Trossachs Explorer Evaluation Report
January 2025

Executive Summary

The Trossachs Explorer shuttle bus pilot was evaluated to assess its impact on promoting sustainable transport within the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park area. The pilot aimed to understand appetite for future services, reduce reliance on private vehicles, increase accessibility for all, and enhance the visitor experience while supporting environmental, community and social goals. Research findings highlighted significant successes, including improved access to remote areas, support for local communities and businesses, and alignment with sustainability objectives. However, operational and marketing challenges were identified, necessitating refinements to optimise the service for future iterations.

A robust research design was employed by the University of Strathclyde to independently evaluate the Trossachs Explorer. A mixed-methods approach included interviews and surveys with users, non-users, and other relevant stakeholders to gather qualitative and quantitative data. A total of 29 interviews were undertaken with 32 participants: users (n=15), non-users (n=4), and other key strategic partners and stakeholders (n=13). A Ketso workshop was held with 11 volunteers across 2 groups. Additionally, some observational data was collected by Volunteer Rangers. A survey was completed by 195 respondents, yielding 262 total responses (some with missing entries). Ticket sales were also analysed to identify usage trends, and a Ketso workshop provided additional insights from Volunteer Rangers involved in the project. This comprehensive methodology ensured a balanced understanding of the service's impacts while uncovering areas for improvement and opportunities for future development.

Key positive elements included the ability of the service to make nature more accessible for non-drivers and its contributions to reducing car dependency and emissions. The branding was particularly praised for its professionalism and

attractiveness, which made the service highly recognisable. Furthermore, the service fostered stronger community ties, increased footfall for local businesses, and supported linear walks (starting in one location and ending in another), enhancing the overall visitor experience. Looking forward, recommendations or aspirational enhancements were proposed should the service run again in future, such as extending service coverage, enhancing marketing strategies, improving reliability, and increasing integration with other transport modes will ensure future iterations of the Trossachs Explorer continue to meet user needs and support sustainable travel initiatives effectively.

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1.0 Introduction

This report evaluates the pilot sustainable transport initiative launched by the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park (LLTNP) Authority, delivered in partnership with strategic partners and local stakeholders. Recognising the environmental challenges associated with heavy reliance on car travel, particularly its carbon emissions, the National Park has outlined a strategy to promote sustainable transport solutions. These efforts aim to mitigate environmental pressures, improve accessibility for individuals without private vehicles, and enhance overall visitor and community experiences. The research focuses on a pilot initiative: the Trossachs Explorer, operational from 1st July to 30th September 2024. Having run seven days a week between key visitor locations, including Aberfoyle and Callander, the Trossachs Explorer made it easier for visitors and locals to access some of the Park's most scenic areas without needing a car.

The Trossachs Explorer was supported with funding from BMW UK, as part of its Recharge in Nature partnership with UK National Parks and Paths for All's Smarter Choices, Smarter Places Open Fund, on behalf of Scottish Government and Transport Scotland.

This report examines the research carried out to assess both user and non-user perspectives, as well as insights from various other stakeholders, with the goal of supporting delivery of the National Park Partnership Plan and Mobility Partnership programme.

The primary aims of the proposed research were to analyse user experiences, identify barriers to adoption among non-users, and understand a range of stakeholder perspectives. Through these objectives, the study seeks to generate actionable insights to optimise service delivery, communication strategies, and overall user satisfaction. Additionally, the research evaluated the effectiveness of promotional efforts and the usability of ticketing mechanisms to ensure inclusivity and ease of access.

1.1 Research Design

The research design featured two complementary studies. Study A emphasised gathering data from users and non-users of the bus service, utilising interviews and surveys. This mixed-methods approach enabled a comprehensive understanding of traveller behaviours, perceptions, and preferences. On the other hand, Study B focused on the perspectives of a range of other stakeholders, exploring operational challenges, barriers, and potential enhancements to the service. A Ketso workshop was also conducted with National Park Volunteer Rangers, some observational data was collected by Volunteer Rangers, and ticket sales data was assessed as part of this report. This multi-faceted approach provided a balanced understanding of both demand and supply dynamics.

The methodological rigour of the research ensured that findings would be robust and reliable. The report outlines the outcomes of this extensive evaluation, offering a detailed assessment of user satisfaction, barriers to access, and operational challenges. The findings are expected to inform strategic improvements in transport offerings by a range of partners, evaluating the Trossachs Explorer and contributing to LLTNP's long-term vision as a thriving place that is nature positive and carbon negative. The analysis also provides critical insights for shaping communication strategies and operational frameworks that will underpin future transport services.

In summary, this report represents a thorough evaluation of the research activities surrounding the Trossachs Explorer. By addressing the key questions of user satisfaction, barriers to adoption, and provider perspectives, it contributes valuable knowledge to the ongoing pursuit of sustainable and accessible transport solutions by partners and stakeholders to and within the National Park.

2.0   Survey results

A survey was used to collect public feedback on the Trossachs Explorer from members of the public. The survey was hosted by Qualtrics and all responses were anonymous. Pilot testing was conducted from 1st July to 15th July, while survey responses were collected between 15th July to 31st October. Initial cleaning was undertaken to remove any test surveys, as well as identify any surveys with 25% or more missing data (excluding scales). One participant was removed as they were under 16. In line with these parameters, a total of **195 responses** were obtained for analysis through the quantitative study. However, some of the excluded responses still provided valuable qualitative insights.

2.1   Respondent characteristics

The majority of respondents' most recent trip to the National Park was undertaken on a Saturday (28.1%), followed by Friday (15.3%), Thursday (13%), and Monday (12.5%) – see Figure 1. Of those who had travelled to the National Park most recently, the majority (n=131; 67.5%) had used the Trossachs Explorer.

Figure 1. Participant responses by day of most recent trip.
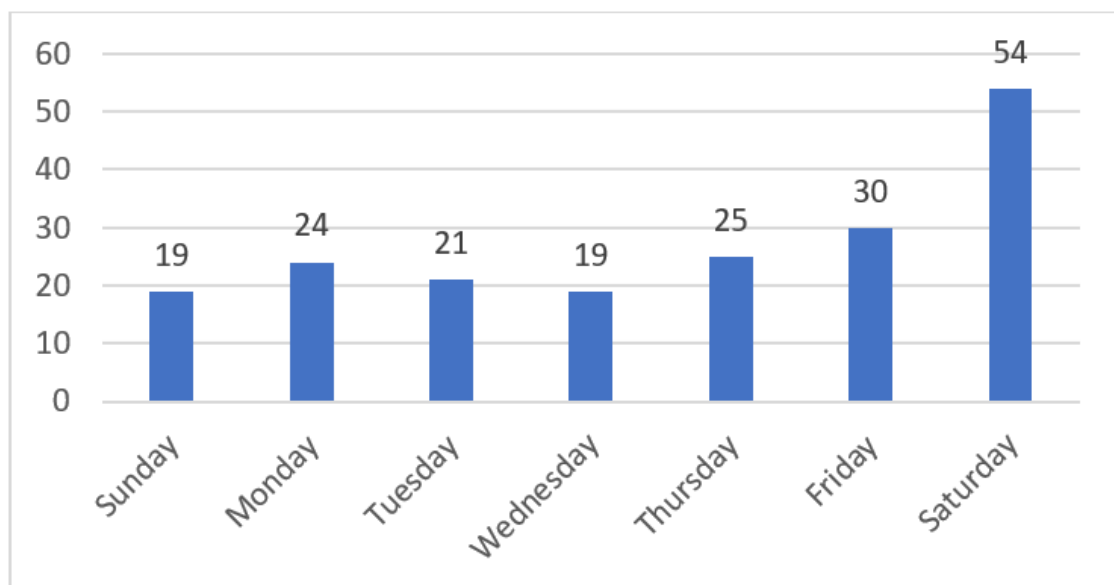
Most travelled in pairs (41.2%), followed by those travelling alone (27.8%) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Group compositions.
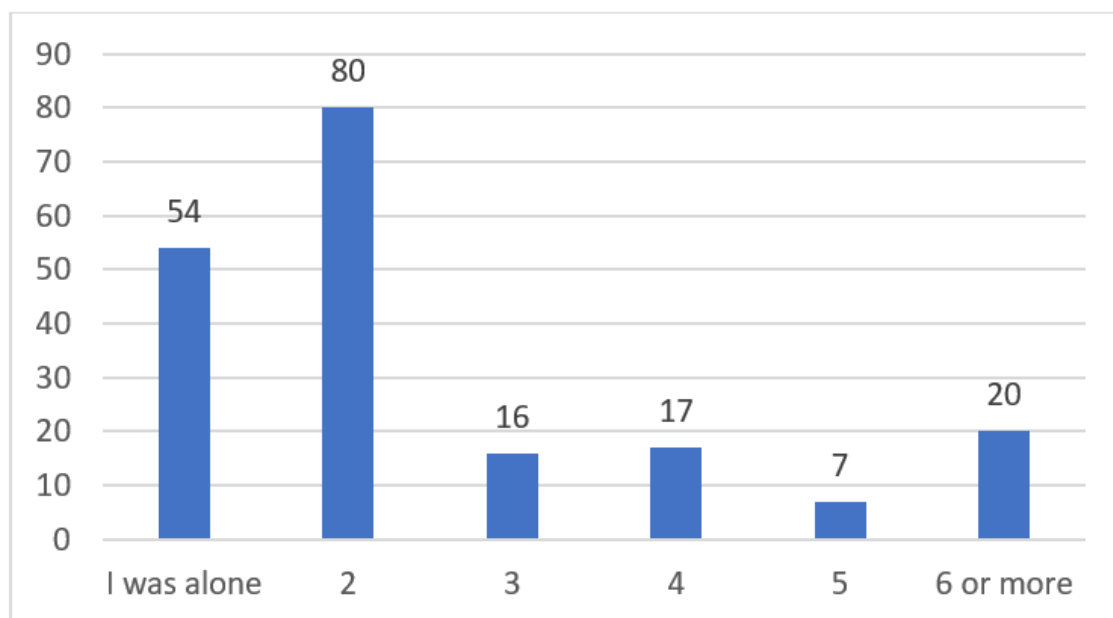
For those who did not travel alone and travelled with others, the groups were made up with the following companions (people could select more than one option, depending on who was on their most recent trip with them; see Table 1).

Table 1. Companions in groups.

Companion	n
Partner/ Spouse	66
Friends	40
Other member of family	21
Child/children	20
An organised group/ tour	13
Other	7
Parents/ Partner's parents	3
Grandchild/children	1

The majority were from Scotland (88.2%) with most providing G or FK postcodes. Only 6 responses from international tourists (predominantly France). See Figure 3.

Figure 3. Where do you live?
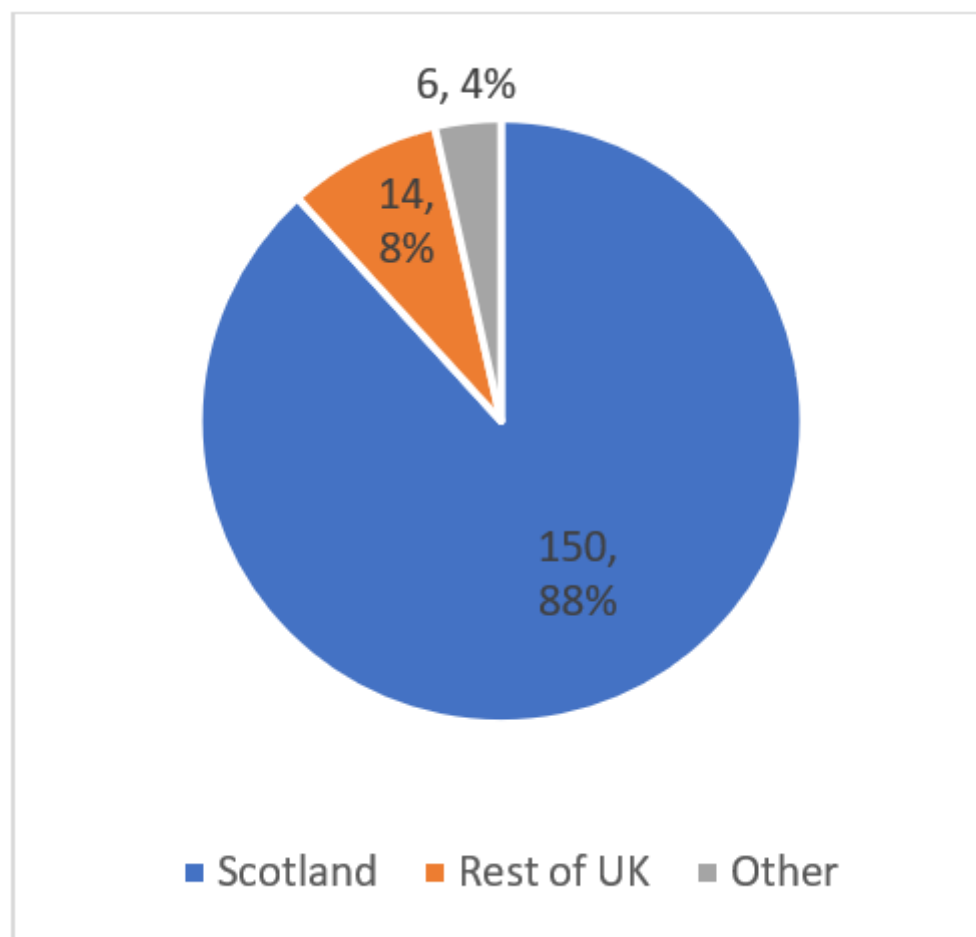
The majority of responses were from females (n=107; 63.3%), followed by males (n=58; 34.3%), with the remainder preferring not to say/ not responding to this question. While the age range of respondents was relatively varied, most were aged 60-69 (23.8%), followed by 40-49 (18.5%), and 50-59 (16.7%). See Figure 4 for further breakdown.

Figure 4. Age of respondents.
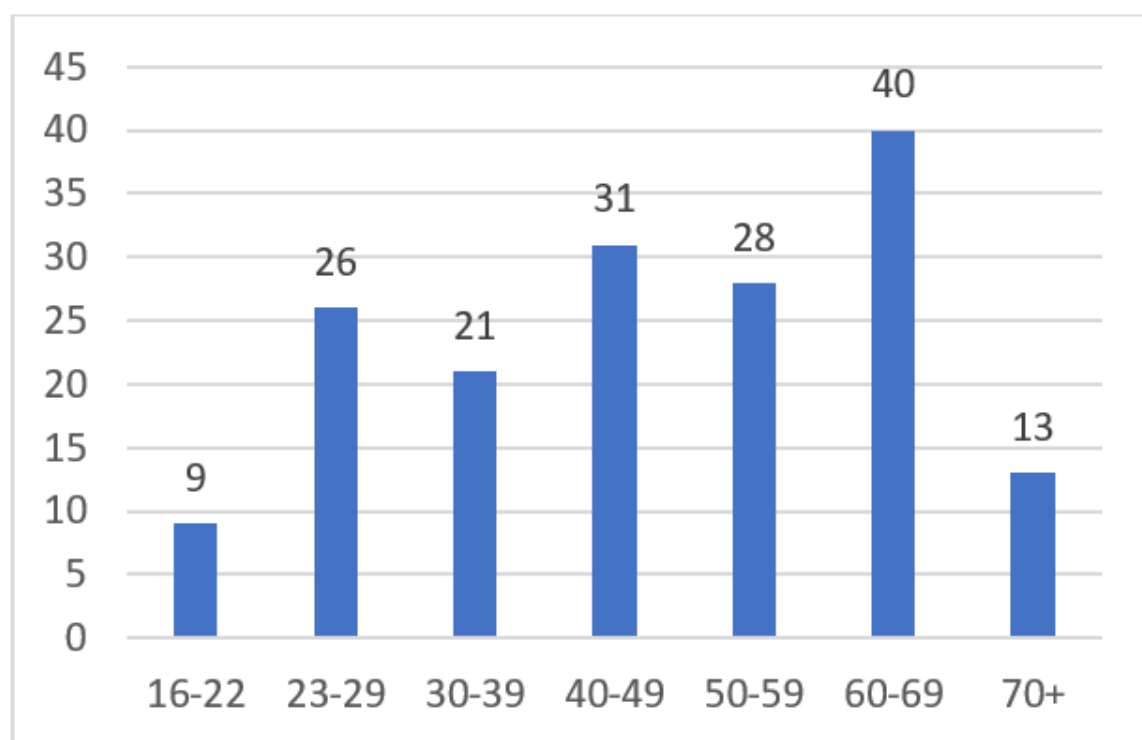
Participants were also asked to indicate the ages of their companions within the group, and this is broken down in Table 2.

Table 2. Ages of companions.

Age group	n
55-64	65
25-34	47
45-54	46
65+	44
35-44	31
Under 18	29
18-24	17

Most respondents were ethnically White (Scottish) with 93 respondents selecting this as an option (61.6%), followed by White (British) (n=40; 26.5%). A breakdown of the ethnicity of respondents is outlined in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Ethnicity of respondents.
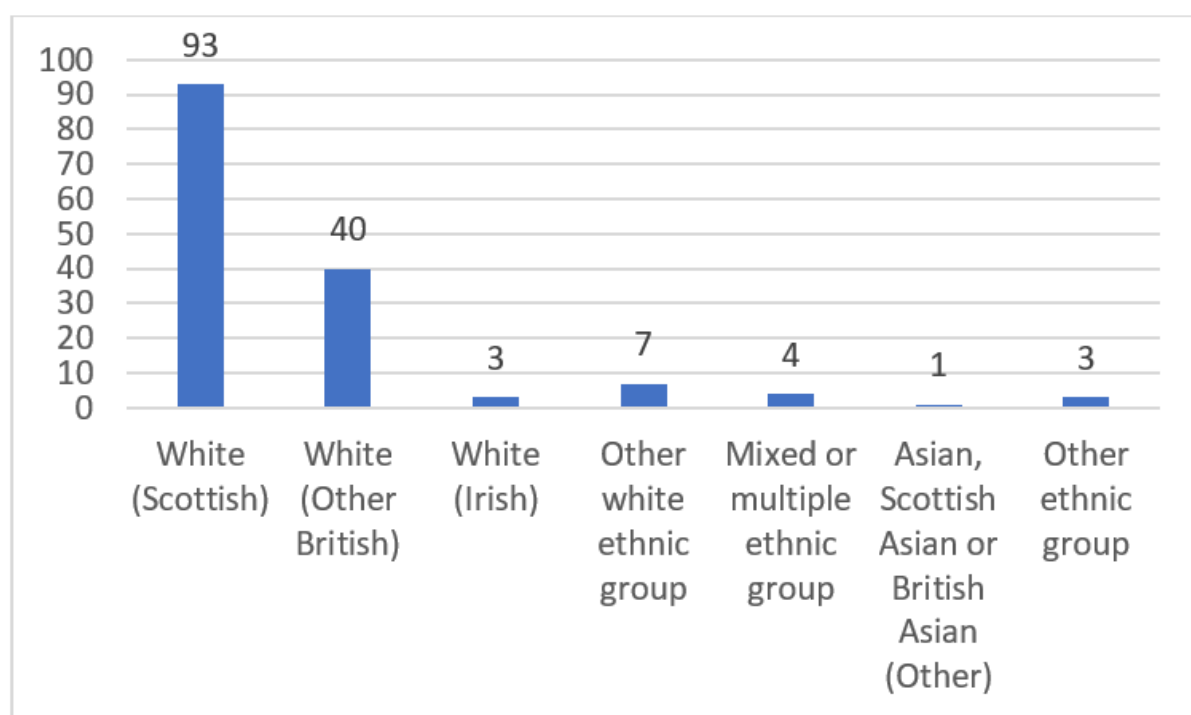
Note: 44 people chose not to respond to this question.

When asked if they had any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more, 23 respondents selected yes (13.5%).

2.2   Descriptives

Of the responses, 130 had used the Trossachs Explorer on their most recent trip (66.7%), and for 76 of them (58.5%) it was their first time on the bus.

The most common reasons for travelling to the National Park (on their most recent trip) were for the beautiful scenery/ countryside/ landscape (n=156), followed by walking (other than hill walks; n=113), hillwalking (n=100), and lochs (n=100). Other reasons were not as frequent (see Table 3).

Table 3. Reasons for Travel to the National Park.

Reason	n
Beautiful scenery/ countryside/ landscape	156
Walking (other than hill walks)	113
Hill walking	100
Lochs	100
Peace and quiet/ relaxation	101
Sightseeing	74
Close to where I live	72
Been before/ enjoyed a previous visit	64
Wildlife/ bird watching etc	55
Visiting attractions	44
Visiting friends/ family	36
Mountain biking	34
Commuting	27
Camping	26
Good variety of things to do for adults	24
Dark skies	19
Other	19
Never been before/ always wanted to come	17
Part of an organised tour/trip	16
Good variety of things for children	15
Passing through/ stopping for a break	14
Climbing	14
An event	11
Fishing	9
Boating	8
No specific reason	2

People commonly found out about the Trossachs Explorer through social media (n=71), followed by Word of Mouth (n=68), the tourist information centre (n=34), and the LLTNP website (n=34). A detailed breakdown is available in Table 4.

Table 4. How they found out about the Trossachs Explorer.

Method of dissemination	n
Social Media*	71
Word of Mouth	68
Tourism Information Centre	34
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park website	34
Other local business*	23
Other*	22
Other websites*	17
Blogs	16
Accommodation provider	5

For each of the methods highlighted by an asterisk, a more detailed list is provided in appendix 1, as respondents had the option to type more information in for these responses.

There were a range of qualitative components to the survey, including additional comments (Appendix 2). Ease of use was overall very positive, with qualitative insights shown in Appendix 3. The branded bus stops were highlighted as "*easy to spot",* though "*announcements of stops would have been helpful for first time users*".

In terms of what people liked about the Trossachs Explorer, key reasons were convenience, accessibility, friendliness of the service, and reliability. Further comments are found in Appendix 4. Feedback, in general, was positive, but feedback focused on extending the service throughout the year, greater frequency of services throughout the day (including earlier starts), names of the stops at each stop, and requests around the provision to carry bikes. Further detailed comments can be found in Appendix 5.

In relation to those who didn't use the service, 55 people provided their most relevant reason with most stating constraints other than those listed (n=22; 40%), followed by being unaware of the service (n=14; 25%), having their own car (n=11; 20%), with other remaining reasons (no accessibility, inconvenient, not enough time, and a lack of information) cited by 8 (14.5%). Comments relating to other constraints are highlighted in Appendix 6. Qualitative comments about what could persuade future use are highlighted in Appendix 7.

2.3   Analysis of key predictive elements

The survey asked a series of questions where respondents rated their responses on a scale from 1 to 7. The survey responses were analysed using a statistical method called regression analysis to determine which specific questions (or items) like opinions about competing transportation options or the ability to try the service, had the biggest influence on people's overall judgement of the service and their likelihood to use it. Overall judgement of the Trossachs Explorer was positive (6.46/7; see Figure 6), predicted by a **lack of competing transportation options** and the **ability to try out the service**.

Figure 6. Frequency of scaled response for overall judgment of the service.
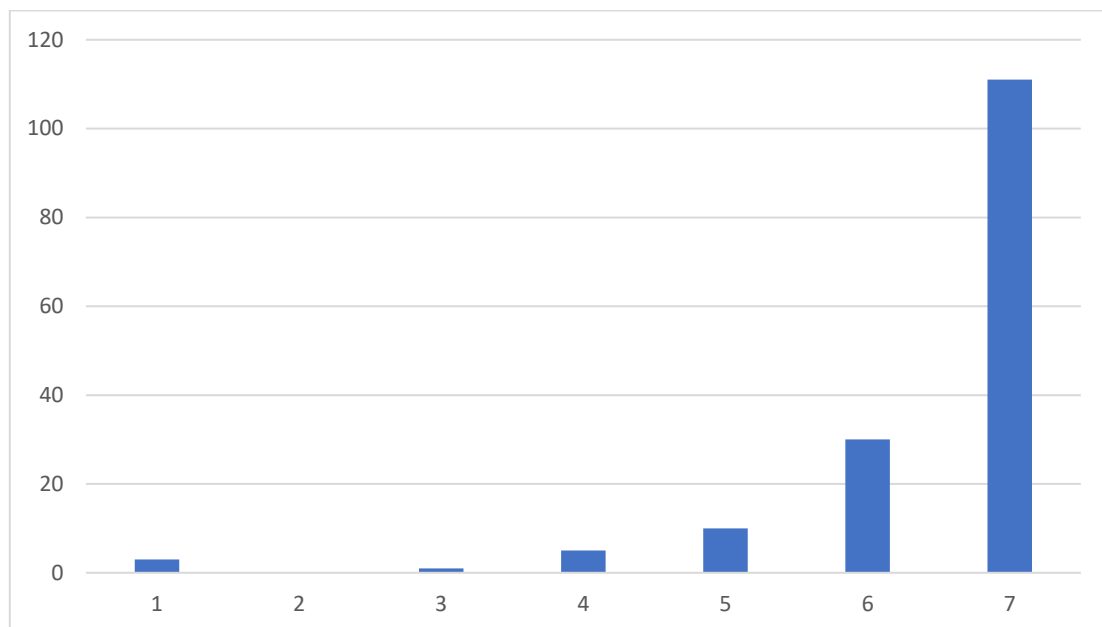
Note. 1= very negative; 7=very positive.

The results for these items suggest that the Trossachs Explorer effectively addresses unique transportation needs and provides a level of reassurance to potential users through opportunities to try the service before committing. These factors contribute to an overall favourable perception of the service, indicating that addressing specific gaps in transport options and reducing uncertainty

through trial opportunities are key drivers of positive user judgment. This insight underscores the importance of positioning the service as a tailored and low-risk solution for travellers. Another predictor of a very good service was a **fit with preferred travel habits**, which aligns with the findings that those who are more likely to take a bus in general would also be more likely to try the service. As such, it would be useful in future to ensure marketing communications were increased throughout the bus networks (e.g., promoted at bus stations throughout Glasgow and Stirling).

Two other items were also identified to predict overall judgement of the Trossachs Explorer: **learning to use would be easy** and **doubts around reliability**. The negative regression results for these items indicate that perceptions of the Trossachs Explorer being easy to use and concerns about its reliability have an inverse relationship with positive judgment. This suggests that if users find the service difficult to learn or doubt its reliability, their overall evaluation of the service becomes less favourable. Addressing these concerns—by simplifying user experiences (e.g., through marketing communications) and building trust in the service's dependability—would be critical to improving its positive reception and encouraging wider adoption.

The likelihood or probability of using the service in general was high (6.34/7; see Figure 7) and predicted by **adequate opportunities to try out the Trossachs Explorer**, indicating that the perception of limited trial opportunities decreases the likelihood of someone using the service. In other words, if potential users feel they lack sufficient chances to experience or try out the Trossachs Explorer, their willingness to use it diminishes. This finding highlights the importance of providing accessible trial options or demonstrations to boost confidence and encourage adoption of the service, including increased marketing and awareness throughout the year. Perceptions of **reliability** were again a concern impacting probability to use, regardless of whether the participant had used the service or not, and given the pilot undertaken this year, statistics could be used in future to emphasise the reliability of the service. Furthermore, **learning to use the service would be easy** was again a critical predictor of probability to use.

Figure 7. Frequency of scaled response for likelihood to use the service.
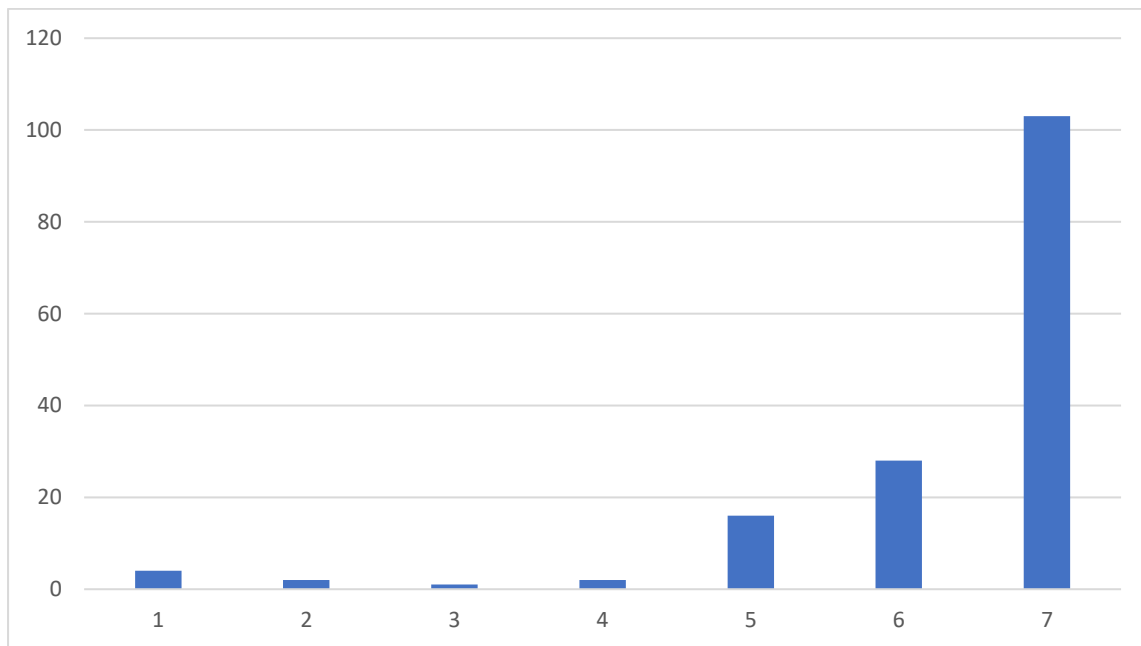
Note. 1= very negative; 7=very positive.

3.0   Interviews

The interview data collected from users, non-users, and other key stakeholders of the Trossachs Explorer provides critical insights into its performance during the pilot phase. These interviews aimed to explore user experiences, perceptions of accessibility, social and environmental impacts, and areas for improvement. They also sought to understand the barriers preventing non-users from adopting the service. The findings shed light on the bus's role in promoting sustainable travel and highlight the potential for enhancing its reach and effectiveness.

Through a thematic analysis of the interview data, key themes emerged that capture the essence of participant experiences. These include enhanced access to nature, sustainability and reduction of emissions, community and tourism benefits, and integration challenges with other transport services. This analytical approach provided a structured way to understand recurring patterns and individual differences in user and non-user experiences, enabling targeted recommendations for the service's future development.

3.1   Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a qualitative method used to identify, analyse, and report patterns (themes) within data. It offers a flexible approach to understanding complex phenomena, making it particularly well-suited for exploring user and non-user perspectives in the context of the Trossachs Explorer. By systematically organising data into meaningful themes, researchers can uncover both explicit and implicit aspects of participant experiences. In this analysis, a combination of manual coding and software tools like Leximancer were employed, allowing the researchers to engage deeply with the data. Automated text analysis complemented this by highlighting overarching patterns and relationships that might not be immediately apparent. Together, these methods enhanced the reliability and depth of the findings.

The thematic analysis revealed distinct insights into how the Trossachs Explorer impacted users and non-users. For example, themes like enhanced access to nature underscored the bus's role in opening up the National Park to individuals without cars, while issues related to integration with other transport services pointed to logistical barriers limiting its use. These findings not only provide a comprehensive understanding of the service's current impact but also offer a roadmap for addressing challenges and amplifying its benefits. This structured approach to analysis ensures that the insights generated are actionable and aligned with the overarching goals of sustainability and inclusivity.

3.2 Sample characteristics from interviews with Users and Non-Users

Nineteen interviews were held with users (n=15) and non-users (n=4) of the Trossachs Explorer (see Table 5). Participants were recruited via the survey, which included an option to provide their email address to sign up for a follow-up interview.

Table 5. Sample characteristics of Users and Non-Users

Participant	User/ Non-User	Age	Notes
Participant 1	User	72	Used the service for hiking and accessing remote areas.
Participant 2	User	66	Valued the environmental benefits and accessibility.
Participant 3	User	30	Found it beneficial for exploring specific locations in the park.
Participant 4	User	51	Used it frequently for leisure and errands.
Participant 5	User	38	Praised the connection to walking routes and local businesses.
Participant 6	User	66	Regularly used the service and appreciated the reduced car reliance.
Participant 7	Non-User	69	Noted the importance of sustainability and enjoyed meeting other users.
Participant 8	User	65	Liked the convenience but noted operational challenges.
Participant 9	User	64	Used it often for both leisure and shopping trips.

Participant 10	User	63	Enjoyed the chance to explore new areas without needing a car.
Participant 11	User	46	Deliberately used it to explore the Trossachs extensively.
Participant 12	Non-User	63	Relatives found it helpful for reducing car use and accessing trails.
Participant 13	User	73	Benefited from accessing scenic spots and connecting with other walkers.
Participant 14	User	75	Valued it for recreational use and social interactions.
Participant 15	User	62	Used the service to support its pilot phase and maximise walking opportunities.
Participant 16	User	71	Used it once and appreciated the friendly atmosphere and regularity.
Participant 17	Non-User	55	Found logistical barriers to accessing the service from Dunblane.
Participant 18	User	63	Frequently used it for leisure activities and errands within the park.
Participant 19	Non-User	30	Liked the concept but cited poor integration with other public transport as a deterrent.

3.3 Themes identified from interviews with Users and Non-Users

3.3.1 Enhanced Access to Nature

The theme of **Enhanced Access to Nature** highlights the transformative impact of initiatives that improve accessibility to natural spaces, enabling broader participation in outdoor experiences. For many, the introduction of accessible transport options—specifically the Trossachs Explorer—has been a transformative development, promoting inclusion and creating new opportunities to explore previously inaccessible landscapes. This accessibility is particularly valuable for individuals who do not drive, those less confident navigating challenging routes, or those seeking sustainable travel alternatives.

Participant feedback illustrates the tangible benefits of this service. By connecting hikers to walking trails or linking different parts of the National Park, the bus facilitated new walking possibilities, such as long hikes with a convenient return option. For some, it provided the chance to explore iconic destinations like Loch Katrine for the first time. Others appreciated the freedom to plan linear walking routes, using the bus as a starting or finishing point.

By reducing reliance on private vehicles, this service not only made nature more accessible but also promoted environmentally responsible recreation. Overall, the findings demonstrate enhanced access to nature through such services promote deeper connections to the outdoors, inclusivity, and sustainable exploration.

Examples of evidence from the interviews to support this theme:

- "*Without the bus, we might not have chosen this destination. Thanks to it, we had some wonderful hikes*" (Participant 3).
- "*It's a walk that we wouldn't normally be able to access, not without a lot of logistics of cars. We'd have to do car sharing. A lot of our participants although they drive, are happy to drive, but a lot of them are older and they're not that confident driving, particularly that route over the Duke's Pass*" (Participant 4).
- "*I used it to do walks that I wouldn't ordinarily have been able to do. Linear walks, that opened up whole areas of the Park, and walking possibilities that we hadn't been able to do before because it would have required to have one car at each end and all of that, so you're just like, "Oh, I can go here, and we can do this walk." So, it was fabulous, you know, all of these kind of different walks that we could plan and do with the bus*" (Participant 10).
- "*Probably just it got me to different places. We wouldn't have got to Loch Katrine*" (Participant 13).

- "*I walked every walk I think it was possible to do in each direction between Callander and Aberfoyle. I did the Three Mountains, and I did the Glen Finglas trail which was fantastic, and I just wouldn't have been able to do that without the Trossachs bus, so I made the most of it, to do everything I could do. Without that bus being there, I would not have been able to do, you know what I mean, so I used it very kind of deliberately, to get out and do walks that I knew I could only get to with that bus and that bus was only going to be there for a couple of months, so take the opportunity, because it might not come back*" (Participant 15).

3.3.2 *Sustainability and Reduction of Emissions*

The theme of **Sustainability and Reduction of Emissions** emphasises the vital role of transport alternatives like the Trossachs Explorer in promoting environmentally conscious travel. By providing a viable alternative to car use, the service supports the goals of reducing carbon footprints and minimising environmental degradation in natural spaces. For many participants, the bus not only facilitated access to the National Park but also aligned with their values of responsible and sustainable tourism.

Several users highlighted the bus's ability to displace car activity, allowing them to leave their vehicles at home and enjoy walks without the environmental (as well as the financial) cost of driving. The service also appealed to those seeking to travel responsibly or cost-effectively, with participants describing it as a step toward reducing emissions and saving on pollution and fuel consumption. Importantly, this option was framed as a "win-win", balancing convenience for travellers with tangible benefits for the environment.

Examples of evidence from the interviews to support the theme:

- "*I think the bus will attract younger tourists, who don't own a car and want to travel responsibly*" (Participant 3).
- "*we try not to use the car if we can avoid it*" (Participant 8).

- "*I think we have definitely displaced two car journeys, in that we would have taken the car and parked it in Aberfoyle or parked it in Brig o' Turk and taken a walk from there. The availability of having the bus, for us, has, on those two instances, a hundred per cent displaced car activity*" (Participant 6).
- "*Thought it was a brilliant idea, and because also, the amount of tourism here, if people could be persuaded to even just leave their cars in Callander and take a bus to the more remote locations, then it would really reduce congestion and everything else*" (Participant 6).
- "*I mean, certainly it gets people like me out of cars. I mean I've got a car, but if I've got buses like that, I'll leave the car at home, which is good for the environment and it's good for road traffic. The less cars on the road, the less congestion it is, the safer roads are*" (Participant 9).
- "*I mean it saves me driving anywhere, to Callander and those areas anyway, so I'll save on driving, I'll save on the pollution, I'll save on the gas, you know*" (Participant 14).
- "*it's a good thing for the environment, to have less traffic on the roads*" (Participant 18).

3.3.3 Community and Tourism Benefits

The theme of "Community and Tourism Benefits" highlights how the Trossachs Explorer fosters connections between visitors, locals, and businesses, enhancing the social and economic vibrancy of the area. By linking villages and attractions, the bus not only supports sustainable tourism but also creates opportunities for meaningful interactions that enrich the visitor experience and strengthen community ties.

Participants emphasised the positive impact on local businesses, noting how the service enabled them to visit cafes, tearooms, and shops during their walks, particularly in villages like Brig o' Turk. A suggestion for a circular route highlights the potential for even greater economic benefits by encouraging visitors to explore more

remote areas. For locals, the bus service offers a convenient way to run errands or connect with nearby communities, promoting a sense of inclusion and accessibility.

The social atmosphere of the bus was another standout feature. Passengers enjoyed chatting with drivers and fellow travellers, creating a sense of camaraderie often absent from regular public transport. For older individuals or those living alone, this service provided not just mobility but an opportunity for social interaction and community connection. Overall, the findings suggest rural buses serve as a bridge between tourism and community life, benefiting both visitors and residents. By reducing car dependency and encouraging shared experiences, the service strengthens local economies and social cohesion while preserving the character and sustainability of the area.

Examples of evidence from the interviews to support the theme:

- "*I think the first time we used it, we'd come from Brig o' Turk, where there's a small tearoom, and quite a lot of the people getting onto the bus, including ourselves, had been to use that as a local business, as part of the bus trip. It was either a walk out to the tearoom to then get a bus back and things. I think it might be... it interacts well with local businesses, I would say, from that one experience*" (Participant 6).
- "*We picked the bus up from Aberfoyle, obviously, and we went over the Duke's Pass to Brig o'Turk, which is one of the stops. We did the walk up in the hamlet and we went back and had our coffee and tea, and coffee and cake, which we always have to end the walks with, but at the Brig o'Turk Tearoom*" (Participant 4).
- "*We're very keen to promote tourism or natural heritage and history of the area and a bus running from Aberfoyle to Callander, Callander to Aberfoyle, via Port of Menteith would have been a great asset for our area*" (Participant 7).

- "*... there were a couple of Rangers, both ways actually, out and back again, and the one, I forgot to get her name, the one lady was brilliant. She was up for chat, so we had a chat on the way out and then she was on the same bus on the way back*" (Participant 16).
- "*Sometimes you bumped into... you know, we met people we knew on the bus and so there was... there was one person that lived locally just chatting to us on the bus*" (Participant 18).

3.3.4 Integration with Other Transportation Services

The theme of "Integration with Other Transportation Services" highlights the importance of seamless connections between the Trossachs Explorer and broader public transport networks to maximise accessibility and usability. Effective coordination with other transportation services can enhance the overall convenience and appeal of sustainable travel options for both locals and visitors.

Participants identified challenges with timing and connectivity, noting difficulties in coordinating their journeys between the Trossachs Explorer and buses from Glasgow and Stirling. For some, the lack of reliable public transport to key hubs like Callander created a barrier to using the service. Improved scheduling and integration with regional transport services would enable more travellers to access the National Park sustainably and efficiently.

By exploring opportunities to address these gaps, future services could expand reach and effectiveness, ensuring practical and attractive options for a wider range of users. Enhancing integration with other transport options would not only support sustainability goals but also provide a smoother and more enjoyable experience for those visiting or living in the region.

Examples of evidence from the interviews to support the theme:

- *"we only made that Trossachs bus by the skin of our teeth, and I mean by the skin of our teeth. I would kind of suggest maybe in the future if they got the money to coordinate the Glasgow bus"* (Participant 13).
- *"the Trossachs bus that comes back to Balfron, on a Sunday, there's no connection back to Glasgow, Milngavie, you're stuck in Balfron"* (Participant 15).
- *"if I could connect to Callander, I would use it a lot because I love walking and also I like going into Callander but I'm dependent on lifts now to do that. Either I get a bus into Stirling or the train into Stirling and then I have to get a bus from Stirling to Callander. The bus from Stirling to Callander crosses two zones, you know, if you use the Midland Bluebird service, you have to pay for two zones worth of travel, which doubles the price almost and makes it a very expensive journey"* (Participant 17).

3.3.5 *Marketing and Awareness*

The theme of "Marketing and Awareness" highlights the critical role of effective promotion in ensuring the success and reach of the Trossachs Explorer. While the service offered significant benefits to users, participant feedback indicates that a lack of early and targeted advertising limited its visibility, potentially reducing its impact during the pilot phase. Participants noted that promotional efforts began too late, with some only discovering the service near the end of its run. Suggestions for improvement included targeted advertising on walking websites and in tourist hotspots to better reach the primary audience of hikers and visitors. Additionally, sustained promotion over time was seen as essential to spreading awareness more broadly and building a consistent user base.

However, while concerns were raised around the timing of the promotion, there was very positive feedback:

- "*So, yeah, I would use it again, I thought it was a great idea, and there was a little, a very attractive, video promo wasn't it, on Walk Highlands, that they linked to. I presume the promo was done by the National Park but the whole thing, yeah, it was, that was well done. It made it attractive, and I passed it on to my walking group which... and they hadn't seen it before so that was... hopefully someone, someone used it as well*" (Participant 16).

The branded bus and stops were also positively spoken about, though with some concerns about whether the pilot would continue next year:

- "*I mean I noticed that the bus stops seem to be quite, sort of, well established. It's supposed to be a pilot, but I thought, "Mmm, these look fairly well established for a pilot," so quite a lot of money been spent on that. …… my concern is that they do things, they've got a budget and there you go, and then they'll not do it the next year, even though they've put up bus stops, and then that's really weird because people are standing there going, "What's this for?"* (Participant 2).
- "*I thought the branding and the, you know… it looked fantastic. It was very obvious, and I loved the branding and the bus going backwards and forwards, and it was that… you could see it was so professionally done, I was really quite impressed*" (Participant 4).

Where feasible, a comprehensive marketing strategy, launched well in advance and tailored to key audiences, would ensure that potential users—including locals, tourists, and walking enthusiasts—are fully aware of the service. By leveraging digital platforms, visitor centres, and partnerships with local tourism organisations, the Trossachs Explorer could significantly enhance its visibility and usage, contributing to its long-term success.

Examples of further evidence from the interviews to support the theme:

- "*The longer it goes on for, the wider the spread of information*" (Participant 14).
- "*I remember when I first heard about the bus, I thought well it will be on the National Park website and I looked and I couldn't find anything. I mean there's something now, but you know it was... you know, I guess that was June that I was looking. For something that started in July I was very surprised that there was just nothing about... if there was it was very well hidden*" (Participant 18).

3.3.6 Operational Challenges and Areas for Improvement

The Trossachs Explorer demonstrated significant potential to enhance access, sustainability, and connectivity within the National Park, but feedback from participants highlighted several operational challenges and opportunities for improvement. These challenges, ranging from route design and scheduling to reliability and accessibility, underscore the importance of working towards refining the service to better meet the needs of both locals and visitors. Addressing these issues will not only improve user satisfaction and trust, but also strengthen the service's role in promoting sustainable and inclusive travel. The following sections break down participants' views on key areas for improvement and offer targeted recommendations for enhancing the service's effectiveness and impact.

a. Route Design and Coverage
- Participants suggested adding circular routes, such as through Port of Menteith and Drymen, to improve accessibility for both locals and tourists.
- Expanding the service to include additional stops and key areas would connect more destinations and enhance its utility for various users.

e.g., " *We would have gone on to Callander and out of curiosity we might have tried it to come back again if it was a circular service. But having to get to Callander meant driving to Callander, finding somewhere to park, which isn't easy, and then obviously onwards to Aberfoyle over the top route*" (Participant 7).

"*if you're thinking about long hikers and things, extending it a bit further out to more Munro based areas. I'm thinking Killin, basically, and up the Ben More's range because that car park is always full*" (Participant 19).

b. Scheduling and Frequency
- Feedback highlighted the desire for more frequent buses and extended services throughout the day, making the service viable for work commutes and other activities.
- Seasonal timing was also a concern, with participants advocating for an earlier start (e.g., May) and extended operation into autumn or year-round to align better with tourist seasons and local needs.

e.g., "*Yeah, so, the only change, improvement would be starting sooner, a longer service*" (Participant 9).

c. Integration and Coordination
- Participants noted that poor alignment with other bus services created challenges for planning seamless connections. Improved coordination with regional transportation networks, including clearer timings, would enhance usability.

"*For me it… the only barrier was I was limited in using it sometimes because of not being able to get to Balfron, by public transport*" (Participant 15).

- Reliability was a recurring issue, with reports of buses breaking down, running early, or causing passengers to miss connections. These experiences erode trust in the service and deter potential users.
- Aiming to improve access to modern, reliable vehicles, potentially electric, would improve dependability and align with sustainability goals.

"*Apart from when they didn't turn up. But it's… apart from that it's been pretty reliable from our point of view, as I say apart from the buses arriving early on the way back from Loch Katrine to Callander*" (Participant 8).

"*There isn't anywhere to go here, other than a very, very long walk to the nearest place where you get any kind of connection. You kind of have to trust that it's actually going to turn up*" (Participant 15).

e. Accessibility and User Experience
- Some participants found some bus stops unclear or inconvenient, requiring significant walking to reach them. Consistent stopping patterns or information about the possibility of requesting stops, are needed.
- Aiming for early distribution of information/ visual maps, real-time data showing stops and nearby activities would make the service more user-friendly and appealing.

"*We also, one trip, walked into town, which is away from the direction of the bus to pick it up at its terminus in Callander, and then it came past our road end and there were people who flagged it down at our road end. We had no confidence that the bus would stop from our road end, so we'd walked a mile and a half into town to pick up the bus, rather than walk our road end, because there's no information about the fact that... actually it could be down as a request stop*" (Participant 6).

"*I'm struggling to think about how much I know about it, which is probably one of the problems, is actually having a visual map of the route, perhaps with, these are the things you can do directly from the route and a real clear sense of how frequently it runs, possibly as well as stops on the way*" (Participant 19).

f. Marketing and Awareness

- Suggestions included launching the service earlier in the year and promoting it more effectively to tourists and locals through tailored campaigns.
- Many participants requested extending the service to cover the tourist season more effectively.

"*To run longer, not just 3 months a year. As I say, I can understand not running it in the winter because the winter has dodgy weather here, but certainly May and June, May and June are the best weather days, it's beautiful. That would be the only major change, is yeah, let's have it longer*" (Participant 9).

"*I would say, an earlier period would obviously be better in a lot of ways because July's the school holidays, but you get a lot of visitors up here before then, and locals from places like Stirling, Glasgow, who want to use it at the weekends as soon as the weather gets better. May is always our best month in Scotland for actual people who want to go out and do outdoor activities, which is what it seems oriented towards because that's what the area is*" (Participant 19).

g. Environmental Enhancements

- Aiming to transition to quieter, modern, electric buses through collaborating with providers would not only improve the user experience but also reinforce the service's commitment to sustainability.

e.g., "*Being on a polluting diesel bus did not fit with the low carbon vision that the park may have had. In terms of what improvements we'd like to see, [them] moving to an electric bus is definitely one*" (Participant 6).

3.4   Key differences between users and non-users

The Trossachs Explorer highlighted distinct differences in how users and non-users perceived and engaged with the service. While users appreciated the benefits of the service, such as reduced car dependency, access to remote areas, and support for leisure activities, non-users often faced barriers like limited awareness, logistical challenges, and difficulty integrating the service into their routines. These differences underline the importance of addressing both practical and perceptual challenges to increase uptake and ensure the service meets the needs of diverse groups.

3.4.1   Awareness and Accessibility

- **Users:** Most users found out about the service by chance or through promotional materials at stops, walking websites, or word-of-mouth.
- **Non-Users:** Non-users often mentioned insufficient awareness or difficulty connecting to the bus service, for example, logistical barriers like long travel times to access the route.

3.4.2   Perception of Benefits

- **Users:** Valued the service for enabling access to remote areas, reducing car dependency, and supporting leisure activities like hiking or exploring the National Park.
- **Non-Users:** Acknowledged the potential benefits but found barriers such as rigid planning, lack of spontaneity, or difficulty integrating the service into their usual travel habits.

3.4.3   Reliability and Trust

- **Users:** While many praised the service, some noted issues with reliability, such as missed or late buses, which affected trust in the system.
- **Non-Users:** Often cited a lack of trust in public transport as a reason for sticking to private cars, exacerbated by anecdotal reports of unreliability.

3.4.4 Planning and Scheduling

- **Users:** Adapted their plans to fit the bus schedule and used the service deliberately to support it or maximise their exploration.
- **Non-Users:** Found the planning required to use the service too restrictive, especially compared to the flexibility of driving.

3.4.5 Connection with Other Transport

- **Users:** Some users managed to integrate the service with other buses or travel methods but found it inconvenient.
- **Non-Users:** Cited poor integration with other public transport services as a significant barrier to use.

While recognising resource constraints, to bridge the gap between users and non-users, several key strategies are recommended:

Increase Awareness and Accessibility

- Build on existing marketing efforts with targeted campaigns on walking websites, social media, and local tourism hubs to ensure both locals and tourists are informed about the service.
- Continue to strengthen visibility through clear signage at popular access points and explore opportunities to expand the distribution of detailed promotional materials at visitor centres and transport hubs.

Improve Integration with Other Transport Services

- Aim to align schedules with regional transport services, such as buses from Glasgow and Stirling, to enable seamless connections and reduce logistical barriers for non-users.
- Collaborate with relevant partners to explore combined ticketing options for integrated journeys.

Enhance Flexibility and Reliability

- Work with providers to explore the potential for modern vehicles and support efforts to maintain consistent schedules.

- Explore opportunities to improve service accessibility by working with partners to assess the feasibility of increased service frequency or more flexible route options, reducing the need for rigid planning by users.

Build Trust and Demonstrate Value
- Showcase success stories and testimonials from current users to build confidence in the service among non-users.
- Highlight the environmental and economic benefits of using the bus, emphasising its contribution to sustainability and support for local communities.

Encourage Planning and Ease of Use
- Consider collaborating with authorities or providers to enable access to easy-to-use digital tools, such as an app or online platform, to help users plan their journeys, access schedules, and understand integration options.
- Work with partners to facilitate access to user-friendly maps showing bus stops, trails, and nearby activities to simplify trip planning.

By addressing these differences and pursuing targeted enhancements, the Trossachs Explorer can better cater to both current users and potential new audiences, amplifying the service's positive environmental, social, and economic impacts.

3.5 Sample Characteristics from interviews with strategic partners and stakeholders

Ten interviews were held with various stakeholders (see Table 6) including representatives from LLTNP, Stirling Council, Midland Bluebird (bus operator), local businesses, community organisations and tourist information centres. Eight interviews were conducted online through video calls; two provided responses to questions via email. A total of 13 participants took part, with two interviews conducted in groups.

Table 6. Sample characteristics of strategic partners and stakeholders.

Participant	Summary
Participant A	Highlighted operational challenges and connectivity issues.
Participant B	Supported the initiative but noted minimal impact on business and logistical misalignments for customers.
Participant C	Facilitated community engagement and feedback. Emphasised the positive reception and potential behavioural shifts.
Participant D	Observed increased accessibility for locals. Highlighted the bus's community impact and operational adjustments needed.
Interview E (2 participants)	Advocated for the service. Noted benefits for locals and tourists, and logistical challenges like older buses.
Participant F	Discussed logistical barriers and community reception challenges.
Participant G	Observed community benefits and challenges in service integration and sustainability concerns.
Participants H, I, J	Underlined the benefits for visitors and local communities, including generating community pride and business support but emphasised challenges communicating with operator, rural accessibility, financial sustainability.
Participant K	Focused on highlighting behavioural change and long-term sustainability.
Participant L	Stressed alignment with community policies and external funding needs.

To ensure a level of anonymity for these participants, minimal information is provided within this report. Further details and pseudonym keys are shared with specific individuals within the evaluation team as discussed with participants.

3.6 Themes from Stakeholder Interviews

The themes identified within the stakeholder interviews were relatively consistent with those identified by the users and non-users. However, there were additional themes which have been outlined in Table 7, with quotes to support each.

Table 7. Key Themes from Stakeholders.

Theme	Quotes
Strategic Collaboration	"*We wanted to learn how can we work with bus operators, and again our skills complement their skills, or not, and see where our weaknesses are as a collective, in doing this work"; "We wanted to learn how we work with Stirling Council's bus team and how our skills complement theirs*" (**Participant K**). "*We are reliant on Stirling Council to deliver bus expertise and an understanding of the wider network / commercial position*" (**Participant L).** "*From the council's point of view, we ordered on behalf of the authority, we ordered the bus stops and/or participated in some of the bus stops and timetable information at the bus stops. We monitored the service through the data provided by the bus operator every week and shared that with the park authority"; "We met with some of... well, one of the businesses in Brig o'Turk about the installation of a bus stop. We were involved with that and we also met with the steam ship company up at Loch Katrine*" (**Participant A**). "*The Mobility Partnership is trying to break down those boundaries and have all partners round the table who are signed up… and we're sharing those resources and expertise to try and deliver something that's integrated, that's coherent, that's just right across the park" (**Participant J**)"*
Community and Tourism Impact	"*What was quite interesting from feedback from the community was they started to see people coming from Callander over to Aberfoyle for a wee jolly who had not been there for years. Again, older residents... they were coming out and then they were having a wee coffee";* (**Participant G**). "*People coming in from Brig o'Turk to me in [location withheld for anonymity] saying, 'We need to do everything we can to promote this because it's amazing and I can get into Callander or Aberfoyle on public transport and I don't have to take the car anymore*" (**Participant C**). "*People were talking about new customers that they'd never had that were coming out to their shop because they could get the bus now from their doorstep" (**Participant I**)*

Challenges in Implementation	"*The biggest one, as I say, was finding a suitable operator who could... who had their own challenges in recruiting drivers, local driver, bus driver recruitment in the area is particularly challenging. That was a main one, was getting a suitable operator to do it at an acceptable price*"; "*What ended up happening was the service was meant to run out of the Balfron depot if you know that part of the world, which is pretty close to the route. It ended up running from Stirling. Every day the buses have to go up and down from Stirling because we've no other operator in the area*" (**Participant A**). "*I know one person who I would say didn't really compute that it was a short-term thing and took out a gym membership... then didn't understand when it got to the period of time that actually it was only ever intended to be a trial*" (**Participant G**). "*I think that's possibly one of the challenges of maybe trying to get folks to go right, 'Leave your car at home, come and get the bus.' Actually it' s a bit of a worry when you're up Ben A'an and thinking I need to get the bus and if I miss it. I think vulnerability of the rural location probably was a bit of a challenge*" (**Participant I**).
Environmental Goals	"*The overall aim of the service was to allow the National Park to be opened up to people who did not necessarily have access to cars. Encourage modal shift, just really kind of break down barriers that people that could not access that previously in their part, and getting out to these parts*" (**Participant F**). "*We estimate we have four million visitors a year, although we suspect it's higher than that, and if we're going to be part of Scottish Government, addressing car kilometres and trying to reduce car kilometres by 20% by 2030*" (**Participant K**). "*One of the stated aims of the project, as far as I'm aware, and rightly so is to open the National Park that people who haven't necessarily been able to access them before*" (**Participant F**). "*On paper, as far as we can tell, it worked, it got people to use it. It took pressure off the road… We know anecdotally that it took a whole swathe of motorhomes or caravans off that pass, which is fantastic in terms of visitor pressure and relieving pressure on those roads*" (**Participant H**).

3.7 Summary of All Interview Findings

An additional analysis was conducted using a programme called Leximancer, to assess for overarching themes across all interviews, and assess for any potentially overlooked themes. The analysis is presented in a map (see Figure 1), but has been summarised into three overarching themes in section 2.7.1.

3.7.1 Summary of Overarching Themes

1. Accessibility and Community Engagement The analysis highlights the importance of the service in bridging gaps for users who lacked alternative transport options. The bus allowed individuals, particularly those without cars, to access areas like Aberfoyle and Callander, which were previously difficult to reach. Residents appreciated how the service connected them to leisure and essential destinations while reducing reliance on personal vehicles. However, challenges such as inconsistent scheduling and missed connections underscored barriers to usability and integration with existing regional transport networks.

2. User Experience and Service Reliability Feedback emphasised the value of the service for leisure trips, offering opportunities to explore scenic locations and partake in outdoor activities without needing a car. Users also appreciated the social aspects, such as engaging with fellow passengers and park staff for recommendations. However, reliability issues, including delays and breakdowns, deterred some users, particularly when these events disrupted travel plans. This underscores the critical need for dependable operations to build trust and encourage repeat use.

3. Environmental and Strategic Goals The service was identified as aligning with sustainability objectives, promoting alternatives to car travel in the National Park to reduce congestion and carbon emissions. Participants noted its role in offering environmentally friendly travel options while supporting local businesses by increasing foot traffic. However, the pilot also revealed gaps in long-term funding and infrastructure, which need addressing to maintain and expand sustainable transport solutions.

4.0 Workshop and Observational Data

4.1 Ketso Workshop

A Ketso workshop was undertaken with Volunteer Rangers who supported the pilot by assisting passengers on the bus as well as undertaking some of the data collection. The Ketso Workshop was undertaken at the LLTNP Headquarters (see Figure 8), with 11 participants who were placed into two groups.

Figure 8. Workshop.

The Ketso workshop is much like a focus group, but given its structured and tactile nature allows all participants to be heard while providing them with a visual representation of the discussion. Across the two groups, two mats were used to outline the discussion (see Figure 9) and this was shared across the workshop.

Figure 9. Ketso Maps for the Workshop.

Feedback about their participation in the Trossachs Explorer was overall very positive. Their first thoughts on the project were that it had huge potential, was proactive, much needed, exciting, connected communities, and encouraged greater access to the public across the National Park.

Access and increases in footfall were seen as strong benefits of the service, as well as reduced traffic, less car usage, and opening up areas to non-drivers. Some perceived the pilot service to be reliable (though this was also raised as a challenge by others) and frequent. Benefits to local business, as well as greater access to those they may not have been able to access before, was also raised. Group discounts were seen as a positive for people using the service. The promotional elements were spoken of positively, including the signs and the bus stops.

Key challenges identified were the lack of publicity in the early stages in particular, cancellations, connection times, and an overarching concern around the financing/ it's continuation. State of the roads and quality of the buses was also raised.

Key areas of action from the perspective of the volunteer rangers were:
- While bus drivers were helpful, there could be more alignment of bus times.
- Inclusion of bikes being allowed on board.
- Connections to the train.
- All year-round service as well as greater options on where to travel to.

4.2 Observational Data

Volunteer Rangers were invited to record observations when possible and submit them anonymously to the researchers. A summary of the key insights from these contributions is provided below:

Multiple diary extracts detail the positive feedback received from passengers and volunteers regarding the Trossachs Explorer. Volunteer Rangers underlined the service's success in connecting residents and tourists to scenic locations, while also noting some logistical issues, such as late connecting buses and inadequate timetable availability at bus stops. Suggestions for improvement include better advertising, improved bus stop signage, and potential route adjustments. Overall, the feedback is overwhelmingly positive, showcasing the service's popularity and fulfilling an unmet transportation need in the area. Themes and quotes representing each theme are illustrated below:

Locals were very positive about the service and appreciate its ability to fulfil a transportation need:

- "*Locals are keen on the service. It fulfils a previously unfulfilled need to travel by bus between Aberfoyle and Callander*". A local "*who lives beside Loch Achray… was delighted with the bus and said she intended to use it regularly*".

The service has enabled access to the Trossachs for those who might not have been able to visit otherwise:

- One passenger "*doesn't drive and was pleased that she now had transport to access hills in this area*".

Passengers enjoyed using the bus to access walking trails and other attractions:

- Passengers used the bus to reach "Ben Aan", "Ben Ledi", and Loch Katrine (though "*used [walking] website and at present still [said] no access to public transport for Ben Ledi*").

Visitors from outside the area were also using the service:

- The bus has been used by "*Germans studying at the Uni*", as well as visitors from "*Glasgow*", "Cumbernauld", "Scottish visitors" and "*young Spanish people who were living in Scotland*".

The sources also highlight a few suggestions for improvement:

Passengers expressed a desire for more accessible timetables at bus stops:

- "*the only access to timetable at the stops is by QR code and not everyone either has suitable phone to access or, even if they do find it difficult to use. Would it be possible to have timetables on the stops as happens with service buses on existing routes*".

Better integration with connecting bus services was suggested:

- "*some of the connections with other services might be reviewed to improve things". For example, "the new route at Callander does not match up with bus from Callander to Stirling inconveniencing passengers*".

Expanding advertising and promotional materials to nearby areas was also recommended:

- "*One suggestion was to "ensure that the service and through tickets /timings with other buses are advertised in Stirling, Milngavie and Glasgow. Perhaps a journey ideas /days out leaflet*".

5.0 Ticket Data

Ticket information was also provided, with some preliminary data visualisation included. The first graph outlined depicts the number of passengers per day (Figure 10), followed by the number of passengers per day on a weekly basis (Figure 11), passenger ticket type sold weekly (Figure 12), and passenger boarding by stage on a weekly basis (Figure 13).

Figure 10. Number of passengers per day.
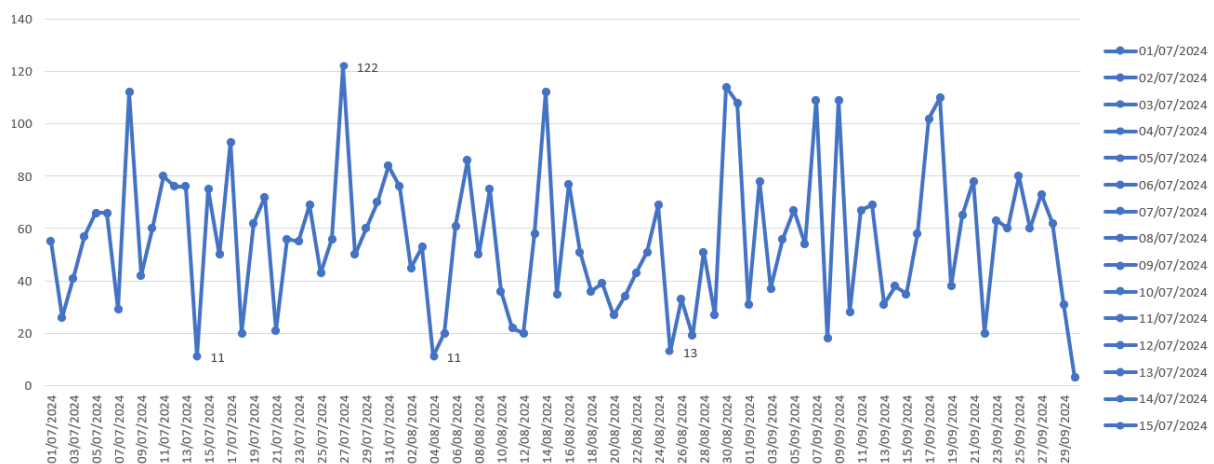
Figure 11. Number of passengers per day on a weekly basis.
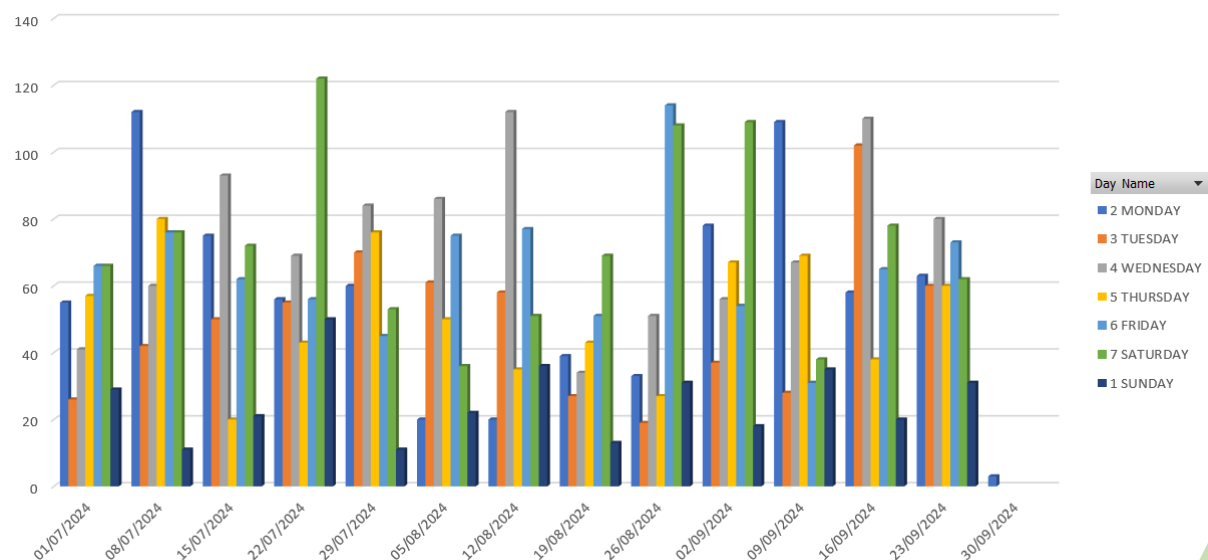
Figure 12. Passenger ticket type sold weekly.
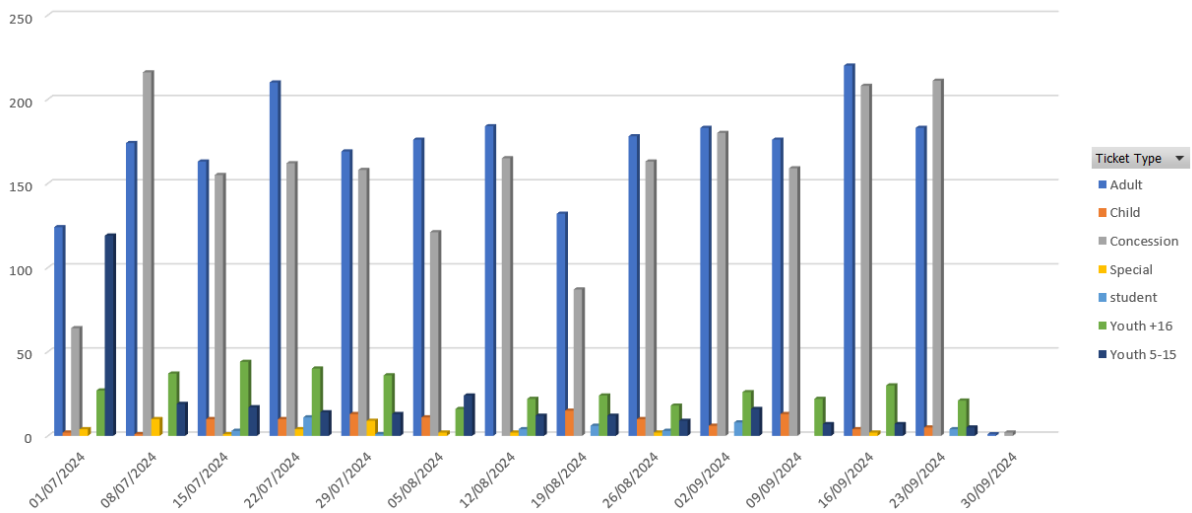
Figure 13. Passenger boarding by stage on a weekly basis.
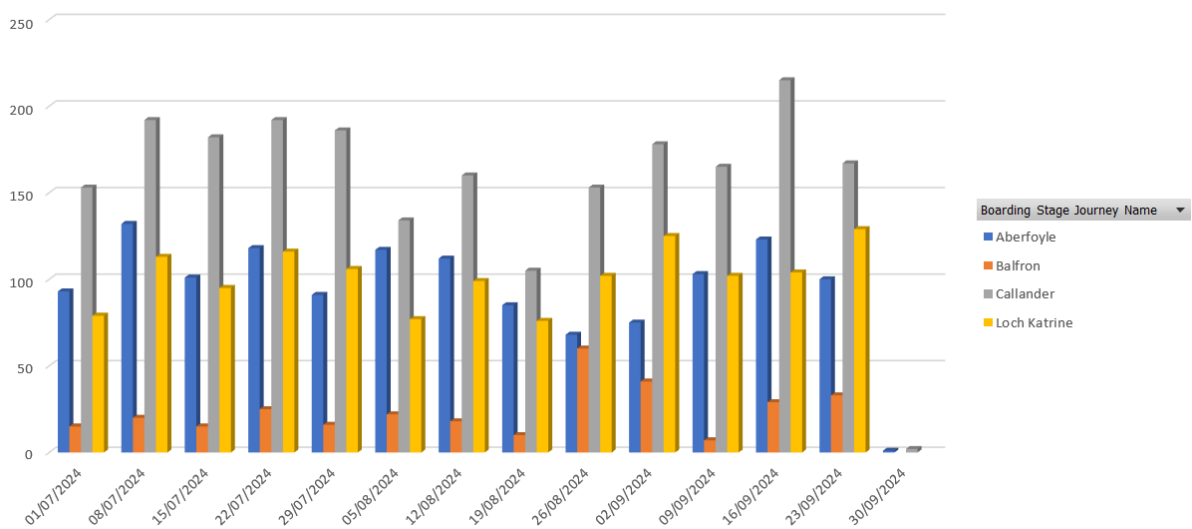
5.1 Additional Analyses of Ticket Data

The ticket data was analysed further to understand how different types of tickets were used across various boarding stages and days of the week. A method called Chi-Square analysis was applied to see if there were patterns or relationships between ticket types and where or when people boarded the bus. To make the results clearer, the information was organised into tables (called crosstabulations), showing the number of each ticket type used for different locations or days. This approach is important because it highlights trends, like which days are busiest or which types of passengers use the service most, helping to identify opportunities for improvement and better planning of the service.

While no relationships were identified between boarding stage and day of travel, two other analyses yielded results, including boarding stage and ticket type as well as ticket type and day of travel. These are outlined in detail below.

5.1.1 Boarding Stage x Ticket Type Analysis

The analysis of ticket usage across boarding stages highlights how different passenger groups utilise the Trossachs Explorer. Key boarding points like Callander and Loch Katrine dominate usage, with adult and concession tickets being the most common across all locations (see Table 8 and Figure 14).

Table 8. Cross-tabulations of boarding stage and ticket type.

		Adult	Child	Concession	Special	Student	Youth +16	Youth 5-15	Total
Boarding Stage	Aberfoyle	581	27	547	8	5	85	66	**1319**
	Balfron	98	1	154	1	0	30	27	**311**
	Callander	957	42	851	14	20	162	138	**2184**
	Loch Katrine	637	30	499	13	15	86	43	**1323**
Total		**2273**	**100**	**2051**	**36**	**40**	**363**	**274**	**5137**

Figure 14. Distribution by Ticket Type and Boarding Stage
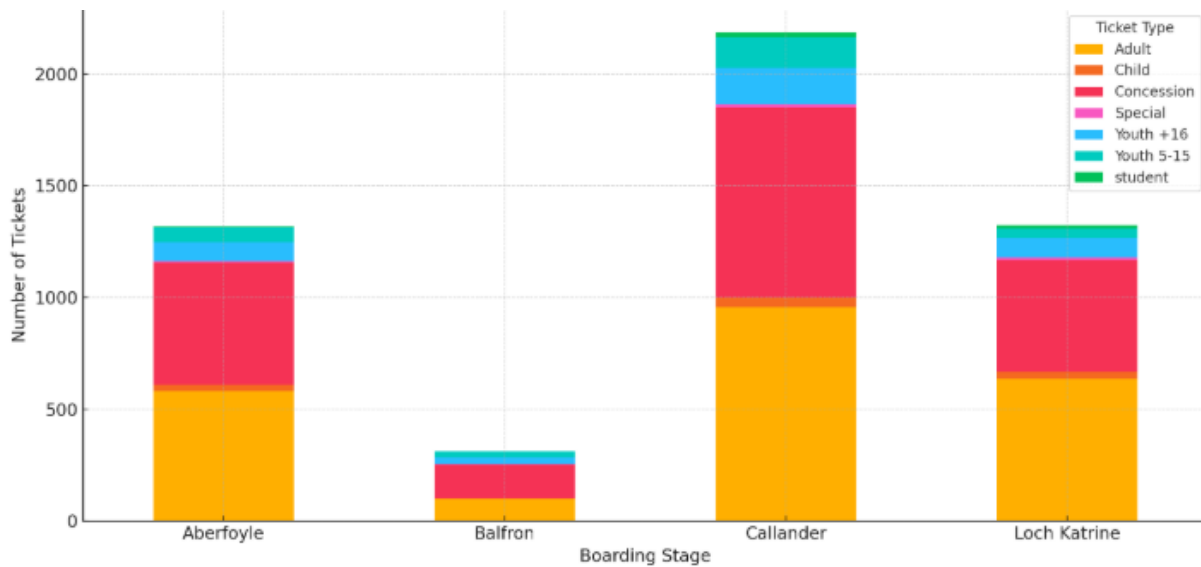
Based on the provided data and statistical outputs, here are the key trends and insights:

Ticket Demographics by Boarding Stage

Popular Boarding Locations:

- **Callander** had the highest number of boardings (2,184 passengers), suggesting it is a significant hub for the Trossachs Explorer service. This indicates its strong centrality and accessibility for users.
- **Loch Katrine** and **Aberfoyle** followed as key boarding points with 1,323 and 1,319 boardings, respectively. These are likely popular due to their attractions and connectivity.
- **Balfron** had the lowest number of boardings (311 passengers), suggesting it may require enhanced promotion or integration with other transport modes to boost usage.

Distribution Across Ticket Types:

- **Adult Tickets** were the most purchased overall (2,273 out of 5,137 passengers, ~44%), highlighting that the service primarily catered to independent adult travellers.

- **Concession Tickets** also showed substantial use (2,051 passengers, ~40%), reflecting significant adoption by older adults or those eligible for reduced fares, likely due to the affordability and utility of the service.
- **Youth Tickets (5–15)** had moderate uptake (363 passengers), which could reflect school-age children traveling with families or on excursions.
- **Students and Youth (16+)** and **Special Tickets** were the least used, indicating potential areas to explore for marketing or service adjustment.

The chi-square/ statistical analysis of this data highlights a relationship between boarding stage and ticket type. This implies that certain ticket types were more common at specific boarding stages, suggesting localised usage trends. For instance:

- **Callander** saw the highest mix of ticket types, which may correlate with its role as a central boarding location.
- **Loch Katrine** and **Aberfoyle** likely drew more tourists and concession users, influenced by their attractions and older demographics.

Operational Insights
Strategic Focus for Marketing:
- Tailored marketing campaigns could target underrepresented groups such as students and youth (16+), especially at points like **Balfron**, which had relatively low usage.
- Promoting family-friendly packages could increase child ticket sales, leveraging the attractions near Loch Katrine and Aberfoyle.

Service Design Considerations:
- Higher boarding numbers at **Callander** suggest the need for optimised frequency and capacity at this hub to accommodate peak times.
- **Balfron's lower numbers** might point to a need for better integration with other transport modes or more direct service promotion in this area.

Concession User Accessibility:

- Significant uptake of concession tickets highlights the importance of accessibility and affordability for older adults, suggesting continued investment in marketing to this group and maintaining concession-friendly policies.

This analysis underscores Callander's centrality, the diverse demographics utilising the service, and the potential to enhance underperforming areas like Balfron while supporting the popular hubs with sufficient resources.

5.1.2 Day x Ticket Type Analysis

The analysis of ticket usage across days of the week reveals clear patterns in passenger behaviour (see Table 9 and Figure 15). Saturday and Wednesday emerged as peak days, with adult and concession tickets dominating overall usage. These trends highlight key opportunities for optimising service schedules and tailoring promotions to align with passenger demand.

Table 9. Cross-tabulations of boarding stage and ticket type.

		Ticket Type							
		Adult	Child	Concession	Special	Student	Youth +16	Youth 5-15	Total
Day	Sunday*	174	3	99	2	0	36	14	**328**
	Monday	336	4	334	0	2	65	40	**781**
	Tuesday	267	12	277	0	10	37	32	**635**
	Wednesday	350	41	431	17	1	57	46	**943**
	Thursday	309	7	227	5	1	60	56	**665**
	Friday	389	11	352	5	2	47	39	**845**
	Saturday	448	22	331	7	24	61	47	**940**
Total		**2273**	**100**	**2051**	**36**	**40**	**363**	**274**	**5137**

*Note. Reduced service.

Figure 15. Distribution by Ticket Type and Day
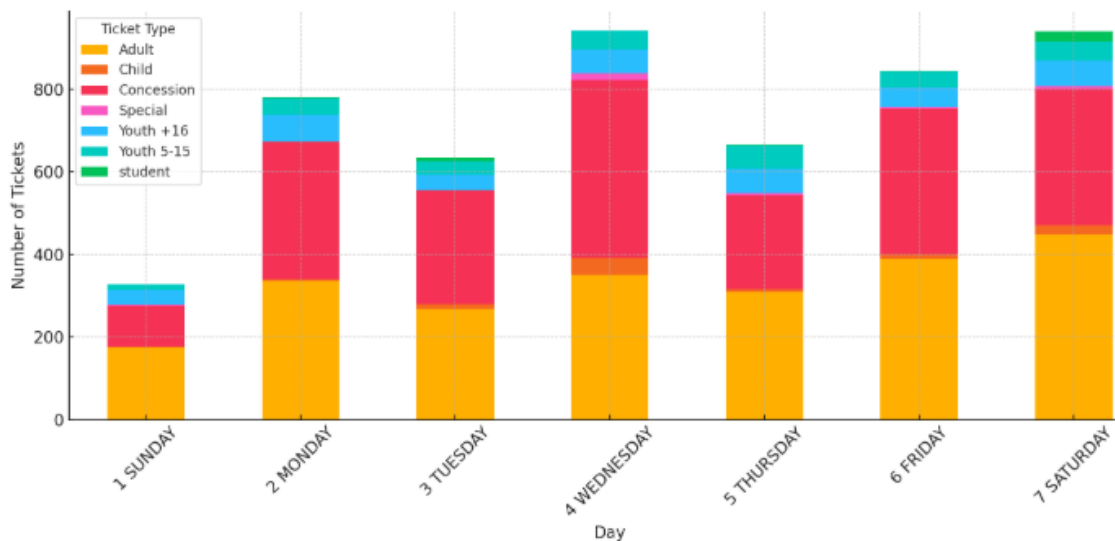
Even though the Chi-Square test has validity concerns (due to low expected counts in several cells), the dataset reveals key trends worth considering:

Weekly Patterns in Ticket Type Usage:

Highest Usage Days:

- **Saturday (1,319 passengers)** and **Wednesday (1,184 passengers)** recorded the highest total boardings. This suggests that weekends and midweek may be peak times for bus usage, possibly driven by tourists and local excursions.

Adult Tickets Dominate:

- o **Adult tickets** consistently represent the majority of ticket sales across all days (2,273 total), with Saturday showing the highest number (581). This indicates strong individual traveller participation throughout the week.

Concession Tickets Are Prominent:

- o **Concession tickets** (2,051 total) are the second most common type, peaking on Wednesday (547) and Friday (499). This aligns with potential weekday travel by older adults or those with discounts, possibly for errands, visits, or leisure.

Youth Engagement on Weekends:

- o Youth tickets (5–15 and 16+) increase noticeably on weekends, especially on **Saturday (223 combined)**. This could reflect family outings or organised activities targeting younger demographics.

Special Tickets are Minimal:

- o "Special" tickets are sparingly used (36 total) with occasional peaks, like on Wednesday (14). This could point to specific, event-driven usage.

Student tickets remain low:

- o Student ticket uptake remains consistently low (40 total), suggesting a potential gap in either marketing efforts or alignment with student demographics

Operational and Marketing Implications:

Optimise for Peak Days:

- Adjust service frequency and capacity to accommodate the higher demand on **Wednesdays** and **Saturdays**, particularly among adults and concession users. This can help enhance user satisfaction and efficiency during peak times.

Weekend Family Packages:

- Enhance marketing for families and youth on weekends with targeted promotions, such as discounted group fares or bundled tickets. Emphasising family outings could boost engagement with younger demographics.

Wednesday Promotions:

- The midweek spike, particularly among concession users, suggests an opportunity for tailored promotions or enhanced service targeting older demographics or specific community events. Could consider special midweek discounts or partnerships with local attractions.

Address Low Student Engagement:

- The consistently low uptake of student tickets highlights a potential gap. Implement targeted marketing campaigns, such as collaborations with local educational institutions or student discount programs, to increase participation from this demographic.

Promote Special Ticket Usage:

- Encourage usage of special tickets through event partnerships or unique experiences. Highlighting these options in marketing campaigns could attract niche audiences.

5.1.3 Day x Boarding Stage Analysis

The analysis of boarding stage usage across the days of the week highlights distinct patterns in passenger behaviour (see Table 10 and Figure 16). Saturday and Wednesday saw the highest levels of activity, with Callander and Loch Katrine standing out as the most utilised boarding stages. These insights present valuable opportunities to optimise service timetables and design promotions that better match passenger demand at key locations.

Table 10. Cross-tabulations of boarding stage and ticket type.

		Day							Total
		Sunday*	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
Boarding Stage	Aberfoyle	88	200	168	256	169	220	218	**1319**
	Balfron	32	38	35	58	36	53	59	**311**
	Callander	135	333	265	427	286	333	405	**2184**
	Loch Katrine	73	210	167	202	174	239	258	**1323**
Total		**328**	**781**	**635**	**943**	**665**	**845**	**940**	**5137**

*Note. Reduced service.

Figure 16. Distribution by Ticket Type and Day
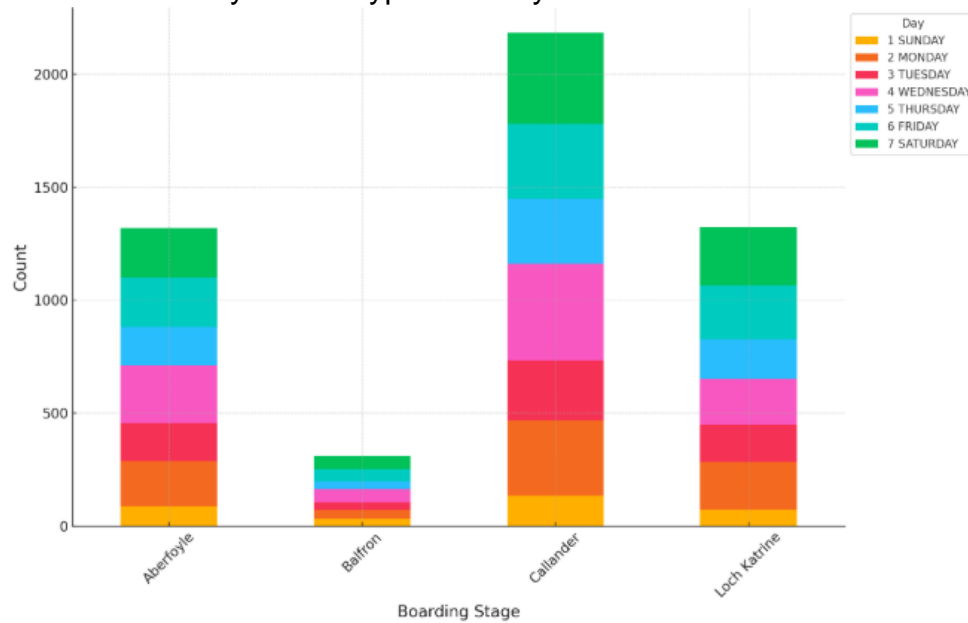
Weekly Patterns in Ticket Type Usage:

Highest Boarding Stages on Key Days:

• Callander recorded the highest total boardings (2,184 passengers) across all days, with the peak on Wednesday (427 passengers). This underscores Callander's role as a primary hub for transit, likely due to its accessibility and prominence as a starting or transition point for travellers.

Aberfoyle as a Secondary Hub:

• Aberfoyle is the second most utilised boarding stage, with 1,319 total boardings, peaking on Friday (220 passengers) and Monday (200 passengers). This suggests Aberfoyle is a significant regional connector, especially for weekday travellers.

Consistent Utilisation of Loch Katrine:

• Loch Katrine maintains steady usage with 1,323 total boardings, showing moderate but consistent demand throughout the week. Its peak days, Wednesday (202 passengers) and Friday (239 passengers), highlight its role as a destination for leisure or niche travel.

Balfron as a Smaller, Local Hub:

• Balfron recorded the lowest total boardings (311 passengers), with relatively even usage across all days, peaking slightly on Wednesday (58 passengers). This suggests its primary role is serving localised travel needs.

Operational and Marketing Implications:

Adjust Capacity for High-Demand Days:

• Increase service frequency or capacity for Callander, especially on Wednesdays, when boardings peak at 427 passengers. This adjustment will enhance operational efficiency and customer satisfaction.

Promote Aberfoyle as a Secondary Hub:

• Aberfoyle's strong weekday usage (especially Monday and Friday) presents an opportunity for targeted marketing efforts, such as partnerships with local attractions or promotions encouraging midweek travel.

Enhance Engagement at Loch Katrine:

• Consider promoting Loch Katrine as a destination for consistent travellers by offering leisure packages or highlighting unique experiences, particularly on its peak days (Wednesday and Friday).

Boost Visibility for Balfron:

• Balfron's lower utilisation suggests potential to engage the local community further. Marketing campaigns could emphasise its convenience and provide incentives for nearby residents to use the service more frequently.

Dynamic Service Adjustments:

• Monitor boarding trends over time to ensure schedules align with demand patterns and adapt routes to optimise efficiency.

6.0   Conclusion and Summary of Recommendations

The evaluation of the Trossachs Explorer demonstrates strong appetite and potential as a future bus service within the immediate area where the pilot was delivered but also more widely across Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. By addressing accessibility gaps, fostering sustainable tourism, and reducing environmental impacts, the service aligns well with goals to encourage better choices for active travel around the National Park. However, the pilot also revealed areas for improvement, including operational reliability, marketing effectiveness, and integration with other transport networks. Key feedback from users, non-users, and providers highlights the bus's benefits and the barriers that need addressing to enhance its reach and effectiveness.

The Trossachs Explorer showcased numerous positive elements, affirming its value as a sustainable transport initiative. Foremost among these was its ability to enhance access to remote areas of the National Park, allowing users without cars to explore scenic trails, historic sites, and local attractions. Many participants praised the convenience, reliability, and friendliness of the service, with particular appreciation for its role in reducing car dependency. The ability to plan linear walks, supported by the bus routes, opened up new opportunities for both seasoned hikers and casual visitors, promoting deeper engagement with nature. Additionally, the service made significant strides in supporting local communities and businesses by increasing foot traffic to tearooms, shops, and visitor destinations, ultimately contributing to the area's social and economic vibrancy.

The branding of the Trossachs Explorer also stood out as a highlight, receiving praise for its professional and attractive presentation. The visually appealing branded buses, clear signage at stops, and promotional materials effectively communicated the service's identity and purpose. Participants noted that the cohesive branding made the service easy to identify and conveyed a sense of reliability and quality, enhancing the overall user experience. These elements, combined with the bus's alignment with sustainability goals and its strong social impact, demonstrated the project's potential to be a cornerstone of sustainable tourism in the National Park.

A summary of highlights, or positive elements of the Trossachs Explorer, are outlined below:

Enhanced Accessibility
- Opened up remote areas of the National Park to users without cars.
- Supported linear walks, allowing visitors to explore more trails and destinations.

Support for Local Communities and Businesses
- Increased foot traffic to tearooms, shops, and other attractions.
- Strengthened social and economic ties within the National Park.

Convenience and Reliability
- Offered an easy-to-use, friendly, and dependable service for many users.
- Provided a practical alternative to car travel, reducing dependency on private vehicles.

Environmental Benefits
- Promoted sustainable tourism by reducing car journeys and congestion.
- Encouraged environmentally responsible recreation within the Park.

Strong Branding
- Visually appealing branded buses and stops were easy to identify.
- Professional and cohesive branding conveyed reliability and quality.

Social Atmosphere
- Promoted connections between passengers, drivers, and local communities.
- Created a friendly and welcoming environment for users.

Alignment with Strategic Goals
- Contributed to sustainability efforts and accessibility goals within the National Park.
- Demonstrated the potential to balance environmental preservation with tourism growth.

While funding and operational challenges may limit action, there is opportunity to refine these aspects, ensuring future services meet diverse user needs while promoting sustainable travel practices. As such, a summary of recommendations/aspirations for enhancement are provided below:

Enhance Marketing and Awareness
- Once bus service is registered, launch promotions earlier in the year, targeting hikers, locals, and tourists through social media, walking websites, and visitor centres.
- Build on existing efforts and widely distribute a visually appealing map showcasing the bus route, stops, and nearby activities.
- Work with partners to extend advertising to regional transport hubs like Glasgow and Stirling.

Improve Integration with Other Transport Services
- Work with operators to better align timetables with regional services for seamless connections to Glasgow, Stirling, and other hubs.
- Work with partners to explore integrated ticketing options to simplify multi-modal journeys.

Aspirations for Operational Enhancement
- Work with operators to explore improving access to reliable, modern vehicles, ideally electric and can accommodate bikes, to enhance user trust and align with environmental goals.
- Work with funders to attract funding to increase service frequency, especially during peak days (Wednesdays and Saturdays), and extend operating hours to accommodate varied user schedules.
- Work with partners and funders to consider more circular routes and additional stops, particularly in underrepresented areas like Balfron and Killin.

Expand Service Season and Coverage
- Depending on when funding can be secured, work with partners and operators to explore opportunities to begin services earlier in the year (e.g., May) and extend operations into the autumn to align with the tourist season.
- Work with partners and funders to consider offering a year-round service to support locals and increase environmental benefits.

Towards Enhancing Accessibility and User Experience
- Develop further signage and ensure clear, consistent stopping patterns, including request stops where feasible.
- Work with operators to explore introducing onboard features like stop announcements for first-time users.
- Work with partners and operators to investigate available fleet which will allow bicycles onboard to appeal to a wider range of outdoor enthusiasts.

Build Community Engagement and Trust
- Highlight success stories and testimonials to encourage uptake among non-users.
- Partner with local businesses to create mutually beneficial packages, such as discounts for bus users at tearooms or attractions.

Towards Bolstering Environmental Commitment
- Work with partners and operators to investigate the transition to electric buses to reinforce sustainability efforts.
- Develop initiatives to quantify and communicate the environmental impact of reduced car journeys facilitated by the service.

Facilitating Digital Solutions for Ease of Use
- Collaborate with relevant partners to facilitate access to user-friendly digital planning tools such as an app or online platform for journey planning, ticket purchasing, and real-time updates.

Enhance Inclusivity
- Continue to prioritise affordability with concession-friendly pricing while exploring additional discounts for families and youth groups.
- Work with partners and operators to explore integrated ticketing options to ensure affordability across zones.

Appendix 1: Additional 'other' responses

The table below outlines detailed responses for how participants found out about the Trossachs Explorer. They had the option to provide additional information for some responses and these have been copied and pasted directly from their survey responses; as such some errors in spelling and grammar may be present.

Response	n
If aware, how did you find out about the Trossachs Explorer? (Tick all that apply) - Other websites (please specify)	
Aberfoyle for everyone	1
email sent to Lendrick Lodge	1
Facebook	1
fb post National park and loch katrine	1
Google	1
Google maps	1
Google Maps	1
I work in the sector and always have an interest in sustainable transport	1
Lake Katrine website	1
Maybe heard it on radio?	1
McGill's app	1
PortLife website	1
Sorry I can't remember but it was definitely on-line somewhere	1
The TEX was mentioned on Walkinghighland when I was preparing the trip and choosing our destination.	1
If aware, how did you find out about the Trossachs Explorer? (Tick all that apply) - Other local business (please specify if possible)	
Deli Ecosse Callander	1
HPB	1
Intrepid, Aberfoyle	1
Leaflet and poster in Callander library	1
loch Katrine	1
Loch Katrine cruises	1
newspaper article	1
Post office Callander	1
Poster and timetables at our hotel (Dreadnouhg hôtel in Callander)+ on the windows of diferent shops in the city	1
Posters in Callander	1
Posters in Callander Connect.	1
Saw the flyers	1
Trossachs Holiday Park	1
If aware, how did you find out about the Trossachs Explorer? (Tick all that apply) - Social media (please specify)	
@lesswastelaura	1
A link to the Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park Facebook page via the Scottish Womens Walking Group Facebook group.	1
All the socials - FB, X, LinkedIn, Instagram	1
Brig o' Turk Facebook group	1
Brig o'Turk WhatsApp	1
Callander Community facebook pages	1
Facebook	1
Facebook	18

Facebook - Callander, Scotland Events and Information page	1
Facebook but also flyers and local newspaper.	1
Facebook post	1
Facebook, Aberfoyle for Everyone page.	1
Facebook? Shared on local page	1
I saw an instagram advert promoting the service.	1
Instagram	6
Less waste laura	1
Less Waste Laura	2
Less Waste Laura on Instagram	1
Lesswastelaura	1
LessWasteLaura	1
LinkedIn	1
Local (Park & Aberfoyle) Facebook pages.	1
Loch Lomond and The Trossachs NP accounts	1
seen on fb for first time today	1
Simply Emma on Instagram	1
Timetables available at Stirling bus station	1
Trossachs national park social twitter/X account.	1
Twitter	2
If aware, how did you find out about the Trossachs Explorer? (Tick all that apply) - Other (please specify)	
Bus stop signage	1
Glasgow Young Walkers	1
Google	1
I saw it	1
I saw it and made enquiries	1
I saw the bus in the area.	1
I saw the bus when out walking in Aberfoyle (having gone there on the scheduled X10 bus)	1
I see the busses in Balfron	1
Killin News window in Killin	1
Leaflet	2
leaflets, email	1
Local library	1
Meetings	1
News feed	1
Poster/leaflets	1
Reddit	1
Saw it in Aberfoyle and was curious	1
Saw the bus on visits to Callander and the surrounding area	1
Taxi driver mentioned reading it on Trossachs Chit-Chat Facebook group.	1
The bus driver	1
Took way too long to find out it actually ran from Balfron (brill)rather than Aberfoyle which we were led to believe initially	1

Appendix 2: Additional comments about trip (including weather)

Comments have been copied and pasted directly from the dataset and as such may have spelling or grammatical errors.

Response	n
1st trip - good weather. Today, 2nd trip - warm but dull with heavy rain by the end of the day. Both trips highly successful. Will definitely use again next year.	1
A rare sunny day	1
A very scottish weather, but shiny enough to take stunning pictures and fully enjoy our trip! The existence of the TEX was decisive in our process of choosing and planning our trip. We are very thankful ! I really hope this kind of bus will continue to exist and develop all around Scotland and Europe!	1
About 20 degrees, light breeze, short occasional rain showers	1
Avoided most of the rain for most of our walk. A fairly Scottish day if weather. Great day out.	1
Beautiful	1
Beautiful and sunny	1
Beautiful scenery	1
Beautiful sunny day and beautiful way to see and enjoy the scenery	1
Beautiful sunny day.	1
brilliant trip	1
Bursts of sunshine in the afternoon but constant drizzle throughout the morning	1
Bus is great but as I said previously it would be helpful if the service was available all year round and there were evening services.	1
Challenging	1
Clear sunny day	1
cloudy but dry	1
Cloudy but warm once we started walking. A bit of a breeze, which we were grateful for to keep the midges away and cool us down a bit while hiking up Ben A'an.	1
Cloudy, sunny, rainy with a bit of wind	1
Cloudy. Lots of low cloud, but dry.	1
Cloudy. I am not clear whether bikes are allowed on the bus if it isn't busy, or not at all. The timetable needs refining to adjust times at the minor stops where sometimes the bus is arriving too early.	1
Drizzle...I have been on it 10 times since the pilot scheme launch, enjoyed it every time .👋👍Please bring it back!	1
Drizzly rain.	1
Drizzly.	1
Dry and sunny	1
Dry and sunny. Another trip planned for next week with the grandkids	1
Excellent	1
Fair	1
Fair, cloudy, cool	1
Fair. I am disappointed with the standard of buses that McGills have put on this route. They are rattly noisy and prone to breaking down. They have left people stranded en route and given the Trossachs Explorer a poor reputation. This is so frustrating as the concept of the bus route is absolutely brilliant.	1
Fine day	1

Glorious. I live local & have used the service several times; with grand children visiting the area, by myself returning from Callander & also by myself getting to walking areas (Brig O' Turk, Ben A' an, and others.).	1
Good	2
Good	3
Good weather I run 2 holiday let's and really popular & important to have transport to scenic tourist sites as well as for locals - wasn't able to advertise it very well as short notice but will do next year	1
Good weather Would be good to have an official stop at the junction of the A821 and the road down to Gartchonzie bridge, where the lay-by/gate leading to the woodland trust part of the the great trossachs path where it comes down to the road. Although not far from the Kilmahog stop, it would be very convenient for people from invertrossachs road or the the caravan site. It is sometimes an unofficial request stop but would give confidence if we knew it would definitely stop there. It is a safe location for buses to stop in either direction.	1
Good, some wet days, mainly fine. Nice bus driver	1
Great day. Easy to relax. Good friendly and professional environment from driver. We all enjoyed our day	1
Great drivers. I hope the service made permanent or at least repeated next summer.	1
Great weather	1
Great weather. Better connections to trains and other buses needed.	1
Have made several trips, all good weather days.	1
Have used the service lots of times in different weather conditions.	1
I did SEVERAL trips!!!!!!! Weather - yes. This is Scotland, is it not. What a silly question!	1
I used the bus on about 20 days between mid-July and September to go walking in the NP, and as I work freelance I was able to plan my use mostly on better weather days. Just being able to get out there by bus has been fantastic; the personable drivers, and their driving skills on difficult roads, made using the service a pleasure.	1
I would like the Trossachs explorer to run all year	1
I'm very angry to wait for the bus wich did not stop where I was, under the rain, d'urine more than one hour, with my children !	1
I've been on many trips on the Trossachs Explorer so sometimes lovely and sometimes wet. As a local resident it has been fantastic having the bus over the summer! It has also been very helpful for the shuttle for walks and with canoeing trips from Loch Achray to Loch Venachar. The drivers are fantastic too! Friendly and very helpful.	1
INTERMITTENT RAIN.	1
It was a beautiful day and we rented bikes at Loch Katrine and cycled alongside the loch. The water was still as glass, and broken only by the Walter Scott doing her relay from one side of the loch to the other. A beautiful memory!	1
It was a beautiful sunny day It was lovely to walk a along the Loch side It was also nice to have something to eat at the pier side	1
It was a bit damp and as said before, the rattles on that little bus were really bad and need addressed if the service is to continue.	1
It was cloudy but dry. I think starting this initiative was great and the first year of operation will have really helped to raise awareness of the service. Now that people are aware of the service, next year passenger numbers would very likely increase. I would also say that the service started quite late into the season and could easily be started from May. The driver I had on my trip was	1

very helpful and welcoming and the bus ran on time and was clean and well presented. I really enjoyed using the service and fully intent on using it again in the future. Hopefully it can be extended to cover more of the park or other services can be introduced to complement it.	
It was overcast but dry. A nice breeze at the top of Ben A'an.	1
It was raining	1
It was very heavy rain unfortunately. The drivers were very helpful, patient, considerate and safe drivers	1
It was warm and sunny, we took TEX from Aberfoyle to Ben Aan and had a very lively day!	1
It's Scotland!	1
Last trip was over 1 year ago so the Trossachs Explorer wasn't running. Weather was fine, some cloud but no rain.	1
Little showery but overall nice day.	1
Love to swim the lochs in this area, you could promote this.	1
Lovely	1
Lovely day	1
Lovely. A very enjoyable trip.	1
mild. dry. Cloudy	1

Appendix 3: Comments about ease of use

Comments have been copied and pasted directly from the dataset and as such may have spelling or grammatical errors.

Response	n
At the start there were 2 timetables which was very confusing. We were stranded in Callander for several hours due to one of the buses breaking down.	1
Brilliant	1
Bus stops were in great locations Once I had timetable it was easy to plan ahead for buses	1
Easy	4
Easy	10
Easy - though the bus timetables at the bus stops / Traveline are not correct.	1
Easy to use timetable	1
Easy, though nervous as to reliability. This however was unfounded. The link to other buses was a small worry.	1
extremely easy	1
Extremely easy	1
Extremely easy as it has online timetables and also shows on journey planners. There was also info at stops and the driver was handing out paper timetables to ensure people knew when their bus back was which was excellent.	1
Fairly easy	1
Fairly easy. Announcements of stops would have been helpful for first time users as I did not tell driver where I was getting off. Driver was very helpful though. Some uncertainty over delays but again driver of other bus was very helpful.	1
Good	1
It was extremely easy.	1
It was perfect !	1
Pretty easy	2
Pretty easy. The web site is helpful. The buses seem to run on time. The bus stops are clearly marked.	1
Quite bad, its not very well explained	1
Quite easy.	2
Quite easy. It's very straightforward	1
Rady	1
really easy	1
Really easy	1
So easy and great service from the driver. Will be using it if it comes back next year	1
Super simple	1
Supremely easy	1
The branded bus stop in Aberfoyle was easy to spot. I checked the timetables online in advance and planned which return service to get. There was no mobile signal when we got to Ben A'an so I was a bit nervous about what to do if the bus didn't turn up at the stated time - but luckily, it did.	1
Vers easy	1
Very	4
very easy	2
Very easy	35

Very Easy	2
Very easy - excellent experience	1
Very easy - the bus turned up on time in both directions. The bus stop in Aberfoyle was very easy to spot.	1
Very easy although I couldn't find clear information online where exactly the bus stop in Aberfoyle was located which made me a bit nervous about finding it	1
Very easy from aberfoyle but no transport link from Gartocharn	1
Very easy staff are great	1
very easy to use *unsure what you mean by navigate)	1
Very easy to use, hugely convenient as a drop off option foor a local through route on the Rob Roy way we do every year with small kids. Great to alleviate the need for a car at start/end point.	1
Very easy with google maps	1
Very easy, although fare system was complicated but driver helped us buy a Trossachs duo day pass	1
Very easy, good bus timetables	1
Very easy, great information on the website and on the Google Maps App.	1
Very easy, the bus was running on time and the stops were clearly marked	1
Very easy!	1
Very easy.	5
Very easy. Convenient and timetables were very clear	1
Very easy. The bus stop isn't far from our home	1
Very easy. The first time we tried the bus didn't turn up but I think that was due to teething problems/breakdowns but since then the service has been excellent.	1
Very, I used the Midland Bluebird app	1
Very.	1
Very. I was able to use the McGill's app to pay for the ticket. Driver was very welcoming.	1
Yes	2
Yes	3
Yes, very easy	1

Appendix 4: Comments regarding what they liked about the Trossachs Explorer

Comments have been copied and pasted directly from the dataset and as such may have spelling or grammatical errors.

Response	n
Convenient. Covered the area I was j terested in.	1
A convenient regular service where you don't have to worry overmuch about timings to get there and back home.	1
access to areas that weren't available to me before	1
Access to hill walking.	1
Access to remote areas	1
Accessibility to areas of the park previously only accessible by car. Really great to be dropped off and be able to walk back to Callander and see lovely areas of the park rather than more restricted out and back walks around the town.	1
Been able to hop on and off when I wanted, stunning scenery	1
Being able to see more scenery than when driving, being able to do a one-way walk from home, very friendly and courteous driver (morning service on 01/09/2024)	1
Being able to visit places I'd normally have to drive to. Also I work at Tigh Mhor and was able to use the bus service instead of driving.	1
Can walk between stops	1
Clean bus, friendly driver and frequent service.	1
Comfortable bus, affordable, gets you to new places which lacked public transport	1
Comfortable, A friendly Driver, free with bus pass, tremendous drive, fabulous access to Ben A'an particularly.👍	1
Conductors very nice and helpful.	1
Connecting the central Trossachs to where I live.	1
Connection between Aberfoyle & Callander, and places in between (over the Dukes Pass).	1
Consistency	1
Convenience	2
Convenience and access	1
Convenient	1
Convenient and good for the environment	1
Convenient to me as I don't own a car	1
convenient way of travelling around the trossachs	1
Didn't have to drive or park, good service	1
Driver was brilliant! Very friendly and welcoming. Relaxed atmosphere and opportunity to disembark the bus floor a few minutes at Loch Katring provided inspiration for future day trips. With the cost of parking in the National park prefer to catch the bus.	1
Drivers very helpful. This bus opened up a beautiful area previously not reachable on public transport. I hope it continues next year.	1
Easily accessible with great stopping points!	1
Easy to find the bus stop, clear timetable	1
Easy to use, friendly staff, came on time, good price for the 2 people day saver, linked to other bus/train routes.	1

Enough services to be able to stop off at a few different places. Ideas and timetable on the website. Helpful drivers. Free with NEC.	1
Everything	3
Fast, quiet, convenient, nice driver	1
Frequency of service Good stop off points Watching the scenery, not the road.	1
Frequent enough. Allows 2 hours in callander	1
Friendly accomodating drivers, useful route.	1
Friendly driver. Good availability of bus timetable and great getting to places I normally aren't able to on public transport as I don't drive.	1
Friendly service Good value Easy to navigate the park without a car	1
Friendly service Pointing out places of interest	1
Friendly staff and I'm able to travel to my partners house much easier and faster.	1
Get to see the sites you wouldn't see driving	1
Good bus.	1
good service to places inaccessible without car	1
Great bus ride	1
Great route, timings	1
Great way to get to areas that can be difficult with the car. Also great to visit our friends in Brig o Turk	1
Having a public network when living rurally has been amazing, particularly for our children.	1
I can do new linear walks that were difficult to do with one car	1
I can enjoy the view and talk to others whilst exploring. Helps to sit back and relax. Helps with child who gets car sick and has no car sickness on buses.	1
I could travel between Aberfoyle and Callander on public transport	1
I don't have a car It was very useful transport to take me round the Trossachs National Park and to see family and friends and go to exercise classes in the Brig o Turk hall.	1
I liked that the bus service took us to places that were otherwise very inaccessible without having to use a car. I also loved the route as it was very scenic and beautiful.	1
I was able to visit new places which were difficult for me to get to before The bus stops were in great locations which made getting to the attractions easier	1
It allowed me to do a walk that would otherwise have required 2 Cars. It ran to time and the service as friendly. I will use it again and would definitely like to see it continued.	1
It allowed our large group of local Health Walkers to have an experience that we would not normally have done. Saves us taking car or asking members to drive over a route that can be difficult for people to drive.	1
It being provided; hop on/off along the route; good natured drivers	1
It goes to a lot of popular locations in the national park that were difficult to get to on public transport. It is reasonably priced. I also like the fact that Midland Bluebird ran it, as it linked well with their ticketing and subsequent onward travel on the S60 bus on a Saturday.	1
It is a brilliant idea and I was very pleased to learn today that it is to continue as a pilot for another year. Route goes through lots of our rambling group's favourite walking areas, so to help the planet we will use it instead of car use, and to avoid congested car parks. Also it saves on parking charges. On both uses, the bus drivers have been incredibly friendly and helpful, making it a very pleasant experience. Always ran to time too. A perfect solution. We will advertise it within our walking group encouraging walk leaders to choose walks that make the most of the service, so please keep it going.	1

it makes it possible to do linear walks	1
It meant we could hike lots of local landmarks in the Trossachs area, with regular bus services there and back. The drivers were all extremely friendly.	1
It ran exactly on time	1
It takes me to parts of the National Park that were difficult for me to get to before	1
It was just an easy way to visit without taking the car	1
It's a simple, easy to understand route which gives vital access to some of the park's most beautiful locations. It is also wheelchair accessible and allows wheelchair users to get out on a range of nice walks in the park! Very useful for when travelling with elderly family members who are less mobile.	1
Its existence connects my home in Brig O'Turk to Callander to catch the 59 to Stirling for work.	1
Locations it went to, Freindlyness of staff, ease of use.	1
Made it very easy to get to and from Callander	1
Makes National Park much more accessible without car. Drivers very helpful and careful when driving.	1
Makes point to point walks possible. Proper 'country' service - request stops possible. Helping to take some cars off the road, even if just for a bit.	1
Meant I didn't have to drive over the Dukes Pass or to gamble whether it would be possible to get a space a the Ben A'an car park.	1
No need to drive such a winding road	1
Not to drive	1
Perfect for exploring Nature, great that it runs so often thait is possible to get on and off during the day. I enjoyed both Loch Katrine and Callander on the same day. Perfect for turists!, Very friendly and helpful staff/busdrivers.	1
Punctuality friendly bus drivers, no driving for us to do, allowed us to explore areas we did not know about	1
Punctuality, transport to Callander which currently does not exist.	1
Quick, efficient, driver helpful. Bus fairly comfortable. I didn't have to drive.	1
Quiet, nice scenery, makes visiting the Trossachs easier for students without a car	1
Recommended routes and attractions on the website Quite liked it being green - makes a change from other buses in scotland Attractive price	1
Regular bus service & great for visitors to region . Less congested roads	1
Regular frequent	1
Regularity, not that expensive, eco friendly, stops almost directly at the begginings of the hikes.	1
Relaxing and enjoying the scenic route	1
Relaxing, see beautiful scenery.	1
Reliability	1
Reliable On time Friendly	1
See different views rather than having to concentrate on driving. Also meeting people enjoying the same trip. This includes the friendly bunch of drivers. Plus the reduction in pollution.	1
Seems to cover a good route for doing the kind of low level walking we like.	1
Small bus. No blacked out (sunscreen) windows so the views were wonderful. Rangers on the bus who were enthusiastic and very knowledgeable.	1
so convenient - great idea	1
Stops close to where I live and my destination.	1
That I didn't have to drive the road on Duke's Pass, that there finally is public transport access to Loch Katrine, the chat I had with the friendly bus driver, being on a bus with others who are travelling round the national park	1

That it existed.	1
The availability and the convenience.	1
The convenience of not having to worry about parking	1
The driver was pleasant. Went to lock Katrine had never been there	1
The fact that it was possible to get to the trossachs for people with no private car	1
The frequency of services and that buses run past 6pm. Also the connection to Balfron is helpful to catch the X10/A service onwards.	1
The lovely driver	1
The peace, the impressive views and the very skillful and friendly driver who makes the journey very enjoyable and fun.	1
The route offering different places of interest.	1
The routes and the service	1
the scenery and the easy trips to callander	1
the seancary and easy trips	1
The service connects parts of the park I wouldn't normally be able to visit and connects Callander and Aberfoyle which are very hard to get between without this bus. The service also connected with the X10 from Glasgow and the 59 to Stirling which made it really easy to access. The branding of the bus was really inviting and bus stop info also made it clear where to catch the bus. Linking together so many previously unconnected visitor attractions makes it very appealing to use the bus and it is a hassle free, more environmentally friendly way to travel.	1
This is an extremely useful service. The drivers are kind and helpful, and the buses are clean.	1
Took me exactly where I wanted to get to. Punctual. Friendly helpful driver.	1
Took me right where I needed to go and was extremely helpful since I don't have a car and couldn't have reached my destination without the Trossachs explorer	1
Very convenient and relaxing not having to drive	1
Very easy to commute between callander and loch Katrine pier, and all the drivers are very friendly	1
Very friendly driver. Very convenient. Good timetable.	1
Very scenic journey. Good driver. Allowed us to walk from Callander to Aberfoyle.	1
Volunteering at lendrick lodge with no car, the bus has Made it easier to travel and easier access to Callander and Aberfoyle. Giving more freedom to export the area.	1
We can visit easily our favourite hiking spots.	1
We do not have any public transport in Brig O' Turk so it's been fantastic having as my fiancé and I have been able to run to many places within the park and the bus always takes us home. The drivers are always so friendly and greet you with a smile. They also recognise us now	1
You could enjoy the views	1

Appendix 5: Comments about what could make the service better

Comments have been copied and pasted directly from the dataset and as such may have spelling or grammatical errors.

Response	n
1. Direct link to Callander (I didn't see anyone getting on or off at the stops in between) 2. A later bus would be good (eg. The Blues & Jazz festival next weekend and no transport links) 3. Aberfoyle does not have a service from Stirling after 17:30. 4. A stop at Gartmore en route to Balfron.	1
A confirmed regular service	1
A couple of services were cancelled which made me worry about getting stranded. More services on Sunday.	1
A fare structure that takes account of residents/visitors travelling only one or two stops. Not everyone wants to connect to other services or 'hop on hop off' at multiple stops. For return travel between a couple of stops, the day fare is too expensive. Driving and parking is a cheaper option making the bus much less attractive.	1
A longer season even if on reduced weekend only hours.	1
A more reliable service	1
A morning bus to Callander.	1
All year round service would be fantastic. My fiancé does not drive so the bus allows him to get his connecting bus from Callandar to Stirling for work	1
Announcements for stops. More regular services. Running throughout the year. Covering a wider area.	1
Available all year.	1
being available more in the year	1
Being on all year long even on a reduced timetable during winter	1
better buses that don't keep breaking down and which don't rattle and bang over the bumpy roads the whole way. More buses on Sundays	1
Better phone signal in the area or a way of getting in touch with the bus provider if there's an issue even if you don't have mobile signal. I was concerned about what would happen if the return bus didn't appear.	1
Better timetabling - link to Stirling in Callander Earlier bus from Aberfoyle to Callander More stops, for eg Loch Achray Hotel, Lendrick car park	1
Bike carrying.	1
Bus drivers checking you're getting on in the right direction - I accidentally got on the wrong bus because they were scheduled to arrive at the same time	1
By making the Trossachs Explorer available all year round.	1
Can't think	1
Continuing the service throughout the year.	1
Covering a further distance say from Balloch	1
Designated stops at local holiday parks for tourists.	1
Earlier start - maybe 09:00 or 09:30 from Aberfoyle. More frequent - there are a couple of 2 hour gaps in the schedule.	1
Electric buses - we recently did a walking holiday in Dumfries and Galloway, and the Moffat to Lockerbie service run by Houston's coaches was an electric bus about the same size - very quiet, and emissions free	1
Everything is ok	1
Expand the operating period to other months of the year	1

Extend the season from July to September to perhaps May to October, to maximise use. Also make Sunday's timetable the same as Saturday's. Sunday's is not a frequent enough service to be viable for a day out, and a lot of walking groups usually go out on Sundays. If they could tie in better with the X10 from Milngavie that would be even better.	1
Extended season.	1
Extending its use past 30/9 and more stops.	1
Extending the season and having a later evening one on Fridays to coincide with Brig O'Turk Tearoom evening events	1
Extra stop at the Three Lochs Forest Drive	1
Facilities for bikes	1
For it to run all year! PLEASE!	1
Going to Loch Lomond shores	1
Happy with experience.	1
Having it going from Stirling to the trossachs. Or Having a connection bus at a certain spot so don't have long to wait	1
Having it year round, or at least for longer either side of summer.	1
I am.sure locals would say more about this than I can	1
I found it hard to get any of the stops on it by public transport I did finish my hike a lot earlier than the next bus so walked along to loch katrine but it's not the beat road to walk on - no pavements etc	1
I noticed on several occasions that the Trossachs Explorer had gone or was just leaving as the X10A from Stirling was arriving into Aberfoyle. I recommended it to friends and visitors to the area, some .managed to get it but some were left disappointed as it had left. Meaning a 2 hour wait in Aberfoyle for the next one. A re think of the timetable should be considered or driver's told to wait until X10A from Stirling arrives.	1
I think we need the service all year round. It's a much needed transport link for locals and visitors. Later services would also be helpful.	1
I understand that the bus used is due to the the nature of the road between Aberfoyle and Callander, however it rattles so so badly. If the service has a longer life than summer of 2024, then this is something that needs addressed. The poor condition of the roads don't help, but the bus itself rattles a LOT. I think some of the marketing can be improved. It isn't clear why Balfron isn't in your marketing or on the website, despite the fact that some journeys start there. I suspect others might say that it should connect with Glasgow, however I think as long as it connects with either the X10 or the X10A, this is a reasonable compromise.	1
I was uncertain that it would remain in service. It definitely should.	1
If it could go through Gartmore would be better	1
If it could link to Port of Menteith	1
If it did a round trip and connected callsmder to Aberfoyle . Also good if it took bikes	1
If it had a screen or some form of showing when bus stops where approaching Further access to timetables and frequent buses	1
If it ran all year round, maybe a more limited service in the winter. From discussions I gather it has opened up routes for local people who could not otherwise reach them. Many people who live in the Trossachs do not have access to private transportation and are limited in what they can do. The Explorer has allowed them to broaden their horizons and must be having a very positive impact on mental health and well-being.	1
If it ran all year round.	1
If it was available all year around with more buses on road departing from Stirling as it would be easier doe people getting to callander on public transport.	1

if it was on all year.	1
If it were an electric vehicle with zero emissions and quieter	1
If the bus continued onto more northern parts of the Park such as Killin which is hugely underserved by buses but clearly has demand for it. There is the C60 service but this doesn't link well with the Trossachs Explorer. I would also suggest either another bus to Drymen and Rowardennan or extending the Trossachs explorer there as getting from east to west in the park is very difficult. Further, an extension to Rowardennan would open up huge opportunities for people to visit Ben Lomond which is hugely inaccessible by public transport (apart from the very limited water bus). Offering a Monday-Sunday timetable that was the same everyday would also make trip planning much easier. Adverting that McGills day tickets can be used on the services needs to be advertised more as this can offer a huge saving for customers who also use services 59 & X10/X10A. Adding buses that have bike racks such as those offered by borders buses would definitely be popular as well as USB charging and next stop announcements. A guided commentary like that used on tour buses could be a good addition. More frequent services would also enable much easier travel planning. Maybe another route running Killin to Aberfeldy would be a great way of helping people access the park form frequent bus connections there and also the very popular hills between these two settlements which are inaccessible without a car currently. The S60 service is great and I have used this to access the national park but it only runs twice on Saturdays which could be increased to everyday in the summer to increase connectivity massively. The Citylink services 978 and 913 operate passed Killin but do not serve it, perhaps speaking to Citylink and arranging for these services to serve Killin would be a very simple and convenient addition to the services (only adding 15 minutes to journey times - times may need to be tweaked slightly for the routes as the connect with other services currently). This would offer a morning and e	1
If the bus went more frequently.	1
If the buses were more frequent.	1
Improved marketing - its a fantastic initiative, well worth shouting about! Extend the routes once established. More buses on a Sunday.	1
It was pretty good really	1
It would be useful to put the name of the stop at every stop (because you never know when you are and sometime there is no signal to check our position)	1
It's already a great service, please this service available for a longer period of time.	1
keep it an all year round fixture	1
Keep this service as it's great way to explore without the car. Perhaps more frequent and additional routes to explore.	1
later busses	1
Live location app or wifi at bus stop due to lack of signal.	1
Make it permanent. So that people can rely on it and use the service effectively.	1
Making it a permanent fixture!	1
More and later buses. And longer than the three month trial. Callander has a hugely successful and busy Jazz/blues festival this year from the 3rd to the 6th October. It would have been very handy had the buses been running	1
More buses like this to other national parks in Scotland	1
More busses, extended timetable.	1
More choice of times. Start before July. Maybe May and June. And continue into October. More buses on a Sunday. To allow for more choice of fitting in full day walks.	1
more frequent and later evening service	1
More frequent service	1

more frequent service on Sundays	1
More information along the route from the drivers. A stop at Loch Venacher.	1
more publicity. I only heard about it mid August	1
More regular	1
More routes :)	1
More routes?...	1
More services on a Sunday	1
More services on a Sunday and later into the evenings in summer. Hopefully this pilot continues!	1
More services, and possibly tying in with more outlying villages (Buchlyvie, Kippen, Thornhill)	1
Not always easy to locate the bus stops (e.g Brig o' Turk). A photo on the website might help	1
Not sure if it stops between Aberfoyle and Balfron eg Gartmore?	1
Nothing	1
Nothing	1
Nothing it was perfect	1
Nothing sensible to suggest	1
Nothing, Keep it running please :)	1
Please can it be a circular rather than linear route. Connecting Callander the Aberfoyle via Port of Menteith. This would allow visitors and folk like myself to reach the facilities on the Lake of Menteith, allow locals to get to Aberfoyle or Callander for appointment, social activities, walking etc	1
Punctuality	1
Reliability. There is no point in promoting a service then not being able to fulfil that service. We were let down by the cancellation of the afternoon service, we were lucky that the weather was dry, and we had the resources to go for a coffee, otherwise it would not have been a positive experience.	1
Run a reduced service during the off season (sept-june)	1
Run for longer	1
Run for more time in the year	1
Run it through to Balfron every time, don't terminate at Aberfoyle several times a day.	1
Run the trips over a longer period. Also keep the timetable the same for every day of the week.	1
Running beyond the current restricted summer only season - Spring and Autumn also good for exploring on foot.	1
Running all year	1
Running all year, maybe via cock hill. Perhaps could have two circular routes in opposite directions, so locals can go via cock hill for work, quickly, and tourists can still access Ben Venue etc	1
running the whole year round, also a bit more frequent or convenient times, hiking is a bit difficult with the timetables given by the bus	1
RUnning through winter, More frequency	1
Smoother roads! Linking to Drymen as well as Balfron. Currently there is no service between Drymen and Balfron.	1
Sort bus interior fixtures that rattle (often very noisy). The Sunday service was of limited use for me (used only once when camping overnight, returning Monday) as there is no public transport connection to/from Balfron for the first outward departure/last return bus (the mid-day departure from Balfron would allow only around an hour in the Park area before the only bus back with an on-going connection leaves) i.e for a non-car user the Sunday timetable to/from Balfron is of little use because of lack of inward/onward bus connections to/from Balfron.	1

Start earlier 1st bus to Callander did not get into Callander until after 10am. It should be earlier to encourage locals to use it.	1
Stop at Lomond Shores and have a bin on the bus	1
Stop McGills from running it, their buses are far from reliable.	1
The explorer would be better if the starting place was at a more accesible place such as Milngavie since connecting to it would be far easier.	1
The key to me would be to run buses , at least at the beginning and end of the day, to railheads at Milngavie, Stirling, and /or Balloch for onward connections. Currently Aberfoyle and Callander are connected to the rail network by buses less frequent than the Trossachs explorer and which do not always connect timewise.	1
Timetable unrespected on August, 9th at Brig o' turk : we saw the bus more than 5 minutes before expected (15h46)and the driver didn't stop so we had to wait more than 1 hour (16h56).	1
To carry bikes	1
To continue the service!	1
Wifi on board	1

Appendix 6: Comments relating to 'other constraints' when not using the service

Comments have been copied and pasted directly from the dataset and as such may have spelling or grammatical errors.

Response	n
1 dog limit - how can I know whether I'm going to be able to make a return trip if I am constrained by an unknown factor e.g. another person onboard with a dog? Many many many people walk in the Trossachs with their dogs and this is a massive constraint to using your service.	1
Aberfoyle to Callander trip much faster by car as can go short route	1
Cost of connecting bus to get to trossachs explorer	1
Does not cover most of the areas of the national park, residents are left out in the cold again	1
End of season	1
I have epilepsy and live I'm Aberfoyle. I was so excited when I saw this bus service was starting as I often feel quote trapped with the infrequent and unreliable busses to Stirling. Sadly I've had to live down in Edinburgh currently as our house is being renovated. I hope to use this service next year if it's available.	1
I live in Port of Menteith and would love a bus link between callander and Aberfoyle via Port of Menteith A81. This alliws improved tourism links to Port of Menteith to support its Place Plan and attract visitors to use new proposed paths to Lake of Menteith, Inchmaholme Island, Karma Hotel and fusheries.	1
I was using a campsite which wasn't on the route.	1
It did not take bikes. We wanted to cycle from E Loch Katrine to Stronachlachar & then to our home in Aberfoyle and would have used the bus if it had taken bikes.	1
It was after the end of September and the bus had stopped running.	1
No reason I would use it when I saw it if I missed it I had to get the x10a	1
Not near where I live/commute.	1
Not the route I wanted to take	1
Require better connections with Stirling (please encourage Stirling Council to enhance bus access to NPA areas!)	1
Stop not located close enough to us even though we are local to the park - in Balfron	1
Travelling from Dunblane to Callander for work so not suitable	1
Unless I made a mistake somewhere, I did use the Explorer and it was fantastic and the driver (James) was so helpful	1
Wasn't able to find the time to make a trip this summer, but really hoping the bus comes back next summer so I can use it then!	1
Wrong route	1
wrong time of day	1

Appendix 7: Comments relating to aspects that would persuade future use

Comments have been copied and pasted directly from the dataset and as such may have spelling or grammatical errors.

Response	n
A circular route that included Port of Menteith and a sunday and more frequent bus service between Stirling and Aberfoyle	1
Already excellent.	1
As I said om the page before what I used it for so I would usually use the x10a from balfron to aberfoyle and then back again but with this bus added In it gave more times to be able to travel down and up. One good reason would use it if you put it back on next year my sister normally if we have appointments has to get a taxi as the first bus available from aberfoyle is after 9am so when this started there was one at half 8 which gave her time to get to balfron to then go through to Glasgow for the appointment and also it runs on a Sunday as the x10a for that day doesn't so if I need to get down there or other way round that was there to get on and get back and not be stuck very sad it's ending on the 30th September I even asked the bus driver will it come back next year he gave me the time table as said there a survey you can do also I like on the time table leaflet you put the prices of the tickets which normal times tables don't so never know prices of tickets. So PLEASE PLEASE start it again next year as it really helped. And so we can use it to go see the places too and even calender as we never got a chance to do that during the summer holidays so I give 10 out 10 bus drivers where always amazing so nice would even talk on the last run back home since I was usually only person on going back to balfron at that time so it was amazing to put this bus on I didn't know about it at first until the bus driver stopped in aberfoyle and asked what bus we where waiting on and said this one goes straight to balfron and cuts out gartmore which got me home quicker so please put it back on again next year I don't know why use are not running it all year I always saw so many people getting on and off it's such a handy bus to have since never been one like that I'm also making my whole family do this survey as well so the bus 10/10 the drivers 10/10 amazing wee bus	1
Better linkages to connections from Glasgow	1
Cheaper. Going places I want to visit. Access from city in comparable time as a car. More information on it. Links to other modes of transport or routes.	1
Departure from Glasgow Regular service Reaching and stopping in all areas of the Trossachs.	1
Didn't get a chance this year, but would be keen in future especially to facilitate one-way walks within the operating area. More info on how to get TO its various stops from outwith the route may help.	1
Discounted/inclusive ticket of connecting bus	1
Expanded route network	1
Extend to Doune & Dunblane …(there's currently no bus between Doune & Dunblane) and would then be directly accessible from railway., so all interconnected. Also gives access to Doune Castle, Dunblane Cathedral etc	1
Good value for money on return or day tickets	1

Have a disabled son living at Callander who we visit regularly from Port of Menteith. We would use bus rather than car for visits here and to Callander shops and cafes. This also links in with bus to Strathyre, and Stirling options.	1
Have a regular service passing through Drymen connecting with major conurbations	1
I had not heard of this bus until Friday 13 Sept. It would be nice if there was a bus from Paisley / Glasgow direct to Aberfoyle or Callander so that people could catch the explorer bus. Pity it was not advertised better, and now sad it is not available during winter and spring.	1
I have had an experience where the bus was early and did not wait. As a result I had to wait an hour in the rain for the next bus. The ability to take bikes on board	1
I HAVE used it several times, your survey does NOT cover that. Bus broke down on one occasion and all of us were somewhat stressed as a result. But last 2 trips were fine. Would certainly use it again next year if I could leave the car behind.	1
I haven't been to the park since the bus service was introduced. But now that I know about it I am keen to try it out! It's so easy just to jump in the car and go but schemes like this promoting active travel are crucial in our journey to net zero, but also to encourage people to get out and about and provide greater accessibility to those without cars.	1
I think the service is a great idea - if I could recommend something it would be to have a service that runs through Dunfermline as it was still difficult and quite time consuming to get to the bus from Dunfermline City. Dunfermline is a popular area but does not have great travel options to reach the National Parks or lochs without a car.	1
I use now and still will in the future I wish it lasted longer than just July to September	1
I use the Trossachs EX bus to get home from work if my husband is using our car. It doesn't tie up great with my next bus (59), so he usually gets me in Callander	1
I will try to use it now I know that it exists!	1
I would be travelling from Glasgow, so a combined ticket to cover the travel from Glasgow as well as the Trossachs Explorer would be great.	1
I would gladly use the Trossachs Explorer on future visits.	1
I would like to say that the Trossachs explorer has been a fantastic service & has had a great positive impact on travel within the park. I would like it to continue running.	1
If a car wasn't available and if faster transport links from Glasgow were available.	1
If it took bikes and also went directly from Aberfoyle to Callander via Port of Menteith on some of its runs.	1
If the bus tured up i would love to use the service! We arrived early at callander bus stop to travel on the 14:05 on Sat the 10th August. Between 13:50 & 14:30 the bus did no show up. There was no printed timetable information at the stop. There was no information on the website about any change to the timetable. I had taken a screen grab of the timetable before leaving. Over dependence on people having access to Internet only a QR code at bus stop and on website direction to download a specific app to to follow the bus. I don't have space on my phone to download any apps and no internet away from wifi even if i did. Main Problems: 1. Very poor communication. 2. If you want people to use the bus it needs to be a reliable service. This questionnaire focuses to much on my personal travel behaviour behaviour, rather than the actual service.	1

If the buses went in both directions in a loop via Port of Menteith myself and my kids would definitely use it. During the trial, Aberfoyle to Callander was an hour trip as the journey always went via Loch Katrine. I think it could be a fantastic and well used service, but it also needs to include the quicker journey between these two places.	1
If the Trossachs Explorer was made into a permanent service I would move to Brig O' Turk. As a non driver I would need to rely on my partner driving me anywhere if this service wasn't available. Over the summer there were two houses for sale in Brig O' Turk but as the bus service was only a pilot at the time I didn't want to buy a house and risk being unable to travel without relying on my partner.	1
If there were the odd service that offered a tour so I could learn more about where I live	1
If this could be expanded to increase wider communities.	1
If we had a stop closer by within walking distance rather than having to use a car to get to the stop	1
In my next trip I would be sure to use the Trossachs explorer. It is a great idea to make these outdoor spaces more accessible to people who cannot or do not like to drive	1
Live at Ruskie so daughter used the normal bus to go to Aberfoyle then used Tossachs Explorer to get to Callander. However this is a massive detour. Would only be four miles from Port of Menteith to Callander. Should also take in Thornhill. Also if bus varied direction at certain times would make a difference.	1
More awareness of it and it would be lovely to use for times when I'm not carrying paddleboarding gear. There's lots of walking and swimming to do in LLTNP, it would be lovely to be able to do that car free and enjoy some of the pubs after a walk or a dip. Plus, parking is stressful and driving home after a long day is quite risky when you're tired.	1
More stops. Service extended to April to October or preferably all year round, weather permitting.	1
Now I know about it I would love to go! I very recently got a my first car at 27 because it unlocks Scotland for me. There is just not enough services like this to allow me to properly explore the country. Transport options like this allow me to explore much more efficiently, and means I could also enjoy a beer in a nice spot if I wanted to!	1
Park and ride scheme?	1
Please please please reconsider your dog limit. Allow the driver some discretion. I understand there cannot be 10 x 50kg dogs on the bus at one time, but as many dog owners will have dogs that can sit on their laps whilst travelling, this should not count. Dog owners should be responsible for their own dogs. The majority of dog owners should know whether their dog will behave well on a bus. Don't penalise the responsible owners. Thank you.	1
So excited that this exists! Having not used it yet I feel like I can't add much to this question but I think keeping costs down would be very important for under 60s adult use? Price of a ticket needs to be low enough to get all people using it - not just those with a buss pass. Frequency must be reasonably important too. I would suggest that advertising the bus through the school system would be a great idea as the only reason I knew about the Explorer was driving past it on my weekly drive to swim at Loch Lubnaig. We get emails all the time from our primary school advertising various services that offer something for kids. Raising awareness of the service is key too.	1
This is a great idea! More of this please! I did not use today as I didn't know about it before leaving the house, so was unprepared. I am planning a retun	1

trip especially to use the bus from the car park in callander. So many fabulous options from one bus route!! Is the callander station road car park free now? The signage is unclear, but the pay machine is not working. Really important for the toilets to remain at this car park too. Some of the questions in this questionnaire are a little difficult to understand what is being asked.	
We would love to use this in the future if it's available	1
With more information I would like to use the Trossachs Explorer in the future. I think its a great service and better public transport is what we need in our national parks to encourage less car use	1
Would you use to link return journey if walking	1
Year round service from Aberfoyle to Callander both anti clock wise and clockwise round the circuit. Link to Balfron really useful for on wards connections too…..	1