

RISBOROUGH COMMUNITY BUS PROJECT
SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION ON 14 FEB 08

Present:

Malcolm Maultby	RACA Transport Group Leader
Richard Maskell	Bucks Community Action
Malcolm Godwim	Bucks Rural Towns Co-ordinator
Chris Blanchard	RACA Transport Group

1. **Type of service.** Bearing in mind the nature of the spread of the potential users and their reasons for using the service, a scheduled service would meet user needs better than an on-call service; it would also be more efficient. Potential users are likely to be from all age groups but, bearing in mind the population of the town, they would tend to be of the older generation.
2. **Area and times of operation.** The aim would be to cover Princes Risborough, Monks Risborough and Longwick. To extend beyond this area would tie the bus up for long periods for only a very small number of people. Hours of operation would be approximately Monday – Friday 0930-1630 and Saturday 0930-1300.
3. **Stand-alone or Tie-In with another service.** There was no other transport service which could provide a centre from which a Community Bus could be co-ordinated.
4. **Business or Charity model?** To run the bus as business would not be viable. It would have to be run as either a Registered Company with Charitable Status or a Community Interest Company, (a not-for-profit company; for more advice Stuart Jones 01494-865333). The bus would be operated under Section 22 of the Transport Act 1985, this allows passengers to be charged.
5. **Type of vehicle.** Ideally, the bus would be a low floor coach, with seating for up to 16 passengers and with wide access at the side for wheelchairs and buggies. A new one would cost about £50k, a second-hand one about £20k. Depreciation would be about £5k per year. To hire a bus would cost at least £11k per year, this appears to be prohibitively expensive.
6. **Drivers.** The aim should be to find sufficient volunteers so that each only had to drive for one half day each month; this would not be easy! Using a bus with a maximum seating capacity of 16, drivers with licences obtained before 1997 **or has passed a medical** would not need to take any additional driving test. However, it is recommended that they undergo a Midas training course, about £75 per driver, which is geared to the driving of the type of vehicle envisaged. Drivers must be under 70 years old.
7. **Co-ordination of the service.** If a scheduled service were introduced there would be no need for hour-by-hour management of it. Instead, it would need daily monitoring to ensure, for example, that if a driver was unavailable a replacement was found; also, the servicing of the bus would need to be pre-planned. The ideal place for this to take place would be the Town Council office. Having heard that the administrative support for the Council needs to be supplemented and that, increasingly, RACA needs administrative support, the obvious solution is to come to an agreement whereby the Town Council clerks are paid to carry out a small amount of work for RACA, this would result in improved admin cover in the council offices. In the future, part of that work could be monitoring and co-ordinating as necessary the Community Bus.
8. **Funding.** Funding should be found for the first 3 years minimum. Lottery grants, a useful source in the past, are in practice no longer available. Local sponsorship would be vital. Useful contacts for advice and assistance are: Laurie Johnson at Bucks Community Action, Dave Furze at WDC, and the website “grantfinder”. Charging passengers would be likely to be necessary

9. **Way Ahead.**

- a. Form a Project Group.
- b. Draw up a Business Plan.