

Appendix B - Bus User Survey headlines

In total **4,314** surveys were received which comprised 2,534 online responses, 1,779 paper responses and 1 telephone response.

Of the individuals completing the survey:

- 66% of respondents who provided an answer in the age category are aged 65 and older.
- The highest response was from people aged 65-74, followed by people aged 75-84. All age groups completed the survey.
- 32% consider themselves to have a disability or long-term illness.
- 68% hold a bus pass for free travel.
- The majority of respondents classified themselves as 'White British', followed by 'White other' as the next highest group. 1.3% stated their ethnic origin as BAME (16% either selected 'prefer not to say' or did not answer the question).

Organisations

Responses were also received on behalf of or from members of the following organisations:

Ansty & Stapleford Parish Council
Ardingly Parish Council
Bignor Parish Meeting
Bluebell Railway
Chichester City Council
Chidham & Hambrook Parish Council
Chithurst Buddhist Monastery
Disability Access – East Grinstead Area
Duncton Parish Council
East Grinstead Town Council
Harting Parish Council
Horsted Keynes Parish Council
Lancing Parish Council
Lyminster & Crossbush Parish Council
Link Medical Service
Mid Sussex District Council
Midhurst Rother College
Mid Sussex District Council
Milland Parish Council
Oathall Community College
Petworth Town Council
Rogate Parish Council

Rotary Club of Shoreham & Southwick
St. Wilfrid's Hospice (volunteers)
St. Richard's Hospital (volunteers)
Sackville School
Scouts
Slinfold Parish Council
Shoreham Beach Residents' Association
Sompting Parish Council
South Downs Local Access Forum
South Downs National Park Authority
Stonepillow (Christian Care Association)
Storrington & Sullington Parish Council
Stoughton Parish Council
Thakeham Parish Council
The Octagon Walks Project
Warnham Parish Council
Washington Parish Council
Westhampnett Parish Council
West Chiltington Parish Council
West Hoathly Parish Council
West Sussex Youth Cabinet

Responses by route:

ROUTE	TOTAL responses	Aged 65+	Disability or long-term illness	No alternative transport	Most negative impact
8/8A	111	93	49	49	I could not get out and about so easily
16	190	166	98	91	I could not get out and about so easily
19	80	58	33	32	I could not get out and about so easily
30	37	27	14	11	I could not get out and about so easily
31	58	39	25	28	I would be isolated
33	150	86	53	73	I would be isolated
36A/36C	48	37	22	12	I could not get out and about so easily
39	19	13	9	5	I could not get out and about so easily
42	2	1	0	1	I could not do my activity at all / It would cost me more
46	119	98	47	33	I could not get out and about so easily
47	103	84	42	28	I could not get out and about so easily
50	59	39	15	13	I could not get out and about so easily
52	31	28	11	15	I would be isolated
54	175	108	39	98	I would be isolated
56	309	215	81	113	I could not get out and about so easily
59A	1	0	0	1	I could not do my activity at all
61	16	10	3	4	I could not get out and about so easily
62	39	24	18	12	I could not get out and about so easily
63	74	42	28	47	I could not do my activity at all
64	20	14	9	13	I would be isolated
65	81	72	25	19	I could not get out and about so easily
66A/66C	108	79	52	60	I would be isolated

67	30	28	12	7	I could not get out and about so easily
ROUTE	TOTAL responses	Aged 65+	Disability or long-term illness	No alternative transport	Most negative impact
69	19	14	6	11	I could not get out and about so easily
70	57	33	18	36	I could not do my activity at all
71	21	14	9	14	I would be isolated
74/74A/B	59	35	15	31	I would be isolated
84	129	78	32	76	I would be isolated
85/85A	122	87	39	54	I could not get out and about so easily / I would have to use a less 'green' alternative
89	41	24	8	17	I could not get out and about so easily / It would cost me more
91/92/93	135	60	34	97	I would be isolated
93	14	6	3	5	I would be isolated
96	3	0	0	1	I could not get out and about so easily
98	126	65	36	47	It would cost me more
99	210	123	71	114	I would be isolated
100	308	198	111	163	I could not get out and about so easily
150	4	3	1	2	I could not get out and about so easily / I could not do my activity at all
200	79	39	14	28	My journey would take longer
270	633	289	142	312	I could not get out and about so easily
272	178	84	55	78	I could not get out and about so easily
291	265	91	45	133	I could not get out and about so easily
606	0	-	-	-	-
610	3	0	1	0	My journey would take longer
692	10	0	0	3	My journey would take longer
693	15	1	0	8	My journey would take longer

Billilinks	13	2	3	10	I could not do my activity at all
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Sample comments:

- *If I couldn't get the bus, I would be isolated. Unable to get to shops, banks, etc. I would not be able to get to hospital, dentist appointments...Unable to meet up with friends, attend groups. It would affect my mental health. It's bad enough with no buses on Sundays or Bank Holidays. I live alone and don't have family near where I live. I'm not the only one in this situation.*
- *I am very concerned when driving is not possible. One values independent mobility for social and practical reasons, increasingly it is also good for our health and welfare.*
- *If this bus was withdrawn I would not be able to go anywhere. I have a slight mobility problem so cannot walk far. I shop daily as I cannot carry a week's shopping. I have no internet access to do this. My social life and voluntary work would stop. I will feel like a prisoner in my own home.*
- *Please keep our bus running. We only have one bus a day we can use our bus pass. I think more people would use the service if buses were more frequent and reliable. Elderly passengers dread to be stranded and isolated.*
- *If you do not drive and live in a remote rural area, other than a taxi, you have no other means of transport.*
- *We all need to use the most environmentally options where possible and buses, even diesels, are one such option.*
- *The bus service for most people is very convenient. Please keep the bus service going else people will become isolated in their homes if they can't get out. Most people are on a budget and cannot afford taxi service every day to get into town. More shops would close down if there were no bus services, as people won't be going out.*
- *Whilst, at the moment, I am able to drive and use the bus as a greener alternative and to avoid issues with parking, should, as I get older, and I cannot drive, this service will be vital to me.*
- *You should encourage bus services instead of cutting them. I do not drive - there must be many people like me.*
- *This bus is the difference between a 'life' and 'no life' for older people. If the worst comes to the worst, we would have to pay for the service. However, would it be economically viable?*
- *If this is a cost cutting exercise, I and many others no doubt would be happy to pay a small fee to offset the difference. A lot of people in the smaller villages would be isolated without a regular bus service.*

- *The bus is critical to get to school on time. The journey is too long on foot, particularly in cold or wet weather. With the significant increase in traffic on local roads cycling no longer feels a safe option for children.*

South Downs National Park Authority response to WSCC consultation on supported bus routes

The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) welcomes the opportunity to respond to WSCC consultation on supported bus services. Our response is constructed around the potential impact of changes to supported services that operate within the National Park.

Supported Passenger Transport Services

With a resident population of 112,000, 2 million people living within 5 km of the National Park boundary and with 46.3 million day visits per annum, the SDNPA is fully aware of the importance of the availability of public transport for both residents and visitors to the National Park. WSCC supported bus services which operate in the National Park are listed later in this response.

Frequency of supported services

In recent years budget constraints have led all four of the Transport Authorities operating in the South Downs National Park to reduce funding for supported bus services. As a result we have seen the loss of not only weekend, evening and leisure services in the National Park but also, in some locations, the loss of a daily Monday to Friday service.

These sort of cuts can have a lasting impact not only on the rural visitor economy but also on the vitality and viability of some of the most rural areas of the National Park. There are social impacts too; where loss of public transport has resulted in some members of rural communities effectively isolated from essential facilities and amenities due to a lack of transport options. WSCC will be aware that some of the services listed below are already at a minimum level with some villages having access to a bus service only one or two days a week.

For these reasons we do not support any proposals which would reduce the number of times of day supported services operate or the number of days a week. In our experience these sort of reductions will result in a loss of patronage as the functionality of the service is reduced with shopping trips, journeys to access doctors and other essential services becoming ever more difficult to arrange. Inevitably this will result in the complete loss of the service eventually.

Whilst the SDNPA recognises the difficulties the County Council has in maintaining public transport in rural areas, we would prefer to see an approach that considers the extension of supported services in effort to boost patronage by attracting commuters, and a wider range of users in general. This is in line with the South Downs Partnership Management Plan policies 36 and 38 which support an increase in public transport services and a reduction in car travel.

Policy 36: *Improve existing public transport provision for visitors and local communities, especially by increasing the availability of Sunday and evening bus and train services.*

Policy 38: *Work in partnership with key partners, business and organisations to reduce car travel across the National Park.*

In undertaking this current bus user survey, we assume that decisions about services will be made based on current trip data information but we are aware that the available data is unlikely to capture information about the demographics of users including age profiles, socio economic circumstances or health status. This means that decisions could be made without any awareness of the impact on individuals' ability to access employment, education, health facilities and so on. Furthermore we consider that any decisions in relation to supported services should also take into account any planned housing growth in the areas of the bus routes to ensure that new housing occupants are neither wholly dependent on private cars nor isolated because of a lack of access to transport.

Public transport use by visitors

Providing access to services for rural communities, whilst vital, is only part of the role of public transport within the South Downs. The Defra 8-Point Plan for National Parks sets out a series of asks of National Parks. These include:-

1. *Connect young people with nature;*
2. *National Parks driving growth in international tourism; and*
3. *Everyone's National Parks*

The ability to access National Parks by means other than private car, and in particular by public transport is essential if the SDNPA is to deliver these aims, enabling those without access to a private car to be able to enjoy the National Park. Not only do those visiting the National Park by bus make a contribution to the local visitor economy but also residents using bus services to travel outside of the National Park are able to contribute to the economy in adjacent towns and cities.

Section 62 of the Environment Act (1995)² places a Duty on certain bodies, including West Sussex County Council to have regard to National Park purposes. In this instance it is the second purpose which is particularly relevant:-

"Promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of [the National Park] by the public"

This relates to the provision of bus services to allow access to the special qualities for those without other means of transport. However, by providing sustainable access to the National Park, the first purpose of conserving and enhancing the special qualities of that Park is also being supported, as the impact of private car travel may also be reduced.

In West Sussex, the following bus services make particularly valuable contributions to visitors' ability to and access and enjoy the special qualities of the South Downs:

- The **Stagecoach 54** (Chichester – West Marden – Compton – South Harting – Petersfield) provides connections from gateway rail stations to the South Downs

Way National Trail and other long distance walking routes including the Serpent Trail and the Octagon Way series of walks. The National Trust property, Uppark, is also served by this bus service.

- The **Stagecoach 91/92/93** (Midhurst – Stedham – Rogate – Petersfield) provides links to the Serpent Trail, and to National Trust property Woolbeding, as well as the countryside around Rother Valley.
- **Compass 99** (Chichester – Halnaker – Upwaltham – Duncton – Petworth) provides links to the South Downs Way National Trail and to the National Trust property at Petworth.

All of the routes above link to attractions and countryside sites which generate significant footfall throughout the year. Any loss of public transport will impact on the people's ability to access these sites and on any revenue generated at the sites themselves.

- Other supported bus services operating within the National Park are also significant and these are listed below:
 - Compass 69 (Worthing – Clapham – Arundel – Bury – Horsham – Alfold)
 - Stagecoach 70 (Midhurst – Fernhurst – Haslemere – Guildford)
 - Compass 71 (Chichester – Slindon – Bury – Pulborough – Storrington)
 - Compass 74/74A/74B (Amberley – Storrington – Horsham)
 - Compass 85/85A (Arundel – Fontwell – Chichester)
 - Compass 93 (Midhurst – Woolbeding – Milland)
 - Compass 96 (Midhurst – Heyshott – Graffham – Selham – Lickfold – Northchapel)
 - Compass 100 (Burgess Hill – Muddleswood – Henfield – Small Dole – Steyning – Washington – Storrington – Pulborough – Horsham)
 - Metrobus 270 (Brighton – Pyecombe – Clayton – Hassocks – Burgess Hill – Haywards Heath – Horsted Keynes – East Grinstead)
 - Metrobus 272 (Brighton – Pyecombe – Clayton – Hassocks – Burgess Hill – Haywards Heath – Ardingly – Crawley)

Final remarks

Given the urgent requirement to make cost savings across public transport, we recommend that County Council explore with operators any opportunities for making savings by adjusting commercial services to meet some of the needs of rural communities. The Bus Services Act 2017 discusses how transport authorities may work in partnership with operators to address the needs of rural communities and recommends authorities undertake a rural proofing exercise when reviewing any transport provision.