

## Passenger Survey

### Wensleydale Flyer 856 – Northallerton to Hawes (Gayle)

#### Introduction

Passengers on board the Wensleydale Flyer 856 were surveyed over two days (1<sup>st</sup> November 2015 and 29<sup>th</sup> November 2015). Themes of the questionnaire included elucidating information relating to the utility of the service to promote social inclusion, accessibility for younger and older populations and economic stimulation in the local area.

#### Method

Self-completed questionnaires were completed on the bus to maximise response rate. Where this was not possible due to a short journey or fears of travel sickness, a blank questionnaire was administered along with a pre-paid self-addressed envelope. A high response rate was achieved. A total of **62** completed questionnaires (with one unusable response) have been analysed and postal responses are still returned long after the original survey date. Repeat users of the bus over the days were only sampled once to ensure a representative sample, however a note of these were made.

Survey Date	Responses Received	Passengers not responded	Repeat passengers (Not re-sampled)	Postal Surveys issued	Weather
01/11/2015	47	14	-	0	Showers; Fog
29/11/2015	15	13	10	10	Heavy rain; Flooding

#### Results

##### Passenger Sex

Sex of passenger	Count	Percent (%)
Male	38	61
Female	24	39
Total	62 (+1 Unusable response)	100

##### Passenger Age

Age of passenger	Count	Percent (%)
17 and under	8	14
18-24	7	12
25-34	4	7
35-44	4	7
45-54	3	5
55-64	11	19
65-74	12	21
75+	8	14
Total	57 (5 Missing responses)	100

It is important to highlight the concentration at each end of the age-spectrum, the modal age categories for users are **65+ (35%)** and **under 24's (26%)**. It should be noted that there were many more young people and teenagers who travelled on the sampled services but who were unwilling to or were unable to complete the survey.

### Passenger Residence

Residence	Count	Percent (%)
Local Resident	44	71
Day Visitor	8	13
Overnight Visitor	10	16
Total	62	100

Most people using the bus were Local Residents (**71%**), demonstrating the local benefit and demand of the 856. The lower number of visitors corresponds with the seasonal variation in demand, and confirms how the winter operation of the Wensleydale Flyer 856 has a primary *local* utility.

### Passenger Household Composition

People in Household	Count	Percent (%)
1	21	40
2	15	28
3	10	19
4	6	11
5	1	2
Total	53 (9 Missing responses)	100

The fact that **40%** of those surveyed lived in single-person households indicates the importance of this service for promoting social-inclusion – and this was a factor that was mentioned by several passengers. To briefly introduce a variable that will be discussed later in more depth, **55%** of these passengers from a single-person household did not own a car showing the importance of the bus for mobility.

### Journey Purpose

Journey Purpose	Count
Shopping	9
Employment	7
Visit Friends or Relatives	13
Medical Appointment	1
Travel to or from a visit / holiday	11
Enjoy going for a bus ride	12
Visit Local Attractions	7
Outdoor Activities	9
Other	3

These results represent the real split that was observed in the reasons for using the bus. Although the main use was for visiting friends and family there is also an important use for leisure journeys such as walking and visiting local attractions; personal business; accessing employment and using the bus as part of a wider public transport network to travel to or from a break.

### Spending in the local area

The average sum of money spent along the route of the Wensleydale Flyer 856 was **£17.39 per passenger** (excluding a large spend £200 to prevent the figure from becoming distorted). In total, over the two days of surveying **£1104.19** (£830.19 + £274.00) was stated by respondents to be spent in the local area. It should be noted that one would expect this to be higher, taking into account those passengers who did not complete a questionnaire. Furthermore, this value also excludes economic benefits associated with employment – both for the employer and employee alike.

From the survey results **£918.19** was spent by passengers who *would not* have made their journey to their destination had the bus not operated, thus demonstrating spending directly facilitated by the bus.

Using a wider passenger database, the findings above were used by the service coordinator to create an overall economic benefit by applying these values to all passengers in the Community Opportunities Fund period. It was calculated that, after removing 23% of passengers who would have been able to make the journey without the bus and allowing for return journeys, spending as a result of the 856 in local area totalled approximately £7,700 in the first two months of the project.

### **Incorporating the Wensleydale Flyer 856 into a longer journey**

13 people over the two days (approximately 20% of those surveyed) used the service as part of a wider journey. With a small number of people using a taxi and private car, the most common other mode used were National Rail connections to and from the bus at Northallerton. Connections were made to and from various domestic and origins/destinations as well as International destinations via Manchester International Airport. The convenience and choice of not driving the full distance or to the railway station was cited as a boon of the 856.

### **Assessing the importance of the Wensleydale Flyer 856 for mobility and independence**

To start, respondents were asked whether they would have made their journey that day and completed their planned activities without the bus. Later, it was asked whether the respondents lived in a household which had access to a car.

	No	Yes
"Without the Service 856, would you have been able to complete all of your planned activities today?"	53 (85%)	9 (15%)

	No	Yes
"Without the Service 856, would you have made your journey today?"	48 (77%)	14 (23%)

This shows how the Wensleydale Flyer 856 was important for allowing users to complete the activities that they had planned for that day. This is reaffirmed by the latter question, in which there is a correspondingly high percentage of respondents who would not have made their journey were it not for the Wensleydale Flyer 856. The latter variable of course also underpins many of the localised benefits of the service.

	No	Yes
Passengers whose <b>household owned</b> a car	22 (39%)	34 (61%) *6 Responses missing

	No	Yes
Of those 22 people whose <b>household did not</b> own a car, did they have access to a car? (for lifts etc)	18 (82%)	4 (18%)

	No	Yes
Of those 34 passengers whose household <b>did</b> own a car, could they have used that car to make that journey?	20 (58%)	12 (42%) *2 Responses missing

The above results could suggest a number of trends operating. To begin, passengers whose households did own a car could not necessarily use it that day (an issue cited by young people

especially – whose parents were otherwise committed) and therefore the Wensleydale Flyer 856 facilitated journeys that could not have been made. Furthermore it was mentioned by some respondents that spells of ill health meant that they were unable to drive and therefore needed the bus – this is an issue which should not be overlooked and should be anticipated as an issue to be more prevalent in the future. On the other hand, the real attractiveness of the Wensleydale Flyer 856 to all people can be seen that it is used by passengers from car-owning households - who *could* have driven. Reasons cited for this were the attraction of not having to drive and relax. In addition to the credential it also has synergistic environmental benefits through reduced traffic/parking congestion and tailpipe emissions.

Importantly however, approximately **40%** of those who responded live in a household without a car, of which **80%** had no other access to a car. This reaffirms the earlier point relating to single-person households: that the Wensleydale Flyer 856 is of a real benefit for allowing the maintenance of social connections and a sense of independence, which leads onto the next section.

### **Passenger Attitudes towards the Wensleydale Flyer 856**

<i>Statement: “Service 856 is important for letting me go out on Sundays.”</i>	Count	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	26	49
Agree	14	26
Neither Agree nor Disagree	10	19
Disagree	2	4
Strongly Disagree	1	2
Total	53 (9 Responses missing)	100

<i>Statement: “The continuation of Service 856 is important to me.”</i>	Count	Percent (%)
Strongly Agree	32	59
Agree	18	34
Neither Agree nor Disagree	4	7
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Total	54 (8 Responses missing)	100

To explicitly find out the importance of the Wensleydale Flyer 856, the above questions were asked. It is clear from the responses the bus service is important for promoting and facilitating social inclusion – **75%** of passengers surveyed Strongly Agreed or Agreed that the bus had been important for allowing them to go out on that Sunday, and when the data is disaggregated further:

- **90%** of passengers from single-person households;
- **c.95%** of passengers for car-less households;
- **80%** of passengers aged 24 and under;
- **100%** passengers aged 65 and over;

Strongly agreed or agreed that the bus was important for letting them go out on Sundays.

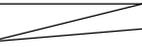
To compound this, **93%** of passengers surveyed strongly agreed or agreed that the continuation of the Wensleydale Flyer 856 was important to them with no passengers disagreeing with this statement. To analyse the same passenger profiles:

- **100%** of passengers from single-person households;
- **100%** of passengers from car-less households;
- **80%** of passengers aged 24 and under;
- **100%** of passengers aged 65 and over

Strongly agreed or agreed that the continuation of the Wensleydale Flyer 856 was important to them.

Below is selection of (anonymised) quotes received from completed questionnaires on board the Wensleydale Flyer 856.

*"It is fantastic to go out into the dales and not have to drive, keep this service"*



*"Fantastic Bus Service for us - we love to walk in the dales"*

*"Excellent Service fits in with my hours of work"*

*"Today I have only used this bus to go to Northallerton but I regularly use this Sunday bus to go to Hawes to visit my son. Would not be able to see him as regularly if this bus were to be withdrawn on a Sunday as there are no other bus services at all on a Sunday"*



*"It is veru much needed"*



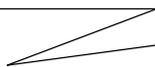
*"Please continue this service"*



*"Please keep this vulnerable service, it's a lifeline"*



*"It is important for people in the local area to have access to public transport for example, for work, especially those who do not have access to a car."*



## Conclusion and Summary

To summarise, the data included in this report clearly shows that the Wensleydale Flyer 856 is part of the Dales' mobility solution having key social, economic and environmental credentials for the places and populations that it serves, satisfying Key Performance Indicators. It has demonstrated that the bus acts as a combatant of social exclusion (indeed the bus acts a 'social arena' in its own right) by facilitating accessibility for younger and older populations (who are the modal age groups of passengers) and those who live in single-person households and households with no access to car. It has also shown the Wensleydale Flyer 856 connects a network of local economies that benefit from spending by bus passengers. Furthermore, despite benefits the associated benefits for visitors to the area (a bonus in itself), during the winter months of operation it is clear that the benefits of this Sunday bus service (which maintains a full 7-day service) are enjoyed by *local residents*.

Finally, I would *strongly encourage* anyone interested in measuring the tangible and intangible impacts of the Wensleydale Flyer 856 to take a journey on this bus service and to observe and speak to those who use it – only then can a clear indication of the real importance and strong passion for continuing the service be understood.

*This data was collected by Andrew Turnbull as part of an undergraduate dissertation on Rural Transport at the Institute for Transport Studies/School of Geography at the University of Leeds. Conducted and prepared in cooperation with the Dales and Bowland Community Interest Company.*

The data represents a sample of users of the Wensleydale Flyer 856 on the days that were surveyed. The sample would obviously be increased if questionnaires were conducted every day of operation however this was not possible. As with all surveys, there is a risk of under-representation of certain strata of society depending on educational attainment, sex and language. This was reduced by inviting all passengers to complete a questionnaire. An issue with quantitative surveys of this nature are that despite enabling collection of a large number of variables in a short period of time it can be criticised for not adequately accounting for the subjective elements that people feel or think – this was minimised by including an open response question at the end for respondents to freely express what they felt.

It was unfortunate that on the second day of sampling the response rate was lower. This is due to lower passenger numbers (a result of weather), repeat-passengers not surveyed twice however a credible reason is that more postal questionnaires were issued. These generally have a lower response rate, yet weather conditions and flooding in the sample area may have reduced the priority of completing the survey, or disrupted postal networks

