PTR report for APM 2025

We now have 'Bus News' items in every issue of the Village News

Last year I completed a report to Oxfordshire County Council on the 10 places where our buses stop and the state of the bus stop signs, timetable holders and timetables, as they were in such poor condition. My report contained details and photos, but didn't lead to any action. So, this year I followed it up, and had a very helpful visit by the relevant OCC officer in charge of such equipment, who added his notes to his copy of my earlier report, as we walked to check every stop. The following week he emailed that he had included our items into a joint request for estimates from their usual supplier. Obviously, estimates will be reviewed, but he anticipated action in weeks rather than months.

The main bus topic for me during the latter part of last year was the uncertainty of what would happen when the contract with Grayline, to run the **24** bus, would end on 31 March of this year. Although given reassurances that there *probably* would be finance, last year ended without any certainty on this. Then there was reassurance about some finance and next I heard that tenders had gone out to bus suppliers. Even by the deadline to submit the Bus News article for the February/March issue of the Village News, the contract for renewal was not signed and so publishable information was still not available! So, only for the April/May issue did I learn and could report that Red Rose Travel had taken over running the **24** bus. I immediately emailed thanks to Grayline for their excellent and friendly service, despite a difficult period with those roadworks at the Kidlington roundabout and elsewhere.

On the occasions I have taken the **24** with Red Rose to Bicester, everything has gone well. Initially there was a query about the 16.55 from Bicester running, but that was resolved in time. Last week, I heard of a report from a Bletchingdon passenger, (but so far not from Kirtlington) about a bus not arriving; I checked with the Bus officer of OCC, who followed it up with the company and was told there was no problem. When I checked, that particular timed bus has been OK since, as far as I know.

My final point, as always, is to car drivers, ***please*** do think of those who depend on the bus, and consider IF you *can* work your timetable into the bus schedule and use the bus. Because with the privatisation of buses, even with the part funding achieved from public finance, the survival of bus routes depends on the number of passengers using the bus.
N.B. The bus companies are paid a proportion of the average fare even when those with concessionary free passes, use them. Of course I know that the change to 2-hourly, a couple of years ago, made it less attractive to use the bus and the number of middle of day bus passengers, *who could use a car,* dropped off. Yet, it still does matter; so ***please*** just think if you can use the bus rather than drive.

There is another issue, which is not "transport", but is "travel", if I may insert it here.
This is a request to the parish council to support getting a footpath beside the road to Bletchingdon. I once measured width of the verge on west side of road, and it is wide enough legally (as I understand it) for a simple footpath until a very few metres before that woodland beside the newish housing association building on the West before the T-junction in Bletchingdon. I stress simple footpath, because the road there is a Sustrans route and much used by groups of fast-riding cyclists. Such a footpath for pedestrians of all ages as I suggest should not be shared with cyclists.