

Annual Report and Statement of Community Interest Delivery 2022-23



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

www.dalesandbowland.com

www.dalesbus.org

Overview

- Dales and Bowland Community Interest Company (D&BCIC) manages much of the weekend DalesBus network, comprising during Summer 2022 two Saturday and twelve Sunday and Bank Holiday public bus services into and around the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. One Saturday and four Sunday services continued through the winter period.
- D&BCIC is a volunteer-run not-for-profit social enterprise whose single member is a charity, Friends of the Dales. D&BCIC has its own independent board of directors who are all unpaid volunteers working alongside 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, including West Yorkshire, Lancashire and the Tees Valley as well as North Yorkshire and the City of York. Although primarily designed to meet the needs of urban communities to access the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Nidderdale AONB, 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.
- 41,731 passenger journeys were made on services managed by D&BCIC in 2022-23, an increase of 45% compared with 28,797 the previous year when services were still recovering from the Coronavirus pandemic.
- The overall social benefit of services managed by D&BCIC in 2022-23 is estimated at around £5 per passenger trip, an overall total benefit of over £200,000, using the standard Department for Transport appraisal guidelines which factor in benefits such as reduced isolation, reduced congestion and environmental impacts.
- DalesBus provides access to the Dales for those without a car available, relieves social isolation, encourages healthy exercise, relieves congestion and pollution from excessive car transport and expands markets for local businesses. But for many years now it has survived hand to mouth with little long-term funding.
- We very much hope that North Yorkshire Council's new Local Transport Plan will recognise the importance of Sunday bus services to the physical and mental health of the residents of North Yorkshire and to the promotion of sustainable tourism, and include financial support for the DalesBus network.
- We welcome the National Park's recently agreed Statement on Public Transport, but more than words are needed, and positive action is needed by both the National Park Authority, North Yorkshire Council and surrounding local authorities to ensure that long term funding is provided to secure and develop public transport provision in the area, including the DalesBus network.

Dales and Bowland Community Interest Company

D&BCIC is a social enterprise wholly owned by the charity Friends of the Dales. The company has its own independent board of directors who are all unpaid volunteers working alongside 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 5, who provide vital funding.

The DalesBus Network

Sufficient funding and donations were raised to enable a broadly similar level of service to be provided in 2022-23 as in the previous year, although some reductions to the operating period of services in the Nidderdale area were required and a Summer Sunday service was no longer provided on the Craven Connection route between Skipton, Settle and Ingleton.

Unfortunately, the Sunday service provided by Little White Bus in Upper Wensleydale was withdrawn at short notice in November 2022 following a review of operating costs by the Upper Dales Community Partnership. D&BCIC aim to reinstate this service, at least for the summer months, at the earliest opportunity.

Overall, 41,731 passenger journeys were made on services managed by D&BCIC in 2022-23, an increase of 45% compared with 28,797 the previous year when services were still recovering from the Coronavirus pandemic. This is 37% higher than the number carried pre-Covid in 2019-20, albeit around 5% lower on a like-for-like basis.

The overall cost of providing and marketing the DalesBus network was around £187,000 (after accounting for the benefit of Bus Recovery Grant) with fares income of approx. £93,000, leaving a net funding requirement of £94,000.

Passenger numbers were boosted by the introduction of a national single fare cap of £2 from January 2023 which included all bus services in the Yorkshire Dales area. This was originally intended to be in place for three months but was subsequently extended.

A full list of the services managed by D&BCIC in 2022-23 is included at Appendix 2.

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.

D&BCIC conducted a passenger survey during summer 2022 to gain feedback on our services and to find out more about how they are used (see Appendix 6). It covered 987 passengers in 624 groups and found that around 44% of our users were going for a walk, with a similar number reporting a ride in the country as a purpose of their journey. The latter tended to be older passengers, and 41% of all passengers reported that the service provided companionship and reduced isolation. 59% 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 people. Healthy exercise is encouraged by a programme of free guided walks, all accessible by the DalesBus network, organised by the Friends of DalesBus.

The survey, in line with previous research, showed 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.

The overall benefit of services managed by D&BCIC in 2022-23 is estimated at around £5 per passenger trip, an overall total benefit of over £200,000, using the standard Department for Transport appraisal guidelines, using the standard Department for Transport appraisal guidelines which factor in benefits such as reduced isolation, reduced congestion and environmental impacts (see Appendix 4). The average cost in terms of subsidy is of the order of £2.20 per journey, so we believe that our services provide good value for money for the subsidies they receive.

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, HarBus (the Hambleton and Richmondshire 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, social media, the DalesBus website or the Friends of DalesBus, as well as through the passenger survey. 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.

Despite the lack of any funding from the public sector D&BCIC again managed the production of 28,700 copies of a Dales area timetable booklet in Summer 2022, covering most bus services in the Yorkshire Dales area. D&BCIC also produced a range of localised timetable leaflets aimed at local communities and visitors.

D&BCIC is active on social media, with over 3,100 followers on Twitter and over 1,600 on Facebook, which saw an increased focus during the year. We continue to provide the DalesBus website at **www.dalesbus.org**, with information on all bus and train services in the area.

2023-24 – The Coming Year

Planning and fundraising for 2023-24 and beyond was an important part of the company's activity in 2022-23, against an uncertain background.

- The aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic continues to affect the use of public transport, although passenger numbers have recovered strongly for leisure travel.
- Bus Recovery Grant is expected to end early in the year, amidst general uncertainty about the level and form of future central government support for bus services.
- A new unitary authority, North Yorkshire Council, becomes the local transport authority for North Yorkshire from 1st April 2023, but has initially adopted the Local Transport Plan of the previous North Yorkshire County Council which excludes financial support from the transport budget for Sunday bus services. Appeals from D&BCIC for financial support for either service or information provision (e.g. printing of area timetable booklets) have been declined.
- It is expected that West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) will offer continued support, reflecting the Authority's previous 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. This had however not been confirmed by the start of the year.
- In March 2023 the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority agreed a very welcome statement highlighting the importance of improved public transport to the area. However, this was not accompanied by an increase in funding, which remains at £5,000 per annum, and a request for additional support from the one-off grant from DEFRA of £440K for 2023-24 was declined.
- More positively a three-year funding arrangement was agreed with Yorkshire Water which, combined with continued support from the National Trust and others, will allow the continuation and improvement of the Summer Sunday and Bank Holiday services in and around the Nidderdale AONB area.
- Support from LNER's Customer and Community Investment Fund will enable the Wensleydale Flyer service to continue throughout the year.
- Charitable Trusts continue to provide valuable support to the DalesBus network, with funding offered by the Dulverton Trust, Jack Brunton Charitable Trust, the Jaytee Foundation and the Wharfedale Charitable Trust.
- Friends of the Dales continue to make a significant annual grant to D&BCIC, partly funded by a legacy from a former Director of D&BCIC, John Disney, to fund a Sunday service in Malhamdale as well as support the company's other activities.
- 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.
- Other funders and grant givers, including Darlington Community Grants, Northern's Seed Corn Fund and North Yorkshire County Council's Locality Fund, as well as many individual donations, continue to make important contributions to the provision of the DalesBus network.

All this fundraising activity, combined with donations received directly and via Friends of the Dales, has enabled a similar number of services to be planned for 2023-24 as in 2022-23. There will however be some notable changes:

- An additional trial service will run between Seacroft, Leeds and Grassington on Summer Sundays and Bank Holidays to provide extra capacity to cope with anticipated increased passenger numbers resulting from the £2 fare cap.
- Summer Sunday and Bank Holiday services between Otley and the Washburn Valley will be increased as a result of the new funding agreement with Yorkshire Water.
- Eastern DalesBus 825 will be reduced to operate on only a monthly basis and will be fully supported by Friends of DalesBus as “Anne’s Bus” in memory of a former member.
- Northern DalesBus 830 will be suspended for the 2023 season following the unexpected withdrawal of a key connecting train services and difficulties in raising sufficient funding.
- Malham DalesBus 881 will not run in 2023 due to prioritisation of the scarce funding following a poor performance in summer 2022.

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 still on a one-off or short-term basis. Moreover, with many organisations badly affected by the cost-of-living crisis, fundraising is becoming even more difficult. There is therefore an urgent need to arrange more stable long-term funding for the DalesBus network.

A three-year business plan was created in early 2020, incorporating plans to increase passenger numbers to 50,000 by 2023-24, based on increased public sector funding. A new plan will be created with external help during 2023 to set out objectives for the next three years.

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.

The new North Yorkshire Council is in the course of preparing a new Local Transport Plan. We very much hope that this will recognise the importance of Sunday bus services to the physical and mental health of the residents of North Yorkshire and to the promotion of sustainable tourism, and therefore include financial support for the DalesBus network.

We welcome the National Park’s recently agreed Statement on Public Transport, but more than words are needed, and positive action is needed by the National Park Authority, North Yorkshire Council and surrounding local authorities to ensure that long term funding is provided to secure and develop public transport provision in the area, including the DalesBus network.

Appendix 1

Directors as at 31st March 2023

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

Appendix 2

DalesBus Services managed by D&BCIC 2022-23

Nidderdale DalesBus	821: Keighley - Otley - Pateley Bridge - Scar House (<i>summer only</i>)
DalesBus	822: Pocklington - York - Ripon - Fountains Abbey - Pateley Bridge - Grassington (<i>summer only</i>)
Eastern DalesBus	825: York - Harrogate - Brimham Rocks - Fountains Abbey - Masham - Leyburn - Richmond (<i>summer only</i>)
Northern DalesBus	830: Preston - Lancaster - Settle - Ingleton - Ribbleshead - Hawes - Reeth - Richmond (<i>summer Sundays only</i>)
Northern DalesBus	831: Middlesbrough - Darlington - Richmond - Reeth - Hawes - Ingleton - Kirkby Lonsdale (<i>summer only</i>)
Wensleydale	855: Garsdale - Hawes - Gayle (<i>until November 2022 only</i>) 856: Northallerton - Bedale - Leyburn - Hawes (<i>all year</i>) Upper Dales CONNECT (<i>until November 2022 only</i>)
Cravenlink	873/884: Bradford - Ilkley - Skipton - Malham (<i>all year - in winter Ilkley to Skipton only</i>)
Wharfedale DalesBus	74: York - Harrogate - Ilkley - Grassington (<i>summer Saturdays only</i>) 874: Wetherby - Leeds - Ilkley - Grassington - Buckden (<i>all year</i>) 875: Leeds - Ilkley - Buckden - Hawes (<i>summer only</i>)
Malham DalesBus	881: Lancaster - Ingleton - Settle - Malham (<i>summer only</i>)
DalesBus 59	59: Harrogate - Skipton (<i>Saturdays only</i>)

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

Appendix 3

Passenger Journeys

	2021-22	2022-23	Change
Sundays & Bank Holidays			
Cravenlink	5,014	7,203	44%
Wharfedale	5,751	8,063	40%
Northern DalesBus	1,576	2,303	46%
Nidderdale	4,909	7,170	46%
Wensleydale	3,129	4,315	38%
Craven Connection	1,173	503	-57%
Saturdays			
Wharfedale	1,143	2,492	118%
Harrogate-Skipton	6,102	9,682	59%
Total	28,797	41,731	45%

Appendix 4

Estimation of Social Value of DalesBus Services

The standard Department for Transport appraisal guidelines value additional trips made by bus, which would not otherwise be made, at around £4 per return journey for passholders and £8 for non-passholders (the value is lower for passholders because the fact that they travel free encourages them to make more, and less valuable, journeys) at 2010 prices: 2023 prices are double these. Around two thirds of our journeys would not be made in the absence of our services and around half of our passengers are passholders. This suggests that the social value of a one-way passenger journey on one of our buses is around £4. The other one third of our journeys would otherwise mainly be made by car. There will be benefits from reduced congestion and environmental impacts from removal of these car journeys. These vary very much with location and time of day, but according to the Transport Appraisal Guidelines average 17p per km in 2010 prices or 34p in 2023 prices. If the mean length of a car trip which would replace a DalesBus trip is 45km, that leads to an external cost of £15.

Assuming a car occupancy of 2, this leads to a benefit of £7.50 per DalesBus passenger trip replacing a car journey. Given that one third of Dalesbus journeys could have been made by car, this suggests a benefit of £2.50 per Dalesbus passenger trip. This is probably an overstatement given that congestion is the dominant cost and the largest share of congestion cost is in the urban peak. No DalesBus journeys would fall into that category. If DalesBus journeys were in the lowest congestion category of roads, the benefit would go down to 50p per journey. Given that congestion is a problem on some Dales roads, perhaps £1 per journey is a reasonable estimate.

This gives an overall average benefit of DalesBus services of around £5 per passenger trip, so an overall benefit of over £200,000. Longer trips are worth more, and there are additional benefits to sponsors of some services through additional revenue from rail trips or visits to their facilities. Our average cost in terms of subsidy is of the order of £2.20 with just one or two services marginally above £5. So, we believe that our services provide good value for money for the subsidies they receive.


Appendix 5

Financial Support

D&BCIC would like to thank the following for financial support during 2022-23:

Ainderby Steeple Parish Council
Askrigg & Low Abbotside Parish Council
Bedale Town Council
County Durham Community Foundation's Darlington Grants Programme
Friends of DalesBus
Friends of the Settle Carlisle Line
Friends of the Dales
Jack Brunton Charitable Trust
Jaytee Foundation
Keighley Town Council Oak Fund
Kirkby Malhamdale Parish Council
Leeds City Council
Leyburn Town Council
Magic Little Grants
National Trust
North Yorkshire County Council Locality Fund
Northallerton BID
Northallerton Town Council
Northern
Otley Walkers are Welcome
Personal Donations
Settle Carlisle Railway Development Company
West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Wharfedale Charitable Trust
Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority
Yorkshire Water

SURVEY RESULTS 2022

 An on-board survey of weekend DalesBus passengers was undertaken between July and October 2022, covering 987 passengers in 624 groups. Comparative data from a similar survey of 685 DalesBus passengers in 2018 is also shown.

	2022	2018
1. Purpose(s) of Journey *		
Walk	44%	56%
Average walk duration	3.3 hrs	3.7 hrs
Ride in the countryside	43%	40%
Shopping	17%	8%
Meal	17%	11%
Visit a specific attraction	16%	20%
Visit friends	11%	7%
Work / volunteering	5%	3%
Special event	4%	5%
2. Main Destinations		
1. Hawes	6. Ilkley	
2. Skipton	7. Kettlewell	
3. Grassington	8. Scar House	
4. Malham	9. Bolton Abbey	
5. Harrogate	10. Northallerton	
3. Starting Points		
1. Harrogate	6. Ilkley	
2. Northallerton	7. Otley	
3. Skipton	8. Grassington	
4. Leeds	9. Bradford	
5. Bedale	10. Keighley	
4. Frequency of Use		
Nearly every week	35%	34%
At least once a month	20%	15%
Several times a year	21%	20%
Less Often	25%	31%
5. Sources of information *		
Timetable/leaflet	47%	53%
Used it before	32%	36%
DalesBus website	27%	27%
Bus stop	25%	13%
Friends / family	13%	10%
Friends of DalesBus	11%	13%
Information centre	6%	11%
Social media	4%	3%
Other website	4%	5%
6. Surveyed passengers receiving information in the year prior to day of travel		
	54%	61%

	2022	2018
7. Quality Assessment		
Drivers	95%	92%
Value for money	92%	88%
Reliability	91%	88%
Comfort	90%	85%
Routes taken	89%	86%
Frequency of buses	77%	75%
Ave. quality assessment	89%	86%
8. Average spend per day per passenger		
Food and drink	£ 8.14	£ 6.01
Transport	£ 2.87	£ 3.06
Other spending	£ 1.34	£ 1.79
Total spend	£12.35	£10.86

These figures underestimate passenger spend: a blank response is presumed to indicate zero spend rather than a reluctance by respondents to disclose financial data.

9. Average Size of Party		
	1.58	1.71
10. Age of passengers		
Under 25	11%	10%
25 – 40	9%	11%
41 – 59	17%	17%
60 – 69	30%	33%
Over 70	33%	29%
56% (51%) of passengers hold an ENCTS bus pass.		

11. Car ownership and accessibility	
46% (48%) of passengers were from a car-owning household.	
29% (31%) could have used it on the day of travel (making a positive choice to use the bus)	
65% (63%) could not get to the Dales without the DalesBus network	

12. Benefits gained from visiting the Dales	
85% (95%) Pleasure from enjoying countryside	
59% (68%) Improved physical health from exercise	
41% (40%) Companionship and reduced isolation	

13. Memberships		
Friends of DalesBus	12%	18%
Friends of Settle Carlisle Line	5%	11%

* Totals add to more than 100% due to multiple responses.