

Bus stops and bus service information

Bus operators are free to stop their buses to pick up and set down passengers wherever they wish, provided they do not breach any Traffic Regulation Order by doing so.

Most bus operators choose to stop only at recognised bus stops, most of which are clearly marked with a bus stop pole and flag. Some stops, particularly in more rural villages, may be unmarked but are long-established places where buses stop.

The council has a procedure for establishing new bus stops (or moving existing stops if needed). The procedure involves a site meeting to establish the optimum location for the stop, considering aspects such as road safety, bus operation and passenger convenience. Frontagers affected by a new or relocated stop are given opportunity to comment on the proposals.

Town or parish councils can request new bus stops, as can bus operators. The cost of new or relocated stops is normally met by the requestor. Council resources for provision of new bus stops is extremely limited and there may be a long wait before a request can be actioned.

Further information: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk – search for “bus stops”

What can PTRs do?

PTRs should familiarise themselves with the bus stops within their parish, both marked or unmarked. If there is a need for new stops, PTRs should discuss the matter with the parish council and decide if there are likely to be acceptable locations for new stops and whether a request is appropriate. It may be appropriate for PTRs to attend bus stop site meetings if convened.

Infrastructure at bus stops

Most bus stop poles, flags and timetable cases are provided by the County Council. The type of flag, pole and number of timetable cases vary by location, depending on the services that use the stop, its age and the funding that was available at the time of installation.

Bus operators can also provide flags and timetable cases (usually attached to existing street furniture), and this was once common, but is now discouraged and rarely done.

Bus Shelters

Most bus shelters are owned and maintained by parish councils (or equivalent). This gives the parish council the flexibility to ensure that the provision of bus shelters in the parish is appropriate and in-keeping with the local area.

For bus shelters on busy roads, parish councils sometimes enter into agreements with advertising companies who provide and maintain the shelters, in exchange for being able to display adverts to on them to passing traffic.

What can PTRs do?

Find out who is responsible for bus shelters in the parish and report any damage or maintenance needed as appropriate

Timetable information at bus stops

In Oxfordshire, bus operators are responsible for the information displayed at bus stops. A timetable showing the departure times and route of buses should be provided as a minimum along with contact details for the operator.

What can PTRs do?

PTRs can check the information at all of the bus stops in the parish to ensure it's up to date and correct. If there are any missing timetables or timetables believed to be out of date, the relevant bus operator can be contacted. If any old timetables for services no longer operating are still on display, and the operator does not remove them, contact OCC for advice.

PTRs can produce bespoke bus time information for their parish. Care must be taken if doing this, primarily because it can be confusing for members of the public to be presented with two different sources of information, especially if one becomes out of date. Information provided by PTRs must not replace operator information at bus stops – only bus operators can display timetables in timetable cases at bus stops. It is suggested that information provided by PTRs is displayed through the parish magazine or parish website, or on parish notice boards if these are regularly kept up to date. It must be clear that any information presented has been prepared by the PTR / parish and not the bus operator. Information must be dated and include contact details for relevant bus operators

Real time information “Oxontime”

For many years the Council has supported the system known as Oxontime which provides live bus departure times for many bus routes across Oxfordshire. At some bus stops, this information is displayed on an electronic display inside a bus shelter or on the bus stop flag. This information is also available on the internet and through mobile phones (e.g. through Google Maps).

Recent legislation has created a requirement for most bus operators to provide live bus information freely to developers to support its use more widely.

Where to find bus service information

Bus operators are required to give several weeks notice to the Traffic Commissioner and the County Council before making changes to bus routes or timetables. One of the reasons for this is to ensure there’s adequate time for the details to appear in information systems. However, there are sometimes circumstances for which short notice changes to services are needed and can be made.

The primary source for bus information, which should be the most up-to-date, is from the operators themselves.

Timetables, routes and journey planning for all bus services can be found on Traveline websites. For Oxfordshire, our local Traveline website is Traveline South West, which covers all services, not just those within Oxfordshire.

Further information: www.travelinesw.com

Bus timetable data is made available for developers, so can also be found on other websites and applications, for example Google Maps.