

**FRIENDS OF THE 65 BUS  
ANNUAL UPDATE TO THE NARTH VILLAGE HALL AGM  
OCTOBER 2022 – SEPTEMBER 2023**

**Introduction**

The 65 Bus is operated by Monmouthshire County Council and connects Monmouth and Chepstow with the communities of Penallt, The Narth, Trellech, Llanishen, Devauden and Itton. It operates 5 to 6 times per day each way on Mondays to Fridays and 4 times per day each way on Saturdays.

Friends of the 65 Bus was formed in 2018 after the route was threatened with closure and has the purpose of working with MCC to support and develop the 65 Bus and to better connect it with the communities that it serves. There are “village bus champions” for each community, and for The Narth these are Jane Gilliard and Brian Mahony.

**Highlights of the Year**

- Friends of the 65 Bus celebrated its 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023.
- The 65 Bus has run its full timetable throughout the year and we have seen new passengers continue to come on board. However, **we always need more passengers to use the Bus** if we are to safeguard its future.
- The service has continued to be a vital lifeline for members of the community who do not have access to a car – young people, the elderly, people with health issues and those who are unable to afford, or choose not to drive, a car. There are many people living along the route who depend on the 65 Bus for their daily activities and who would otherwise be isolated.
- Increasingly, people who **do** have access to a car are choosing to use the 65 Bus for environmental reasons and/or because it is cheaper and can be more convenient.
- We have excellent regular drivers – Rob and Paul – who know and look after their passengers and ensure the Bus runs reliably and to time.
- We have seen the introduction of contactless payment by card, alongside the continuing opportunity to pay by cash. Travel is of course free for Wales Travel Pass holders.
- MCC have introduced a brand new electric bus on the afternoon services as part of their carbon reduction programme and we expect to see this extended to mornings soon.
- We have maintained contact with Catrin Maby, the new MCC Cabinet member for public transport and she has expressed strong support for the service. We have continued to meet with other local politicians. Both the Leader of MCC – Cllr Mary Anne Brocklesby – and the Labour Party’s General Election candidate – Cllr Catherine Fookes – have travelled with us on the 65 Bus, meeting passengers and gaining an understanding of why it is so important.

- We have maintained a strong media profile for the 65 Bus through local press and other opportunities such as Bus Users UK and a recent feature on BBC Wales TV News.
- F65B has joined MCC's new "Monmouthshire Transport Forum".

### **How can The Community Help?**

- It's very simple – **please use the 65 Bus!**
- Think about using the Bus for trips to Chepstow or Monmouth to shop or visit services, meet friends, go to the café or pub, for work or school or onward travel.
- Use the Bus locally to go for a walk (Bus out/walk back – dogs go free), visit a village pub, café or Trellech Teas or just a ride to enjoy the view.

If you would like to use the 65 Bus, but are unsure about how to do so, need information about timetables, fares etc – please contact us. We're here to help.

Brian Mahony and Jane Gilliard  
October 2023