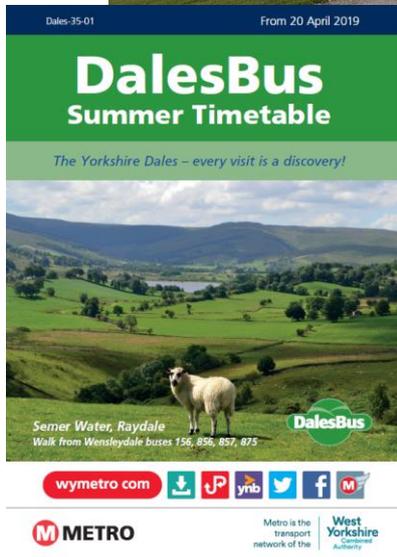


Annual Report and Statement of Community Interest Delivery 2019-20



Dales and Bowland Community Interest Company
 Canal Wharf, Eshton Road, Gargrave, North Yorkshire BD23 3PN

Overview

- Dales and Bowland Community Interest Company (D&BCIC) provided the “DalesBus” network of 14 Sunday and Bank Holiday public bus services into and around the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Nidderdale/ Forest of Bowland Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty throughout Summer 2019, plus one Summer Saturday service. Five services continued on Sundays all year.
- D&BCIC also produced, in conjunction with West Yorkshire Combined Authority, a timetable booklet covering most bus services in the Yorkshire Dales and undertook other activities to promote public transport in the area.
- D&BCIC is a social enterprise whose single member is a charity, the Yorkshire Dales Society, also known as Friends of the Dales. D&BCIC has its own independent board of directors who are all unpaid volunteers working in partnership with commercial bus operators, community transport operators, user groups, local attractions and other businesses and local authorities.
- DalesBus is not just a local but also a regional transport network. It serves a wide range of catchment communities across the North of England, from Preston to Middlesbrough, and Kirkby Lonsdale to Selby. Although primarily designed to meet the needs of urban communities to access the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Nidderdale/Forest of Bowland AONBs, DalesBus also provides a much-valued service for local communities within the Dales who otherwise would have no transport on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays, thereby further isolating those without access to their own transport.
- 30,370 passenger journeys were made on services provided by D&BCIC in 2019-20.
- Over the summer passenger numbers across the DalesBus network increased by around 4% compared to summer 2018, but the winter period saw a decline due to several weekend storms in February and the increasing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic from mid-March onwards.
- DalesBus delivers many economic, social and environmental benefits, but D&BCIC cannot achieve these alone. For DalesBus to survive and develop we need increased longer-term financial support.

Dales and Bowland Community Interest Company

D&BCIC is a social enterprise wholly owned by the charity Yorkshire Dales Society, also known as Friends of the Dales. The company has its own independent board of directors who are all unpaid volunteers working in partnership with commercial bus operators, community transport operators, user groups, local attractions, businesses and local authorities.

We wish to thank the many volunteers who give up time to help with the running of the company, and the management and promotion of DalesBus services, as well as the many organisations, listed at Appendix 4, who have provided vital financial support.

The DalesBus Network

The company was successful in raising funding and utilising donations to enable a broadly similar network to be provided in 2019 as in previous years.

Some changes were however made in the Western Dales/Bowland area to accommodate the introduction of a trial Summer Sunday and Bank Holiday Craven Connection service between Lancaster, Ingleton, Settle and Skipton by Kirkby Lonsdale Coach Hire on a commercial basis. This service was marketed as part of the DalesBus network, with DalesBus 881 modified to operate from Lancaster to Malham via Slaidburn, also replacing the Bowland Explorer service.

In Nidderdale support for the winter Sunday journeys on service 24 was provided directly to the operator by Harrogate Spring Water in Winter 2019-20. Again, this service was still marketed as part of the DalesBus network, but D&BCIC was no longer involved in its management.

The Summer Sunday and Bank Holiday service in Nidderdale AONB was revamped with service 825 extended to operate between Selby, Wetherby, Harrogate, Brimham Rocks, Fountains Abbey, Kirkby Malzeard and Masham, and service 859 extended to run from Richmond via Leyburn to Masham.

A full list of the services provided by D&BCIC in 2019-20 is included at Appendix 2.

Overall, 30,370 passenger journeys were made on services provided by D&BCIC in 2019-20.

Inclusion of the Sunday Craven Connection and Sunday 24 services above, brings the number of passenger journeys on the network to 33,597 – which is a slight increase over last year's total of 33,391 passenger journeys.

Over the summer passenger numbers across the network increased by around 4% compared to summer 2018, but the winter period saw a decline due to several weekend storms in February and the increasing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic from mid-March onwards.

The overall cost of providing and marketing the network was around £149,000 with fares income of approx. £63,200, leaving a net cost funding requirement of £85,800.

Community Benefits and Consultation

DalesBus was primarily established to provide people without their own transport affordable opportunities to access the National Park and neighbouring AONBs where other public bus services are not available. An important secondary benefit is the provision of bus services for rural communities, allowing them to access local services, shops, jobs and leisure facilities, as well as enjoying the countryside itself.

A survey undertaken in 2018 found that a little more than half our users were going for a walk, with nearly half reporting a ride in the country as a purpose of their journey. Naturally the latter tended to be older passengers, and 40% of all passengers reported that the service provided companionship and reduced isolation. 68% of passengers reported improved physical health from the exercise use of the service provided. The physical and mental health benefits achieved from a bus ride in the countryside and activities such as walking, are significant, well documented and can be a huge antidote to isolation, loneliness and depression, suffered by many older people. Healthy exercise is encouraged by a programme of free guided walks, all accessible by the DalesBus network, organised by the Friends of DalesBus.

Research shows that bus passengers spend on average around £10 on the outing excluding transport, demonstrating the importance of bus users to shops, pubs, cafes, camp sites, hotels and leisure attractions. This spend on local goods and services has a multiplier effect in which spending is engendered through small businesses to other supporting businesses in the area. This importance is recognised by local businesses, many of whom strongly support DalesBus, displaying and even requesting timetables and posters to publicise bus services to their customers.

Many regular DalesBus users are members of Friends of the Dales and the Friends of DalesBus with whom D&BCIC has close working relationships. There is regular contact between our Board and their committees, and presentations are made to their annual general meetings on past performance and future plans for DalesBus services. Attendees are encouraged to provide feedback and suggestions for improving and expanding the services. D&BCIC also seeks input from other relevant groups, such as Lancaster District Bus Users Group and Action for Yorkshire Transport.

Passengers are encouraged to feedback their experiences, concerns, complaints and suggestions to D&BCIC directors face to face or via email, Twitter, the DalesBus website or the Friends of DalesBus. Similarly, DalesBus drivers provide operational feedback to improve the running of the services, which reaches the company via direct face-to-face conversations or through their operating companies, with whom directors have close working relationships.

Though primarily involved with managing the Sunday, Bank Holiday and limited Saturday DalesBus network, D&BCIC also works to integrate its activities with the services of weekday bus and rail operators in the Dales such as Dales & District, Kirkby Lonsdale Coach Hire, Transdev and Northern, as well as the four Dales-based community transport operators operating public scheduled bus services, for mutual benefit and support. Our aim is for Dales residents and visitors to be offered a seven day a week, all year high quality public transport network to meet their travel needs.

Marketing

Marketing of public transport in the Yorkshire Dales is a major activity of D&BCIC, covering not only DalesBus services managed by the company but also other public transport in the area.

In the absence of any funding from the public sector D&BCIC funded the printing of 40,000 copies of a network DalesBus timetable booklet for Summer 2019, which covers most bus services in the Yorkshire Dales area.

D&BCIC also produced a large range of localised timetable leaflets with promotional copy aimed at local communities and visitors. These included leaflets which focussed on bus links from rail services, produced in partnership with Friends of the Settle Carlisle line, and timetable leaflets in partnership with local bus companies.

The popular “Ingleborough Walks” booklet, produced as part of the Ingleborough Dales Landscape Partnerships Stories in Stone project, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and managed by Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, was updated and reprinted.

Volunteers distributed these publications to numerous outlets, maintained many bus stop timetable displays in the Dales, maintained the www.dalesbus.org website and produced numerous press releases and public relations stories.

DalesBus is active on social media, with the DalesBus Twitter feed now having over 2,500 followers.

Key features of the DalesBus network are a range of multi operator tickets, discounts for young people (including the One Way £1 ticket), the elderly and disabled, and families (in addition to free travel for senior citizens with ENCT passes on some services) and, thanks to the support of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, availability of MCard train and bus commuter tickets on the weekend DalesBus network.

2020-21 – The Coming Year

Planning for 2020-21 and beyond was an important part of the company's activity in 2019-20, with the main challenge again being to source funding to facilitate the continuation and development of the network.

- The West Yorkshire Combined Authority has offered continued support, reflecting the Authority's view of the value of DalesBus to the health and well-being of the people of West Yorkshire in terms of access to the National Park and AONB, and the regional economic and social importance of cross boundary services within the Leeds City Region.
- The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority will continue to provide annual support of £5,000. This is very welcome but represents a small proportion of the net operating cost of the network.
- Continued support from the National Trust combined with other fundraising, including welcome new support from Yorkshire Water, will allow the continuation of the Summer Sunday and Bank Holiday services in and around the Nidderdale AONB area.
- A £12,000 grant from TransPennine Express Community Rail Partnership Growth Fund via the Settle Carlisle Railway Development Company has secured the Wensleydale Flyer service linking Northallerton, Leyburn and Hawes on Sundays and Bank Holidays for another year. This funding is however only for twelve months, so additional funding is still required to secure this service in future years.
- A new three-year partnership with Community Rail Lancashire will facilitate the continuation of Sunday DalesBus service 881 to Malham and the introduction of a new Sunday link between Lancaster, Kirkby Stephen and Richmond. Both services are planned to operate on the same dates as the Lancashire DalesRail trains, and connect with the train at Settle/Kirkby Stephen stations.
- Charitable Trusts continue to provide valuable support to the DalesBus network, with ongoing support from the Sovereign Health Care Trust, the Jaytee Foundation and the Wharfedale Charitable Trust.
- Financial support from users via local transport user groups, the Friends of DalesBus and the Friends of the Settle Carlisle Line remains vital to the work of D&BCIC.
- Friends of the Dales continues to provide an annual grant to D&BCIC, in addition to providing essential office and much appreciated administrative support to allow the company to function.
- A grant from Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust will facilitate the printing of 45,000 copies of a DalesBus network timetable booklet for Summer 2020.
- Other smaller funders and grant givers, including North Yorkshire County Council's Locality Fund, as well as a wide range of individual donations, have continued to make important contributions to the provision of the DalesBus network.

All this fundraising activity, combined with a number of donations received directly and via Friends of the Dales, has enabled the planning of a slightly improved network for Summer 2020. In addition to the introduction of the new Sunday service via Kirkby Stephen mentioned above, it is planned in response to many requests to reintroduce a Summer Saturday service between Skipton and Harrogate.

Sadly at the time of writing in April 2020, the global COVID-19 pandemic was having a severe impact in the United Kingdom, with restrictions placed on non-essential travel. As a result, several winter DalesBus services were suspended from late March and the start of the Summer 2020 network delayed until further notice.

The Future of DalesBus

Whilst D&BCIC has achieved considerable success in securing numerous donations and grants to support the network in recent years, a substantial part of the funding is on a one-off or short-term basis. Moreover, with many organisations badly affected by the coronavirus crisis, fundraising may become even more difficult. There is therefore an urgent need to arrange more stable long-term funding for the DalesBus network.

In recent months there has been a welcome recognition at a national level of the importance of local bus services.

Firstly, the government announced as part of its “Better Deal for Bus Users” that Bus Service Operators Grant payments to local authorities would be increased by £30m in 2020-21, with mention made inter alia of improving evening or weekend service frequencies and supporting additional seasonal bus services in tourist areas. D&BCIC, in conjunction with the Friends of DalesBus, submitted several proposals to North Yorkshire County Council for the use of this funding, including some DalesBus services as well as other services to fill gaps in the existing network. However, this £30m fund has since been diverted to help support existing bus services affected by the coronavirus crisis.

Secondly, the government announced that it was preparing a Bus Strategy to be published later in 2020, together with £5bn of funding over five years for improved bus services, cycleways and walking.

In addition, the government is developing a Transportation Decarbonisation Plan to accelerate the decarbonisation of transport, setting out in detail what government, business and society will need to do to deliver the significant greenhouse gas emissions reduction needed across all modes of transport, with the aim to put the UK on a pathway to achieving carbon budgets and net zero emissions across every single mode of transport by 2050. It is aiming to publish the final plan in Autumn 2020. It published a document “Decarbonising Transport – setting the challenge” which stated that:

“Public transport and active travel will be the natural first choice for our daily activities. We will use our cars less and be able to rely on a convenient, cost-effective and coherent public transport network.”

Looking ahead, it is vital that the promised increased funding for bus services is delivered, giving services like DalesBus the security they need. In the meantime, D&BCIC will continue to work with key stakeholders, operators and user groups; to respond to consultations and inquiries to make the case for increased services and funding for public transport into and around the Dales; and to press for improved marketing and timetable information for passengers.

D&BCIC can help the National Park and neighbouring protected landscapes achieve many of their aims and objectives, and in so doing deliver significant economic, social and environmental benefits. But we cannot do it alone, and **for DalesBus to survive and thrive, and the benefits realised, we need increased political and financial support.**

Appendix 1

Directors as at 31st March 2020

Prof. Christopher Nash (*Chairman*)
Mr John Carey
Mr Paul Chattwood
Mr Howard Handley
Mr Howard Robinson
Ms Janet Stallworthy
Dr Christopher Wright

Appendix 2

DalesBus Services managed by D&BCIC during 2019-20

Nidderdale DalesBus	821: Keighley - Otley - Pateley Bridge - Scar House (<i>summer only</i>)
DalesBus	822: Selby - York - Ripon - Fountains Abbey - Pateley Bridge - Grassington (<i>summer only</i>)
Eastern DalesBus	825: Selby - Wetherby - Harrogate - Brimham Rocks - Fountains Abbey - Masham (<i>summer only</i>)
World of James Herriot DalesBus	830: Middlesbrough - Darlington - Richmond - Reeth - Hawes (<i>summer only</i>)
Northern DalesBus	830: Preston - Lancaster - Settle - Ingleton - Ribbleshead - Hawes - Reeth - Richmond (<i>summer Sundays only</i>)
Ribbleshead DalesBus	831: Hawes - Ribbleshead - Settle (<i>summer only</i>)
Wensleydale	855: Garsdale - Hawes - Gayle (<i>all year</i>) 856: Northallerton - Bedale - Leyburn - Hawes (<i>all year</i>) Upper Dales CONNECT (<i>all year</i>)
World of James Herriot DalesBus	857: Hawes - Castle Bolton - Leyburn - Richmond (<i>summer only</i>) 859: Richmond – Leyburn - Masham (<i>summer Sundays only</i>)
Cravenlink	873/884: Dewsbury - Bradford - Ilkley - Skipton - Malham (<i>all year - in winter Ilkley to Skipton only</i>)
Wharfedale DalesBus	74: Wakefield - Leeds - Grassington (<i>summer Saturdays only</i>) 874: Wakefield - Leeds - Grassington - Buckden (<i>all year</i>) 875: Wakefield - Leeds - Buckden - Hawes (<i>summer only</i>)
Coast & Cove DalesBus	881: Morecambe - Lancaster - Slaidburn - Settle - Malham (<i>summer only</i>)
DalesBus 24	24: Harrogate - Pateley Bridge (<i>winter 2018-19 only</i>)

All services operated on Sundays and Bank Holidays, except where indicated otherwise.

Appendix 3

Passenger Journeys

Sundays & Bank Holidays

Cravenlink	7,455
Wharfedale	7,900
Northern DalesBus from Lancashire	1,018
WOJH DalesBus from North East	811
Nidderdale DalesBus	1,472
Fountains DalesBus	1,177
Eastern DalesBus	685
Wensleydale	5,533
Coast & Cove DalesBus	646
Winter Nidderdale 24	681

Saturdays

Wharfedale	2,992
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Total **30,370**

Appendix 4

Financial Support

D&BCIC would like to thank the following for financial support during 2019-20:

Acorn Stairlifts
Bolton Castle
Bradford Gurdwaras
Friends of DalesBus
Friends of the Settle Carlisle Line
Friends of the Dales
Fullers Foods
Gale & Phillipson
Jaytee Foundation
Keighley Town Council
Kendall's Farm Butchers
Kirkby Malhamdale Parish Council
Leeds City Council MICE Fund
Muker Tearooms
National Trust
Northern
North Yorkshire County Council
Nidderdale Chamber of Trade
Oldest Sweet Shop
Otley Town Council
Otley Walkers are Welcome
Pateley Bridge Town Council
Personal Donations
Ripley Castle
Sovereign Health Care Trust
TransPennine Express
Two Ridings Community Fund
West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Wharfedale Charitable Trust
World of James Herriot
WYG
Yorke Arms
Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust
Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority