



Getting Around

It can be hard to get about in the countryside yet being able to travel to work, school, shops, healthcare and leisure facilities is essential. For this reason, transport is one of the most important issues for people in rural areas. Making sure that everyone in the community can get to where they need to go is an important aspect of community planning. We also need to think about how we manage our transport systems and what impact it has on our quality of life and local landscape.

A few facts

Car ownership

Car ownership in Dorset is higher than the national average. Improved public transport would help reduce our reliance on cars – and help reduce the safety and environmental problems that go with them. Road transport is the fastest growing source of greenhouse gases which cause climate change. In Britain, people travel by car for 18% of all trips under 1 mile and for 61% of all trips between 1-2 miles. Our rural road network is struggling to cope with the growing volume and speed of traffic.

Public transport

Public transport is difficult to run in rural areas such as Dorset because small numbers of users are spread over large areas. About half of Dorset's parishes do not have a daily bus service. This means that some of the most vulnerable people in our communities, such as the old and young, are potentially left isolated.

Rural buses

To maintain rural bus services in the long-term, the best solution is to make them 'demand-responsive' – you call and book your journey and get collected rather than waiting for a bus that runs to a fixed timetable. You can help develop this type of service or a variety of community transport options in Dorset.

Sign clutter

The character of country roads in Dorset has been well retained but now our landscape is under assault from an increasing number of signs, kerbs, streetlights and calming measures. These clutter and urbanise our villages and in some cases do little to solve the problem. Communities have a vital role to play.

Roadside reserves

Some of the most interesting conservation sites in the county are literally by the side of the road. Meadow plants lost to intensive agriculture in neighbouring fields sometimes survive on the verge and in the hedgerows, attracting many butterflies and other insects. Ancient trees can also be found along country lanes.

What you can do

- **Assess the transport needs of your community**

As part of your Parish or Community plan, assess the un-met transport needs of all members of your community. Particularly note the needs of those without a car, such as the very old and young - accessibility statistics developed by Dorset County Council may help. In short, log precisely where and when people need to travel. Think about small scale solutions to those needs.

Who can help:

DART Partnership (Dorset Accessible and Responsive Transport) c/o Dorset Community Action, Dorset County Council Research Team

Funding: District Council community grant schemes



- **Join things up**

To make demand-responsive transport work, operators / planners need to know where there are clusters of regular users. You can help by pooling information. For example, you may find that six people in your village regularly travel to your local market town several times a week. If they could agree which days and times were convenient to all, they could become a regular part of a demand-responsive service. Pooling information with neighbouring villages would further help operators to help you.

Who can help: DART (Dorset Accessible and Responsive Transport), your local TAG (Transport Action Group), NORDCAT, Dorset County Council Passenger Transport Team

Funding: Local Transport Plan



- **Provide transport for young people**

Facilities for young people are limited in rural settlements, meaning that social activities outside school hours can be difficult to reach. Demand-responsive transport can help meet these needs, particularly where regular journeys can be identified. It may even be possible for volunteer drivers to be trained up to provide local services using existing vehicles.

Who can help: DART (Dorset Accessible and Responsive Transport), NORDCAT, your local TAG (Transport Action Group)

Funding: Local Network Fund, District Council

- **Making the most of**

Ensuring that everyone in your village knows the times of your local buses is important, as it can encourage people to use them. Producing a Parish Timetable - a simple information sheet showing where the bus stops, the times, where it goes (nearest market town usually) and the return times - and publishing it in the Parish Magazine or delivering it to every house - ensures that everyone has this local information. Make sure that it is simple to understand and large enough print to be easily read.

- **Protect the roadsides**

Think about the rural roads in your parish - what are the features you value? Do they have historic features such as traditional Dorset finger posts, village name signs, fords, water pumps or parkland railings? Note these features in your plan and any management or repair that may be required. See 'Reclaiming our Rural Highways' from the Dorset AONB team for issues affecting the

- **Think about speed**

Abuse of speed limits can have a really detrimental effect on other road users like walkers, cyclists and horse riders but often solutions are over engineered and very 'urban'. Recent research has shown that putting up more signs actually reduces their effectiveness and drivers become "sign blind". If speed is a problem in your area, get people together to think creatively about how the street scene can be improved to create shared space rather than traffic dominated space. Make it somewhere in which local pride and sense of responsible shared ownership are reinstated.

f public transport

Who can help: DART (Dorset Accessible and Responsive Transport), Dorset Community Action, Dorset County Council Passenger Transport
Funding: DART



e features

character of roads and streets in rural Dorset.

Who can help: Dorset AONB, Cranborne Chase & West Wilts Downs AONB (CC&WWD AONB), Campaign to Protect Rural England, English Heritage
Funding: Dorset & CC&WWD AONB's Sustainable Development Funds



Who can help: Dorset County Council Highways and Improvements Team
Funding: Local Transport Plan
Further information: Dorset AONB, English Heritage, Campaign to Protect Rural England

• Clutter clear

If your village is cluttered with unnecessary signs and other street furniture, undertake an audit and work with Dorset AONB and Dorset County Council to see if any can be removed or replaced with something more appropriate.

Who can help: Dorset County Council Highways and Improvements Team, Dorset AONB

Funding: Local Transport Plan, AONB Sustainable Development Funds

Further information: English Heritage, Campaign to Protect Rural England



• Getting problems fixed

If you have noticed something on your local highways that needs repairing, report it as they may not be aware there is a problem.

Who can help: Dorset County Divisional Highways, Parish Councils



• Wildlife friendly verges

Dorset Wildlife Trust and Dorset County Council have been working together to identify roadside verges which need protection. One hundred verges have been identified and signed so that verge cutting is done at a time to suit the plants & wildlife. Help is needed by local

people to 'adopt' these verges and help with surveying and scrub clearance when needed.

Who can help: Dorset Wildlife Trust

• The Local Transport Plan

Dorset County Council has a duty to maintain and improve most of the county's roads, bridges, footways and cycleways. Plans for transport infrastructure improvements are published in the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and include national priorities which include accessibility, road safety, congestion and air quality.

Local transport improvement schemes which are supported by a Parish Council or Transport Action Group (TAG) can apply for grant aid through LTP funds. To be successful, schemes need to contribute to the transport

priorities e.g. a new footway in your parish which might connect a village or housing estate to a school or local shop could make pedestrians safer and encourage people to walk; contributing to improved road safety, better accessibility and reduction of traffic.

For information about how your Parish might benefit from the LTP please contact Andrew Shaw, Project Engineer, Dorset County Council.



Getting Around

It can be hard to get about in the countryside. For this reason, transport is one of the most important issues for people in rural areas. Making sure that everyone in the community can get to where they need to go is an important aspect of community planning. We also need to think about how we manage our transport systems and what impact it has on our quality of life and local landscape.

Ideas for Action

Get young people moving

Facilities for young people can be really limited in rural areas and lack of transport compounds this problem. Find out where young people in your local area want to get to and get help to arrange demand-responsive transport to meet their needs.

Join the dots

Log where and when people need to travel, particularly those who don't have a car. Local transport operators and planners need to know if there are clusters of demand so that these can be met. Community transport and other initiatives like liftshare, sharing taxis and rural car clubs can all contribute to a better transport system and cut down on congestion, pollution, sense of rural isolation.

Slow down

If speed is an issue in your area, get together with local people and transport officers to think creatively about how to slow drivers down and redress the balance for walkers, cyclists & horse riders.

Reduce the need to travel

By shopping locally, you can support your shop, Post Office, mobile library and other rural services. Cutting unnecessary trips reduces traffic and pollution. Join with others to do this, by lift sharing, combining purposes for trips, home deliveries and local box schemes.

Clear clutter

Sometimes roads get littered with signs and other street furniture which accumulate over time. Identify where clutter is detracting from the village or views and think creatively about how it could look better.

Adopt a verge

The Wildlife Trust and County Council have identified verges which are teeming with wildlife and need extra special treatment. They need local people to adopt these special verges to keep an eye on them and make sure they get the attention they deserve.

If you want to take up any of these ideas, there's a lot of help available. See over for how to get started.

Case study

Proliferation of road signs in Charminster

The Charminster Residents' Association completed its Village Design Statement in 2004 and it was accepted as Supplementary Planning Guidance early in 2005. Hugh Hill explains how they achieved this:

"In photographing various parts of the village for the project, a proliferation of road signs had been observed – many of which we considered unnecessary and to be spoiling the village. Encouraged by the research carried out in the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany, and by English Heritage in this country, the Residents' Association embarked on a project to list all the road signs in Charminster with a view to ultimately persuading the local authority that many of the signs could be removed or repositioned.

Large scale maps (1:2,500) of the village were obtained and members of the Residents' Association recorded every road sign on the maps with a corresponding key.

We started with the main road through the village, the A352 North Street, and listed every sign throughout its entire length. We subsequently recorded the signs on the side roads until a complete road sign audit had been completed. In addition to signs on posts we also listed signs painted on the roads and pavements which we also considered to spoil the countryside. "

The Residents' Association is now considering how their streetscene can be improved in the village by removing unattractive signs and amalgamating others, in discussion with Dorset County Council.

If you are interested in taking up any of these ideas in your local area, we have more detailed information to help you.

For each topic in this pack, you can request our additional sheets which include more actions, a guide to who can help with advice and support, sources of funding available and things to be aware of before you start. These are all free and updated regularly.

For your free copy, contact the Dorset AONB Office:

01305 756782
dorsetaonb@dorsetcc.gov.uk
www.dorsetaonb.org.uk



Courtesy of Hugh Hill



Courtesy of Hugh Hill