

Coach Friendly Status for Malmesbury Report

In 2015 some work was done by the Town Team and one of our Town Councilors on how Malmesbury would acquire Coach Friendly Status. The Confederation of Passenger Transport give out this status if a Town applies and meets their criteria. Any town acquiring the status will be listed on their transport website and can forward leaflets and maps that will be given to tour operators and coach drivers planning routes and tours.

The implications of this are that Coach Drivers who want to add Malmesbury to their tour or route will build a relationship with the TIC and call ahead to say they're going to stop. They will use the town as a pit-stop or a place to visit as part of a day trip or a destination base for a holiday in the area (which I don't think is likely in our case). The Coach will stop to drop people and go off to park or get a coach wash/clean and then pick up from the pick-up point.

The criteria we need to meet are:

- Rest facilities for drivers, or a scheme to support them
- Sufficient parking for coaches
- Signage that will guide coaches to the correct car park
- Access to coach cleaning facilities if possible
- The town has a coherent tourism strategy with walks and museums and places/activities of interest.

In 2015 a representative from the CPT visited Malmesbury and was impressed and couldn't see much work that needed doing.

Drivers need access to toilets every day of the week and because the Museum is open on Sunday during the hours that a coach driver would come, that's acceptable. We should really provide better access for the public outside those hours.

For refreshments, we could use a voucher scheme with some businesses, and we would foot the bill for that. If we do this we should agree a cut-off point where the business then starts to pay.

We could ask Andy of the Andy Bus co if drivers could wash their coaches there. Not sure if this would be expected for free or for a small charge.

In other towns small additions to signs have been produced so that where the correct carpark has been indicated and image of a coach has been stuck alongside it to identify that it's the coach park.

If we want to go ahead with this we need to do some work and I'd like to identify a working group.

- We need to collect data about coaches that visit the town already so that we can compare the impact of getting the status. (The first step of this is consultation.)
- We need to consult with businesses as to whether they want to participate in any scheme we come up with.
- We need to have a champion in the TIC that will build the relationship with coach drivers and meet the coach party with a handful of leaflets, etc.
- We need to make a plan

We could also apply for vale action funding to help with the cost of, for example, allocating a third coach space if it's deemed necessary or even a public toilet...