

Imagine a local bus service with a regular timetable going to the places we all need to be at, or would like to be at. The Horton Hospital, Gateway Shopping, the Town Centre, for instance.

Imagine being able to get on the bus easily with a wheelchair.

Imagine a friendly regular driver who can help you off with some shopping now and again.

And now imagine that this is actually possible and not a fantasy.

Many of us will remember a better service than we currently suffer; however, there is no real improvement in sight. It's quite the opposite in fact. And the problem is, that folk's expectations have become so low about our public transport that there is an almost passive acceptance of what we have at present, which is close to nothing. The consequence is that we use our cars of course, or for some people they are trapped at home awaiting a family member to swing by and take them out.

Let's look at those destinations again. Kids love buses, it's a fact, so wouldn't it have been nice to take the kids out to the fair and back in Banbury recently without stressing about where to park the car.

For years the subject of a safe path between Swalcliffe, Tadmarton and Broughton, has been mooted, but the cost puts it out of reach. However a regular bus service would connect us without having to risk life and limb by walking on the road.

To keep a community viable and an attractive place to live in public transport is essential to access places of work, study, leisure and health facilities.

The possibilities are endless, private hire for those one off trips to celebrate a special event. How lovely to be able to ring up your own local bus service to arrange this.

And so on and so on.....

What's this all about then you ask. It all sounds too good to be true doesn't it? Well it *can* be true and it *is* being done elsewhere only a few miles away from us, by "Our Bus Bartons". Tadmarton and Swalcliffe PC's have had preliminary discussions and are very impressed by the work done by the Our Bus Bartons team, and would like to get a feeling for the interest across our villages in such a scheme.

Our Bus Bartons provides a community led timetabled bus service which has been running and expanding for nearly 10 years. Just like us, they recognised the already poor transport service was disappearing before their eyes, leaving young and old stranded. A group of like minded community spirited residents researched their options for buying and operating their own bus. A committee was formed and fundraising began together with extensive research on how to actually buy, maintain and run a 17 seater bus. Who can drive it? What licence is required? Where do you keep it?

We have followed Our Bus Bartons for some time and have met with founder member and Director Richard Brown MBE to glean all the information we need. Richard has been incredibly generous with his time and support, and he has talked us through the setting up of the Charitable organisation that oversees their mini fleet. They currently own 2 electric buses, the first and only community led service of its kind in the country, and are close to reaching their fundraising total for a third bus.

So, now here's the big question, would YOU like YOUR own bus. Because without passengers the wheels on the bus do not go round.

<https://www.facebook.com/OurBusBartons/>

You can send your thoughts to clerk@tadmarton-pc.gov.uk