

HILTON BUS SURVEY AUTUMN 2017

SUMMARY

A questionnaire was put through every door in Hilton inviting responses concerning bus use from every resident. Of the 410 questionnaires posted 54 (13%) were returned to the Parish Council. It is unknown just why the level of response was so low although it is known that recent cuts in services were due to low usage.

The largest group of those who responded use the bus service less than once a month, St Ives and Cambridge being the most frequent destinations.

Shopping is the most popular reason for bus use with healthcare second.

The returned questionnaires came principally from those over 66 years of age and who are retired. Over three quarters of responders hold a bus pass.

Inevitably many feel car use would increase if buses were to cease altogether.

Some asked if a minibus could be provided and several suggested a link to the guided bus would be well used.

1. How often do you use the bus?

- 61% of the responders actually use the bus with the remaining 39% indicating they would if times suited.
- Of those using the bus, the largest group, 36%, use it less than once a month.

Table 1: Current Frequency of Bus Use (%)

>5/week	9
3-4/week	9
2/week	21
1/week	9
1/fortnight	6
1/month	6
Less frequently	36

- 27% of users make journeys on a Saturday

2. What are your usual destinations?

- The two most popular destinations are St Ives (73%) and Cambridge (64%).
- Huntingdon is visited by 30% of users with 21% of users travelling to 'other destinations' which include Papworth, Cambourne, Peterborough, Hinchingsbrooke and Bar Hill.

3. What are your main purposes for using the bus? (Tick all that apply)

- By far and away the largest reason for using the bus is for shopping (73%), the next being to access healthcare facilities (42%).

Table 2: Purpose for use of current bus services (%)

Commuting	15
Education	12
Shopping	73
Visiting people	33
Leisure	18
Healthcare	42
St Ives Monday market	33
St Ives Friday market	24
Other	0

- It is of some concern that there are small but significant groups that rely on the bus services for commuting and education, - both extremely time sensitive. This statement may also apply to those using the bus services for healthcare purposes.

4. In which of these age groups are you?

- Those over 66 years old represented 72% of the responders. They are clearly not the largest group numerically that live in Hilton, therefore it is reasonable to conclude that since they took the time and effort to respond they are very concerned about any loss of bus services.
- It is worth considering why younger groups did not respond more - was it the nature of the appeal or the categories used? Perhaps it was a lack of belief that anything would happen as a result of the survey.

Table 3: In which age group are you? (%)

< 16 yrs	6
17 – 25 yrs	7
26 – 65 yrs	15
> 66 yrs	72

5. Are you a bus pass holder?

- 81% of responders hold a bus pass. 19% do not.

6. Are you.....?

- The biggest group by far are those who are retired representing 74% of responders.

Table 4: Are you.....? (%)

Employed	9
In education	9
Unemployed	0
Retired	74
Carer	4

7. How would you cope without a village bus service?

Of the 54 surveys returned 46 (85%) answered this question. The statements given below are in declining frequency of occurrence.

- 39 % reported they would use a car if buses were no longer available.
- 22% were at a loss to know how they would cope without a bus service.
- Several said they would resort to using taxis, although some stressed cost may prevent frequent use.
- Some would rely on friends and relatives who drove to provide lifts. This was especially true for those under 16.
- The following are statements given in individual surveys:
 - a. I would cope easily
 - b. I would consider moving
 - c. Internet shopping
 - d. I have joined HACT*

* HACT is the Huntingdon Association for Community Transport which has a fleet of minibuses. These have some regular routes e.g. Hilton is on their 'Area 2' list. This gives a service to Peterborough, Mondays and Tuesdays, Huntingdon on Wednesdays, St Neots on Thursdays and Cambourne on Fridays. The return fare for these destinations is approximately £7. HACT also operates a 'dial-a-ride' service.

8. Any other comments?

Statements made in this section were many and varied. Regular themes were:

- Could a minibus be provided?
- A link to the guided bus would be well used.
- A more frequent bus service would be well used.

Below are all the statements (in precis form) with repeats omitted:

- Did not know about service run by Dews
- A better, more frequent service would be used.
- Poor bus service = more cars on congested roads
- Big local building plans = more congested roads
- May have to move.
- Put bus timetables on Hilton website.
- Bus to guided bus would be v. useful.
- Currently have to get to neighbouring villages to use their bus
- County Council should provide a bus service
- Mid-morning service would be useful
- Mid-morning Saturday to Huntingdon & Cambridge please
- We are stuck without a bus
- One driving licence in house already gone

- Best times for service would be 10 am, 11 am & 2 pm
- I dare not be ill at a weekend
- Currently use guided bus. Would prefer Cambridge direct
- A bus increases social contact within the village
- Direct bus to St Ives best solution
- Frequent <1 hr bus to Cambridge would get used
- Better connected footpaths would help between villages
- Car journeys getting more difficult due to congestion
- Current service is already very poor
- Used to use bus when it gave me an hour in St Ives
- Connection to St Ives, guided bus and Cambridge needed
- Taxi when no longer able to drive.