

Questions/Comments & Responses re Rutland Public Bus Services

Categories

- Timings, Connections & Routes Q 1 - 11
- Infrastructure
 - a) timetables and display of information Q 12 - 13
 - b) real time information Q 14 - 15
 - c) bus stop and bus shelter upkeep Q 16 - 17
- Rail Q 18 - 20
- On Board Your Bus Q 21 - 24
- Funding, Investments & Promotions Q 25 - 31
- Requests Q 32 - 40
- Evenings & Weekends Q 41 - 42
- Miscellaneous Q 43

<u>Timings/Connections/Routes</u>		
1	<p>Why don't we have an early bus from Ketton to Stamford for people to catch trains at 0800? Also, people need to start work at 0800/0830. (R9)</p>	<p>The CallConnect service is available for all residents of Ketton to travel to Stamford at that time. We can provide further information if required. And of course, the Blands R5 service is available at other times of the day.</p>
2	<p>Timings of R9 not suitable to get to Gt Casterton for 0930. Service 185 gets in too early; CallConnect is never available at the times requested; R9 on Friday not big enough; dangerous for drivers to get off to open the door; too long a wait in Oakham and Stamford for buses on a Saturday (Empingham)</p>	<p>The R9 timetable has to fit in with a number of statutory obligations. We do not have any larger buses for this route. The bus isn't fitted with an automatic door. RCC took on this service or it would have been cut. Comments have been noted for future consideration. CallConnect can look at instances of unsuccessful booking requests if further information can be supplied.</p>
3a	<p>Buses to go to Oakham via Ketton/Edith Weston (R5)</p>	<p>A bus network cannot include direct travel from every village to every town without additional funding and the implementation of new services. The geography of Rutland with a large reservoir in the middle means that a connecting network of services means that a connecting network of services is required linking villages to nearby towns and onward travel from those towns.</p>
3b	<p>Can we consider a direct service from Stamford to Oakham taking in Edith Weston as currently average journey takes over an hour</p>	
4	<p>Catch R5 between Ketton and Edith Weston to go to Uppingham – connections to Corby and Oakham are tight and long waits to connect with 747 and returns to Edith Weston.</p>	<p>Timings at Uppingham have been adjusted to rectify connection issues. The 747 is a Leicestershire County Council contracted service to which RCC contributes. We will discuss this with our next meeting with them.</p>
5	<p>Sometime in the future will the timetable change back to more regular timings at Great Easton?</p>	<p>Unknown at this stage. Any additions to the network require additional funding, but we will note this request.</p>

<p>6a</p> <p>6b</p> <p>7a</p> <p>7b</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p>	<p>Re R1 – timetable gaps between buses too big.</p> <p>Could Blands re-time journeys on the R1 (Melton to Corby) so they run at a more evenly two hour frequency rather than the current 1-3 hour gaps.</p> <p>R1 timetable needs earlier departure from Oakham to Corby as finish work at 0600; long wait for people during the day for buses.</p> <p>The first bus to Corby arrives at 1048 and first bus back departs 1354. Is it possible to have a return bus an hour earlier?</p> <p>Can the Hopper route be revised? Now a minibus so can Alsthorpe Road be included again?</p> <p>Sometimes on a Wednesday afternoon from Catmose (college) to Greetham when we finish school early the bus doesn't arrive, and students can be left stranded. Please could you ensure that the transport is consistent and gives enough time for students finishing the afternoon sessions time to catch the bus? Should there be problems, could the college be told promptly so that parents/guardians can be informed? (R2)</p>	<p>The current timetable has little room to re-time unless an additional bus and driver are put back onto the route. This is not possible without additional funding being available to expand the route.</p> <p>We are currently subsidising as much of a network as we are able to. Any additional journeys would require additional funding. Struggling to retain existing journeys with costs rising.</p> <p>This service is currently subsidised by Oakham Town Council so enquiries should be directed to them in the first instance. This adds more weight to the request, but we are happy to support with this.</p> <p>We have not been notified of any instances like this so if not notified we cannot let the college know. School finishes at 1440 on Wednesdays giving a four minute window to reach the bus stop. Bus times had been adjusted. We conducted bus checks early on and no issues, and no issues raised by any parents. Instructions on what to do if a bus does not turn up are displayed at the bus stop and drivers have been asked to apply some discretion with timings to allow for student departure from school. Additional random checks have since been conducted, again with no major issues.</p>
---	--	---

10	Why are the bus service so bad in the mornings and midday?	This question requires clarification. We will try to contact submitter.
11	Is it possible to have an earlier bus to Melton on which to use a bus pass? The first available bus on which to use a is not till 1040.	This is due to the service being cut from 3 buses to 2. We will continue to work with the operator to try to improve this service, but again, reliant on available resource.
<u>Infrastructure</u>		
Timetable Information & Displays:		
12a	Why isn't there a better display for buses from the bus station at Stamford, especially for strangers to the area?	Unfortunately, Stamford Bus Station is not within Rutland County Council's responsibility. We have contacted Lincolnshire County Council for assistance in resolving this issue. Any complaints about bus stop infrastructure and/or bus timetable information in Stamford should be directed to Lincolnshire County Council's public transport team direct.
12b	No signposted stops at Stamford Bus Station.	
13	Difficult to know if there is a bus available or where is the best place to go for up-to-date information. Can a website or hub be created where people know the bus timetables they are looking at are current and accurate?	Timetables are available on the RCC website and on the bus operators' individual websites. Each operator has a customer enquiry line to call for any clarifications. Timetables are displayed at bus stops throughout Rutland, and our timetable booklet, which is usually produced twice a year, is available from the bus station, Rutland libraries and the foyer at the Council Offices. They are also distributed to other various outlets eg village shops, cafes and hotels. Any suggestions for other outlets are welcome.

Real Time Information:		
14	Real time information sign at Oakham bus station not operating – essential for 1 or 2 hourly services; signs not working in Uppingham either; are there plans to install low cost battery operated signs at all key stops in the towns?	We have never had real time information units. The existing system showed scheduled times only for Centrebus services. We have been working with a contact to try and re-align the system to accommodate the changes of operator and bus route branding.
15	Can real time information be installed at Oakham bus station – issue with R2 being late or not running.	We do not have the funding required to invest into real time information at this time. Centrebus have trackers on their buses and these can be followed via their website.
Bus Stop/Bus Shelter upkeep:		
16	The bus stops in villages need lighting up during the evenings when it gets dark early as the buses will not see you waiting at the bus stop as they don't stop unless you flag them down.	As part of our BSIP/Enhanced Bus Partnership work we are auditing all of our bus stops to identify any improvements we are able to make within existing available funding. Lighting needs to be considered as part of these works.
17	Who is responsible for the poor state of our Bus Shelters?	As above and incidents of damage can be reported via fix-my-street so that we can action repairs.
<u>Rail</u>		
18	Could the R1 bus route to Corby be extended to include Corby Rail Station?	This was requested and trialled pre 2019 with only 1 regular user. This could be looked at again to assess current demand. We will include travel to rail stations as part of any public bus consultations we undertake this year.

19a	<p>Would it be possible to devise some means whereby Oakham Rail Station can be linked into the bus network? At present the bus routes seem to studiously ignore the station.</p>	<p>The location of the rail station is within reasonable walking distance of the bus station, but we appreciate that mobility issues can hinder travel and access. The rail station in Oakham is lacking in options for bus stop implementation close by without significant changes to the current road layout including available parking. Feasibility for this can be further explored if demand exists. We will look to consult the public this year with specific questions relating to onward travel by rail. We have also submitted a joint bid for levelling up funding with Melton Borough Council which includes possible improvements to links between the bus station and the rail station. We are currently waiting to hear if our bid has been successful.</p>
19b	<p>Rail to bus connections are very poor – no bus stops at Oakham rail station.</p>	
20	<p>Would it be possible to get the bus to connect with the train?</p>	<p>We look to link buses with rail wherever possible and will continue to do so.</p>
<p><u>On Board Your Bus</u></p>		
21	<p>Are all buses dog friendly?</p>	<p>Each bus operator has their own rules for transporting animals. RCC minibuses will accept assistance dogs only.</p>
22	<p>Can recent passenger concerns over non-permittance of boarding/alighting at chosen stops for Hail & Ride serviced be addressed?</p>	<p>Buses should only stop when safe to do so. All operators are aware of their obligations regarding Hail & Ride. Incidents should be raised with the driver at the time. Please contact us if issues continue.</p>
23	<p>Can an agreement be reached with Lincs CC to allow passengers to alight at stops with the county other than Stamford on the number 9 service.</p>	<p>This is an interim service. Currently we need to prioritise travel for Rutland residents on our service due to seating capacity on-board.</p>

24	<p>Is it safe for a 15 month old to occupy a seat with an inappropriate seat belt?</p>	<p>On a standard public bus service there is no requirements for seat belts. Parents are responsible for their children. On a minibus, such as the ones RCC are using, the driver is legally responsible for any passenger under the age of 14 to be wearing a seat belt. There is no requirement to carry child seats so where there is no child seat they will have to sit on the seat and use the seat belt provided. A parent can bring their own child seat to use.</p>
<p>Funding, Investments & Promotions</p>		
25	<p>Will RCC be supporting the £2 fare scheme?</p>	<p>The £2 Fare Cap is a scheme is a DfT initiative and individual bus operators had the choice as to whether to participate or not. Centrebus have chosen to take part in this area. The scheme is operating from 1st January to 31st March 2023.</p>
26	<p>Could RCC have promotional £1 flat fares on routes R1 and R2 on Saturdays in December. This will encourage drivers to use the bus and help take the pressure off of Oakham's car parks on these very busy market and shopping days.</p>	<p>We have operated some free travel and travel for £1 promotions in recent years with very little additional usage, but we can discuss this with operators to see if we are able to trial this again. The issue is of potential lost revenue and being able to cover the costs of running the buses. In December 2022 RCC chose to offer free parking on certain dates. Therefore, it would only be RCC income that would be affected. If bus operators choose to run a fare reduction then it is their income that would be affected and RCC is not in a financial position to guarantee subsidising this affect. Previous schemes have been able to run when government funding to support this has been available, but we will investigate the possibility of a fare promotion for December 2023 with operators.</p>

27	Is it a wise use of resources for everyone to travel free rather than only those with a bus pass, as has been the case until now?	Assume this query relates to the services being operated by RCC. These are currently on Section 19 permits, and this means that we cannot charge fees. These are interim services to plug gaps in the current network.
28	Why did Rutland miss out on the (£3 million) government grant to implement a BSIP?	The initial large pot of money allocated when the Bus Back Better strategy was launched reduced significantly before BSIP funding was allocated. A large number of Local Authorities were not successful in securing any funding including Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Leicestershire. A lot of the successful authorities focussed on bus priority schemes involving bus lanes and other more urban measures.
29	What is the transport strategy to make better use of Rutland's assets and strengths (as well placed to serve Leicester, Peterborough, Northants, Grantham and Belvoir)?	Question requires clarification and we will contact the resident to discuss.
30	How would future investment in public transport reinforce visitor economy and promote travel in and around Rutland? How big is the ambition?	Please refer to our Local Transport Plan 4 which can be found on the RCC website. This can be accessed at https://www.rutland.gov.uk/roads-transport-parking/transport-parking-strategies-bids .
31	Uppingham/Oakham/Stamford triangle seems piecemeal, uncoordinated and insufficient so what can be done? Who would be our partners?	Again, requires some clarification which we will seek.

	<u>Requests</u>	
32	On a Tuesday can we have a bigger bus to Melton Mowbray as not enough space for shopping trolleys; would be nice to have the 0945 journey back; Stamford bus not ideal for trolleys that don't fold down; usually full by the time it gets to Empingham.	The R1 service is now a commercial bus service operated by Blands with some subsidy from RCC. If there is regular demand for a larger bus then a commercial operator would look to increase the vehicle size wherever possible to accommodate the demand of customers. We will work with Blands to assess the daily usage figures to see if there is any need to amend the current vehicles used.
33	Can there be a bigger bus on busy days eg Monday?	Details of which service this refers to was not supplied.
34	Oakham Enterprise Park might be more widely used if there were a regular service connecting from Oakham to there.	The OEP is on the R1 bus route. Oakham Town Council is subsidising the RCC Hopper service. We have raised the possibility of other connections with OEP with them and are awaiting their feedback on this proposal.
35	Would like an assurance of hourly services from Oakham to Stamford, Melton and Leicester (could be by minibus) to visit department stores and attractions; also useful for workers; comment about using electric buses and RCC should well be able to subsidise these services.	We have a current situation with rising costs and lack of budget to subsidise non-statutory services. Providing additional services is not a possibility at this time due to lack of BSIP funding.
36	What are the chances of reinstating the old service 19 which ran from Oakham to Nottingham and back?	The service was reduced and partially removed due to lack of funding and passenger usage. Putting back any service which was not supporting itself would require additional grant funding which is currently not available.
37	Is there any chance of running an occasional service from Oakham to Leicester? I would suggest this could be done on a Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday with an	As mentioned, there is a lack of resources to put in place additional services. There is a train service providing an Oakham-Leicester link.

	<p>outward service from Oakham departing around 9.30 am and an inward service from Leicester departing around 4.00 pm. Even better would be to make each of these services return services so that there are two buses on each of Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.</p>	
38	<p>Recently used the R9 service from Oakham to Stamford after taking the morning R2 bus from Greetham. Could Greetham be included on the R9 route in the future at least 1 going and 1 return during the day?</p>	<p>CallConnect is available for Greetham residents to travel from the village into Stamford.</p>
39	<p>(Stretton) had a daily service to Oakham and a service to Stamford withdrawn 7-8 years ago; CallConnect not workable; no funding for cycle path? Bus times not suitable for those going to and returning from work.</p>	<p>Services are reduced or removed due to lack of usage and/or lack of funding to continue. We can discuss with Stretton Parish Council about carrying out some consultation with residents to assess actual demand for bus services in the village to assist with future planning. Blands services 183 and 184 operate through Stretton twice a day. Although these services are primarily used by students they are public bus services available to all.</p>
40	<p>Can we consider a service that goes round Rutland Water? This would ease parking problems over the summer months.</p>	<p>In 2014 RCC launched the Shorelink Service which operated in loops around Rutland Water and had the capacity to transport multiple bicycles. This utilised grant funding and aimed to serve residents and tourists. The bus was very poorly used despite extensive publicity and promotion and was removed when the grant funding expired due to this lack of passenger usage. Again, this can be consulted on this year to gauge interest in a service like this, but we cannot trial without additional funding to do so.</p>

<u>Evenings & Weekends</u>	
41	<p>Currently it seems like our bus services are focussed mainly on school children or local shopping, and I wonder if there would be any potential for coinciding with more recreational trips – little weekend transport or for those not attending a local school – popular park run at 0900 on Saturdays at Rutland Water – could a current route be diverted or added on as a stop from Oakham? Rutland Water could have a hopper bus which could connect with Oakham and train station to encourage more passing trade and sustainable tourism.</p>
	<p>Local Authorities do not have a statutory requirement to provide and subsidise public bus services. This means that any funding we do have available needs to be used to maximum effect. The network we have is centred around essential journeys where there is the greatest opportunity to pick-up passengers with regular travel requirements all year. We link public bus journeys with as many statutory scholar requirements as possible as this helps to support the bus network. Evenings and Sundays are not viable for us at present without additional funding to trial extra services to assess passenger demand.</p>
42	<p>Saturday timings not convenient; cannot stay in Stamford after college as last bus back is 1720 and you have to pay; nothing for evening events; is there a student/under 18 fare; current timetable would not make it feasible to get a job in Oakham or Stamford from Empingham.</p>
	<p>There are usually discounted fares for younger people. Each operator sets their own discounted fares. Again, lack of resource to put in place additional journeys; subsidy is for key essential journeys where main usage is known.</p>
<u>Miscellaneous</u>	
43	<p>Query over the wording on our website regarding bus passes.</p>
	<p>Our website has been re-designed to make navigation and information clearer.</p>