

Transport and Young People in the Marlborough Community Area – ‘Mapping and Gapping’ Report

Introduction and Background

Transport has been recognised for some time as a key issue for young people living in Wiltshire and to address this issue locally, the Marlborough Area Board commissioned a Transport Working Group to look into addressing this issue in partnership with local communities’ charity Community First.

Whilst the Transport Working Group have focussed efforts on bringing together important stakeholders at a strategic level to address the issues concerned, Community First were commissioned by the Marlborough Area Board in October 2010 specifically to draw up a ‘Mapping and Gapping’ Report in order to:

‘provide a clear understanding of what transport and supporting services are available (locally for young people) in order to identify gaps and agree appropriate action to address them.’

Community First’s response to this commission was as follows:

1. To assimilate local young people’s transport needs through research
2. To map available local transport services (bus services and community-based transport) in response to the needs identified from the research
3. To consult with the local community about ways in which it can help itself to tackle the issues associated with young people’s transport locally

The detailed results of Community First’s work in these 3 areas are given in the main body of this Report.

Executive Summary

Short summaries of the results of the 3 main focus areas of this report are given below:

Local young people’s transport needs

- Primary and secondary research into this area revealed that the ‘big issues’ in relation to transport for local young people concerned transport in the evenings, at weekends and after school; transport in the villages and cheaper fares.

Available local transport services

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- The report found that there were some public bus services that were available to meet some of the transport needs of local young people and, where they existed, these services were relatively reasonable given the fact that the vast majority of the public bus services in the Marlborough Community Area are subsidised by Wiltshire Council. However, given the potential for future cuts to public transport in Wiltshire as a result of changes to central government funding, the existing public bus services in the Marlborough Community Area could be reviewed meaning that these existing services could similarly be reduced. In addition to this scenario the report also revealed that, even as it is, the existing public bus network did not meet the 'harder to reach' needs of local young people such as evening transport, wide ranging village services or cheaper fares.
- More encouragingly, the report also found that there were a number of community-based minibuses and community minibuses in the Marlborough area. It was revealed some of these minibuses could be made available to young people and that some of the organisations that owned these minibuses were willing to assist with the issues associated with young people's transport locally.

Consultation with the local community / next steps

- One aspect of the consultation undertaken as part of this report focussed on talking to parents and staff at St. John's School in Marlborough about using a school minibus and recruiting volunteer parent drivers to develop a transport service which could be used on an occasional basis by young people. Discussions with both parties have been encouraging and as a result one of the recommendations of this Report is to continue efforts with St. John's School to bring about the provision of a facility which enables young people based in and close to Marlborough to travel to events which they cannot access easily at present.
- A second aspect of the consultation undertaken as part of this report focussed on Parish-level development work with the Community Minibus, Parish Council and local young people in Ramsbury. Again, discussions with all parties concerned have been encouraging and as a result this Report also recommends that efforts are furthered to bring about a facility which enables young people based in and close to Ramsbury to travel to events which they cannot access easily at present. As a result of the consultation work undertaken in the area, this Report also recommends that efforts are pursued in Ramsbury to involve local young people in gathering, designing and publicising public bus information and also in lobbying for bus shelters in the area in partnership with statutory organisations.

1. Assimilation of young people's transport needs through research

As part of the first phase of this Report, pertinent information about young people's transport needs was gathered from attendance at Community Area Young People's Issues Groups (CAYPIGs) held at St. John's School; feedback from the Wiltshire Youth Development Service; via assimilation of the Dreams and Wishes survey data and also via a special meeting for young people in Ramsbury and Axford held recently.

Key information from this research has been assembled below. The first part of this information relates only to needs articulated by young people to which a specific response can be given in terms of current public transport service provision. The second part of this information is more general and is more relevant to alternative transport service provision (for example, transport which could be provided by community minibus groups or community-based minibuses).

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Public transport related needs

The following information raised by young people relates to issues which are not necessarily area specific:

Non-area specific issue	Public Transport available?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services from villages to allow young people to go to Marlborough and Swindon in the evenings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service 48 & 46A serves some rural villages into Marlborough arriving at 1741 on weekdays and Saturdays (but no suitable return service). Service 48 serves some rural villages into Swindon on weekdays and Saturdays arriving at 1842 (but no suitable return service). Service 95 serves some rural villages into Swindon on weekdays and Saturdays arriving at 1822 and on Sundays arriving at 1934 (but no suitable return service)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services from villages to allow young people to go to Marlborough and Swindon at weekends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service 46, 46A, 48 & 48A serves some rural villages into and out of Marlborough and Swindon on Saturdays. Service 95 serves some rural villages into and out of Swindon on Saturdays and Sundays.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services after school from Marlborough to villages and between villages and e.g. to Aldbourne CAN (see http://www.aldbourneyouthcouncil.co.uk/ for opening times) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service 48 serves Ramsbury, Aldbourne and Baydon from Marlborough after school (limited return service). Services 48 & 46A provides an inter-village service between Ramsbury, Aldbourne and Baydon after school (some return services.) All of these services would be suitable to get to Aldbourne CAN, although there is no suitable return service when the CAN closes (9pm). Service 95 serves Ogbourne St. George from Marlborough after school.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services at weekends from Marlborough to villages and between villages and e.g. to Aldbourne CAN (see http://www.aldbourneyouthcouncil.co.uk/ for opening times) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service 48A & 48 serves Ramsbury, Aldbourne and Baydon from Marlborough on Saturdays. Services 48 & 46A provides an inter-village service between Ramsbury, Aldbourne and Baydon on Saturdays. All of these services would be suitable to get to and from Aldbourne CAN on Saturdays,
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday services from Marlborough and the villages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service 96 & 95 serves Swindon from Marlborough virtually every 2 hours on a Sunday (last departure is 1904). No suitable services from the villages on Sundays.

The following information relates to issues raised by young people which are area specific:

Area specific issue	Public Transport available?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aldbourne - Earlier bus times from St. John's School home - Frequency of buses to Marlborough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated school buses that serve Aldbourne leave St. John's School at 15:15, 15:30 & 15:43 however pupils are allocated to a specific bus, so they can't choose which of the 3 departures they travel on. This is because the departures cover different routes to get to Aldbourne. Wiltshire Council try to average the village set down times between the different runs so that it is fair to all in Aldbourne regardless of which bus stops are closest to their home. • St. John's School is unusual in that 6th formers can come and go from the School all day. 6th formers could, for instance, use their bus pass and catch the 1243 Service 48 from

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	<p>Marlborough to Aldbourne if they wished.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Re. frequency of buses from Aldbourne to Marlborough, currently Service 46, 46A & 48 runs 2 hourly in the mornings and hourly in the afternoons during the week and on Saturdays from Aldbourne to Marlborough.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baydon- Frequency of buses in Baydon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service 46, 46A & 48 runs 2 hourly in the mornings and hourly in the afternoons during the week and on Saturdays from Baydon to Marlborough. Except on service, the same services run hourly to Swindon from Baydon during the week and on Saturdays.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Axford & Midenhall- Later bus services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The last Service from Axford & Midenhall to Marlborough is the 48 which leaves the 2 villages at 1732 & 1736 respectively on weekdays and Saturdays (no return service). The last Service from Axford & Midenhall to Swindon is the 48 which leaves the 2 villages at 1750 & 1754 respectively on weekdays and Saturdays (no return service).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Ogbournes- School bus to leave earlier and return earlier	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Designated school buses that serve the Ogbournes start leaving for St. John's School at 0755 and 0801 and return from St. John's School at 1515, 1530 and 1535 however pupils are allocated to a specific bus, so they can't choose which of the departures they travel on. This is because the departures cover different routes to

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	<p>get to the School/The Ogbournes. Wiltshire Council try to average the village set down times between the different runs so that it is fair to all in The Ogbournes regardless of which bus stops are closest to their home.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• St. John's School is unusual in that 6th formers can come and go from the School all day. 6th formers could, for instance, could catch the 1152 or 1352 Service 95 from Marlborough to Ogbourne St. George if they wished but they could not use their bus passes as Service 95 is a commercial service (i.e. not subsidised by Wiltshire Council).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marlborough <p>- Services to Devizes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Calne & Kennet Valley Connect 2 Wiltshire (C2W) service serves Devizes from Marlborough directly (Monday – Friday leaving at 0930 and returning at 1400 – for prebooked customers only) or at other times by changing at Avebury for the 49 service (again the C2W service is for pre-booked customers only).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ramsbury and Axford <p>- Transport to Marlborough 'Mop'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service 46, 46A, 48 & 48A serves Ramsbury into and out of Marlborough on Saturdays.

Timetables for services 46, 46A, 48, 48A; 95/96; The Calne & Kennet Valley Connect 2 Wiltshire service; and information about use of school bus passes out of hours at St. John's School is appended to this Report (Appendix 1)

Community transport related needs

Having researched the relevant information, all of the following issues raised by young people cannot easily be met with current public transport provision but are more relevant to alternative transport service provision (for example, transport which could be provided by community minibus groups or community-based minibuses):

Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services from all villages to allow young people to go to the Marlborough Youth Centre (from Monday – Thursday start and finish times vary but generally 7pm to 9.30pm)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To visit sport clubs at weekends such a football, shooting, archery, cadets and any other alternative sports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Later buses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheaper fares
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduled bus service from Ramsbury and Axford on Sundays
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport from Ramsbury and Axford to events held in the evenings or at weekends e.g. Bluez n’ Zuz; Swimming and off-road Mountain Biking.

2. Transport mapping

a. Community-based minibuses in Marlborough Community Area

There are 2 community minibus groups in the Marlborough Community Area - East Kennet District Community Transport and the Ramsbury Community Bus. Primarily these groups run services for older people; for instance services to local shopping centres, to access health facilities or for day care. However both of these groups make their vehicles available to hire to community groups.

In relation to these groups specifically transporting young people, firstly discussions with the East Kennet District Community Transport group have revealed that this group are keen to broaden their passenger base and to consider carrying young people. (Subsequently work is currently being undertaken by Community First with East Kennet District Community Transport to revise their Constitution in order that they can carry young people.)

Discussions with the Ramsbury Community Bus have also revealed that this group is interested in principal in helping young people in Ramsbury with regard to some of the needs that they have articulated (referred to in Section 1 of this Report). The Ramsbury Community Bus already have a pool of volunteer drivers; they currently provide services for local community groups (including the Aldbourne after school club); they are looking at means of

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generating new income and they have some spare capacity their vehicle (average spare capacity per community minibus group in Wiltshire is 55% further to an audit of Community Bus use undertaken by Community First in 2006). More information about how the Ramsbury Community Bus could be used to meet needs of young people specifically in Ramsbury is referred to in Section 3 of this Report.

In addition to the community minibus groups in the Marlborough Community Area there is also 1* community-based minibus owned by St. John's School and 1 minibus owned by the network that supports the Wiltshire Youth Development Service which could potentially help to meet more local young people's transport needs.

(*St. John's School actually own 3 minibuses but have said that 1 of those buses could be made available for community use outside of normal school activities.)

Presently the 1 community-based minibus owned by St. John's School is made available on an occasional basis to community groups such as the local Children's Centre and Preshute School. However to broaden out the use of this vehicles to young people, Community First is currently undertaking work with the school to incorporate the vehicles into a countywide minibus sharing scheme and to recruit parent volunteer drivers/chaperones. Including these vehicles into this scheme would mean that these buses could be hired to a group of young people without the need to have to comply with School policies which would normally only relate to School trips. (For more details about this initiative please refer to the Section 3. of this Report.)

In addition, the minibus owned by the network that supports the Wiltshire Youth Development Service can be used for young people generally. To elaborate, Wiltshire Youth Development Service have said that they would be happy to be contacted by young people who wish to go to certain events that they cannot currently access and for the transport to be organised using the Wiltshire Youth Development network minibus and network driver.

The table below shows details of whether or not the minibuses specified above are currently available to young people (i.e. for events that are **not** organised by another body on their behalf e.g. a school trip or a youth service event); how much they cost, whether they are available to book with a driver and how they can be booked.

Name of minibus owning group	Community minibus group or community-based minibus	Currently available to young people generally?	Cost	Available to 'hire' with a driver?	How can bus be booked?
East Kennet Community Transport	Community minibus group	No (not currently)	£15 per hour (includes fuel)	Yes	Through Chairman - (01672) 513861
Ramsbury	Community	Not	£10	No (self-drive	Through

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Community Bus	minibus group	currently (although RCB group willing to help – See Section 3. for more details)	booking fee + 45p/mile (includes fuel)	unless exceptional circumstances)	Bookings Secretary – (01672) 520555
St. John's School	Community-based minibus	No (not currently)	50p/mile for first 100 miles and 35p/mile thereafter (includes fuel)	No	Through the Marlborough Area Extended Schools Coordinator – (01672) 519538
Wiltshire Youth Development Service	Community-based minibus	Yes	N/A	No	Through the Youth Development Service – (01672) 520555

Pilot transport services

As part of the focus of the Transport Working Group set up by the Marlborough Community Area Board to look into the issue of young people's transport needs, some pilot transport services were organised over a handful of dates in December (see Appendix 2 for details).

To organise logistical arrangements associated with these services, Community First invested a considerable amount of time in liaising with community minibus groups, community-based minibuses, drivers and also with the Wiltshire Youth Development Service and other members of the Transport Working Group.

Unfortunately the only pilot services that actually went ahead were those which were associated with events that the Youth Development Service had organised (1st December – Lazer Quest in Swindon and 14th December – Ice Skating in Swindon n.b. the event on 1st December was not publicised in the Transport to Go Flyer (Appendix 2) but was organised separately by the Wiltshire Youth Development Service.).

Although it is not possible to draw any definitive conclusions from the experience of putting on these services as there were only a small number of them organised, the successful trips relied on publicity of the events themselves in advance via a source known to young people and 'hands on' coordination of interest amongst young people by a primary agent. This model will be considered again in Section 3. of this Report.

b. Bus routes mapping

For ease of reference, the public bus services relevant to the needs of young people articulated at various events stated in Section 1 of this Report have been specified alongside those needs (also shown in Section 1 of this Report).

Currently Wiltshire Council is undertaking a review of all public transport services in Wiltshire in order to reduce costs as part of central government funding cuts. As the vast majority of bus services in the Marlborough area are subsidised by Wiltshire Council, some of these services may be at risk. This may mean that the bus service provision which has been specified in Section 1 of this Report in relation to young people's needs may be reduced in the near future. As a result, there may be more scope for community-based transport (such as community minibuses or school minibuses) to be used to meet the some of the needs that have been articulated. More discussion about how this can be done is referred to in Section 3 of this Report.

3. Consultation to ascertain need for/willingness of coordinators and ways in which community can help itself

i. Focus on St. John's School Marlborough

Having considered carefully the most efficient means of ascertaining from the whole Community Area interested parties' responses to getting involved in tackling the issue of young people's transport needs locally, it was felt that the best focus for this work initially would be on St. John' School.

This was because:

- the Schools' catchment area covers the whole of the Community Area
- a number of the issues presented in secondary research about young people's transport needs were centred around school transport and the issues closely associated with transport in the school day
- shortly after this Report was commissioned, it was revealed that the School were already planning a series of parents' evenings which presented a good opportunity to gauge the response of parents (and young people) about becoming involved in the project. (The School was also chosen given the relatively short time scale for delivering this Report and also the fact that from experience, setting up entirely new meetings across the Community Area to discuss the issues at hand may not have received the best response.)

A considerable amount of work has been undertaken using the School as a focal point to ascertain the ways in which the local community can help itself in relation to the issue of young people's transport needs in the Marlborough Community Area.

Firstly, working closely with the Marlborough Area Extended Schools Network Co-ordinator, Community First put together a letter (see Appendix 3) which was circulated to all parents at St. John's School.

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In addition to promoting the pilot events mentioned earlier, the main aim of the letter was to draw parents' attention to the project and also to encourage them to consider volunteering as minibus drivers / chaperones to enable young people to get to the places they have said they cannot get to (See Section 1 of this Report for more details about the places that young people have said they cannot get to).

To incentivise parents to volunteer, a partnership with Pebley Beach Garage was created by Community First to offer discounted car maintenance to volunteer parent minibus drivers / chaperones.

Details about how parents could volunteer as occasional minibus drivers / chaperones for their children and their friends (who ultimately represent many of the young people who have articulated their needs) were shared with parents of pupils at the School at Parents' evenings on 22nd November and 20th January.

As a result of these events, 8 parents put their names forward as prospective volunteer drivers/chaperones.

To follow up this work, a meeting will be held with these volunteers within the next few months to explain to them in more detail about how they can get involved in tackling young people's transport needs locally. This meeting will also present an opportunity to ascertain whether there would be numbers amongst them prepared to act as volunteer coordinators (e.g. a central point of contact) for what is likely to be occasional minibus services for young people.

In parallel, further work will also be undertaken in partnership with the Marlborough Area Extended Schools Network Co-ordinator to involve young people at the School in gathering bookings from their peers for events for which they would require minibus transport. As the experience of the successful pilot transport events showed, interest would also need to be ascertained from these young people about their ability to publicise the events amongst their peers and to undertake some elements of the coordination work themselves.

ii. Focus on Ramsbury

With reference to the information immediately above, the work which has been undertaken at St. John's School has focussed on the issue of young people's transport needs across the whole Community Area.

To mirror this work, consultation has also been undertaken with the community at a Parish level in Ramsbury. As well as providing a focus for investigating the Parish-level response to the issue of tackling young people's transport needs locally, the reason that Ramsbury was chosen as a study area was as follows:

- The Parish already has an active community minibus group including a pool of volunteer drivers

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- Wiltshire Youth Development Service is focussing attention and resources on the Parish
- The Parish has a pro-active Parish Council which is supportive of efforts to assist young people in the Parish

In order to ascertain the means by which the community in Ramsbury can 'help itself' in relation to the issue of local young people's transport needs, discussions have been held with the Ramsbury Community Bus Group and also with young people from the Parish.

Discussions with the Ramsbury Community Bus Group have been very positive. For instance, the Group have said that they are willing to help young people in the Parish to get to events (such as the Roxy Cinema and the Aldbourne CAN) and Ramsbury Parish Council have said that they are willing to underwrite possible losses on initial trial services in order to give the services the best possible chance of success.

The ideas for developing services using the Ramsbury Community Bus for local young people are in a formative stage at present, however the Ramsbury Community Bus Group have suggested the following prerequisites for young people and their parents to meet in order to benefit from the service:

- the young people wishing to use the Ramsbury Community Bus would need to create an informal 'club' with a Terms of Reference for usage (e.g. notice period for booking, behaviour on board etc.)
- volunteer drivers would need to be sourced initially amongst parents of the young people concerned (if parent volunteer drivers cannot be sourced, then the Ramsbury Community Bus Group would consider contacting their own drivers to request their assistance)
- there would need to be a financial contribution from the young people concerned towards the use of the service to make it a viable going concern (initially suggested at £1 per head)
- the young people concerned would be asked about cleaning the bus
- chaperones would need to be provided on the service

In addition to discussions with the Ramsbury Community Bus Group, a meeting specifically for young people in Ramsbury and Axford was also attended by Community First. This meeting was organised by Ramsbury Parish Council to ask young people in Ramsbury and Axford for their suggestions about new activities in the area to improve their general welfare.

The feedback given by local young people about transport services from this meeting is given in Section 1 of this Report. In addition to the feedback given specifically about transport services, young people at this meeting also suggested that public bus information in Ramsbury and Axford needed improving in order to give them confidence when using local public bus services (i.e. information about timetables and policies regarding young people's fares and use of school bus passes on later buses) and bus shelters were needed to promote bus use.

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The feedback given by young people at this meeting also suggested that there might be issues concerned with reliability of numbers if they had to gather interest from their peers about attending a particular event and booking the Ramsbury Community Bus to take them there. Instead the suggestion was that a regular scheduled service be run by the Ramsbury Community Bus on set days and at set times.

To follow up this consultation with the young people in Ramsbury and also with the Ramsbury Community Bus, it is envisaged that a meeting will be held with both parties in order to plan a workable solution. One of the issues that would need to be resolved is that of young people playing some part in coordinating the booking of the Ramsbury Community Bus as the Bus group may struggle with providing a regular scheduled service (for example in the evenings and at weekends) with volunteer drivers.

As a further follow up to the consultation work in Ramsbury, it is possible that the local young people could also feasibly be involved in gathering, designing and publicising public bus information in partnership with Wiltshire Council and also with lobbying for bus shelters in the area in partnership with Ramsbury Parish Council.

Recommendations

Having analysed young people's transport needs; the availability of local transport and the willingness of the local community to meet local needs, this Report has two main Recommendations. These recommendations have mainly been driven by the consultation work undertaken with the local community and are as follows:

- To continue efforts with St. John's School to bring together a School minibus, parent volunteer drivers / chaperones, and young people at the School to bring about the provision of a facility which enables young people based in and close to Marlborough to travel to events which they cannot access easily at present
- To further efforts in Ramsbury to bring together the Ramsbury Community Bus, parent volunteer drivers / chaperones and young people in Ramsbury and Axford to bring about the provision of a facility which enables young people based in and close to Ramsbury to travel to events which they cannot access easily at present
- To pursue efforts in Ramsbury to involve local young people in gathering, designing and publicising public bus information in partnership with Wiltshire Council and also in lobbying for bus shelters in the area in partnership with Ramsbury Parish Council.

Conclusion

Throughout the undertaking of this Report and further to the work undertaken by the Transport Working Group it has become clear that there is not a simple 'silver bullet' that will solve all of the issues associated with young people's transport in the Marlborough Community Area. Instead - particularly looking towards the idea of focussing efforts on specific areas (i.e. Marlborough and Ramsbury) it is hoped that what is left as a legacy to this work is a workable 'template' which could not simply be copied but adapted and shaped according to each individual communities' needs and resources across the Marlborough Community Area.

Indeed the community development work that the undertaking of this Report and the Transport Working Group has brought about has, in itself, gone a long way to moving towards community-based solutions to the issues presented.

What is clear; however from the work already undertaken, is that all parties with a 'stake' in the issue need to come together to create a solution which is workable for them and for others involved. In practice this means that young people, parents and – in reality, in the face of transport cuts – those involved with community-based minibuses need to work together to provide a lasting solution which is right for their community to tackle the issues associated with young people's transport in their area.

If these small-scale solutions are achieved then the community links that this type of activity could create could lead to the development of more strategic and harder-to-realise services (for example home to school transport etc.) however it is important to focus on getting the small, very locally-oriented services right first.

