

TALYBONT ENERGY

COMMUNITY CAR SHARING

Country: Wales

OVERVIEW

Short description of the Good Practice Case:

Talybont Energy is a not-for-profit limited company that aims to reduce the Talybont community's energy consumption and to maximise the conversion of the community's energy consumption to renewable sources.

Talybont Energy has sponsored a community car sharing project since 2010, starting initially with two vehicles (one 100% electric vehicle and the other that runs on recycled vegetable oil). A tank was purchased to hold the recycled vegetable oil). The original electric vehicle was later replaced by a vehicle that can be configured as a van or a five-seater car. It is charged at its base using solar generated electricity.

Talybont Energy purchased the vehicles with the help of Brecon Beacons Sustainable Development Fund.

The scheme is run in Talybont-on-Usk in Powys, Wales. The area in which the scheme is operated is not defined. However, the three output areas that Talybont-on-Usk straddles (W00009770, W00002646 and W00002648) had a rural population (noting that these may encompass other villages) of 719 people according to 2011 Census data.

Talybont-on-Usk is located on the B4558 although clusters of residential dwellings are found on Station Road and other local unclassified roads.



Figure 1. Talybont, 2016. Eco Car Share Project.
Source: talybontenergy.files.wordpress.com

The B4558 runs between Cefn Brynich to the north and Crickhowell to the east. Talybont-on-Usk is a rural, picturesque village characterised by low density residential houses and a few public amenities such as a village shop, pubs and a restaurant. The village is currently served by two bus services: 43 and X43. The 43 runs approximately every two hours for a limited period of weekdays. The X43 runs twice a day on weekdays within the village.

Main aspect/issue addressed by the good practice

- Personal transport accounted for 40% of the rural carbon footprint.
- Nearly all households in Talybont owned a car.
- Somewhat limited public transport options.

Main objectives of the good practice

- Enable people to experience driving alternatively fuelled (electric and vegetable oil) vehicles without making a personal purchase.
- Make carbon savings in terms of replacement miles.
- Enable mobility while providing an alternative to households owning a second vehicle.
- To encourage other Green Valleys community groups to develop their own schemes and work towards having a larger pool of cars.
- The scheme has limited reach. At the time of reporting (2015), only five member households accounted for 91% of the car trips. However, 1 two-person household gave up running a second household car as a result of the scheme.

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

<i>Region</i>	<i>Target area</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Population density</i>
The village of Talybont-on-Usk	Unspecified. However, the target households are located in Talybont-on-Usk village and the scattered population of nearby settlements.	719 (according to 2011 Census)	0.1 per hectare or 9.5 persons per sq. km.

Other

The village of Talybont-on-Usk is situated within Brecon Beacons National Park. It is located approximately 22.5 km west of Abergavenny and approximately 23 km north of Merthyr Tydfil town.

Given its location in the national park, Talybont-on-Usk attracts tourists and visitors who engage in activities such as walking, cycling and canoeing.



Photo from Talybont-on-Usk Energy

Target user groups and needs

The share of elderly people (65 years or older) in the identified output areas is 22.1%. However, Talybont Energy specifies that anyone living in the local Talybont area, over the age of 24 years, is eligible to join the car sharing scheme. Approximately 75.1% of people in the identified area are over 24 years of age.

The main needs and requirements of people living in the area is the need for mobility in light of limited public transport. Access to private vehicles is high and Talybont Energy seek to encourage people to consider alternative means of mobility.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE

Timeframe(s)

The Talybont-on-Usk car sharing project was established in 2010. However, Talybont Energy has a wider remit, not just limited to transport, to reduce the community's energy consumption and where possible, to source energy from renewable sources.

Bodies involved

- Talybont Energy
- Brecon Beacons Sustainable Development Fund
- Henderson Hall (community hall which provides space for parking).

Mobility services provided/addressed

- Two car sharing vehicles which use alternative fuel (electric and vegetable oil), which is available to eligible individuals for hire.
- The target area is households in Talybont-on-Usk.
- Members pay for use of the vehicles online or via the village Post Office. The number of staff involved in running the scheme is unknown. However, it has mainly relied on voluntary effort.
- It is understood that provided the service is booked, the vehicles can be used at any time.
- Users must travel to the village's community centre, Henderson Hall, to pick up and return the vehicle.
- In 2013, the scheme had 15 member households. However, fewer households account for the significant majority of vehicle usage.

Legal Framework

Talybont Energy is a not-for-profit limited company and so it is expected that the main legislative framework for the company as a whole is related to this type of operation.

It is understood that a car sharing scheme can operate using normal car insurance provided that it is not profit making.

All vehicles on UK roads must have an up-to-date Vehicle Registration document which specifies who the Registered Keeper of the vehicle is.

Therefore, within the UK, car sharing vehicles must have one person who acts as the keeper of each vehicle. It is noted that the Registered Keeper is not necessarily the legal owner of the vehicle.

Cost and Financing sources

The main financing sources are:

- Brecon Beacons Sustainable Development Fund
- User membership and user charges (£25/annum membership. £18/day or £0.18/ mile for the vegetable oil fuelled vehicle. £2.50/hour or £0.05/ mile for the electric vehicle).

Organizational set-up

- Talybont Energy is a not-for-profit limited company.
- The directors are all members of the local community and volunteer their time. Talybont Energy has almost 100 full or associate members who support the work of the group and get involved in various projects.
- The board comprises seven directors, one secretary and one treasurer.

Supporting technologies

- Talybont Energy is currently registered with Chargemaster / Polar, Ecotricity and Charge our Car / SourceWest to allow the electric vehicle to be charged away from base. At base, the electric vehicle uses solar power.
- Talybont Energy uses an online appointment scheduling service, SuperSaaS, to digitise convenient vehicle booking. SuperSaaS is an independent entity which was not set up by Talybont Energy.

INNOVATION ASPECTS

ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Talybont Energy is run by a team of local volunteers. It is a community driven and focused initiative

LEVEL OF PUBLIC SECTOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Talybont Energy is a not-for-profit company that received funding from the Brecon Beacons Sustainable Development Fund to allow for purchase of the vehicles. Details on the funding of the installation of solar panels at the vehicle base is unknown. It is not clear if the car sharing scheme is self-sustaining.

INTERCONNECTIONS BETWEEN SHARED AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES

The car sharing scheme is available to support mobility needs and to encourage households to consider alternatively fuelled vehicles. However, it is not explicitly stated that the main aim is to act as an interconnection with public transport.

ICT CONNECTIONS AND IMPACTS OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS IMPLEMENTED

N/A

OTHER (E.G. SOCIAL INNOVATION, ETC.)

This practice is a clear case of community engagement and social action to enable sustainable mobility.

ASSESSMENT

Ridership and other key metrics/results (through key-indicators, where applicable)

This is a local initiative that relies on the voluntary efforts of people living in Talybont-on-Usk. It is a good example of community driven efforts and engagement. It appears that the scheme has been popular. However, it is not clear that the scheme is yet profitable or self-sustaining. However, it is understood that the company owns and manages a community hydro scheme in the national park and that generated revenue is used to pay for the vehicles.

It is a very small, community focused scheme which could be replicated elsewhere. However, importantly, it requires the efforts and time of volunteers, access to funding in order to purchase vehicles and agreed space reservation to act as the base for the vehicles. Much of this work relies on goodwill.

The initiative has not expanded. However, it is aspiration of Talybont Energy to encourage other Green Valleys community groups to develop their own car sharing schemes so that they can build towards a larger pool of cars across the area.

Good Governance

The car sharing scheme is an initiative of the company Talybont Energy, which focuses more widely on reducing the local community's energy consumption and where possible, converting energy consumption to renewable sources. The car sharing scheme is just one of several measures that Talybont has undertaken.

Talybont Energy is officially registered as a not-for-profit limited company and has several directors, a treasurer and a secretary. The company's accounts are published by Companies House, the government's executive agency and registrar of companies.

The company is reliant on volunteers which is suitable for its small size and serving the needs of its small, local community.

Success factors/strengths

The initiative is driven by locals and tailored towards local needs. The people running Talybont Energy and the car sharing service understand the requirements of their local population.

The car sharing service is not free of charge, but is relatively low cost to encourage use of the scheme. The service introduces car sharing to households in an area which is likely to have been overlooked by a conventional, commercial car sharing operator.

The car sharing operation has given some of the Talybont Energy Directors the experience to run a separate social enterprise called Eco Travel Network, which is a small scale, Renault Twizy, car hire scheme. This service is aimed at visitors and are hired out through member businesses such as holiday cottages, hotels, boat hire operators, etc.

Difficulties encountered/weakness

- Dependency on volunteer work.
- Dependency on public funding, which is not guaranteed.
- Dependency on a small number of households that account for the majority of vehicle bookings.

FEATURES THAT ARE CONSIDERED TO BE GOOD PRACTICE (LESSON(S) LEARNT)

Talybont Energy has included its car sharing scheme as part of its wider efforts to reduce local energy consumption and source energy from renewable sources where possible.

The scheme is a good example of a grassroots level initiative that is driven by the local community for the local residential population. This encourages a greater element of ownership among locals to keep the initiative going.

REFERENCES FOR FURTHER DETAILS

Contact of the operator and of relevant stakeholders

Organization: Talybont-on-Usk Energy

Person contact: Barbara Ann Anglezarke – Company Secretary

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Key references

- <https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/company/05047317>
- www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/data_finder
- www.brookes.ac.uk/uploadedFiles/Faculty_of_Technology,_Design_and_Environment/School_of_Engineering,_Computing_and_Mathematics/Pagebuilder_pages/ECM/Research/Engineering/Low_Carbon_Vehicles/REPUTE-Guide-EN.pdf
- https://como.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Running-an-Informal-Car-Club_Carplus-Best-Practice-Guidance_May-2012.pdf

Websites

- <https://talybontenergy.co.uk>