

With the rising cost of petrol, many people are seeking ways to make savings and car sharing is one way to significantly reduce the costs of car journeys.

Launched in June 2004 by Herefordshire Council, www.twoshare.co.uk enables people to share car journeys so they not only save money but also provide a transport lifeline for isolated people and help the environment by reducing their carbon emissions.

Jenni Chapple, who works at Norman Allen Group Travel in Daws Road, started car sharing more than a year ago and has never looked back since.

She said: "I don't drive and was finding it expensive to travel on the bus so I decided car sharing would be a good option for me.

"I signed up on the website and was contacted by a woman who drives through my village on her way to work in Hereford and we have been travelling into Hereford together ever since and I give her some money towards the petrol costs.

"I really enjoy the company on our journeys to and from work and we sometimes go to the supermarket to do a big grocery shop. We also collect and deliver prescriptions for people in the village which saves even more car journeys being made," she added.

One of Jenni's colleagues, Pina Di Pietro, also car shares with a man from Hay-on-wye and two other colleagues, Hilary Christmas and Celia Gunnell are both seeking people to share their journeys to work with.

Hilary said: "As petrol prices continue to rise, I thought it would be a good idea to be able to share the costs with someone else who drives from Michaelchurch into Hereford every day and I have signed up to the website to find a suitable sharer."

Celia, who lives in Wellington, has also signed up to the website to find someone to car share with. She said: "I don't really want to lose the freedom of having my car so I would prefer to share journeys with someone rather than having a lift every day."

Councillor Brian Wilcox, Herefordshire Council's cabinet member for highways and transportation, said: "The fact that four people from just one office in town either already share car journeys or would like to shows the popularity of this scheme.

"Figures show 80 per cent of people who drive to work do so on their own and I would encourage all these motorists to sign up on the website and see if they can find someone with whom to share their journeys. The scheme is totally flexible with sharers making their own arrangements over whether they offer regular lifts, share car journeys or offer occasional lifts. The more people who sign up the more chance there will be of finding someone suitable.

"Currently one in three journeys registered on twoshare finds a match which is a significant number," he added.

To find out more about car sharing log onto www.twoshare.co.uk or call 08700 111199.

www.twoshare.co.uk is open to anyone who lives or works in Herefordshire and the choice is totally up to them. All people have to do is register and put in their journeys and which days of the week they travel.

People choose how many days they want to share, occasional, regular or a complete one-off. A search on the site will show who can offer sharing on these journeys.

Results show the sharer's first name so people will know if they are male or female and will also show whether they are a smoker or non-smoker.

If a suitable match is found, people need to make contact with your potential car sharer. It is suggested people choose a neutral, public place to meet up and discuss how a sharing arrangement will work.

No contracts have to be signed and if it doesn't work out or people change jobs and journey route, they can cancel this twoshare arrangement and start looking for another person to share with instead.

The map of current twoshare members shows that wherever people live in the county, there is a good chance of finding someone to share their journey. In addition, there are already many members who commute from neighbouring counties into Herefordshire.

If everyone who travelled to work each day on their own were to catch a lift just once a week, the commuting car journeys throughout the county would be reduced by 20 per cent, leading to a significant reduction in congestion.

Cars produce 10 per cent of the UK's greenhouse emissions so every journey saved will cut pollution, helping to save the planet from climate change.