# Organising Coaches & Other Transport to Actions

## Introduction

Group transport to events and actions have many advantages. Much of the work and stress involved in travelling long distances can be eased for activists if they can just turn up to a coach pick up point and travel together. The feedback received from Local Groups shows that there is appreciation for building up the sense of shared purpose ahead of an action. Finally, where affordable, subsidising costs for people seeking to take part will make it even easier for commitments to be made.

Benefits of booking transport:

- Local Groups know their rebels and the community groups they are speaking to and can book transport specific to their needs.
- Local Groups can collaborate with other supporter organisations to travel together as part of alliance building.

To make arranging transport as easy as possible, XRUK has written this guide that will help Local Groups decide whether to book transport, how to do so, ticketing, best practice on the day, and what support is available from XRUK teams.

## The Basics

Before starting to book transport, you may need to build an accurate picture of the need and enthusiasm for travelling in a group for a particular event or action. Start by having conversations in your spaces and record those that would like to travel as a group, moving people towards firm commitments where possible: Drop a message in whatever messaging channel you use as a group and/or send out an email to your mailing list. Once you have determined the interest in your group and wider community connections, it’s time to look into the practicalities of financing transport.

Renting group transport can be quite an expensive cost to bear as a Local Group and, for all of the advantages listed in providing this service for the community and removing barriers to protest, it sometimes isn’t possible to do. XRUK don't have the funds to pay for coaches but you may get support from your Nation/Region for deposits.

This guide includes how to set up ticket sales to help you recoup costs but the priority for local groups is to plan within budget and this may sometimes mean grabbing a cheap ticket on a scheduled coach or train rather than hiring a coach.

# Booking Transport

## Shopping around

It is best to book transport well in advance to ensure availability so let's get started. The first thing you'll need to do is find transport providers. There are a number of options available to you:

- Local providers
- National providers such as National Express
- Comparison websites such as https://www.coachhirecomparison.co.uk/
- Booking tickets in coaches running regular trips to London

A quick search on Google Maps for 'coach companies near me' will show just that. Click on a pin to see more including website information and contact details. Local companies may offer cheaper options than national companies, however some may not service long journey trips and are often slow to reply to inquiries. If local companies do offer long distance journeys they should only be used if you are returning on the same day otherwise you'll be paying for deadhead costs of the vehicle returning to the area they're based.

National companies will accept long distance journeys, deadhead costs will be less, and it is likely that Low Emission Zone and Ultra Low Emission Zone costs will already be covered (but always double-check).

Comparison websites can generate a number of quotes quickly, saving you time. They will take commission, possibly increasing costs. Regardless of how you found a company, you will need to do due diligence and check their reputation: We want you to have a safe and comfortable journey! Look for reviews and comments online, for example on Google Reviews. If a company doesn't have an online presence, steer clear.

Another possibility, should your group feel too unsure about numbers or raising the deposit to book a whole coach, would be to block book onto buses that run regular trips to London. Companies that provide this service include:

- Flixbus
- Megabus
- National Express

You can check first that they do run a service at the right time and from near you. Also they have various cancellation policies and differ over whether you need the names of all passengers when

booking - so it's good to check.

The best way to do this block booking would be to choose the bus that suits you, survey your Local Group and when you have gathered a block of people, 10, 20, 30, whatever size you decide, and then book the seats. Going down this route allows your group to repeat this as long as seats are available. Obviously, it's a good idea to encourage people to book as far in advance as possible.

Doing this kind of block booking can provide a little more flexibility, and less financial risk, though it reduces some of the benefits of having a whole vehicle to yourselves - i.e. sense of solidarity, the chance to create links between people, teach songs, share info etc.

# Booking

Once you've found prospective companies or got some basic quotes from a comparison site, it's time to contact the companies. Share the key details of the journey but remember this is also your opportunity to ask lots of questions!

**The details you should provide:**

1. The name under which the booking will be made

2. The purpose of the journey.
   Extinction Rebellion's name may make companies reluctant to offer their business so where possible it is best to offer an additional individual's name too and explain that this will be a well-organised, safe, facilitated demonstration.

3. Whether the booking is for a one way journey or return.
   Returns increase the cost, but are practical for Local Groups to consider.

4. The number of seats needed, which will determine the type of vehicle, coach or minibus, needed

5. The date and time of the journey(s)

6. Pick up address(es)
   Rely on local knowledge from coach companies for the best . Bear in mind the various locations your passengers will be coming from. Try to choose a central pick up location and be aware of the additional costs people will incur in travelling to the pick up location.

7. Addresses of any intermediate stops

8. How many extra passengers that be picked up at intermediate stops

9. Drop off location

   For London events there is info on TFL website.

10. The potential additional needs of passengers

11. Luggage space required

**You should inquire about:**

- Whether you can upgrade the booking to a larger vehicle should this be needed, and what extra costs are involved.
- If a deposit is required and their cancellation policy. Typically, a coach / minibus hire company will ask for a 20% deposit and cancellation policies differ greatly.
- Their breakdown policy.
- How additional costs such as tolls and Emission Zone charges will be covered.
- Whether you are able to eat and drink on the coach.

# Ticketing

**Eventbrite** : Tracking bookings and attendance is crucial to transport plans and for this, we recommend using the website Eventbrite. Eventbrite offers simple management of payments and refunds of tickets. Find details on setting up events and selling tickets on Eventbrite here.

**TicketTailor** : If you are a group with a bank account and payment processor set up (e.g. Stripe or Paypal) you can use the cheaper services of Ticket Tailor.

# How to advertise your LG Transport □□

Once you have your coach booked you are going to want to advertise the coach! This guide has some handy information on how to get people to book onto your coach!

You can find guidance on advertising your transport here.

# On the Day of Travel

Smooth running of the travel operation requires lots of systems in place that should be arranged in advance of the day itself but, most of all, make sure to arrive at the pick up point to meet your transport!

The person who has access to the attendees list from the Eventbrite platform should print off the attendees list and bring it to the coach to tick people off as they arrive. Leave no rebel behind! Remember, share this data with as few other people as possible, and those you do share it with must have signed the Volunteer Agreement. This print-off should then be shredded and disposed

of. If you have arranged with the transport provider any accommodations for additional needs, then this is the time to reiterate these needs.

A comms point person should be nominated to be the point person and communicate between your group and the transport company. This will ensure that any changes to the schedule can be relayed to the group efficiently. The point person will also need to communicate with members of their group who will be at Restore Nature Now but not travelling with them to let them know whether the plan is on schedule or if plans have changed.

Plan to keep the coach tidy. Bring bin bags, cloths, and other materials necessary to maintain the vehicle in the same state as when it arrived. You may have to pay cleaning bills otherwise. Consider bringing a mask with you if you are going to be in a confined space with poor ventilation for a few hours.

For London events : depending on the arrival destination, you may have to pay a fee. After the coach has departed you will need to telephone the number for your stop, available here: Coach drivers - Transport for London. Make sure you have payment options available.

# Transport Bursary Scheme

XRUK wants you to attend our upcoming events!
To be as inclusive as possible, a subsidy is available to Rebels who may find it difficult to meet the costs of travel, such as those with accessibility needs or who are on a low income.

Find all of the details here.

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