

Eastbourne Area Bus User Group [EABUG]

Meeting 16th June 10.30-12.30 Eastbourne Town Hall

1 In Attendance

Bus providers: , Nick Price (Cuckmere Buses), Ali Rahmani & Jake Smith (Stagecoach), Ben Garcia (B&H Buses)

EEAN/EABUG: David Everson, Paul Humphries, Jill Shacklock, Carol Mills, Chris Ralls

ESCC Bus Team : Donnalyn Morris

EBC: Kate Richardson Environment Officer

Local Councillors: Kathy Ballard (EBC & ESCC for Upperton), Malcolm Cunningham (Polegate Town), Nigel Goodyear (EBC), Jack Morrell (ESCC for Meads), Tom Nevill (EBC for Upperton), Roy Peche (ESCC for Sovereign Harbour), Colin Swansborough (EBC & ESCC for Hampden Park),

Community Groups: Paul Bromley (Southeast Community Rail Partnership), Ralph Lucas (Eastbourne Downland Group), Mark Simmons & David Barclay (Eastbourne Blind Society), John Hudson (BESPOKE), Alec Horner & Nash Travelman (Brighton Bus Watch)

Bus Users: Pamela Adams, Peter Dann, Roberta Ramsdale, David Roberts, Liz Trethewey, Linda Miller, Angela Connelly, Norman Rae (also bus driver)

1.1 Apologies

Anna Hoad (Beachy Head Ambassadors), Cllr Colin Belsey, Cllr Mickey Caira, Derrick Coffee (EEAN), Cllr Christina Ewbank (Eastbourne Chamber of Commerce), Monica Farkas (University of Sussex), Cllr Peter Griffiths, Cllr Roger Lincoln, Lucy Lisle (University of Brighton), Cllr James Murray, Cllr Hugh Parker, Cllr Paul Soane, Cllr. Andy Woolley

1.2 Acronyms explained

BSIP- Bus Service Improvement Plan, DfT – Department for Transport, EEAN -Eastbourne Eco Action Network, EABUG- Eastbourne Area Bus User Group, EBC-Eastbourne Borough Council, ESCC- East Sussex County Council, RTI -Real Time Information

1.3 Presentations

[The slides for the presentations are available here on the EABUG web page.](#) The presentations contain more details than these notes. We recommend referring to the slides alongside the notes.

2 Matters Arising

Matters arising from our last meeting and questions sent in advance by members were discussed:

2.1 Exceat Bridge

Some preparation work has been carried out, and some archaeological features were discovered which need further investigation.

Donnalyn provided further information immediately after the meeting: [Jackson Civils](#) were appointed as the contractors in February 2026. June was the planned works start date but there has been a slight delay due to archaeological findings.

2.2 Eastbourne Bus Lanes

There had been some articles in the local media opposing the construction of the bus lanes in Eastbourne.

EABUG had responded to this by producing an article, which was published in the Sussex World, in support of the bus lanes.

Currently, there are consultations ongoing about the need to remove 1 tree on each of the bus lanes. The consultations close June 26th. They can be accessed here:

- [Consultation for Seaside tree](#)
- [Consultation for Newhaven tree](#)
- [Consultation for Eastbourne station tree](#)

2.3 Bus Stop improvements in Eastbourne

Work has already started on the removal of old shelters in April, as arranged between EBC and the new contractor for shelters, Trueform. The new shelters will be blue and painted with 'anti-rust' paint to combat the corrosion caused by the sea air. The shelters will have digital displays.

There have been some delays in installing the new bus shelters, due to the need for lighting and for planning permission to install illuminated displays at bus stops. Delays are also due to the current workload of the contractors.

2.4 Cornfield Road

An action from our last meeting in February 2026 was to write to ESCC about our concerns over the road hump on Cornfield Road. The height of the hump/ramp and angle of the slope causes damage to buses and to the road itself. The existence of this hump has prevented Stagecoach from deploying electric buses in Eastbourne. Cllr. Stephen Holt kindly wrote to Rupert Clubb on our behalf. Rupert Clubb's response:

"With regard to the speed hump on Cornfield Road, I am aware this is causing problems and I can confirm we are drawing up plans to lengthen the ramps to provide a more suitable transition for larger vehicles and to replace the damaged granite setts on the raised section. Two of the highway gullies will need to be relocated to accommodate the revised layout and ensure effective drainage once the ramp profiles are altered. These works will need the road to be closed, and we are looking to agree an approach that is acceptable to the bus operators and minimises disruption. In the meantime, we will continue to monitor the situation and will ensure that any emerging safety concerns are addressed in line with our normal inspection and maintenance processes."

We note that no time frame has been given and that the bus operators need to be consulted to find an acceptable time. We hope that these consultations have already begun.

Action: Cllr Jack Morrell offered to chase for updates on this important piece of work.

Update: Cllr Jack Morrell reported back soon after the meeting that work on the Cornfield Road hump is scheduled for Monday 20 July to Friday 7 August 2026, 24 hours a day. The road will be closed to through traffic, with a signed diversion route in place via Grove Road, South Street, the A259, Lushington Road and vice versa. Two bus stops on Cornfield Road will be temporarily suspended and moved to Lushington Road. These works involve

- repairing a 'ramp' caused by the road sinking over time.
- removing the existing paving, kerbs and granite setts and replacing them with new materials.
- Reshaping the ramp to create a gentler slope, helping to reduce damage to buses. drainage improvements
- installing tactile paving, and refreshing the road markings.

2.5 Bus information in Eastbourne Railway Station

EABUG had suggested that passengers need clearer bus information within the station, particularly a local bus route map and live departure information. The ESCC Bus Team is looking into options and hopes to provide a a bus map for the RTI board currently in place. A separate map would be preferable but this is dependent on agreeing a space for this. . As the station is a listed building, any changes will need to take account of the additional permissions and practical constraints involved.

2.6 Roadwork legislation

Roadworks cause significant problems for buses either through delays or the need to re-route buses. Many of the works are classified as 'emergency' which means that the utility companies do not have to give any prior warning before commencing work and closing sections of road, or installing temporary lights. This means bus providers have no time to plan, or advertise, route diversions. Work is currently underway to create a new national policy on this and we hope to have news for our next meeting.

2.7 Birling Gap disruption to buses

Following our last meeting a letter was sent to Cllr Dowling (at the time, lead member for Transport & the Environment) about congestion and roadside parking in the vicinity of Birling Gap. A reply was received indicating that our letter had been passed on to the 'officers' for consideration.

ACTION: it was decided to rewrite this letter to the new lead councillor for transport. [David Everson]

2.8 World Public Transport Day

EABUG decided to support the World Public Transport Day by having a stall in Eastbourne Station with the assistance of the Community Rail Partnership. Members engaged with the public, gave advice and issued Eastbourne Bus Route Maps- these were very popular. EABUG also ran a social media campaign highlighting journeys made by local residents, including Josh Babarinde, our MP.

3 Questions sent in advance

3.1 Need for a bus App that covers all bus providers

"I would like to be able to use one Android app to access Stagecoach, Brighton and Hove and Metro bus services. I realise that I could walk to a bus stop and scan a QR code but I would like to be able to determine when to leave home."

Response from Stagecoach:

- On the Stagecoach app you can see other operator services and plan your journey, but you can't buy their tickets or track the bus.
- You have to use the Plan Your Journey section and once you click Find times and Prices, tick the box in the right hand side of your screen that says, 'Include all bus services' and it should appear.
- I also believe that you can save the QR code webpage to your phone so it can be accessible from anywhere.

John Hudson recommended Bus Checker which he found very effective. It works in a similar way to Stagecoach & B & H apps, but displays information for all buses.

The bus stop QR codes can be accessed away from a bus stop. These are available online on the [East Sussex bus map](#) . Click on a bus stop icon to bring up the same QR code as at the actual bus stop. You can bookmark your favourite bus stops.

3.2 Unitary authority and tourism

“How will Eastbourne interact with bus service planning when Sussex goes unitary? Who will be responsible for responding to the transport need of tourists?”

This topic was discussed later in the meeting.

3.3 Would local children be allowed to travel for Free during the summer holidays?

All the bus providers were hopeful that this initiative will be in place for the summer holidays however, they were awaiting further details about the scheme from DfT.

3.4 Service complaints (routes 3 & 51)

Several complaints had been received about the poor service of route 3 and 3A in Eastbourne. Additionally, complaints had been received from residents of the Heathfield area about the poor provision of buses from Heathfield to Eastbourne following cuts to the 51. Heathfield residents have complained of feeling isolated and unable to travel for services and appointments.

ACTION : write to Cllr Woolley about the need for subsidy on the Heathfield route to allow for improved services [David Everson]

4 BSIP/Bus Grant Update

Donnalyn Morris ESCC Bus Team

(Please see slides 18-30 in [the meeting presentation..](#))

The meeting was informed that every £1.00 invested in buses represented £3.87 is accrued in broader social and economic benefits across East Sussex. Better bus services also contribute to reduced CO2 emissions.

Slides 20-22 summarise the revenue and capital bus budgets from 2026-2030 which were discussed at council committee meetings in February and March respectively It was noted that the capital budget was 42% lower than the BSIP 1 funding as significant bus priority schemes were included earlier.

There was an update on the Denton Corner & Avis Road (Phase 1) project in Newhaven (See slide 23). This is a virtual Bus Priority Ring Road utilising Traffic Light Priority technology. There is a consultation on the removal of trees. The work must now be completed for November 2026.

Regarding the two bus lanes in Eastbourne (See slide 24) – these had passed planning committee stages and progress was being made towards construction of the schemes. There were 2 tree consultations currently underway. Both schemes are on track for delivery in 2026/27.

If, however, the schemes were not constructed the funding monies would have to be returned to DfT. Looking to the future Donnalyn indicated that if East Sussex became part of a Mayoral Authority the Mayor would have greater flexibility on how monies could be spent. Slide 28 summarised how the main capital allocations would be spent from 2026-2030.

In response to a question about whether Newhaven/Denton phase 2 would progress Donnalyn stated that phase 2 was currently on hold.

The new bus shelters in Eastbourne will be cleaned more frequently and repaired more rapidly. The new bus shelters contract is for 10 years so expected to move to the combined authority in due course. Ben Garcia commented that the delay between removing old bus shelters and installing new shelters has caused considerable problems. If it is raining it is very difficult to avoid getting wet and some bus stops are hard to spot.

Discussion

- There was a brief discussion about traffic flow problems on the Station Approach bus stop exit. Nick Price from Cuckmere Buses indicated that it was the phasing of the traffic lights that was part of the problem.
- Cllr Ballard suggested that it would be best to move the whole bus stop along the road towards the station.
- Cllr Nevill made a comment about No 3 bus stopping on yellow lines as it departed South Street, going south and turning left.
- A member of the public said the location of the No 3 bus stops in Gildredge Road was too far from the main shopping areas for her to walk. This means she now has to get a taxi rather than the bus. This concern was echoed by others in the meeting.
- Action EABUG to feedback these comments to Bus team.

5 Bus Operator Reports

5.1 Stagecoach

Stagecoach did not make a report.

5.2 Cuckmere Buses

(See [meeting presentation](#) slides 33-38)

Director Nick Price said that Cuckmere Buses were celebrating their 50th year of operation. But regrettably the Managing Director, Philip Ayers is to step down this year.

The Bloomsbury Route no 25 will now operate on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

Cuckmere Buses would now be providing the Sunday service on routes 21, 23, and 25X, replacing the Compass travel buses.

(Nash T – noted that the No 23 may be confusing for users as B&H already have a No 23 bus! He suggested using number 123) (Compass has a 123 route in Lewes.)

Wealden Council will be using Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies to provide an electric bus for Cuckmere Buses and this will hopefully be in place during July. Charging facilities would be in Berwick.

5.3 Brighton and Hove Buses

(see [meeting presentation](#) slides 39-47)

- The 13 X will run a summer service from the 14th June, Monday to Saturday, with buses running every 20 min on a Sunday.
- From 27th June Eastbourne Sightseeing Bus will run every 30 min until 18.30 hrs.
- 19th July will see an increase in the frequency of the 12X and the 13X will run every 15mins on Sunday and Bank holidays.
- The Night service, N12, between Brighton and Eastbourne will be hourly from 19th July.
- The newly introduced 500 bus between Eastbourne and Gatwick Airport has been a success with over 10,000 passengers using the service in the first 10 days.

A point was raised about the 500-bus route – would it be possible to route the bus to East Grinstead Station in both directions, and could it start at the C3 stop in Eastbourne?

B & H sponsored and attended Eastbourne Carnival

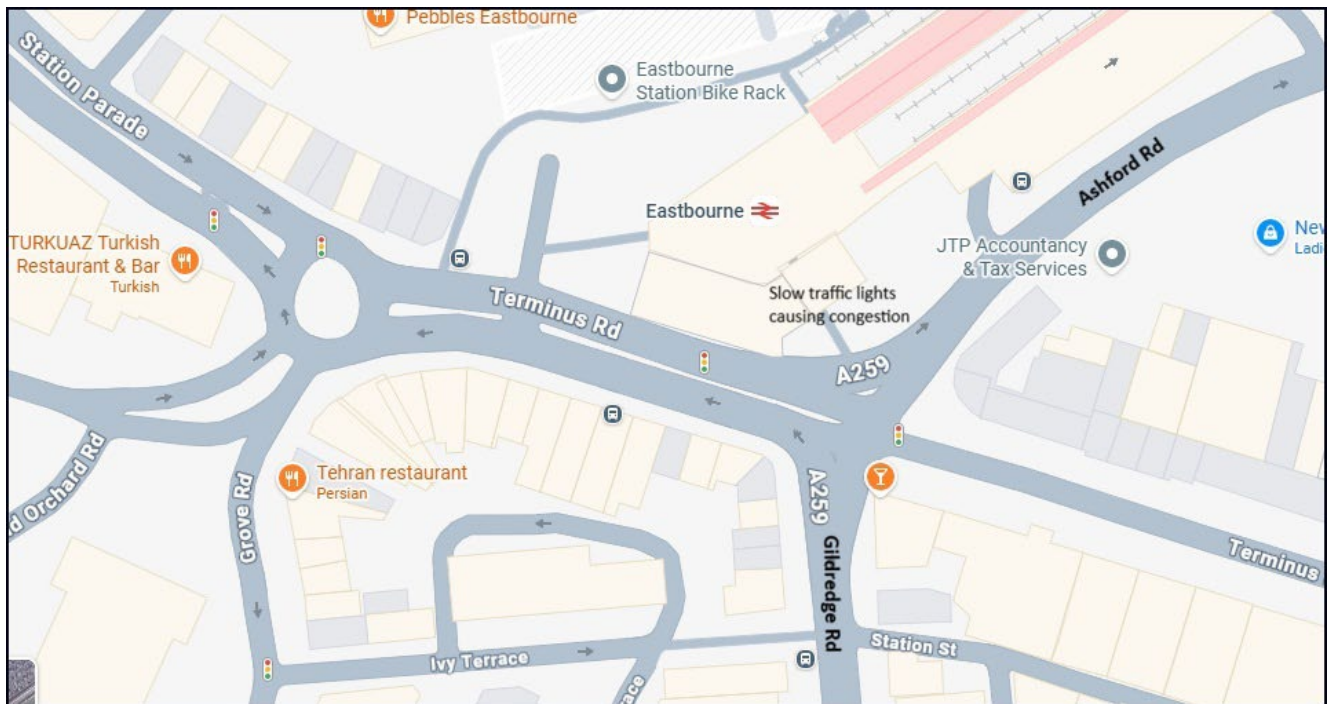
6 Discussion Groups

6.1 What can be done to promote the use of buses?

- Thank you to all the drivers doing a brilliant job in challenging circumstances
- Disability needs should be included in decision making processes, for example over bus stops (bus stops not close enough to main attractions/shops in town centre)
- Public transport and active travel not marketed adequately for Airbourne
- ESCC should defend their plans in media
- Need for factual information to show that interventions work/effective for example active traffic lights – data from success stories
- Promote bus use in schools, awareness of how to use buses
- Those that could be involved- ESCC, Borough and District Councils, Businesses, County Officers, Local councillors, bus providers, EABUG.

6.2 What quick wins could be identified re congestion at the bus stop on Station Approach?

- Rephase traffic signals between rail station and Costa (at crossing just beyond the bus stop) OR
- Remove kerbed island next to taxi rank



- Move bus stop towards the Beacon shopping area
- Could buses terminating at Gildredge Road continue in service to Cornfield Rd, then continue to South St and Gildredge Rd. – realise this would require timetable alterations
- Use of stop C3 by 500s and possibly 28s. Issue is space when drivers have lengthy layover times and need toilet breaks etc
- Bus stop allocation re-set for Cornfield Rd/Gildredge road bus stop
- Another suggestion was to move the station bus stop forward to its previous position in front of the station building. But this was noted to be unworkable, as it would conflict with traffic turning left into Ashford Road.
- There was a suggestion to restrict Cornfield Road to buses, on the grounds that using both sides of the road would ease the current congestion of too many bus stands on one side of the road. But buses stopping on the western side (i.e. the side with entrances to Lushington Road, Hyde Gardens and Mark Lane) would need to face north for their doors to be by the pavement. This would restrict that side to buses beginning their journeys westwards (e.g. 12 group, 28, 53, 500), which could use the west side of Cornfield Road and proceed towards Gildredge Road via Hyde Gardens. Using both sides of Cornfield Road could also, or alternatively, be used as layover space for buses out of service.

6.3 Mayoral Authority and Transport

- With a Mayor potentially in charge of transport and a degree of flexibility in how funds are to be spent it would be worth while preparing a plan to present to the Mayor.
- With tourism an important aspect for the town, can we prepare a tourism strategy.
- Promote Active travel along the seafront in Eastbourne, similar to Brighton.
- Need to co-ordinate buses and trains
- Need for simple ticketing across the authority – buses and trains
- We should start by looking for authorities that have got transport right – how did they get there. What do we need to do?

ACTION set up a working group to produce a Mayoral Plan for Transport

7 Important dates

- 5th July Classic Bus Running Day
- 22nd July Meet Josh Babarinde MP and Joel , M D Stagecoach 2.30-5.30 outside Bankers Corner
- 26th November - World Sustainable Public Transport Day

The date of the next EABUG meeting is proposed as 20th October 2026. To be confirmed.