



Newsletter 26 - Spring 2024



We've been working for nearly five years raising awareness, encouraging discussion, and stimulating practical action. We want to move forward as a thriving, sustainable community that responds positively to the big environmental and social challenges.

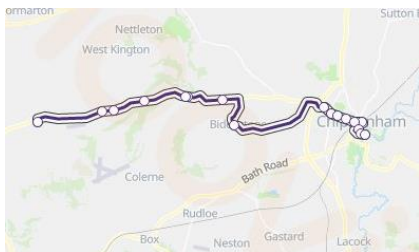
Transport: Bus Travel from Marshfield

There have been a number of queries raised on Facebook where people enquire what bus services there are to get to our local towns, so I thought it might be useful to outline what we have (been left with).

Nearest: Bath

The good news is that we still have a service to Bath, the **X79** leaving from the Withymead or Community Centre (Westbound) at 1024 giving you 2 hours 25 minutes before returning at 1315. The bad news is it only runs on Thursdays. There are some enthusiastic bus travellers who continue to use this service to try to ensure it doesn't disappear completely.

Post Town: Chippenham



Passengers for Chippenham have the luxury of 2 buses every day (except weekends!) at 0925 & 1410 using the **635** services from all the Marshfield eastbound bus stops starting at the Almshouses. Strangely, there is only one 635 bus back, at 1140 giving about an 1¼ hours to sample this historic town after the first bus arrives. Need to return after the second bus?

Well it can be done, but you have to use the **636** at 1710, which normally runs via Colerne but advertises stopping at the Almshouses or other stops

in Marshfield by request. If you work in Chippenham part-time and start late you could almost get there and back by bus! There are regular travellers on this route, so using it to go shopping will let you meet new people and join in their camaraderie!

Major City: Bristol Kingswood

It's not clear if the truncation of the **635** bus destination from Bristol to Kingswood was for operational reasons or just an attempt to boost the fading facilities of Kingswood by flooding its shopping centre with busloads of Marshfield residents. If it was the latter, it doesn't seem to have worked. However, it does mean we are blessed with a relatively frequent (in a funding-starved transport world) EIGHT buses a day to Kingswood: beating heart of South Gloucestershire. Kingswood does boast a bus service of six buses per hour into the centre of Bristol so it is possible to extend your journey to Bristol and somewhere you might actually like to visit. There are some downsides. Whilst the bus from Marshfield positively rushes to Kingswood in less than 30 minutes (well, 29 on the timetable) the bus to Bristol centre takes another 40 as it carries in the Redfield traffic. Added to the time to make the connection in the seething Kingswood metropolis it does make the journey times rather long. In addition, if you don't leave Bristol before 1645 you'll be needing a taxi, which

rather rules out a drink after work, or using it to commute at all for most people. Not surprisingly, the service is not heavily used so is extremely vulnerable to any future service cuts.

The World is your Oyster: Westlink

The whole of the west has been enjoying the novel dial-a-ride Westlink service which for Marshfield gave the opportunity to travel across South Glos. to Yate and its station, Bristol Parkway, Bath Park'n'Ride, Chipping Sodbury and the express buses into Bristol. However, the latest changes introduced (8 April '24) to overcome its popularity now prevent it being used wherever it duplicates bus services and restrict the area to the Boyd Valley. Going further afield now requires you to go to one of the interchanges such as Bath Park'n'Ride for a trip to Bath, or Emerson's Green, Kingswood or Bitton for connecting onward buses elsewhere. Given these buses are often slow and follow tortuous routes the number of realistic routes you might want to take seem to have been significantly curtailed. although the link to Bath forms a useful lifeline. There are reports that Westlink may now run to the Royal United Hospital, if true this could prove an invaluable service for people without a car.



Sustainable Marshfield Initiative

1. **Lift-Sharing** - We are piloting a scheme for people to offer lifts to other Marshfield residents. A small number of invited people have been in the scheme since January. We are now looking to test the scheme's viability for all residents. If you want to find out more please contact Jane Boyne: janeboyne2@gmail.com
2. **Car Share:** Wendy Allan believes that HIYA car works well as a peer-to-peer car sharing platform <https://.hiyacar.co.uk/> According to their website they sort out the insurance for the car sharers and this does not affect your own car insurance. On the website there are 3 cars within about 10 miles that we could use. We haven't been able to trial this yet because no-one with a car 15 years young or less has had the courage to put their car onto the HIYA site. Recent legislation relating to insurance has put an end to the smaller car share schemes so this is the most likely car share option that could be used by the village. We have a small-town population so not an attractive, or viable, option for commercial car sharing firms.
3. **Feedback:** If you are having problems accessing public transport, or have been unable to use public transport, please let us know.

Wild flowers to look out for in April-May in our Blue Heart Verges and elsewhere by the Wild flower Group

The wild flowers of early spring - Celandines, Primroses and Violets (see pictures at the top) - are gradually making way for the flush of late spring and early summer and our verges are burgeoning with new growth. Daises, April's birth flower and symbol of purity, are spotting their way across grassy patches and Dandelions are lighting up even the greyest day. In April look out for Cow Parsley, Bluebells and wild garlic (aka Ramsons). Tiny pink Herb Robert flowers are just beginning to show among lacy foliage sitting proudly on red stems. If you gently squeeze the leaves you'll notice they give off a slightly musty, peppery smell.

In May wandering along to the Blue Heart Verge at Little End (just beyond the Churchyard) you might see the beginnings of Vipers Bugloss, *Echium vulgare*, a tall, stately and spiky plant with blue flowers. It's fantastic name comes from ancient times when the root was used as a treatment for snake bites. Apparently, the leaves are an aphrodisiac and diuretic.



Meanwhile a short stroll to the Community Center Blue Heart verge and you can bask in a mass of wild flowers. Last May we counted 42 different species in this verge alone, one of them was Knapweed - *Centaurea scabiosa*, with raggy, purple flowers. It's in the Cornflower family and if you look closely you'll see a similar pattern of petals with a central core surrounded by single florets. Insects love them and you might see butterflies swarming all over just one flowerhead.



Shining Cranesbill is a beauty to look out for on dry stone walls and in cracks in sunny places. In May its pretty delicate pink flowers are just beginning to emerge and the leaves really are shining. They crop up everywhere but you can see them on the wall in the walk down to Ringswell. Another wall-lover is Ivy-



Leaved Toadflax that has the sweetest little lilac flowers with a yellow spot and delightful, ivy-shaped leaves. Like all the Toadflaxes they are a miniature version of a childhood favourite - Snapdragon - pinching the flower together makes its jaws snap open!



Calling all Gardeners, Plant lovers & Tree enthusiasts

This is an event not to be missed...come along to the Community Centre on **Saturday 18th May at 1100** for a fantastic talk by international garden designer Mary Keen. There will be loads of very reasonably priced plants for sale and a simple lunch, followed by "Trees - a talk and 'weather-permitting' walk on trees" at 1300 by Nigel de Berker, Tree Specialist. **Put it in your diary now.**

Sustainable Marshfield Talks at Community Centre at 7.00pm (18 May 11am)

SM have been running a monthly series of talks discussing different aspects of sustainability this year. So far, we have had talks on transport, waste & recycling and car sharing. Future planned talks are as follows:

- **24 APRIL: Retrofitting your home to improve energy efficiency – Bill Gething**
A chance to understand what are the challenges of reducing energy use for the different types of property in Marshfield
- **18 MAY at 11am: Mary Keen "What can we gardeners do about climate change?" and Nigel de Berker "Local trees & Tree Identification walks"** Presentations by well-known gardening and local tree experts either side of a light lunch.
- **19 JUNE:** Still to be decided – possibly a talk by the National Trust citizens assembly / Looking at Swifts in Marshfield / or Hedgehogs – *Watch this space.*
- **17 JULY: Talking to neighbourhood villages** – A panel session presenting what other surrounding villages and communities are aiming to achieve through local action.

New Sustainable Marshfield Website

Our new website is now available published at <https://sustainablemarshfield.co.uk/index.php> please take a look and let us know what you think.

Vacancy: We're looking for another person to join our committee and we'd really like someone with children at a local school to join our little band of sustainers. Please contact us if interested.

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 Correspondence to news@sustainablemarshfield.org

Join the **Sustainable Marshfield Group** on Facebook/email, like 500 others, who get regular updates.