

Festive Cheer with Free Bus Travel in West Berkshire this Christmas!

Get ready for a jolly holiday season filled with free bus travel in West Berkshire! This year, we're again excited to announce a fantastic opportunity for residents to embrace the festive spirit without worrying about transport costs.

For a series of Saturdays in November and December, all bus journeys within West Berkshire will be FREE, providing an excellent chance to explore and enjoy various seasonal events and activities in the run up to Christmas!

Mark your calendars for these special days:

- Saturday 16 December 2023: Head to the vibrant [Newbury Christmas Artisan Market](#)
- Saturday 23 December 2023: Dive into the last weekend of Christmas shopping or [steam into Christmas at Didcot Railway Centre](#) and help Santa find his missing reindeer!

On these Saturdays, you can travel all day, any time, completely FREE (do check the timetables) within West Berkshire. It's the perfect opportunity to shop for gifts, enjoy in the festive lights, catch the panto at the [Corn Exchange](#), dine at local eateries, embrace the scenery, or spread the holiday cheer with pre-Christmas visits to family and friends.

We have worked in partnership with our bus operators [Reading Buses](#), [Newbury & District](#), [Thames Travel](#), and [Stagecoach](#), along with the Council's [Connect buses](#), to bring you this initiative over the festive period. Don't forget, Concessionary Bus Passes are welcome as usual.

But that's not all! Free travel extends beyond West Berkshire to our neighbouring areas such as Reading, Basingstoke, and Swindon. If you start your journey in West

Berkshire, your return journey is also FREE! But you need to request a return ticket from the driver when boarding to take advantage of this offer.

Cllr Denise Gaines, Executive Member for Highways, Housing, and Sustainable Travel at West Berkshire Council, expressed excitement, saying, "We're delighted to offer free bus travel to residents again, both within and beyond West Berkshire.

"As we navigate the cost of living crisis, this gesture not only eases travel expenses but also reduces our carbon footprint. By filling our roads with fewer cars, we aim to boost footfall in local towns and villages to enjoy all the activities taking place and support our local businesses during these challenging times."

Robert Williams, CEO of Reading Buses, said: "We are delighted to be working with West Berkshire Council to highlight the many journeys that are possible using the local bus network, and to be supporting local businesses in an environmentally sustainable way through this free travel offer."

Prepare to spread festive joy without worrying about transport costs! Hop aboard and make the most of these free travel days this holiday season.

The full list of routes is as follows:

Public bus services that operate entirely within West Berkshire:

Route Number	Operator	Destination
1a/1c/1e	Newbury & District	Newbury to Thatcham
2	Newbury & District	Newbury to Wash Common/Tesco
3	Newbury & District	Newbury to Hungerford
4	Newbury & District	Newbury to Lambourn
6/6a	Newbury & District	Newbury to East/West Ilsley
8	Newbury & District	Newbury to Tesco, Greenham, and Pigeons Farm
9	Newbury & District	Newbury to Racecourse

The following routes will offer free bus travel in West Berkshire, whatever the destination. Should you travel beyond the West Berkshire boundary, the return journey back to West Berkshire will be free.

Route	Operator	Destination
The LINK	Stagecoach South	Newbury to Basingstoke
Jet Black 1	Reading Buses	Newbury to Reading
Lime 2/2a	Reading Buses	Mortimer/Burghfield to Reading
7/7a	Stagecoach South	Andover/Burghclere to Newbury
Sky Blue 15	Reading Buses	Theale/Calcot to Reading
Sky Blue 16	Reading Buses	Purley on Thames to Reading
Yellow 26	Reading Buses	Calcot to Reading
Royal Blue 33	Reading Buses	Turnham's Farm to Reading
X34	Thames Travel	Newbury to Harwell Campus/Didcot
47	WBC Connect	Lambourn to Swindon
143	Thames Travel	Upper Basildon to Reading

This initiative has been made possible by funding from HM Government, given to West Berkshire Council after submission of a [**Bus Service Improvement Plan \(BSIP\)**](#) in October 2021.