



**Wealden Bus Alliance**

**July 2013**

## **Become a Forest Explorer**

A new scheme to encourage visitors to leave their cars behind and use more sustainable transport when visiting Ashdown Forest is being launched by Lib Dem Transport Minister Norman Baker on 12 July.

A co-ordinated bus network has been set up by the Wealden Bus Alliance connecting visitors from local mainline railway stations to the heart of Ashdown Forest. An Explorer bus ticket allows visitors arriving at one mainline station to catch a bus to Ashdown Forest, and if they want to go walking, pick up a different bus which can take them to another station.

“Explorer tickets mean you can leave the car at home and go with friends and family to explore Ashdown Forest,” said Norman Baker, MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport. “Ashdown Forest is a wonderful area of open countryside for walking, picnics and wildlife, but its rare heathland habitat is under threat from increasing nitrogen deposits caused by a number of sources including the motor car. The Forest Explorer bus network allows visitors to enjoy the Forest while keeping harmful pollution to a minimum.”

Charles Hendry, MP for Wealden, said: “We want people to come and enjoy the wonderful scenery and peace of Ashdown Forest, but we also need to reduce the impact of the number of car journeys to protect the interests of people living here and the environment. By taking the bus, they can come and enjoy a great day out in a way that looks after our other local needs as well.”

“The Forest Explorer is a great example of joined up thinking when it comes to transport problems,” said Barry Marlowe, chairman of the Wealden Bus Alliance. “Visitors can get off a train at Uckfield, East Grinstead, Eridge or Tunbridge Wells, and catch a regular bus to take them to various destinations in the Forest. They can then catch another bus from the same spot to take

them back to the station, or use another service to take them to a different mainline station.

“The stops are at various cafes, pubs and attractions, making for an enjoyable day out. These exciting travel opportunities have been possible through the commitment of the bus companies: Compass Bus, Metrobus, Brighton and Hove Buses, Stagecoach, the community bus partnership Wealdlink; and Southern Railways to provide a better service for the public.”

“Explorer bus tickets can offer really good value to family groups and other travellers,” adds Barry. “A Metrobus Family explorer will take a family group of five to the Forest and back to the station for just £12.50.”

An additional benefit of the Forest Explorer scheme is the special offers available to bus passengers at a substantial number of pubs and tea rooms across Ashdown Forest. These include discounts on purchases and free food or drink items. Just show your Explorer ticket.

Full details of the Forest Explorer can be found on the bus companies' websites or from the Wealden Bus Alliance,  
<http://www.wealdenbus.org.uk/forestexplorer.html>

. A Sunday service, provided by Wealdlink, will be introduced next year.

### **Note to Editors:**

The launch will take place at Uckfield Station at 10.00am on Friday 12 July, ready for the arrival of the 10.20 from London Bridge, You invited to send a photographer/reporter.

### **For further information:**

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