

## **A brief history**

In 1991 various villages within Kennet District were asked if they had the need for and the ability to run a community bus. A village meeting was arranged by the Parish Council. A committee was formed and after a long study – which included looking at existing community buses, asking villagers about their needs, visiting dealers and drawing up a proposal – we were ready to go. The initial finance would come from two basic sources – Kennet District Council and the Rural Development Commission.



KDC were prepared to finance a standard run-of-the-mill factory-produced minibus but Seend, being what it is, wanted something better. So we set about raising additional finance. We 'sold' the seats to sponsors for £30 a time to raise £500. We held fund-raising events. We approached Wiltshire County Council who gave us a donation towards an electric-powered folding door with low entrance step. The RDC would match any monies raised by

other sources plus up to £1,000 if necessary to cover any losses in the first year's operation. Eventually we had sufficient resources to acquire a Leyland DAF 400 with 16 passenger seats. In February 1993 the first service run was made. We have to conform to a timetable and the services are registered with the Traffic Commissioners. The bus has two permits; one to run bus services and the other to allow for private hire operations. After six years that first vehicle was replaced by the Seend Shuttle Mark II, a Mercedes Sprinter. That was replaced in 2006 by Mark III, a Volkswagen. We no longer had a tail lift as it was hardly ever used but we still had a conveniently low step and the new model had more room for shopping and luggage. In 2014 we bought Mark 1V, a slightly longer Mercedes Sprinter with some storage behind the back seats, heated windscreen and mirrors and a reversing camera and sensor. It is a lovely bus to drive.

## **The scheduled services**

The bus operates regular passenger services. There is a service every morning in term-time which transports children to Seend School. Except on Bank Holidays the Shuttle runs a service around the village up to the Post Office on a Monday morning. On Tuesday mornings it runs to Bromham and Melksham and on Thursday it 'shuttles' between all parts of Seend and Devizes and Bromham. Even if you have your own transport try using the Shuttle now and then to avoid the hassle of parking and enjoy travelling among friends.

N.B. Those over-60s who are in possession of a bus pass can use it on the scheduled services.

On the first Wednesday of each month there is also a trip to Salisbury with a bus fare of £5. Phone Rex or Jan Gudge on 01225 706526 to book your seat.

## **Private hire**

When the bus is not required for scheduled services it is available for private hire. The cost to hire (inc.VAT) is 90p per mile with a reduction to 66p for miles over 200 and with a minimum charge of £13.80. This includes fuel but you are usually expected to find your own driver who has to be approved and accepted on to our list of insured drivers. The bus has seats for sixteen passengers plus driver.

## **Hiring the Shuttle has lots of benefits to the hirer:**

- only one person is needed to drive – handy if visiting a restaurant and the wine flows.
- only one vehicle to pay for parking.

- the occasion starts when you leave the village, as you are all together in one vehicle to go and return.

Ask any of the many groups who use it how an outing is improved by travelling together in the Shuttle. Regular hirers include village skittle teams, the Theatre Club, the Bromham Wednesday Club, and the Historic Houses Club.

The options are many from a trip to the airport to a day at the races.

## **Our volunteers**

The credit for all of this lies mainly with those people who give their time voluntarily to organize the finances and bookings, keep the bus road worthy and volunteer to drive.

As with most voluntary organisations there is always work to be done and not enough people to do it! So if you are a driver with a D1 on your licence we would welcome you into the fold, even if you are only occasionally available. Maybe you are a Mum or Dad of one of the children that take the Shuttle to school in the morning and could return the compliment by doing the odd trip. Get in touch and have a trial run on the bus. You will see what a pleasure it is to drive.

If you do not drive and would still like to help in some way, such as keeping the bus clean or helping out with maintenance etc. then do volunteer.

Remember it is YOUR bus. It is a wonderful asset to the village so let us use it and keep it rolling.

## **Contacts:**

**email [seendshuttle@gmail.com](mailto:seendshuttle@gmail.com)**

Pete Wallis- chairman & driver training

Alison Cobbing- private hire bookings (email or ring +447951 030491)

Anita Shea- Secretary & Cleaning rota