

The Fritwell Bus Campaign Report

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Until late 2015 Heyfordian, with subsidies from Oxfordshire County Council, ran a service through Fritwell four days a week (Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays) with more than one bus a day, enabling residents to get to Bicester on some days, Banbury on others and buses going to both places on Saturdays.

All subsidies from OCC were withdrawn in July 2016 and since then only one bus has been provided per week, taking passengers only to Bicester.

The current timetable for the 81 service FINMERE-ARDLEY-BICESTER on Fridays is shown below:

9:45	FINMERE	13:30	BICESTER
9:50	NEWTON PURCELL SHELSWELL INN	13:38	BUCKNELL
9:53	FRINGFORD	13:42	ARDLEY
9:57	HETHE	13:45	FRITWELL
10:00	HARDWICK	13:48	SOULDERN
10:02	STOKE LYNE CHURCH	13:53	STOKE LYNE CHURCH
10:07	SOULDERN	13:55	HARDWICK
10:10	FRITWELL	13:58	HETHE
10:13	ARDLEY	14:02	FRINGFORD
10:17	BUCKNELL	14:05	NEWTON PURCELL SHELSWELL INN
10:25	BICESTER	14:10	FINMERE

EVIDENCE OF ACTUAL USE OF THE CURRENT SERVICE

Since February 2017 a Fritwell resident has been diligently recording the actual numbers using this service (see table **Appendix B**). Further information on usage by individual villages and the variation of usage per day is shown clearly in **Appendix C**

The information shows that during a 6-month period almost 1000 journeys were made on this bus, 43% by Fritwell residents. Other villages with high usage are Fringford 20%, Hethe 14%, Ardley and Finmere 8%.

The outward journey to Bicester is used by an average of 20 passengers with the highest recorded usage being 29 passengers travelling on 28th July. The return journey has an average of almost 18 passengers. The total number of journeys made over the 6 month period is 948, an average of around 38 per service day.

These numbers do not include the various dogs, cats and other pets using the service – mainly going to the vets in Bicester.

The statistics together with the bar chart in Appendix C clearly illustrate consistent, high usage with no evidence of seasonal variation.

THE EFFECT OF THE CUTS

Individual statements from a selection of Fritwell passengers are included in Appendix A.

These personal statements express very clearly the detrimental effect the withdrawal of busses has had on the lives of individuals and the village communities, and the hardship, isolation and loneliness experienced by those who have no access to regular public transport.

The single trip on a Friday has to fit in shopping, banking and business, doctors, dentists and other medical and health appointments, volunteering work, visiting the library and keeping in touch with friends and family. Some limited services and activities for older residents are available in Bicester but are unlikely to be timed to fit with the single 81 service bus currently provided.

One difficulty is the need to incorporate clothes and food shopping into one trip; there is also the difficulty of getting appointments to fit in with the time available in Bicester - around three hours, and the pressure on GPs and dentists to fit appointments around such a limited time period.

A number of people mentioned not being able to get to Banbury market on a Saturday.

One lady said she cannot now attend the Matinee Club on a Thursday which gave her one of the few opportunities to socialise with others for an hour or so. She is lonely and suffering isolation which is causing increased mental and physical health concerns.

Another told us she also shopped for an infirm neighbour but this has been made more difficult with the drastic reductions in the service. It was difficult to fit in all the shopping, banking, medical appointments and other things – and no time left to choose her library book.

One resident commented that she has a large family, two of whom are special needs and have bus passes but of course very little opportunity to use them since the bus only runs once a week. They would like to gain work experience and volunteer to work for charities but the mother cannot fit in lifts for them all the time.

PROPOSAL

We would ask Oxfordshire County Council to look again at the service provision – either to re-start subsidies or to perhaps look at the contract for Heyfordian to expressly provide more bus services via Fritwell.

We would also call on our local County and District Councillors to help Fritwell achieve a more frequent public bus service for residents.

APPENDIX A STATEMENTS FROM A SAMPLE OF BUS USERS ON 81 SERVICE TO BICESTER

BUS USER 1

This user has never owned or driven a car, is very independent and would like to stay that way!

She has been responsible for collecting the passenger numbers for this report – THANKS!

I shop for myself and a friend who is not very mobile. During the time allowed in Bicester I also have to visit the Doctor's Surgery at Montgomery House to collect my prescription medication. In addition, I have doctor's appointments for blood tests, check-ups etc.

I also have to attend a dental practice and optician which, on these days, restricts shopping time.

It's frustrating that I have so little time to choose books from the library.

Some people go into Bicester on the bus to visit their relatives or friends, or to transfer at Manorsfield Road for a bus to Oxford. On those occasions the number of return passengers is less than on the outward journey, as shown on 28th July when 14 people travelled from Fritwell into Bicester but only 6 returned at 1.30 pm.

I think that an extra midweek bus would be appreciated by all. Having consulted one or two of the other users, we would opt for Thursday. On Tuesday, there is a weekly coffee morning in Ardley, and also once a month, on Tuesdays, there is the Forget-me-Not club outing which would mean that 6 potential passengers would be missing from the bus that day.

Heyfordian has a tight schedule for school runs. Would it be possible to have a service which picks up at Fritwell after the morning run, and then returns from Bicester to Fritwell after the afternoon school run? This would give people the opportunity of going to Oxford and returning in time to catch the late afternoon bus from Manorsfield to Fritwell.

BUS USER 2

I have a large family and as they grow up it is hard to support them to access training and college courses or to undertake work experience, and eventually employment.

Two of my children are Special Needs and are now in their twenties. They have Bus Passes but very little opportunity to use them. They have recently been volunteering at a charity shop but the sessions they can attend are very limited by travel arrangements and my availability.

There are no buses to take young people from the village to Banbury and Bicester College and work opportunities depend on owning a car. Some of my children are unlikely to drive or afford a car.

On a Thursday I have to take two of my daughters to college in Banbury and then my sons to the charity shop in Bicester for 10am and then picked up at 1pm. I would love ♥ to see the bus return on Thursdays as this would give me more time to look after my mother in law who is disabled. More buses would also give my sons a chance to gain more skills and greater confidence to cope with adult life.

It would be good to see an extra bus and give more time for elderly and disabled passengers to get what they need and make them feel less isolated, and not the forgotten generation.

Thanks for listening.

BUS USER 3

This user does not drive and says she relies on the bus service to do banking, opticians and dentist appointments, as well as shopping. Says she feels socially isolated and would like to see a bus on Tuesdays as it would give more time to do things and attend local groups and join in sociable activities.

	24 February 2017		03 March 2017		10 March 2017		17 March 2017		24 March 2017		31 March 2017		07 April 2017		21 April 2017		28 April 2017	
Outward Stops	Outward	Return	Outward	Return	Outward	Return	Outward	Return	Outward	Return	Outward	Return	Outward	Return	Outward	Return	Outward	Return
Finmere	2	2	0	0	2	2	-	-	2	3	3	3	2	2			2	2
Newton Purcell	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fringford	4	4	4	3	6	6	2	2	3	4	5	4	4	3	6	3	3	1
Hethe	3	3	3	1	4	2	-	-	2	3	3	3	4	5	3	2	4	3
Hardwick	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stoke Lyne Church	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
Souldern	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Fritwell	7	9	11	9	8	8	9	6	6	5	6	7	12	9	8	9	8	6
Ardley	1	2	1	1	2	2	3	2	-	-	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2
*Highfield	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bucknell	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-
Bicester																		
TOTALS	19	20	20	15	24	22	14	10	14	16	20	20	26	22	21	18	20	15
TOTAL PER DAY	39		35		46		24		30		40		48		39		35	

	05 May 2017		12 May 2017		19 May 2017		26 May 2017		02 June 2017		09 June 2017		16 June 2017		23 June 2017		30 June 2017	
Outward Stops	Outward	Return	Outward	Return	Outward	Return	Outward	Return	Outward	Return	Outward	Return	Outward	Return	Outward	Return	Outward	Return
Finmere	2	2	2	2	-	-	1	1	2	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1
Newton Purcell	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
Fringford	6	3	3	3	5	4	4	4	6	5	5	4	5	3	5	3	4	3
Hethe	3	3	2	4	5	3	4	4	3	1	4	2	2	3	3	4	1	2
Hardwick	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stoke Lyne Church	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Souldern	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	1	-	-
Fritwell	10	7	9	7	4	4	8	7	8	7	8	8	11	9	10	9	12	10
Ardley	3	2	2	2	2	3	4	4	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	-	1	1
*Highfield	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bucknell	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	-
Bicester																		
TOTALS	25	19	21	21	17	16	22	22	24	20	23	19	21	19	21	18	19	17
TOTAL PER DAY	44		42		33		44		44		42		40		39		36	

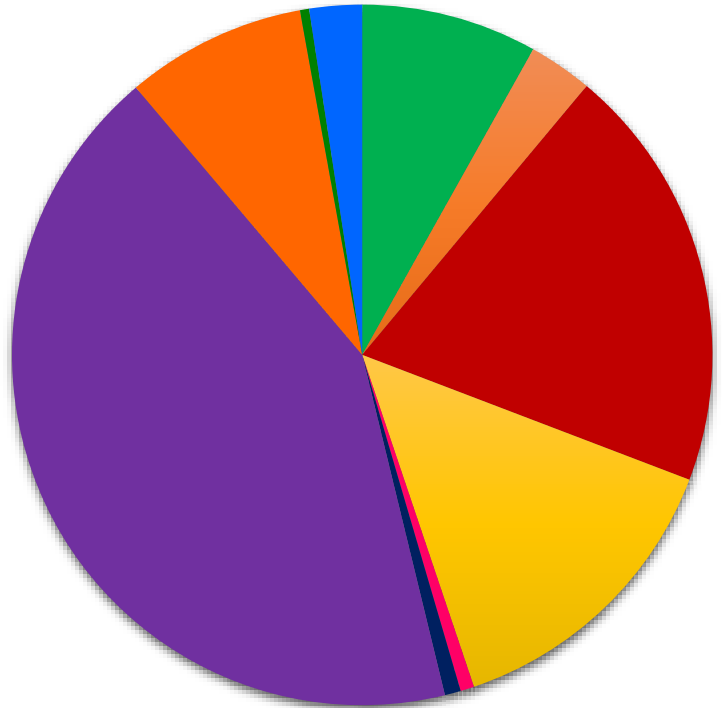
	07 July 2017		14 July 2017		21 July 2017		28 July 2017		04 August 2017		11 August 2017		28 August 2017	
Outward Stops	Outward	Return	Outward	Return	Outward	Return	Outward	Return	Outward	Return	Outward	Return	Outward	Return
Finmere	2	2	1	1	4	4	4	4	1	1	2	2	2	2
Newton Purcell	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-
Fringford	5	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	1	3	3	3	3	3
Hethe	1	1	3	3	4	5	4	4	3	2	1	-	-	1
Hardwick	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stoke Lyne Church	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Souldern	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fritwell	9	8	10	8	9	8	14	6	7	8	8	8	5	5
Ardley	-	2	-	-	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1
*Highfield	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bucknell	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	1	1	1	1
Bicester														
TOTALS	17	16	18	16	22	22	29	20	13	15	18	17	12	13
TOTAL PER DAY	33		34		44		49		28		35		25	

Appendix B

Use of the 81 bus service over 6 months (Feb-Aug)

Overall usage by village

Village	Total trips	%
Finmere	77	8.12%
Newton Purcell	28	2.95%
Fringford	187	19.73%
Hethe	133	14.03%
Hardwick	0	0.00%
Stoke Lyne Church	6	0.63%
Souldern	7	0.74%
Fritwell	404	42.62%
Ardley	79	8.33%
*Highfield	4	0.42%
Bucknell	23	2.43%
Grand total trips	948	



	Outward	Return	Total
Total usage across period:	500	448	948
Average usage per date:	20	17.92	37.92

Total use per day

