

Muckhart Community Transport Survey Responses Report

Background

Muckhart has been without a bus service since 2021 when the x53 service between Kinross and Stirling was suspended. A subsequent trial of the x202 service between Kinross and Tillycoultry from January to March 2022 was not continued.

Muckhart Community Council (MCC) was keen to explore the possibility of the reintroduction of a viable bus service and began discussions with Glenfarg Community Transport Group (GCTG) about a potential collaboration to improve transport options locally.

MCC directly engaged with residents at a well-attended public meeting on 28th April where GCTG made a presentation of what they have achieved and how we might become part of that.

Two surveys were devised, a Muckhart Community Transport Survey and a Youth Transport Survey for residents under 22, which included issues such as travel to and from school. Both surveys were launched at the public meeting to further assess interest and demand in community transport.

The surveys were delivered to every household in Muckhart and made available online and by means of a QR code. 83 responses were received, of which, 67% were aged 60 or over. The surveys have provided a substantial amount of data that will inform the planning of a transport solution.

MCC was also informed by earlier feedback from residents to a Clackmannanshire Council survey on public transport which is currently being finalised. The following comment shows the level of need felt by residents:

- **We all need a bus - getting to the health centre or connection to the hospital, connection to Kinross for Scotland wide bus connections or our young people being able to go to after school activities.**

Key findings

Feedback highlighted the difficulties faced by both older and younger residents in accessing public transport, with school children unable to access after school clubs and some residents having already made the decision to move from the area to access better transport links.

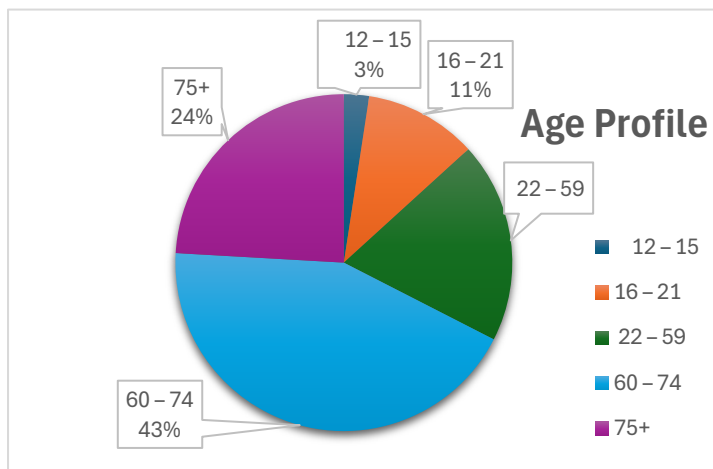
- **We plan to move from Muckhart shortly. Lack of transport was part of our decision making process.**
- **Would be keen for bus service to enable kids to attend after school clubs at Alva Academy and get home and to access the Hillfoots/Stirling at weekends to see friends.**

Responses also highlighted social inclusion and access to health and social care services as areas which could be improved by the introduction of a community transport service.

- **Please act on this ASAP as this is a potential vital service to reduce social isolation.**
- **If and/or when I am no longer able to drive, I will be very poorly placed, as I have no family living in the area.**

These areas, along with climate change and poverty, are issues which the Community Transport Association has identified as ones where community transport can make a positive change to people's lives.

Age profile



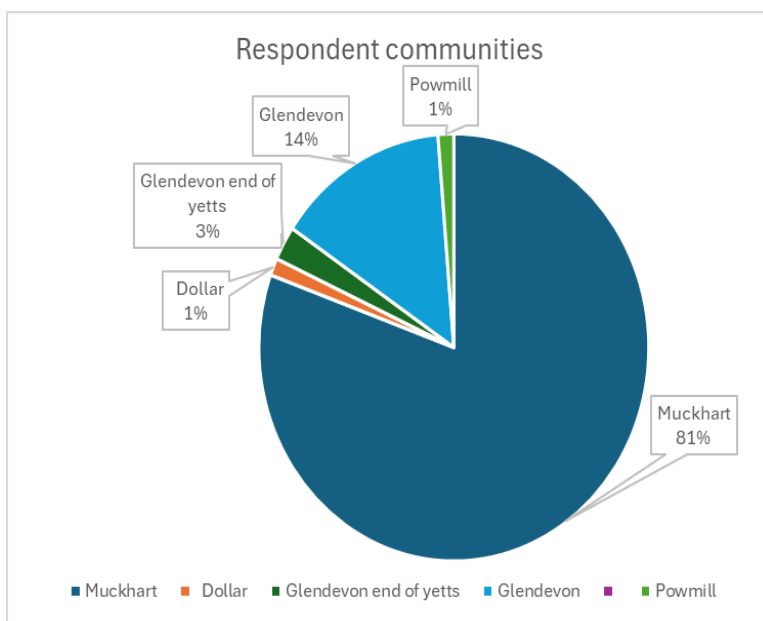
74 residents responded to the Community Transport Survey and 9 responded to the Youth Transport Survey making a total of 83.

67% of respondents were 60 or over, 19% aged 22 to 59 and 14% aged 12 – 21.

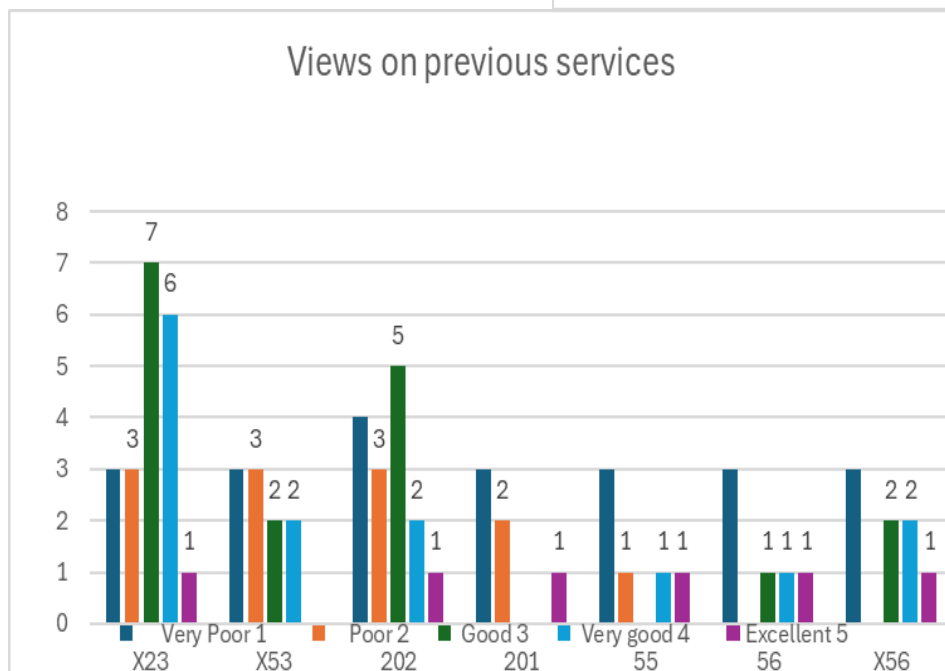
Communities in which respondents live

84 % of respondents live in Muckhart or the Yetts area, with 14% in Glendevon and 2 % in Dollar or Powmill.

Although the majority were in the Muckhart area, there was a lot of interest from Glendevon which also has no bus service.



Views on previous services



Views on previous services

37% of respondents had used previous services, with most used being the X23 and 202.

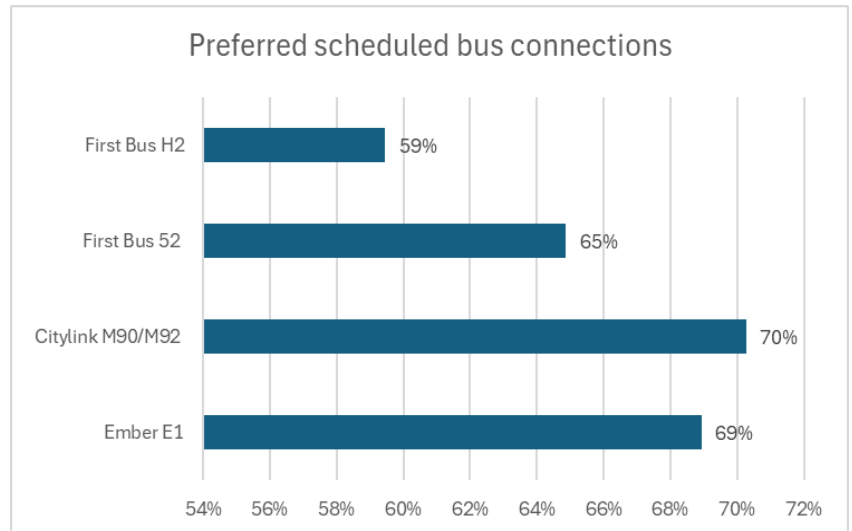
A wide range of views were held on these, with 48% rating services poor or very poor and 52% good or very good.

Scheduled community bus

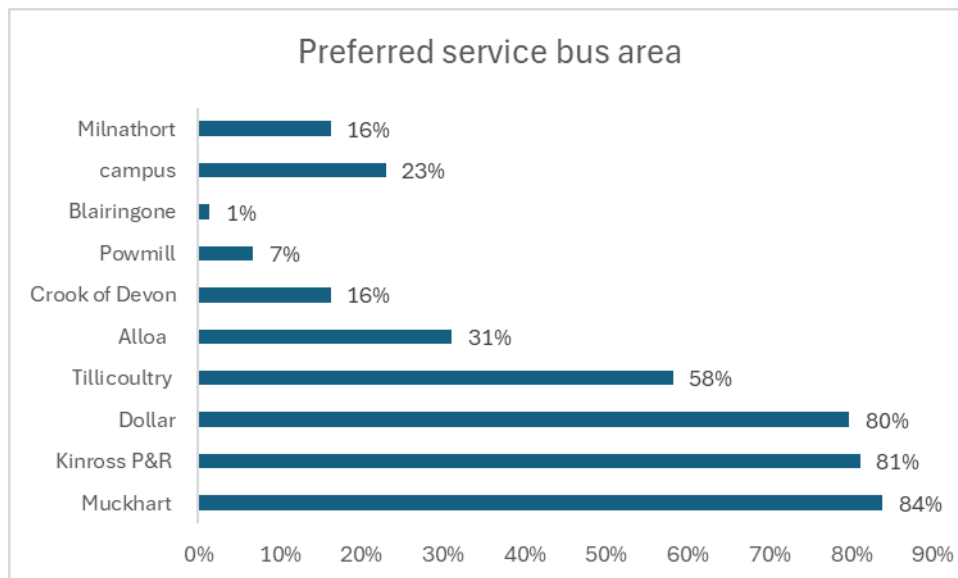
connection preferences

69-70% of respondents would like a connection to the Ember E1 bus to Edinburgh/Glasgow/ Dundee or Citylink M90/M92 to Edinburgh. 65% would like a connection to Stirling from Tillycoultry and 59% to the Forth Valley Royal Hospital service from Dollar.

Connections to train services, Perth, Inverness, St Andrews and Crieff were also mentioned.



Preferred area a scheduled bus service would cover



80-84% of respondents wish a service to cover Dollar, Kinross Park and Ride and Muckhart.

58% would like coverage of Tullycoultry, 31% of Alloa and 23% Kinross community campus. 16% would like coverage of Milnathort or Crook of Devon.

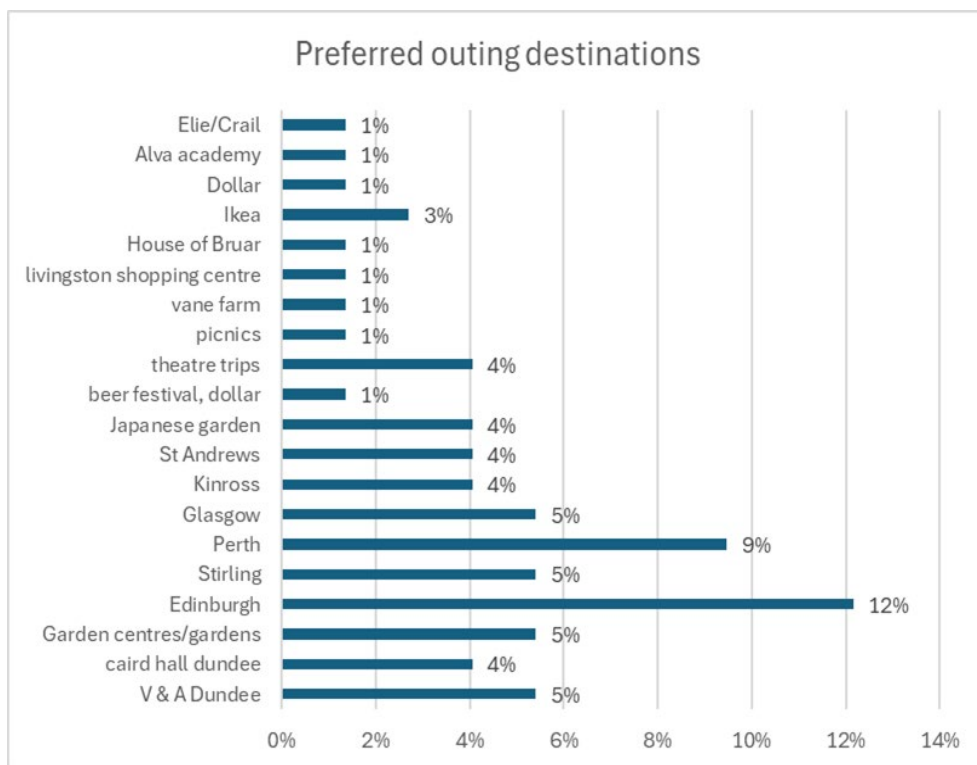
A wide range of other areas were listed as other options, with Gleneagles, Auchterarder and Glendevon most cited (although a small % of overall numbers).

Preferred destinations for community transport (outings)

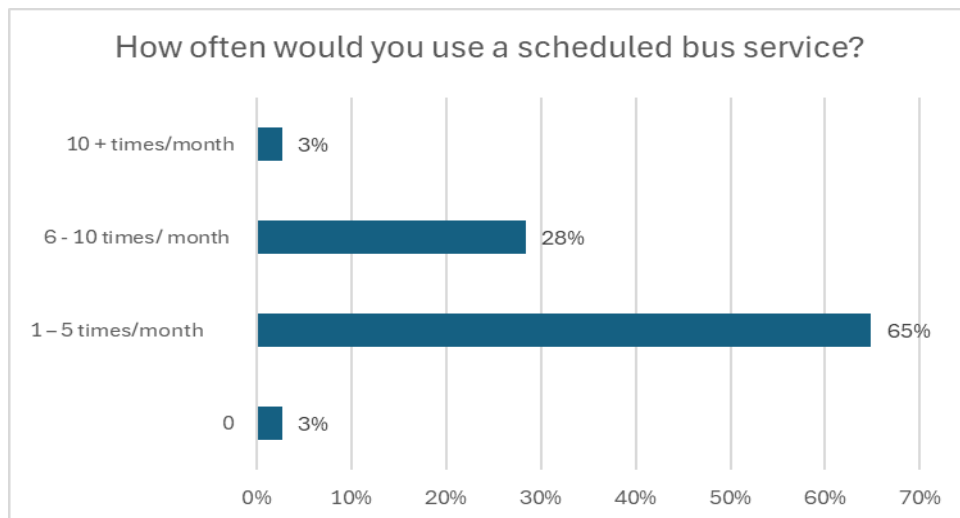
A wide range of destinations was suggested with Edinburgh and Perth proving most popular, followed by Stirling, Dundee and Glasgow.

Preferred times included morning/afternoon and evening for cities, as well as daytime for other locations and all times for Dollar and Kinross.

Trips would be used for attending events and attractions, shopping, visiting restaurants and pubs, garden centre visits and commuting to work or interviews.



Estimated use of a scheduled bus service



65% of respondents would use a scheduled bus service 1 – 5 times per month, and a further 28% would use it 6 – 10 times a month and 3% would use it more than 10 times per month.

Only 3% of respondents suggested that they would not use it.

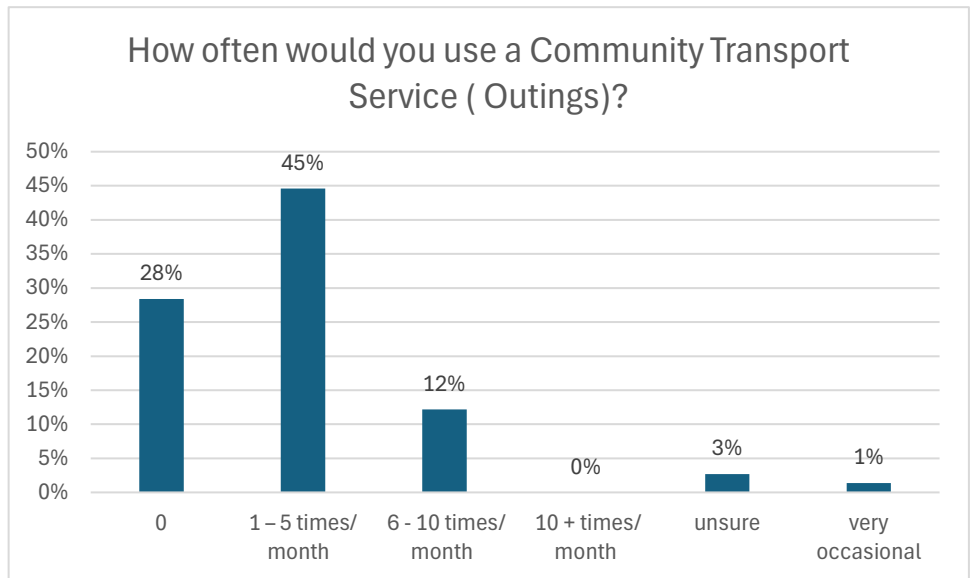
Several respondents in the 22 – 59 age bracket commented that their use would increase as their children grew older.

Estimated use of a Community Transport Service (Outings)

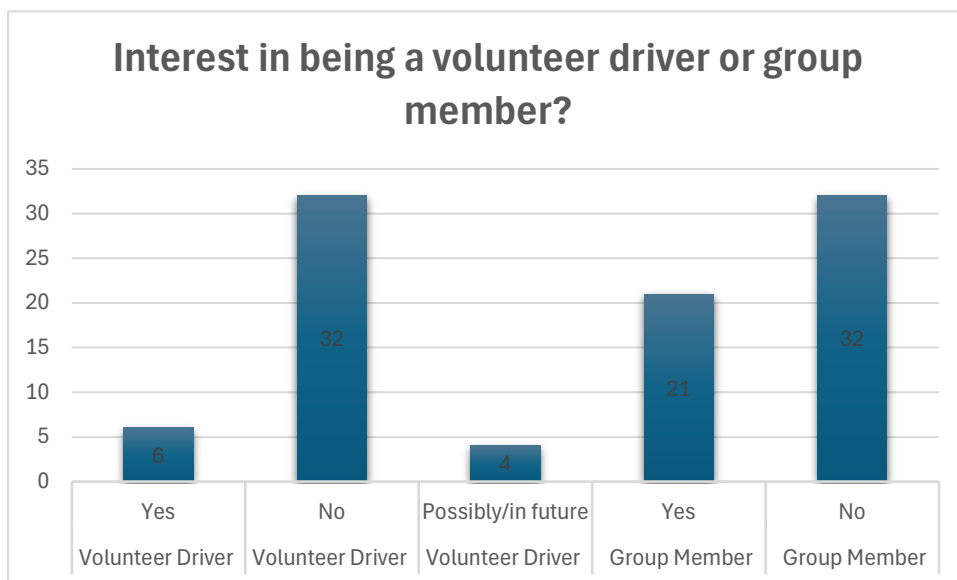
45% of respondents would use a Community transport service for outings 1 – 5 times per month and a further 12% would use it 6 - 10 times a month.

A further 1% would use it very occasionally and 3% were unsure.

28% were unlikely to use it.



Interest in becoming a volunteer driver or group member



6 residents are interested in becoming a volunteer driver, with a further 4 possible subject to further information or in future.

21 respondents would be interested in becoming a group member.

These numbers are very positive and demonstrate the level of interest in this project.

Comments

Comments made by respondents are overwhelmingly positive with few not in support. The need to have a car was highlighted and difficulties when this was not available or when driving became impossible. The need for a frequent service was also raised and to enable teenage children in particular to access after school clubs easily and have some level of independence.

A service which allowed connections to other services was seen as a major advantage and the community bus and scheduled service would reduce social isolation.

There was some concern about long term viability and the costs of running a service but also a willingness to fundraise.

The full list of comments is attached at Appendix 1.

Comments received directly from residents as part of the Clackmannanshire Council consultation conducted by Mott MacDonald are attached at Annex 2. MCC also met with Mott MacDonald as part of this exercise and attended the public consultation event held in Alloa, as did a number of residents.

Youth Transport Survey Responses

Awareness of free bus travel

All respondents were aware that free bus travel has been in place for those below the age of 22 from 31st January 2022.

Travel to school by school bus

33% of respondents use the school bus to travel to school and 66% do not.

Usefulness of a regular bus service linking rural villages

All respondents said that a regular bus service linking rural villages would be of use.

Attendance at after school clubs/classes and accessibility of a bus home

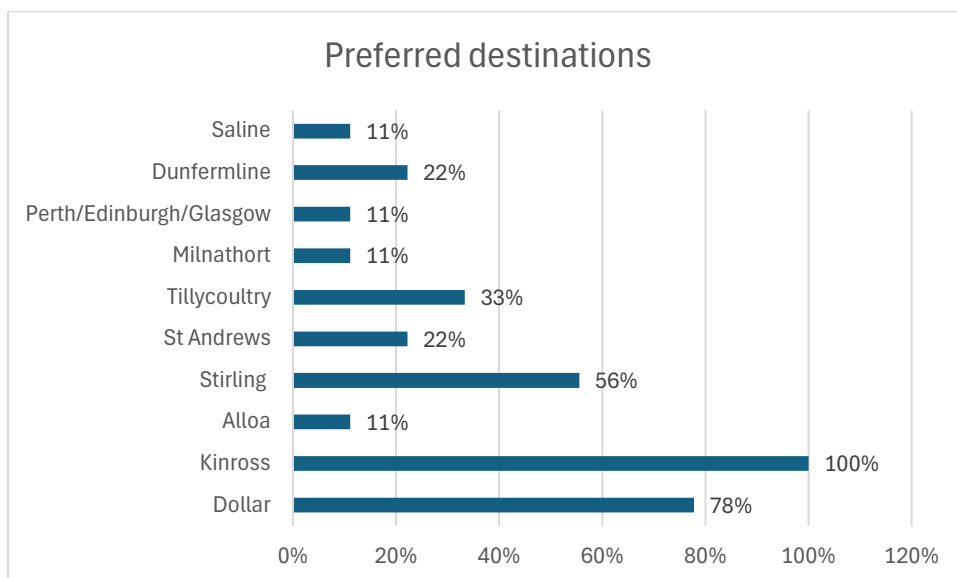
78% of respondents attend these and 22% do not. 43% of those that responded to this question could access a bus home but had to pay for this and not after 1730. 57% could not.

Use of a bus service in the evening and weekend

89% of respondents would use a bus service in the evening and all of them would use a weekend service.

Travel destinations


A bus would be used for the following destinations if available:



- If a reliable service was in place I would use it more!
- Maybe approach Springfield to donate a bus as I am unaware of any contribution to Muckhart so far – good advertising for them! Possible for Muckhart GC to be used as a stop? Toilets are available all day for all volunteers, could use dining facilities and plenty of room to turn the bus.
- The bus would be more for our teenager's independence than our use at the moment but would be helpful to have an alternative if we are unable to drive.
- It is essential to have a scheduled frequent community bus service which can be used on a regular basis. Otherwise, it is impossible to live in a rural area if we don't have a car.
- We are unable to use any of the buses in section 3 as none of them connect to Muckhart.
- Needs to go to Tillycoultry. Changing once to go to Stirling is bad enough but twice is unacceptable and H2 not frequent. Please, please please remember those who don't use social media and who aren't great with technology (including mobile phones). Good luck!
- We plan to move from Muckhart shortly. Lack of transport was part of our decision making process.
- Unable to dedicate time to this at present but happy to support /be involved in fundraising etc. Would be fantastic addition to Muckhart.
- From our family's perspective the main need for this service is to allow our children to connect with friends in Hillfoot villages, particularly our teenage son. However, a connection to Kinross park and ride would also be invaluable.
- Currently our son can't do after school clubs because he has no way of getting home from Alva. An evening bus back from Kinross, Dollar and Auchterarder would encourage us to visit those places in evenings, even if buses alternated between days/nights per week/month. Early services to enable commuting (and back) would be great. They would need to allow connections to buses or trains that would get into Edinburgh or Glasgow by 0830 and back after 1700.
- Weekend services too? Concerned about long term viability of such a scheme.
- It would be helpful to have a connection with Gleneagles train station and perhaps a stop or be able to support Auchterarder residents to get to and fro to the station. Also support the Muckhart hub to and from Dollar or Kinross. There are approx. 100 lodges at Glendevon country Park mainly fulltime residents.
- Could be a regular service to reduce social isolation and get to Gleneagles train station.
- Please act on this ASAP as this is a potential vital service to reduce social isolation.
- Having lived in the glen for 40 years, I am nearing the time when I may have to give up driving, so the idea of a community bus is very appealing.
- Would be keen for bus service to enable kids to attend after school clubs at Alva Academy and get home and to access the Hillfoots/Stirling at weekends to see friends. Also, Kinross would be helpful for bus to Edinburgh.

- Or family pay a high level of taxation and would not use public transport, so for us an expensive bus service that will probably have mostly empty buses running is not a good use of scarce public funds. We would much prefer to have a tennis court or other facilities than a bus service. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.
- When I worked my job required me to drive to construction sites. I still have a car and drive it. Included the following sheet in response which was not completed other than comments.

'Bus Service Criteria



Change of perspective – people want to use bus services; bus companies want to run bus services.
We know local people's wants but let us look at the Company perspective -

1. A bus service can only run if finance will support it – either Government subsidy, or raw capitalist profit (disregard the bus services of Communist countries).
2. We can disregard Government subsidy because our Government does not want to provide state financed public transport (if they did, we would have it already).
3. Running a public transport service is horrendously expensive – buying new busses, maintaining them, running costs, staff costs (including pension schemes), corporation tax, fuel duty, VAT, dividends for investors, bonuses for Fat Cats, etc.
4. Profit can only come if the bus is 90% or more full.
5. Profit can only come if there are *lots* of passengers every day.
6. Profit can only come if the passengers pay the fare, even if it is thousands of Pounds.
7. Scotland GDP is approx \$244 bn.
8. Rural busses in Britain are rare as Scottish Wild Cats.

What are the odds of a convenient bus service (serving Hillfoots) being formed?

- My wife and I were both in our early 70's when we 'downsized' to a bungalow in Muckhart, some 7 plus years ago. One of the most important factors in our choice of location was the fact that there was a bus service in the village, 'against the day' that we were no longer able to drive. Sadly my wife passed away a few months ago, just short of her 81st birthday. I am lucky to still be in reasonably good health and will have my 80th birthday in a few months. If and/or when I am no longer able to drive I will be very poorly placed, as I have no family living in the area. In the case of a continued absence of public transport, I will be faced with an impossible situation - one which I can hardly even begin to contemplate. In summary I will - like very many others - face only bleak options.
- If there's no change in the provision of public transport here we, like others have said I'm sure, would definitely need to move from Muckhart to somewhere better served in the not too distant future. We chose to have one car when there was a bus here, and are ever hopeful of public transport being available again, giving us more freedom to follow separate interests in different directions at the same time! Any transport should also provide easy link to Forth Valley hospital in our view, or connect to existing transport. No public transport also limits job opportunities for youngsters from nearby who might find employment here. For example garden help and help in the home, The shop, pub, golf course etc.
- I'm unable to attend the consultation in Alloa on the 17th April but just wanted to share my opinions. I have two teenage girls that I have to drive everywhere due to the lack of bus service. They both attend Alva Academy and get the school bus there and back every day. However, they also do a lot of extra curricular activities. For example, on a Monday school finishes at 2.30 so they can get home on the school bus if they leave then. However, my youngest daughter goes to rugby until 3.30pm. There are no other school buses and of course no other bus to Muckhart and so we have to arrange to pick her up every Monday. This is repeated throughout the week for orchestra, study clubs etc. At the weekend they would like to see friends, go shopping or access leisure facilities like the gym in Tillicoultry or swimming pool at Stirling university or Kinross. The girls have friends at the other end of the Alva Academy catchment (Menstrie) and are unable to make their own way there. They can't do any of this on their own.
- I work in Kinross and find it impossible to travel there by public transport if my car is out of action. We sometimes question living here as it's so difficult to get anywhere by public transport. When we moved here there was a bus service. It should not be that because the 202 is now serving Blairingone/rumbling Bridge/Powmill, Muckhart has entirely lost it's bus service. There are a lot of young families in the village now and I feel as the kids become teenagers the lack of bus becomes more of an issue for young people.
- Muckhart has been sidelined in our wee county with no bus service.
- We all need a bus - getting to the health centre or connection to the hospital, connection to Kinross for Scotland wide bus connections or our young people being able to go to after school activities.
- We all love living in the village but some are even thinking of leaving if there is no bus.

- I agree so important to have a link for residents to maintain independence to crucial services, work, shopping and leisure.
- Wonder if it would be useful to know how many teens in the village have Young Scot cards that they would use on a bus if we had one!?