

Q&A re. the discontinuation of the match day shuttle bus service

The board of FC United recognises that the decision to stop running the match day shuttle bus service may be disappointing for some supporters and would therefore like to fully explain the reasoning behind this decision and answer what we anticipate will be some of the likely questions that supporters may have below.

Q1: Why is the club removing the free bus service now?

During the recent renegotiation of our brewery deal with Holts, it became clear that the free bus service presented logistical challenges for them in terms of running a reliable and punctual service. The heavy city centre traffic on Saturdays often caused delays to supporters as the bus would sometimes get stuck in traffic. Holts expressed a lack of appetite to continue running the service due to the administrative headache they faced as the club were regularly in contact requesting improvements in the service. As a result, the club made the decision to convert the funds earmarked for the bus service into additional sponsorship money for the club.

Q2: How will the long-term financial stability of the club be impacted by this additional sponsorship money?

The additional sponsorship money plays a significant role in securing the long-term financial stability of the club. By redirecting these funds to support various areas of the club's operations and initiatives, we can ensure a solid financial foundation that allows for continued growth, development, and improved services for all members. This financial stability is essential for the club's sustainability and the ability to provide a high-quality football experience for years to come.

Q3: How will the conversion of funds earmarked for the bus service into additional sponsorship benefit the club?

The conversion of funds earmarked for the bus service into additional sponsorship will provide the club with an additional £20,000 over the contract period. While it is regrettable that we won't have a free bus service, this additional sponsorship money is crucial in terms of ensuring the long-term financial stability of the club. These funds will be used to support various aspects of the club's operations, initiatives, and improvements for the benefit of all FC United members.

Q4: Why didn't the member consultation about the future of the bus service go ahead as previously communicated?

We apologise for the deviation from the original plan to consult members regarding the future of the bus service. The decision to remove the bus service was not made lightly, and we initially intended to consult members to explore potential funding options. However, during this process, it became increasingly evident that the club could not afford to sustain the service in the long term and the logistical challenges associated with running the service as a pay service, such as administration, payment collection, cash handling, safeguarding, and availability of staff and volunteering resources, proved to be significant obstacles that the club lacked the necessary resources to overcome.

Additionally, the club had to take into account the rising costs of travel, particularly in the context of the ongoing cost of living crisis. As the club strives to ensure its long-term financial stability, introducing a bus service that would potentially incur additional expenses was not a risk we felt we should undertake. It was essential to consider the available cheaper alternative travel options, such as public transport services and car sharing, that supporters can utilise to reach Broadhurst Park.

We understand that members may be concerned about the lack of consultation, and we regret any confusion caused. However, once it became evident that provision of the service through the club itself was not feasible, we made the decision to discontinue it. We did not want to

waste members' time or create false expectations by engaging with them on the continuation of the service when it was not a viable option. We assure you that this decision was made in the best interest of the club's long-term financial stability and to ensure that resources are allocated effectively to benefit the entire FC United community.

Q5: What would have been the anticipated costs of running a paid-for bus service?

Running a paid-for bus service would have incurred significant costs beyond the logistical difficulties mentioned earlier. These costs would have included expenses related to staff, insurance, and other operational overheads. When considering the limited passenger numbers and the challenges involved in providing a reliable and efficient service, it became apparent that the cost of running a paid-for bus service would likely exceed the cost of existing public transport options which offers cheap and frequent travel options to Broadhurst Park.

Q6: Did the club consider implementing a streamlined bus service as an alternative?

Yes, the club did consider the option of a streamlined bus service. However, after careful evaluation, it became evident that the same logistical challenges existed in terms of payment collection, administration, and the availability of staff and volunteers. Implementing a streamlined service would have required significant resources and coordination, which the club currently lacks.

Q7: Will the club support the development of a DIY bus scheme organised by members?

While the club cannot commit to running the bus service at this time, we are more than happy to encourage our own members to explore the possibility of developing a DIY bus scheme, similar to other fan-owner empowered initiatives. In fact, we have seen successful examples of fan-led initiatives for away travel, such as those organised by Pete Wharton and many others.

If any members are interested in volunteering to run a DIY bus service, we are willing to share information, contacts, and guidance to support their efforts. We understand the value of community-led initiatives and the positive impact they can have on matchday experiences. To facilitate this, we will actively promote any such service on our website and social media platforms to ensure widespread awareness and participation.

Q8: Why was the bus service originally provided by the club?

The bus service was originally provided by the club as part of the planning and highways conditions during the move to Broadhurst Park. The aim was to address potential parking issues and provide a convenient transportation option for supporters. Over time, the club has demonstrated to the local community that car parking is not a significant issue. With alternative transport options available and the absence of parking concerns, the decision was made to reallocate the resources previously used for the bus service to areas that will benefit all our members.

Q9: Will the club continue to monitor parking issues and address potential concerns in the future?

Yes, the club remains committed to monitoring and addressing any potential parking concerns that may arise in the future. While the bus service may no longer be provided, the club will continue to assess parking availability and explore alternative transportation options to ensure a smooth matchday experience for all supporters.

Q10: What alternative transport options are available for supporters now that the bus service has been removed?

Several alternative transport options are available for supporters to travel to Broadhurst Park on matchdays. These options include:

Bus: Supporters can utilise the 181 & 182 bus service from Piccadilly Gardens, which costs £2 per journey ([click here for timetable](#)). This service provides direct transportation to Broadhurst Park. Additionally, several other bus services from the city centre run along Moston Lane, which is a short walk from the ground([click here for timetable](#)).

Tram: The Newton Heath and Moston tram stop is approximately a 15-minute walk along St Mary's Road to Broadhurst Park. Supporters can use the tram system as a convenient and efficient means of transportation.

Train: Moston Railway Station is approximately a 20-minute walk along Hollinwood Avenue and Lightbowne Road to Broadhurst Park.

Car sharing: Supporters can consider car sharing with fellow fans to share travel costs and reduce the number of vehicles on matchday. Car sharing can be arranged through fan forums, social media groups, or coordinated efforts with friends and acquaintances.

Taxis: Sharing taxis with other supporters remains a viable option for those who prefer a direct and convenient mode of transport. By splitting the fare, supporters can minimise the cost and ensure a hassle-free journey to and from the ground.

In addition to these options, we hope that over time, walking and cycling will become attractive alternatives for supporters. We are keen to explore ways to encourage walking and cycling to the stadium, including the provision of secure bicycle parking facilities and promoting active travel initiatives. By embracing sustainable modes of transportation, we can reduce our carbon footprint and promote healthier lifestyles.

Q10: How can I provide feedback or ask further questions about this decision?

We encourage co-owners to reach out to the club with any feedback or questions regarding this decision. The board members are co-owners and volunteers and understand the disappointment felt by users of the bus service. Your input is valuable, and we are here to address any concerns or queries you may have. You can contact the office by calling 0161 769 2005, emailing office@fc-utd.uk , or speaking to us on a match day.