

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 06 March 2025
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Environment and Regeneration
Report Title:	Funding and Delivery of the Greenlinks Community Transport Service
Purpose of Report:	To agree the continuation of Sustainable Transport Planning Contributions (Section 106 funding) for the Greenlinks Community Transport Service until 31st March 2026 if alternative funding sources cannot be found
Report Owner:	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Places
Responsible Officer:	Miles Punter – Director of Environment and Housing
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Committee Reports Operational Manager – Accountancy – Gemma Jones Senior Planner, Development Contributions (S106) – Lucy Butler
Policy Framework:	This Report is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet
Executive Summary:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenlinks is a Demand Responsive Transport Service (DRT) which has been operational in the Vale of Glamorgan for 13 years. The service is operated using permits issued by Sections 19 and 22 of the Transport Act 1985. The Service forms part of the Council’s provision of public transport throughout the Vale of Glamorgan providing transport for those who have no access to local public or private transport or those who are unable to access public transport due to physical or mental abilities. This Report provides Cabinet with an update on the delivery of the Greenlinks Service and the proposal to continue to fund the service until 31st March 2026 with Section 106 sustainable transport contributions unless alternative funding sources can be found. The Report also informs of other types of funding that will be explored to fund the service longer term which will be reported to Cabinet later in 2025. 	

Recommendations

- 1.** That the Greenlinks Community Transport Service continues to be funded by Section 106 Sustainable Transport Contributions until March 2026 should other sources of funding not be available.
- 2.** That should the Section 106 contributions be required, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Places in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Equalities and Regulatory Services and Head of Sustainable Development, be granted delegated authority to agree the sources of funding, in instances where use of that funding for Greenlinks would be consistent with the terms of the Section 106 agreement.
- 3.** That a further report is presented to Cabinet later in 2025 once other sources of funding to run the service and potentially purchase a new replacement electric minibus have been explored.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 1.** To continue to provide a flexible means of passenger transport for those who cannot easily access other forms of public transport in a cost effective and reliable manner as part of the local bus network across the Vale of Glamorgan.
- 2.** To ensure Section 106 sustainable transport contributions, if required, can be allocated to the Greenlinks budget in a timely manner.
- 3.** To allow other sources of funding such as the Shared Prosperity Fund and Welsh Government grant to be considered to fund the service longer term and to assist in the purchase of a replacement vehicle.

1. Background

- 1.1** Greenlinks is a Demand Responsive Transport Service (DRT) which has been operational in the Vale of Glamorgan for 13 years. The service is operated using permits issued by Sections 19 of the Transport Act 1985 and can also operate under Section 22 permits.
- 1.2** The Service forms part of the Council's provision of public transport throughout the Vale of Glamorgan to assist with providing transport for those who have no access to local public or private transport or those who are unable to access public transport due to physical or mental abilities.
- 1.3** The Greenlinks service generally operates between 9:00 and 16.00, Monday to Friday; however, it is also available to hire in the evenings and weekends for group members.

- 1.4 Cash payments for the service are made to the driver on the vehicle. However, section 22 services allow passengers to use their concessionary bus passes free of charge.
- 1.5 The service provides transport for health appointments, shopping, visiting relatives in care homes and accessing local community clubs to name but a few.
- 1.6 The Service currently operates using one paid driver, 12 volunteer drivers and two office staff. Volunteers tend to offer their services 1 to 2 days a week. On average this means we are able to offer 2 to 3 vehicles each weekday.
- 1.7 The Greenlinks fleet contains 7 vehicles: two 12 seaters, two 9 seaters, 1 caddy and 2 electric vehicles. An additional caddy is used by Dinas Powys Voluntary Concern, all of which are accessible.
- 1.8 Members of the scheme make a request for transport up until midday the working day before they wish to travel. Requests are then considered and schedules drawn up based on the vehicles and drivers available with the aim of accommodating as many passengers as possible.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 The scheme currently has 2118 individual members and 133 groups.
- 2.2 Since March 2023, 224 new members have joined the scheme.
- 2.3 In 2023/24 Greenlinks facilitated 4,870 passenger journeys.
- 2.4 Between April and December 2024, 3786 passenger journeys were undertaken. It is forecast that 5000 passenger journeys will be undertaken in 2024/2025 which is showing an upward trend in the use of service but is still some way off the 10,000 plus that were undertaken prior to the pandemic.
- 2.5 Between April and December 2024 the service received 2258 transport requests and was successful in accommodating 1835 of these. There were 423 requests that could not be accommodated either due to lack of available drivers or the service not being in or going to the area requested on a specific day. In addition to this Greenlinks has also accommodated 20 group bookings for:

Age Cymru - Barry Nordic Walkers
Barry Island Lamplighter Orchestra
Barry Womens Institute
Golau Caredig Residents Association
Innovative Trust
Llantwit Major & Cowbridge Lions

Rhose Bowling Club
St Illtyd Primary School
Vale Plus
Wick Pensioners Group

2.6 Funding

Greenlinks is currently funded by developer Section 106 sustainable transport contributions.

From April to December 2024 the cost of running the services was:

	£
Staff (office and paid driver)	76,181.06
Vehicles (maintenance and fuel)	22,338.63
Promotion	587.00
Drivers (subsistence claims and training)	3,053.74
Office Purchases	376.00
Total	102,535.86

Between April and December 2024 the funding was made up of:

	£
Membership Fees	1,460
Fares	4,353
Bus Service Support Grant (one off)	10,383
Section 106 contributions	56,493
Total	72,689

It is forecast that another £60,000 of Section 106 funding, taking the total amount to £116,493, will be required for the service for the remainder of the 2024/25 financial year.

2.7 Funding April 2025 onwards

In addition to Section 106 contributions, other options for funding in the 2025/26 financial year are being considered.

A bid for Shared Prosperity funding is being submitted and investigations into use of Welsh Government grants such as Local Transport Fund and the and the Bus Network Grant are being investigated for capital and revenue support. The intention being if other sources are made available the S106 contributions can be used on other sustainable transport schemes/projects.

Should Section 106 sustainable transport funding be required the following areas have contributions that could be used:

Cowbridge
Barry
St. Nicholas
Sully
Penarth
Wenvoe

These areas all have bus services that are funded from Council or Welsh Government grant budgets.

2.8 Greenlinks and the Local Bus Network

How Greenlinks is funded needs to be considered in conjunction with the rest of the local bus network and not as a stand along service.

Currently the local bus network is funded annually with:

	£
Council budget	470,000
Bus Service Support Grant (WG)	380,490
Bus Network Grant (WG)	2,104,245
Section 106 contributions -	116,493
	3,071,228

The total cost of the current bus network is £3,071,228. The Greenlinks proportion of the total spend is 3.7%.

The purpose of the Bus Network Grant, created by Welsh Government in 2024, is to ensure the current local bus network remains in its existing form which will allow for an easier transition to Franchising in 2029. Greenlinks and other Community Transport operators are considered vital to the future franchised network.

2.9 Transport Officer recruitment

In September 2021 the officer responsible for managing the Greenlinks service moved over to the Fleet and Vehicle maintenance department. This left a void with the Transport Officer post advertised frequently from this time but unfortunately no applications were received until March 2024.

This meant the service was without a lead officer for a significant period and operated in a limited way with the focus being on providing passenger journeys. This meant promotion of the service, driver recruitment campaigns, reinstatement of Section 22 services and attempts to modernise the service could not happen.

Since May 2024, a Transport Officer with responsibility for the management of the Greenlinks service has been in post and the service is once again operating in a progressive way.

2.10 Promotion of the service

Since May 2024 promotion of the service has been at the forefront of the lead officer's role.

The service has been promoted via the social media channels of:

- Community Hubs – Town Councils / Community Councils
- Libraries
- Vale Village hubs
- Vale Village email groups
- Dementia Friendly
- Y Galon Heart of the Community
- Cardiff and Vale Action for Mental Health and hospices
- Memory Jar
- Glamorgan Voluntary Service

Promotion of the service at events including:

- Dementia Friendly – Cowbridge Town Hall
- Green Libraries Week – Barry Library
- Green Libraries Week – Penarth Library
- Green Libraries Week – Llantwit Major
- Vale 50+ Forum – Civic Offices
- Memory Jar – Cowbridge

Forthcoming events that the Transport Officer will be attending:

- CT24 – The Voice of the Passenger (November 2024)
- Community Transport and Bus Reform (December 2024)
- Home Instead Memory Café - Penarth (January 2025)
- Home Instead Barry over 50's – Barry (January 2025)
- Big Volunteering Fayre (January 2025)
- Home Instead Llandough over 50's – Llandough (February 2025)
- V50+SF Transport Focus Group – Civic Offices, Barry (February 2025)
- Vale 50+ Strategy 'have your say' (March 2025)

Paper advertising has been undertaken in The Glamorgan Star newspaper and Wenvoe What's on.

In addition, advertisements have been going out daily on Bro Radio. This started in August 2024 which supports the growth in membership.

A refreshed Greenlinks leaflet (appendix 1) has been circulated to locations such as doctor's surgeries / libraries / village hubs throughout the Vale in the new year.

2.11 Driver recruitment

Following the renewed promotional campaign the number of drivers has increased from 6 to 12 in the past 9 months. Recruitment of drivers is a continual process and to ensure Greenlinks remains sustainable the service does require more volunteers.

A new driver recruitment leaflet has been produced (appendix 2) and has been distributed at forthcoming events and other locations such as doctor surgeries, libraries, shopping centres, community halls and other venues.

As part of the funding application for Shared Prosperity a request to fund additional driver has been submitted. Should this bid be successful this will give greater scope to increase the transport offer in the rural Vale and accommodate far more passenger journeys.

2.12 Electric vehicles

As part of the Council's Project Zero commitment, in addition to the existing fleet, Cardiff Capital Region donated two electric vehicles to the Greenlinks Service. The vehicles were previously used as part of a "try before you buy" e-taxi scheme. These vehicles will replace two diesel fuelled vehicles in 2025, streamlining the fleet.

2.13 Membership Survey

A survey has been sent out to all existing Greenlinks members requesting feedback on what they would like to see from the service (appendix 3). The surveys were sent out to all members and were also available in vehicles. The results are currently being collated to inform us what members want to see improved. We are also going to treat this as a data cleansing exercise to update our current membership database which has been in place since 2013.

2.14 G1 Service

The service will be reintroduced on a part time basis (2 days per week – Thursday and Friday) We will be considering the survey results and taking a decision on whether the days of operation change or additional days are added.

The G1 leaflet is currently being refreshed in order to promote the service and will be distributed to locations where the service operates (attached as appendix 4 is the previous G1 leaflet)

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

Long Term

- 3.1** The Greenlinks Transport Service has been operational for over 13 years, and although there has been a disruption in the service, the service is growing again. Due to the nature of the Service it continues to require financial support to deliver an accessible service to residents of the Vale. Providing a Service that allows residents to live in their own homes for longer and in more rural areas of the Vale is a longer-term benefit to the Council and its residents.
- 3.2** The Greenlinks service can assist in filling the gaps in the public transport network.

Prevention

- 3.3** The provision of a demand responsive transport service assists in the reduction of unnecessary mileage and provides a different, more sustainable and viable mode of public transport.
- 3.4** Greenlinks may be able to assist in the prevention of gaps within the local transport network.

Integration

- 3.5** The Greenlinks Service forms an integral part of the Council's public transportation plan ensuring that all areas of the Vale of Glamorgan has access to public transport where it is not viable to operate a more traditional 'timetabled' service. The Service also improves access for those with impaired mobility.
- 3.6** The 'All Wales Transport Strategy', has community transport as a key component of the Transport Network, particularly linking in with other modes of transport.

Collaboration

- 3.7** The continued development of the Greenlinks Service is achieved in collaboration with other CT operators within the Vale to provide the greatest coverage and opportunities for the residents of the Vale to access public transport.

Involvement

- 3.8** As the Greenlinks Service is demand responsive, it automatically responds to and is aware of the needs of the Greenlinks members catering where possible for the

greatest demand. It will continue to evolve following involvement from members.

- 3.9** The Greenlinks service is operated by several volunteer drivers whose involvement greatly benefits the local communities.

Well-being Goals

- 3.10** The Council continues to support the running of the Greenlinks Community Transport service to transport passengers in and around the Vale, including areas without local bus services and to ensure the service is operated in line with accessibility regulations.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** The Council continue to encourage the use of public transport services and/or active travel. The aim being to reduce individual car journeys in as many areas as possible thus reducing carbon emissions throughout the Vale. Greenlinks supports this aim by providing access to public transport in areas where traditional public transport is not viable.
- 4.2** The addition of two electric vehicles into the Greenlinks fleet is contributing to the Council's Project Zero campaign and will assist in trying to reach net-zero carbon by 2030.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** The funding required for delivering the Greenlinks service for the 2024/25 financial year is predicted to be in the region of £120k and is met from the overall annual budget of £3,071,228.
- 5.2** Section 106 sustainable transport developer contributions currently fund the Greenlinks service. The amount required is offset by membership fees and fares as well as a one-off annual Bus Services Support Grant (BSSG) payment.

Employment

- 5.3** The Service is administered with two members of office staff, one paid driver and a number of volunteer drivers. Recruitment of volunteer drivers is a continual process, working with partners such as Glamorgan Voluntary Services (GVS) and Job Centres.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.4** The running and maintenance of the vehicles will continue to comply with legislation as identified in the terms and conditions of the Section 19 and Section 22 permits and Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) requirements for operating a public service vehicle. This involves daily visual checks on the vehicles completed by drivers ensuring the vehicle is fit for purpose, eight weekly safety checks, services and MOT's as required.
- 5.5** The Greenlinks service offers fully accessible vehicles with most services running door to door meaning residents can travel easily regardless of any mobility impairments.
- 5.6** The Greenlinks service supports the Council's vision of a well organised transport network which helps to increase mobility and accessibility.
- 5.7** All drivers, both paid and volunteer, as part of the recruitment process, undertake an enhanced DBS check. This is necessary for the role as they regularly come into contact with young people and vulnerable members of society.

6. Background Papers

None



Greenlinks Community Transport is a Membership Scheme that offers accessible transport for local people living in the Vale of Glamorgan and surrounding areas. The service operates between the hours of 8.30am - 4.30pm Monday - Friday* (excluding bank holidays) and offers an affordable door to door service available to all individuals, groups, clubs, associations and more. Our vehicles are easily accessible and suitable for wheelchair users.

Whether you wish to meet up with friends, attend a community group, hair appointment, medical appointment etc our friendly experienced drivers are on hand to take you anywhere within the Vale of Glamorgan and are always willing to give a helping hand.

Members of the scheme can make a request for transport up until midday the working day before they wish to travel. Requests are then considered and schedules drawn up based on the vehicles and drivers available with the aim of accommodating as many passengers as possible.

Passengers requesting the service will share the vehicle with other pre-booked passengers who are travelling to the same or nearby destination.

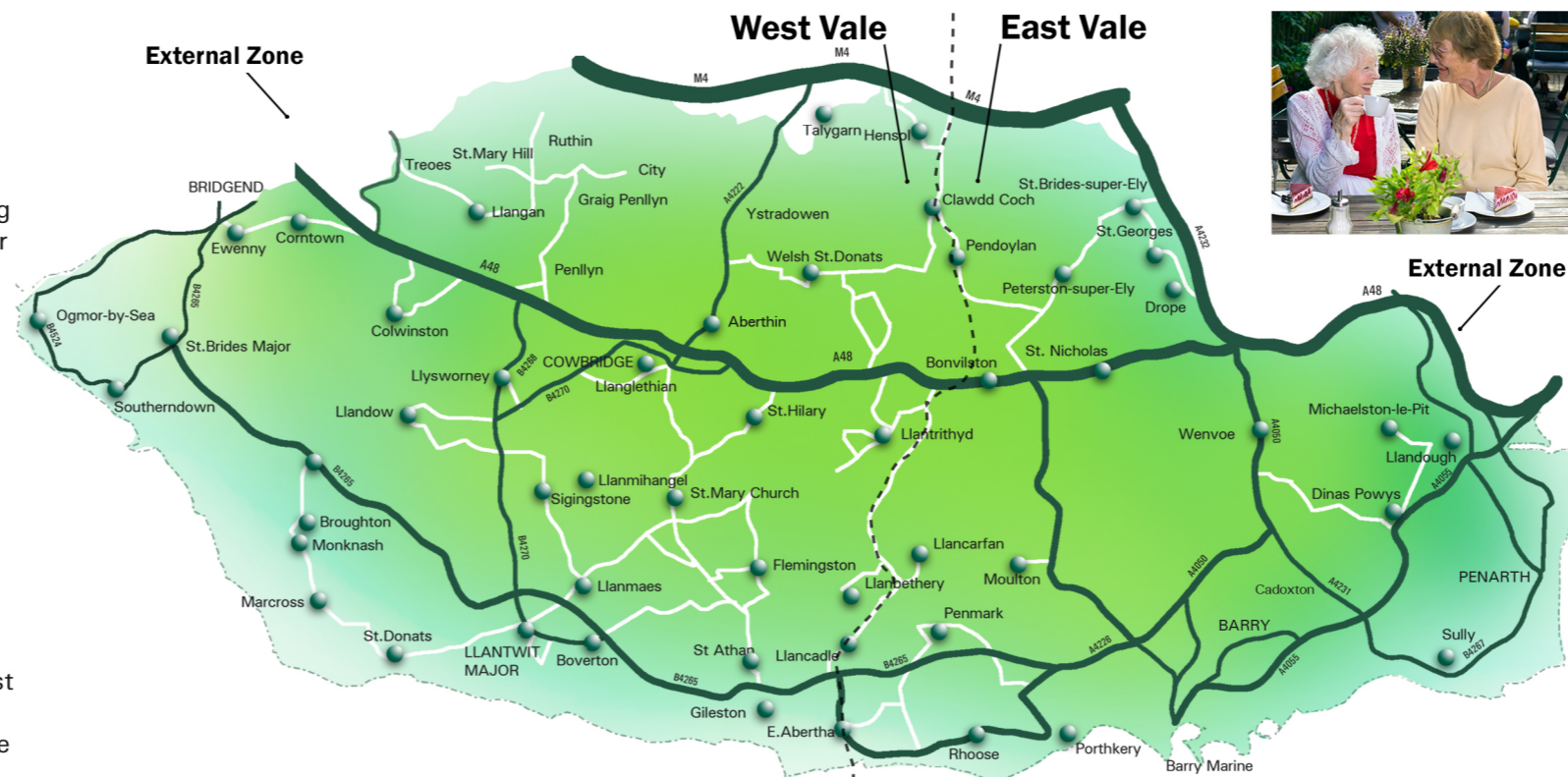
For more information contact the Greenlinks team on freephone: **0800 294 1113**

Available Fleet:

- 2 X 12 seater buses
- 2 X 9 seater buses
- 3 caddy's
- 2 X EV (electric vehicle) caddy's.

All vehicles are wheelchair adapted with accessible ramps.

*Also available to groups evenings and weekends.



- Available for:**
- Shopping
 - Social Trips
 - Days Out
 - Community groups and more

Available to:
(Non profit making organisations only)

- Individuals or Groups
- Societies
- Clubs

Membership is £6.00

with a maximum fee of only **£6.00** return for each journey taken thereafter.

Cheques made payable to Vale of Glamorgan Council. We also accept cash and card payments.

FREE phone:
0800 294 1113



"Greenlinks is my lifeline. I wouldn't be able to stay living in my area if it wasn't for Greenlinks, I've used them for 10 years. Fantastic door to door service" ... Jaqueline, Colwinston

I have been using Greenlinks for 15 years on a regular basis and would be lost without them. They have never let me down, especially recently when I have needed them for urgent hospital appointments. They always go above and beyond the call of duty. Keep up the good work all because we need you" ... Marie, Rhoose

Some of the comments we have received from our satisfied customers

Number of zones

The Fare Zones Map shows the East and West Vale and External Zones that apply.

Charges for travel within or across zones.

No. of zones	Single	Return
1	£2.50	£3.50
x 2	£3.50	£5
x 3	£5	£6

Community Transport Application Form

Name

Address

.....Postcode

Date of birth /..... /.....

Tel.....

Emergency Contact Name.....

Tel

Are you:

Registered disabled [] Visually impaired []

Registered carer [] Wheelchair user []

Membership Fee £6.00

Cheques / postal orders should be made payable to the Vale of Glamorgan Council

Signed.....

Date.....

Please return your completed application form to
Community Transport Officer,
The Alps Depot, Quarry Road,
Wenvoe CF5 6AA



Gwirfoddoli Volunteer



VALE OF GLAMORGAN



greenlinks
community transport
cludiant cymunedol

I yrru i ni heddiw! to drive for us today!

Mae Greenlinks Community Transport yn cynnig gwasanaeth teithio cynunedol cyfeillgar, proffesiynol a rhad i unigolion a grwpiau cymunedol ym Mro Morgannwg.

Sut alla i gymryd rhan?

Os ydych yn mwynhau gyrru ac am fod yn rhan o'ch cymuned leol, yna gallai fod gennych ddi-ddordeb mewn dod yn yrrwr gwirfoddol Greenlinks. I gymryd rhan rhaid i chi:

- fod yn 21 oed neu'n hŷn;
- fod â thrywydded yrru lawn y DU ers o leiaf 2 flynedd;
- fod ar gael am shiftt hyblyg o 4 awr neu fwy.

I ddysgu mwy am wirfoddoli neu i gael pecyn cais:

Greenlinks Community Transport provides a friendly, professional community travel service at a low cost to individual and community groups within the Vale of Glamorgan.

How can you get involved?

If you enjoy driving and want to get involved in your local community, then you may be interested in becoming a Greenlinks volunteer driver. To get involved you must be able to fulfil the following criteria:

- be 21 years of age or over;
- have held a full UK driving licence for at least 2 years;
- be available for a flexible shift of 4 hours and over.

To find out more about volunteering or to request an application pack:



CYCYLLTWCW Â NI AR:
CONTACT US ON:

0800 294 1113

Greenlinks@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Neu ewch i'r wefan:

Visit the website: www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/greenlinks

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“Have your say”

We are gathering feedback regarding our Greenlinks service and would be grateful if you could answer the questions below. Your feedback will let us know what we do well and what areas we need to improve on.

How often do you use the Greenlinks Service?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Fortnightly
- Monthly
- No longer use the service

If you no longer use the service please let us know why:

What area do you live in?

- Rural Vale
- Cowbridge
- Llantwit Major
- St Athan
- Barry
- Sully
- Penarth
- Dinas Powys

If not provided, please specify:

How easy do you find the process of requesting a journey?

Very easy

Moderate

Difficult

If difficult, please provide more information:

Are your requests dealt with in a timely manner?

Yes

No

If no, please provide more information:

How would you like to be notified if your journey request has been confirmed?

Telephone Call

Email

Text

If email please note the email address below / contact the Greenlinks team directly to update your details:

Are office staff friendly, helpful and patient at all times?

Yes

No

If no, please provide more information:

Are drivers friendly, helpful and patient at all times?

Yes

No

If no, please provide more information:

What are the main reasons for your journey requests?

Shopping

Medical

Event

Other

If other, please provide more information:

Which payment method would you prefer to use?

Invoice

Cash

Card

Are the vehicles clean?

Yes

No

How satisfied are you with the service provided?

Very satisfied

Room for improvement

If room for improvement, please provide more information:

Would you recommend Greenlinks to friends/family members?

Yes

No

If no, please provide more information:

G1 Service

The G1 service is a flexible bus service that will operate between 08:30 and 16:30 providing a link between St Athan, Cowbridge, Bridgend Town Centre and the surrounding villages. Welsh Concessionary Bus Pass Holders – travel for Free

Would you like to see the re-introduction of the Greenlinks G1 service?

Yes

No

What days would you use the service mostly if re-introduced?

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

How would you pay for the G1 service?

Concessionary Bus Pass

Pay a fare

Have you recently travelled in a Greenlinks Electric vehicle?

Yes

No

If yes, is the vehicle easily accessible and comfortable to travel in?

Yes

No

If no, please provide more information:

Any other comments:

If you would like to be removed from the Greenlinks database please contact:

0800 2941113

Emma Farnham – Manager of Greenlinks

emmfarnham@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey, we would be grateful if you would return your completed form by February 2025

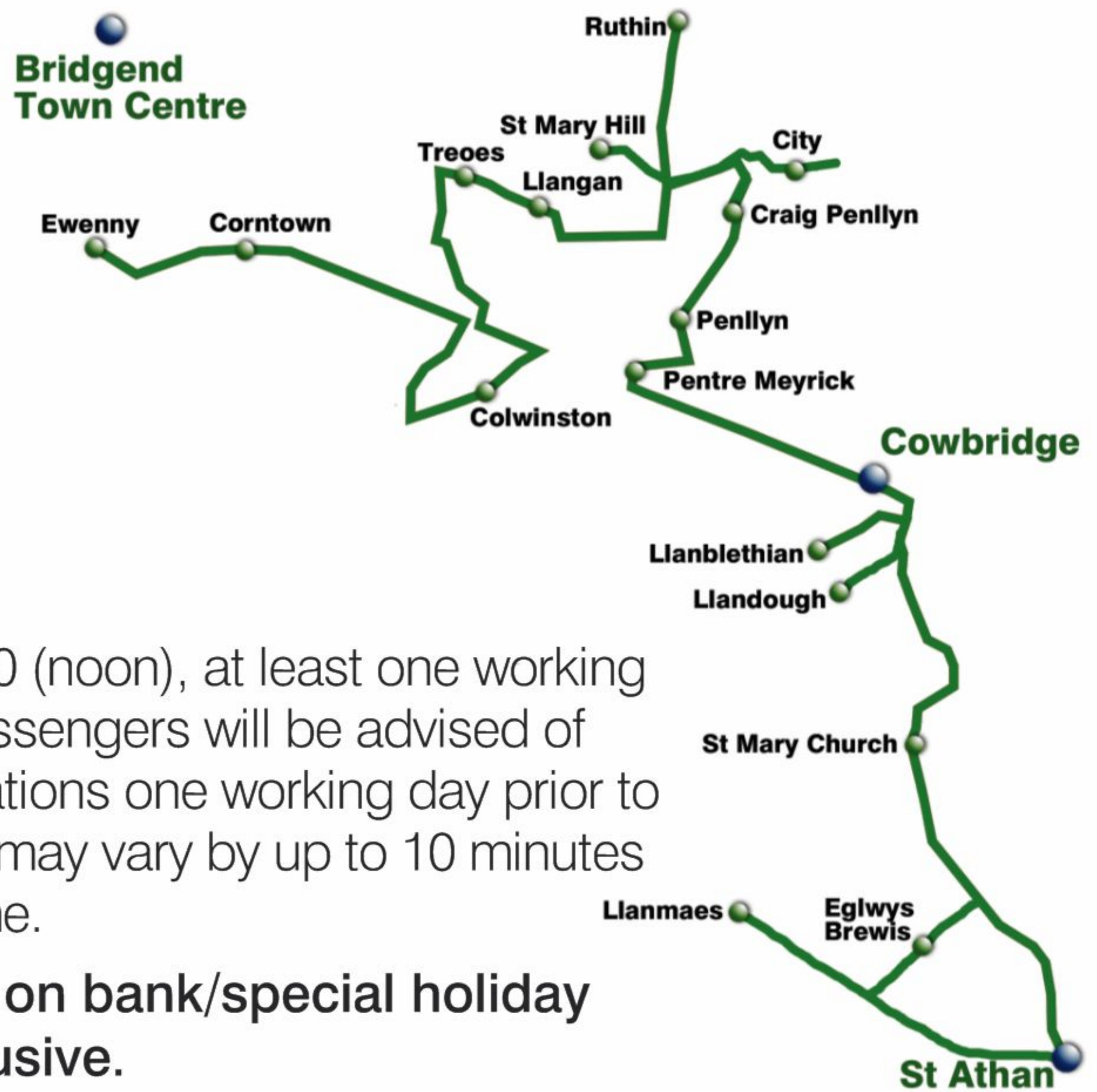
G1

A demand responsive flexible service from 26 May 2015

St Athan to Bridgend via Cowbridge and surrounding Villages



A flexible bus service will operate Monday to Friday between 08:30 and 17:15 and will provide a link between St Athan, Cowbridge, Bridgend Town Centre and the surrounding villages as identified on the map.



Requests must be received by 12:00 (noon), at least one working day before transport is required. Passengers will be advised of their pick up times from agreed locations one working day prior to travel. Please note the pick up time may vary by up to 10 minutes either side of the agreed pick up time.

The service will not be available on bank/special holiday or between 24 Dec to 2 Jan inclusive.

Fares on the G1 Service:

Within the Vale of Glamorgan

Adult Single £2	Return £3
Child Single £1	Return £1.50

To/from Bridgend

Adult Single £3	Return £4
Child Single £1.50	Return £2

Welsh Concessionary Pass Holders FREE
(information correct as of May 2015)

To request a seat on this service please call the freephone number

0800 294 1113

between the hours of
09:00 – 13:00
Monday to Friday.
(If no requests are received,
the service will not run).