that the CAD offices are closed at weekends and on local bank holidays. If you have a vehicle booked at these times, you must pick up the keys before 4.00 p.m. on the preceding Friday. If you are using the minibus in the evening or at the weekend, the minibus must be returned to its base. Keys must be posted through the CAD office door at 48 High Street in a key pouch.

## EMERGENCIES

You MUST be able to provide a contact telephone number that will be staffed during the time of the hire. This is especially important for hires out of normal office hours. If you do not provide such a telephone number, CAD cannot be held responsible for any failure to inform you about any emergency or other problem associated with the hire: e.g. a breakdown on the way to the first pick-up.

## INSURANCE

Vehicles in the Community Wheels fleet are driven under insurance arranged by **Arthur J Gallagher** and CAD is insured under **QBE Insurance** (under Community Transport Fleet Insurance).

Minibuses must not be used for the carriage of goods.

## VEHICLE BREAKDOWNS

All vehicles in the Community Wheels fleet are covered by the AA. In event of breakdown or accident please contact the number on the card in the vehicle handbook quoting the policy holder name (Community Action Dacorum) and policy number. The minibus handbook contains general details about what to do in the event of a breakdown or accident.

## OFF-ROAD USE

Vehicles in the Community Wheels fleet should not be driven "off-road" or driven through animal enclosures within Safari Parks. If a driver causes loss or damage to a Community Wheels fleet vehicle by going "off-road" or driving through a Safari Park, the costs of any necessary repairs will become the hirer's responsibility.

## CHILDREN

CAD ask that groups that carry children/teenagers up to the age of 17 have a passenger assistant, (this cannot be the driver), we ask that the passenger assistant travels in the back of the minibus to supervise the children/teenagers.

Groups are asked to ensure that they have the relevant equipment when carrying young children ie child seats/restraints.

## ESCORTS

CAD is unable to offer an escort for group travel bookings. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the hirer to provide a reliable and competent escort where required. An escort is desirable if children or other vulnerable passengers are to be carried. CAD reserves the right to refuse a booking if a suitable escort cannot be provided.

The escort is normally expected to meet the driver at an agreed pick-up point, or at the first passenger pick-up point.

The escort's responsibilities include:

- Dealing with the needs of passengers.
- Escorting passengers to and from the vehicle.
- Assisting the driver in planning the route if the job involves multiple pick-ups.
- Assisting the driver in the event of an accident, breakdown or emergency by looking after the passengers.

## REGISTER OF DRIVERS

To be included on the CAD register of drivers, the driver must:

- Be between the ages of 21 and 70.
- Be able to answer "NO" to the following questions:
  - a) Have you had any convictions within the last 5 years, or do you have any prosecutions pending?
  - b) Have you had an accident whilst driving a motor vehicle in the last 3 years?
  - c) Has any period of a ban from driving been operative within the last 5 years?
  - d) Has any company or underwriter ever declined, cancelled or refused to renew any motor insurance, or increased the policy excess, or imposed special conditions?
- No more than 3 points on their driving licence.

- Provide details about any medical condition, or medical history (whether physical or mental, including defective vision not corrected by glasses or hearing loss not corrected by a hearing aid) that may affect his/her ability to drive a minibus. In addition, details about any medication that is currently being taken, including dosage, should also be provided.
- Be approved and 'best practice' assessed to either Hertfordshire County Council minibus driving 'certificate of competence' or MiDAS standards.

A driver who has obtained the appropriate MiDAS certificate(s) will not normally be required to undertake a further driving assessment with CAD. However, CAD will still need to see the driving licence and MiDAS certificate of such a driver before s/he can drive a vehicle in the Community Wheels fleet.

When a driver reaches the age of 70, the DVLA automatically revokes a person's licence and entitlement to drive a minibus with 9-16 passengers is lost unless s/he passes a medical and gains an extension to their driving licence.

CAD reserves the right to remove a person from the *Register of Drivers* if:

- That person is involved in a serious own-fault accident.
- That person has more than one minor own-fault accident in any 12 month period.
- Is given more than 3 points on their licence.

In all such cases, CAD shall be the sole arbiter when determining whether an accident is serious or of a minor nature.

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## **WITH-DRIVER MINIBUS HIRE**

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### **DRIVERS**

Drivers volunteering for CAD carry a lot of responsibility and, should they feel it necessary, the final decision to cancel or vary the itinerary of a journey (e.g. because of bad weather) lies with them.

It is a delicate job to strike a balance between maintaining a volunteer's interest, and also ensuring that they are not taken for granted. It is, therefore, vital that groups making use of this service do not make unreasonable requests of the volunteer. For example, a group should not request a CAD driver to pick up more than the agreed number of passengers, add another destination to the route or act as an escort such as escorting a wheelchair user from the minibus into a venue. A CAD driver reserves the right to refuse a request in these circumstances.

**Document updated March 2017**  
**All information correct to that date**