

Transport Representative on Outside Bodies - Report - July 2020

From: Cllr Sonja Francis

THE various bus and train services that serve Thame have been continually updating passengers with safety advice in response to the Covid 19 emergency, as government guidelines have evolved and these are the latest guidelines:

(1) ARRIVA - Advice for passengers

Please sit one per row unless travelling with a member of your own household.

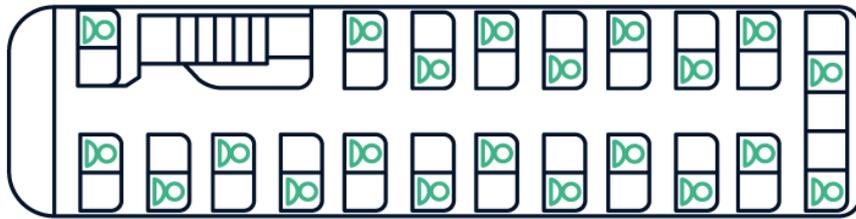
Please keep your face covering on for the **entire journey**. Face coverings **must** be worn onboard.

- Follow our no standing policy
- Pay by contactless or the app. Only use cash as a last resort and with exact fare only as our drivers cannot provide change.
- Please don't travel if you feel unwell
- Face away from others when sitting onboard

(2) Stage Coach

There will be posters and signage onboard the bus to help you find where to sit. See below an example plan of the upper level of a bus so that you can see the zig zag seating arrangement:

- » **One person per double seat**
- » **Leave the seat behind and next to someone empty**
- » **Only sit with somebody if they're in your household or bubble.**



(3) Chiltern Rail

For those that have to travel, we aim to provide a safe environment with increased train and station cleaning. Touchpoints, like handles and rails, are cleaned regularly with antiviral disinfectant throughout the day. Daily deep cleaning has been increased, with more teams on key routes, and social distancing measures are being implemented at stations and on trains.

What you can do to keep safe

- Face coverings are compulsory for people travelling on public transport in England, unless you are exempt.
- Reduce contact and buy your ticket online or via our app before travel (as always, No Booking Fees)
- Check train times or download our app for the latest live train times and latest updates
- * Keep your distance from other people as far as possible and wear a face covering
- Wash hands regularly
- Avoid travelling during busy periods and allow more time for your journey

(4) Government's Proposals to re-open old railway lines

SUGGESTIONS have been submitted to the government, and an extension line between Chinnor and Aston Rowant has been shortlisted. Announcement expected in a couple of months.

(5) LTP5 consultation - Local Transport and Connectivity Plan

Results due to be published September 2020

(6) Transport Working Group - has been revived and met - drew up the Emergency plan for travel in the high street with the Town Centre Working Group, and a Town Centre Recovery Plan for the high street, has been submitted, and we await word from OCC.

Parish Transport Reps. meeting on the 23rd June, cancelled because of Covid 19.

A) County Council Update (written update received)

THE County Council has been very successful in recent years in obtaining Section 106 funds from developers for the improvement of local bus services. In addition, the Council has secured £588,000 in one-off Government funds for the improvement of bus services in the financial year 2020/21.

The long-term impact of Covid-19 on the bus network is not yet known, but the Council is working closely with bus operators to ensure that these impacts will be understood and identify where any appropriate action can be taken. In the meantime, we have pressed ahead with two major procurement exercises which will result in significant service improvements over the next six months.

Further details can be found [here](#)

Rural Mobility Transport Fund

Earlier this year the Department for Transport advised that they had set aside £20 million for Demand Responsive Transport schemes. Councils have been offered the chance to write Expressions of Interest for Demand Responsive Transport solutions in their area. Following consultation, the Council agreed to proceed with four Expressions of Interest:

- A DRT serving villages south of Didcot;
- Expansion and automation of a voluntary service currently running in Freeland and Hanborough, possibly incorporating a DRT serving the Lower Windrush Valley Area working with existing partners in the villages;
- Local services running alongside the A4074 and

- An expansion of the existing Oxford Pick Me Up DRT serving villages in the rural periphery of Oxford with our existing partners at Oxford Bus Company

The closing date for the Expression of Interest was 4 June and DfT have indicated that they will advise on shortlisted schemes in July. If a scheme is shortlisted the Council will then need to develop the Expression of Interest into a Business Case for consideration. Final schemes will then be selected by DfT based on the Business Case.

B) Community First Oxford Update

With lockdown, community transport momentarily paused, however, with the right PPE many schemes redeployed volunteers to deliver food parcels and collect prescriptions and a few have even managed to support some patients to get to their health appointments. Volunteer driver schemes and minibus groups are absolutely committed to supporting people in their community, (Sonja: including the **Thame Community Car**; although at a much reduced service, with only 3 drivers able and willing to carry on (many being over 70 yrs-old). They helped 12 local people over the lockdown period, mostly for trips to the surgery, some to hospital appointments. Calls from the doctors at the surgery have started increasing recently, as they are encouraging more people to visit the surgery in person)

C) Community Transport Team - Grants

Start Up grants of up to £2,000 are available this year to assist with any new Community Transport Schemes.

Grants are also to contribute towards the cost of 'Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme' (MiDAS) and PATS training. Training is also available for volunteer car drivers.

Drivers refresh their MiDAS training every four years.

The 'Passenger Assistant Training Scheme' has general modules and others, such as how to help someone in a wheelchair or children with special needs. To find out more or discuss other training needs, get in touch with John Charlton at

communitytransport@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

END

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