

# Life in the Bus Lane

## Autumn 2002 Newsletter

### Low Price Travel For Yet Another Year!!

Following a third successful "Life in the Bus Lane" bid to the Rural Bus Challenge by Devon County Council, First Bus and North Devon College, entitled students are enjoying a further year of subsidised transport to and from college.

Instead of paying the standard annual cost of **£225**, entitled students at North Devon College and Bideford and Ifracombe Sixth forms can travel to and from college for just **£100** until 31 July 2003.

However, funding from the Rural Bus Challenge will cease on 31 October 2003 and therefore the "Life in the Bus Lane" Steering Group is actively seeking other sources of funding to continue the success of the project.

The number of students travelling to college by bus continues to rise. In 2000, 1035 smartcards were issued, in 2001 this figure had risen to 1173, and this year 1281 students have been issued with smartcards.

The smartcard entitles students to a "free" journey to and from college or their work placement, plus half fare travel after 6 pm on college days, all day Saturdays and



The lucky winner of the Travel Audit prize draw was Lauren MacDonald of North Devon College, pictured above receiving her prize from the Life in the Bus Lane Steering Group.

Sundays and college holidays on the First Bus network in the project area.

### Under 3 Mile Smartcards

Students living less than three miles from college can also purchase a smartcard. The cost is £100 for the academic year and is paid direct to First Bus. This smartcard entitles the student to the same benefits as those outlined above. There is no fee waiver for these cards.

**It is not too late to apply for a smartcard** - just call into the Travel Centre in A23 and ask for an application form. From January 2003 smartcards will cost £66 for the remainder of the academic year up to 31 July 2003.

### Travel Audit Prize Draw

In March 2002 a transport questionnaire was sent out to all full time students. The results were used to produce a Travel Audit and Report for the "Life in the Bus Lane" project. Students who completed the questionnaire were entered for a prize draw for £25 of gift vouchers from S n V music shop in Barnstaple.

### College Travel Co-ordinator

Marcia Clayton, the College Travel Co-ordinator, is situated in the Travel Centre (A23) at North Devon College. If you have any problems connected with transport Marcia should be your first contact and she will do her best to help.

## Retail Discounts

Don't forget you can use your smartcard to obtain retail discounts from 94 local businesses! A leaflet is available from the Travel Centre at NDC.

## Student Focus Group

If you would like the opportunity to discuss any problems you are having with your transport, or to suggest any ideas you have for improving the bus services then you may be interested in joining the Student Transport Focus Group. This group meets once a term, with a representative from First Bus who will answer any queries you may have. If you would be interested in joining the group please call into the Travel Centre in A23 and have a chat with Marcia, the College Travel Co-ordinator.

**The photograph below was taken at the Student Focus Group meeting held in November 2002.**



## Success of "Life in the Bus Lane"

Since the project commenced in September 2000, "Life in the Bus Lane" has been successful in the following awards:

In November 2001 the "Life in the Bus Lane" project was shortlisted in three categories, from 130 projects, in the Bus Industry Awards. "Life in the Bus Lane" received the "Runners Up" award for the "Buses in the Countryside" category and was "Highly Commended" for the "Schlumberger Sema Award for Innovation" and also for the "Marketing Award for Local Authorities". The "Runners Up" prize, a glass bowl is displayed at North Devon College.

In Spring 2002 "Life in the Bus Lane" came first in the transport category of the S W Regional Development Agency "Hand in Hand Award". The overall winner of the Award is to be announced early in 2003.

In November 2002, "Life in the Bus Lane" was shortlisted as a finalist in the environmental category of the Institute of Logistics and Transport's Annual Award for Excellence.

## Changes to Bus Routes in 2002

### Smartcards for Cornish Students

From September 2002 students from Bude have been able to purchase smartcards. In the past these students travelled to North Devon College on contract coaches and did not enjoy the benefits of a smartcard. However, now that this service is operated by First Bus the students can use smartcards enabling them to travel home earlier in the day or travel in to college later if their timetable allows this.

**Holsworthy** - Students from the Holsworthy area also now travel in by First Bus and can travel home during the day at no extra charge. A later journey at 1740 is also now available from Barnstaple to Holsworthy.

**Lynton** - Following problems of overloading at Bratton Fleming last year changes have been made to bus services on this route. Service 309 now travels from Lynton - through Parracombe - Blackmoor Gate - Arlington - and Shirwell to North Devon College and service 310 travels from Blackmoor Gate via Bratton Fleming to North Devon College.

**Witheridge** - Extra students in this area meant that the current minibus was no longer adequate. In the mornings these students now travel on First service 346 to South Molton where they **must** change to the service 307 bus. The students return on the 346 in the afternoons.

Other services experiencing overloading are being monitored and improvements made where possible.

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## Partnership of



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