



DIGITAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Wiltshire Council: New on-demand and semi-flexible bus services to connect rural communities in the Pewsey Vale

Digital demand responsive transport powered by ioki • improved public transport network with direct lines • funded by the Government's Rural Mobility Fund

(Wiltshire Council, 3rd August) Wiltshire Council is launching five new Wiltshire Connect bus services and several revised services in the Pewsey Vale to conveniently connect rural communities at a time that suits passengers.

The innovative new services, which will launch in phases over the coming months, include both on demand and semi-flexible buses, which can pick up and drop off passengers where they want to go, when they want to get there. The smartphone app as well as the routing and pooling platform have been developed by ioki, one of the leading platform providers for digital demand responsive transport in Europe.

On-demand services allow passengers to book the bus from a stop of their choosing in the service area to their destination at a time to suit them, either by booking through a smartphone app or by phone. Semi-flexible services are halfway between a standard timetabled bus service and an on-demand bus, in that they follow a timetable, but can take detours and have some flexibility to pick up and drop off people who have booked in advance.

The services are being funded by £1.2m from the Government's Rural Mobility Fund following a successful bid by the council. All the services are being run by Salisbury Reds but will feature the striking green Wiltshire Connect branding. The council has also worked in partnership with GWR to highlight the improved connectivity with Wiltshire Connect and the rail network at Bedwyn and Pewsey.

New services to offer better public transport connection

The first Wiltshire Connect service is the on-demand Pewsey Vale bus that covers an area west of Pewsey, from Pewsey to Devizes. This will be complemented by the new 101 semi-flexible service from Pewsey to Devizes, with a more direct route than the previous 101 bus, with any missed villages now covered by the on-demand bus.

Two further on-demand buses will then get under way over the coming months, with a service that covers Marlborough and the Great Bedwyn area launching on 4 September, and a third service that will extend east of Marlborough as far as Hungerford later in the autumn, along with a new direct semi-flexible route between Marlborough and Devizes.



Cllr Richard Clewer, Leader of Wiltshire Council, said: "Wiltshire Connect is a revolutionary new bus service that will serve thousands of Wiltshire residents, connecting communities and helping to tackle rural isolation. These innovative new services combine semi-flexible and on-demand buses to give people a service that takes them where they want to go, at a time that suits them and for a reasonable price. People can either hop on and off a timetabled semi-flexible service, or book in advance using the smartphone app or by calling us – it's very easy to use. In our Business Plan, we set out our commitments to have vibrant, well-connected communities, and to build an efficient and effective transport network that offers a viable alternative to the car, and Wiltshire Connect does just that for all residents in the Pewsey Vale area and beyond."

"We're looking forward to the first new service launching at the end of July."

Andrew Wickham, Salisbury Reds Managing Director, said: "We are delighted to be operating Wiltshire Connect on behalf of Wiltshire Council. It offers vital, convenient, and comfortable transport for those living in the area. This is an excellent opportunity, not only to make the area more accessible for all, but also to encourage people to leave their cars at home – helping to ease congestion and improve air quality here."

Michael Barillère-Scholz, CEO and co-founder of ioki, said: "We're delighted to be working with Wiltshire Council on this project, which uses our specialist pooling and routing technologies to power the Wiltshire Connect service. This is the third digital demand responsive transport service in the UK that uses our software to significantly simplify and improve the everyday mobility of people in rural areas across the country. As one of the leading platform providers for digital demand responsive solutions in Europe, we look forward to both passengers and drivers using our apps to get around in the Pewsey Vale area."

About Wiltshire Connect

Wiltshire Connect buses will cost £2 for adults for all journeys until 31 October, and then £2-2.50 for adults from 1 November 2023 to 30 November 2024, depending on the length of the journey. Following that, the standard fares for all journeys will be £2 or £3 for adults. Children and young people aged under 21 pay half fare of £1 or £1.50, depending on the length of the journey. Ten journey tickets are also available for both adults and young people at a reduced rate.

The Wiltshire Connect app is available to download on Apple and Android devices, and anyone without access to a smartphone can call 01225 712900 to book their ride. To find out more about Wiltshire Connect, including route maps, people can go to www.wiltshireconnect.co.uk.

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About ioki

With over 120 demand-responsive transport services, ioki is one of the leading platform providers for digital on-demand solutions in Europe and market leader in the DACH region. Over 90 per cent of on-demand transport with ioki software complement public transport in suburban or rural regions. Companies, cities and municipalities have relied on our expertise since 2017 to optimise and digitise transport according to demand. These include flagship projects such as ioki Hamburg (now hvv hop) and the Europe-



wide largest project for on-demand transport in the Rhine-Main area. As a pioneer for autonomous ride pooling, ioki has been setting milestones for digital and autonomous mobility since its founding – from Germany's first autonomous shuttle bus to the planned world's largest autonomous fleet on demand in public transport. More than 150 employees from more than 20 nations develop equitable and modern mobility solutions for sustainable, attractive local transport from the heart of Europe.

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