

1] the Salisbury & South Wilts District Scout Council covers roughly the area of south Wiltshire which is bordered in the north by the A303 and includes Durrington, Bulford and Amesbury and to the west by the A350 including Tisbury and adjacent villages. The boundaries are not set in stone and membership is open to anyone no matter where they live.

Our Scout District encompasses all or part of four area boards – Amesbury, Salisbury, Southern Wiltshire and South West Wiltshire.

Groups and Units within the various area boards are:

Amesbury	1 st Amesbury 2 nd Bulford 1 st Boscombe Down Bourne Valley Bourne Valley Explorer Scout Unit Salisbury Plain Explorer Scout Unit
Salisbury	2 nd Salisbury 3 rd Salisbury 4 th Salisbury 6 th Salisbury 8 th Salisbury 10 th Salisbury 14 th Salisbury 23 rd Salisbury City Explorer Scout Unit Fisherton Explorer scout Unit Harnham Explorer scout Unit
Southern	Alderbury Downton Laverstock Old Sarum Winterslow Alderbury Explorer Scout Unit Laverstock Explorer Scout Unit Winterslow Explorer Scout Unit
South Western	Tisbury Wilton Wilton Explorer Scout Unit

2] the bid to the Southern Wiltshire area board has been submitted and is recorded as Application Submitted, as at 18th June 2016.

3] At this moment in time I was not considering applying to the Amesbury area board. I am aware that we could apply to three area boards simultaneously. We have four groups and two Explorer Scout Units within that area. The number of members is not great apart from those at Bourne Valley and Bourne Valley Explorer Scout Unit, and I felt we had a better chance of funding from yourselves and the Southern Area Board where most of our groups and larger numbers are situated. If you feel it may be beneficial to apply to Amesbury Area Board as well then I certainly will do. It was similar in respect of the South Western Area Board where there are only two Scout Groups and one Explorer Scout Unit. As you will read later one of those groups now has its own minibus.

4] the lack of available minibuses has always been a problem and this is what prompted us to get a minibus in the first place. At one time there were Youth and Community Services minibuses based at Grosvenor House, Salisbury and at Amesbury but these are no more.

Community Transport does not have self-drive minibuses and to utilise one of their vehicles payment has also to be made for the driver. Having our own drivers and minibus allows so much more flexibility of use in that can be driven at any time day or night without having to consider the employed driver. Impromptu changes can be made to routes and times and can be used on a 'whim' without having to pre book the vehicle through another organisation and their formalities. The use of our minibus can be cancelled at the shortest of notice without any penalties. It is unlikely any other providers would be so accommodating

School minibuses, have very occasionally been used by our members but this has been the result of the driver also being a teacher or member of staff of the school. Not all schools would consider letting out their vehicles. Experience has shown that 'down time' of school minibuses is limited normally to the major school holidays. Other occasions it is used for extracurricular activities such as sports and DofE.

Schools insist on the drivers having additional training before use of the minibus. Although we encourage our drivers to take additional training such as MiDAS (of which we are an authorised provider) it is not compulsory. The rules of the Scout Association do not require it and neither do our vehicle insurers.

A couple of years ago a church in Salisbury had a minibus which we were able to utilise but sadly they no longer have one.

The 1st Wilton Scout Group (located within South Western Area Board) have recently acquired a minibus which is now available for use by Scouting and other organisations local to them. Our minibus is in great demand and we have had to turn away requests for use because of that demand. We have been able to pass on such enquiries to Wilton. If we did not have our minibus the availability of Wilton's would not be sufficient to cover demand. It is only within the last few months that they have acquired their vehicle and it is known that they too have had to decline requests for use.

In July this year we have a large group going to Gilwell24, [24hours of non-stop activities for Explorer Scouts at our National Scout Campsite and HQ at Chingford]. This has necessitated in commercially hiring a minibus in addition to ours and that of Wilton's. It has had to be sourced from Andover as none are available in Salisbury commercially on those dates. This has incurred a much greater expense because of lack of other minibuses not to mention the driver having to make arrangements to get to Andover to collect and return the vehicle which will involve a considerable amount of time.

Having our own vehicle is by far in the main the only way of providing transport for our members and is the most convenient and the cost effective method to ensure we can carry out our adventurous programmes.

If there were other minibus providers, such as schools, then we would no doubt have to conform to their formalities such as booking in advance and in relation to collecting keys at particular times such as school open hours. This would be a hindrance to our volunteer leaders and drivers who may be in employment during these hours.

The lack of available minibuses locally is highlighted by the number of non-scout users that make use of our down time. Such users are listed elsewhere in the application.

Our minibus can be available following one phone call at any hour. This accommodates our volunteer leaders and drivers who may have to make changes to itineraries and programme plans at the last minutes through their own circumstances or that of their members. If we were reliant on other organisations this would not be possible and therefore our activities may be curtailed.