

# UPPINGHAM FIRST Community Partnership

Chair: Robert Wills Vice Chair: Edward Baines Secretary/Treasurer: Ron Simpson

Uppingham Webcam  [www.uppinghamfirst.co.uk](http://www.uppinghamfirst.co.uk)

## The Uppingham Hopper Trial – October 5<sup>th</sup> 2015 – April 1<sup>st</sup> 2016

### 1. Introduction

This report is prepared for the Board of Uppingham First, Uppingham Town Council (UTC) and Rutland County Council (RCC). Its purpose is to review the six month Hopper trial and consider the Hopper's long term viability, social benefit and value for money. The Hopper driving team has helped prepare this report. It should be read in conjunction with the 'End of Week 25' update previously circulated. It is hoped the report will help inform the current RCC Public Transport Review and UTC deliberations on the possibility of permanent Uppingham Hopper.

Uppingham First is also to use the report to help inform a proposed viability study on a Hopper 2 service intended to link Uppingham Town Centre with its hinterland villages.

### 2. The Project

The Hopper is a 10 year old bus purchased for around £7500 by Rutland County Council and loaned to bus operator, the Uppingham First Community Partnership, a company limited by guarantee. Operating costs, excluding bus repairs, were funded jointly by RCC and UTC up to a maximum of £2k each. UTC provided the funds in advance. RCC reimbursed monthly in arrears. RCC has paid all major repair bills. The day to day running of the project has been undertaken by volunteers with support from a number of local businesses. To create a brand identity, the bus signage bears all three supporting partners' logos and the driving team were equipped with waterproof uniform jackets and ID cards.



### 3. Route and Timetable

1. Uppingham Surgery - Car Park	09.00	10.00	11.00	12.00	13.00	14.00	15.00	16.00
2. The Beeches - Bottom of Elizabeth Way	09.03	10.03	11.03	12.03	13.03	14.03	15.03	16.03
3. The Beeches - Notice Board	09.04	10.04	11.04	12.04	13.04	14.04	15.04	16.04
4. Ayston Road - N Entrance Wheatley Ave	09.05	10.05	11.05	12.05	13.05	14.05	15.05	16.05
5. High Street - Martins Newsagents	09.10	10.10	11.10	12.10	13.10	14.10	15.10	16.10
6. Station Road - Cemetery Gate	09.12	10.12	11.12	12.12	13.12	14.12	15.12	16.12
7. Tod's Piece Bus Stop	09.14	10.14	11.14	12.14	13.14	14.14	15.14	16.14
8. Top of Hornbeam Lane	09.16	10.16	11.16	12.16	13.16	14.16	15.16	16.16
9. Seaton Road - Entrance to Ash Close	09.17	10.17	11.17	12.17	13.17	14.17	15.17	16.17
10. Seaton Road - Entrance to Cedar Close	09.18	10.18	11.18	12.18	13.18	14.18	15.18	16.18
11. Welland Vale Garden Centre - Car Park	09.20	10.20	11.20	12.20	13.20	14.20	15.20	16.20
12. Uppingham Surgery - Ayston Road	09.23	10.23	11.23	12.23	13.23	14.23	15.23	16.23
13. Uppingham Surgery - Car Park	09.25	10.25	11.25	12.25	13.25	14.25	15.25	16.25
14. Ayston Road - N Entrance Wheatley Ave	09.27	10.27	11.27	12.27	13.27	14.27	15.27	16.27
14A High St Martins Newsagents	09.29	10.29	11.29	12.29	13.29	14.29	15.29	16.29
15. North Street East - Outside Co-op	09.30	10.30	11.30	12.30	13.30	14.30	15.30	16.30
15A High Street West - Barclays Bank	09.31	10.31	11.31	12.31	13.31	14.31	15.31	16.31
16. Stockerston Crescent - End of footpath	09.33	10.33	11.33	12.33	13.33	14.33	15.33	16.33
17. Stockerston Rd - Jct with Newtown Rd	09.34	10.34	11.34	12.34	13.34	14.34	15.34	16.34
18. Stockerston Road - Aberdeen House	09.36	10.36	11.36	12.36	13.36	14.36	15.36	16.36
19. High Street West - Barclays Bank	09.39	10.39	11.39	12.39	13.39	14.39	15.39	16.39
20. Shepherds Way - Top of Cul-de-sac	09.42	10.42	11.42	12.42	13.42	14.42	15.42	16.42
21. Leicester Road - Cricket Club	09.43	10.43	11.43	12.43	13.43	14.43	15.43	16.43
22. Leicester Road - Sports Centre	09.44	10.44	11.44	12.44	13.44	14.44	15.44	16.44
23. Uppingham C of E School	09.45	10.45	11.45	12.45	13.45	14.45	15.45	16.45
24. Dolphin Court	09.47	10.47	11.47	12.47	13.47	14.47	15.47	16.47
25. Branston Road - Opposite Samuel Close	09.50	10.50	11.50	12.50	13.50	14.50	15.50	16.50
26. Firs Avenue - Top end	09.52	10.52	11.52	12.52	13.52	14.52	15.52	16.52
27. Firs Avenue - End of Branston Road	09.54	10.54	11.54	12.54	13.54	14.54	15.54	16.54

Uppingham Hopper Timetable – March 2016 - Times/route may be adjusted in the light of experience. Any changes will be notified to residents in advance – Help Lines 01572 495050 and 07710 328469

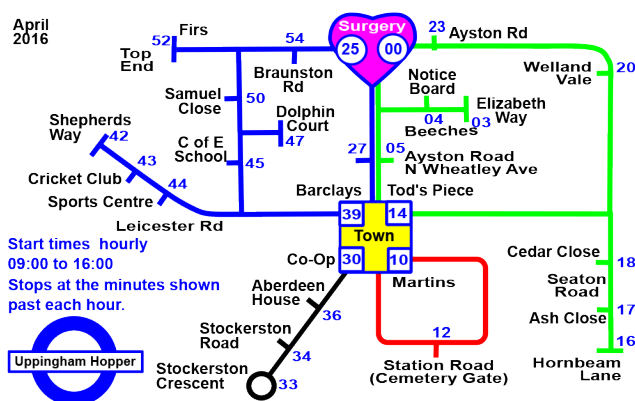
#### Notes on Updated Timetable

1. Introduces extra stop 14A in High Street East at Martins Newsagents 29 mins past the hour
2. Introduces extra stop 15A in High Street West at Barclays Bank 31 mins past the hour

UPPINGHAM HOPPER BUS TIMETABLE - REVISED VERSION – April 2016

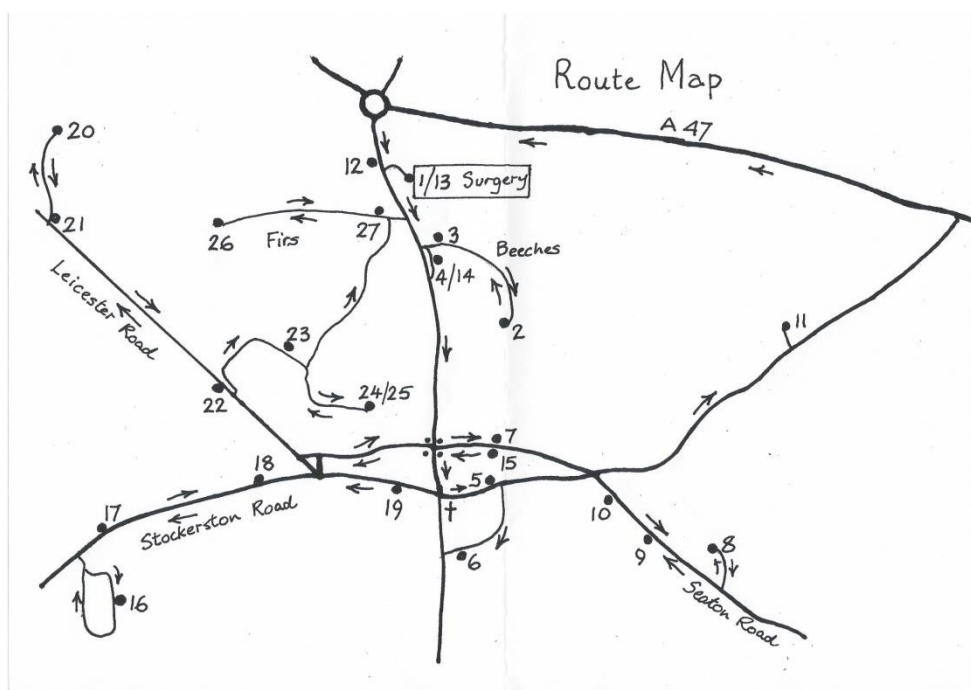
The Hopper timetable and route has been modified twice during the six month trial period, with two additional stops in the High Street due to be added from April 4<sup>th</sup> 2016 for the agreed three month extension of the project. The figure of eight, hourly route, which visits most residential areas, the town's business zones, Uppingham Surgery and the town centre, has proved very successful. Critically, the timings enable transfer to and from service buses going to Oakham, Corby and Stamford. As a result the service has acquired a significant number of, mainly elderly, regular travellers who have come to depend on it and have become its champions. More recently, the service has been used by a growing number of younger residents.

Uppingham octogenarian entrepreneur David Demaine, a retired company owner, has generously designed and printed an initial supply of an innovative credit card sized version of the Hopper route map and timetable in the style of the London Underground maps. This will be made available free to sponsoring partners, travellers and town shops from Wednesday April 6<sup>th</sup> 2016.



Stopping Place	Min
Surgery Car Park	00
Elizabeth Way (The Beeches)	03
The Beeches (Notice Board)	04
Ayston Road (N Wheatley Ave)	05
Town (Martins)	10
Station Road (Cemetery Gate)	12
Town (Tod's Piece)	14
Hornbeam Lane Top	16
Seaton Rd (Ash Close)	17
Seaton Road (Cedar Close)	18
Welland Vale Garden Centre	20
Surgery (Ayston Rd)	23
Surgery Car Park	25
Ayston Road (N Wheatley Ave)	27
Town (N St East outside Co-op)	30
Stockerston Crescent	33
Stockerston Rd (Newtown Road)	34
Stockerston Rd (Aberdeen House)	36
Town High St W (Barclays Bank)	39
Shepherds Way	42
Leicester Rd (Cricket Club)	43
Leicester Rd (Sports Centre)	44
C of E School	45
Dolphin Court	47
Braunston Rd (Samuel Close)	50
Firs Avenue (Top End)	52
Firs Avenue (Braunston Rd)	54

To assist the visually impaired traveller, a retired Uppingham map maker has produced an A4 large scale drawing of the Hopper route which can be obtained from Uppingham Town Hall or Uppingham First.



## 4. Passenger Statistics

The following table confirms the number of passenger journeys during the period covered by this report, analysing them by the day and the hour

Day	Operational Weeks	9-10am	10-11am	11am-12	12-1pm	1-2pm	2-3pm	3-4pm	4-5pm	Total
<b>Mon</b>	18	60	89	87	54	48	64	41	31	<b>474</b>
<b>Tues</b>	20	109	97	95	120	41	63	49	41	<b>625</b>
<b>Wed</b>	22	95	120	91	59	78	59	76	36	<b>514</b>
<b>Thurs</b>	21	87	106	82	99	45	54	78	44	<b>595</b>
<b>Friday</b>	22	111	120	149	121	106	63	50	16	<b>836</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>462</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>3044</b>

An average of 29.5 passengers per day with 64% boarding before 1pm. These figures exclude special journeys such as Christmas events, Small Business Saturday and cinema evenings.

The bus has been off the road for service/breakdowns for a total of 22 working days during the trial. This demonstrates the need for a reliable vehicle for any permanent Hopper service and the need for a back-up vehicle. The long term credibility of the Hopper for the future will depend upon the reliability and timekeeping of any future service.

## 5. Administration

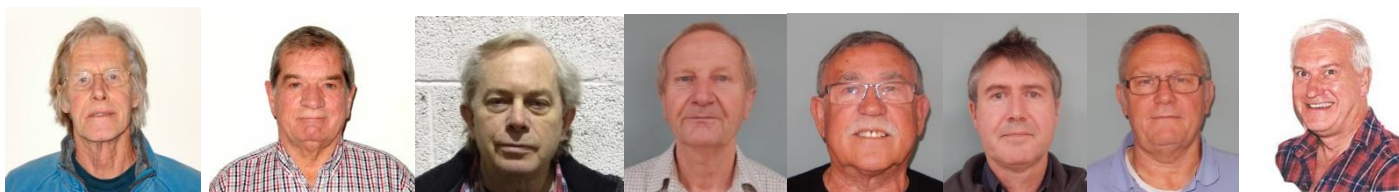
Administration of the Hopper Project is being undertaken by Uppingham First and the workload should not be underestimated. Other projects in the town, such as the Virtual High Street initiative, were delayed to allow the Hopper Project to go ahead.

Uppingham First established a telephone help line with answering machine to support passenger enquiries and notification of periods when the bus was off the road for any reason. Regular meetings of the driving team were held supported by regular e-mail and mobile telephone contact. This has helped ensure continuity of service, shift swaps, problem resolution and a sustained team spirit.

The volunteer team have been supported, where appropriate, by RCC transport staff who have helped with staff training, DBS clearance and vehicle maintenance and inspection.

Secure overnight vehicle storage has been delivered courtesy of Arnold Wills & Co. A number of other businesses have been very supportive offering meeting space, driver toilet facilities en route, free tea & coffee for drivers and a Christmas meal. The Rotary Club of Uppingham has helped maintain the vehicle's cleanliness and the Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum has helped disseminate information and distribute timetables. Close liaison has been maintained with Janet Thompson who is not only Chair of the Forum, but is also an administrator at the Uppingham Surgery. As a consequence residents are now often able to fix their doctor's appointments to match Hopper arrival and departure times.

## 6. Driving Team



The Hopper trial has again proved that there is an incredible community spirit in Uppingham. An original team of five MIDAS trained and DBS cleared volunteer drivers working two half days per week, each on a rotating five week schedule, established the project's credibility. The team is now eight with an additional volunteer driver available in the event of an emergency or in the case of sickness.

During the trial extension it is hoped to build up the driving team to 10 permanent female and male volunteer drivers, plus reserves, so that no driver needs to work more than one half day per week. From April 4<sup>th</sup> 2016, the present team of eight will work two half days a week every fourth week as illustrated in the appended driving record sheet.

The Hopper volunteer team has created a legend, with the Uppingham Hopper being cited as an outstanding project in neighbouring counties following a visit by a senior civil servant and the project featuring in the draft Uppingham Town Centre & Business Zones Plan.

## **7. Public Relations and Community Support**

The Uppingham Hopper trial has been an outstanding example of effective collaboration that epitomises the rationale underpinning the construct and raison d'être of Uppingham First. Principal local authority, parish, local community and local business working together for the collective good. It has been a rewarding experience.

With the help of the Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum, local media and social media, the project is rapidly becoming the most well-known and popular volunteer led project ever funded by local government in Rutland. As the Hopper travels around the town people wave in recognition. Local drivers give it precedence. Folk talk about it in the shops and in the cafes. Local radio has become its champion and the Rutland Times, Stamford & Rutland Mercury and the Leicester Mercury have given it many column centimetres. Twitter and Facebook have been used to keep the community up to date with developments and the Uppingham First and Town Council websites have carried relevant news flashes.

The long term reputation of the project will be enhanced if the volunteer team can become more diverse. Recruitment efforts continue in that direction.

## **8. The Budget**

The project has been delivered within budget, as will the agreed three month extension now that town and county councils have agreed further funding of £2500.

## **9. The Future**

It is now clear that many residents, and particularly regular users of the Hopper, would like to see the Hopper become a permanent feature of Rutland's community transport. The present team of volunteers is happy to support the trial until the end of June 2016 while awaiting the outcome of the current RCC Public Transport Review and the Town Mayor's efforts to fund a new bus. If UTC and RCC are minded to look toward a more permanent solution, then the provision of a more reliable, newer vehicle with breakdown backup would become imperative, as would a review of the delivery, administrative and support arrangements.

In the interim work has commenced on the possibility of a Hopper 2 trial intended to connect Uppingham Town Centre with the villages in its hinterland. This study will also need to engage with the current public transport review.

## 10. Summary of the Issues

It is not for Uppingham First to make a decision on the long term future of the Hopper project. This is a matter for the funding authorities. The driving team has however made the following observations:-

- a) The Hopper is undoubtedly popular in the community
- b) The Hopper has a core of approximately 50 regular users who board it frequently
- c) In the early weeks of the trial, around 50% of passengers offered to pay a small fare. A voluntary donations box will shortly added to the bus facilities to see if contributions are forthcoming
- d) Passenger journey numbers have been impacted by the vehicle breakdowns. Confidence in the reliability of the service is critical to support medical appointments at the Uppingham Surgery
- e) Top pick up/drop off points have been High Street East, High Street West, the Co-op/Tod's Piece, Dolphin Court, Uppingham Surgery, Welland Vale and Stockerston Crescent
- f) A new bus would be essential for any permanent or long term service
- g) MIDAS training is a big help to effective service delivery. Not all drivers have had this
- h) There is an argument for making the service 8am to 4pm to help those travelling to work and school. This needs to be tested for viability. A short trial may be possible before July 2016.
- i) The present bus, although not very reliable due to its age, has a very popular layout which would be a good design basis for any more permanent solution
- j) There would be plenty of scope within a more permanent project to incorporate the generation of some income e.g. advertising, and the provision of additional services for community groups and young people
- k) Bus stop signage etc. would benefit from being brought up to a commercial standard and better integrated with regular service bus requirements e.g. timetables in bus shelters.

Uppingham First now awaits a decision by the funding partners on the Hopper project for the period post July 1<sup>st</sup> 2016. Volunteers will sustain the service until that date.

*Ron Simpson*

Secretary

Uppingham First

2.4.2016

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Unless otherwise requested please direct all correspondence to The Secretary, 7 Hawthorn Drive, Uppingham, Rutland LE15 9TA

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**DAILY VEHICLE CHECKLIST** (checks to be conducted every morning before use of the vehicle)

Driver: A/B/C/D/E/F/G/H Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Shift am/pm Odometer Reading \_\_\_\_\_

**EXTERNAL VEHICLE CONDITION**

Item √ = satisfactory/available OR X = defective/missing

- Condition of vehicle bodywork, windscreen, windows, lights
- Condition of windscreen wiper blades
- Cleanness of windscreen, windows, mirrors, lights, number plate
- Condition and pressure of tyres

**FLUIDS**

- Engine oil level
- Windscreen wash level
- Coolant level

**VEHICLE INTERIOR AND EQUIPMENT**

- Condition & function of seat belts
- Mirror adjustment
- Permit disc
- First aid kit
- Fire extinguishers
- Torch
- Warning triangle
- Yellow Jacket

**Driver Contact Details**

A - Phil Whay – 07500 900059  
 B - Dennis Broughton - 07502 084290  
 C - Richard Holman – 0791 9681471  
 D - Nick Cooper - 07747 030573  
 E - Richard West - 07840 074726  
 F - Ron Simpson - 07710 328469  
 G - Steve Hargreaves - 01572 823677  
 H - Jim Gray – 07795 950006

**Breakdown/Problem Tel Numbers**

Graham Saunders RCC: 07901 9681471  
 Briars – Ashwell: 01572 756900  
 Kirkland Recovery: 01664 566382

**Incident Report**

**FUNCTION CHECKS BEFORE STARTING THE JOURNEY**

- All lights
- Horn
- Washers & wipers
- Brake
- Fuel
- Rear door unlocked

**Notify these regulars in the event of service failure:**

1. Margaret Dickinson – 823462
2. Dorine Warren – 822986
3. Sue Ashenden – 823234

**VEHICLE PROBLEM REPORT**

PTO if necessary

All the items above have been checked and any defects and omissions reported.

Driver's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**Passenger Numbers**

	8-9	9-10	10-11	11-12	12- 1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	Total
AM										
PM										

## Driving Rota

Drivers A to H on a four week rota - One half day drive per week alternating - Two half day drives every fourth week alternating

**Week 1**

**Week 2**

DAY	AM	PM	DAY	AM	PM
MON	A	B	MON	D	C
TUES	C	D	TUES	E	G
WED	E	G	WED	H	F
THURS	F	H	THURS	B	A
FRI	B	A	FRI	C	D

**Week 3**

**Week 4**

DAY	AM	PM	DAY	AM	PM
MON	E	G	MON	H	F
TUES	F	H	TUES	B	A
WED	A	B	WED	D	C
THURS	C	D	THURS	E	G
FRI	E	G	FRI	F	H

Problem/Incident Report continued: