



Bassetlaw Integrated Care Partnership Transport Work Stream “Transport and Wellbeing Engagement with the Community” (Focus: Mattersey Thorpe and Tuxford)

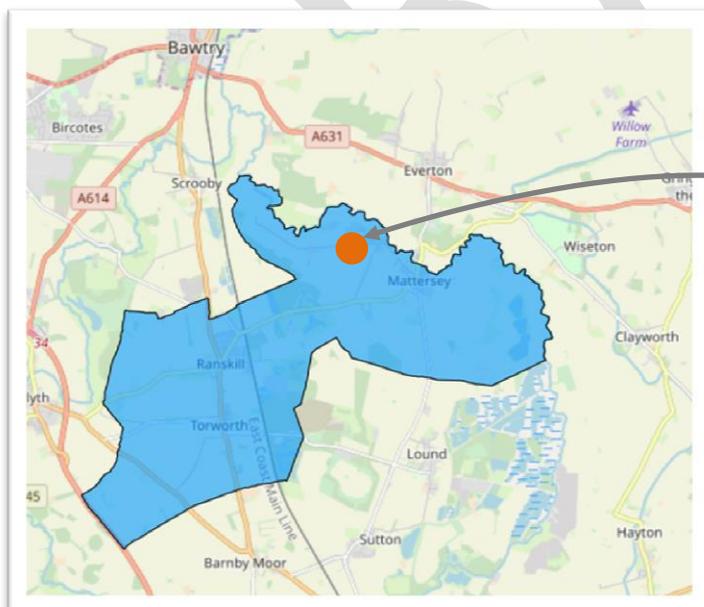
1. Introduction

Bassetlaw partners from across the NHS, local government, third sector and beyond recognise that the determinants of health lie predominantly outside traditional health services and that a more integrated approach towards creating the conditions in which the wellbeing of Bassetlaw people can be optimised is a priority locally.

Transport is one of the top three priorities for improving health and wellbeing in the Bassetlaw place.

To better understand transport issues, and engage communities in improving their connectedness to social networks, work and services, the ICP’s transport work stream opted to focus on two communities to explore issues in detail and challenge assumptions about transport needs, options and availability. These were Mattersey Thorpe and Tuxford. Teams from the NHS, ICP and Nottinghamshire County Council went to these villages on two separate days in December to better understand the experiences of those living in the two communities and how transport relates to this.

2. The findings from Mattersey Thorpe

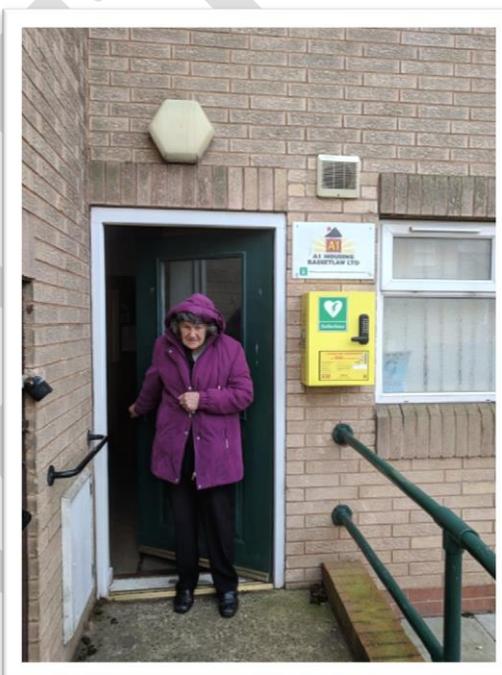


The village of Mattersey Thorpe

2.1 The people in Mattersey Thorpe

The team spoke to the following people who are living in the village:

- Retired lady who has lived in the village since 1962 and coordinates the 'Community House'
- 5 young mums doing the school run;
- Retired man, who used to be the chair of the tenants and residents association (TRA), lived in the village for 70 years
- Man in his thirties, lives with partner and children having moved from the North East 3 years ago, has fibromyalgia and no longer works;
- Woman in her 40s with two teenage children, one with special needs and one at post 16 provision in Retford who works in Doncaster;
- Two locals at a bus stop – one man in his 70s with a heart complaint who is the local paper boy, and a woman, also in her 70s, who used to run the TRA
- A working age man returning from a night shift.



2.2 About Mattersey Thorpe

Mattersey, made up of two linked communities of Mattersey and Mattersey Thorpe, is a village in Nottinghamshire, England. It is located about 6 miles north of Retford and sits close to the border of Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire, being just under 13 miles from Doncaster. According to the 2001 census it had a population of 779, increasing to 792 at the 2011 Census. Located in the ward of Ranskill, 11% of residents do not have a car or van, the area is rural and sparsely populated, 26% of local people are over 65, 36% are economically inactive and 6% view their health as bad or very bad. As such, it was assumed that there may be a risk that the wellbeing of people in this community could be affected by transport or social isolation issues. There is no shop, pub, health centre or other business in Mattersey Thorpe, although there is a small shop and a primary school in Mattersey, about 0.7 miles from the centre of Mattersey Thorpe.

2.3 Engagement Results and Insights

There are very low levels of social isolation in Mattersey Thorpe as the community is close, villagers know each other well, and look out for each other. As one villager stated, 'we all just muck in'. The centre of the community is the 'community house' co-ordinated by the TRA, which provides a hub, regular activities such as bingo, youth club, Christmas and summer fayres and an access point for social housing services, all of which span generations. The locals we spoke to describe the village as being their main social network. Newcomers are welcomed, as described by two recent arrivals to the village both of whom have rapidly become part of the TRA. There is an active parish council which coordinates local communications and a number of events¹. **Whilst the village may be geographically remote, its residents are well connected, with high levels of social capital.**

For those without a car, the main source of transport is the bus, the routes and times of which local people know well, as there are only about 6 buses a day. The main bus destination for the villagers is Retford, which is the nearest main shopping and facilities destination. Secondary age children feed in to the Elizabethan Academy in Retford. **The buses are well used, most people felt confident in using the bus, however, there was limited confidence in the bus services due to reliability issues.** Bus times are limited – the route to Retford takes 40 minutes. The 9.50am bus arrives at 10.30am, and the next return to Mattersey is at 12.30 or 15.30. The 14.30 stops in Sutton, which is a frustration as this would be a convenient time for many, and it is not understood why the bus can't take a small detour to include Mattersey. Multiple locals complained that when there is a problem on any route or with any vehicle in the fleet, theirs' is the first service to be cancelled, with some people having been asked to disembark from a bus in Retford as it had been cancelled. There used to be a free bus to Gainsborough on a Wednesday, provided by Tesco, but this has now stopped and is missed, as many used it for social outings.

¹ <http://www.matterseypc.co.uk/>



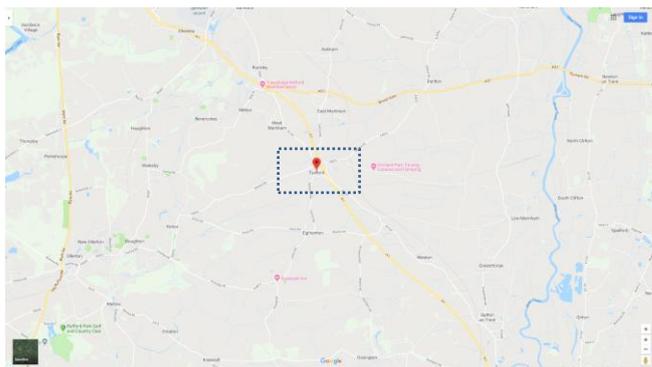
For primary care services, **most residents are registered with practices in Retford, and at Misterton.** Misterton is not accessible by bus from Mattersey so only viable for patients with a car, or other means of transport. Appointments in Retford can be difficult, given the limited window enabled by bus routes, and the cost of the bus is £5.50 return, which is a significant cost for households on low incomes. Most of those we spoke to did not know that Misterton was now part of Riverside, and some said going to Retford would be more convenient, given the lack of buses to Misterton. All we spoke to were **in favour of services like 'Ask my GP', or telephone based appointments,** but were not aware that these were possible. For hospital

services, local people identified that it was possible to get to Bassetlaw hospital by bus, but that it was not straightforward, and **they did not know how to access information** about which buses to take. Only one of those we spoke to had heard of the Bassetlaw Action Centre community car scheme.

Many people described other villagers helping out with lifts where there were no other transport options, and this theme of **the community supporting itself** was apparent throughout all of the conversations. One villager described how there hadn't been a police car in the village in years, as there was no need. The villagers look out for each other. However, there is a concern that residents in newer houses developing in the area wouldn't want to integrate into 'the village', although they would be welcome to.

Villagers are **increasingly using online services for shopping** – in particular Asda and Iceland in Retford deliver to the village, and these are favoured by the younger families.

3. The findings from Tuxford



3.1 The people in Tuxford

The team interviewed several people in the local Co-Operative store and talked to users at the local GP surgery.

Of those 26 members of the public approached in the Co-Op, 13 were aged between 19 and 64, one was under 18 and 9 were over 65. Three participants did not disclose their age. In terms of their place of residence, 13 were from Tuxford itself, whilst the remainder were from villages in the triangle between Retford, Ollerton and Newark. Very little information about the people themselves was disclosed, as they were all in a hurry to gather their shopping and leave. The information gleaned from these contacts was varied in its detail and usually quite minimal.

3.2 About Tuxford

Tuxford is a village and a civil parish on the southern edge of the Bassetlaw district of Nottinghamshire, England. It may also be considered a small town as it was historically a market town. At the 2001 census, it had a population of 2,516, increasing to 2,649 at the 2011 census. Nearby larger towns are Retford and Newark-on-Trent. The Great North Road runs through the village (now B1164), though the majority of traffic now uses the modern A1 trunk road, which splits the village in two. The village was bypassed in July 1967. The A6075 passes through east–west and connects the A57 to Ollerton and Mansfield. The East Coast Main Line passes close to the east. The A611 previously went east–west through the village; this is now the A6075; the A611 now goes from Mansfield to Hucknall.



The population of Tuxford as a whole is older than the national average. The population of Tuxford is also older than the Nottinghamshire average, making Tuxford an older persons' location. 28.5% of Tuxford residents have no formal qualifications, almost 6% higher than the national average. As a result, Tuxford has 20% less Higher and Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional households than the national average. At 12.9%, the amount of council rented

housing is more than 3% higher than the national average. The percentage of residents in Tuxford rating their health as 'very good' is less than the national average. Also the percentage of residents in Tuxford rating their health as 'very bad' is more than the national average, suggesting that the health of the residents of Tuxford is generally worse than in the average person in England. (All statistics National Census data 2011).

In terms of amenities, there is a Co-op on Newcastle Street in addition to three village pubs. There is a parish church and the local windmill is a visitor attraction throughout the year, except Tuesdays. Tuxford has an 11-16 Academy, four youth football teams and is known for being the birthplace of local footballer Craig Disley.

Well connected to the road network, Tuxford used to have three railway stations, as well as serving as a major junction for three railway companies, but these had all closed by the end of the 1950s. The former Lancashire, Derbyshire and East Coast Railway line is now used by Network Rail for high speed testing.

3.3 Engagement Results and Insights

Those engaged by the team at the Co-Operative had little to no knowledge of bus travel in and out of Tuxford, and **little interest in relying on it**. This was reinforced through conversations with the practice patients, who relied on other means of transport to get to the surgery as **only 3 buses per day** run past the practice. Of those interviewed, **only 2 had walked** into Tuxford. The others had **used a car**, either their own or through a family member. Buses **rarely ran after 6pm and never on a Sunday or bank holiday** so it was easier for residents to plan their journeys using a private car.

Several felt that without a car, **life would be very different and even difficult**, as the lack of buses limited them to the immediate environment of Tuxford. It was **not possible to travel directly to Bassetlaw Hospital on the bus**, which then presented patients with the issue of parking, which can be problematic on occasions, particularly at times when clinics are running. There were also problems for patients getting to Nottingham for treatment, although Newark hospital was not discussed. Equally, one gentleman would have taken a job in Nottingham, but **the bus times made it impossible** for him and he didn't drive.

Like Mattersey Thorpe, residents are **increasingly using online shopping** as a way of doing their transactions, as it is easier to manage.

Others **complained of the distance from bus stops to places** they needed to reach (e.g. GP surgery), which meant that using the bus just wasn't practical. Despite an hourly service from Sutton, the bus stops were not in accessible locations when users had limited mobility.

Generally, participants **demonstrated little or no interest in the topic**. At the GP surgery, a noticeboard contained information regarding both the Dial a Trip and Bassetlaw Action centre, but these were obscured by other notices and people regarded the **information as being "too crowded"** and so they didn't bother reading it. **Tuxford residents were generally accepting of transport**

challenges, and a lot of users at both the Co-Op and the GP surgery **had developed their own solutions** (usually involving their own or a friend's car).

Yet despite these perceived problems with transport, only one respondent regarded themselves as “not at all” independent.

4. Recommendations and actions

The following considerations and actions have emerged:

- a. Social inclusion and social capital in Mattersey Thorpe is incredibly strong, and as a result the village is very resourceful and self-supporting – given its size and existing network of ‘lift’ arrangements, the addition of a dedicated community car scheme would be unlikely to add value;
- b. Mattersey Thorpe is relatively well served by buses for a small rural community – in an ideal world, residents would prefer more buses, greater frequency, and evenings, but everyone to whom we spoke make their journey to work with the services that are available and by pulling together;
- c. Some small changes to the bus arrangements could make a big difference, such as the timings of the buses, exploring whether the 14.30 could extend its route to Mattersey, and challenging Stagecoach about route cancellations and duty of care to passengers. There may be the potential to extend a community bus scheme from a neighbouring village;
- d. Information about transport is an opportunity to improve the experience of villagers, such as an online single point of access to information about routes, fares and community car schemes – information shared in the community house/ TRA is most likely to reach a wider audience;
- e. More villagers would use services like ‘ask my GP’, and may were not aware of the ability to request a telephone consultation, rather than attend in person – practices could make use of this for patients living in rural communities by promoting this via the community house and parish council;
- f. The Mattersey Thorpe community could develop its own commissioned bus, for example to Retford market day, at low cost to each participant;
- g. Bus services in Bassetlaw are already heavily subsidised by the county council (without which they would be withdrawn) and therefore schemes such as village car shares could be promoted, like the one in Mattersey Thorpe, more widely to other villages in the Bassetlaw area, particularly to the east of the region;
- h. Better communications around Dial a Trip and Bassetlaw Action Centre as well as community schemes in general (such as Ranskill’s community link to Harworth) would help spread the word and raise general awareness for residents;
- i. Better information about existing services, to dispel the myths around public transport (e.g. inaccuracies in knowledge of Tuxford residents about their bus services);
- j. Better information around connections as well as centralised ticketing, with the ability to carry a ticket from one carrier to another when making a connection, could make a real difference to existing journeys;
- k. Education sessions for Bassetlaw residents could help inform and improve understanding of alternatives. Is car travel really the better option? (This was apparent particularly in Tuxford where several residents were unaware of alternatives and subsidised travel options);

- l. The county council is in the process of developing a one-stop website to help plan travel across the region, using a similar concept to Trivago, and therefore in the medium to long term this could help with the understanding of alternative travel methods;
- m. Better promotion of the Phone-a-Bus 190 service (which connects 18 villages), perhaps through GP surgeries and as part of social prescribing;
- n. Conventional bus timetables are increasingly anachronistic in rural areas – the longer term future may be to have one bus performing multiple functions throughout the week, serving different villages according to demand (e.g. market days), whilst at the same time reducing overhead cost to the company;
- o. Lincolnshire council have improved bus performance through having a main route which is fed by several minor bus routes, so that passengers are delivered to stop points along the main route rather than to specific destinations. (This already happens to a minor degree in Bassetlaw, where the Tuxford – Retford bus connects with the bus to Bassetlaw Hospital from Retford bus station, but could be rolled out further after investigation of the possible routes which it would benefit);
- p. Turn away from the concept of serving the commuter in rural areas and concentrate on supporting the social/shopping/health-related passenger;
- q. *Consider (following the success of the Robin Hood line) whether railways can play a role within the region, given the government's recent announcement regarding supporting re-opening stations or trunk routes to relieve congestion on the existing system;*
- r. Engage further with local businesses to address apathy around car share schemes and subsidised bus travel;
- s. Encourage users, through better linkage and information, to abandon their cars for short portions of their route, reducing pressure on parking.