



## FAQ for Volunteer Drivers

Thank you for your interest in volunteering as a driver for The Communi-Tea Circle. Our drivers do so much more than provide a lift – you're often the first friendly face our members see on the day. We're pleased to enclose some guidelines below, and we're on hand to support in any way we can, so please let us know how we can help.

### What do I need to become a volunteer driver?

You'll need a full driving licence and to be legally entitled to drive the vehicle you're using, which must be legal and road safe. You'll also need a current, valid DBS certificate and to be able to provide two personal references. Please keep the Trustees updated about any endorsements on your licence, or any illness or disability that may affect your driving, so that reasonable adjustments can be made where possible.

### Will my documents be checked?

Yes – we have a duty of care to ensure the car you're driving is safe and legal when transporting our members. Driving licences, insurance, tax and DBS checks are reviewed annually; MOT certificates are checked annually on cars older than 4 years; and service documents are checked if deemed necessary.

### Do I need to tell my insurance company?

Yes. Please inform your insurer that you're using your car for voluntary work – not business – and that you're not paid for the activity. A sample letter is provided in the Volunteer Drivers Information Sheet. In most cases your premium won't be affected, and we'd encourage you to challenge any proposed increase.

### How do I know when the events are held?

We normally send out calendar invites for the events each quarter, although these only act as a placeholder for your calendar. We always get in touch before each event to check availability.

### How do I stay safe while driving?

Cars must have front and rear seatbelts and be worn at all times by the driver and all passengers. Please follow speed limits and the Highway Code, and we advise that smoking is not permitted in the vehicle while transport is being provided. Please keep doors locked and valuables out of sight, carry a mobile phone for emergencies, and never pick up hitchhikers.

### What happens before each event?

One of our coordinators will send out a voting poll on WhatsApp about 5–7 days in advance of each event date. Simply add your availability, and we'll assign 2–3 members per driver to create the most efficient journeys for all. Member allocations will be sent to you via email, and may include a couple of standby members should there be space to accommodate them.

Typically, the poll will include:

- A.** I can drive to and from the event
- B.** I can only drive to the event
- C.** I can only collect from the event
- D.** I am not available

Please call the members 3–5 days in advance of the event date to ask if they can attend. Always introduce yourself clearly as 'Name from The Communi-Tea Circle.'

You may be asked to gather a menu pre-order for a pub or restaurant event. Once you've received their RSVP, please reply to the original email. Our coordinators will then liaise with the venue or host to confirm final numbers.

### **What should I do on event day?**

Please call your members to confirm they're still able to attend. Most are excited to go out and will be ready well before you arrive, so do let them know if you're delayed. Depending on their mobility, you may need to help them to and from the car – please allow time for this, and we'll tell you in advance if anyone has a walking aid or difficulty with their vision. We advise against entering members' homes, but please make sure they've locked up and have their keys somewhere safe. And don't forget to wear your CTC-branded polo shirt so it's easy to see who you're representing!

### **What is my role at the event?**

Primarily, we're there to ensure members get to and from home and the venue safely. We suggest meeting them at their front door and offering an arm for support to your car.

Once you arrive at the venue, introduce them to the host, point out the WC, and ensure they are seated comfortably.

If you're staying for the event, please offer your support to the host. It's a social occasion, so it's also great if you can chat with the members and hosts and, space permitting, join them at the table. You may also be asked to help with the raffle, either selling tickets or folding them ready to be picked. For those choosing not to stay, we kindly ask you to return 10–15 minutes before the end of the event.

### **Will I be fed?**

Home-hosted events: Soft drinks, tea and coffee are usually provided by the hosts. Food is prepared for the members, and whilst many hosts will prepare enough for volunteers to eat too, please don't rely on being fed.

Venue events: Members and volunteers are encouraged to eat together, and we ask all diners to contribute £15 towards the bill – The Communi-Tea Circle will cover any additional costs. Payment is accepted by cash or card.

### **Who do I contact with questions?**

For any questions or issues on the day, please call us on **0300 102 2252**. For anything else, you can contact us at **[contact@communi-teacircle.org](mailto:contact@communi-teacircle.org)**.

**Thank you for being a valued volunteer – we hope you find it as rewarding as our members do.**