



Committee and Date Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership 17 March 2015

Item 6

SHROPSHIRE HILLS SHUTTLES

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Summary

This paper presents a report on the 2014 Shuttles season in support of the verbal presentation which will be made at the meeting.

Recommendation

The Partnership is recommended to note and comment on the current position with the Shuttles.

List of Background Papers

Shuttles information at http://www.shropshirehillsaonb.co.uk/things-to-do/shuttles/

Human Rights Act Appraisal

The information in this report is compatible with the Human Rights Act 1998.
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Environmental Appraisal

The recommendation in this paper will contribute to the conservation of protected landscapes.

Risk Management Appraisal

Risk management has been appraised as part of the considerations of this report.
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Community / Consultations Appraisal
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The topics raised in this paper have been the subject of earlier consultations with Partnership members.
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Appendices

Appendix 1 2014 Shuttles report

Shropshire Hills Shuttles Annual Report 2014

10 March 2015



Introduction

The Shropshire Hills Shuttles is a weekend bus service which operates through the spring and summer months. The buses provide easy access in to the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for walking, sightseeing, pub lunches, picnics and more. They are aimed at both visitors and local people, encouraging them not to use their cars, but take the bus to explore the Shropshire Hills, its towns and villages, and local attractions, which include some great walking, heritage trails, and country pubs. The Long Mynd & Stiperstones Shuttle has been running for 15 years, while Castle Connect is in its second year of operation.

Shropshire Hills Shuttle 2014 Season

In 2014, we ran two Shuttle services, the Long Mynd & Stiperstones Shuttle (LM&S), and Castle Connect (CC). We did not run the Wenlock Wanderer as passenger numbers remained low in 2013, its second running year, and it was agreed to concentrate resources on the remaining two services.

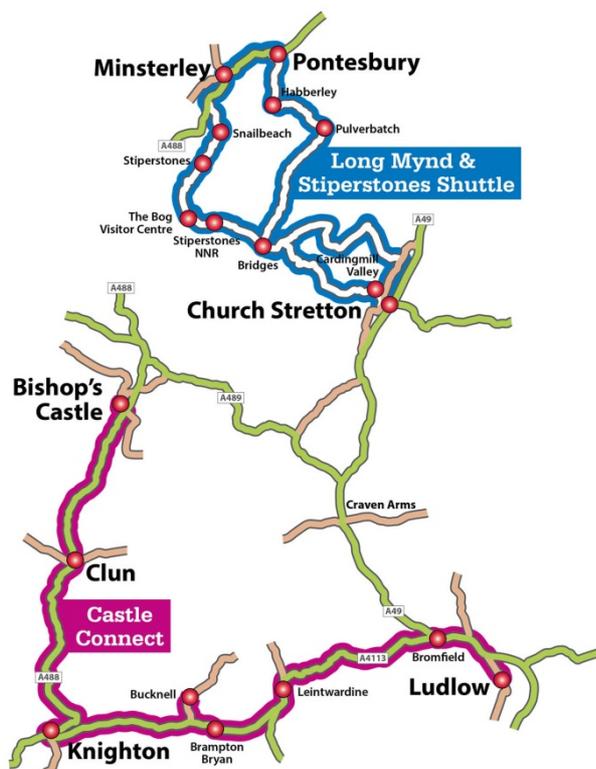
The 2014 Shuttle service ran from 19 April (Easter) to 28 September, every weekend and Bank Holiday Mondays (52 running days). **6,856 passenger journeys were made over the season.**

- **Long Mynd & Stiperstones Shuttle**

Two 16-seater minibuses are needed to maintain the hourly timetable on this figure of eight route (see above route map). With the loss of Shropshire Council Fleet Services, the private bus company Caradoc Coaches was contracted to run this service for the first time. As Caradoc Coaches is based close to Church Stretton, we lost the Shuttle connection from Shrewsbury at the beginning and end of the day, which had been in place for eight years. We also decided to trial both minibuses starting at the later time of 1010 from Church Stretton, to reduce the passenger overcrowding issues we have had at this time in the past.

- **Castle Connect**

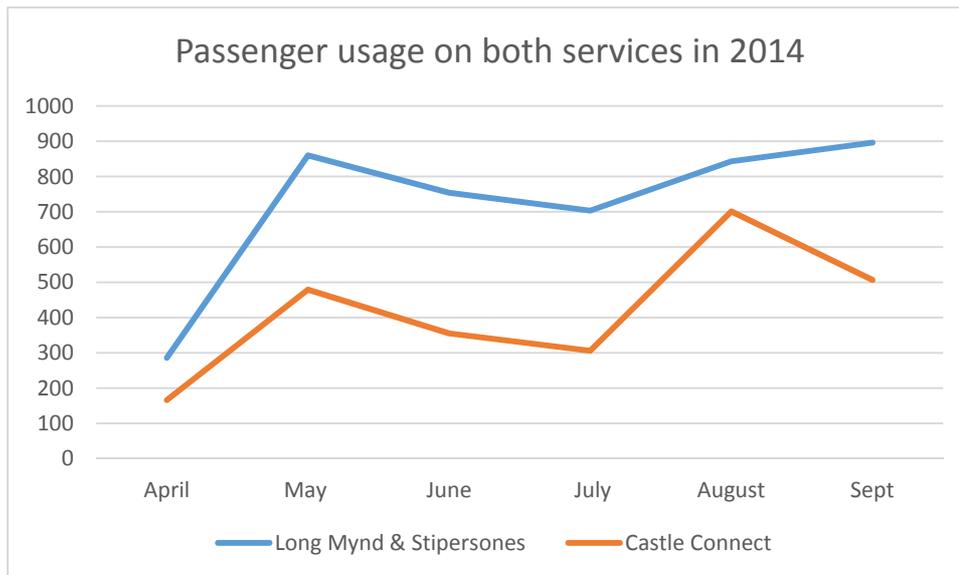
2014 was the second year for operating the Castle Connect service (see above map for route). As in 2013, M&J Travel ran the service on our behalf using a 33 seater coach. Changes were made to the timetable following feedback from passengers and drivers in 2013.



2014 Passenger Numbers

The table and graph below compares passenger numbers between the two services in 2014. Overall, passenger numbers in 2014 have been good. As can be seen, the Long Mynd & Stiperstones service has been fairly consistent over the season with monthly passenger numbers ranging in the 700 – 800s. Castle Connect passenger numbers took a dip in June and July, peaking in August with over 700 passengers and continuing with good number on board in September.

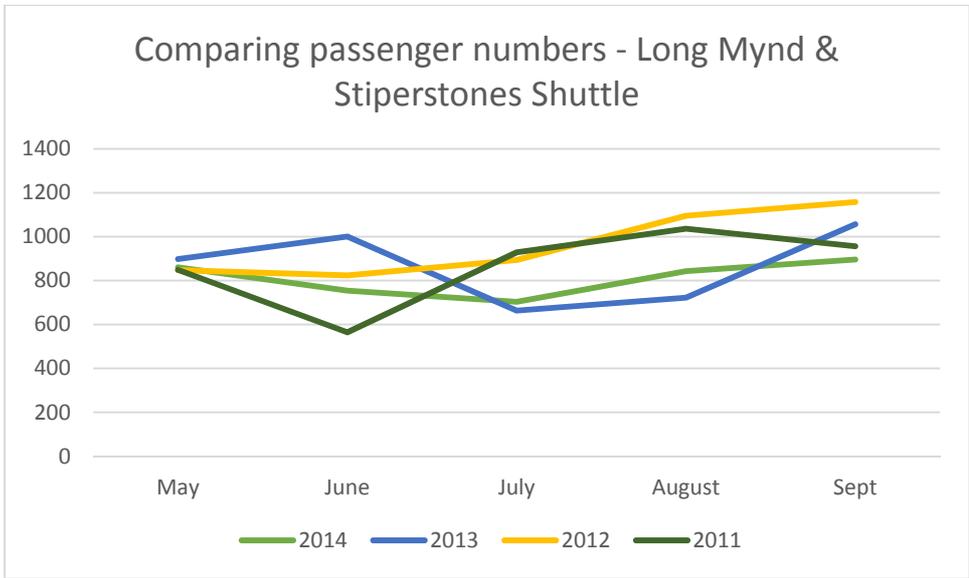
2014 - Passenger numbers	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	TOTAL
Long Mynd & Stiperstones	286	860	754	703	843	896	4342
Castle Connect	166	479	355	306	701	507	2514



- ### Long Mynd & Stiperstones Shuttles

4,342 passenger journeys were made on this service in 2014 and monthly passenger figures have been fairly consistent though out the season (700 – 800s). Passenger usage of this service is very similar to last year – see table and graph below for passenger number comparisons (May – Sept):

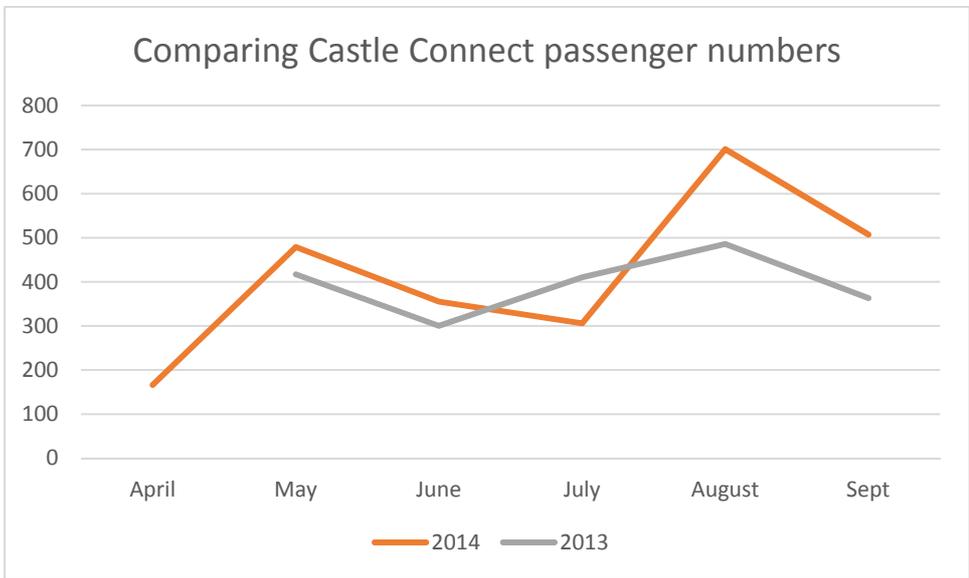
Year	Running days	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	TOTAL
2014	52	286	860	754	703	843	896	4,342
2013	48		898	1,001	663	722	1,057	4,341
2012	58		847	823	894	1,095	1,158	4,817
2011	52		849	564	929	1,036	956	4,334



- Castle Connect**

Passenger numbers increased by 400 in 2014, with 2,514 passenger journeys made on Castle Connect. See table and graph below for passenger number comparisons with 2013 (May – Sept):

Year	Running days	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	TOTAL (May-Sept)
2014	52	166	479	355	306	701	507	2,514
2013	48		417	300	410	486	363	1,976



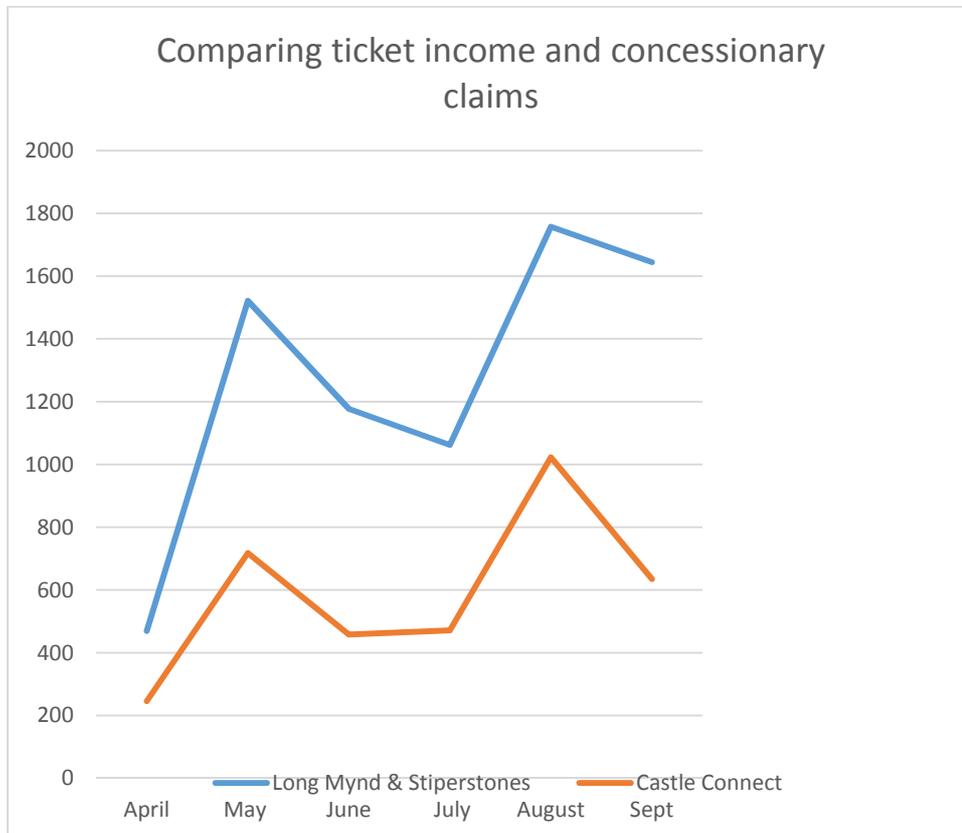
2014 Ticket Sales

Following feedback from 2013, the ticket pricing was reviewed before the start of the season and some changes made to single ticket pricing and children fares. The fare stages were inputted into the ticket machines, making it easier for the drivers to manage ticketing.

The Shuttle service qualifies for the use of concessionary bus passes. Passes are recorded by the driver through the ticket machine and claims are made to the respective Councils (Shropshire, Herefordshire and Powys).

The table and graph below show the comparative ticket income and concessionary claims for both services.

2014 - Ticket income & concessionary claims	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	TOTAL
Long Mynd & Stiperstones	£469.79	£1,520.97	£1,176.92	£1,062.15	£1,757.16	£1,644.27	£7,631.26
Castle Connect	£246.02	£717.54	£458.09	£470.85	£1,023.08	£634.85	£3,550.43



Taking the concessionary fare income into account, along with ticket sales, the subsidy per passenger is as follows:

2014	Ticket income	Concessionary Fare compensation	Total income	Cost of service	Cost of service - income	No of passengers	Cost / passenger
Long Mynd & Stiperstones	£ 3,267.3	£ 4,363.86	£ 7,631.16	£ 21,840	£ 14,209.16	4,342	£ 3.27
Castle Connect	£ 1,169.9	£ 2,380.53	£ 3,550.43	£ 12,480	£ 8,930.43	2,514	£ 3.55
TOTAL	£ 4,437.4	£ 6,744.39	£ 11,181.79	£ 34,320	£ 23,139.59	6,856	£ 3.38

2014 Budget

EXPENDITURE		INCOME	
Description	Amount (net)	Description	Amount
Long Mynd & Stiperstones bus	£ 21,840.00	Long Mynd & Stiperstones ticket income	£ 3,267.30
Castle Connect bus	£ 12,480.00	Castle Connect ticket income	£ 1,170.10
Miscellaneous running costs	£ 1,381.89	Long Mynd & Stiperstones concession income	£ 4,363.86
Promotion for 2015 (cf £1,348 for 2014)	£ 1,500.00	Castle Connect concession income	£ 2,380.53
Management fee (5%)	£ 1,852.00	Natural England Contribution 2014	£ 5,000.00
		Church Stretton Area Tourism Group Contribution 2014	£ 500.00
		National Trust Contribution 2014	£ 5,000.00
		Local Sustainable Transport Fund	£ 17,372.10
TOTAL:	£ 39,053.89	TOTAL:	£ 39,053.89

Total ticket income £ 4,437.40
 Total concessions £ 6,744.39

Breakdown of miscellaneous Costs:

Ticket Machine £ 1,209.00
 Cash box £ 22.44
 Room hire & catering £ 67.00
 Return of Ticket Machine £ 8.45
 Ticket Machine repair £ 45.00
 Paycell Rolls £ 30.00
£ 1,381.89

2014 Promotion

- 30,000 copies of the timetables were printed, one for Long Mynd & Stiperstones and one for Castle Connect.
- A3 timetable posters for the Shuttle bus stops were produced and put up along the routes.
- Shuttle posters were distributed locally and shuttle bus banners were placed in each vehicle.
- Shuttle website was updated and ongoing promotion of the service through twitter and Facebook, and through www.travelshropshire.co.uk
- Two Shuttle Roadshows helped to promote the start of the season.
- Press releases and articles were written and sent to local newspapers, newsletters and magazines.
- Presentation on the Shuttle service was given to BUS (Bus Users Shropshire) AGM in April.

Management

The Shuttles are managed by the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership, hosted by Shropshire Council. The Shropshire Hills Shuttle Steering Group is made up of partner representatives with a particular interest in the service. Membership is:

- Les Lumsdon, Consultant in Transport and Tourism
- Simon Cooter, Senior Warden, Stiperstones NNR, Natural England
- Peter Carty, South Shropshire, National Trust
- Matt Johnson, Senior Public Transport Officer, Shropshire Council
- Stephanie Hayes, Promotions Officer, Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership
- Clare Fildes, Development Officer, Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership (left post June 2014)

The Steering Group advise on management and delivery of the service.

The Shuttles service is tendered at least every three years. Caradoc Coaches were awarded the contract to operate the Long Mynd & Stiperstones Shuttle in 2014, and M & J Travel continued their contract to run Castle Connect.

A meeting was arranged with the drivers at the end of the season to get feedback and address any issues raised.

Plans for 2015

The Shuttles continue to be supported by the Local Sustainable Transport Fund in 2015, and by Shropshire Council, Natural England, National Trust and the Church Stretton Area Tourism Group. The funding is in place to operate the Long Mynd & Stiperstones Shuttle and Castle Connect in 2015 and 2016.

The Shuttle service will start on Saturday 2 May 2015, running every weekend and Bank Holiday Mondays until the end of September (47 running days) for the Long Mynd & Stiperstones. The Castle Connect will run until 4 October in support of the Clun Beer Festival. The bus companies, M & J Travel and Caradoc Coaches, will continue to run the services on our behalf.

The Castle Connect will operate on the same timetable as 2013. A slight change will be made to the Long Mynd & Stiperstones start time, allowing the first bus to depart at 0950. This will extend its journey to the Stiperstones NNR before heading back to Bridges to continue the hourly circuit. The second bus will start at 1010 from Carding Mill Valley.

Ludlow 21 will be supporting the Castle Connect in 2015, promoting the service from Ludlow and encouraging group use.

2015 Promotion

Our focus for 2015 is to increase promotion of the service targeting specific groups of users and potential users in specific locations, as well as having more of a presence in key places. Feedback from the drivers has identified there is much more potential to connect with people in Ludlow, as well as people travelling into Ludlow socially.

Additional funds of £2,800 have been secured from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund in order to help support the additional promotional activity.

The list below highlights the media/activity proposed:

- Pop-up banner stands to be used in key locations, libraries, town halls, visitor centres etc – such as Ludlow Bishops Castle Town Hall, Knighton Offa's Dyke Centre, SHDC, Cardingmill Valley Tea Rooms and Youth Hostels.
- Pop-up banner stand and flyers promoting the service for use in a series of roadshows to promote the service (especially CC) throughout the season
- Poster-sized promo panels at Shrewsbury, Ludlow, Church Stretton and Craven Arms railway stations
Promotion in local print including Shropshire Hills Tourism Accommodation and Events Guide, Ludlow and Walkers are Welcome
- Increased web presence and greater use of social media – especially through Twitter. Including if possible the use of 'managed' QR codes allowing us to track use at various locations..
- Design, Print and distribution of 14,000 timetable leaflets for each service including a tear-off feedback page with free-post licence
- Promotion at the Tourist Information Centre Volunteer Day 4 March
- Promotion at the Shropshire Hills & Ludlow Swap Shop 25 March at Acton Scott HWF
Other promotional opportunities and repeated activity throughout the season

Conclusion

The Shropshire Hills Shuttles remain a valuable service to visitors and locals alike. Below is feedback from some of our passengers this year.

PASSENGER FEEDBACK 13/08/14

*"I have just returned from a visit to Clun where I was working as a volunteer warden at the Youth Hostel and then stayed on to go walking in the area. Can I say what a wonderful and beautiful area it is and how much I enjoyed my visit. I particularly wanted to thank you for the Shuttle bus service which I used as much as possible. I don't have a car and try to use public transport as much as possible to reduce my carbon emissions.
With many thanks, Rachel Platt"*

PASSENGER FEEDBACK 19/08/14

*"I just wanted to take a moment to thank you, warmly, for the Shropshire Hills Shuttle Service: not only for offering such an invaluable service, but for the manner in which it was delivered.
The punctual, professional service enabled a very enjoyable day's hill walking, for which we are grateful. But over and above that, the friendly feel on the bus, the fact that the drivers pointed out local landmarks, and that they were concerned to make the journey interesting far exceeded the norm, and made the whole day memorable.
Thank you". Mark*

PASSENGER FEEDBACK 08/10/14

"I'm not sure who I should send this to but I just wanted to say how brilliant the Castle Shuttle service has been over this summer – reliable, friendly, comfortable, safe, always punctual – have used it on several occasions and it's great to have the link made between Bishops Castle, Knighton & Ludlow since there is simply nothing otherwise for the rest of the year. A gentleman from Clun who cannot drive due to vertigo had been using the service and said to me how sorry he was it would be stopping for the winter since it was his means of going shopping now. It would be a great idea if next year there were some feedback forms on the buses that travellers could be encouraged to fill out and give in, to encourage the continuation of the service next year?" Sarah Jameson