

Update - 01/12/15

Living in a village brings home much more acutely the need to have available transport in order to get around. Whereas in the town or city where a walk of a couple hundred yards usually brings you in contact with a shop or means of public transport, in the village things are very different and can at times be extremely challenging.

Those lucky enough to have regular use of a car will not necessarily have noticed much of a difference within the parish over the last few years. However, with purse strings being increasingly tightened across local Government there have been a number of changes. Worse still there could be more to follow.....

Lower Basildon has suffered more than Upper Basildon in this loss of public transport having lost its bus service which previously gave residents the means to get to (albeit infrequently) Goring and Pangbourne. Once in these two villages a greater variety of transportation was available in the form of other buses or the railway service. Without this residents face a challenge and for those without cars there is a significant impact on quality of life.

Upper Basildon was fortunate that it retained the bus service and the Pangbourne / Reading service remained. However, with Oxfordshire County Council cutting their subsidy for bus services we suddenly find that the Upper Basildon service is coming under consideration again as West Berkshire Council look into whether they should follow suit. So, to recycle the phrase from the Parish Plan – ‘Where do we go from here?’

The Parish Council has contacted West Berkshire Council to express its dissatisfaction with the level of cuts and the disproportionate effect this has on those classed as the more vulnerable in our society. Also, we have confirmed in writing that should the service come under threat we would like the opportunity to examine whether we as a parish council could pay the subsidy and retain the service. A further welcome addition has come from a local resident who has offered to organise a petition with help from the Parish Council on the advertising front. We will use noticeboards and social media to spread the word and ask that you take a moment to sign if you wish to support the service.

Away from the bus service and the Parish Council believes it has a responsibility to assist residents where it can. To this end we have kicked off discussions around handy buses for Lower Basildon to see if they can back up a similar scheme that is already in use in that village. Additionally, we are exploring the introduction of a fully subsidised taxi service which would travel between Upper Basildon, Lower Basildon and Pangbourne on a couple of occasions twice a week. Quotes returned have been promising and councillors are currently obtaining local feedback before we proceed with a proposed 6 month pilot.

As a final note we can all help on transport in a very simple way. Next time you see a villager struggling why not offer them a lift? One day, the good fortune may come your way when you are walking and it starts to rain.....

