

PRESS RELEASE

Transport Planning Society

**UK'S MOST POPULAR LOCAL
TRANSPORT PLANNING PROJECTS REVEALED**

**Judges praise schemes that put community engagement at the
centre of local decision making**

TWO community transport initiatives in Sevenoaks have been chosen as best reflecting what local people really want from transport schemes in the UK by a top panel of judges.

The Sevenoaks Town Partnership Vintage Bus Service and the Sevenoaks Route 8 Bus Service have been awarded top prize in the **Transport Planning Society's** inaugural People's Award for 2018.

Judges also praised as 'highly commended' the Loch Earn Railway Path, a previously non-existent off-road link between Comrie and St Fillans in Perthshire.

This year's finalists were:

- Cycle Centres in Broxtowe
- Hackney Community Parklet
- Jaguar Land Rover Solihull Bicycle User Group
- Loch Earn Railway Path (Highly commended)
- Sevenoaks Route 8 Bus Service (Winner)
- Sevenoaks Town Partnership Vintage Bus Service (Winner)

The People's Award, launched earlier this year, showcases transport planning initiatives that have made a significant difference to local people. The Transport Planning Society invited communities from across the UK to nominate projects that had put local engagement at the forefront in the planning and delivery of schemes.

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The winners were announced at the annual Transport Planning Day, hosted by the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) in London, which brought together transport planners and community groups for a discussion about best practice in community engagement in transport planning and what transport planners should look to in developing local schemes. Keynote speaker for the event was Lilian Greenwood MP, Chair of the Transport Select Committee, who delivered an evening lecture.

The competitive judging process was led by Stephen Joseph, a former Chief Executive of the Campaign for Better Transport. The panel looked at community schemes that had made a real difference to people's access to services, quality of life and wellbeing.

The **Sevenoaks Town Partnership Vintage Bus Service** was launched in 2011 as a partnership between Sevenoaks Town Council and the local community. Operating during the summer and now in its sixth year, it has helped contribute to a boon in visitor numbers to businesses in the town centre and the leading National Trust property at Knole. Such is the popularity of the service, local residents also use the bus route often, instead of travelling by car. Older people say they can now visit the town independently rather than waiting for a relative to collect them and take them shopping.

The introduction of the **Sevenoaks Route 8 Bus Service**, an orbital bus route linking Sevenoaks town centre to residential areas, has seen the town council providing free bus travel to young people aged 11 to 18. Older passengers say they find the bus a social experience meeting the same neighbours and conversing with the bus driver and helps sometimes with loneliness experiences. Attracting nearly 500 passengers per week, the bus operates six days per week, linking the two train stations, bus station, residential areas and town centre.

The **Loch Earn Railway Path** is a previously non-existent off-road link with Comrie (in the Strathearn region of Perthshire), which gives locals and visitors the option to travel actively between the villages, without accessing a dangerous trunk road. The path was championed by a group of community volunteers called the St Fillans Community Paths Group.

Lynda Addison OBE, Chair of the Transport Planning Society, said:

“The People's Award is a great platform for us to recognise that when good transport planning and strong community engagement combine, they deliver lasting benefit to society. These winners have made a genuine contribution to improving people's accessibility, quality of life and wellbeing and have made such a huge difference to their

local communities.

“Fundamentally, it is community involvement that makes good transport planning. In fact, delivering exemplary community engagement will make a good scheme great.”

Stephen Joseph, former Chief Executive of the Campaign for Better Transport and Chair of the judges, said:

“We received entries from communities across the country, and reaching a decision on the final winner was very difficult. Each nomination demonstrated that schemes, such as the eventual winners in Sevenoaks, that had been developed with the community had made a positive impact both to the local economy and to residents’ quality of life. This is incredibly important at a time when we must encourage a move away from car dependency.

“We’re delighted to be able to recognise their vision and their hard work.”

The People’s Award is part of the programme led by the Transport Planning Society with support from Arup, AECOM, PBA, now part of Stantec, Atkins (a member of the SNC Lavalin Group), Meridian, Steer and Systra. It culminates in the Transport Planning Day (13 November).

The Transport Planning Society was launched in 1997 as the professional body for transport planners in the UK. With over 1,400 members and 34 corporate members, the Society promotes best practice in transport planning and gives guidance, training and support to the profession.

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Notes to editors:

For further information about the Transport Planning Society and the People’s Award, please contact Jo Field at jo@jfgcomms.co.uk or 07788 131347.

Images of Transport Planning Day, and the winning and highly commended initiatives are available on request.

About the People’s Award judging panel

The judging panel was chaired by Stephen Joseph, former Chief Executive of Campaign for Better Transport. Other members of the judging panel included: Steve Quartermain, Chief Planner at Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; Tricia Hayes, Director

General for Roads, Motoring and Devolution in the Department of Transport; and Mary Parsons, Group Director – Placemaking and Regeneration at Places for People.