

65 Bus - Passenger Feedback Survey Report

1 Introduction

With the aim of gaining a better understanding of why and when our passengers use the 65 Bus, we undertook a feedback survey of passengers over a period of two weeks in January 2020 (11-25 January). This was administered in 2 ways: via the Friends of the 65 Bus Facebook page; and via face-to-face discussions.

57 passengers of the 65 Bus completed our survey - 30 online and 27 face-to-face.

2 Results Summary – Key Points

2.1 Frequency of use

- Over half of passengers surveyed use the 65 Bus more than once a week; 10% use it on a daily basis.

2.2 Nature of the journey

- The 3 most frequent points on the route where passengers surveyed begin their journey are: Monmouth, Chepstow and The Narth, accounting for 57% of the total in our survey.
- Most journeys have a destination at *either end* of the route – Monmouth or Chepstow, but there were a small number of passengers (11%) with a different destination, some to access medical appointments.

2.3 Passenger status

- Around two thirds of passengers surveyed hold a Bus Pass, and a similar proportion have access to a car.

2.4 Purpose of Travel

- It is evident that people make use of the 65 Bus for a wide variety of purposes (*detailed below – Question 7*). The most frequently cited (67%) is shopping, and almost half of those surveyed use the Bus to meet up with friends/family. One passenger in the survey visits and cares for an elderly parent. Over a third of passengers need to use the Bus to access services and a significant percentage use the Bus to go to/return from work.

2.5 Why people choose to travel by the 65 Bus

As noted below (*Question 6*), many passengers have made a positive choice to use the 65 Bus, even if they have access to a car. A variety of reasons were put forward, the major ones being:

- Environmental
- Social interaction
- Enjoy the journey and scenery
- Friendly service with good drivers
- Independence (particularly for young people using the service)

2.6 What would encourage people to use the 65 Bus more often?

- Improvements in the frequency of service was the top answer to this question – cited by a quarter of those surveyed, with some suggestions to address this.
- Better connections with other bus routes.

2.7 Suggestions/Comments

See below (*Question 9*) for full details of these.

- *Suggestions* related entirely to the desire for increased frequency of the service and the unsuitability of the minibus (used when the usual service bus is not available).
- *Comments* were, without exception, very positive and reflected passengers' reasons for choosing to use the 65 Bus.

3 Results in Detail

Q1 How often do you use the 65 Bus?

Frequency	No	%
Daily	5	9
More than once a week	24	42
Once a week	9	16
At least once a month	11	19
Less than once a month	7	12
Less than twice a year	1	2
	57	100

Q2 When you use the 65 Bus, where do you usually start your outward journey?

	No	%
Chepstow	8	15
Itton	1	2
Devauden	2	4
Cobbler's Plain	2	4
Llanishen	5	9
Trellech	6	11
The Narth	13	24
Penallt	6	11
Lydart	1	2
Monmouth	10	18
	54	100

Q3. What is your most frequent destination?

	No	%
Chepstow	19	30
Monmouth	38	59
Other (see below)	7	11
		100
Devauden (2) The Narth (1) Chepstow Hospital/Vauxhall Surgery (1) Trellech (including doctor's Surgery) (4)		

Q4 Do you have a bus pass?

Yes	35	61%
No	22	39%

Q5. Do you have access to a car?

Yes	39	68%
No	18	32%

Q6. Why do you *choose* to travel by the 65 Bus, rather than by other means of transport?

With two thirds of passengers surveyed stating that they have access to a car, but make a positive choice to use the 65 Bus, it was interesting to note their reasons for choosing this means of transport. A number of reasons were stated by respondents, with many giving more than one. The main reasons put forward were:

- **Environmental**
- **Convenience**
- **No parking issues**
- **Friendly service with good drivers**
- **Social interaction**
- **More enjoyable than driving**
- **Enjoy the journey and the scenery**
- **Independence for young people**
- **Economical**
- **To support the continuation of the service**
- **To access a walking route**

Some sample quotes:

"It's better for the environment. Much more enjoyable than driving and the drivers and passengers are so friendly. Last but not least, we get to enjoy the beautiful scenery."

"Could have a lift, but easier to get the bus. It's a proper community bus; it's always on time. The drivers are friendly. It's a nice country run".

“Convenience, economy, better for the environment and to keep the service going (in a few years time driving may not be an option, I am 69)”

“Convenience, no worry about parking and for environmental reasons”

“More environmentally-friendly, no parking, less traffic congestion”

“I enjoy it. Prefer it to driving my car. Don't have to think about parking issues”

“Like the very friendly drivers. Enjoy the journey and company. Only use the car if have heavy shopping.”

“Environmental reasons. Convenient. Supports our community and the bus.”

“Easier than driving/parking. Prompts me to get up and out”

“Because it is important to support the public service and I don't always want to drive”

“It means I get to have a social life”

“To avoid drink driving. To support a vital local resource”

“For a linear walk back to Trellech”

“Parents not available and gives me freedom and independence”

Q7. What are your main purposes in using the 65 Bus? (select all that apply)

	No	%
Shopping	38	67
Meeting up with friends/family in town	25	44
Accessing services e.g. doctor/dentist/bank/library	21	37
Going out for a meal/drink	17	30
Going to/returning from work	8	14
Going to the start of a countryside walk/returning from a walk	7	12
Going to/returning from school/college	6	11
Visiting friends/family at their home	5	9
Just visiting a town or village on the route	4	7
Other (please specify below)	6	11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catching connecting bus to Bristol • Caring for elderly parent • Gym • Independence, just to get out; access to railway stations and other bus services • To escape for a few hours • Just for a run out • Connecting to another bus from Chepstow • Connect with other buses/train 		

Q8. Is there anything that would make you likely to use the 65 Bus more often?

The vast majority of comments (24) related to the *frequency of service*, and some suggestions to improve this. It is apparent that this is a *major issue* that affects the use of the 65 Bus, including for those who use it to go to/from work.

- **More frequent service**, including suggestions that:
 - all buses could run through The Narth & Penallt
 - there is a later bus in the afternoon/evening buses
 - there is a Sunday Service

“More frequent services especially mid afternoon Monmouth - Chepstow”

“Later bus time in the afternoon. I finish work at 17.30 so have to leave early to catch 17.15 bus. 17.45 would be good.”

“If there wasn't a "hole" in the timetable in the afternoon”

If the service was more frequent and regular, and if every service came through my village (The Narth) - especially in the afternoons

“If school run bus came through the village (The Narth) I would probably use it”

“Access to buses in time for normal working hours”

“Currently only getting the bus back to Chepstow in the evening, due to needing to be in work earlier this month, so the timings have not been ideal.”

“If it were hourly. Evening buses - to access the theatre/cinema etc.”

“I would like to know more about the walks that are accessible from bus stops along the route. An extra bus that leaves Monmouth at 11.30 am would be handy”

“I would use a Sunday service, but am not a regular user so it would not be every Sunday”

- **Better connections**

“A more convenient timetable, particularly for the afternoon when it is difficult to plan a return journey. Also, if the 65 bus had better connections with other bus routes eg to Abergavenny, Ross, Hereford, Newport”

- **Cost**
- **Other**

“Nothing can persuade me to be a more regular passenger as I have been a user for more than 21 years”

“I already use it every day”

Q9 Do you have any other comments/suggestions?

Almost all passengers who completed the survey took this opportunity to make comments or suggestions about the 65 Bus. Without exception, everyone was very positive.

Where any **suggestions** were made, they related to the desire for **increased frequency** of service and the **unsuitability of the minibus**.

"Staff are excellent. Inappropriate relief bus (minibus), especially for the disabled getting on and off"

"Supportive community on the bus, including the helpful drivers. Minibus is not suitable for all-ability access. Bus service could be better-publicised to encourage more people to use it."

"I like the bus route. The drivers and service are fantastic. The drivers know their passengers and it is a good community bus. The bus supports a vibrant high street and independent businesses. I have to finish work early to catch the bus - could tie in better with retail trading hours."

"It would be good to have more frequent buses I like the good service. It's friendly, like a club."

Passengers' **comments** covered the following positive features:

- **Good service and important resource**
- **Convenience**
- **Environmental**
- **Pleasure in the scenic route**
- **Friendly and helpful drivers**
- **Encourages social interactions**
- **Cost effective**

Typical **comments**:

"Great drivers. Bus is clean and comfortable. Price is good. Good environmentally. I like the F65B notices and get my information from them. Bus is just wonderful."

"Very useful. Parents are at work and I can't drive, so the 65 Bus is my only way to get to work."

"Reliable friendly service, very capable responsible drivers"

"Bus is a good opportunity for generations to mix. Good for tourists - beautiful route. A lifeline against isolation. Bus is now a community in itself. Drivers are outstanding and give a high standard of care to passengers"

"I like the bus route. The drivers and service are fantastic. The drivers know their passengers and it is a good community bus."

"Its a nice comfortable bus. The low floor is good for access. A lifeline for people living in the countryside."

"It's a great resource, encourages people to get out and enjoy social interactions they would otherwise not access, and is vital for anyone in our community who is unable to drive, for whatever reason."

It is a pleasure to travel on the bus as it is such a beautiful route, you can really enjoy the scenery.

"Keep it going!" I sometimes use it as an alternative to the 69 because I like the scenery.

"Great Bus. Very friendly. I've made loads of friends on the 65 Bus"

“Thank you for keeping the bus going!! My girlfriend lives in town and I live in the middle of nowhere so it really helps us to be able to see each other.”

“A vital local resource. I have 2 pre-teen children and it will be an important resource for them when they become a little older”

“Suits my needs. I would be lost without it”

“Lovely friendly service and the Facebook updates are brilliant “

“I think the bus is just about perfect”