



Newsletter Easter 2023

We are a local group aiming to raise awareness, encourage discussion and stimulate practical action to ensure we develop into the future as a thriving and sustainable community that responds positively to the big environmental and social challenges facing us all.



In this quarter's newsletter we are taking the opportunity to focus on a particular sustainability issue, in this case transport. Wendy Allen approached us to ask to raise awareness of (the lack of) mobility in Marshfield and the difficulties this creates in allowing her to live sustainably.

Sustainable Mobility in Marshfield

I have been looking at the most sustainable way to travel to and from Marshfield. Obviously, the most sustainable option would be to use a bus service that delivered a service as convenient and flexible as owning a car. We do have buses that come and go from the village, my observations are that they are mostly empty, under used and I have come to my own conclusion that they do not really serve the mobility needs of our very rural village. So, I have explored some possible alternatives and have gleaned most of my information from a charity run organization called CoMo (Collaborate Mobility). <https://www.como.org.uk/>

Alternatives to private car ownership come in many flavours here are some options for consideration:

Option 1 Advertising Sharing Opportunities

People can share car trips advertising where and what they are doing on a local social media platform. This requires planning, clear thinking and flexibility to fit in with others.

Option 2 Informal Car Sharing

Informal car sharing, where a small number of people/neighbours can opt to share cars, costs of car ownership and reduce numbers of cars on the road, or it might be a good second car option for active couples. Insurance would need to be looked into but probably not too much of a problem having a few extra named drivers on the policy. It could be as formal as you like, one person owns the car, others pay to use it and/or variations.

Option 3 Peer-to-peer Sharing

Peer-to-peer car sharing is a different model to car sharing to car clubs. It is a formal version of car sharing using a website (Ap. ?) to find a car to use. Car clubs have dedicated vehicles which belong to the car club and are shared with its members, whereas peer-to-peer car sharing allows private car owners to share their cars with their neighbours and other non-car owners. This information model is available through CoMo. I looked up the nearest peer to peer car share, it was 8.6 miles away, it did not say where it was located but this could change if we had some in the village.

Option 4 Car Clubs

Car clubs, a national operator, there are a number around, would provide a car, it could be electric, for people to use on an hourly basis. The disadvantage is that we would need a considerable number of people involved to make this a financially viable option for the car operator. During busy times when people might want a car for the holidays, a weekend away or some other use - arrangements can be made with car firms to hire cars. Disadvantages of this are because of the rural

nature of Marshfield's location cars would be out for longer trips.

The advantage of the car club is that it is run (using an Ap.) - all car maintenance, insurance, car use etc. is organized by someone else and it only requires the user to return the car, clean and in the state that they found it.

There are various places relatively locally where car clubs are happening. Locally there has been a car club in Larkhall, Bath for some years and in East Tisbury, near Salisbury, they have a car club serving a village of about 2,500 people who already have a bus service and are on a railway line too. The link below gives some in depth information about car sharing if anyone wants to look in more depth. There is a commitment from Local Authorities to provide on street parking for car clubs and so they would need to be involved to begin with https://www.como.org.uk/community-car-sharing?_hsmi=251463314&_hsenc=p2ANqtz_nhdle4ZIBLbGa5fgSA7gw5tAiuPQeT8nXIPWw3fqba_VqDagKfrW0n_v20V14Xa46EAxBMpNOF15YDW2STxbF0xKsm5C4vJcixM0XyVa87dY01g#case-studies

Option 5 Travel Hub

A travel hub where there is access to electric bikes, scooters, car club and a minibus. This seems to be a comparatively new idea that is in CoMo's newsletter. It is trying to address the idea of getting from the more rural areas to join up using other types of shared transport.

Summary

There are a range of options from informal to formal. A lot of the work and research has already been done so there is no need to re-invent the wheel.

----- **Wendy Allen, March 2023.** -----

The New WESTlink Service – April 2023

Withdrawal of the remaining bus service to Bath in March would have reinforced the need to look at new transport options for Marshfield. However, in April a new initiative in transport has started operation, the WESTlink service championed by the West of England Combined Authority. This is a "on demand" minibus service booked in advance through an App, see the website <https://travelwest.info/westlink/> It runs in three zones from 0700 to 1900 Mon-Sat.

Checking it out it seems too good to be true, with availability from a couple of hours in advance and cost £2 per journey (£1 for children, free for over-66's). However, it does not take you into town centres, only to transport hubs where you can catch connections. For Bath, you'd have to go to the Lansdown Park and Ride and catch a bus. For Bristol you can go to Emerson's Green and catch the express bus into the centre but it won't be any quicker than the No 35 which continues to run. You can get to Keynsham or Yate railway stations or visit Chipping Sodbury/Yate in a single journey which opens up new possibilities for shopping.

It's not clear how reliable or busy the service will become, or what it will cost once the current £2 cap on prices ends but it certainly has the potential to make travelling by public transport a realistic possibility for many people in Marshfield.

----- **Dan Smith** -----

The Question for the future

So where should Marshfield go next? Do we need to explore new transport solutions outlined above or will the new bus service meet our needs? SM would like your views either on the Facebook site or by email below.

In the meantime, go out and make use of our new bus service and make your journeys more sustainable. It will undoubtedly only last as long as it is being used! Please let us know if it has changed the way you travel and if it really is the sustainable transport solution for Marshfield.

Growing Sustainable Marshfield membership with your help

We want to grow our free membership, connecting up households in and around Marshfield who are interested in taking local action for sustainability. Please encourage friends and neighbours to join.

Email: membership@sustainablemarshfield.org All other correspondence to news@sustainablemarshfield.org

Join over 350 people on the **Sustainable Marshfield Group** on Facebook for regular updates.