



GET ON BOARD

FOR A BETTER BUS SERVICE

NFWI 2019 Resolution

A call against the decline in local bus services

'Over the last decade there has been a massive decline in the number of bus services, particularly of those in rural and semi-rural areas. In order to alleviate loneliness, improve health and wellbeing, as well as promoting sustainable development, the NFWI calls on the Government and local authorities to increase subsidies and work in partnership with bus companies and community transport operators to enable an adequate provision of services.'

Burniston & Cloughton WI, North Yorkshire Federation.

Why is the WI campaigning on buses?

This campaign seeks to raise awareness of the importance of local bus services and to empower members, WIs and federations to make the case for buses in their local communities. With bus services

under threat across England, Wales and the Islands, the resolution calls on both local and national governments to take action.

Why are buses important?

Bus services play a vital role in ensuring communities remain sustainable, reduce social isolation and ensure access to employment, education, local facilities and health services. Cuts to bus services disproportionately impact on women; according to the Department for

Transport, women make 21% more journeys than men outside London. Encouraging people to move away from polluting cars and use public transport is key to cutting our carbon emissions and tackling climate change.

What is the current situation?

Since 2010, local authorities have faced budgets cuts which have put pressure on the delivery of local services including libraries, children's centres and bus services. According to the Campaign for Better Transport, council bus budgets

have been cut by 25% since 2010. Local authorities across England and Wales were found to have taken £182 million away from supported bus services in ten years, affecting more than 3,000 bus services in England and 259 in Wales.

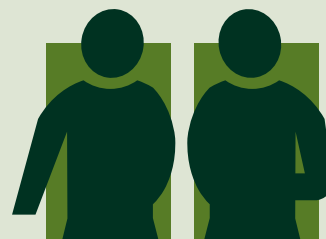
Council bus budgets have been cut by 25% since 2010



Outside of London, women make 21% more bus journeys than men



A third of people say they deliberately catch the bus to have some human contact



What is our campaign calling for?

The campaign is calling for the importance of buses to be recognised at both local and national levels.

- **At a national level:** the campaign aims to let Government know that the WI is concerned about the future of our bus services, and the impact of local cuts, as well as highlighting areas of good practice where services have been delivered in innovative ways.
- **At a local level:** the NFWI is calling for local authorities and bus companies to listen to the views of WI members, bus users and the community when making decisions about changes.
- **WI members and communities:** should support and use their local bus services – using them and speaking up to make sure their value is recognized in the face of threatened cuts or reductions and to push for viable and sustainable services.

What is the link between buses and loneliness?

Loneliness does not discriminate. It can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender and life stage. Across the age spectrum, it is estimated that more than 9 million adults in the UK are lonely 'always or often'. Our Link Together campaign encourages members to work together in their own communities to build bridges and reach out to others in order to tackle

loneliness. Bus services can play a vital role in ensuring people can connect with friends and family, as well as accessing health services, employment and leisure. Research for campaign group Greener Journeys also found that a third of people said they deliberately catch the bus to have some human contact.

The government's loneliness strategy, published in 2018, recognises the role that transport can have in preventing loneliness and commits to creating a transport network that supports people's social connections. Many bus companies have started 'chatty bus' initiatives to encourage people to take time to talk to someone else on their bus journeys.

What is the link between buses and climate change?

Providing efficient public transport can help people make more sustainable life choices and reduce the amount of cars on the road. Transport is the largest source of greenhouse gases and also

contributes to air pollution, which is responsible for 36,000 early deaths each year in the UK. An effective bus system will help to relieve the pressure placed on the environment from cars and reduce

carbon emissions. So by taking the bus you are also helping to tackle climate change!

Get involved

4 WAYS TO TAKE ACTION FOR BUSES

1. USE YOUR LOCAL BUS SERVICE

The best way to show that buses are important to you is by using them. By using bus services you can help show local authorities and bus companies that they are vital to you and your community, and help safeguard them for the future.

- As individuals, WI members can switch to use buses when you might usually use the car, and encourage your friends and family to do the same.
- WIs and Federations can plan group outings that are within easy reach of public transport.
- You could also promote your WI by holding a mini-meeting on your local bus route.
- If you don't normally use the bus, keep a note of your experiences and make sure you feed this back to the bus company or your local authority.

If it is not possible for you to use local bus services (perhaps they don't run at convenient times or you don't have a service at all), then it's important you raise awareness about this too. Perhaps you could organise a photo opportunity involving your WI group at a local bus stop or in your town or village centre?

2. TELL YOUR LOCAL MP OR COUNCILLOR WHY YOU THINK BUSES ARE IMPORTANT

It's really important that decision-makers know why buses are important to you and your community. You could write to them using our template letter (please contact the Public Affairs Department to receive a copy) or even invite them to join you and your WI for a bus journey.

3. GET INVOLVED IN OUR BUS JOURNEY VIDEO PROJECT

We want to capture the reality of threats to bus services on the ground and are looking for members who can record short video diaries or messages to showcase their experiences.

Perhaps you could travel to work or appointments using local bus services, but it would take so long it would be impractical!

Or perhaps you used to travel by bus but your service has been cut so you now have to rely on others or not travel at all.

If you would like to record a video message then please contact us to find out how to get involved.

4. SHARE YOUR VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES OF LOCAL BUS SERVICES

We want to hear about your experiences of local bus services. Perhaps you have lost a service - what was the impact? Or have you campaigned successfully to save your local service? Has your community worked together to find new ways to make bus services sustainable?

Your views and experiences will be used to inform planning for the campaign and any NFWI research on bus services. They may be used to promote the campaign in NFWI Public Affairs resources, WI Life, and on our social media channels. You can of course remain anonymous if you wish to. If you have any questions about how your personal information will be used please contact dataprotection@nfwf.org.uk

Please contact us on 020 7371 9300 ext 243 or email publicaffairs@nfwf.org.uk to share your views.

Contact us

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