

News

Communications Unit

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Improvements to bus services in Wensleydale

New timetables for bus services in Wensleydale come into effect from Monday 1 February as North Yorkshire County Council and bus operators respond to feedback from passengers and make best use of the funding available.

The changes have made it possible to realise a series of big improvements with increases in frequency, to the Wensleydale Voyager service between Hawes and Leyburn provided by The Little White Bus (LWB).

The improvements include:

- Revised service 159 (Ripon – Leyburn – Richmond) to provide additional journeys and improved reliability.
- Revised service 155 (Leyburn – Bedale). This service will be operated by the County Council's fleet, providing a Monday to Friday service

County Councillor John Blackie, member for the Upper Dales and chairman of the Upper Wensleydale Community Partnership, which operates The Little White Bus said: "Our new timetable has many improvements provided unilaterally by The LWB as a result of the huge success of our services, operated in the main by our team of 40 volunteer drivers.

"The changes the County Council and other bus operators have put in place allow us to offer even better connections with our LWB services at Leyburn, giving residents of Wensleydale an increasingly frequent, flexible and reliable service, making the best use of the more limited resources we all have available."

One timetable will operate throughout the whole year. New scheduled services will match or exceed the frequency of those operated prior to The Little White Bus service taking over the routes. For example, West Burton will have five scheduled services in each direction daily, Carperby will have four and Hawes, Bainbridge, Askrigg, Leyburn and Wensley will each have six.

There will be extra early morning and evening LWB express services on school and college days to provide additional scheduled journeys which are flexible in the route they will follow.

There will be better timekeeping and reliability as the new timetable being introduced largely removes the need to divert from the schedule to pick up "book in advance" or "demand responsive" passengers, though these can still be accommodated at those locations where only a small handful of passengers regularly get on or off the bus.

There will be a daily return journey from Hawes to the recently opened Princes Gate Shopping Centre at Catterick, allowing 1 hour 50 minutes for shopping. This service allows those living in the deeply rural communities in the Upper Dales served by the LWB occasionally to experience the

broader choice of goods and services provided at Princes Gate (some unavailable locally) while still using the LWB to support regularly local shops and services along the Wensleydale Voyager route.

There will be better connection timings and increased frequency opportunities at Leyburn for passengers travelling to or from Richmond and Ripon, taking advantage of the new 159 Dales and District service.

County Councillor Don Mackenzie, Executive Member for Public Transport, said: “Retaining a bus network across a large rural county like ours is crucially important to those of our residents who have little or no access to other means of transport. We work with local communities to decide which timetable best meets their needs, so I am delighted that it has been possible to introduce these changes to improve the service for travellers across Wensleydale.”

Ends

Pictures show: A minibus from the Little White Bus fleet.

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