

Community Bus Report 2018

The Community Bus was set up 35 years ago when the post bus stopped running to help people without transport get to shops and towns. There are weekly services to Framlingham, Stowmarket and Diss, monthly runs to Norwich, Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds and three times a year (May, June and September) there is a trip to Lowestoft.

The Bus is run by a Committee of seven and there are thirteen volunteer drivers who share the journeys between them. More drivers are always needed, so if you can spare some time please consider volunteering.

There has been a small drop in the numbers of passengers over the last year, which has meant that income from fares and donations has dropped slightly. Grant funds are also becoming more difficult to access and although the bus is available (complete with driver) for private hire to groups as an additional way of bringing in funding, the heavy annual maintenance bills for the vehicle means that balancing the books is a constant concern for the Committee.

As part of the operating procedures, each year the Committee try to put some money to one side to build a fund for the eventual replacement of the bus. There is quite a substantial fund in place, but in the last year the Committee were only able to put £5,400 to one side, instead of the usual annual £6,000

At the recent meeting to present the findings of the Worlingworth Survey, there were a couple of comments about the Community Bus;

1) that it is only suitable for older people and no good for those who work. The Committee accept that it is not possible to run a bus for workers, but the bus is available to all ages, with the primary aim being to provide a means of accessing local towns for shops and other services. The bus drivers will also help passengers with luggage to board and disembark from the bus, something that most commercial services would not do.

2) there is no information about the timetable available. This was surprising as the Community Bus is listed in the village newsletter every month with contact details. It is also listed in What's on in Worlingworth and timetables are on the village noticeboard by the Community Centre and on the village website (Click on Useful Information, Transport and Bus Services)

If anyone wants to find out more the Annual General Meeting for the Community Bus will take place at Worlingworth Community Centre on Thursday 17th May at 7.30pm with refreshments being provided afterwards.