



# The Case for Integrated Transport on the Leeds-Settle-Carlisle Line Corridor



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# **1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This paper gives an overview of the state of public transport along the Leeds-Settle-Carlisle (SCL) rail line corridor and identifies a significant opportunity for the railway to lead the development of an integrated transport solution for the area.
- 1.2 A more integrated transport network centred on the SCL corridor would not only benefit local communities providing access to the outside world for leisure, college, health and employment but also allow tourism to develop thus benefiting the local economy and, ultimately, the economy of the railway.
- 1.3 For this to happen it will need to be driven by a forward-thinking single body such as a Community Rail Partnership.
- 1.4 The Leeds-Settle-Carlisle line is a nationally important rail corridor which has gained increased ridership since re-privatisation in 1989. However, despite passing through one of the most scenic areas of Britain the line fails to fulfil its true potential for communities and tourism due to the lack of integrated travel both to and from the intermediate stations along the line.
- 1.5 Buses already provide a valuable part of the amenity of the line without which onward travel would be difficult. However, some services which previously existed have been lost or reduced due to the withdrawal of council subsidies. In addition to this, with the growth in tourism and increased environmental concerns, there is an urgent need for development of a more integrated transport solution for the benefit of the area.
- 1.6 Key recommendations are to:
  - Secure the Existing Bus Network
  - Develop Tourism and Marketing
  - Involve and Support Communities and the SCL through full Community Rail Partnership
  - Develop Rural Transport Hubs at SCL Stations
  - Provide a Connection to the Westmorland Dales
  - Seek the Reinstatement of Previously Withdrawn Bus Services
  - Review Timetables to meet Passenger Needs
  - Develop Integrated Ticketing

## **2 Introduction**

- 2.1 The Leeds-Settle-Carlisle rail line (SCL) is a nationally important transport corridor which has gained increased ridership since reprieve in 1989 both for leisure and local traffic and for longer distance travellers between Yorkshire and Scotland. However despite passing through one of the most scenic areas of Britain the line fails to fulfil its potential as regards many of the intermediate stations because of the lack of adequate integrated travel both to and from the line.
- 2.2 Bus services such as they exist (see Map 2 in appendix) are a valuable part of the amenity and economy of the SCL allowing travel to and from some of the intermediate stations which, whilst located in outstanding scenery, can be somewhat isolated from any nearby habitation. Without these services onward travel from the intermediate stations would be difficult and the SCL could be merely an 'end to end' journey.
- 2.3 Indeed, the SCL submission to the Williams review has identified that integration with bus services should be a key part of the strategy to encourage less car use in the Yorkshire Dales National Park and assist the economic development of the line. Other studies have shown that visitor spend within the YDNP averages at £15 per day (£50 with an overnight stay) and thus SCL can play a significant part in benefitting the local economy. The potential for connection to tourist destinations is illustrated in Map 3 within the appendix.
- 2.4 The SCL plays a significant part in the transport needs of the local communities along the corridor. Stations such as Settle and Appleby are situated close to the communities they serve and consequently enjoy reasonable patronage. However, at other locations the lack of integrated transport is without doubt a significant restriction on the ability of local residents to be able to access the rail services to seek wider economic opportunities, hospital visits or simply to use for leisure. Ownership of a car is often regarded as a necessity in rural areas and for those without their own means of transport isolation can present a very real problem. The potential for connection to communities is illustrated in Map 1 within the appendix.
- 2.5 Several critical bus services have been withdrawn over recent years due to austerity, most notably in the Kirkby Stephen area. Those services which currently remain are fragmented and fragile, comprising a mixture of voluntary sector provision combined with only a few subsidised and commercial operations. Some Sunday and seasonal services are provided by the DalesBus network (see later). Few bus services north of Skipton currently receive any local authority subsidy, in contrast to the Aire Valley section of the line which is generally well-provided for.

- 2.6 The tender requirements<sup>1</sup> for the current Northern Rail Franchise require the rail operator to *'Support local communities to help deliver local transport integration, local regeneration and investment at and around stations'*. Thus, connecting services are seen to be a key objective by the DfT and yet it is perhaps surprising that there have been no significant developments as regards the SCL, despite being some time into the current franchise which commenced in April 2016.
- 2.7 It is however noted that Arriva Rail North (ARN) do make significant financial contributions to community funds as part of their commitment under the franchise towards community rail partnerships and it is vital that the SCL seeks an allocation of any funding available to assist with integration projects.
- 2.8 In the event that the SCL through FoSCL with the Settle Carlisle Development Company were to gain full Community Rail Partnership status this would assist in attracting funding which could be utilised towards integrated transport improvements along the rail corridor. It is noted that the ACoRP evidence based submission to the Williams review<sup>2</sup> (Jan 2019) emphasises the necessity of integration with other modes of transport working in partnership with bus operators.



The DalesBus 884 to Ilkley at Skipton Station

<sup>1</sup> Department for Transport Northern Invitation to Tender September 2015 – Page 10 Section 2.2 Franchise Objectives

<sup>2</sup> <https://communityrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/RailReviewEvidence-fromACoRP-Jan19.pdf>

### **3 Rural Bus Services - Some Context**

#### **3.1 How Buses are Funded**

- 3.1.1 Rural bus services are particularly difficult to sustain on the basis of fare income alone. A full-sized bus typically costs in the region of £400-450 a day to run. In urban areas a large part of the fare income will be derived from travel-to-work journeys with off-peak journeys provided at marginal cost. Away from urban areas services become less viable. However, there are some exceptions such as the central Lake District where tourist numbers are sufficient to sustain a number of commercial services such as the well-known 555 service from Lancaster to Keswick. But even that route has poor evening and Sunday provision.
- 3.1.2 It is therefore usually the case that a rural bus service will require some level of subsidy in order to be sustainable. This is in common with rail passenger services which receive considerably greater public funding from the national purse.
- 3.1.3 Historically, funding for socially-necessary bus services was provided by local county councils who tendered services to local bus companies to plug the gaps in commercial networks. The main types of operation are:
- Gross cost contract: where the cost of the service is paid outright and the fare income effectively returned to the authority.
  - Net cost contract: where a set amount is paid in order to make the service viable and the operator retains the fare income. An example of a net contract is the 581 which runs between Settle and Kirkby Lonsdale, support being provided by NYCC.
  - Commercial: services run without subsidy are usually referred to as 'commercial'. In other words the service is sustainable based on the fare income. An example of a commercial service is the 580 which runs between Skipton and Settle.
- 3.1.4 Most local authorities have reduced the level of subsidy offered for public services in common with other fiscal cut backs and some (e.g. Cumbria) have removed subsidies altogether resulting in decimation of local services. Services around Appleby and Kirkby Stephen have been particularly badly affected by this policy.
- 3.1.5 Commercial operators will naturally tend to focus on those services which are the most viable, such as those in urban areas and popular tourist areas such as the central Lakes. Few commercial operators will seek to provide an integrated service with other operators or indeed other modes of transport such as rail unless there is some commercial incentive to do so.

- 3.1.6 The deregulation of bus services in 1986<sup>3</sup> allowed commercial operators to compete along the most profitable routes at the expense of the less commercially attractive, usually rural, routes. This is the situation which has existed for some time. Whilst the concept of franchising and quality partnerships have been widely discussed and incorporated within the recent Bus Services Act<sup>4</sup> no UK regional transport authority outside London has yet successfully adopted a franchising model. Franchising is where services are bundled up and the operator is asked to take on the less commercially attractive services as well as the more profitable. This could well be a model suited to rural areas but for the cost, and potential opposition from commercial interests operating the more profitable routes. It is a widely held view that the Bus Services Act has done little to assist rural transport despite an opportunity to do so.
- 3.1.7 In some rural areas bus operators have attempted to run services commercially for a short while after withdrawal of a local authority subsidy (from a previously subsidised service) often finding it too challenging. One notable example is the erstwhile 563 between Kirkby Stephen and Penrith. Also, some operators have managed to sustain a limited service in between school contracts where their vehicles and staff can be utilised at marginal cost. However, this means that useful work journeys are impossible and there may not even be a Saturday service. The withdrawal of a school contract can have the unintended consequence of losing the off peak service which some operators are able to run in between such as recently reported<sup>5</sup> in Cumbria (e.g. the 552 service from Arnside to Kendal via Milnthorpe and Hincaster, and also the 530 from Cartmel to Kendal via Levens).
- 3.1.8 Recent changes in legislation require that full sized bus services must be fully accessible to disabled users. This has presented bus operators with a further challenge in having to acquire suitable but more costly replacement vehicles. Whilst this might be easily achievable in urban areas where operators can cover such costs with fare revenue it has imposed yet another cost burden on the smaller rural bus operator.
- 3.1.9 Faced with loss of subsidy and in the absence of a willing commercial operator bus services will inevitably be withdrawn. However, this has led to innovations within the voluntary sector and the use of Section 22 and Section 19 community-run services (see later).

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<sup>3</sup> Transport Act 1985

<sup>4</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/664318/bus-services-act-2017-new-powers-and-opportunities.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664318/bus-services-act-2017-new-powers-and-opportunities.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.thewestmorlandgazette.co.uk/news/17908490.anger-axeing-bus-services-south-cumbria/>

## **3.2 English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS)**

- 3.2.1 The English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) provides for free bus travel initially for the over 60's however the age threshold has been gradually increased to state pension age. The operators of all scheduled bus services in England are legally obliged to offer concessionary travel to pass-holders and reimbursement is provided at a reduced rate (usually a % of the single ticket price or a flat rate per journey irrespective of length) via the local authority based on the place of boarding. Concessionary (free) travel usually only applies to services after 0930, although this is 0900 for North Yorkshire residents. The original intention behind ENCTS was that it should be cost-neutral as regards the operators of the services and the local authority would, in turn, receive an adequate grant from central government which was intended to cover the whole cost.
- 3.2.2 In practice local authorities do not receive a specific grant from central government to fund ENCTS reimbursements to bus operators. Indeed, reimbursement is effectively met from the Revenue Support Grant provided by central government to all local authorities to help fund all their diverse activities. Given the intense pressure on local authority finances, most councils have reduced the rate of reimbursement paid to bus operators where they can.
- 3.2.3 At the time of introduction the bus pass was seen as a positive move forward providing mobility to the elderly, however, the inadequate government funding has increased the burden on local authorities to meet ENCTS payments thereby hastening the removal of subsidies for non-commercial services. In rural areas many users will typically be bus pass holders – those without access to a car. Therefore, an unintended consequence of the bus pass in rural areas can ultimately be the withdrawal of services and effectively few or no services on which to use the pass. This might be construed as removal of the bus pass by stealth, a point well-articulated by the late FoSCL bus advisor, Dr John Disney.
- 3.2.4 ENCTS reimbursement is currently a critical component towards the funding of bus services without which many services could not operate. Therefore any reduction or removal could be critical to the viability of services connecting to the SCL.
- 3.2.5 However, in recent years a controversial decision was taken by North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) to classify certain routes as a 'tourist services' thereby ineligible for ENCTS reimbursement. Notably this affects the 831 and 881 services (see later). It is believed that this is a misinterpretation of the legislation and the intentions of Parliament. The consequence is that everybody pays.



### **3.3 Notice Periods**

- 3.3.1 A recent and highly relevant change<sup>6</sup> has occurred increasing the notice period required of bus operators to give the local authority and traffic commissioner as regards the introduction of new services and any changes to existing services. This is now 70 days for large buses and 42 days for smaller community buses (16 seats or less). Thus, for any bus services having dedicated connections to the rail line it is crucial that rail times are known well in advance for the application to take place.
- 3.3.2 Late notice of a rail timetable change can result in a period of catch up by the bus operator during which the bus effectively travels to the station to meet no train a recent example being the Saturday S1 to Dent Station following the May 2018 changes. More recently the December 2019 change with the Sunday 1502 service from Carlisle to Leeds means that the train no longer meets the connection with the DalesBus 884 from Skipton to Ilkley.

### **3.4 Section 22 Community Services**

- 3.4.1 Section 22 of the 1985 Transport Act provides for community groups to set up and operate their own bus services using up to 16 seater vehicles. Derogation is offered from the normal PSV requirement and permits operation by drivers with a D1 licence. It is generally the case that drivers undergo the more basic MIDAS (minibus driver awareness) training although this is not compulsory. All other stringent regulations apply such as driver hours as for large buses although, as mentioned, some relaxation is provided on registration periods. Closely related, Section 19 of the 1985 Act allows for on-demand or private hire for individuals or community groups.
- 3.4.2 However, the number of operators using the Section 22 facility is comparatively small and the recent HOC Select Committee hearing into this sector revealed that there were only circa 500 registered Section 22 vehicles in England between some 100 operators. There are now possibly six such operators in Cumbria although there are a number operating under the auspices of North Yorkshire County Council as a means of their local service provision.
- 3.4.3 Notably, two such Section 22 operators Western Dales Community Bus (WDB) and Little White Bus (LWB) provide dedicated connections to the Leeds-Settle-Carlisle line. LWB also operate a useful on-demand Section 19 service. It is noted that whilst Fellrunner, another Section 22 operator, have their base at Langwathby Station and run services adjacent to the line they do not offer any actual rail connections at this time.

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<sup>6</sup> Public Service Vehicles (Registration of Local Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2018

- 3.4.4 Section 22 might initially appear to be the solution to the rural transport dilemma however the main constraints are the cost of the vehicles which are disproportionately high (per passenger) and a supply of volunteers willing to give up their time on a regular basis. Thus services where they exist tend to be on a limited once a week basis with a single out and back service at off peak times to suit pass-holders. Little White Bus is an exception running several return trips daily between Hawes and Garsdale Station but augments a considerable number of volunteers with some part time paid staff. Also Western Dales Bus runs several return trips on service days. Section 19 and 22 services are currently under review and potentially subject to legislative changes in the future. There are more likely to be more restrictive than the reverse despite a recent government drive to encourage the voluntary sector and issue of a limited number of 'free' vehicles to suitable groups.



S4 Western Dales Community Bus in Brough



Little White Bus at the Moorcock Inn

- 3.4.5 One further limitation of section 22 services is that 16 seated passengers is the maximum capacity under the derogation and there is no provision for standing, occasionally an issue on a busy day or for large hiking parties as might be anticipated on the SCL.

### 3.5 Bus Services Operators Grant

- 3.5.1 The government provides support for bus services amounting to £250m per year of which £43m is paid directly to local authorities to support socially necessary services, the bulk being paid as a fuel rebate to the operators. In September 2019 the government announced the allocation of a further £30m over the period 2020/21<sup>7</sup> specifically to improve current services or critically restore lost services where needed. Whilst the amounts are derisory when compared with support for other modes of transport it is nevertheless imperative that councils adjacent to the line (including Cumbria) lobby for a share of this money and that this be used towards conventional bus services available to all. In particular the restoration of a full 563 Penrith-Appleby-Brough-Kirkby Stephen service should be seen as a high priority.

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<sup>7</sup> A Better Deal For Bus Users Published September 2019 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-better-deal-for-bus-users/a-better-deal-for-bus-users#passenger-information-and-publicity>

## **4 Organisations Providing Connections to the Leeds-Settle-Carlisle Line**

### **4.1 Dales Integrated Transport Alliance**

- 4.1.1 The Dales Integrated Transport Alliance (DITA) was created in 2011 with the primary intention of utilising Local Sustainable Transport Funding (LSTF) at that time available from central government. One of the objectives was to create ‘brokerage’ allowing various rural transport functions to be combined such as schools, patient transfer and public service provision.
- 4.1.2 It is a problem endemic in rural transport that service provision is fragmented between providers and school transport, patient transfer and public bus services are usually considered and let as separate contracts by different public authorities. There are many instances of single use or even community vehicles which are not put to alternative public uses say in between schools services or at weekends.
- 4.1.3 Whilst LSTF funding was beneficial to a number of projects including Western Dales Bus and Little White Bus the prime objective of DITA of providing a brokerage was not successful. It was found that there were many practical difficulties in sharing resource let alone the reluctance of organisations to engage with each other. In 2011 the organisation was disbanded, the LSTF funding having run its course.

### **4.2 The Dales and Bowland Community Interest Company**

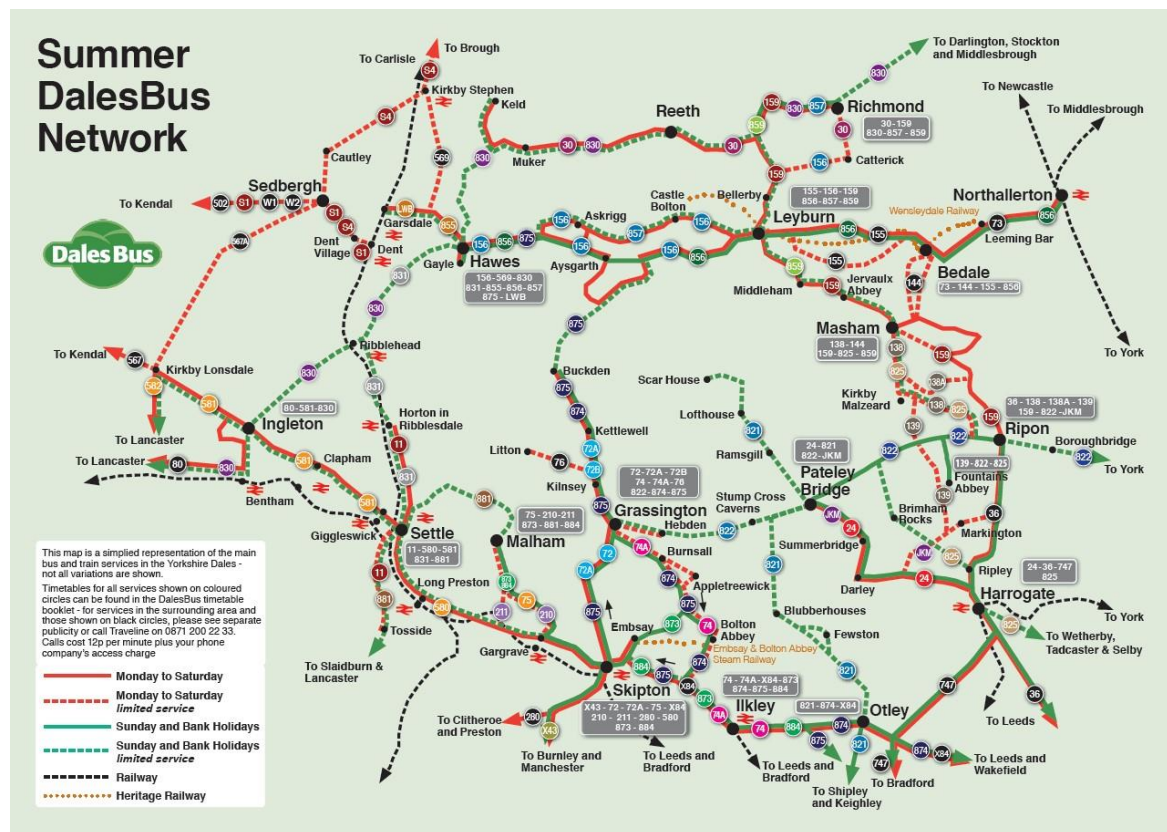
- 4.2.1 The Dales and Bowland Community Interest Company (D&BCIC)<sup>8</sup> is a not for profit company run entirely by volunteer directors in their spare time and is a subsidiary of the charity the Yorkshire Dales Society (now marketed as Friends of the Dales<sup>9</sup>). The services are branded ‘DalesBus’.
- 4.2.2 Whilst D&BCIC was incorporated in 2007 the seeds of part of the DalesBus network were sown with the saving of the Settle – Carlisle line at which time the promoters engaged local bus operators to connect with the ‘DalesRail’ services at Garsdale Station with bus links with integrated through ticketing available from rail stations to Hawes, Sedbergh and points beyond. It is worth noting that several of the D&BCIC directors are also current FoSCL members with an interest in integrated transport. Since inception D&BCIC has worked in partnership with ARN, the Settle Carlisle Railway Development Co and

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<sup>8</sup> [www.dalesandbowland.com](http://www.dalesandbowland.com)

<sup>9</sup> [www.friendsofthedales.org.uk](http://www.friendsofthedales.org.uk)

FoSCL. Mention should also be made of Friends of DalesBus<sup>10</sup> who are the campaigning and support group for bus services in the Dales.



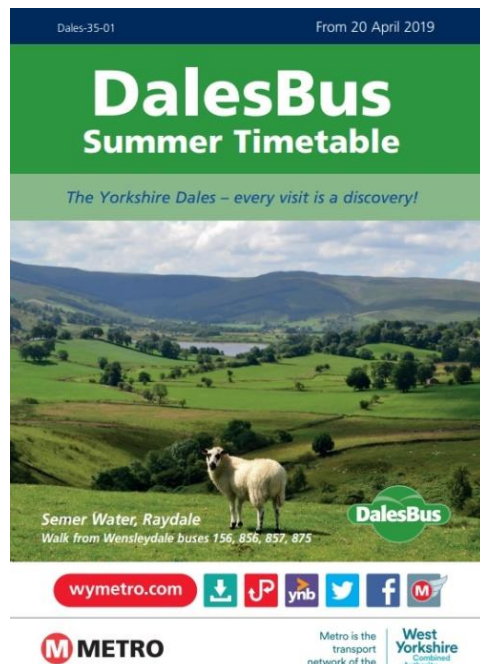
DalesBus route map summer 2019

- 4.2.3 Currently, D&BCIC manages most of the Sunday and Bank Holiday bus services in the Yorkshire Dales with passenger numbers on the managed services totalling 33,391 in 2018-19<sup>11</sup>, an increase of 19% over the previous year. Notably, this includes several services which connect directly with the Settle Carlisle line including those at Skipton (884), Settle (881), Ribbleshead (830) and Garsdale (855). In addition D&BCIC support a number of commercial services with marketing and through-ticketing (rover tickets). D&BCIC provide the recognised primary portal for access to information for transport in the Yorkshire Dales via their website: [www.dalesbus.org](http://www.dalesbus.org)
- 4.2.4 The primary focus of D&BCIC is to promote access for all users by public transport into and around the Yorkshire Dales National Park however some of the services are equally used by locals as a means of transport; the 856/855 services between Northallerton and Garsdale Station being a notable example. To this end, D&BCIC contract a range of bus companies such as Arriva, Dales & District, Kirkby Lonsdale Coach Hire, Transdev and Rotala, effectively buying into spare capacity available at weekends.

<sup>10</sup> [www.friendsofdalesbus.org.uk](http://www.friendsofdalesbus.org.uk)

<sup>11</sup> Dales & Bowland CIC 2019 Annual Report

- 4.2.5 The overall cost of providing and marketing the network in 2018-19 was around £163,700, with fares income of approx. £64,000, leaving a net cost funding requirement of £99,700. D&BCIC is therefore highly dependent on fundraising as the fare income accounts for only part of the cost of operation. Funding tends to be provided on a year to year basis which restricts effective long term planning/marketing and creates an over-reliance on a small number of volunteers for annual fundraising activities.



The DalesBus Summer 2019 Timetable booklet produced by WYCA



Example of volunteer produced leaflet

- 4.2.6 D&BCIC is a rare example within the UK of a volunteer management company focused on providing the services that passengers want, with interconnecting routes and through ticketing. D&BCIC is able to engage in effective marketing usually producing it's own marketing materials in-house at low cost. D&BCIC maintains a high public profile with contributions to BBC1 'Countryfile', BBC Radio 4 'You and Yours' and a 2 hour-long BBC4 television programme 'All Aboard the Country Bus'.
- 4.2.7 It is worth noting that D&BCIC, in conjunction with North Yorkshire County Council, has negotiated a train+bus Dales Rambler ticket with Northern allowing return rail travel from Leeds or Bradford to Skipton or Ilkley and unlimited bus travel with most local bus operators within a defined zone in the Wharfedale and Malham area. This is similar to the PlusBus scheme operated within the major conurbations. Furthermore, through ticketing arrangements have been agreed with the main local bus operators including First, Transdev and Kirkby Lonsdale Coach Hire.





Marketing banner produced by Northern at Ribbleshead Station



Large format station post produced by Northern (2015)

### 4.3 Little White Bus

- 4.3.1 Little White Bus (LWB)<sup>12</sup> was inaugurated in 2011 as a Section 19 and 22 community transport operator under the auspices of the Upper Wensleydale Community Partnership, the brainchild of the late Cllr John Blackie, an enigmatic and forward thinking local councillor. This was in response to the withdrawal of the 113 Hawes Village Bus operated by Little Red Bus which had until that time run between Gayle/Hawes and Garsdale Station under a direct contract with North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC). At that time the move to a Section 22 operation from the previous council contract was said to have resulted in a reduction to less than one third of the previous cost to the local authority.
- 4.3.2 The ensuing period saw the withdrawal of the main council subsidised bus services into Wensleydale and Swaledale from Leyburn and Richmond respectively with NYCC instead awarding contracts to LWB for more limited services using 16 seater vehicles. LWB now operates 4 routes most of which are on a Monday to Saturday basis, the Garsdale Shuttle also operating on a Sunday with financial assistance from D&BCIC. In addition LWB provides a valuable on-demand service which can be called upon by arrangement with the community office in Hawes or the driver. This permits travel to Garsdale Station outside the scheduled timetable as well as outlying destinations.
- 4.3.3 LWB maintains a high public profile with frequent television appearances on Dales-related programmes and now has a team of circa 40 volunteers including some part time paid staff together with a fleet of eleven 16-seater buses, most of which they currently lease. UWCP have also taken over other essential local services including the local petrol station, post office, cashpoint machine and library. In 2017 UWCP changed their name to the Upper Dales Community Partnership reflecting their wider interests (including Swaledale).

<sup>12</sup> [www.littlewhitebus.co.uk](http://www.littlewhitebus.co.uk)



LWB Garsdale Shuttle at Garsdale Station

4.3.4 LWB has been used as a model for other services and NYCC have embraced section 22 community transport as part of their rural transport strategy in other areas of the county, some of these services being run directly by the council.

4.3.5 Currently, LWB is funded with subsidy from NYCC under the various contracts as well as fare income. ENCTS bus passes are accepted on all routes with the exception of the on-demand (Section 19) services where full fare is payable.

#### 4.4 Western Dales Community Bus

4.4.1 Western Dales Community Bus (WDB)<sup>13</sup> was inaugurated in 2011 following the withdrawal of the council funded 564A service from Dent to Kendal with funding assistance from FoSCL, the Dales Integrated Transport Alliance, the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust and the National Lottery amongst others.

4.4.2 WDB, a registered charity, is a Section 19 and 22 community operator currently having a team of circa 30 volunteers covering the various activities including driving, marketing and admin. Critically nobody is paid.

4.4.3 The routes have developed over the period following the withdrawal of various council subsidised services. In November 2014 the 564 service between Brough and Kendal was withdrawn by Cumbria County Council and WDB quickly stepped in to provide a Saturday shuttle between Dent village, Sedbergh and Kendal. This was followed by routes between Sedbergh and Kirkby Stephen/Brough and finally Kirkby Stephen to Kendal. The latter

<sup>13</sup> [www.westerndalesbus.co.uk](http://www.westerndalesbus.co.uk)

fulfilled an urgent request for services from Kirkby Stephen town council, the town having lost most of its regular bus services.



WDB S1 service descending Coal Hill from Dent Station

- 4.4.4 WDB currently operates four routes which interface to varying degrees with the SCL at Dent, Garsdale and Kirkby Stephen stations. However the principal dedicated connection remains the Saturday S1 (formerly the 564A) from Dent Station to Dent, Sedbergh and Kendal which provides a morning and evening connection to the train from and to Leeds.
- 4.4.5 WDB currently has a fleet of two 16-seat Mercedes buses one of which was purchased as recently as 2019. Unusually for a community operator the buses are low-floor and fully accessible for wheelchairs without the need for a tail lift.
- 4.4.6 WDB receive no subsidy from Cumbria County Council and the running costs are funded out of ticket revenue including concessionary reimbursement (currently at 58% of single ticket price in Cumbria). Capital expenditure is met by fund raising and applications to grant funding bodies e.g. National Lottery and Garfield Weston Foundation. ENCTS bus passes are accepted on all routes.
- 4.4.7 In 2018 the bus was featured in a BBC News item dealing with cuts to bus services throughout the UK and how locals were addressing the problem. A short film can be viewed at BBC online entitled 'Why we drive our own buses'<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-43059692/why-we-drive-our-own-buses>



## **4.5 Cumbria Classic Coaches**

- 4.5.1 Cumbria Classic Coaches<sup>15</sup> (CCC) is a commercial operator based at Ravenstonedale near Kirkby Stephen unusually operating heritage buses on scheduled services. Currently CCC operate a total of 4 weekday routes, typically as single day out and back services. These include destinations such as Barnard Castle, Kendal, Penrith and Hawes (seasonal) and have proved extremely popular with mostly elderly locals and visitors, some of the services running with near full capacity. ENCTS bus passes are accepted and are critical to the revenue.
- 4.5.2 Interface with the SCL is made at Kirkby Stephen Station for three of the services however the operator experienced extreme difficulties with the May 2018 Northern timetable changes in common with other operators such that it proved difficult to maintain a dedicated rail connection on all but one of the services, this being the seasonal service to Hawes. Nevertheless the services offered by CCC do provide some limited connectivity with the line. CCC receive no council subsidy and the services are effectively financed out of fares. Given the nature of the services (aimed at the elderly) income is derived mainly through ENCTS reimbursement.
- 4.5.3 It is noted that CCC have recently acquired a DDA-compliant low floor vehicle with which to operate public services, now a statutory requirement. However, as CCC are engaged in their primary business of private hire (weddings etc) at weekends, there is unlikely to be any interest in operating a commercial service at these times.

## **4.6 Kirkby Lonsdale Coach Hire**

- 4.6.1 Kirkby Lonsdale Coach Hire (KLCH), another commercial bus operator, is worthy of inclusion as it currently provides an important strategic link from Settle to Ingleton, Kirkby Lonsdale and Skipton. Also it is one of the partner operators with D&BCIC providing the Sunday 881 from Settle Station to Malham and, in the other direction, to the Forest of Bowland (Summer 2019).

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.cumbriaclassiccoaches.co.uk/>

## **5 Station by Station Review**

5.1 Where station footfalls are quoted these are based on the FoSCL survey carried out on all services over 2 full weeks in the course of 2014. These were interpreted and extrapolated in a report written by Dr John Disney and for the purposes of this paper are rounded to the nearest 1000. Population data where quoted is taken from the 2011 census (Wikipedia).

### **5.2 Intermediate Stations between Leeds and Skipton**

5.2.1 Generally, the stations within the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) area south of Skipton are well provided for by bus service provision and onward travel is possible to many destinations and need not concern this paper.

### **5.3 Skipton**

5.3.1 Skipton is well served from the bus station onward travel being possible to many destinations. Some of these services also serve the railway station which, in itself, provides a primary transport hub for the area. Services include:

- 72 to Grassington (Mon to Sun)
- 75/210/211 to Malham (Mon to Sat)
- X43 to Barnoldswick, Burnley and Manchester (Mon to Sun)
- 873/884 DalesBus to Malham (Sunday seasonal)

5.3.2 In addition the Sunday 884 DalesBus service from Ilkley provides an important feeder link into the SCL at Skipton Station meeting the 0859 train from Leeds albeit the previous return connection with the 1502 train from Carlisle has now been lost due to a recent rail timetable change (December 2019).

### **5.4 Gargrave, Hellifield and Long Preston**

5.4.1 The 580 Craven Connection service runs Skipton to Settle and effectively parallels the SCL on the A65 providing a Monday to Saturday service. This is operated commercially by Kirkby Lonsdale Coach Hire (without subsidy) following the demise of Pennine Motors who had run the route for many years. This followed a high profile campaign in which Friends of DalesBus were able to provide support in locating an operator. However the service is dependent on the same operator also receiving a contract to run the 581 (Settle to Kirkby Lonsdale) without which the 580 service is unlikely to be commercially viable, the depot being based in Morecambe.

5.4.2 Whilst this might provide limited competition with the railway it also serves the intermediate locations between stations and acts as a feeder as well as filling some of the gaps in the rail timetable. Therefore, if anything, it provides a complementary service. Fares on this route are generally high (compared with the rail fare) due to the lack of subsidy.

5.4.3 It may well be that a regular rail link between Clitheroe and Hellifield is reinstated giving improved connectivity to the line from the Manchester area. Indeed, the Lancashire DalesRail trains connect at Hellifield on a Sunday during the winter months, running to Carlisle in the summer.

## **5.5 Settle**

5.5.1 Settle with a population of 2,564<sup>16</sup> is one of the larger towns along the SCL route and benefits from the proximity of the station to the town and nearby outstanding local scenery. Also, it is often used as the transfer point by coach operators. Probably for these reasons there is a large annual predicted footfall through the station of circa 141,000<sup>17</sup> including both locals and visitors, Settle being a gateway to the Craven Dales and Three Peaks areas.

5.5.2 Settle is primarily served by bus from the nearby Market Place (5 minutes' walk) with occasional services passing the station itself. The key services are provided by Kirkby Lonsdale Coach Hire, commercially to Skipton and with support from NYCC under a net contract between Settle and Kirkby Lonsdale. The number 11 service is operated directly by NYCC with a 16 seat bus, however, the service has diminished in frequency with the closure of Horton Primary School. Otherwise seasonal services are provided by D&DCIC. Current services are thus:-

- 580 to Skipton (Mon – Sat plus seasonal Sun)
- 581 to Ingleton, Kirkby Lonsdale and Lancaster (Mon – Sat plus seasonal Sun)
- 11 to Stainforth, Horton and Tosside (Mon-Sat)

On Sundays (seasonal 2019):

- DalesBus 881 to Malham via Tarn and Slaidburn/Lancaster
- DalesBus 831 to Hawes

5.5.3 The seasonal Sunday service was provided on a trial basis by Kirkby Lonsdale Coach Hire in summer 2019. This demonstrated that there is a significant demand for such a service,

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<sup>16</sup> 2011 Census (Wikipedia)

<sup>17</sup> FoSCL Train Loadings and Data Analysis Report February 2015 – Dr John Disney

but also that external funding will be required for it to operate in future years. DalesBus services 831 and 881 were provided by D&BCIC largely relying on short-term funding.

- 5.5.4 Given the strategic importance of Settle both in terms of population and tourism the station could be further developed as a transport hub. Consideration should be given to see whether existing services could be routed past the station bus stop as well as seasonal services into the station yard. It is however recognised that there may be difficulties with full sized buses and the comparatively narrow street (with parked cars) and if this cannot be achieved the Market Place is not too far distant and only a short walk. Consideration should be given to the better integration of bus and rail timetables where practicable and particularly as regards the 581 service to Ingleton and Kirkby Lonsdale.



581 service in Settle

- 5.5.5 The weekday bus service south from Settle (no. 11) now terminates at Tosside, at the county boundary, the award-winning “Bowland Transit” service through the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to Slaidburn and Clitheroe having been withdrawn due to Lancashire County Council cutbacks. Consideration should be given to the restoration of this service in some form, which could provide a connection to other rail services from Clitheroe Interchange.

## 5.6 Horton in Ribblesdale

- 5.6.1 Horton in Ribblesdale station is located close to the village and the main usage is undoubtedly leisure with walkers accessing the popular Three Peaks paths to Pen-y-ghent and Ingleborough.

5.6.2 The primary service is the No 11 operated by NYCC running Horton - Settle - Tosside (Mon-Sat) using one of their 16 seat minibuses. This was once part of the route to Clitheroe but truncated following removal of funding by Lancashire County Council. The service was further reduced following closure of the local primary school. In addition the DalesBus 831 passes on summer Sundays (2019).

5.6.3 Otherwise, there is no compelling necessity for any onward connections from the station.

## 5.7 Ribblehead

5.7.1 Ribblehead is situated in a remote location and yet is used by some local residents particularly from Ingleton as their railhead despite the closer proximity of Bentham Station. However leisure represents by far the greatest usage of the station which is convenient for two of the Three Peaks and accounts for the majority of the annual footfall<sup>18</sup> of circa 21,000. The Station Inn is located close by and within 5 minutes' walk.

5.7.2 Ribblehead has no regular bus services except for the seasonal 830 Northern DalesBus from Preston and Lancaster to Swaledale and Richmond (managed by D&BCIC) which provides a dedicated rail connection to and from the station on summer Sundays, as does the limited service 831 between Hawes and Settle which calls at the road junction below the station. The 830 from Preston is financially supported by FoSCL, the Settle Carlisle Railway Development Co and Northern Rail.



830 Northern DalesBus on Buttertubs Pass enroute from Ribblehead to Swaledale



830 Northern DalesBus at Ribblehead

5.7.3 In recent years a controversial decision was taken by NYCC to classify the 830 and 831 routes as 'tourist services' thereby ineligible for ENCTS reimbursement. It is believed that this is a misinterpretation of the legislation and the intentions of Parliament. However the consequence is that everybody pays. The fare is currently £10 for a rover ticket and £8 for a privilege rover (with a Dales Railcard or ENCTS bus pass) although lower fares for

<sup>18</sup> FoSCL Train Loadings and Data Analysis Report February 2015 – Dr John Disney

shorter journeys are available. Typically, transfer patronage from the rail line at Ribbleshead is good and accounts for over 50% of the passengers carried.

- 5.7.4 The service necessarily starts from either Lancaster or Preston as there are few operators of public service buses in the Yorkshire Dales, essentially with DDA compliant vehicles and, secondly, operating from a larger centre of population provides a regular pool of users when combined with the rail users contribute towards the operating costs.
- 5.7.5 The 830 Northern DalesBus has justifiably received high profile media attention due to the outstanding nature of the scenery through which it passes and was featured on the BBC4 programme 'All Aboard the Country Bus'<sup>19</sup> in 2016 and travels via Ingleton passing over Newby Head to reach Hawes before taking the scenic Buttertubs Pass into Swaledale. Together with the separately funded DalesBus 830 from Middlesbrough to Hawes these provide a unique coast to coast service. The service has twice featured on a Northern large format station poster advertising travel by rail and bus into the Dales.
- 5.7.6 Whilst the service is popular it is the case that few bus services can pay their way out of fare income alone and the service is therefore entirely dependent on achieving funding sought on a year to year basis. In the absence of support the service would not run.
- 5.7.7 Ribbleshead is an important interchange point for the Swaledale service and should be maintained as a seasonal mini-transport hub. Whilst it is considered that there would be limited current demand for onward travel to or from Ingleton which can already be accessed by existing bus services to and from Settle, this is something which might be explored in future.

## **5.8 Dent**

- 5.8.1 As will be generally well known Dent Station holds the accolade of being the highest mainline station in England but, critically, is located some 5 miles from the village it purports to serve and situated in a very isolated location, indeed, part of its charm. Nevertheless, this still comes as a shock to the occasional uninformed traveller! The valley whilst sparsely populated is an area of considerable scenic beauty and also connects with more sizeable town of Sedburgh 10 miles distant from the station. The location and lack of parking at the station is undoubtedly a factor in the lower predicted annual footfall of circa 8,000<sup>20</sup>.
- 5.8.2 Dentedale was historically served by the Saturdays-only Cumbria County Council operated 564A bus service running from Cowgill to Kendal. Following reprieve of the SCL and the

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p044g8yx>

<sup>20</sup> FoSCL Train Loadings and Data Analysis Report February 2015 – Dr John Disney

reopening of intermediate stations the service was extended up to Dent Station as a result of representations from the Yorkshire Dales National Park and Friends of DalesBus in the 1990s and for many years has made a dedicated connection with the 1016 (pre May 2018) train arrival from Leeds. This supplemented the more frequent 564 service between Sedbergh and Kendal. However, despite many objections, notice of withdrawal of the service was issued in 2011 as part of the first tranche of council cut backs.

- 5.8.3 In 2011 the service was taken over by Western Dales Community Bus (WDB) with financial assistance from FoSCL and the Dales Integrated Transport Alliance (amongst others). WDB continued the service much on the same pattern with one outward bus meeting the 1016 train arrival at Dent and 2 afternoon return trips to the station on Saturdays throughout the year. The timetable was modified in November 2014 following the loss of the Monday to Saturday 564 Saturday service running between Brough, Sedbergh and Kendal and the need for additional journeys between Sedbergh and Kendal however still retaining the two return trips to Dent Station. The service is now labelled S1 the 'S' reflecting the Sedbergh operating base.
- 5.8.4 The S1 service continues to provide the only means of travelling into Dentdale and Sedbergh from the SCL although this was impacted badly by the Northern timetable changes in May 2018 the 38 minute later arrival of the main morning train conflicting with the main shopping service to Kendal. Also the late notification of the altered rail timetable by Northern Rail caused severe problems as bus operators are obliged by statute to give notice to the traffic commissioner in respect of any changes to their timetable, 42 days being the statutory period for a small bus. The situation was further aggravated by the RMT industrial action in 2018-19 latterly affecting most Saturdays, this unfortunately being the principal day of bus operation. The financial impact was significant.
- 5.8.5 There are however current proposals to revise the bus service to one outward from the station connecting with the 1048 northbound train (and 1041 southbound) and reducing to a single return to the 1732 southbound in the evening. However, this will be augmented with a later service to the 1938 southbound (1944 northbound) in the summer months. Unfortunately, the winter service will not facilitate use by local residents to reach Leeds via the SCL although this will become possible in the proposed summer timetable.
- 5.8.6 Dent is almost unique as regards the intermediate stations in that it is theoretically possible for disabled users to leave and return to the platform (using the barrow crossing) as well as getting straight on to a DDA compliant low-floor bus.

- 5.8.7 The market town of Sedbergh is one of the largest communities in the Yorkshire Dales, with a population of 2,765<sup>21</sup>. Since withdrawal of regular train services in 1954 (followed by complete closure in 1965) Sedbergh generally looks towards Oxenholme Station for its rail connection. The population increases considerably due to Sedbergh School and also tourism. However, there is a potential untapped market for travellers wishing to access the SCL to reach Leeds. This has been difficult with the present bus services due to conflicting requirements but an ideal would be to take locals to the train and pick up visitors usually travelling to and from the West Yorkshire conurbations.
- 5.8.8 Until 2017 WDB also ran the S2 Sunday service providing a link between Dent Station and Cautley Spout, a well-known local beauty spot, as well as serving Farfield Mill and Heritage Centre. Sadly it has not been possible to maintain this service due to limited volunteer resource.
- 5.8.9 The leisure potential from Dent Station can only be truly realised with a connecting bus service. The Dales Way through Dentdale is a popular walk and indeed this has often been included in the FoSCL guided walks programme. In addition there are attractive hills to each side of Dent not to forget the Howgills, accessible from Sedbergh. Indeed, the buses often run full in holiday periods with no potential for standing and the single day of operation is insufficient for the potential market if the station is to be fully utilised. An example of a self-guided walk using the bus service can be viewed as a download on the Settle Carlisle Railway Development Co website<sup>22</sup>.
- 5.8.10 Whilst WDB provides a critical function in maintaining the S1 service its focus as a community transport operator must necessarily be on local needs and is further constrained by the volunteer resource. Thus, there are very real issues in meeting the potential demand.

## **5.9 Garsdale**

- 5.9.1 Garsdale Station is an important interchange point on the SCL having at one time been the junction for the Hawes branch and onward connection to Northallerton, now sadly a distant memory. The station however remains the main railhead for the nearby town of Hawes 6 miles distant and its environs having a significant resident population of 1137<sup>23</sup> although this increases considerably with visitors in the summer months. Hawes is an important transport hub within the Dales. Meanwhile Sedbergh is a sizeable Dales town 10 miles distant to the west and Garsdale is often the preferred railhead on the SCL for

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<sup>21</sup> 2011 Census (Wikipedia)

<sup>22</sup> [https://settle-carlisle.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/13\\_The\\_Dalesway\\_From\\_Cowgill\\_To\\_Sedburgh\\_Nov19.pdf](https://settle-carlisle.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/13_The_Dalesway_From_Cowgill_To_Sedburgh_Nov19.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> 2011 Census (Wikipedia)



those approaching by car due to better parking when compared with the narrow roads in Dentdale. The predicted annual footfall at the station is circa 17,000<sup>24</sup>.

- 5.9.2 The principal service from Garsdale Station to Hawes/Gayle is provided by the Little White Bus (LWB) Garsdale Shuttle (Mon–Sun), a community operator although under contract from NYCC (Mon–Sat). On Sundays financial assistance is provided by D&BCIC as this is part of a strategic route into Wensleydale and on to Northallerton for the East Coast Main Line, a connection being made with the 856 DalesBus service in Hawes.
- 5.9.3 The weekday and Saturday service pattern between Garsdale Station and Hawes comprises two return trips both in the morning and evening (four in all) with three return trips on Sundays. In addition there is a valuable on-demand service booked in advance with Upper Wensleydale Community Office (UWCO) or with the driver on the day.
- 5.9.4 The Northern timetable changes in May 2018 impacted greatly on the LWB service and it has proved necessary to connect with an increased number of trains at increased costs ultimately to serve the same number of passengers. This was further exacerbated by the RMT industrial action shortly afterwards (in 2018-19) which principally affected the Saturday trains. Buses were obliged to run to connect with non-existent trains. As with WDB this has inevitably had a financial impact.
- 5.9.5 Whilst LWB is reliant upon continued support by NYCC and subject to a periodic re-tender process there is no reason to think that the connection would be discontinued. This is a valuable service and critical to the economy of the area allowing economic and social possibilities for local residents and visitors alike on a 7 day basis. The bus services account for a significant proportion of the usage of Garsdale Station, however, there is undoubtedly spare capacity within the existing services which could be exploited with better marketing.
- 5.9.6 The visitor potential from Garsdale Station is considerable. There are several attractions in Hawes including the Ropeworks, Dales Countryside Museum and the nearby Hardraw Falls. Various local walks from the bus are available on the website Walking in the Yorkshire Dales<sup>25</sup>. Slightly further afield with travel possible by connecting buses are the attractions of Aysgarth Falls, Bolton Castle and the Wensleydale Railway for which connection can be made at Leyburn.
- 5.9.7 Furthermore in the event that additional services were available during the day these would undoubtedly make travel more attractive to the casual visitor wanting a shorter stay whilst the current times are ideal for walking. Also, attention might be given to the

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<sup>24</sup> FoSCL Train Loadings and Data Analysis Report February 2015 – Dr John Disney

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.walkingintheyorkshiredales.co.uk/Wensleydale.htm>

fare structure which, at £9 return to Hawes is perceived as high for the comparatively short distance of 6 miles.

- 5.9.8 In addition, the Western Dales Bus S3 service reinstates a long-disappeared route between Sedbergh and Hawes passing the end of the Coal Road on Tuesdays (Hawes market day). This does not currently run up to the traditional Garsdale Station bus stop, but provides some ad hoc connectivity with the SCL. Several local residents and visitors have raised their concerns with regard to the lack of use of the station stop and it is hoped that this can be addressed in future. The service also makes a useful end-on connection in Hawes with the morning LWB 156 service from Leyburn permitting through travel to Sedbergh. There is no other regular service to the west of Garsdale Station.
- 5.9.9 Buses serving Hawes include principally those provided by LWB (Mon-Sat) supplemented by DalesBus services on Sundays and Bank Holidays many of the latter of which are seasonal.

All year services include:

- 156 from/to Leyburn (Mon-Sat)
- 856 from/to Leyburn and Northallerton (Sundays) (currently funded by Transpennine Express under their community programme).
- Garsdale Shuttle from/to Garsdale Station (Daily)
- S3 from/to Sedbergh (Tuesday only)

On summer Sundays (2019):

- DalesBus 875 from/to Leeds/Wakefield
- DalesBus 830 from/to Preston/Richmond/Middlesbrough
- DalesBus 831 from/to Settle
- Dalesbus 857 from/to Richmond via Askrigg/Castle Bolton/Leyburn

- 5.9.10 Without doubt Garsdale Station could fulfil an improved potential as a local transport hub with a slightly improved LWB Shuttle service to Hawes providing access to and from the station in the middle of the day benefiting locals and visitors. Furthermore, it is possible that a potential link to Sedbergh (possibly as part of a longer route to Kendal) could benefit the local community there, providing a convenient route to Leeds.

- 5.9.11 There is also a fledgling campaign<sup>26</sup> to reopen the railway line from Hawes to Garsdale as part of the national network, thus reinstating a long-lost physical connection with the SCL were this to happen.

## **5.10 Kirkby Stephen**

- 5.10.1 The market town of Kirkby Stephen has a population of 1,822<sup>27</sup> and lies 1.65 miles distant and downhill from the railway station. The smaller community of Brough with a population 751<sup>28</sup> lies a further 5 miles distant. The wider Upper Eden community is estimated to have a population of circa 5,000. This is one of the more economically disadvantaged communities when compared with the more affluent neighbours in the Lake District part of Cumbria. The predicted annual footfall at the station is circa 28,000<sup>29</sup>, almost half of its near neighbour, Appleby. However, some of this number might well be accounted for by coach travel often using Kirkby Stephen as a pick up point.
- 5.10.2 The station has suffered badly through lack of ease of access from the town which necessitates a 1.65 mile walk or a taxi journey. This may go some way to explaining why the footfall is not as high as might be expected. The more convenient station of Kirkby Stephen East on the Stainmore line was a victim of the 1965 closures.
- 5.10.3 Until November 2014 the town had a regular 564 bus service to Kendal passing the station although not ideally timed to integrate with the rail services. However, this fell victim to county council cut-backs and a decision not to subsidise bus services. Meanwhile the 563 service to Appleby and Penrith continued without subsidy as a commercial operation until December 2017 at which time, despite a valiant campaign assisted by members of FoSCL to avoid closure, this also succumbed. The operator simply could not make it pay when faced with the cost of vehicle renewal.
- 5.10.4 In 1999 the University of London instigated a rural transport project based on Kirkby Stephen known as 'PlusBus' and providing a Section 22 service connecting communities in the area and the station. However, this was ultimately wound up by the local authority in around 2010 having failed to engage with rail users and effectively integrate with the rail timetable and with costs mounting. The service had effectively moved from Section 22 to a gross cost contract with a bus operator albeit with a volunteer management team. It was the county council recommendation that the alternatives offered by the scheduled services available at that time were adequate<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> <https://upperwensleydalrailway.org.uk/>

<sup>27</sup> 2011 Census (Wikipedia)

<sup>28</sup> 2011 Census (Wikipedia)

<sup>29</sup> FoSCL Train Loadings and Data Analysis Report February 2015 – Dr John Disney

<sup>30</sup> County Council Local Committee For Eden Passenger Transport – Plus Bus Service Replacement July 2010

5.10.5 The position has since significantly changed over the intervening years with the demise of the 563 and 564. Whilst the writer has had difficulties in obtaining detailed information due to the passage of time the indications are that the service did not run at times convenient to rail users or visitors and was poorly marketed and so the take up was consequently small. It is likely that given the passage of some 10 years the position would now be entirely different and this would have been a vital service were it still to exist and with an integrated timetable.



Kirkby Stephen Station – an under-utilised resource

5.10.6 The current overall picture is pretty bleak consisting only of a number of fragmented services mostly running on individual days mostly as out and back routes:

- 502 Kendal College Bus: runs college days only early out and late back (Mon to Fri)
- S4 WDB between Brough and Sedbergh: runs Friday only (3 return services)
- S5 WDB to Kendal: runs Thursday only (3 return services)
- 569 Cumbria Classic Coaches (vintage bus) to Hawes: runs Tuesday (summer only)
- 571 Cumbria Classic Coaches (vintage bus) to Kendal: runs Monday only
- 572 Cumbria Classic Coaches (vintage bus) to Barnard Castle: runs Wednesday only
- 574 Cumbria Classic Coaches (vintage bus) to Penrith: runs Tuesday only

5.10.7 Whilst all services except the 574 pass the station only the seasonal 569 is timed to make a connection. Thus, as regards all of the other services, connection is only possible on an ad-hoc basis. The only regular service is the 502 and even this is provided on college days only. Bluntly, the situation is extremely dire for a community of this size and social need. Only two of the services provide for any possibility of a visit to the town from outside and return these being on Thursdays and Fridays only (S4 and S5).

5.10.8 Critically, there is no bus service providing a viable connection between the town and the station, so for those without access to a car the only options are to either walk up the

steep hill on an unlit footpath or book a taxi of which there are currently 4 operators in the town. The normal fare for a single journey is circa £5 and thus a trip by rail can prove to be very expensive. There is a further problem in that most of the taxi operators are engaged in schools contracts which means that obtaining a taxi at school travel times is problematic.

- 5.10.9 Whilst there would be considerable benefits in the longer distance bus services being timed to meet the rail services it is accepted that timing is problematic due to constraints on the remainder of the route (and being able to meet each train). Therefore, the only appropriate solution would probably be a dedicated station connection perhaps running as far as Brough which could be best addressed by a community type operation or even a taxi bus. Such a service might also link some of the adjacent communities on a dial and ride basis. Indeed, the connection to the station is vital to the local economy in order to provide opportunities to the local residents but also as a means of visitors accessing Kirkby Stephen and Brough. It would be a brave step forward but a 'free' bus provided to rail users might even justify its cost with the increased rail ticket revenue.
- 5.10.10 The area has considerable tourism potential yet to be realised, the town being an attractive destination with the historic market place, church, Stainmore Railway centre, the viaduct walk, River Eden and nearby Brough Castle.
- 5.10.11 In August 2016 the area immediately to the west of Kirkby Stephen town became part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park extension now branded as the Westmorland Dales<sup>31</sup>, the area extending towards the M6 motorway and including Great Asby limestone plateau with the villages of Orton, Great Asby and Crosby Ravensworth. In addition the Smardale Nature Reserve<sup>32</sup> operated by Cumbria Wildlife Trust is located close by with a car park often full to capacity and the Northern Howgills are within reach from the villages of Newbiggin and Ravenstonedale. Cautley Spout is located midway between Ravenstonedale and Sedbergh. There is now an imperative to be able to reach the area which is not currently served by any effective public transport save for a few ad hoc services which pass by.
- 5.10.12 In order to achieve these objectives Kirkby Stephen station should be developed as a key transport hub for the area with considerable benefit to the SCL. Arrangements for turning buses within the station area would need to be considered. Increased public usage of the station buildings such as a café, information centre, exhibition, cycle hire or such like would greatly assist. It is noted that there was a café and bookshop within the station accommodation for a short while but closed some years ago.

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<sup>31</sup> [www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/about/about-us/history/boundary-extension/](http://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/about/about-us/history/boundary-extension/)

<sup>32</sup> [www.cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/smardale](http://www.cumbriawildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/smardale)

## **5.11 Appleby**

- 5.11.1 Appleby is one of the larger communities situated along the route and at one time the county town of Westmorland. The town is located close to the busy A66 trunk route with a population of 3,048<sup>33</sup>. The station is situated relatively close to the town centre albeit up a steep hill. The predicted annual footfall to the station is circa 55,000<sup>34</sup>.
- 5.11.2 Until December 2017 the town was served by the commercial 563 bus providing a regular Monday to Saturday service to Penrith and Kirkby Stephen and as previously related this was withdrawn as the operator could not make it pay. However ensuing discussions with Stagecoach (being the only interested operator) resulted in the part resurrection of the route in 2018 with three return journeys running Monday to Friday only between Appleby and Penrith in between their school transport commitments. There is no weekend provision. Critically, there was no commercial interest in extending the route back to Kirkby Stephen.
- 5.11.3 Currently the 563 service does not serve Appleby Station despite the fact that there is a reasonable fit with the rail timetable were it to do so. This misses a significant potential for onward travel as this would be a useful connection to Penrith from where access can easily be made to Keswick and the Lakes. It is understood that there may be some reluctance on the part of the operator to detour to the station however there would be considerable merit in a jointly marketed and connecting service. If the service was also improved to run on Saturdays this would have considerable added benefit to SCL and the local community.
- 5.11.4 The area to the north east of Appleby is popular with walkers wishing to access the Northern Pennines including High Cup Nick, Great Dun Fell and Cross Fell. Indeed there are a number of FoSCL guided walks in this area. However the potential to visit and walk in this area is limited by the lack of any onward transport to locations such as Dufton and Kirkland which are normally accessed by a long walk or a taxi. Whilst there was until recently a local bus service operating one day a week connection with the train was not possible. This has more recently been replaced with a locals-only community bus. There would be considerable benefit if this service could also be available to visitors.
- 5.11.5 Appleby Station could be developed as a local transport hub with improved integration of the existing 563 and additional local services providing visitor access to the North Pennines. Arrangements for turning buses would need to be considered although it is noted that the occasional rail replacement buses manage this without major problems.

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<sup>33</sup> 2011 Census (Wikipedia)

<sup>34</sup> FoSCL Train Loadings and Data Analysis Report February 2015 – Dr John Disney

## **5.12 Langwathby**

- 5.12.1 The station is located in reasonable proximity to the village and can be accessed by walking. The annual predicted footfall is circa 20,000<sup>35</sup>.
- 5.12.2 The 888 seasonal service (July – end Sept) is provided by Wright Brothers of Alston running Newcastle to Keswick every day throughout the season. This would appear to connect well with the current 1132 train arrival at Langwathby Station departing 1150 and allowing travel to Penrith and Keswick although the return at 1715 would involve a wait for the 1852 southbound train.
- 5.12.3 Otherwise Langwathby village is served Tuesday to Saturday by Fellrunner community bus with destinations alternating between Penrith and Carlisle. These services do not connect directly with the SCL. It is possible that opportunities might be explored with the operator to see if connections are viable to allow travel via the SCL.
- 5.12.4 It is important to recognise that with community bus services (primarily used by pass holders) already serving the major towns of Carlisle and Penrith albeit on an occasional basis the reality is that there would be little or limited demand for transferring to train and incurring a fare although there might be some attraction in the option to travel in the Leeds direction. Also, there might be potential for the transfer of passengers from the train to the bus if connection to the north Pennines could be afforded.
- 5.12.5 It is noted that there is a fledgling community bus group being formed in the Ullswater area which could potentially seek connection to the SCL at Langwathby.

## **5.13 Lazonby and Kirkoswald / Armathwaite**

- 5.13.1 There are no current bus connections. However the villages are reasonably proximate to the respective railway stations. The daily 104 bus between Center Parcs and Carlisle runs some 2 miles away and this is used by some locals as an alternative to the train. Both villages are served by the Fellrunner community bus service alternating between Penrith and Carlisle as destinations whilst these do not provide a direct connection with the SCL rail services. Opportunities should be explored with the community operator to see if connections from and to the SCL are viable to allow travel, potentially in the Leeds direction.

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<sup>35</sup> FoSCL Train Loadings and Data Analysis Report February 2015 – Dr John Disney

## 6 The Cornwall Integration Project

- 6.1 Whilst it will not start to come to fruition until May 2020, Cornwall has taken the major initiative to provide an integrated and sustainable public transport network known as One Public Transport System for Cornwall (OPTSfC)<sup>36</sup>. There are some striking similarities between Cornwall and Cumbria/North Yorkshire, one being a wide divergence between the affluent tourist areas and the less affluent hinterland. Government funding has been sought as part of a growth deal in addition to which an application is pending with the Local Enterprise Partnership for further growth funding.
- 6.2 The project utilises powers afforded under the Bus Services Act with the aim of creating one transport network, a single timetable, single ticket and a single brand. It is thought that this will bring about increased customer focus as well as generating increased revenue. There will be economic benefits to the region as well as anticipated relief of traffic congestion endemic in the county.
- 6.3 As part of the plan public services will be integrated around a central spine of the main rail line having improved frequency and the provision of integrated bus services to the outlying communities.
- 6.4 Key features of OPTSfC include:
- Branding to enhance customer awareness
  - Improved integration to allow combined bus/rail/ferry journeys
  - One timetable and one network
  - Improved frequency of services
  - Improved real time passenger information
  - One ticket
  - Working with several bus operators both large and small
  - Investment in new railway trains
  - Investment in bus infrastructure
  - Improved viability of network through increased patronage
- 6.5 The project is being watched keenly by many in the transport industry and could well be used as a blue print for similar communities elsewhere. Indeed, there is no reason why elements of such a model could not be adapted for use on the SCL.

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<sup>36</sup> <http://travelwatchesouthwest.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/OPTSfC-Project-Details-Travelwatch-Oct-2017.pdf>



## **7 A Vision for the Future**

### **7.1 Securing the Existing Network**

- 7.1.1 Whilst there are some obvious shortcomings which should be addressed every necessary effort should be applied to sustaining and growing the existing network such as it is (as shown in Map 2 - see appendix) without any further deterioration.
- 7.1.2 A major concern is that funding for some services, in particular the seasonal DalesBus network provided by D&BCIC, is only on a short-term ad-hoc basis, with an over-reliance on a limited number of volunteers to undertake annual fund-raising activity. An immediate priority should be to secure longer-term funding arrangements for the existing network.

### **7.2 Tourism and Marketing**

- 7.2.1 The primary focus has often been on the SCL as an 'end-to-end' journey which, for most, will only be an occasional or one-off event. Less attention has been paid to destination marketing the potential of the intermediate stations and the surrounding area. The comparatively remote nature of the line means that some form of onward transport is vital particularly in the cases of Dent, Garsdale, Kirkby Stephen and Appleby. This would have the potential to generate multiple visits whether for walking or simply visiting. The potential tourism flows from the line are shown graphically in Map 3 (see appendix).
- 7.2.2 In addition, Green Tourism is becoming increasingly important in the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the SCL can provide a vital role in the reduction of car use on the already congested roads. Efforts should be made to develop better marketing particularly for destinations and leisure activities (e.g. walking).

### **7.3 Community Involvement**

- 7.3.1 Urgent consideration should be given as to how the SCL can be better utilised to benefit the communities within proximity to the line as identified in Map 1 (see appendix) but for the lack of connecting public transport. Indeed this was contemplated in the DfT invitation to tender document for the Northern franchise. With the exception of Garsdale Station there is an absence of provision for locals to connect with the line by regular and integrated public transport. Future provision should be a matter of discussion with local stakeholders. All services should be socially inclusive and open to all users.

## 7.4 Rural Transport Hubs

- 7.4.1 The development of rural transport ‘hubs’ at Settle, Garsdale, Kirkby Stephen and Appleby Stations with the possible addition of Langwathby would be an obvious move forward, including improved information and signage. Ribbleshead could remain as a seasonal mini-hub.
- 7.4.2 **Settle:** The existing bus routes should be supported and if possible operators encouraged to better integrate and improve timetables particular to Ingleton and Kirkby Lonsdale. The more seasonal leisure routes to Malham and the Forest of Bowland should be maintained and developed.
- 7.4.3 **Ribbleshead** remains as a seasonal hub for the Northern DalesBus and of course accommodates the Ribbleshead Visitor Centre, a popular visitor attraction.
- 7.4.4 **Dent** will continue to be the connection point for the Western Dales Bus and serving Dentdale and Sedburgh (the Howgills).
- 7.4.5 **Garsdale:** Increased provision of services (i.e. midday) from Garsdale to Hawes would benefit the shorter stay leisure market whilst the present services ideally suit the longer stay market (walking etc). In addition, the provision of additional services to the west of the station (Sedburgh area) would allow better access for local residents and visitors to reach the trains, predominantly, to Leeds and beyond.
- 7.4.6 **Kirkby Stephen:** The creation of a station link serving Kirkby Stephen and Brough must be a high priority. Ideally this should be a frequent community type service or taxi bus possibly including a dial a ride service serving outlying communities within the Upper Eden area. Given the commercial benefit to the railway consideration might be given to a rail supported ‘free’ bus. Furthermore, a connection to the Westmorland Dales would be an attractive proposition (see later). Allied to this the development of Kirkby Stephen as a rural transport hub might also incorporate better use of the existing space within the station as a café/visitor centre.
- 7.4.7 **Appleby:** An immediate and low-cost proposition would be an integrated service between the SCL and the 563 bus to Penrith at Appleby station. The addition of a Saturday service would be crucial and in time it is hoped that the service provision to Appleby could be increased from the current 3 return trips from Penrith. In addition, the creation of a link from Appleby or Langwathby stations would allow visitor access to the north Pennines and the nearby villages. Ideally this might be done in conjunction with a community operation. In all likelihood a single day per week operation, probably on a Saturday would suffice.

## **7.5 A Connection to the Westmorland Dales**

- 7.5.1 The absence of effective public transport allowing visitor access to the Westmorland Dales part of the extended Yorkshire Dales National Park would appear to be a significant shortcoming despite the proximity to the SCL. A connection from the line via Kirkby Stephen Station would seem the an obvious answer probably initially as a single day service bus linking Kirkby Stephen Town, Ravenstonedale, the Cumbria Wildlife Trust Smardale Nature Reserve and village of Orton. Urgent consultation should take place involving YDNPA, Friends of the Dales and Cumbria Wildlife Trust in this respect.

## **7.6 Reinstatement of Previously Withdrawn Services**

- 7.6.1 As noted earlier, the government has recently allocated additional funding to help restore withdrawn bus services, with a particular mention of rural services. Local authorities should be encouraged to reinstate some of the previously withdrawn routes in the area such as the 563 and 564 in Cumbria and the link between Settle and Clitheroe, and encourage wherever possible that these services are integrated with the SCL rail services. Furthermore, where community transport solutions are adopted as a low cost alternative it is important that these are also operated and marketed as public services to facilitate the movement of passengers to and from the SCL and not solely locals-only use.

## **7.7 The Rail Timetable**

- 7.7.1 It is clear that the rail timetable could be better aligned with passengers' needs and that the operator should liaise more effectively with other transport providers along the route.
- 7.7.2 In particular, the rail operator should be encouraged to:
- restore the 0849 (Monday-Saturday) departure from Leeds as the current earlier departure has had a detrimental effect on connecting services
  - reconsider the 0859 Sundays departure from Leeds as this does not enable connections at Leeds/Shipley and therefore impacts upon the usefulness of the service and potential bus ridership. A slightly later departure would enable connections from incoming rail and bus services which are currently impossible.
  - reduce the unnecessarily long gaps existing within the current service pattern. This can be partly achieved by providing for stopping by the current semi-fast services.

- 7.7.3 Future changes to the rail timetable should be notified to all stakeholders well in advance in order for the necessary consultation to take place and compliance with notice periods for bus operators.

## 7.8 Ticketing

- 7.8.1 Consideration should be given to through ticketing such as PlusBus and the existing Dales Rambler where a supplement is paid on top of the rail ticket to include the bus fare provided that an equitable sharing system can be organised and administered. A combined bus and rail ticket such as the Derbyshire Wayfarer which covers all rail and bus journeys within Derbyshire but extending one stop over the boundary, would be attractive. These are available on the bus or train.



The Derbyshire Wayfarer bus and rail ticket

- 7.8.2 People wishing to use multiple buses or trains should not be disadvantaged with several single fares, a point articulated by Dr John Disney in his evidence to the HOC select committee hearing in 2016. It is important that all bus and rail services are socially inclusive.
- 7.8.3 A realistically priced zoned Day Ranger leisure rail ticket would considerably simplify the complexity of tickets currently available on the SCL and adjoining Bentham Line, and allow flexibility of travel even if this cannot be worked to also include bus travel. Often visitors are dissuaded from undertaking more complex journeys by the unrealistically high single ticket prices. This is evidenced when the winter Day Ranger offers are applied and ridership increases.

## 7.9 An Integrated Future for the Leeds-Settle-Carlisle line

- 7.9.1 For the vision of integrated services to happen there will need to be liaison between the various stakeholders including Arriva Rail North (as the current rail franchise operator), Settle Carlisle Railway Development Co, Settle Carlisle Railway Trust, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Friends of the Dales, Dales & Bowland CIC, Cumbria Wildlife Trust

and all of the various local authorities. Friends of the Settle Carlisle Line as the leading supporting body for the SCL and the largest rail-user group in the UK with a membership of over 3000 should provide a key role in this respect.

7.9.2 Critically, increased service provision will inevitably require the injection of funding from the rail operator, government or other grant providers. In the event that the line moves towards full Community Rail Partnership status then this will assist. The example of the One Public Transport System for Cornwall should be closely studied and adapted as necessary to suit the slightly different needs of the SCL corridor.

7.9.3 **The Leeds-Settle-Carlisle railway can fulfil a vital role as part of an integrated transport solution for the area. This will not only benefit local communities providing access to the outside world for leisure, college, health, welfare and employment but also allow tourism to develop thus benefiting the local economy and, ultimately, the economy of the railway. However for this to happen it will need to be driven by a forward thinking single body, such as a Community Rail Partnership.**

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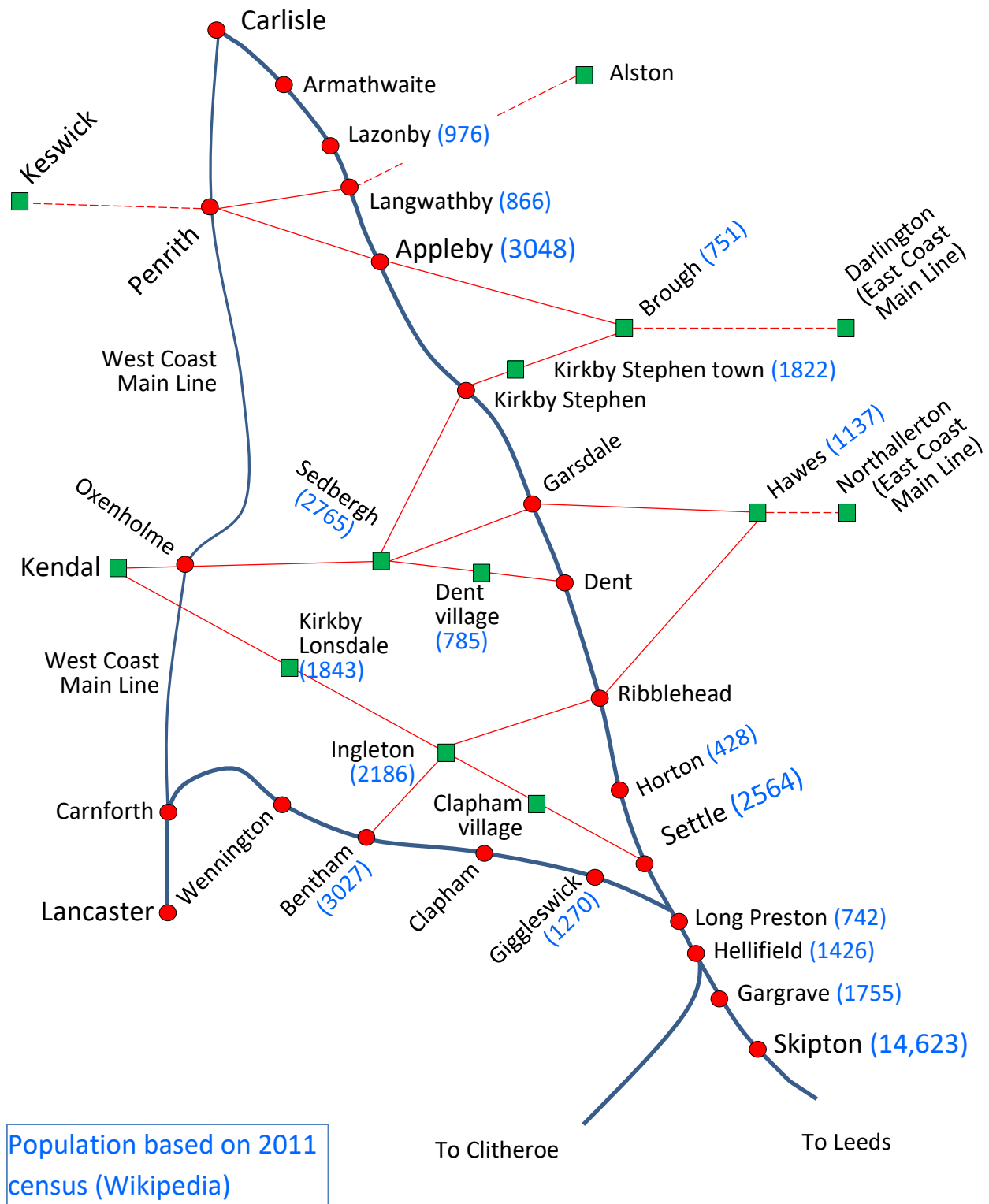
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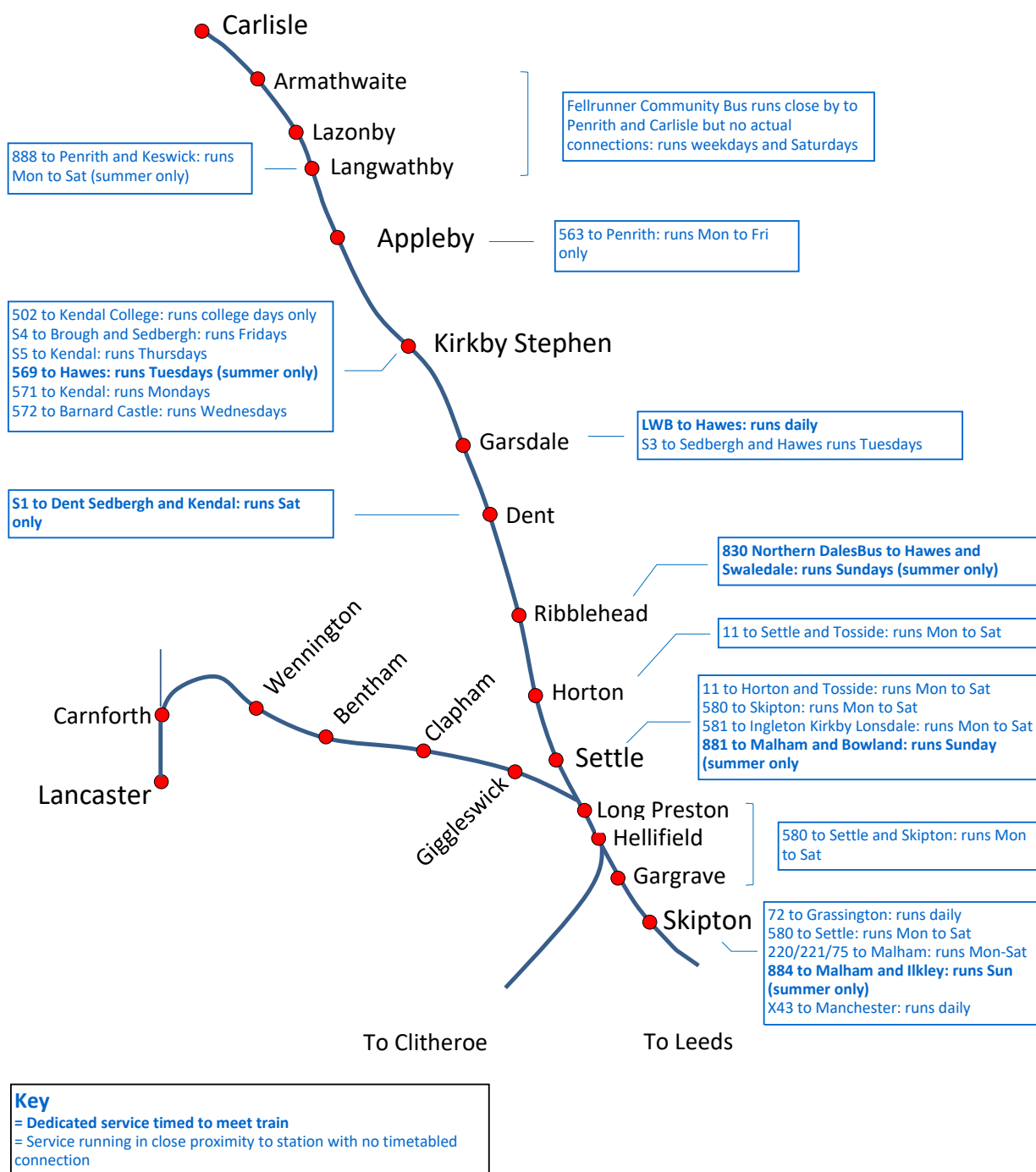
## 9 Appendices

- (a) Map 1 - Leeds-Settle-Carlisle Line Location Showing Strategic Links and Communities
- (b) Map 2 - Leeds-Settle-Carlisle Line Bus Connections (as at 2019)
- (c) Map 3 - Leeds-Settle-Carlisle Line Tourism - Showing Potential Destinations

# Map 1 - Leeds-Settle-Carlisle Line Location Showing Strategic Links and Communities



## Map 2 - Leeds-Settle-Carlisle Line Bus Connections (as at 2019)



## Map 3 - Leeds-Settle-Carlisle Line Tourism Showing Potential Destinations

