Passenger power: but can it beat the cuts?
Recent changes to disability legislation have given parity to people with mental health conditions, ensuring their needs must be addressed, alongside those of people with physical disabilities. The bus industry has been working hard on this and for years Bus Users has been helping passengers to get understanding and support for their less visible needs.

One in four of us is affected by a mental health condition and one in ten young people self-harm. So Bus Users is supporting Time to Change, a campaign which aims to end the stigma and discrimination experienced by people with mental health problems and ensure we’re all better equipped to provide the right kind of support. We are also discussing a joint project with Anxiety UK to help people who find the prospect of a bus journey just too difficult to bear. At the recent Mental Health Summit funded by DfT, Alistair Campbell struck a chord by reminding us how people used to talk about cancer in hushed tones, looking over their shoulder before mentioning this taboo subject. Thankfully there is no longer a stigma attached to cancer, something we now hope to achieve for mental health.

If you’d like to be involved in some way, please visit the Time to Change website www.time-to-change.org.uk and look at their suggestions and resources. Let us know about your own experiences and we will keep you updated on this important issue in Bus User.

Claire Walters, Chief Executive, Bus Users

Bus User 61 Features

Tribute to Julian Osborne .................................................................................................................. 8
Cuts to bus services .......................................................................................................................... 10
Fuel costs are down: why not bus fares? ......................................................................................... 14
What makes a prize-winning driver ............................................................................................... 16
UK Bus Awards .................................................................................................................................. 19
Going contactless ............................................................................................................................. 20
The Buses Bill ..................................................................................................................................... 21
Bus stops... more please ..................................................................................................................... 22
The new Stagecoach website ........................................................................................................... 24
Chelsea Pensioner ............................................................................................................................ 26
Interview with Ian Jones .................................................................................................................... 28

Plus our regular items:

Bus news ............................................................................................................................................. 3
Have your say ...................................................................................................................................... 30
Membership matters ........................................................................................................................ 32

Cover photo: Paul Clarke

Bus User is published by Bus Users, Terminal House, Shepperton TW17 8AS
Editorial contact: editor@bususers.org, 01932 232574
Design: Mark Watkins, Luck Design www.thisisluck.com
Print: The Lavenham Press www.lavenhampress.com

www.bususers.org
Youth Ambassador for Bus Users
Ella Beevers, Member of Youth Parliament for Calderdale and campaigner for Fairer Fares 4 Youth, has become Bus Users’ first ever Youth Ambassador. In addition to raising awareness of the transport needs of young people, Ella will help Bus Users to reach out and engage with young bus users and ensure that their interests are fully represented.

Wow factor for Cambridge
A Cambridge transport system with bus lanes down the middle of the city’s major roads has the ‘wow factor’ to succeed, say campaigners — and has been backed by the City Deal. The ‘Streetcar We Desire’ project, spearheaded by Coton parish councillors Helen Bradbury and Dr Gabriel Fox, is a radical interpretation of the bus-based system likely to be implemented by the City Deal. It envisages buses travelling on centre-lane expressways along Cambridge’s major radial routes like Histon Road, Madingley Road and Milton Road.

Boxing Day bus to Leeds
A Boxing Day bus service from Wetherby to Leeds, which ran for the first time in 2014 due to pressure from campaigners, ran again in 2015. Wetherby MP Alec Shelbrooke, local bus campaigner Paul Kirby and ward councillors persuaded Metro, the West Yorkshire Transport Authority, to fund the service.

Contactless travel on every bus in Britain...
... but not till 2022
The Big Five bus companies (Arriva, First, Go-Ahead, National Express and Stagecoach) are working on a scheme to introduce contactless payment on every bus in Britain by 2022. The plan is to introduce the scheme in Tyne & Wear in April 2017 and it would see new contactless technology installed on every one of the UK’s 32,000-plus buses outside London. It would offer cashless travel for those who want it and capped pay-as-you-go fares in all urban areas. (See p20.)

... and smarter, cheaper bus travel
In line with a Government commitment to smart ticketing in the North of England, bus passengers in Greater Manchester and Tyne & Wear now have access to smartcard ticketing available across different bus companies. More than 30 bus operators have joined the scheme in Greater Manchester. Fares are reduced by an average of 10% for the new Get Me There electronic one-day, seven-day and 28-day tickets. Meanwhile in Tyne & Wear, Go North East, Arriva and Stagecoach have introduced a new multi-operator SmartZone smartcard, allowing travel on buses operated by all three companies in Sunderland, Newcastle and North Tyneside.

Pay as You Go smartcard for Nottingham
Nottingham City Council has launched a new multi-operator smartcard called Robin Hood Pay as You Go Travel. The card, available to buy and top up from ticket kiosks across the city and Broadmarsh travel centre, can be used on all trentbarton, Kinchbus, NCT and Nottingham Community Transport buses within the greater Nottingham boundary as well as all stops on the NET tram. It will automatically work out the best fare for your journey throughout the day.

Timed tickets from Abellio
Abellio Surrey has introduced a new ticket which gives unlimited travel on its buses for two hours. The ticket costs £4 (Abellio’s single cash fares range from £2 to £4). Although commonplace on the Continent, as far as we know this is the first use of timed tickets in the UK. London Mayoral candidate Sadiq Kahn has pledged a similar system in London and a fares freeze until 2020.

New office for Bus Users
Bus Users is to open a new office in Birmingham which will be home to Bus Users England – watch this space!
Trust in the bus
A new report from Transport Focus looks at the trust passengers have in buses and their relationship with the bus industry, with a view to getting more people on board. As well as feeling valued as customers, passengers want to see operators get the basics right and give them value for money in terms of punctuality, frequency and reliability of services. Claire Walters, Chief Executive of Bus Users said: ‘This underlines the messages that we have consistently given bus operators, including highlighting the huge potential that bus drivers have for increasing passenger trust and confidence.’

Bus Alliance for Merseyside
Stagecoach, Arriva and Merseytravel have formed a Bus Alliance for Merseyside which aims to increase the number of fare paying passengers by 10% by next April, improve customer satisfaction and increase investment. Only 10% of bus journeys into Liverpool are for commuting and there is potential for buses to play a much more significant role in growing the City Region’s economy.

The Bus Alliance will take a City Region-wide approach looking at matching bus routes to demand, the clarity of fare structures and value for money, the quality of vehicles, ease of obtaining information, reliability and punctuality of services and the standard of customer service.

Reaching younger riders in Merseyside
Merseyside now has a £2 all-day bus ticket for young people, and has increased the age for eligibility for young people’s fares to, and including, 18 across much of the Merseyside network. Liverpool City Region now claims the best young people’s ticketing offer for buses outside London.

London-style buses for Blackpool
Blackpool Transport is to put new buses based on London’s ‘New Routemaster’ on its Blackpool-Cleveleys service 9 in the summer. The new buses will have ‘e-leather’ seats, wood-effect floors, Wi-Fi and USB charging points and ‘next stop’ visual and audio announcements.

Huddersfield Bus Gates...
New Bus Gates have been activated in Huddersfield town centre. The gates at Westgate, Kirkgate, Railway Street, Market Street and High Street allow only buses and taxis to pass through.

...and questions over Manchester bus lanes
Graham Stringer, MP for Blackley and Broughton, has been questioning the effectiveness of bus lanes in Greater Manchester. The MP, known for his desire to return bus services to public control, said: ‘Evidence so far is that bus lanes are damaging the economy and making travel times slower for everybody. We need to look at whether they are an ideological decision only good for profits and not for the travelling public. It’s a money-making racket
and the transport authority rather arrogantly says they will have to educate motorists. In my view, the transport authority needs educating on how to run a public transport system.’

The Leigh busway, on which construction is nearing completion had, he said, ‘caused chaos’. He has called for a review of all the city’s bus lanes. Transport for Greater Manchester is currently creating new bus priorities in the region to create a cross-city bus corridor – though, according to Mr Stringer, TfGM is ‘vandalising the economy and our transport system.’

Wartime and postwar recollections
Roger Atkinson, a Bus Users member, has published a book covering life in the 1940s, and his life in particular. Titled ‘Blackout, Austerity and Pride’, Roger recalls his early years against the background of World War 2 and the austerity years that followed. He has clearly held on to much material from these years, and buses have played an important part in his life as evidenced by the tickets and other bus-related items he has used to illustrate his 368-page book. Anyone with an interest in this period in our history — and particularly those who grew up in this time — will relate to many of Roger’s reminiscences.

The book is published by Roger Atkinson Publishing, 45 Dee Banks, Chester CH3 5UU.

Money for cleaning up buses
The Department for Transport launched the £5million Clean Bus Technology Fund 2015 last September and invited local councils in England to apply for grants of up to £500,000 to fit existing bus fleets with green technology to reduce nitrogen oxides by at least 50%. As a result of the quality of the bids received the fund was increased to £7million.

The funding has allowed for 439 buses across England to be retrofitted with emission-reducing technology, all but 50 outside London, as shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leeds</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merseyside</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheffield</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Yorkshire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(outside Leeds)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bristol</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brighton &amp; Hove</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateshead</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunderland</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Manchester</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancashire</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrogate</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broxbourne, Herts</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rossendale</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>439</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

McGill’s brings back conductors
McGill’s, which operates bus services around Greenock, has put conductors back on to the 38 service between Paisley and Glasgow as a trial. Like many urban bus companies McGill’s is having difficulty keeping to timetables because of increasing traffic congestion, which is ‘getting to unmanageable levels’, according to managing director Ralph Roberts. The conductors are speeding up boarding times on the service’s articulated buses, and if they prove to be cost effective they will be kept. These are not the only bus conductors in Scotland; Stagecoach East Scotland still uses conductors on its Arbroath-Dundee-Ninewells Hospital service.

Some of McGill’s conductors, brought in to speed up the Glasgow-Paisley service.
Bus Users News

Obituaries

Bus Users has sadly lost three significant people over the last few months.

Firstly **Michael Barlow**, chairman of Bus Users Northampton, passed away on 21 October aged 69. Michael, a well-known figure at our AGMs, worked tirelessly for bus users in Northamptonshire and developed good relationships between Bus Users, local passengers, Stagecoach and other local operators and the local council. He was particularly vocal over the shortcomings of the development of Northampton’s new bus station.

**Richard Lomax**, a hard-working member of Bus Users West Midlands, passed away suddenly on 1 February aged 75. Richard was an active campaigner who took part in all of the group’s observation audits and mystery passenger work with Centro and National Express. He combined a keen eye for detail with a cheerful personality which won the respect of bus personnel at all levels and will be greatly missed by colleagues and friends in the local bus scene.

Finally **Julian Osborne**, who has worked in a number of roles for Bus Users, latterly as a senior complaints negotiator and Bus Appeals Body administrator, suffered a heart attack on a bus in January and died in hospital a few days later.

**Julian Osborne**

Born in Worthing in 1952, Julian worked as a bus conductor for Brighton, Hove & District during university vacations when he was a geography student at Oxford University. He started a column in *Buses* magazine, examining issues around customer service, highlighting both good and poor practice from first-hand experience as an extensive traveller by bus and coach. After taking early retirement he brought his human relations expertise to Bus Users and was passionate about improving the organisation’s professionalism.

Julian introduced new HR procedures and valuable management systems to the organisation, which remain vital to its work today. With his passion for good service he became involved in the complaints processes, and his particular expertise in the area of express coaches was especially valuable to the organisation’s work with National Express and other coach companies. He also helped develop Bus Users’ expertise in mystery travelling and negotiated a valuable contract to provide regular mystery travelling work for National Express West Midlands over a number of years, resulting in some notable improvements in that operator’s customer service.

Latterly, Julian provided all the administrative support for the Bus Appeals Body and continued to help with Bus Users’ complaints handling work in England. Julian also took an interest in the history of the bus industry, and wrote a definitive history of the ‘Queen Mary’-class buses operated by his childhood local operator Southdown in the 1960s and 1970s.

*See p6 for tributes to Julian.*

Bus Users Groups

**MKBUG’s charter**

Milton Keynes Bus User Group (MKBUG) and Milton Keynes Council together have signed a new Milton Keynes Bus Charter.

The Charter is an agreement between MKBUG, Milton Keynes Council and all the bus operators who provide services in or through Milton Keynes. It is the first charter written from the passengers’ viewpoint and sets out service levels and commitments to ensure that Milton Keynes provides good, reliable bus services and infrastructure.

**New secretary for the Isle of Wight**

The Isle of Wight Bus & Rail Users Group is thought to be one of the longest established bus user groups anywhere in the UK. It was first established in 1985 under the auspices of the former National Federation of Bus Users, set up by Caroline Cahm, and held its 30th Annual General Meeting in February 2016.

Secretary David Rogers stepped down at the AGM and the new Secretary is Andy Morris, who was the Isle of Wight Council’s Transport Officer until his retirement a couple of years ago.

**Sustaining Devizes**

As reported in the following article Wiltshire Council is consulting on how local people want their bus services to be allocated. Devizes
Passengers is running a series of commentaries on Sustainable Devizes’ blog (see www.sustainabledevizes.org.uk).

The Group says that public transport is vital for people’s independence, health and well-being as well as local prosperity in rural areas in particular. The options being proposed by the Council are:

• all evening services after 7pm cut, saving: £639,000 a year;
• all services on Sundays and Bank Holidays cut, saving: £165,000 a year;
• frequency of hourly services reduced by 50%, saving: £430,000 a year;
• frequency of rural buses reduced by 75%, saving: £1.19m a year;
• frequency of town buses reduced by 75%, saving: £460,000 a year;
• Or reducing services by 100%.

Wiltshire Council has emphatically stated that they wish to protect the ‘vulnerable’. The ‘vulnerable’ have been defined in an Equality Analysis Evidence Document, a score card for those deemed to make ‘socially necessary journeys’, including people on low incomes, unemployed, those with mobility limitations, older people, younger people, black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, single parents, people who live in rural areas and women. This list represents a sizeable chunk of Wiltshire’s population and prompts us to ask, if Wiltshire Council agreed to sponsor a bus service because it fulfilled a socially necessary service last year, why should it be less necessary next year? Are we the public not all vulnerable to bus cuts?

Working together as a region

In August 2013, Bus Users held a ‘training day’ for regional groups in Selly Oak, Birmingham (writes Peter Ballantyne, chair of Milton Keynes Bus Users Group). At that meeting greater communication between regional groups was encouraged.

Milton Keynes Bus Users Group, Bedford Area Bus Users Society and Bus Users Northampton decided two years ago to form a regional group, holding meetings on a quarterly basis. Chairing of the meetings is rotated between the groups, as is the location.

The result has been very positive, and although each group still operates independently, the regional communication has enabled a better understanding of cross-county issues. By working together the groups have also been able to work more closely with the regional bus operators.

Each meeting’s agenda consists of reports from each group, items include common transport issues, tackling council transport officers, and experience and information is shared.

Unfortunately, as reported elsewhere, Michael Barlow, Chair of the Northampton group, passed away late in 2015, but the regional group has been able to provide support.

During January 2016, it was decided to name the regional group ‘South Midlands Regional Bus Users Group’ with the view that we would extend the communication to other groups in the region.
We were completely stunned to hear of the death of Julian Osborne. Always cheerful and helpful we will miss him terribly. We each had our different relationships with Julian and his family and I am happy so many of us were able to attend his funeral to support his widow Sue, daughter Sarah and son Tim.

Julian Osborne was a ‘one off’. When I was interviewed for the position of Senior Officer for Wales he was the HR manager and sat on my interview panel. I later found out that I had ‘failed’ one of his tests but it must have been decided that I could learn what I didn’t know and I was duly appointed. Julian never lost an opportunity to remind me, however, about the test I had failed and he was, as usual, quite right – I should have done my homework.

Natacha Tagholm, Deputy Director for England said: “I was one of the last people to see Julian and he was in great spirits and very excited at being in his old stomping ground of Ealing. The nostalgia was coming through at every turn of the bus. I shall miss his references to Brighton & Hove (especially how well they do compared to others) and his pedantry for grammar!”

Staff, past and present, have been quick to share their thoughts and anecdotes about Julian. He was a friend to each of us and though he could be very critical, we learned to accept the criticism because it was always fair and always in the best interests of the passenger.

One member of staff at Bus Users, told me: “I remember Julian as a most loyal colleague and friend. He loved a job to be done well and expected this from others also. He cared deeply about his work for Bus Users, and did all he could to ensure that the organisation always operated to the highest standards. He also loved buses of course, and travel generally; I remember that he kept a tally of all the different countries he had visited, and was pleased to have added a few more to his list during 2015. Above all I remember his support during difficult times, his zest for life and his wit and good humour. I think he was rather pleased to learn that he was occasionally referred to affectionately by some of his colleagues as ‘the Rottweiler’ – a breed described as good-natured, placid, dependable, confident, tenacious, very devoted, eager to work, and having great intelligence and guarding instincts. Not a bad description of Julian.”

Another said: “In the short time I knew Julian, I found him to be a very endearing character to work with who was always jovial and had a wealth of life experience to call upon.” Another said: “I have fond memories of our conversations about bus and coach travel and his jovial comments when my geographical categorisation of bus company locations was not accurate. We nearly missed our bus once as Julian wanted to take the perfect photograph of a particular bus that was missing from his fleet collection. I will miss our conversations and his undeniable and relentless knowledge of all things bus and coach. Bus Users and the Bus Appeals Body will not be the same without him.”

In another tribute I was told: “We spent many hours reminiscing about our times working on buses, him as conductor and me as driver/conductor. I used to drive the bus service past his house and he was always going
to see if he had a picture in his collection! The day of his funeral was so sad, I really cannot quite grasp that he is not going to appear somewhere along the line.”

Paul Fullwood, who worked alongside Julian for the last seven months said: “By way of background, and although I knew him tangentially for a few years, the closer relationship only started when I began working with Julian to resolve passenger complaints in England. Julian was a great help, always willing to share his experience and great knowledge, always willing to talk, whether that be through issues of technical knowledge or consumer expertise.

“That is not to hide the fact that he could be challenging; he appreciated, even relished, a debate and put his point of view across forcefully. His point of view though, was very firmly that of the passenger, for whom he was a passionate advocate.

“As I was learning the ropes, and he was teaching me, what became apparent was his geographical knowledge, his knowledge of the history of bus operations in various areas and of the career history of industry personnel. I only had to give him a brief sketch of the issues and he was able to fill in the background and so highlight the way forward in many seemingly intractable cases. The danger of these chats, for me, was the digressions, detours and diversions of his encyclopaedic knowledge as his enthusiasm and passion provided far more detail than I could assimilate at the time. But, as Julian said to me when telling me some fact or other: “Remember this, it will come in useful at some point”. And I am sure that it will; and when it does I will remember who told it to me.”

And lastly a tribute from Gavin Booth, Director of Bus Users Scotland, and one of his closest friends: “Julian was a friend before we both got involved in Bus Users, through our interest in buses in the UK and overseas. We enjoyed regular bouts of verbal jousting – face to face and over the phone – as we light-heartedly rubbed each other’s views on a range of topics, including transport. He was a loyal and supportive colleague when we both ended up at Bus Users, where his HR experience, his intimate knowledge of National Express and his almost obsessive approach to complaint-handling were all invaluable.

“He was a devoted family man and when daughter Sarah came to study and then work in Edinburgh, Julian and I met up regularly for another sociable joust. We held meetings at the Osbornes’ Worplesdon home and I met Sue and their son Tim, whose IT knowledge was invaluable for those of us from the generation where electric typewriters represented the cutting-edge of technology.

“Julian was fun, supportive, mildly obsessive – he really did keep a tally of all the countries he had visited - sometimes grumpy, but always a good colleague and friend. Now I must find someone for those verbal jousts.”

Julian’s funeral was held on 8th February in Guildford and was attended by his family and many friends and colleagues from the industry. It was a joyful and sometimes painful celebration of his life and the occasion was even more poignant with the arrival of a Southdown Queen Mary class bus, a type on which Julian was an acknowledged expert, which escorted the hearse into the crematorium grounds and conveyed the guests to the wake.

RIP Julian.
Despite the comparatively small amount of money put into supporting bus services in relation to the known benefits they bring, bus services continue to be at the sharp end of local authority funding cuts. As local authorities are put under pressure to reduce their budgets by central government, and have major obligations placed on them to provide education, housing, social services etc they have little choice but to take money out of activities regarded as ‘optional’.

The impact of these new cuts is deeper now as some bus companies have already taken the hit themselves in previous rounds of cuts, or adjusted services to reduce their dependence on local authority funding: their room for manoeuvre is now severely limited.

Elsewhere in this issue (p10) Peter Shipp of East Yorkshire Motor Services explains some of the reasons why bus operators’ cost bases are rising at the same time as funding pressures tighten.

According to our colleagues at Campaign for Better Transport, local authority funding for bus services in England and Wales fell by £22.6million last year. Since 2010, more than £78 million has been cut from local authority funding for buses, with more than 2,400 bus services cut, altered or withdrawn.

A worrying trend is the belief amongst some local authorities that they can cut all expenditure on supporting bus services, despite a duty imposed on them under the 1985 Transport Act. The duty is a vague one; Section 63 (part 1a) of the Act requires transport authorities ‘to secure the provision of such public passenger transport services as the council
consider it appropriate to secure to meet any public transport requirements within the county which would not in their view be met apart from any action taken by them for that purpose.’ There are similar clauses referring to Scottish local authorities and what are now ITAs.

Clearly it is up to the local authority to determine what is ‘appropriate’, but it is unlikely that many local authorities can claim to have no need to support any bus services, especially in counties like Cumbria, with large rural swathes and economically deprived towns: the required equality and accessibility impact assessments should show these needs very clearly, if properly carried out.

It’s up to bus users to demonstrate that their lives are turned upside down by the removal of bus services on which they depend, and to help local councillors and MPs understand that the money spent on bus services not only gives people a quality of life, but helps their own local economies to succeed.

Below we cite some instances where cuts are being fought, or even overturned. One is Devizes Passengers in Wiltshire, which points out that Wiltshire is not alone in facing such huge cuts to services: other counties include Derbyshire, Somerset, Dorset, West Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Hertfordshire, North Yorkshire and Lancashire.

Devizes Passengers fights cuts
Devizes Passengers has been working closely with the Sustainable Devizes partnership and Bus Users over Wiltshire Council’s proposed cuts to funding in bus services. A countywide bus survey is underway and closes on 4 April (see consult.wiltshire.gov.uk). ‘A bus review could have been welcomed by us if it were not for the alarming prospect that the results of the review could lead to draconian loss of services’, says the group.

The group highlights the importance of public transport to the county’s market towns and villages: ‘This corner of Wiltshire is going to be one of the hardest hit by the bus review, relying as it does on bus subsidies’. It is also concerned that the review will force more people to travel by car when roads and air quality are already under pressure, cause others to suffer for want of access and impact on local businesses.

Central government has reduced Wiltshire Council’s grant by £16.15m and the Council wants to reduce the public transport budget from £3.3 million to £733,000. This comes after a 16% saving since 2010, which included the withdrawal of three bus routes. The cuts will leave ‘commercial services and volunteers to pick up the threadbare remnants of the network in some way’, says the group.

Bus Users has been helping communities to have their say, with Your Bus Matters events in Chippenham, Devizes and Marlborough.
Northamptonshire Total Transport — or Total Cut?

Northamptonshire County Council is proposing to replace its entire budget for bus service support over the next four years with what it calls ‘The Total Transport model’. This will entail a ‘radical transformation’ of the way people make journeys in the county and how public transport is provided.

The council is working with the University of Northampton, the NHS, Further Education establishments and businesses to collect data to create a ‘snapshot’ of present and future transport needs. Total Transport could create a social enterprise model to improve efficiencies in meeting changing transport needs. Any profits would then be put back into local communities.

Cllr Michael Clarke, county council cabinet member for transport, highways and environment, said: ‘The traditional way of providing public transport needs to change to keep pace with the way we want to make journeys now and in the future. We have to look at modal change, changes in working hours and opportunities for more people who wish to work from home.’

He says the current model is costly and inefficient, particularly in the way that congestion builds in the peak hours. Total Transport will examine ways to stagger working hours to reduce rush hour congestion. He stressed the importance of ‘finding a way that not only works but that is also cost-effective as Northamptonshire’s population continues to grow.’

Northamptonshire has a rapidly growing population, increased car ownership and ancient town centre layouts presenting challenges to the transport network. ‘We have twin objectives of creating a variety of transport options to meet the changing needs of the travelling public while achieving substantial cost savings to the council’, he said. ‘Not only do longer journey lengths and congestion cause frustration for motorists and commuters but they also cause more pollution, add costs for businesses and restrict further economic growth’.

It is not clear how such a strategy will help those dependent on bus services. Alan Jones of Bus Users Northampton also points out that the list of partners does not include bus passengers or anyone from the bus industry.

Meanwhile Bus Users Northampton member Mick Furn has collected more than 350 signatures on a petition to keep the only regular bus service connecting Silverstone with a number of villages in Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire. Talking of Oxfordshire...

Oxfordshire to cut all supported buses

*Hugh Jaeger writes:* In November 2015, Oxfordshire County Council’s Cabinet voted to end all subsidised buses. In February 2016 the full council adopted its austerity budget. It back-tracked slightly on a few items, but made no promise to save any buses. Bus passengers and opposition councillors have run petitions on paper and online. I have tried to help parish council representatives, and addressed meetings of residents and groups of retired people. We have addressed council meetings and protest rallies and marched through Oxford. The Campaign for Better Transport has helped us with placards, tee shirts and a day of campaigning.

Bus Users Oxford put posters on 300 bus stops, got national news coverage on BBC1 and Radio 4, regional coverage on ITV and reports by almost every local newspaper and radio. We use both Twitter and Facebook, where our followers far outnumber our actual members! A meeting against bus cuts in Witney on 21 February was followed up by a letter from Witney councillors and bus drivers in the *Oxford Mail* inviting residents to help them to start a Witney Bus Users Group. They are also taking advice on whether it would be workable for them to start a community bus co-operative.

Nearly all of Oxfordshire’s subsidised buses will be terminated in June. For contractual reasons those in Bicester will survive until October.

Oxfordshire has one of England’s best supported bus networks. Destroying it makes no economic, social or environmental sense, especially since the county will receive £8.9m in Transitional grant from central government to ease the pain of cuts.
Small rural buses link many communities in rural Lincolnshire not only with each other but with main-road bus services linking the bigger towns, enabling rural residents to access essential services. This one is in the market town of Spilsby in East Lincolnshire. (It’s not going to Wakefield via Leeds, despite what it says on the front: the driver was rather surprised when we told him what the display said!)

 Threats to Lincolnshire’s rural buses averted, for now...

Up to 100 communities across Lincolnshire could have lost their bus service as the County Council sought to cut £2million from its public transport budget. The council has to reduce its overall budget by £42million this year. Bus Users worked alongside local campaigner, David Rimmington, who collected 5,500 signatures for his stop the cuts petition in a matter of weeks, and appeared with Claire Walters on a local discussion programme ‘Hot Topic’ to discuss the impact of cuts.

They pointed out that the County Council had been in receipt of over £7m from the districts to mitigate the effects of cuts which seemed to have been put into reserves. Lincolnshire County Council has now decided to spend £2.2million of Government transition funding to defer all bus cuts; but only until next year.

‘Nobody is doubting for one second the importance of bus services’, said Councillor Richard Davies, who had urged residents to voice their concerns to MPs. ‘Public transport is important, but it’s not always seen as a priority.’

Bus Users helps get cuts overturned

Bus Users has been helping local residents across England to campaign against cuts to bus services. Bus services are the lifeline of communities and cutting them simply results in a ‘robbing Peter to pay Paul’ scenario where other budgets within the local authority are impacted.

One recent campaign was in Dorset where, amongst other services, the council was looking to cut the funding on the X12 Weymouth-Salisbury via Dorchester and Blandford Forum route. This cross border service provides vital links with the hospital, railway station, college, university, work opportunities, shops and market in Salisbury and similar in Dorchester. The demise of the service would have represented a very real loss of public transport availability and connectivity.

Following campaigning with local residents on both sides of the border, we are pleased to announce that the X12 will remain from Blandford Forum to Weymouth and that there will be a new service 20 from 11 April to meet the needs of the communities which would otherwise have been left stranded.

Inevitably cuts will continue while the austerity culture overrides all other concerns, so the best way to retain your local bus service is to use it regularly and encourage others to do the same.
Fuel costs are down: why not bus fares?

Rising oil prices were until recently a concern, and were a reason given for bus fares rising faster than inflation. Now, oil prices are tumbling. One of our supporters, Mrs R. Cooley, asks the question that’s on many of our lips: ‘Do you have any news of fare decreases as a result of oil prices?’

Claire Walters, Chief Executive, Bus Users, explains some of the reasons why we haven’t seen falling oil prices reflected in lower fares.

Apart from some of the very smallest bus companies, bus operators don’t fill up at the garage the same way that motorists do, so they can’t benefit in the same way from the current discounts on offer. Bus operators are nearly all reliant on diesel fuel, and in a process known as hedging, they buy their fuel well in advance at set prices in order to make sure they have a guaranteed supply at a known rate they can budget for. While they achieve some discount this way, the suppliers are always a bit scared of doing too good a deal in case the oil prices lurch upwards suddenly. It’s a bit like fixing your electricity costs for a year or two in advance — it allows you to budget, but you wouldn’t have got that good a deal over the last year because of the artificially depressed energy prices. Any commercial organisation is keen to keep its costs down but hedging their costs hasn’t really saved them a lot. So, short of clogging up the diesel pumps at Asda with rows of buses queueing to get fuel rather than being out on the road, we’re not going to see significant changes to fares as a result of cheap fuel, I’m afraid.

Peter Shipp, Chairman and Chief Executive of East Yorkshire Motor Services, based in Hull, tell us more.

Although there have been cuts in fuel costs, these have been more than outweighed by increases in driver pay needed to attract and retain staff; engineering costs on an ageing fleet; and vehicle upgrade costs to meet the requirements of the PSV Accessibility Regulations. These and other costs are reflected in the latest CPT cost index, a regular biennial summary based on statistics provided by a wide range of operators in a number of regions, so is a pretty accurate reflection of bus industry cost changes.

There is also the cost of increasing traffic congestion (and not only in cities like Hull) resulting in additional driver costs (eg overtime when the last bus on a driver’s shift is late back at base), fuel consumption, and lost passengers due to bus service unreliability.

As to the cost of fuel itself, while our bulk prices have reduced more or less in line with the price at the forecourt, it must not be forgotten that the 20% cut in Bus Service Operator Grant (BSOG) from April 2012 has reduced payments to EYMS by approximately £600,000 a year. BSOG was introduced in the 1960s as Fuel Duty Rebate for local bus services, but renamed as a grant.
several years later. To put it in another way, the cut in BSOG was actually a 59% increase in the fuel duty bus operators pay — an iniquitous and unfair increase, especially when motorists have been spared any recent duty rises. That increased cost has of course flowed through to today and is something that motorists have still not suffered in any way.

There is also the continuing and pernicious effect of the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme — with more and more local authorities cutting reimbursement to the minimum allowed in the DfT Reimbursement Assessment Tool (the RAT). Because the reimbursement is largely based on a ‘bundle’ of adult fares charged by each operator, any reduction in those adult fares (even for a short promotional period) has the effect of cutting the reimbursement still further. As passholders travel free anyway any fares reduction has no effect on their travel habits, so there is no possibility that they will travel more and thus increase the numbers for which we are reimbursed to help offset the general reduction in that reimbursement.

We at EYMS have frozen the majority of our fares since May 2014, but these increasing cost pressures will make a modest fare increase likely soon.

Out of interest, our Commercial Manager has looked at long-term cost and price trends. The RAC Foundation publishes statistics for the cost of motoring & other transport modes over the last ten years. These show that bus fares have risen by 52.17% compared to a rise in motoring costs of 22.59% (which is below Retail Price Index of 34.19%). This cost figure includes a fall in purchase costs of 12.71%. This has a direct influence on bus usage as the National Travel Survey shows a decline in bus trips per annum per person in non-car owning households.

Looking at our EYMS route costing data over the same period, our variable cost per km has increased by 55.4%. We have maintained the network over that period with only a 5% cut in mileage operated despite significant reductions in local authority contracted operation and concessionary reimbursement. The company has maintained its profitability and cash position only by significant reduction in overheads, including depot closures and diversification into other contract operations — but our budget for 2016 is based on making virtually no profit, even with a small fares increase.

James Freeman, Managing Director, First West of England, explains what the situation is for his company.

At First West of England we’ve made tremendous progress in the last couple of years improving our services. During 2015 we’ve invested £13million in 59 brand new environmentally friendly vehicles, including two electric buses, and have ambitious plans with our Local Authority partners to introduce a fleet of 110 bio-methane buses, powered by human and food waste. Such levels of investment, combined with other initiatives such as free Wi-Fi on board our buses, m-Ticketing, and significant fares reductions in 2014 have resulted in record levels of passenger growth. Indeed, some 70,000 additional passengers are travelling with us each week, a 25% increase!

Whilst the oil price is currently relatively low, it is only around 15% of our cost base. We take a long-term approach and ‘hedge’ our fuel purchases in advance to protect our business and our customers from significant fluctuations in fuel prices, particularly increases. Unfortunately, it will be some time before we start to feel the similar benefit of the low pump prices that motorists have been enjoying. In addition, given almost every other cost associated with running buses is increasing — wage costs in particular — we simply cannot justify introducing wholesale reductions in fares in the West of England.
Once upon a time bus drivers were required to show an ability to tame a 10-ton monster on the road and be able to drive it safely, competently and to time. You had little or no contact with passengers, and you drove smoothly not really to suit the passengers but to keep on good terms with your conductor who was dealing with ‘the enemy’ down the back. Machismo was a greater quality than customer service.

Happily all that has changed: the physical effort involved in driving a bus is now minimal, but keeping us passengers on side is all-important.

Carole Hind’s employer, trentbarton, which modestly styles itself as ‘the really good bus company’, looks at potential drivers’ personality and ability to get on well with people before it considers whether they can make it through the driving school. Nonetheless it was Carole’s love of driving that brought her to

What makes a prize-winning driver?

trentbarton in February 2010. Both she and her husband Paul had driven cash vans for a security firm and had been made redundant. So they both applied to work at trentbarton. As it happened, when I met Carole on her break at Derby bus station, along with managing director Jeff Counsell, Paul was also on his break and we all sat down together for a coffee and a chat.

Carole had worked in an office for 14 years and ‘hated every minute of it’. She was much happier out on the road. I asked her if she preferred driving cash or driving passengers; she reckoned driving cash was actually less of a risk than driving passengers, though agreed with my suggestion that cash didn’t tend to answer back! Five months after passing out through trentbarton’s driving school, and spending her first few weeks out on the road with a mentor, Carole transferred from local bus work on to the prestigious Red Arrow Nottingham-Derby direct service. The frequency was being increased from every 15 minutes to every 10, so more drivers were needed. The service then ran beyond Derby to Chesterfield, but as any closure on the M1 could lead to traffic chaos on either leg of the route the Derby-Chesterfield service is now a separate route. Carole still drives both.

A very recent upgrade to Red Arrow has brought in some new, very impressive, extra long three-axle coaches, which Carole loves driving. Despite their extra length they have steering on the back axle as well as the front at low speeds, making them remarkably manoeuvrable for all their massive size: ‘you can turn them on a sixpence’, she says.

Getting Carole to tell me what makes a prize-winning driver is very difficult. I ask her if she has many challenging passengers. ‘Not really’, she says. Maybe this is down to the sort of people that use the Red Arrow, she thinks, and shrugs when Jeff Counsell suggests it may be down to the way she treats them. ‘Some people say I’ve got a nice smile’, she says. She has: she’s not stopped smiling since we met. Husband Paul tells me that when she smiles like that at home she’s usually after something...

Carole is like many people you meet in Derby: self-effacing yet naturally friendly. ‘You’re obviously a “people person”?’ I suggest. ‘I never used to be’, she admits. ‘But you get to know your regular passengers. That makes you sociable.’ trentbarton runs mystery passenger audits, and Jeff tells me Carole scores consistently highly on them.

Carole finally tells me that giving passengers a ‘safe, pleasant and comfortable journey’ is her first priority. I ask her what she most likes about the job. ‘The variety’, she says. ‘Every day is different, and most days I drive to Chesterfield as well as Nottingham.’ She is very quick to tell me the worst aspect of the job: ‘Other idiots in the road!’ ‘Oh!’, she adds: ‘that makes it sound like I’m an idiot as well! You know what I mean…’ I do. She doesn’t find the passengers a trial, though she doesn’t volunteer to drive the late-night Night Owl journeys on Fridays and Saturdays. Nottingham is a popular nightclub spot especially for students and she is concerned that alcohol can make some late-night passengers difficult to deal with. Night Owl journeys are run by drivers who actually want to drive them. Otherwise she works a variety of hours: the first coach out is 05.30 and on Friday nights the last coach is not in till 01.30.

One of the hardest things about the job, she says, is learning all the different types of ticket you’re likely to encounter. An added complication is that Nottingham City Council has decided that as the Red Arrow is a premium service, and as there are other conventional bus routes between the two cities it need not pay for concessionary travel on the route, whereas Derby will continue to do so. This means concessionary passes will be valid on journeys out of Derby but not for the return trip.
The Red Arrows’ drivers’ job is made a bit easier by having customer assistants who sell tickets to waiting passengers at Nottingham and Derby bus stations. This was introduced to speed up boarding times in the peaks, but is now done throughout the day. The service is a very busy one and even as I stand at the departure bay in Derby at round 11.00am there is a steady stream of passengers for each departure, even with a frequency of every 10 minutes. Carole’s due to drive to Nottingham on the 11.10 so I’m tagging along for the ride.

The customer assistants at Derby are polite, friendly and efficient, and it all adds to the perception of a friendly and efficient service. The coach is scheduled to take 35 minutes to Nottingham: it’s slower than the train, but cheaper, the bus stations at either end are much more convenient for the shops than the railway stations (Derby’s is particularly inconvenient, and Nottingham’s not a lot better) the coaches are very comfortable and the wifi is free, and quick too. You can also charge your phone as you travel.

With passengers already having tickets in the main, Carole’s interaction with them is brief, but everyone is treated to that kind smile and a cheery ‘Good morning’. Despite having 57 seats and it being a slack time of day, the coach is at least three quarters full as Carole prepares to reverse off the stand at Derby bus station spot on at 11.10. However an elderly lady rolls up just before Carole closes the door and clambers up the steps on to the coach. Clearly one of Carole’s ‘regulars’, she greets her like a friend, and Carole has to wait while the lady makes the long walk to a vacant seat towards the rear of our busy, and very long, coach, so we leave a couple of minutes late, at 11.12.

She is true to her word: her driving is smooth, safe and comfortable with gentle acceleration and braking and no antics going round roundabouts. °°°

‘Good morning’. Despite having 57 seats and it being a slack time of day, the coach is at least three quarters full as Carole prepares to reverse off the stand at Derby bus station spot on at 11.10. However an elderly lady rolls up just before Carole closes the door and clambers up the steps on to the coach. Clearly one of Carole’s ‘regulars’, she greets her like a friend, and Carole has to wait while the lady makes the long walk to a vacant seat towards the rear of our busy, and very long, coach, so we leave a couple of minutes late, at 11.12.

The new coaches are very comfortable and attractive inside with red ‘mood lighting’ along the gangway and moquette seats trimmed with red leather. They are very quiet and smooth, and Carole manoeuvres it deftly out of Derby bus station, which despite being recently built is not the easiest place to drive in and out of, into the pouring rain. She is true to her word: her driving is smooth, safe and comfortable with gentle acceleration and braking and no antics going round roundabouts. Not that she hangs about either and she gets us into Nottingham Victoria bus station in the requisite 35 minutes. The coach has a good audio-visual announcement system that tells you to fasten your seat belt as it pulls out of the bus station. Not only does it announce the next stop but gives a bit of useful extra information about each. Not that there are many stops: first stop out of Derby is the Queens Medical Centre in Nottingham, which, the system tells me, is where I should get off if I want to go to the University. Upper Parliament Street is by far the most popular stop, where most people get off, leaving a few of us stalwarts to carry on to Victoria bus station.

Red Arrow is certainly an excellent way of travelling between the two cities in style and comfort, and Carole, despite her modesty, is a worthy award winner. In fact her modesty probably says it all: she has no special technique for winning awards. In her own words she ‘just gets on with the job’, but in so doing makes people’s days with her friendly greeting and winning smile. And does so with consummate professionalism.
UK Bus Awards

The UK Bus Awards is an annual awards scheme which commemorates the best in the British bus industry and celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2015.

Recognising the contribution the awards scheme makes towards driving up quality and standards for bus passengers, Bus Users has been involved in judging some of the categories for many years now. Our input has ensured that the passenger perspective is always considered and our mystery passenger work, where we have gone to check out some of the companies and people nominated for awards, has affected the outcome of the awards over the years. In particular we have been very much involved in the Top National Bus Driver Award, given in memory of the late Chief Executive of Go-Ahead Group, Chris Moyes.

Carole Hind, as described, was a worthy winner of the National Bus Driver Gold Award but the runners up were all excellent and came close. The Silver Award went to Denis McMahon, Abellio Surrey, who drives on services in the area of Bus Users’ head office in Shepperton and has made a real name for himself in the local community. The Bronze Award went to Phil Rowson, Nottingham City Transport. Finalists were David Skitt, Arriva Midlands; Daniel Curry, Arriva North East; Zachary Narvaez, Brighton & Hove; Chris Richmond, Konectbus and Keith Renshaw, Transdev Keighley & District.

The Gold Award for Bus Operator of the Year is considered the most prestigious award of the scheme; it went to Reading Buses, which has worked very hard at improving things for passengers with many innovations and a high-quality service. The Silver Award went to another operator known for its excellence, Brighton & Hove Bus and Coach Company, while the bronze award went to a small independent operator, Safeguard Coaches, which as well as running coaches runs a very highly-regarded, and very long-established, local bus service in Guildford.

To mark the 20th year of the UK Bus Awards, a 20th Anniversary Special award was awarded to Ray Stenning, Director of Best Impressions, for his immense and pioneering contribution to design in the bus industry. Ray is responsible for many bus liveries and a range of award-winning marketing campaigns for bus operators up and down the country. He has long advised and urged the industry towards a positive and empowering style of communicating with staff and the outside world.

The accolade of Services to the Industry went to Dr William Wright, founder of the Ballymena-based Wrightbus manufacturer, renowned not least for building the New Routemaster bus for London and the Streetlite micro hybrid bus. William began his career working in his father’s shed behind their house at Warden Street in Ballymena in the 1940s. Now in his late 80s, he still turns up for work every day and is known for his innovation, particularly in hybrid drive technology.

The Go-Ahead Group won ten of the awards, Stagecoach followed by winning seven awards, including Young Manager of the Year which went to Martin Gibbon, who runs the company’s Winchester and Andover depots.
Those of us not lucky enough to live in London have looked on enviously, as since 2003 users of London’s buses, Underground trains, trams, light rail, national rail and even river boats have been able to use a single piece of plastic to pay for every journey they make. Oystercard has been a tremendous success; in the first 10 years some 60 million were issued.

Transport for London encouraged the use of Oystercards by giving people hefty discounts for using them, and eventually removing the ability to pay cash to travel on a bus or tram altogether. Bus Users has spoken out on numerous occasions about the difficulties created by Transport for London’s totally cash-free bus service. But Oyster is popular not just because people have been forced into using them; they make public transport so simple to use and speed it up too. No wonder we’d all like Oystercards where we live too.

Yet many of us are still waiting, and those of us unlucky enough to have to pay for our journey still end up buying a packet of mints on the way to the bus stop to avoid being snarled at by the driver for handing over a £10 note.

Smartcards have been around for a long time in places other than London. However a Government-sponsored programme called ITSO, to make sure smartcards are compatible across the country, has been slow to deliver. Transport for London gave up waiting, which is why Oystercard only works in London: it is incompatible with ITSO. And while all of us would love to have smartcards, the cost and complexity of them is something bus companies working commercially have found hard to justify: especially when it makes it easier for us to use someone else’s bus as well as their own.

The major bus operators have now introduced smart multi-operator bus ticketing in all nine of England’s ‘smart city regions’, which account for around 15 million people. A similar project is now under way for Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen. But just as ITSO smartcards are at last beginning to appear in bigger quantities, it seems they might soon be a thing of the past. Other technologies have been developed, not least mobile phone applications, and now it looks like contactless bankcards may be the future.

Contactless bankcards are becoming more and more commonplace, and more people are getting used to using them to make small transactions. Around 76 million contactless cards are in use in the UK and nearly a billion pounds a month is spent contactlessly. Again London has led the way in their use for public transport. Anywhere you can use an Oystercard, you can now use a contactless bankcard.

Now the ‘Big Five’ transport groups are working on a scheme to bring contactless travel to all 32,000-plus British buses outside London by 2022. The business case to offer cashless travel for those who want it, and capped pay-as-you-go-fares in all urban areas, is expected to be completed by late spring 2016. Government legislation would be needed to ensure contactless ticketing was offered by all 1,200 bus operators.

Transport Minister Andrew Jones said: ‘By working together, industry, city regions and government have been able to ensure more and more people can use smart ticketing to get around. We are determined to continue driving progress so passengers get the quick and simple journeys that they want and deserve.’

While Bus Users has welcomed the scheme, it wants to see a level playing field for smaller operators, who might find the start-up costs prohibitive, so that passengers don’t find themselves inconvenienced. The organisation is also concerned that passengers without access to bank accounts should not be excluded.

Chief Executive Claire Walters said: ‘Feedback from passengers suggests that smart ticketing will make it easier for many passengers to access services and plan their journeys and, in many cases, may even reduce travel times.’ She added, however, that: ‘Any system of smart ticketing must accommodate the significant number of passengers without bank accounts. One of the biggest benefits of bus travel is that it is socially inclusive, and any scheme that is eventually introduced must be accessible to everyone.’
The Government is shortly to introduce its Buses Bill, which, according to Andrew Jones, is the ‘first bus-specific legislation in living memory’.

The Bill, he says, has been informed by three principles:

• that people using buses is a good thing;
• local areas should have the best possible tools for supporting and increasing that bus usage;
• the principle of devolution.

We would hardly disagree with the first of these. Bus services, says Mr Jones, offer ‘huge public benefits’. He echoed what Bus Users and many others have been saying for a long time: bus services help people get to the shops and to work, boosting the economy; they enable people to visit friends and family and they reduce air pollution.

Given that Government says it wants to see people using buses, local areas should have the ‘best possible tools for supporting and increasing that bus usage’. Some places have seen decline, others have seen increases. ‘Either way’, says the Minister, ‘it’s clear that the tools local areas have at their disposal to increase bus usage, such as the Quality Contracts — introduced in 2001 but still never successfully used — are insufficiently effective’. The Bill will introduce new options for local areas to take up if they wish.

Devolution is an underlying theme of the current Government. Devolution deals have been agreed in a number of areas, including Manchester, Liverpool and Sheffield and, says Mr Jones, they need greater choice over how local transport works, such as linking bus routes to local economic development, including new housing and new business parks.

The Bill will also include a requirement for operators to make data about routes, fares and times open and accessible. ‘It is in everyone’s interests for people to know as much as possible about the bus services in their area’ he said, and such data will enable app makers to develop journey planning products that ‘give people the confidence to leave the car at home and take the bus instead’.

New partnership arrangements

The Bill will introduce new partnership arrangements to enable local authorities and bus operators to agree standards for all services in their area, including a focus on frequency and reliability or setting emissions standards. They will be able to introduce common branding, marketing and ticketing rules over a wider geographical area.

‘This new partnership approach won’t be right for every area’, he says. ‘And sometimes, there will be a case for more radical change.’ This would give powers to introduce features that can be difficult to deliver in a fully deregulated market, such as a single fare structure across different operators and transport modes.
The bus stop is a crucial feature of any bus journey; we walk to it, we wait at it and we (used to) queue at it. It’s where we board the bus and, if we’re lucky, we shelter, sit, and maybe absorb various bits information. But what if we had no bus stop, or we had to walk half a mile or more along a bus route to find one?

Ever since working in the Traffic Office ‘Stops and Stands Section’ of London Transport, I have wondered why some places have long gaps between stops, and how rarely stops are relocated to somewhere more convenient.

In my early career I was brought up on the Department of the Environment’s Circular 82/73 ‘Bus Operation in Residential and Industrial Areas’ of 1973. There was a section on the spacing and siting of bus stops stating that: ‘on average bus stops will be spaced at 2 to 3 to the kilometre (4 to 5 to the mile).’

Transport for London’s guidance remains similar some 40 years later. It wants the ‘bus network to run within about a five minute walk of homes’, around 400m at normal walking speed. But does ‘the bus network to run’ mean bus stops?

Of London’s 19,000 bus stops, six are ‘mine’ — I even arranged for the bus numbers at one stop to be painted on the pavement to encourage parallel queues. I’ve since found it difficult to get the long gaps between stops filled.

**Beware Parish/Town Councils**

In the 1970s my parents retired to Much Needing. It had a level crossing at its centre with bus stops on the far side. If the barriers were down, alighting passengers had to wait until the barriers were raised again for the bus to reach the next stop. Much Needing Parish Council rejected my suggestion that buses could stop before the barriers, on the basis that they would lose three on-street car parking spaces!

I once suggested that Little Doing County Council close a half-mile gap between stops in a town’s residential area. The Town Council said there was nowhere safe for stops and because the Town Council refused, the County Council refused. After my ‘Stage 2 complaint’ it was agreed that there should be stops: funding them, of course, was another matter.

**Bus stops... more please**

Bus User member **David Hurdle** looks back at the humble bus stop. While some of the place names have been changed, the stories are all real.
Every little helps
In one town, it was a requirement of planning permission for a new Tesco that an additional bus stop be provided. The store was finally opened without the bus stop and although one was eventually erected some two years later, it was in the wrong place.

To stop or not to stop
One particular National Trust site served by buses attracts thousands of visitors each year. There are no actual stops but the site is shown as a timing point in the bus timetable so buses stop at the driver’s discretion. But how do boarding passengers know where to wait when there is no hard standing, no street lighting, 60mph traffic and, of course, no information?

Raised kerbs
The proliferation of raised kerbs at bus stops means that low floor ‘easy access’ buses often can’t pull onto them properly; yellow lines sometimes finish too close to a stop and even legally parked cars can prevent the bus’s door from lining up with the raised kerb. With a rapidly ageing population we need bus stops that are close to people’s homes and usable.

I had to resort to the complaints procedure when I raised one example of this with a county council. They eventually agreed to provide a bus cage, but with the budget for the next two years already spoken for, it could take some time.

Take a stance
Another basic need is for information at bus stations. At Snoring-on-Sea I knew where I was going and I knew the route number, but there was nothing to tell me which stop to use.

On a visit to the Scottish town of Doonowt a few months ago, I had the same problem. The bus station had plenty of maps, timetables and digital displays, but nothing to tell you which stop (or stance, to use Scottish parlance) to go to for your chosen route.

In both cases, however, the councils readily agreed that more information was needed.

A sheltered life
When council staff decide that a bus shelter is needed at a particularly busy bus stop, why do they never seem to consider whether it might need a larger than standard shelter? Time and again I see bus stops with shelters that simply aren’t big enough to accommodate the number of waiting passengers.

Persevere
Bus Users’ Good Practice Guide has a section on bus stops and bus stations, and recognises that ‘bus stops are an integral part of every bus journey’ and that they should be ‘easily accessible and well situated’.

I would urge Members to audit their local area for ‘missing stops’, raised kerbs that can’t be served, and bus stations that don’t assist you in finding your stop. And please, persevere with your councils: I think it’s time to get back to basics.
Barclay Davies, Deputy Director for Bus Users Cymru, takes a rigorous look at the new fully mobile website from Stagecoach

Stagecoach is the operator of my local bus services, so I was intrigued last December to see a press release announcing the launch of a new website promising:

- a new, fully mobile site, designed to meet customer needs
- improved journey planner allowing passengers to search for journeys and buy tickets online
- new fare calculator, personalised timetables and search for your nearest bus stop option
- improved accessibility for users with visual impairment

So how good is it?
First impressions, it’s pretty good.

The Journey planner is clear, intuitive and easy to use. You can set up a regular trip as a favourite journey and even create a PDF that you can save/print and take with you so that when you are out and about you can check on how you can make your journey. You are encouraged to register and set up your home and work locations and can click on links to ‘get me home’ or ‘get me to work’ and quickly find the next bus.

Another useful addition is that when you search for a particular journey, it alerts you to any potential disruption. There’s also a tool to find your nearest bus stop, showing you on an interactive map where the stops are so that if you are in an unfamiliar town, you can work out where to go to catch your bus.
The site offers what users have been regularly telling us they wanted at our Your Bus Matters events, an online fares calculator. Rail users have been able to get this information for a number of years and some other bus operators offer this, but this tool is a welcome addition for passengers trying to figure out which is the cheapest way to travel. It will show you the price of your ticket and it will also allow you to click on the ticket type and launch a PDF of a map of the ticket boundaries: ideal for when you want to make several journeys but are unsure if there is a ticket that covers these.

If I search from my home to Hereford it shows me the cost of a single ticket £17.50 and a return ticket at £27.40 but highlights the Best Value ticket, South Wales Explorer ticket at £7.50!

The site is accessible and meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. It’s possible to change text size, colour as well as background colours by altering the preferences or options in your browser ensuring accessibility for users like me with poor eyesight and for those who are colour blind.

What about when things go wrong? Well, there is a section on contacting Stagecoach and they detail contact numbers for items of lost property, their Customer Charter, Conditions of carriage and code of practice including details of the respective Bus Users offices in England, Scotland and Wales if users are unhappy with the operator’s response.

What could be better? An app. I find the apps I have for other services very useful and whilst the website looks OK on my phone, it is a little bit fiddly and could benefit from an app. Stagecoach say an app will be launched in 2016, so I look forward to that.

The Journey Planner only shows Stagecoach services and sometimes passengers need the services of more than one operator. When I searched from my home to Penarth I was expecting it to show me how I could get to Cardiff using Stagecoach services and then use Cardiff Bus service to travel from Cardiff to Penarth using a multi operator ticket, but it just told me that the Journey was not found. I was able to find relevant bus times on Traveline.

Inputting the details of travelling from Cardiff to Gloucester, which you can do entirely on Stagecoach services, it shows me the times but tells me to check the prices with the bus driver. It seems that the fares option will only show if you are travelling within one fare area. It doesn’t give you the option to plan a return journey, which can be frustrating.

The website is part of a three-year, £11m digital investment strategy which includes investment in delivering real time information and improving options for users to purchase their tickets.

The website is part of a three-year, £11m digital investment strategy which includes investment in delivering real time information and improving options for users to purchase their tickets.
John Hellewell
Chelsea Pensioner

We talk to John Hellewell, bus lover and long-standing member of Bus Users, to find out what public transport means to a Chelsea Pensioner

At 72 years of age, John Hellewell is one of the youngest Chelsea Pensioners currently living at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, London: at 6ft 2in he misses out on being the tallest by just half an inch!

John always wanted to join the army. His grandfather, Charles Matthew Middleton, served with the Royal Army Medical Corps in Gallipoli and John himself served in England, Wales and Germany with the Royal Artillery Army Air Corps before being medically discharged. As well as his family history, his interest in the armed services was borne out of a passion for travelling and for transport: ‘I didn’t get very far when I was in the army,’ he says with a rueful smile, ‘but I’m making up for it now!’

He meets me at Victoria Station in his full Scarlet, the iconic uniform of the Chelsea Pensioners, and his keen interest in transport becomes immediately apparent. The Scarlet uniform and John’s natural air of authority attracts a woman with a map in her hand who asks for directions. John knows the area and transport networks like the back of his hand and soon points her in the right direction.

We follow and head for the number 170 out of Victoria. When it arrives the two other men waiting ahead of us at the bus stop automatically make way for John, his uniform having the usual effect. The Scarlet has been proudly worn by Chelsea Pensioners since the Royal Hospital opened its doors in 1692. For ceremonial purposes, the nine button coat is worn with the Tricorne Hat, white gloves and dark blue tweed trousers with a thin scarlet stripe running down the outer seam. Today, John wears it with the more modest Shako cap which also accompanies the Blue uniform of the Chelsea Pensioners, worn in and around the Hospital.

To become a Chelsea Pensioner and live at the Royal Chelsea Hospital you have to have served in the British Army as a soldier, and be over 65 with no dependents. Each Pensioner contributes financially by either surrendering their military pension and their war disability pension — if they have one — or by making a financial contribution in lieu, depending on their means. There are currently around 290 Chelsea Pensioners including 13 women, with the numbers set to increase to 310 by the summer and a waiting list for places.

The Royal Hospital itself is stunning, founded by Charles II and designed by Sir Christopher Wren some 300 years ago. The Grade I and II listed site sits in the heart of London and boasts a Club House and an incredible Great Hall where the Pensioners take their meals, a Chapel, Museum, Gym and Infirmary. The grounds are beautiful and the Hospital plays host to weddings and corporate events to supplement its income. There is a constant stream of activities and trips out including music evenings and parades, and every member of the Royal Hospital has their own Freedom Pass so they can get out and about independently.

‘When I was a Standard Bearer with the Royal Artillery Association I used to travel down to the Royal Chelsea Hospital for Gunner Sunday every year and take part in the parades. I got to know quite a few of the Chelsea Pensioners and always thought to myself, “that’s the life for me”’.

John was born in Sheffield and lived there with his wife of 25 years who sadly died in 1991. After caring for his mother, who died in 2010, John decided it was...
time to make the move: ‘It was the best decision I could have made. Being a Chelsea Pensioner is a way of life, there’s great camaraderie and real opportunity for travel and new experiences. I love it.’

The first thing John did when he arrived in London was to get to know the area and the bus routes. In full Scarlet, he would jump on the number 360 bus to Elephant & Castle and head to Vauxhall where he’d walk down to the South Bank to Tower Bridge, up to Liverpool Street Station and from there catch the number 11 bus back. ‘It was a great way to see the sights and get to know the area. You attract so much interest in your uniform and people have so much respect for it. I would constantly be stopped on my walk by people asking to take my photo or to have a photograph taken with me.’

Outside his berth at the Hospital (at the time it was built, the Navy was the dominant service) John proudly displays the Standard he paraded for Prince Charles when he went to Dunkirk in 2000 with the Royal Artillery Association. The berths run the length of the wide corridors that make up each ‘ward’ and act as comfortable, communal seating areas. The berths are bright, self-contained and private with huge windows overlooking the central parade ground with its gleaming, golden statue of the Hospital’s founder, King Charles II.

There’s plenty of structure to life at the Hospital which naturally suits the veterans who live there. There’s a constant stream of activities including the bowls club which takes John all over the country and, every other year, abroad including to the Algarve and Spain in 2014; this year they’re off to Cyprus. While aeroplanes are just about the only form of transport John isn’t keen on (‘at 6ft 2in it’s a bit of a squeeze’, he says) he’s a huge fan of pretty much everything else: ‘I love buses and public transport. I used to drive in the sixties before my eyes became too bad and I was told I had to stop. But I probably would have used public transport anyway, especially back then in Yorkshire. You could get from one boundary, through the city centre and across to the other boundary for 5p and buses ran every three to four minutes and were always full.

‘Nowadays I travel all over the place thanks to my Freedom Pass — it means everything to me. I’m an island man and I love the coast, so I often travel from places like Bournemouth to Brighton along the coast and from Brighton to Poole. Each time I go to the North East I do another little journey from Newcastle: I’ve been to Berwick, Sunderland and Redcar, and down to Whitby, Scarborough and Hull. I’ve been over the Humber Bridge to Grimsby and Cleethorpes — I’ve done all that.’

Not all the travel is purely for pleasure. The veterans at the Hospital use their Freedom Passes to travel to and from service events. On the Saturday marking the 64th anniversary of the Queen’s Accession to the throne, John and 12 other Chelsea Pensioners made the trip to Green Park for the 41 Gun Salute fired by the King’s Troop Royal Horse Artillery. When transport is laid on by the Hospital for a specific event, John and his friends often make their own way back so they can choose when to travel and what route to take. ‘It gives us complete independence — I’d be devastated if I didn’t have my Freedom Pass. I’d love to see more people use public transport, especially buses, which is why I’m a member of Bus Users. Since I joined I’ve been able to travel to every single AGM bar the last two!’

John has the perfect balance in his life. Being a Chelsea Pensioner and living at the Royal Chelsea Hospital gives him a great sense of community, structure and belonging, and his Freedom Pass gives him just that: freedom.
Ian Jones is a Director and Solicitor with Backhouse Jones. He takes an unorthodox approach to his work with the transport industry and, together with his partner James Backhouse, has created the UK’s leading law firm for the commercial road and passenger transport industries. When I met up with him, he explained his company’s unique ethos.

Ian met his partner, James Backhouse at a law firm where both were trainee solicitors. James’s Grandfather had represented the British Government during the Nuremburg trials and before that had been involved in the Road Traffic Act of 1930. The Backhouse family business was started in 1891, so they’ve been advising transport operators since before the diesel engine was invented. James went on to work for the family law firm from a terraced house in Blackburn while Ian went to a commercial practice in Manchester, where he became a partner in 1997.

Things really started to change late one Friday afternoon, recalls Ian, when a call was put through to him from a very large bus operator. It was a chance call that led to a meeting and a handshake. ‘Despite the fact that we’ve never had a contract — a good contract won’t stop a bad person — I’m still acting for them some 24 years later’, he says. ‘That was my introduction to the transport industry.’

In 1998, James’ father died and so James invited Ian to join him and his twin brother in building a new brand within the commercial road transport industry, primarily the bus industry. ‘It was a charm offensive — I provided the charm and they provided the offensive!’ he jokes. James recognised that we had different but complementary skills; he’s a brilliant lawyer and I’m strong on marketing, and between the two of us we have achieved something we could never have achieved on our own.’

Ian recognises that going to a lawyer is a ‘distress’ purchase — it’s not something you choose to do. So when you have to go to a lawyer, he says, you want good quality, affordable, advice. Lawyers, he admits, have the reputation of being ‘fusty, conservative, aloof, expensive: it’s a failing in the profession but that is the perception and it needs changing. So that’s what we set out to do.

‘Lawyers used to be judged by how they reacted to a problem. If a wheel fell off a bus, you’d go to see the lawyer and he’d sit down with you, work out what the issues were, then advise you on how to defend yourself at court. You’d judge him by whether he turned up on time and called you back, what the outcome of the case was and how much he charged. But we thought, rather than judge a lawyer by how he reacts to a problem, you should judge a lawyer by how he anticipates a problem — prevention being better than cure.’

The Backhouse Jones practice can claim a huge body of expertise. It takes part in around 200 public enquiries each year, and Ian has personally participated in 50
inquests. ‘I’ve seen, first hand, the stress and emotion of everyone involved. I’ve seen hardened professionals in tears and I’ve seen the impact of tragic accidents on the family and friends of those involved. I can tell you that they all have a single defining characteristic — no-one intended it to happen.

‘We all want to improve safety in transport’, Ian continues, ‘so we looked to develop services that would be affordable but would raise the benchmark. Ahead of a public enquiry, my colleague did all his preparation, improving systems, putting a programme of training in place, and generally raising standards of safety in the organisation. This was all acknowledged at the enquiry and the client kept his licence. But when my colleague submitted his invoice, the client queried the cost. The client had waited until there was a firefight, had called us in to put out the flames and when all that was left were the charcoal embers, he’d complained about the price of the water.

‘I knew there had to be a better way so we developed BACKUP service. We charge a subscription to thousands of operators and in return they receive comprehensive industry specific advice. The cost is negligible but it saves a lot of money when the unexpected happens, and the unexpected does happen. If you think health and safety is expensive, try counting the cost of an accident.’

Operators might not like regulation but, says Ian, ‘it works’. The very first road traffic inquest was held in 1896 when Bridget Driscoll was killed by a motor vehicle. The coroner at the time said, ‘Let us hope this never happens again’, but by 1929 there were 5,900 deaths on the roads of Great Britain. By 1930, when Backhouse represented its first client, the Road Traffic Act was introduced and with it the driving test which became compulsory four years later.

Since that time the number of vehicles on the roads has increased exponentially and yet the number of deaths has decreased, to 1,713 in 2013. ‘It’s still 1,713 too many’, accepts Ian, ‘but it’s the lowest number of deaths on our roads since records began — that’s regulation working. We use our expertise to get the systems in place and build good habits so they have no need to call upon our professional services as a distress purchase. We’re trying to change the perception of the legal profession within the bus industry — we’re selling the sizzle and the steak! We’re there for our clients round the clock and we provide management, leadership and transport manager training and maintenance, all of which raises the benchmark for everyone in the industry.’

He recognises the bus industry is led by ‘some amazing people who don’t just view it as a job, they view it as a vocation. He recognise the bus industry is led by some amazing people who don’t just view it as a job, they view it as a vocation. You can see it at the UK Bus Awards and it’s reflected in the satisfaction rates, which are currently at 98.5%! That’s not an accident: there are five billion passenger bus journeys made in Great Britain each year and the work that goes on behind the scenes to get those vehicles out is exceptional. Standards have risen dramatically since I was a child in terms of safety, comfort and technology. That’s happened through clear leadership and the bus industry doesn’t get as much credit as it should. What they’ve done is working and despite ever-changing legislation, they’re continually looking to drive up standards.

‘The reputation of the bus industry is a bit like the BBC — people will always complain about the BBC so the best way to show its value would be to turn it off for a fortnight. I’m not suggesting we stop running buses, but you just don’t appreciate what you’ve got until it’s gone. If you asked anyone what they thought of the legal profession they would tell you lawyers are over-expensive, pontificating parasites, but they’d add that their own lawyer is really quite good. Their view of the profession as a whole is negative, but their view of their own bit of it is good. Their view of the profession as a whole is negative, but their view of their own bit of it is good. It’s the same with the bus industry and yet with trust and public confidence at an all-time low at the moment, buses have a satisfaction record that most MPs and bankers would kill for!

‘As a law firm we market ourselves relentlessly through advertising and sponsorship, but that’s just cave art. More importantly, we get out there and talk to people in the industry, give advice, speak at seminars and offer the best services we can to the industry. Marketing lets people know where to find you, but they won’t keep coming back unless there’s substance to what you have to offer. We want our customers to keep coming back.’

With our meeting nearing an end, the subject somehow turns from public transport to football and we discover we’re not as similar as we first thought. Ian supports Everton, I support Chelsea.

Where’s my bus?
Are there issues about bus travel that you feel strongly about, or have you had an experience as a passenger that you’d like to share? These pages are for our readers’ letters and photos, so we’d love to hear from you.

Paying for passes

I was interested in Simon Norton’s letter concerning concessionary passes in Bus User 60.

I am a keen supporter and user of the pass, and I am convinced that there is a growing feeling amongst pass users that they would prefer to make a contribution to their fares rather than seeing the continued reduction and cancellation of services, particularly in rural areas.

Eighteen months ago I was in correspondence with the then transport minister. My suggestion was that the pass should be subject to an annual fee, similar to a senior railcard, and at a similar price — around £30. This would continue to make travel free at the point use, so that users do not have to decide each day whether they can afford an outing, and avoiding any cash handling on the buses. As an alternative I would also suggest a cheap day ticket, up to £1 per day, for use on any operator’s services. In return for this I suggest the 09.30 barrier should be removed: the 09.30 rule seems harsh in areas where services are few, and penalises pass holders who have to go out early, say to a hospital appointment. It also causes a peak, with the first bus after 09.30 often being overcrowded.

My suggestions were rejected by the transport minister, who replied that the whole point of the scheme was that all travel should be free, that the scheme was a great success, that funding was in place for many years, and that there would be no changes.

Many services have been withdrawn, and some companies have gone out of business.

Simon Norton mentions that some counties are trying to redesignate popular summer services as tourist routes. This is against the rules of the scheme — any bus registered as a local service with point-to-point fares should accept the pass. Devon and Cornwall did this with several routes in 2014, and some were the only services for those living along the routes, but by 2015 many of the affected services had been withdrawn due to poor use.

Without some sort of change it seems likely that many pensioners will end up with a bus pass and no bus.

Peter Cowlyn, Wells, Somerset

Response from Bus Users Chief Executive Claire Walters

I’m glad you use your bus pass a great deal, it’s by far the best way to ensure nobody can suggest it’s not useful! We have had the same discussion several times with various suggestions being made, but we are told either that there’s nothing stopping pass-holders from not using their pass and paying full fare now and again or that it would require a change in the law to allow charges to be made in the way you suggest.

With cuts to local authority budgets becoming ever greater, it’s hard not to assume the worst is yet to come. The Department for Transport has accepted a 30% cut in its budget for next year and with the future of the Bus Service Operators’ Grant still under discussion, the picture ahead looks fairly gloomy.

10 out of 10 in Aberdeen

Top marks to Stephen Morris for the article about being a first-time bus user in Aberdeen (Bus User 60). Most amusing. And also very, very sad. Perhaps another jaunt in six months’ time to see what’s changed might be called for?

John Rose, Birmingham

Views and opinions expressed in ‘Have your say’ are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect those of Bus Users UK. The editor reserves the right to shorten or edit letters.
Fares not fair
As readers of Bus User will undoubtedly attest, the humble British bus shelter seldom has pretensions to architectural distinction. A vital facility yes... but a thing of magic, no.

So while enduring the extended waits resulting from the latest round of service cuts, British bus passengers may have extra time to envy their opposite numbers in some of the countries of the former Soviet Union, whose extraordinary shelter architecture is illustrated in a newly issued book on Soviet Bus Stops by a Canadian photographer, Christopher Herwig. Published by Fuel Publishing (ISBN 978-0-9931911-0-7), it contains 147 images of often flamboyant examples drawn from this little-known but remarkable architectural genre. ‘The local bus stop proved to be fertile ground for local artistic experimentation in the Soviet period,’ we are told, ‘and was built seemingly without design restrictions or budgetary concerns.

The result is an astonishing variety of styles and types, from the strictest brutalism to exuberant whimsy.’ Sadly, many appear now to be in a poor state of repair.

But while on the subject of exuberant whimsy, it would be wrong to imagine that Britain is entirely without anything comparable to offer. For example, at a place called Fairy Cross in north Devon, near Bideford, passengers wait in a matching pair of hexagonal stone pavilions, with Gothic arched doors and windows and ‘witch’s hat’-style slated roofs, each topped by a weather vane bearing a silhouette of the eponymous fairy. Regrettably, the quality of the roadside infrastructure is not matched by the frequency of the service, since only five buses each way call here on weekdays and none on Sundays. Are these Britain’s most attractive bus shelters? If there are rivals for that title, no doubt Bus Users members will be the first to say.

John Cartledge, Borehamwood

Bus Users on social media
Here’s a selection of some of the online posts and comments we’ve received over the past few weeks. If you don’t already follow us on Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn then pay us a visit and tell us what you think about buses and passenger service.

As five leading operators announce moves towards Smart ticketing, Alex Hornby of Transdev Blazefield warned on Twitter:

Alex Hornby Integrated ticketing needs to be part of the offer but not top of list. Congestion & punctuality is. Let’s focus on customer demands

Following the story in November of the Belfast bus driver who bought a warm winter coat for a homeless man, another Irish bus driver was photographed doing his own good deed:

The Telegraph Irish bus driver goes viral after kindly tying an elderly woman’s shoes for her

One story that attracted a lot of ‘likes’ covered research from Stagecoach on the costs of Bus travel:

TravelPRNews.com Research reveals #bustravel costs are 55% cheaper than same commute by car @stagecoachgroup

But without question the issue that has got most people talking on social media is cuts to services, cuts to subsidies and local bus consultations. A tweet from Bus Users Oxford sums up the general mood:

Bus Users Oxford @OxfordshireCC cuts will be devastating! @SaveOurBuses_UK!
Membership Matters

Welcome

To new member groups
Lancaster District Bus Users’ Group
West Dorset Western Area Transport Action Group

Bus Users LOCAL GROUPS

Association of Devizes Passengers
BABUS (Bedford Area Bus User’s Society)
www.babus.org.uk
Bath Bus Users Group
chair@bath-bus-users.org.uk
Berkshire Bus Users Group
info@bbug.org.uk
Brighton Area Buswatch
brightonbuswatch@gmail.com
BUGS Bus Users Group Stevenage
www.betterbuses.org.uk
Bus Users Shropshire
bususersshropshire@hotmail.co.uk
Bus Users UK Northampton
arjones@postmaster.co.uk
Bus Users UK Oxford
hughjaeger@hotmail.com
Bus Users West Midlands
philipc.green@yahoo.co.uk
Campaign for Better Transport – Cambs
6 Hertford Street, Cambridge CB4 3AG
Campaign for Better Transport – West Yorkshire
rwilkes@blueyonder.co.uk
Colchester Bus Users Support Group (C-BUS)
peterkay.essex@btinternet.com
Dengie Hundred Bus Users Group (DHBUG)
contact@dhbug.org.uk
Devon Senior Voice Transport Group
Mr John Montgomery, 150 Cleeve Drive, Ivybridge PL21 9DD
East Suffolk Travellers’ Association (ESTA)
The Beehive, Hall Road, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft NR32 3AW
Friends of DalesBus
www.friendsofdalesbus.org.uk
Isle of Wight Bus & Rail Users Group
iwbususers@fsmail.net
Kendal & District Bus Users (KADBUS)
01539 740761
Lancaster District Bus Users’ Group
Jim Davies, lancasterbususers@gmail.com
Lostwithiel Transport Users Group
Prof J Scott CBE, 9 Meadow Breeze, Lostwithiel, Cornwall PL22 0BJ
Milton Keynes Bus Users Group
www.mkbug.co.uk
Norfolk Bus Forum
fedsec@norfolkwi.org.uk
North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum
www.nptf.co.uk
North West Surrey Bus Users Group
mjworeley@btopenworld.com, www.facebook.com/nwsurreybug
Railfuture
www.railfuture.org.uk

Railfuture Severnside
www.railfuture.org.uk/Severnside+Branch
Rame Peninsula Public Transport Users Group
g.cadwallader@btinternet.com
Rural East Lothian Bus Users
www.relbus.org.uk
The Senior Council for Devon Transport
andrea@scfd.org.uk
Southend Area Bus User Group
stephenknightley@hotmail.com
Swindon Climate Action Network
www.swindonclimate.org.uk
TransWilts CIC
pauljohnson@transwilts.org
TravelWatch NorthWest
admin@travelwatch-northwest.org.uk
TravelWatch SouthWest
www.travelwatchsouthwest.org
West Cumbria Bus Users Group
David Andrews, tel 01946 695373
West Dorset Western Area Transport Action Group
watag@hotmail.co.uk
Westleigh Residents Association
stephenknightley@hotmail.com
Wirral Transport Users Association
www.wirraltua.org.uk

Joining Bus Users

We always welcome new members; membership is available to anyone who uses buses for whatever purpose. It doesn’t matter if you only use them occasionally. It’s also open to groups of bus users and organisations that share our concern for better public transport.

You can join online (www.bususers.org) and pay by debit card via Paypal, or by Direct Debit. If you wish to pay by BACS, please contact finance@bususers.org for details and, of course, existing members can pay by cheque if you prefer.

Annual subscriptions

£15 for individuals
£10 for senior citizens, under-18s and unwaged.

The subscription for local groups is £20 (£10 in the first year).

Bus companies and local authorities that share our desire to improve communication with passengers and who support the Confederation of Passenger Transport’s Code of Good Practice can take out associate membership; please contact us for details at the address on page 2 or email enquiries@bususers.org.