



Citizens Advice gave advice in response to almost 5.75 million questions last year; they were asked by almost 2 million clients. So we think that we have a remarkable view of what is worrying people.

Some of our cases end “happy ever after” - but not all. Part of our role is to identify the cases that don’t. In the Sedgemoor office, this is my role. When people say “Something’s got to be done about it...” they mean for me to do it. The correct expression is Research & Campaigns. “Troublemaker” also works.

Sedgemoor contributes to a Rural Issues Group of 157 bureaux.

In 2015, that group started to think about what is bothering rural people. I expected it to be Affordable Housing, but Transport came out head and shoulders above the rest. 62% of people responding to our survey prioritised Transport. Housing came second and availability of broadband came third.

By Transport, people mean bus services.

A few weeks ago we published a report containing the facts of the matter and a wealth of case studies.

*Rural bus services are under used and uneconomic. For most of us, when the bus is a problem, we jump in the car. But there were still 2.21 billion bus journeys outside London in the 15-16 year.*

Nationally about 25% of people don’t have a car. Many of these are older people or younger people or disabled – to a fair extent, they are the vulnerable people.

They would use a bus

- To get to work
- To the doctor or the hospital
- To get to shops, post offices and banks – in a time when small post offices and banks are closing
- To get to school/college
- To get to the job centre and interviews for benefits
- To obtain Advice or to get to a foodbank
- Some simply catch the bus to mitigate a sense of isolation.

What are they complaining about ?

- There are many localities in which there is simply no bus service.
- Where there is a service, it often costs too much.
- Country Buses are not always reliable - they often run late or not at all.

- Buses are often not timely. Some arrive after work/school starts. Some are not daily – perhaps they arrive one day and depart the next. Or perhaps they arrive and depart so quickly that there is no time for the doctor's appointment.

Alternatives like walking, cycling and taxis are less likely to be realistic in rural areas.

And this situation gets worse every year.

*One of our clients M reported that he will walk the 24 mile round trip to attend the initial meeting to receive Universal Credit as he is desperate.*

This problem has a wider effect on the economy, as well as on congestion and the environment.

We believe that bus services should be available to all – particularly those who are disadvantaged.

And they must be reliable, cost effective and timely.

We are campaigning

- To raise awareness
- To encourage the development, support and publication of Community Transport Schemes
- To encourage any measures to improve this desperate situation.

(Mention the concept of Total Transport).