

# The Oxfordshire Comet - Terms & Conditions of Use

## Membership

Anyone who does not have 'suitable access to public transport' may register and use the service. This may include a lack of appropriate provision for your intended journey, mobility issues or specific vulnerabilities which make it hard for you to use public transport. To use the service you must register and become a member. There is a one off membership fee of £3 to cover admin fees and the issuing of a membership card. This service is not eligible for concessionary fares and, as a result, you will not be allowed to use a bus pass to waiver any charges.

## Prices

Individuals will be charged based on the distance that they travel once in the vehicle. We will always calculate the distance using the shortest reasonable route, rounding up or down to the nearest whole mile. You will be told the price up front and we will take the payment before you travel over the phone as we cannot collect cash on the vehicle. You will be required to credit your account, the value of which will then be converted into miles. The amount of these miles will depend on the type of travel you ask for, 'exclusive use' or 'shared travel'. When topping up your account please have your debit or credit card details ready.

The driver may on the day take you a quicker/longer route but there will be no change to the up- front price. If the call out is more than 10 miles from one of our depots then you will be charged a minimum cost of 5 miles or the length of the journey itself, whichever is the greater of the two. If you wish to leave the scheme at any time we will arrange to refund any balance on your account.

Organisations will be charged based on a special reduced hourly rate for the service. If you want us to set up a regular route for you then please contact us and we will quote for the work.

We reserve the right to terminate membership at any time and refund your account balance. We reserve the right to refuse to undertake any journey that does not fit the remit of the service or cannot be undertaken safely. We reserve the right to review and alter prices, any credit held by us at that point will of course be honored on the previous terms.

## Making a booking

The Comet operates between 10:15am and 2.30pm. Customers can call between 9am-4:30pm to make a booking. Bookings are taken on a first come first served

basis and must be made by midday the day before travel is required for 'shared travel'.

When making a booking for the 'shared travel' service you can request the day you wish to travel, however, as you may be sharing the journey with other passengers, the time of your pick up will be confirmed the day prior to travel (once the route has been planned). Your journey could be scheduled at any time during the operating hours.

When booking the 'exclusive use'; service you can request both the day and specific times for your journey.

If we do not have any availability for the day you wish to travel, we will try to support you to find another date that meets your needs.

## **Arrival time**

Please be ready up to 10 minutes before your pick up time. If you are returning back with us later in the day then please be at your pick up point on time as the driver will only be able to wait for 10 minutes past the allotted time.

## **Getting help from the driver**

Our drivers are happy to help you get to and from the minibus and to/from your house. This is based on the driver being able to collect and return you safely to your home, if you know of any issues we need to be aware of then please make sure you tell us in advance or we may not be able to take you on the service. If you use a wheelchair then you will need ramp access at your home and a flat paved surface without high steps.

Our drivers can't help you with other tasks once in your home, if you need home help, please contact your local authority's social services department.

## **What you can bring**

At driver's discretion, normally up to 3 average-sized bags of shopping or similar as our minibuses have limited storage space. If you have mobility issues or other relevant support needs the driver will be able to help you with your shopping to and from your home. You can also bring any equipment to assist you with walking including assistance dogs, please let us know when booking. If bringing a dog it must at all times be on a leash and under control and must sit/lie at your feet during the journey.

## **Seatbelts**

To ensure your safety, we operate a 'no belt no trip' policy and seatbelts must be worn at all times by all users. Users in wheelchairs will need to either transfer to a seat or have a crash tested chair with a waist belt that can be safely secured by our staff. All wheelchairs will be secured inside the vehicle with specialist equipment and the occupant will be further secured by way of a 3 point seatbelt. If the driver has concerns over the appropriateness of a baby car seat or wheelchair they will not be able to take you on the service. Please make sure to discuss any concerns or issues when making your booking.

## **Bringing people with you**

When travelling on our "exclusive use" service you can bring up to 15 other passengers with you, but you need to let us know when booking. They must be travelling to and from the same address as you or we will charge for the distance to pick up everyone and complete the journey. If you do require extra pick up points then please be aware our operators will need time to plan this into your journey so may have to call you back once this is done to confirm the details.

When travelling on our "shared" service you can bring a companion with you free of charge or your children, but you must let us know when booking. They must be travelling to and from the same address as you.

## **Children**

If you would like to bring your child or children, we will need to know if they are under 12 years old and less than 135cm (4ft 5in). Children aged 2-12 and less than 135cm will be able to use our 'all age seat belts' and so will not need a booster seat. If you want to bring children aged 0-2 then please discuss this with us as you will need to bring your own BSE (British Standards, shown by use of a kite mark) approved baby/child car seat. Please let us know these details when you book or we might not be able to take them.

## **Journey Times**

If you are using our "flexible" service, it is likely that you will be making a shared journey on a minibus, with other passengers, who may be dropped off at destinations on the way to your own. This means our journeys will usually take longer than if you were going on your own in a private car or a taxi. If you require a specific departure or arrival time, please ask for the "exclusive" service (charged at a higher rate).

## **If you need extra help**

Because The Comet provides shared journeys, passengers can be left unattended in a vehicle for up to 15 minutes with the door open while the driver is helping another

person to or from the vehicle. If you need to be accompanied at all times, for example due to a diagnosis of dementia or other conditions that cause memory loss or confusion, you will need to be accompanied by someone over the age of 18 who can act as your escort. Again, please notify us at the time of your call if you will be bringing an escort with you.