

COACH SURVEY JANUARY 2022

Thank you to everyone who completed the survey, all responses have been discussed, and suggestions will be implemented if feasible.

There were a number of positive comments, including:

Good value
More convenient
Can have a drink as not having to drive
Quicker than public transport
Drops off at the ground
Stress free travel

The Supporters Club committee has discussed suggestions made in the survey. Here are our responses...

Cost – The Club will actively help in finding some funding to help with the coach hire costs. The Supporters' Club do not aim to make a profit from the away travel, and already subsidises the coach costs up to £100 per trip. There is a sliding scale of fares once the coach cost has been covered.

Certainty Coach Will Run – We appreciate that train tickets are cheaper if purchased in advance. We will announce at the start of the season those trips where a coach will not be running, together with details of coaches that we will try to run. However, we need supporters to commit to each trip as early as possible so that we can confirm/cancel a coach well ahead of fixtures.

Make a Day Out of Trip – Depending on fixture and date we will consider a full day trip as previously run to Weymouth and Torquay. We will also consider earlier departure times to some fixtures to give supporters time in city/town centres for sightseeing, going to a pub or getting food.

Currently we aim to arrive at grounds by 1.30, this gives us some leeway for traffic holdups, but also gives supporters some time before matches to get a drink or food. We will always drop supporters near a pub or town/city centre if convenient for the coach.

Can't Drink Alcohol on the Coach - There are regulations regarding alcohol on football supporters' coaches. Coach companies also set their own hire conditions, and for the comfort of travellers the Supporters' Club is not in favour.

Other Coach Companies are Cheaper – The Supporters' Club recently asked other coach companies to quote. Some refuse to take football supporters. Some trips might have been cheaper, but over a whole season there was very little in the costs. We get a very good service from Berkeley's, other coach companies would charge full cost if a trip had to be cancelled (ie due to a postponement).

Wearing Face Covering and other Covid Restrictions – We follow Government regulations and advice. We appreciate some people are unable, or unwilling, to wear a face covering, but the safety and wellbeing of our supporters is important. Some supporters will not travel if face coverings aren't worn.

More Time After the Game – We appreciate some people enjoy an after-match drink and maybe a chance to meet the players. We frequently ask our regular away supporters for their preferred departure time, and the majority prefer to leave soon after the final whistle.

Some journeys are quite long and people like to get back home as early as possible. The driver's hours also have to be taken into consideration.

People Who Run the Coaches – We are all volunteers, organising coaches can be time consuming. We would welcome any offers of help, or even to join the Supporters' Club committee.

Could Pick Up Points be Amended to Save Time and Suit New Fanbase - We have added a pick-up outside Sainsbury's for those supporters based near the city centre. We will always try to arrange alternative pick-up points provided they are en route.

Pick up in Bradford-on-Avon, Trowbridge – Unfortunately this isn't practical for the majority of trips where we travel along the M4. However, should there be any fixtures south of Bath we will look at a suitable pick-up in that area.

Pick up Exiles En Route to Games - This could certainly be arranged, but might be difficult to give a time or meeting point depending on traffic delays or detours on the day. Please contact the coach organiser to discuss.

Away Travel Scheme – We will be looking into how we could implement a match bundle ticket, but we would need enough supporters to commit to coach travel to ensure coaches will run.

Pub Stop En Route – Something we will look into for some trips. We do stop at Beaconsfield Services where there is a Wetherspoons when travelling north of London.

No Incentive for One-Off Travel if not a Supporters Club Member - Not necessary to join the Supporters' Club to be able to use the coach, but we offer a £4 reduction as a membership perk. We will look into allowing members to bring a guest at the members reduced fare for 1 trip.

Flat Rate for All, No Concession Rate – This has been considered in the past, but the vote of our members has been split. Anyone is welcome to pay the additional £2 as a donation.

Having to Walk from Lower Bristol Road to Twerton Park on Return – We no longer do this; the coach always goes back to Twerton Park.

Maximum Price for All Trips, say £25 – A good idea, but we would need enough supporters to commit to using the coaches for all games so that any profit on some trips used to offset losses on others.

No Shows Should Pay – This would not be easy to implement without taking pre-payment or a deposit. Something we could look into using is online banking.

Smaller Coach for Less Popular Trips – The hire cost of a smaller coach (minibus) isn't cost effective as the driver's hours would be the same. Some supporters will not travel on a small coach, so we would still struggle to take enough bookings.

Coach Not Well Advertised - Trips are advertised on social media (and retweeted/liked by the Club), Supporters' Club website, matchday programme, members emails, the Club's weekly newsletter, posters in bars and in the ground, and announcements at home games. Social media will now explain where the Supporters' Club HQ is (which has a sign outside). The Coach Organiser's email is also well publicised. Any other suggestions welcomed.