



Folkestone Town Council Minibus Hire Policy

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General

This document sets out the procedures, and terms and conditions for borrowing the minibus operated by Folkestone Town Council.

Our minibus borrowing service is only available to non-profit making community and voluntary groups in Folkestone and the surrounding area who hold a valid Section 19 Permit.

Small bus permit operation

The minibus is operated under the Small Bus Permit legislation. Therefore, it can only be operated by authorised officials of organisations holding a valid Section 19 Permit (Government Guidance). Section 19 means that the minibus cannot be operated for hire or reward.

Minibus

Folkestone Town Council minibus is BEV, otherwise known as an all-electric vehicle, solely powered by electric. An electric motor replaces the traditional combustion engine found in petrol and diesel cars and is charged by a battery – in place of a fuel tank.

A good charging point infrastructure in your local area, or a home charging point, is necessary in order to recharge the car battery. All-electric cars are usually very quiet, due to the lack of engine noise, while no exhaust system means there are zero exhaust fumes. To find your local charging point in Folkestone follow the links below:

<https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/parking/EV-charging-points>

<https://www.zap-map.com/charge-points/folkestone>

Driving an Electric Vehicle

Many people assume that when they get in an electric car for the first time, it'll be just like driving a petrol or diesel-powered car, with an automatic transmission. But electric cars work a little differently.

There are only two pedals, the throttle and the brake, just like an automatic. However, while an automatic transmission works its way up and down the gears according to the car's speed and load being placed on the engine, EVs effectively only have one gear.

What this means is that the torque that petrol or diesel-fuelled cars must gradually build up is immediately available in an electric vehicle. As a result, the acceleration from a standing start can be very rapid as the power is directly applied to the wheels.

You'll find this levels off as you reach higher speeds, so the acceleration between 40mph and 60mph won't be as dramatic, but it should still be comparable to a petrol or diesel-powered car.

The seats are fitted with seatbelts, which passengers must use at all times, unless they hold a medical exemption certificate.

What is the most efficient way to drive an electric car?

Exactly the same as petrol or diesel-powered vehicles, there are ways to improve the performance of an electric vehicle via your driving practices. One of the main concerns with driving an EV is the distance it will cover before the power runs out and the battery needs recharging. While EVs are naturally very efficient, it's important to be conscious of how you're driving if you want to cover the maximum possible range on a charge.

One of the keys to this is having a light right foot. It might be tempting to use all that torque to move away quickly when the stop light turns green, but taking off more slowly and smoothly will preserve your power.

Something else to consider is how much other power you're using with other onboard features. Air-conditioning, heating and media devices all drain power from the battery. If it's safe and comfortable to do so, it's a good idea to switch them off during your trip to save power.

Step by Step guide to Charging your EV

If you haven't driven an EV before, don't worry. Charging an EV has become a lot easier with the arrival of apps that aggregate all the charge points in the UK and allow you to pay for multiple participating networks.

1. Identify the type of charge needed

The minibus has a Combined Charging System (CCS) combo type 2 connection for charging. Charging cables are supplied for both connections.



2. Find your nearest charge point

Open the charging map app you have downloaded and put in your location, you can then filter by car make and connector type to find your nearest station.

3. Once at the charging station

Park with the charging point (front drivers side) nearest to the charge point.

4. Activate the charge point

Open the relevant charge point within the app to activate it and select your payment type, open the car's charging port cover and insert the charge point connector into the car port.

5. Charge

It is best to charge the battery to at least 80% and not to let the charge fall below 20%. EVs control the flow of energy into the battery and optimise charging.

Speed Limits

Drivers should remember that speed limits for minibuses are not the same as those for cars. The limits are as follows:

Speed Limit (mph)

Built up areas (where no lower limit applies) 30

Single carriageway roads (where no lower limit applies) 50

Dual carriageways (where no lower limit applies) 60

Motorways (where no lower limit applies) 70

Drivers should note that the minibus has a Dashcam fitted.

The minibus is equipped with:

A first aid kit

A fire extinguisher High visibility vest

A ring binder containing:

- mileage log sheets
- a copy of this policy
- the vehicle specification

General Terms and Conditions

Drivers

Drivers should ensure that all doors are unlocked before allowing passengers to board the minibus. Drivers must not drive whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Drivers must not indulge in dangerous driving or abuse the vehicle.

Folkestone Town Council reserve the right to ban a driver from driving the minibus should that person allow another person who has not been through the relevant Folkestone Town Council Minibus vehicle familiarisation and driver registration process to drive the Folkestone Town Council Minibus. In such circumstances, the driver(s) may be liable to prosecution.

Folkestone Town Council reserve the right to ban a driver from driving the Folkestone Town Council Minibus if there are reasonable grounds for believing that person knowingly failed to report any damage to, or accident involving, the Folkestone Town Council Minibus

Any fines during bookings resulting from illegal parking will be passed onto, and are the responsibility of, the user. Folkestone Town Council reserve the right to make payment and then recover the amount from the user. The user is responsible for any charges (tolls etc.) arising through the use of the vehicle.

Any prosecution of a driver arising from the use of Folkestone Town Council Minibus will be the responsibility of the user and/or driver. This includes any charges against a driver arising from vehicle defects.

Anyone driving the Folkestone Town Council Minibus must:

- Be aged 30 over
- Have held their driving licence for at least 2 years,
- Complete the driver's registration form, including the 'check code' obtained from the DVLA, and provide a photocopy of the driver's driving licence,
- Be able to answer "NO" to the following questions:

Have you had any convictions within the last 5 years, or do you have any prosecutions pending?

Have you ever been disqualified from driving?

Has any company or underwriter ever declined, cancelled or refused to renew any motor insurance, or increased the premium or policy excess, or imposed special conditions?

Have you had an accident whilst driving a motor vehicle in the last 5 years, regardless of fault?

Provide details about any medical condition, or medical history (whether physical or mental, including defective vision not corrected by glasses or hearing loss not corrected by a hearing aid) that may affect their ability to drive a minibus. In addition, details about any medication that is currently being taken, including dosage, should also be provided.

Folkestone Town Council may, at their discretion, accept a driver who has current endorsements on their licence. However, any additional excess or premium that may be charged by the insurers will be payable by the user, should a claim arise.

When a driver reaches the age of 70, entitlement to drive a minibus with 9-16 passengers is lost unless they pass a medical.

Folkestone Town Council reserve the right to refuse any driver that they believe may be unsuitable.

Vehicle Care

Drivers and passengers are not allowed to smoke in the Folkestone Town Council Minibus.

Vehicles must be returned in a clean and tidy condition: all rubbish must be removed from the vehicle before the end of the user. Failure to do so may result in a £30 surcharge being added to the user's invoice.

Drivers must inspect the vehicle before and after each loan and note down any damage or fault on the log sheet.

The user may be liable for the cost of replacing a tyre if it is damaged beyond repair due to kerbing, or being driven on whilst it is flat or punctured.

Receipts for charging, minor repairs incurred during the loan must be returned to the Folkestone Town Council Minibus coordinator, together with the log sheet and vehicle keys. Failure to do so will result in these costs NOT being deducted from the invoice.

Any accident or damage to the vehicle must be notified to Folkestone Town Council as soon as possible. The cost of any damage not covered by the insurance will be recoverable from the user.

Off-Road Use

The Folkestone Town Council Minibus should not be driven “off-road”. Travel over/in rough terrain, riverbeds, etc. is strictly prohibited. The only exception to this rule will be access to recognised camp sites. If a driver causes loss or damage to the Folkestone Town Council Minibus by going “off-road”, the costs of any necessary repairs will become the user’s responsibility.

Bookings

You must be able to provide a contact telephone number that will be manned during the time of the loan. This is especially important for loans outside normal office hours. If you do not provide such a telephone number, Folkestone Town Council cannot be held responsible for any failure to inform you about any emergency or other problem associated with the loan.

Should a group fail to turn up for a booked loan or give little or no notice of cancelling their booking, Folkestone Town Council reserve the right to levy the minimum daily charge for each day cancelled.

Should a group persistently cancel their bookings, Folkestone Town Council reserve the right to levy a charge of £30 per day for each day cancelled, regardless of the length of notice given for the cancellation.

Folkestone Town Council reserve the right to reject, cancel or vary any booking if the purpose for which the vehicle is to be used is inconsistent with the aims, objectives or rules of Folkestone Town Council Minibus.

In the event of cancellation or change to a booking by Folkestone Town Council, no liability can be accepted for any loss, financial or otherwise, arising from our failure to provide a vehicle, and Folkestone Town Council cannot be held responsible for breach of contract in such circumstances.

The minibus must be returned no later than the previously booked time. Should an unauthorised late return of a vehicle result in another group being unable to lend the vehicle at the time they booked, any resultant financial liability may be passed on. Wilfully keeping a vehicle beyond the booked time can be construed as taking the vehicle without the owner’s consent. In such cases, Folkestone Town Council reserve the right to take any appropriate action to recover the vehicle. Folkestone Town Council reserve the right to levy an additional surcharge of £10 per hour (or

part thereof) in the event of an unauthorised late return of a vehicle. Folkestone Town Council reserves the right to refuse booking requests from groups who are persistently late in returning vehicles.

Insurance

The Folkestone Town Council Minibus is driven under insurance arranged by ERS.

Insurance cover may be invalidated if any of the information contained on the Folkestone Town Council Minibus driver registration form is subsequently found to be false or inaccurate. Any material changes to the information on a driver's licence must be notified to Folkestone Town Council before that person next drives the minibus. Similarly, should a driver have an accident whilst driving any motor vehicle after their name is entered on the Folkestone Town Council Minibus Approved Driver List that fact must be disclosed to Folkestone Town Council before that person next drives the Folkestone Town Council Minibus.

In the event of an accident, the user will be liable for any insurance excess payable (set at £150 and £75-£125 for the windscreen).

The minibus must not be used for the carriage of goods or for hire and reward.

Should a driver provide false or inaccurate information at the time of registering with Folkestone Town Council and insurance cover is consequently invalidated, Folkestone Town Council reserve the right to take legal action against the relevant parties.

Drivers must notify Folkestone Town Council of any changes in the circumstances relating to their driving licence (including changes in health) that occur after they have completed the application form.

Accessibility

The Minibus has disabled facilities which include an electric lift and space for one wheelchair user.

The Vehicle has a maximum capacity of 9 passenger seats and 1 driver's seat or a maximum capacity of 6 passenger seats, 1 wheelchair and 1 driver's seat. The hirer is responsible to ensure this is the case.

The operations procedure for the lift are shown on the rear door of the minibus. The auxiliary switch under the steering wheel must be turned on for the lift to operate. It is up to the user to familiarise themselves with the controls and safety procedures before using the lift.

The 3-point restraining system must be used to secure wheelchairs before driving. Instructions for fitting can be found on the rear side of the minibus. All strapping must be returned with the minibus.

Vehicle Breakdowns

A Breakdown Organisation covers the Folkestone Town Council Minibus. This includes breakdown, at home rescue, national recovery and onward travel. The recovery will take all passengers.

Costs for community use

Borrowing the minibus is subject to a mileage charge which includes all costs for electricity, insurance and breakdown cover.

Seats 10

Mileage charge (£/mile) 0.60

Minimum charge (£/day) 40

Folkestone Town Council reserve the right to change these contributions at any time prior to commencement of a booking, subject to informing the groups affected.

Charging

If you charge the minibus during your loan period, this will be at your own cost.

Breakdown Information

Breakdown Cover is supplied through the insurance company details are:

0800 587 8872 or 01277 720778 when calling from the UK or +0044 (0)1277 235999 or freephone 00 800 999 00 999 when calling from Europe

Emergency Contact: Ian Bishop 07891 254036

Bus-specific Useful Info

10 seater LDV V80 LR73 ZZF

Fuel: Electric

Height: 2.5m Length: 5.7m

Width (excl. mirrors): 2.0m

This bus can be driven on an ordinary car (D1) driving licence.