

FAVERSHAM BUS USERS' FORUM MEETING NOTES

16 July 2026 at 11:00am

The Guildhall

Present: Cllr J Saunders (Chair)

Apologies: E Eyre, D Hawkes, D Keech, B Summers, S Taylor, R Wingate

In attendance: Rob Gibbs (Office Manager), W Bing, G Chambers, J Chambers, J Duck, H Everest, K Fortuin, R Gregory, R Guthrie, J Hamilton, M Harris, J Hill, S Hill, A Marley, Cllr R Newman, H Newman, L Padgett, D Pope, H Quinton, M Scott, M Sidders, M Tilley, M Wilkins

1. Chair's Introduction

Cllr Saunders set out the aims of the meeting, which included the seeking of volunteers to help set up a committee, which would hold Forum meetings. It was hoped that the Committee would work with, and lobby stakeholders, including the bus operators, and councils.

2. Key Findings of the Faversham Bus Users' Survey

Rob Gibbs delivered a presentation on the key findings of the Faversham Bus Users' Survey – see Appendix 1.

3. Local Bus Services Presentation

Rob Gibbs delivered a presentation on Faversham area bus services – see Appendix 2.

4. Open Forum

The following discussion points were raised:

- Other ways of communicating apart from a survey should be explored.
- Social housing tenants might be apathetic towards Council surveys.
- Communication with school children through schools.
- Bus route 3 was axed – can Stagecoach reinstate?
- Could the Hopper be extended to Selling – although the village has a rail service, the station is outside the village.
- Train and bus connections needed to be timed in co-ordination.
- Lobbying of the local MP as she had had some success in persuading Stagecoach to run an extra timetabled journey in the morning and evening.
- Difficulties of those on the outskirts of town getting into the centre.
- Morning and evening and weekends required improvements.
- Bus connections to Ashford required improvement. The first bus from Ashford ran dead to Faversham and the last bus from Faversham to Ashford also ran dead- could Stagecoach be persuaded to open these to passengers?

- Bus connections for new estates.
- Duchy and Brogdale developments and how buses will serve it.
- The priority for wheelchairs over prams was not being policed on buses.
- Issues with cancelled timetabled journeys on the X3.
- Services from Boughton being delayed due to refuge collections on Wednesdays.
- Health and safety issues of people sitting or standing on the staircases on the X3 due to overcrowded buses.
- At least a half hourly service on the X3 was required.
- Inviting a Stagecoach representative to attend a future meeting.
- The lack of bus services was having a detrimental effect on people's lives – lack of social life opportunities, taking longer to get to medical appointments, lack of transport to jobs outside town.

5. Discussion of the Future Role and Operation of the Forum

The following were agreed objectives of the Forum:

- Safety.
- Engage with residents – further surveys but engagement with all age groups including West Faversham Community Centre Youth Club.
- Setting achievable goals – including bus departure information for bus stops.

The following items were discussed for the possible operation of the Forum:

- Hold meetings at different times of the day to maximise participation – including holding meetings in the evening.
- Hold meetings in different parts of the town, including West Faversham Community Centre.
- Invite representatives from Stagecoach and KCC and take a constructive approach.
- Include meetings and feedback in the Town Council newsletter.

6. Setting up of an Interim Committee

The following attendees volunteered to help in the setting up of an Interim Committee:

R Guthrie, M Harris, S Hill, H Newman, L Padgett, M Tilley, M Wilkins

7. Future Meetings

It was agreed that Rob Gibbs would contact the volunteers to arrange a meeting to discuss the next steps.

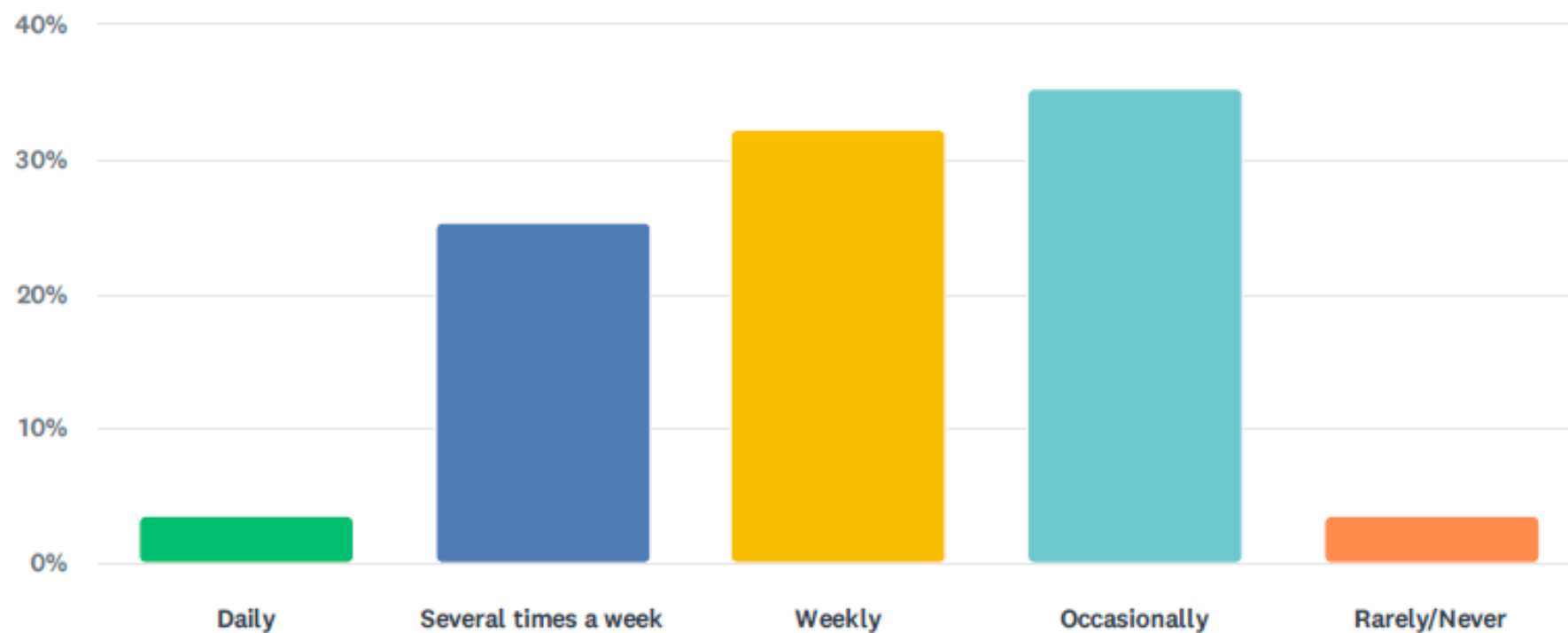
The meeting closed at 12:30pm.

FAVERSHAM BUS USERS' SURVEY RESULTS

Faversham Bus Users' Survey

Q1 260 responses

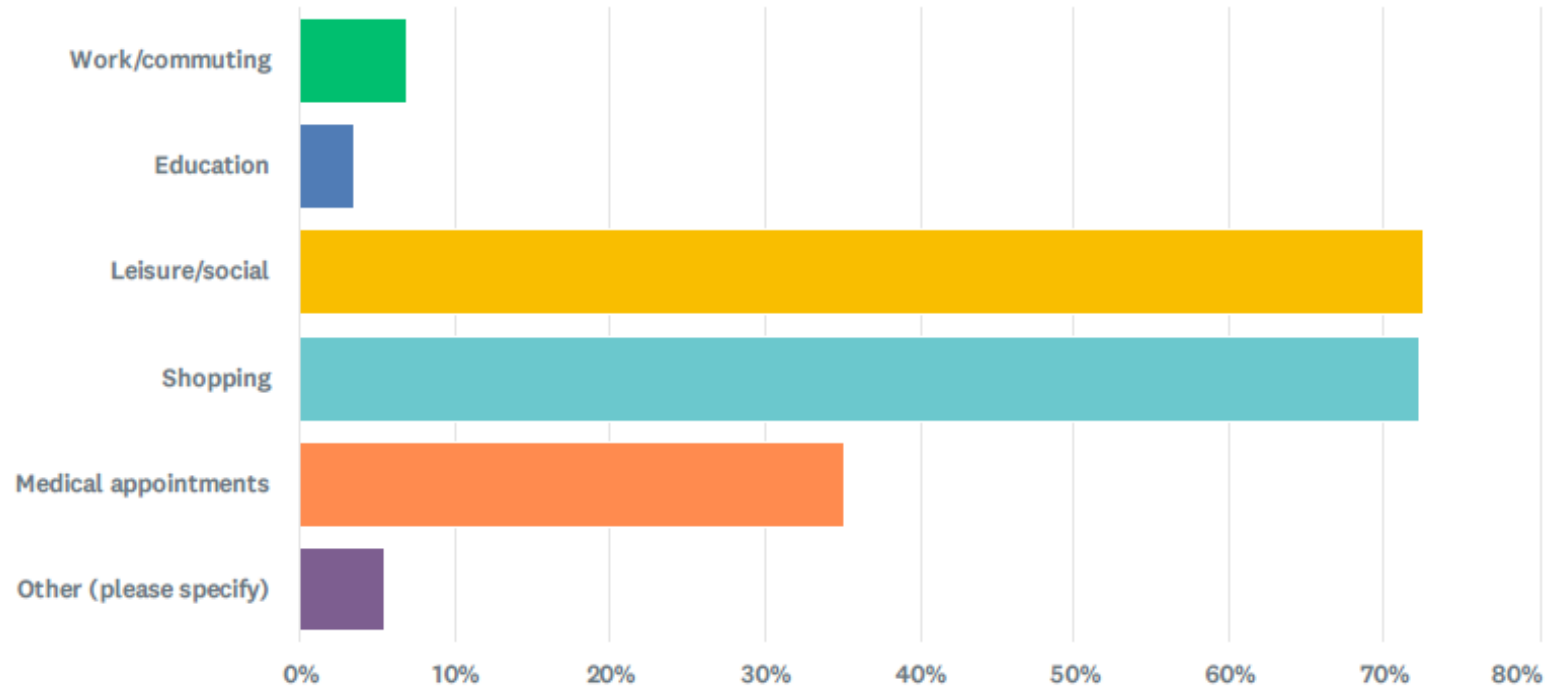
How often do you usually travel by bus?



Faversham Bus Users' Survey

Q2 259 responses

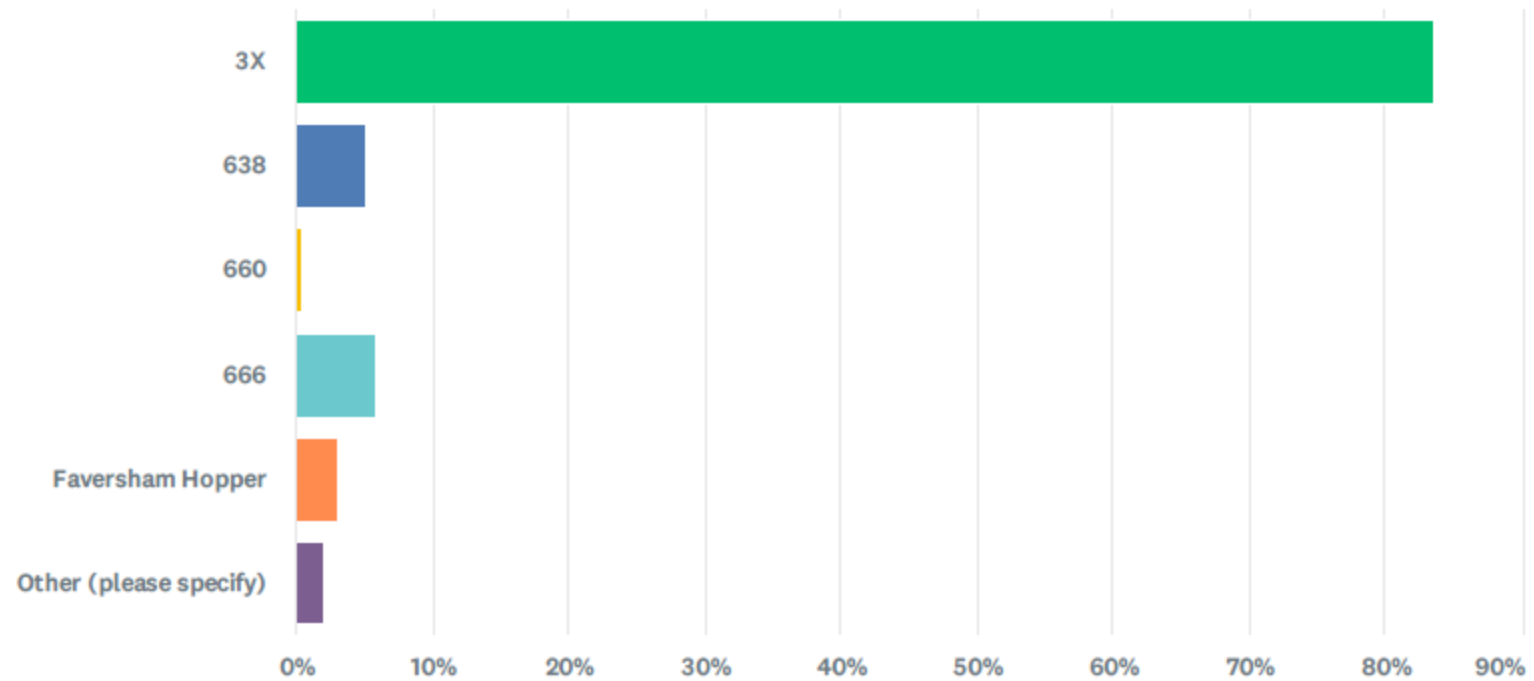
What are your main reasons for using the bus? (Tick all that apply)



Faversham Bus Users' Survey

Q3 257 responses

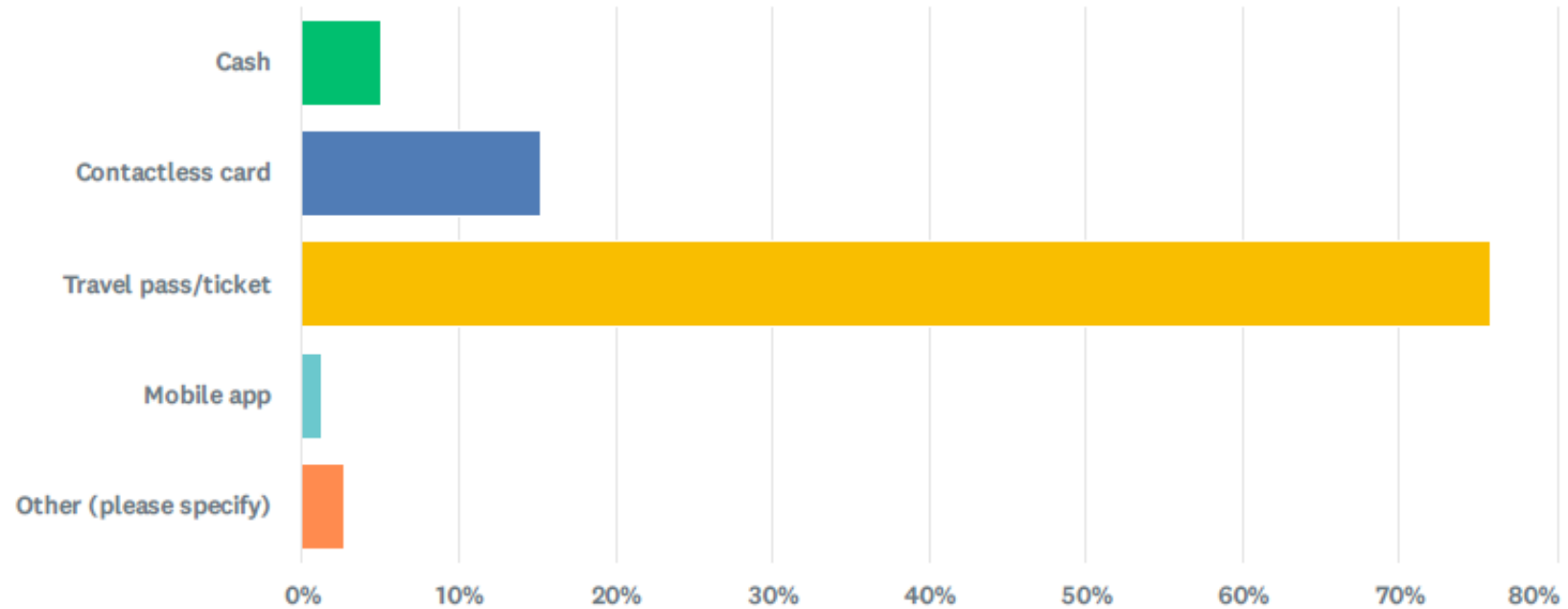
Which bus routes to you use most often?



Faversham Bus Users' Survey

Q4 256 responses

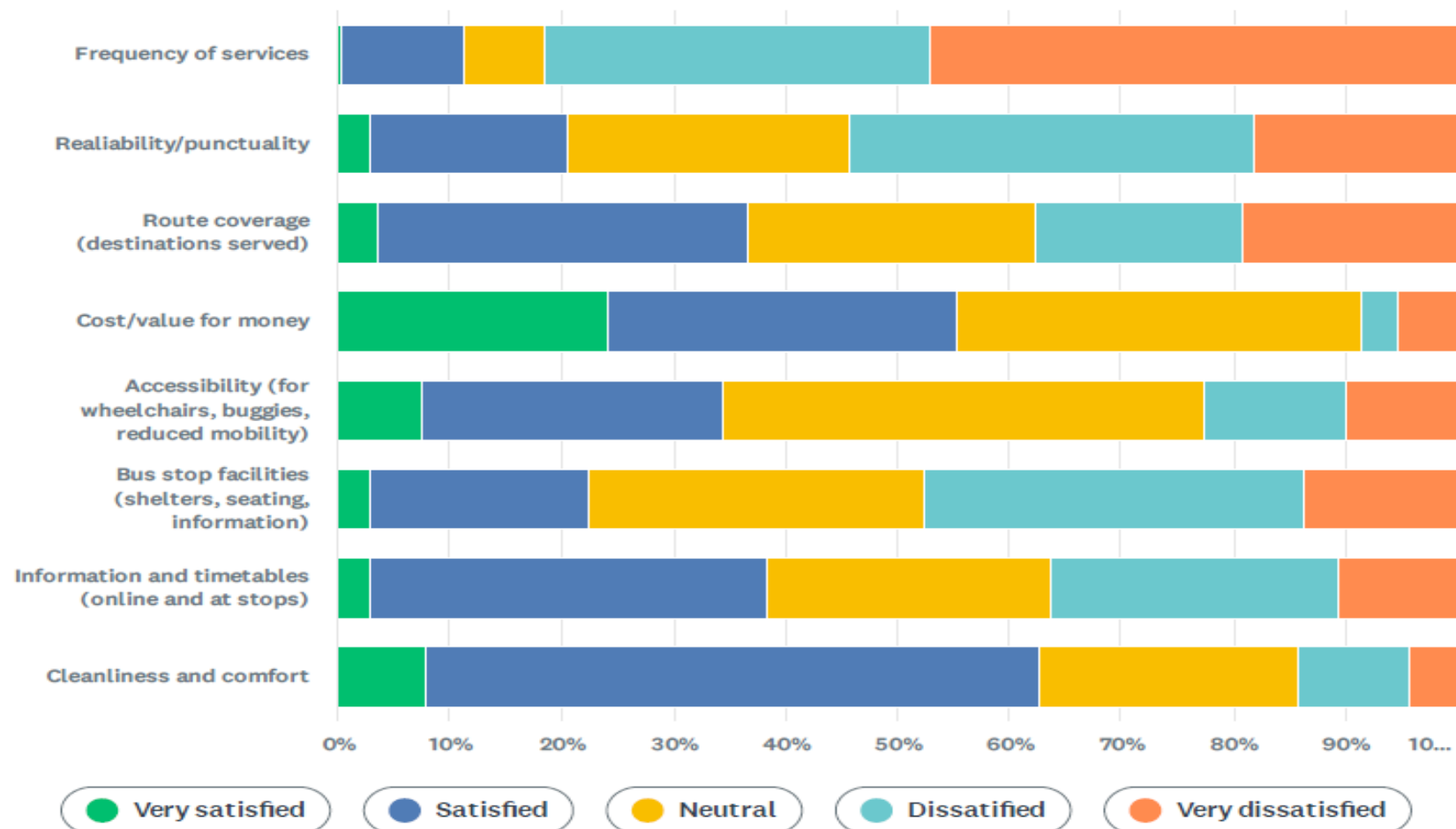
How do you usually pay for your bus journey?



Faversham Bus Users' Survey

Q5 259 responses

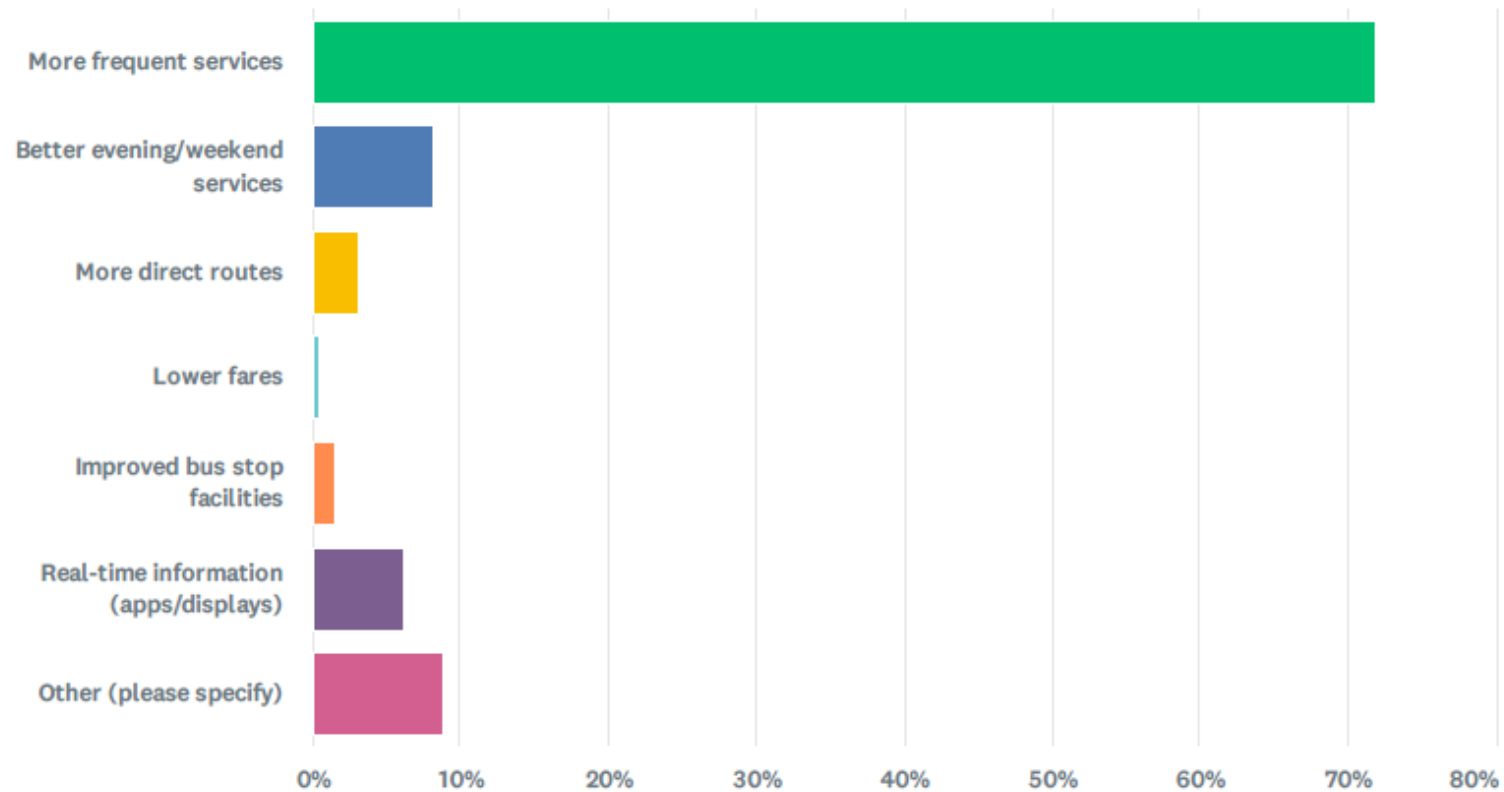
How satisfied are you with the following aspects of bus services in Faversham?
(Please tick one box per row)



Faversham Bus Users' Survey

Q6 259 responses

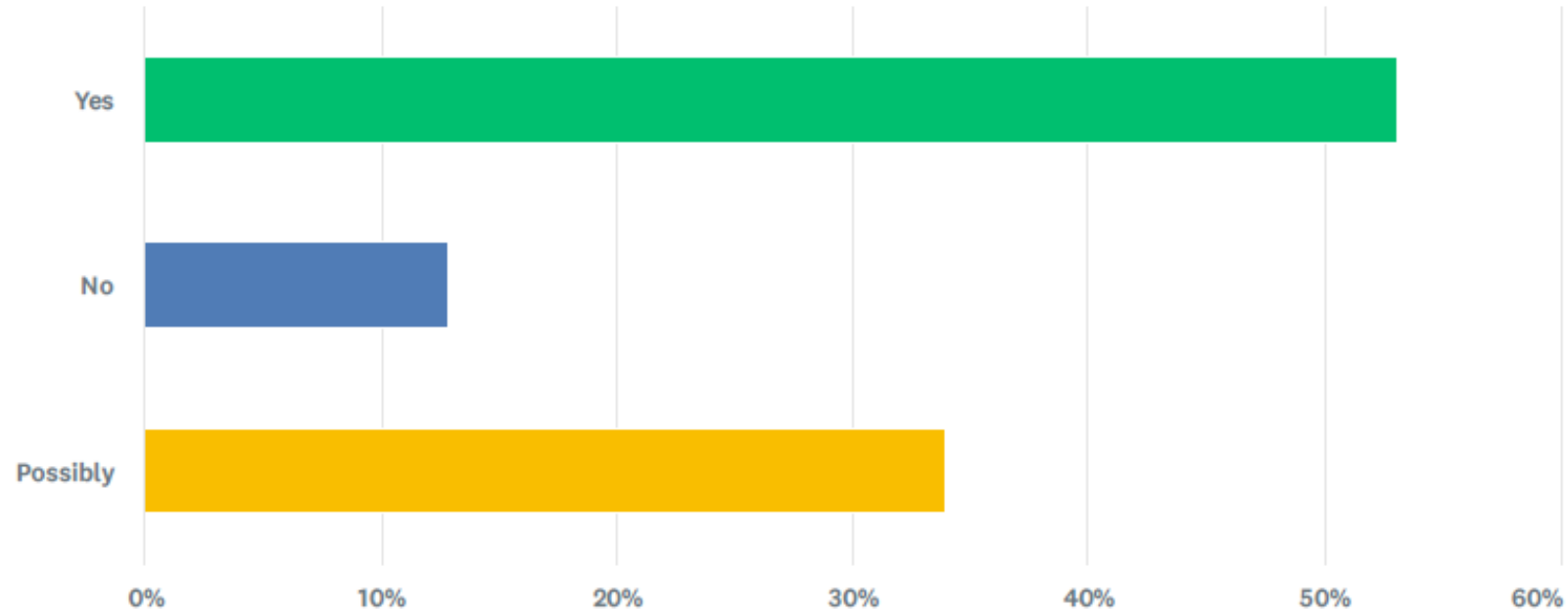
What improvements would make you more likely to use buses more often?



Faversham Bus Users' Survey

Q7 256 responses

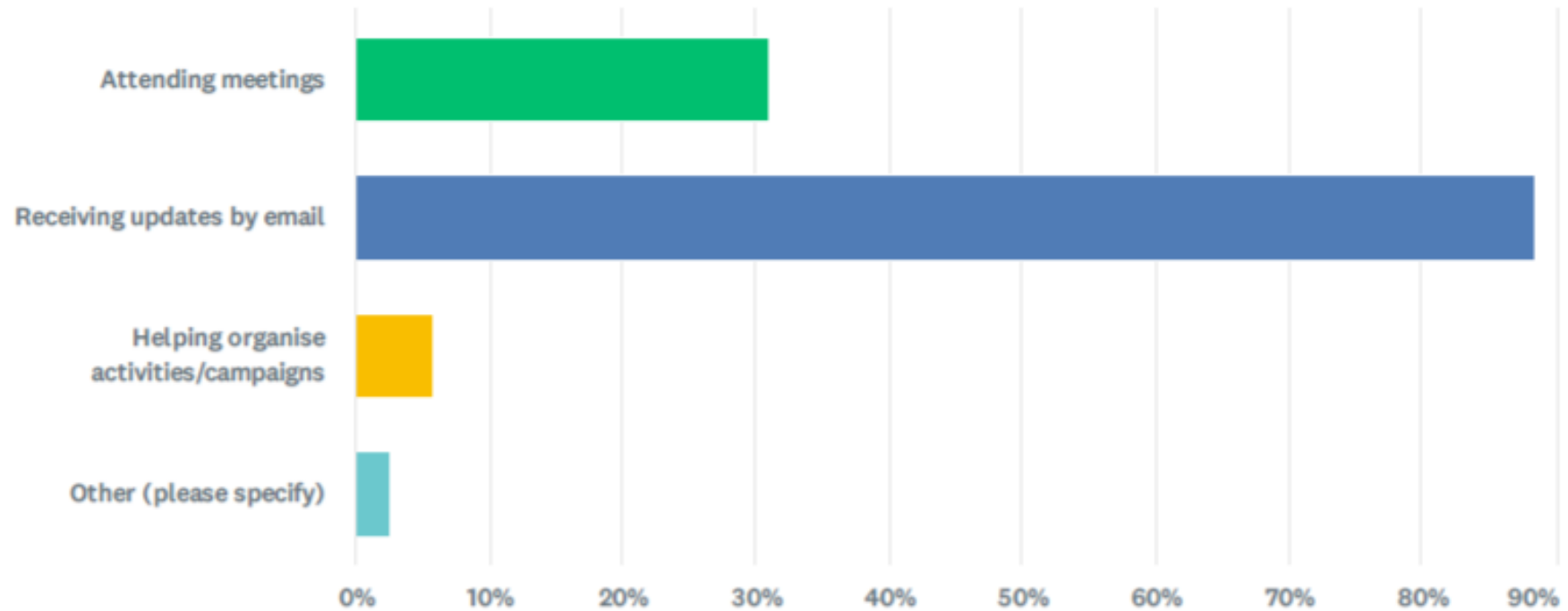
Would you support the creation of a Faversham Bus Users' Group to represent passengers and campaign for better services?



Faversham Bus Users' Survey

Q8 158 responses

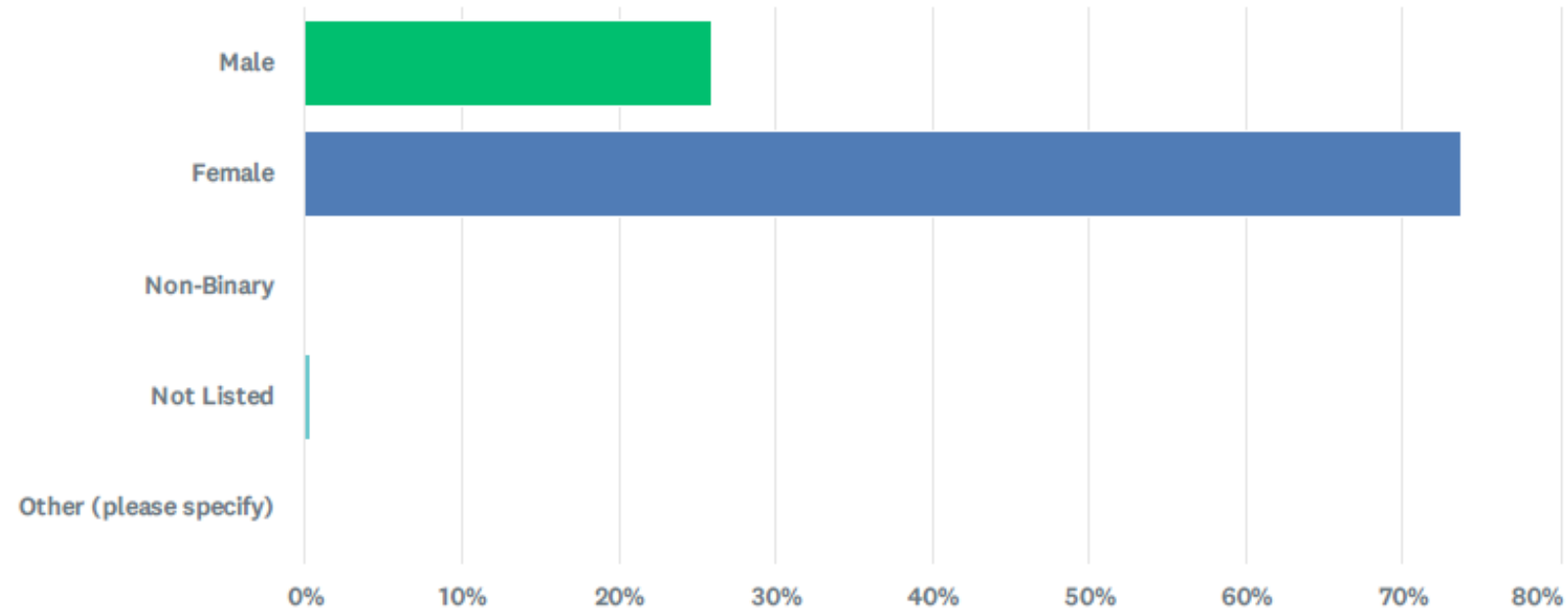
If yes/possibly, would you be interested in any of the following?



Faversham Bus Users' Survey

Q9 255 responses

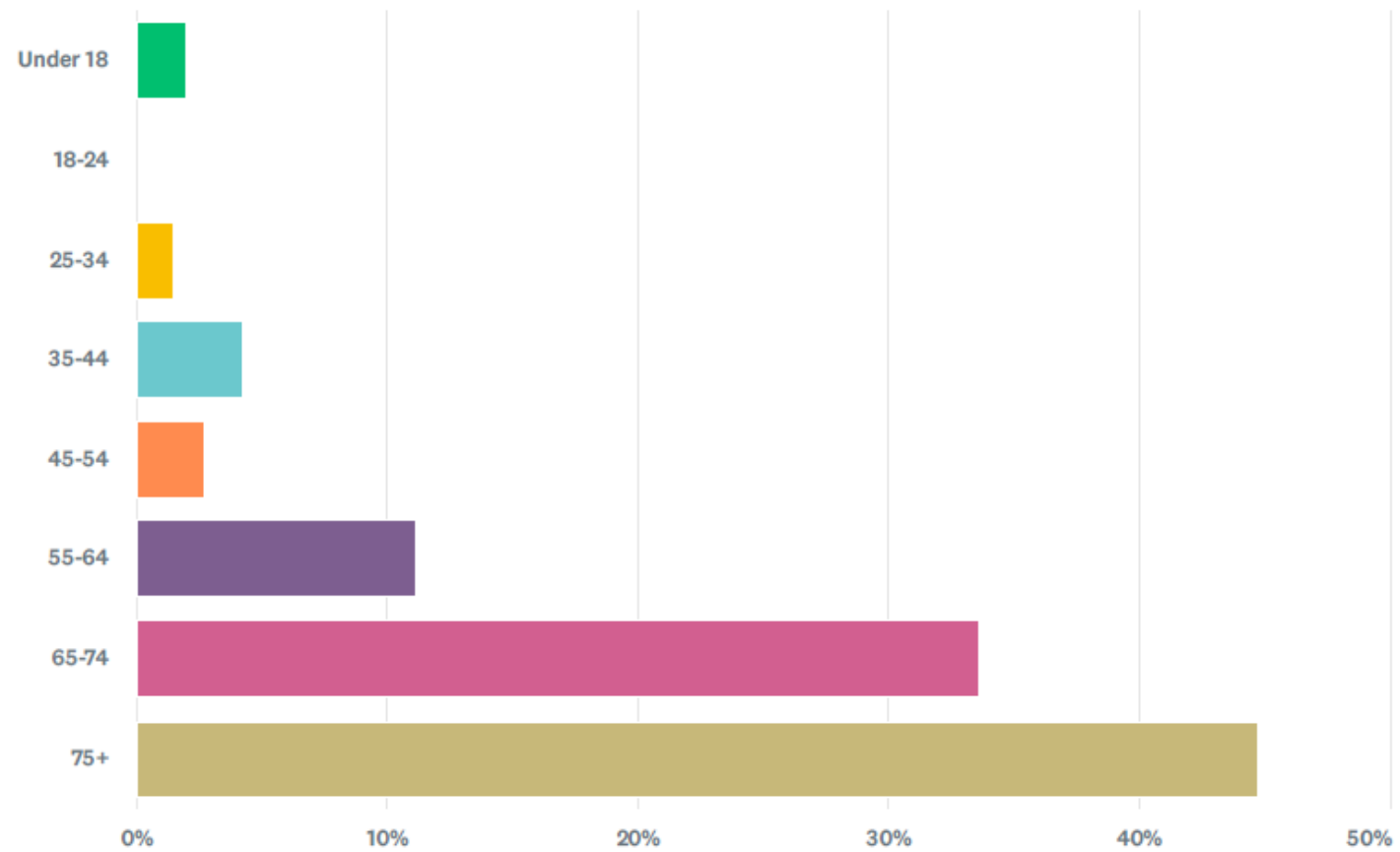
What gender do you identify as?



Faversham Bus Users' Survey

Q10 259 responses

How old are you?





FAVERSHAM BUS USERS' FORUM MEETING – 16TH
JULY 2026

Bus Services in Faversham

The role of Kent County Council

KCC acts as the strategic planner, infrastructure providers, and financial backers for bus networks. While private operators run commercial services, KCC manages public funding, subsidises non-commercial routes (to an extent), maintains bus stops, and coordinates concessionary travel schemes.

Key Responsibilities

- Strategic Planning:** Developing Local Transport Plans to assess community needs and coordinate public transit across their specific region.
- Subsidising Routes:** Procuring and financially supporting "socially necessary" bus services that are not commercially viable for private operators (e.g., rural or late-night routes).
- Infrastructure Management:** Designing, maintaining, and upgrading physical infrastructure such as bus stops, shelters, interchanges, and dedicated bus lanes.
- Information & Ticketing:** Fulfilling statutory duties to provide clear, accurate, and real-time travel information, timetables, and integrated ticketing options for passengers.
- Concessionary Fares:** Managing and funding travel pass schemes for eligible individuals, including older people, disabled persons, and young people.

Swale Borough Council

Local Bus Forum – virtual meetings where Operators and Councillors discuss issues in an open forum.

Faversham Town Council

Since early 2024 FTC has operated a community bus service connecting Faversham and the surrounding villages of Oare, Newnham, Doddington, Lynsted, and Teynham. The service is provided by a team of volunteers.

The services operate Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and from August it is hoped to run on Saturdays too (this has been agreed by Kent County Council, and the last hurdle is approval from the Office of the Traffic Commissioner).

The Role of the South East Traffic Commissioner

Traffic Commissioners oversee the licensing and regulation of heavy goods vehicle (HGV) operators, public service vehicles (PSV) and local bus services.

Traffic Commissioners can call a public inquiry to get more evidence. This is to decide whether to grant or refuse a licence for an HGV or PSV operator. They can also take regulatory action against an operator's existing licence.

Traffic Commissioners are also responsible in their traffic area for:

- The registration of local bus services
- The environmental suitability of centres designated as parking locations for HGVs
- Ensuring operators are reputable, competent and adequately funded
- Encouraging operators to adopt robust systems so there is fair competition

Current Faversham Area Bus Services

X3	Canterbury – Maidstone via Faversham and Sittingbourne (7 days a week)
3A	Canterbury – Faversham (One school journey each way)
355	Sittingbourne – Faversham (One school journey each way)
638	Faversham – Whitstable (Mon-Sat) KCC contract
660	Tankerton – Stalisfield (Mon-Sat) KCC contract
666	Ashford – Faversham (Mon-Sat) KCC contract
FH1	Faversham – Oare Circular (Wednesdays)
FH2	Faversham – Newnham – Doddington – Lynsted – Teynham (Tues, Thurs, Fri, and soon to be running on Saturdays)
Kent Karrier	Monday/Wednesday/Friday – KCC contract

Local Bus Operators

Stagecoach - Stagecoach is owned by the global investment firm **DWS Infrastructure**, which acquired the company in 2022. DWS is a massive asset management division originally part of Deutsche Bank. Prior to this acquisition, the company was publicly traded and originally founded in 1980 by Scottish siblings Sir Brian Souter and Dame Ann Gloag. Stagecoach took over East Kent Road Car Company in 1993, the previous historic operator in the area.

Regent Coaches Ltd - Established in 1970, is a third-generation, family-owned transport business based in Whitstable

Chalkwell – Established in 1931 as “Island Luxury Coaches”, has been family owned and based in Sittingbourne for many years

Faversham Town Council (Community Bus) - FTC began operating the Faversham Hopper in April 2024 to replace local bus services that had been cut in 2023.

Compaid (Kent Karrier) - Founded in 1986, Compaid is a Kent based charity that has supported older, disabled, and vulnerable people to overcome digital, social and economic exclusion.