

# Local Bus Champions

## Terms of Reference

Local Bus Champions are residents of a particular area who value bus services and wish to see them protected and improved. They are enthusiasts for their local bus services and value the social, environmental and economic contribution buses make to the community.

Champions can be appointed by a local town or parish council, or they can volunteer for the role by contacting Somerset Bus Partnership (SBP) direct. The area they cover will usually be that of their parish or town council, but may be smaller or larger depending on local circumstances. They will be expected to act in their role for an initial term of twelve months, which can be renewed annually thereafter.

Local Bus Champions will be expected to carry out the following roles. In some circumstances, the roles could be carried out in conjunction with local bus user groups. Under each heading, some optional activities are also suggested, which are contained in the boxes.

### **1. INFORMATION**

Ensure that information about bus services in their area is easily available and up to date.

- Check that information in timetable cases at bus stops is up to date and easy to read. Report any issues to the relevant bus operator.
- Check that there is up-to-date transport information on local noticeboards and parish websites, with a summary of current services and links to the County Council's Think Travel portal.
- Use social media and the parish magazine to inform local people of current services and any changes.

In addition, Champions might also wish to undertake the following activities:

- Work with the local council to produce a bus timetable leaflet for the local area and get it delivered to every household.
- Encourage the local council to purchase and put up timetable cases for bus stops where there isn't one.

### **2. FEEDBACK**

Use your local knowledge and 'ear to the ground' to report any problems or issues promptly.

- Check local bus shelters, signs, timetable cases etc on an occasional basis to ensure they are in good condition, and report any issues to the relevant authority.
- Relay any complaints or compliments from local passengers to the bus operators.

- Report any incidents of poor service, lateness, cancellations etc to the relevant operator and to the County Council, and keep a record of all such incidents.

In addition, Champions might also wish to undertake the following activities:

- Raise your profile as a Local Bus Champions amongst bus users and the wider community, so that their concerns can be raised with you and you can take them up with operators or the council on their behalf.

### **3. ADVOCACY**

Be a champion for local bus services in your community and help campaign for improvements in local services.

- Attend local meetings of the Somerset Bus Partnership and join in with its activities.
- Lobby your local county councillors and MP about supporting and improving bus services.

In addition, Champions might also wish to undertake the following activities:

- Set up a local bus users group in your area, to build a team of likeminded people who are passionate about local buses and will work together for better services. If one already exists, join it and encourage others to do the same.
- Work with your local community to develop a blueprint for an ideal bus network in your area.
- Use opportunities such as neighbourhood plans, planning applications and public consultations to raise the profile of local bus services and argue for improvements.