

How does the success of a Community Rail Partnership increase over time and how big a role do other factors have on the success of these lines?

Abstract

Community Rail Partnerships are a relatively new phenomenon in Britain's railway history. From an industry perspective they are universally seen as a positive aspect of a business which was once in gradual decline but is currently undergoing what some have called 'a renaissance' (Railnews, 2007). But just how successful are these Partnerships from the perspective of the passengers using the services on which they focus? This project sets out to establish just how passengers feel about these services and the impact Community Rail Partnerships are having on them.

Two lines have been picked which broadly share the same characteristics and a survey conducted amongst passengers to act as case studies for Community Rail Partnerships generally. A conclusion has then been reached as to whether the Partnerships in question have been successful and whether it is time or other factors which are the reasons for this success. Recommendations have then been established for other Community Rail Partnerships to benefit from the outputs of this study.

Contents

Abstract	1
Introduction.....	3
Background Information on the two lines surveyed.....	5
The St Albans Abbey Line.....	5
The Marston Vale Line (Bedford-Bletchley)	6
Review of Literature	7
Research Questions	12
Methods & Ethics.....	14
Questionnaire Survey Results	17
Personal Details	18
Quality of Service.....	25
Role the Service Plays in the Local Community.....	31
Multiple Response Tables.....	35
Questionnaire Results Analysis.....	39
Interpretation of Results & Analysis.....	44
Recommendations	47
Appendices	49
Appendix 1; Interview Matrix	49
Appendix 2; Blank Questionnaire	51
Appendix 3; Questionnaire Cover Letter.....	53
Appendix 4; Signed Declaration.....	54
Appendix 5; List of Tables	55
References	56

Introduction

In a relatively densely populated country such as Great Britain railways are an important way of transporting large numbers of people, quickly and efficiency. However, many rail services, particularly across rural Britain, are frequently threatened with closure, mainly due to their low patronage but also the high cost of running these services when they are often lightly used. Whenever one of these services is threatened with closure there is often a strong outcry from the local community and the Beeching cuts of the 1960s showed just how many people will come out in support of their local railway (Banister *et al*, 1981). If it were possible to harness this support when the service is not under threat it may be possible to make the most of these services in order to make them both cost effective and a vital part of the communities they serve.

If the local community can be involved in the running of a rail service, it is thought that it is more likely that it will be better valued and supported. But passengers do have their say on the running of their local services in the form of Rail User Groups and Associations. These provide passengers with the opportunity to provide feedback to Train Operating Companies (TOCs) regarding the service. This however is a very one way process with Rail User Groups being only able to offer their opinion on the quality of service and not having an active role in the running of their local line.

This is where Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) come in. The history of CRPs goes back to the late 1990s when a need was identified to help protect and develop the railway lines (mainly rural branch lines) that had 'survived Beeching, overcome the threat of closure in the 1980s and weathered the storms of privatisation' (ACoRP, 1007). CRPs combine the Rail User Group with other stakeholders including the TOC, Network Rail, local Councils, businesses in the local area and other groups and organisations that have an interest in the railway (Interviews with CRP Officers). The first unofficial CRP was established in 1997 but it was not until 2004 that the government published their Community Development Strategy, outlining the approach they believed CRPs should take (Department for Transport, 2007).

This report led to the announcement of the first official CRPs to be designated and unveiled in 2004. The brainchild of the SRA, the first Pilot schemes; the St Ives branch in Cornwall, the Esk Valley line in North Yorkshire and the St Albans Abbey line were launched on the 6th July 2005. These were the first three of six pilot lines which would each focus on different aspects of rural services. Following the successful introduction of these lines other lines were examined as to their potential to be classified as Community Rail Partnerships. From this came the split in classification of either 'Full Designation' or 'Service Designation'. 'Full Designation' focuses on the rail service and the infrastructure that it runs on, 'Service Designation' focuses purely on the passenger service and any improvements that can be made to this.

In order to answer the research question, two lines have been chosen in order to offer a comparison of passengers views of the services. A questionnaire survey will be conducted on both lines and interviews with representatives from both lines carried out to add some context to the questionnaire results. Services on both lines are run by the same company, Silverlink Train Services (now London Midland), the infrastructure is owned by Network Rail and both lines have CRPs. The main difference between the two lines is that the CRP on the St Albans Abbey line was formed in 2005 and the Marston Vale CRP in 2006. It is hoped that this difference in timeframe will show whether time has a part to play in the success of CRPs or whether other factors are key.

Background Information on the two lines surveyed

The St Albans Abbey Line

The St Albans Abbey line is 6.5 miles long and runs from Watford Junction to St Albans Abbey in the County of Hertfordshire. The line was part of a planned route to Luton and Dunstable but the opening of the Midland Mainline through St Albans removed the need for this and the line only reached as far as its current terminus at St Albans Abbey station, opening throughout in 1858. In 1966 a line was opened from Hatfield to St Albans Abbey which doubled the stations usage and required the building of extensive sidings at St Albans Abbey to cope with the increase in freight traffic.

Passenger traffic ceased on the Hatfield to St Albans part of the route in 1951 and the track was lifted in the 1960s making the line from Watford the only user of St Albans Abbey station. This line also suffered from the Beeching cuts as a passing loop which enabled two trains to operate on the branch at once was removed in 1966. Since then there has been repeated threats to close the line altogether but these have been met with strong local opposition. Abfly (The Abbey Flyer Rail User Group) was formed in the 1980s to stand against any future proposals to shut the line. The strong support for the line was one of the main reasons for choosing the line as a Pilot Community Rail Partnership (Abfly, 2007).

The St Albans Abbey line was given 'Full Designation' as a Community Rail Partnership as one of its Pilot schemes in 2005. This 'Full Designation' means that not only is the service the focus for development, the infrastructure is also targeted. One of the main reasons for this route being given 'Full Designation' was that passenger services are the sole users of this line, as there is no freight traffic. This line was targeted as a Pilot line as the estimated cost for a passing loop to increase the service was extremely high in comparison to the patronage on the route. The aim of this Pilot scheme is to seek a lower cost solution to increasing services as it has been identified that a local branch line should not be bound by the high standards that a mainline would be subject to when upgrading infrastructure.

The Marston Vale Line (Bedford-Bletchley)

The Marston Vale line runs for 16.5 miles through the county of Bedfordshire and connects the Midland Mainline at Bedford with the West Coast Mainline at Bletchley. The route was opened in 1846 and was gradually extended to the East and West to form a cross country link between the University towns of Oxford and Cambridge. The railway survived the Beeching report but 1967 spelled the end as British Railways decided to close the Eastern and Western ends of the route. By the start of 1968 the only remaining section was the Marston Vale and despite repeated threats of closure the line continues to this day.

It was the threat of closure in 1980 which sparked the formation of the BBRUA (Bedford to Bletchley Rail Users' Association). This voluntary group formed with the aim of 'breathing new life into the railway' and in 2001 had attracted over 500 members and forged good working relationships with rail managers and local authorities' representatives. The popularity of this group was one of the main factors in the formation in November 2006, of a Community Rail Partnership on this line (BBRUA, 2006).

As the Marston Vale line is used by a number of freight trains the Community Rail Partnership has received 'Service Designation'. This means that the role of the Partnership is purely to focus on the provision of passenger services over the line and this must not interfere with the lines use by freight trains. Although not designated as a Pilot scheme, the Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership is intended to learn from the achievements of the Pilot schemes and apply these lessons where they are appropriate.

Review of Literature

Before attempting to conduct a research project into Community Rail Partnerships it is important to identify the existing literature already available on the subject so as to ensure that my research is unique and offers a new perspective on the issue. The issue of sustainability proved a good starting point when attempting to research the issue of Community Rail as involving the community is often at the heart of sustainable projects. Indeed, the West Midlands European Network states that ‘management and ownership [of projects] by the community creates a will to succeed’ (WMEURONET, 2007)

Sustainability was first described in the Brundtland Report (1987) as that which “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs” (Shawcroft, 1995). This is an important element of sustainability and rail travel, with the environmental advantages it has over other forms of transport means that it complies with this form of sustainability. Cloke *et al* highlights the current importance of sustainability by saying that it has risen to the status of ‘global buzzword’ and this is supported by Banister *et al* when he states that sustainable development is a ‘global concept’.

Cloke *et al* goes on to say that the potential for sustainability ‘can be diminished if it is taken to mean all things to all people’ and this is one of the main criticisms of the increasing popularity of the term. A given commodity or service may be sustainable environmentally but not financially or vice versa making truly sustainable projects relatively ‘rare and often impractical’.

In the past sustainability has not been a key feature of Britain’s railways. The Beeching reports of the 1960s, specifically the report entitled ‘The Reshaping of British Railways’ proved that Britain’s Railways were not sustainable by highlighting the need to turn an ageing, inefficient and subsidised railway into ‘a modern, economically sufficient and profit making transport system’ (The Beeching Report, 1963).

This situation has since changed and although the word sustainability is not overtly present in the railway press the overwhelming theme throughout railway publications is the need for railways to 'pay for themselves' (Rail Professional, Nov 2007). In order to continue to 'pay for themselves' Britain's railways need to be sustainable in terms of their 'appeal to customers, their opportunity to reduce road congestion and their social impact' (Austin Smyth, 2003). The current environmental attraction should be 'fully appreciated' in the short term in order for railways to continue to operate successfully in the long term (Shaw & Farrington, 2003).

The issue of sustainability is key to the Labour Government published White Paper (CM 7176); 'Delivering a Sustainable Railway'. This outlines the government's aims for the next 5 year period; 2009-2014 including the government's relationship with the rail industry, increasing capacity and improving the quality of service (Department for Transport, 2007). Despite the 5 year time frame, in keeping with a sustainable approach the report also considers the position of Britain's rail system in 30 years time.

As part of a wider package of sustainable transport measures, the railway still has an important role to play in the government's policy of integrated [sustainable] transport (Shaw & Farrington, 2003). The railway system in Britain is undergoing a period of 'renaissance', with more passenger journeys being completed than at any other time during its existence (Railnews, 2006). The increasing popularity of rail travel has made it central to integrated transport policy, with 'all modes leading to rail' (Lucas, 2001). Rail is seen as a real opportunity to reduce road congestion and it is this alternative to private cars that gives rail its social value by providing transport to those without cars, thereby helping to alleviate social exclusion. Shaw & Farrington point out that "this is particularly the case beyond the Southeast of England where more than half of rail users are not in the top two social groups".

Martin Jones supports the view that lack of access to public transport can create exclusion as he points out that 'even in many urban areas, public transport services stop at 18.00 and the lack of Sunday services results in people being unable to access services at these times'. Hamilton goes on to say that the issues of inadequate staffing at stations and absence of bus and train conductors means that even where services are provided after 18.00, 'many vulnerable groups will choose not to use public transport for safety reasons'.

In 1995 Shawcroft stated that "existing government policy will deliver neither a sustainable environment nor a sustainable economy". She links this heavily to the lack of coherent transport policy, particularly in her focus area of Southeast London. This is an issue which continues as the government fails to select a clear transport policy, choosing rather to focus on a number of different policies in different areas, making it nearly impossible to identify a national strategy (Railnews, 2007).

One such example is the call for extended electrification which has been made repeatedly over the last 20 years. The government repeatedly states its sustainable carbon neutral ambitions, however Roger Ford points out that the government would rather "pin its hopes on finding the perfect future energy" than adopt a policy which would instantly reduce carbon emissions. The reasons behind this are cost based but the call is for a pragmatic "extending" of electrification rather than a national system of electrifying Britain's entire rail network.

Rail being the most energy efficient way to transport high volumes of people puts it at the heart of most inner city transport policies (Banister *et al*). However, in rural areas, where populations are relatively sparse, this advantage is less evident and previous cost cutting schemes have reduced the ability of rural lines to cope with the larger volumes of traffic that make rail more attractive. It is this threat to many rural lines that has prompted many communities to stand up and take notice.

A key way for the government to gain community 'buy-in' to railways is via Community Rail Partnerships. The Government's Community Rail Development Strategy published in January 2005, highlights 56 routes which the Strategic Rail Authority (now the Department for Transport) believe have scope for development with 'Community Support' (Department for Transport, 2007).

The publishing of the Government's Community Rail Development Strategy saw the fruition of a long term aim of ACoRP (The Association of Community Rail Partnerships). This organisation, created in the late 1990s was influential in the creation and development of this strategy as "a framework for partnerships to improve the effectiveness of local railways in meeting social, environmental and economic objectives" (ACoRP Website, 2006).

Although sustainability in the form of community rail partnerships is seen by the government as a key component of today's railways little published research has been conducted as to how successful these schemes are. This may in part be due to the relatively short amount of time that these organisations have been around however it could also be due to the relatively small proportion of the railway they cover. The Department for Transport estimate that routes with Community Rail Partnerships make up only 10.5% of Britain's rail network, meaning that they are often overlooked in favour of higher profile projects which potentially make a larger impact (Department for Transport, 2007).

A recent discussion with a Community Rail Partnership member highlighted the difficulty in measuring success on these lines. He stated 'success could be measured in terms of the number of people using a particular service, however it is difficult to identify whether there is another underlying increase in demand'. This is made increasingly difficult due to the fact that there is currently a growth in the demand for rail on the network nationally.

As Community Rail is a relatively new concept there appears to be little or no criticism of the process or the people involved. It appears that Community Rail is viewed as a universally popular concept within railway circles, however a recent conversation with a Railway Operator offered the opinion that community rail partnerships are “often made up of ‘enthusiasts’ who have little idea of the operational limitations of railways”. But this is part of the appeal that Community Rail Partnerships have as they offer a view point which isn’t restricted by railway standards that may apply to the mainline but not be so necessary on a rural branch line.

Alan Williams writes that although Community Rail Partnerships are national policy, some Train Operating Companies are more enthusiastic than others. He points to First Great Western, which have undone much of the good work achieved by the previous franchisee (Wessex) and the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership by replacing trains with buses to use the resultant spare units elsewhere. This undermines Community Rail as passengers see the service as unreliable and choose other, more reliable forms of transport (Modern Railways, 2007).

Community Rail can offer a blueprint to other resources that are fading fast. Prior to the introduction of Community Rail Partnerships many rural railway lines were under threat of closure due to lack of patronage. Indeed, many people saw Community Rail as a way for ‘the Department for Transport to justify the closure of many rural lines’ (Alan Williams, 2007). Whether it was the original intention or not, many Community Rail lines have experienced a high level of support from their local communities with many stakeholders suddenly ‘coming out of the woodwork’ (Alan Williams, 2007). The history of current Community Rail lines is similar to the fate currently befalling Britain’s Post Offices and the mantra of ‘use it or lose it’ seems very applicable to both. In the future Community Rail Partnerships could provide a framework for other industries to adopt; it appears that Community Rail could bring an unlikely success story for Britain’s railways.

Research Questions

The previous literature identified and discussed above highlights some of the successes that Community Rail Partnerships have achieved and continue to achieve as far as keeping rural railway lines open. It is difficult however to find research which focuses on whether passengers feel that CRPs are successful. Therefore this study will approach the issue of Community Rail Partnerships from a passenger perspective by surveying passengers that currently use the line. Success will be evaluated in terms of passenger perception of the line and awareness of the CRP and will focus on whether the length of time a CRP has been established has affected these variables or whether there are significant other factors which could have influenced success.

In order to better focus on the outputs of the questionnaire survey the research title has been split into two research questions;

How does the success of a Community Rail Partnership increase over time?

By surveying a line that has a CRP which has been in existence for longer and a line with a less established CRP it should be possible to distinguish whether this has an effect on passenger's perception of the service and their awareness of the CRP. It is anticipated that the awareness of the CRP on the Marston Vale will be less than that on the St Albans Abbey line as the length of time the CRP has been around on the St Albans Abbey line will enable greater levels of advertising and promotion.

How big a role do other factors play in the success of Community Rail Partnerships?

Using other aspects of the questionnaire data and the output from the interviews with the CRP Officers it should be possible to identify whether other factors have a role to play in whether one CRP is more successful than the other. Other factors such as the beginnings of each CRP, the location of the lines and the make up of passengers may all have an impact on the success of the CRP.

Hypotheses

It is expected that customer perception and awareness will be greatest on the line with the most established CRP, the St Albans Abbey line. This is because the CRP will have had more time to establish itself and therefore make real differences to the way the services are run. The Marston Vale in contrast is expected to show signs of improvement and moving the right direction but less established as it has not had as long to establish itself.

Methods & Ethics

The main way in which the two CRPs are compared is via a questionnaire survey which was conducted on the two lines to establish passenger perception of the two services and the CRPs. The questionnaires were handed out on board the train, a semi public space, to a random sample of passengers using the service who were prepared to take part in the survey. The motive behind selecting a random sample was so as to receive a balanced view from passengers that had a variety of reasons for using the service.

The aim of the survey was to achieve a sample size of a minimum of 100 responses in order to provide results which would be relatively free from bias. These 100 responses were collected from a number of train services on each line over two days (one day on each line) in November 2007. By surveying a number of services it was hoped to get a variety of different passengers responding including commuters, students, retired people and families.

The questionnaire itself (see appendix 2) was designed to be two pages long so as to not be time consuming and put people off completing it as well as giving passengers enough time to complete it before the leaving the train. It featured closed questions which could be easily converted into numbers which made statistical analysis possible, but with additional open ended questions which enabled passengers to be more specific about their responses to a number of questions. The 17 questions asked on the questionnaire were split into three sections;

- Personal Details; although this section was kept anonymous,
- Service Quality; passengers perception of various aspects of the service
- Role the Service Plays in the Local Community; how vital the service is to the respondent as well as the awareness of the CRP

The focus of the questionnaire was on the impact time and other factors have on the rail service so as to better answer the research questions. The questions were not directly asked, instead they were asked through a series of questions so as not to make it clear that the focus was Community Rail as this may bias the results. The survey was carried out on weekdays so as to get a representative sample of respondents and care was taken to ensure that the survey wasn't conducted on a day when there would be an unrepresentative sample, e.g. school holiday/service alterations. This was with the intention of receiving a response from a typical sample who would usually conduct their journey on this service.

Information from the completed questionnaires was input into SPSS (a statistical analysis program) with the responses to closed questions converted into numbers to offer a greater potential for analysis. This conversion meant that the best way to show the results was by bar charts which split the responses into each line and then by their respective categories. This enabled a direct comparison between the two lines on the same graph but also showed clearly the different responses for each line.

The strategy for analysing the results from this questionnaire was broadly similar to that laid out in the questionnaire itself. Initially analysis was conducted on the questions included in the questionnaire, which was split, like the questionnaire, into personal details, quality of service and the role the service plays in the local community. Additional analysis was also conducted by combining one variable with another using multiple response tables. This was able to show how a passenger responded to two different questions and assess whether a response to one question impacted on the response to another.

Results were organised into the same order as the questionnaire with the majority of graphs being bar charts, with a number of multiple responses tables and two pie charts which were used to show the town of residence of passengers who use the line. The sample size, despite being relatively small should be representative of the passengers that use the line as the way in which passengers were chosen to take part was even, unbiased and enabled any passengers who were willing to take part to offer their view of the service.

Interviews were also carried out with representatives of each CRP. These took the form of semi-structured interviews in which I explained the purpose of my research and requested information on a number of topics. The initial aim of this study was to focus on a number of elements of the CRPs but it soon became clear that it was not possible to access the level of information needed, where it existed, for both CRPs and therefore the focus on the questionnaire survey was increased.

These interviews nevertheless offered important background information for conducting this research especially concerning the history of CRPs and the process by which the CRPs on these two lines were established. An interview matrix from these interviews is available in appendix 1. The Community Rail Officers for the two CRPs are based within the County Councils and therefore the meeting with Steven Sleight; the Marston Vale Community Rail Officer was conducted in the head offices of Bedford County Council. The meeting with the Community Rail Officer for the St Albans Abbey line was held in a coffee shop as this was the most convenient place to meet.

Themes for each interview were arranged in terms of the topics listed on the matrix found in appendix 1. The interviews do not form a major part of this study, however they do provide context for the results of the questionnaire and therefore it was important that the outputs from these meetings were included in the appendix.

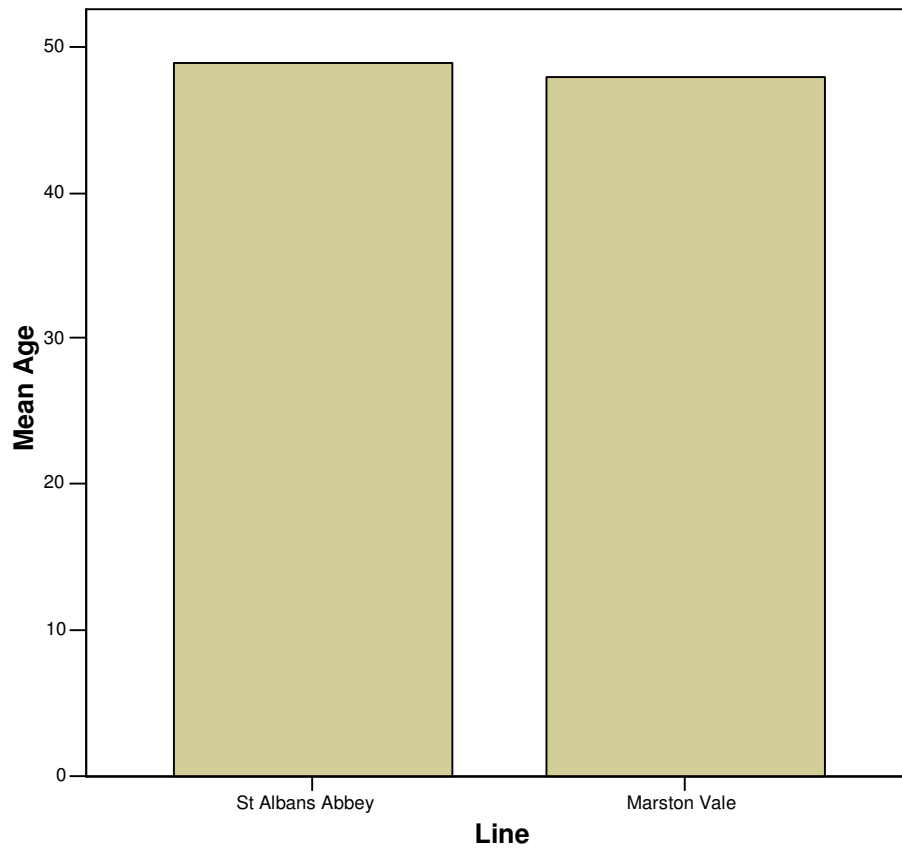
Questionnaire Survey Results

The following graphs and tables were produced from the responses to the questionnaire which was handed out on the two surveyed rail services. A random sample of approximately 100 responses was targeted across the two routes and a total of 101 questionnaires were completed and handed in to the researcher. Of these 101 completed responses, 53 were collected on the St Albans Abbey Line and 48 were collected on the Marston Vale. The following output was achieved using the statistical analysis software, SPSS.

The questionnaires handed out on each route were identical and a template copy of the questionnaire is provided in the appendix. The results of the questionnaire have been split into three distinct sections inline with the layout of the questionnaire.

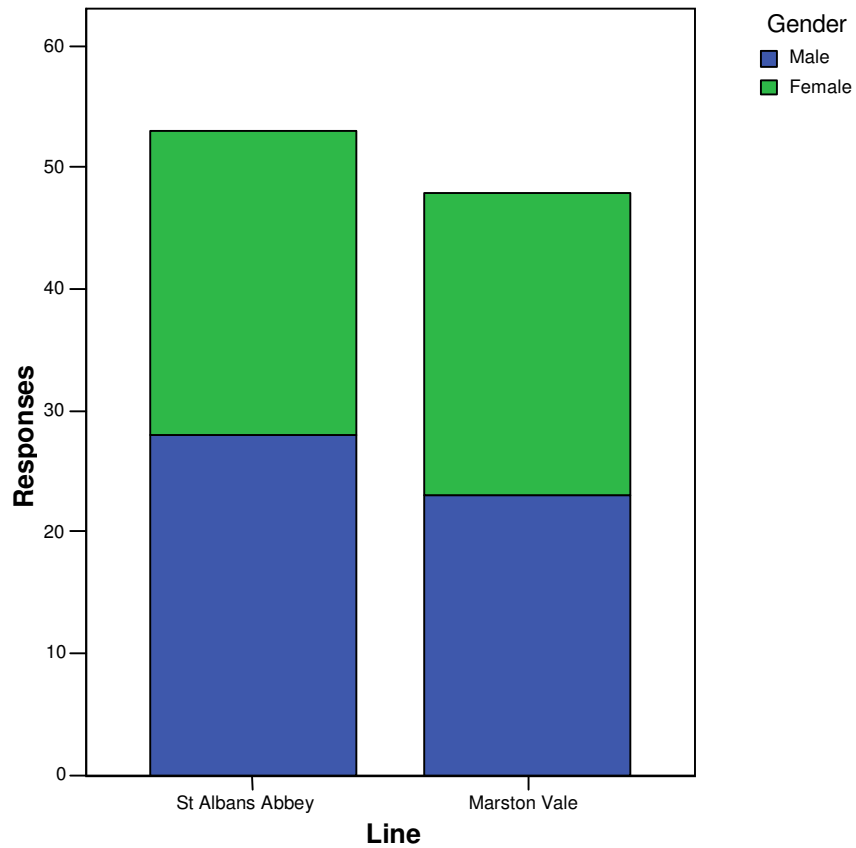
Personal Details

Graph 1; Mean Age of Respondents:



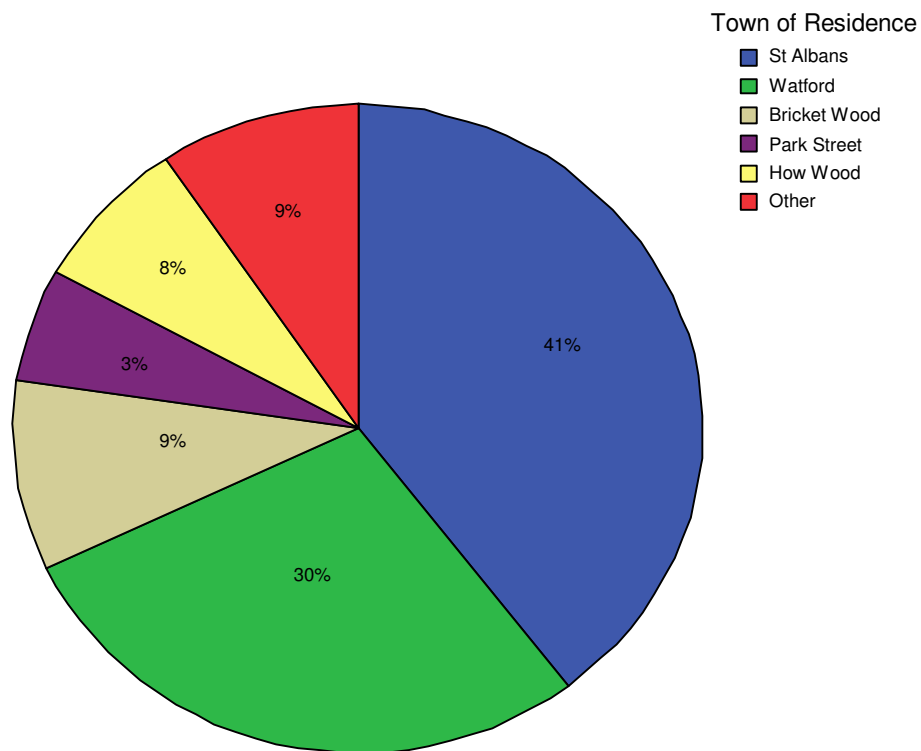
Graph 1 shows the average age of the questionnaire respondents. This reveals that the average age for the Marston Vale line is slightly below that of the St Albans Abbey Line. The average age for each of the lines is relatively high and this could be due to a number of factors. The parochial nature of each of the lines means that it may not be suited to younger passengers who need to travel longer distances with shorter journey times e.g. commuters travelling to London. Also the time that the questionnaire survey was carried out may also have had an effect as it was difficult to hand out questionnaires on busy trains.

Graph 2; Gender of Respondents:



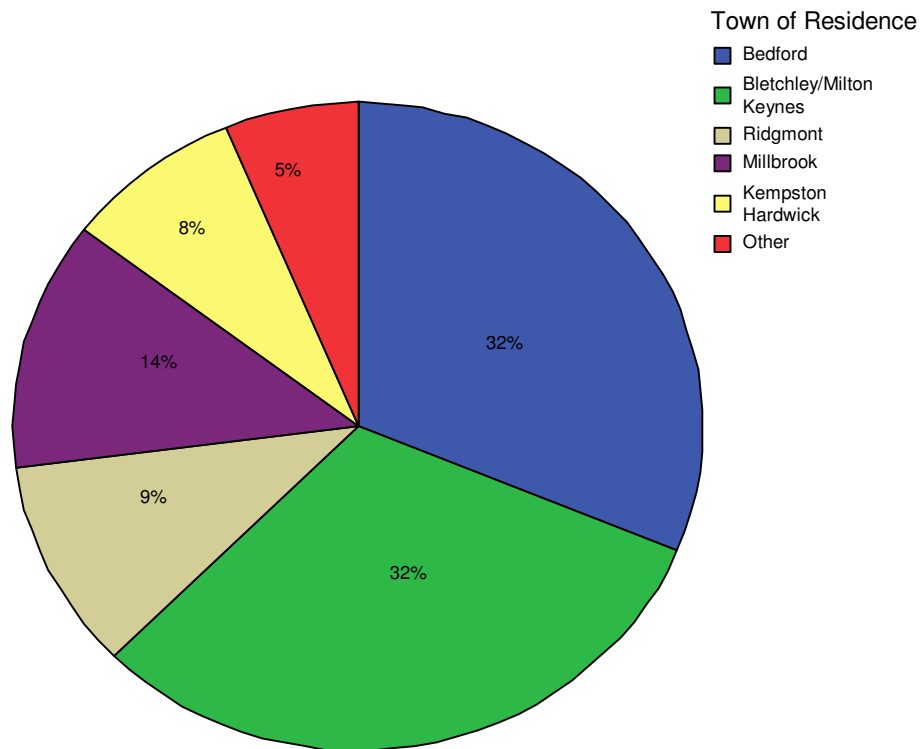
Graph 2 is a count of the gender of questionnaire respondents. It shows that the majority of respondents on the St Albans Abbey line were male but that the majority of respondents on the Marston Vale line were female. This is likely to have had little affect on the response given by the two groups and although the majorities are different on each route, they are not significantly different as to make affect the overall response results.

Chart 1; Town of Residence St Albans Abbey line Responses:



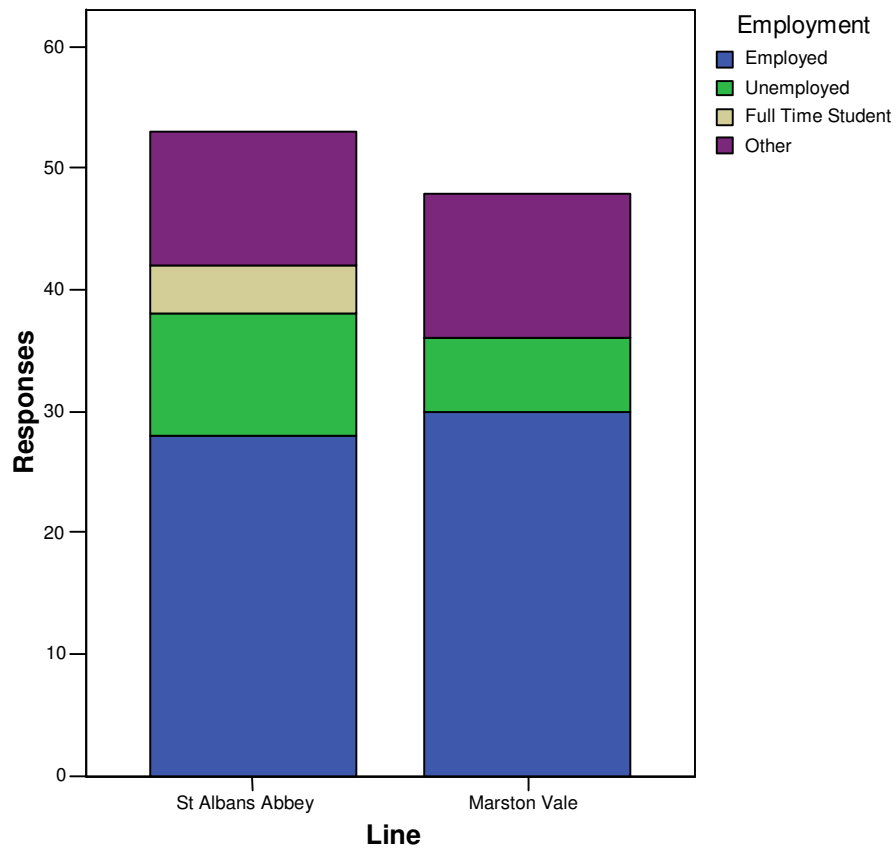
Charts 1 and 2 show the responses to the question 'What is your town of residence?' for each of the routes. As the question was an open one in which the respondent could write any number of characters, the responses for each route were collated by the top 5 most common responses with other less common responses grouped under 'other'. This revealed that on the St Albans Abbey line the most common Town of Residence was St Albans followed closely by Watford. There were fewer respondents from the other stations on the route with Bricket Wood, Park Street and How Wood being the home of similarly low numbers of respondents. The 'other' category was also relatively low.

Chart 2; Town of Residence Marston Vale line Responses



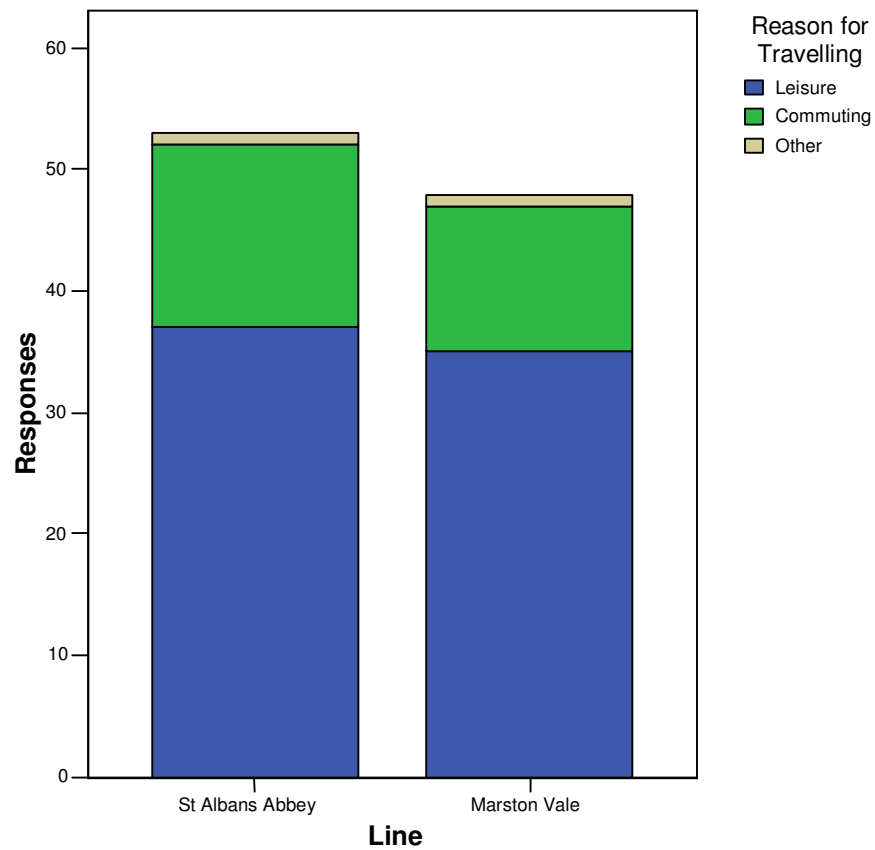
On the Marston Vale line the same grouping was carried out for the less common responses and the 5 most common responses identified. The most common responses were Bedford and Bletchley/Milton Keynes. These two places at the ends of the route accounted for over half of all the responses with the three other most common responses being other stations along the route. The 'other' grouping received relatively few.

Graph 3; Employment of Respondents:



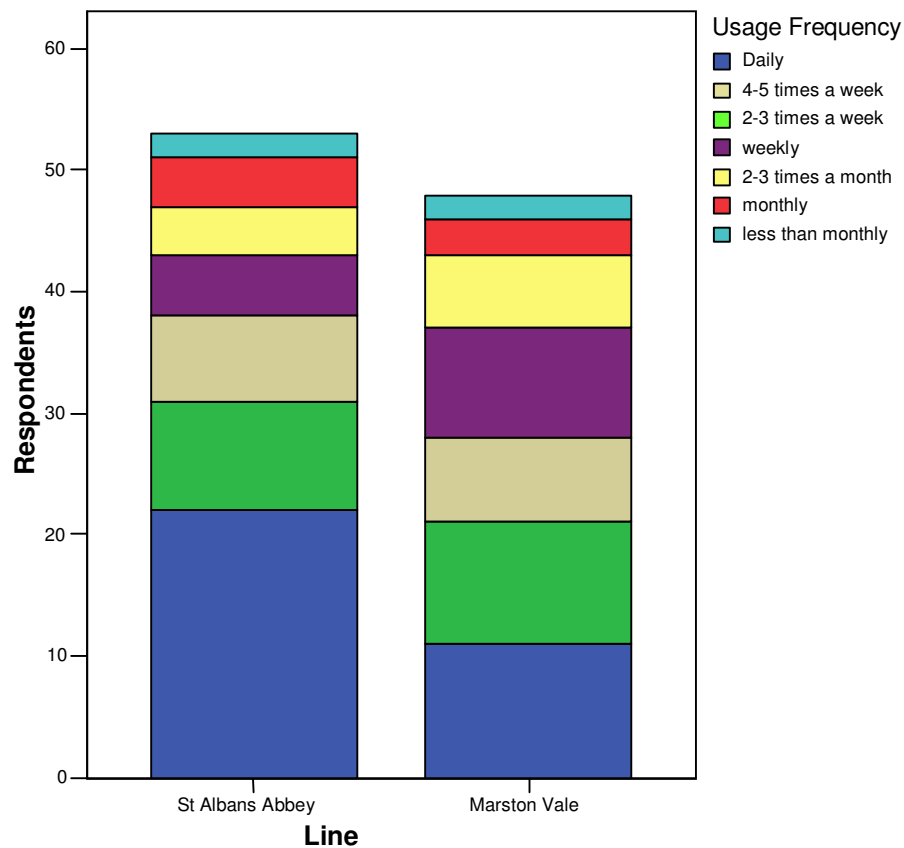
Graph 3 shows the employment status of passengers on the two routes. On both the St Albans Abbey and Marston Vale lines the predominant response was 'Employed', however the Marston Vale line showed a greater number of respondents who replied 'Other'. The St Albans Abbey line had a number of passengers who also replied 'Other' however they also had a greater number of 'Unemployed' passengers than the Marston Vale. The predominant response added as an explanation to 'other' was that the respondent was retired.

Graph 4; Reason for Travelling:



Graph 4 reveals the reason for travelling for the respondents of the questionnaire. The majority of passengers on each of the routes were travelling for leisure and it may have been useful to request respondents to further specify their reason for travelling. The number of passengers commuting on each of the lines was similar and formed the second most common response. There were only two 'other' responses, one on each route, and in each of these cases the further explanation was 'shopping'.

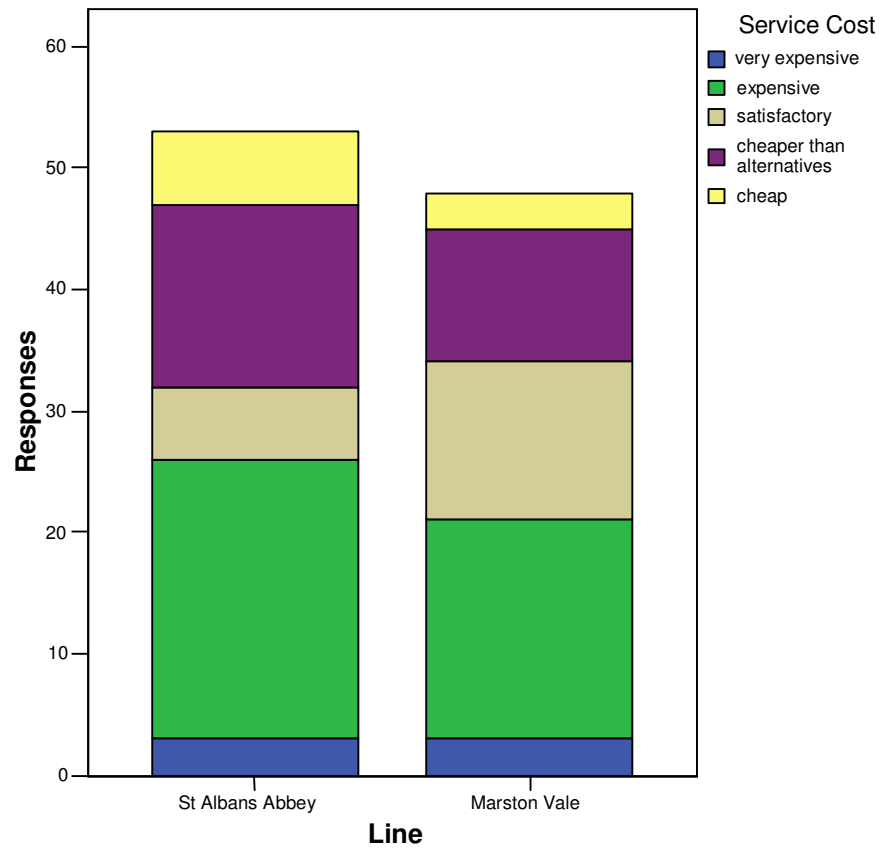
Graph 5; Usage Frequency:



Graph 5 shows the responses to the question; how often do you use this service. It shows that the majority of passengers on both routes use the service less than daily, with responses ranging from '2-3 times per week' to 'less than monthly'. On the Marston Vale line the range of responses is relatively equally spread between 'daily', '4-5 times per week', '2-3 times per week', 'weekly' and '2-3 times per month'. On the St Albans Abbey line this is not the case as a high number of passengers use the service daily, with the second most common responses split between '2-3 times per week' and '4-5 times per week'. The remaining responses were split roughly equally between 'weekly', '2-3 times per month' and 'monthly'. On both lines there were two passengers who use the service less than monthly.

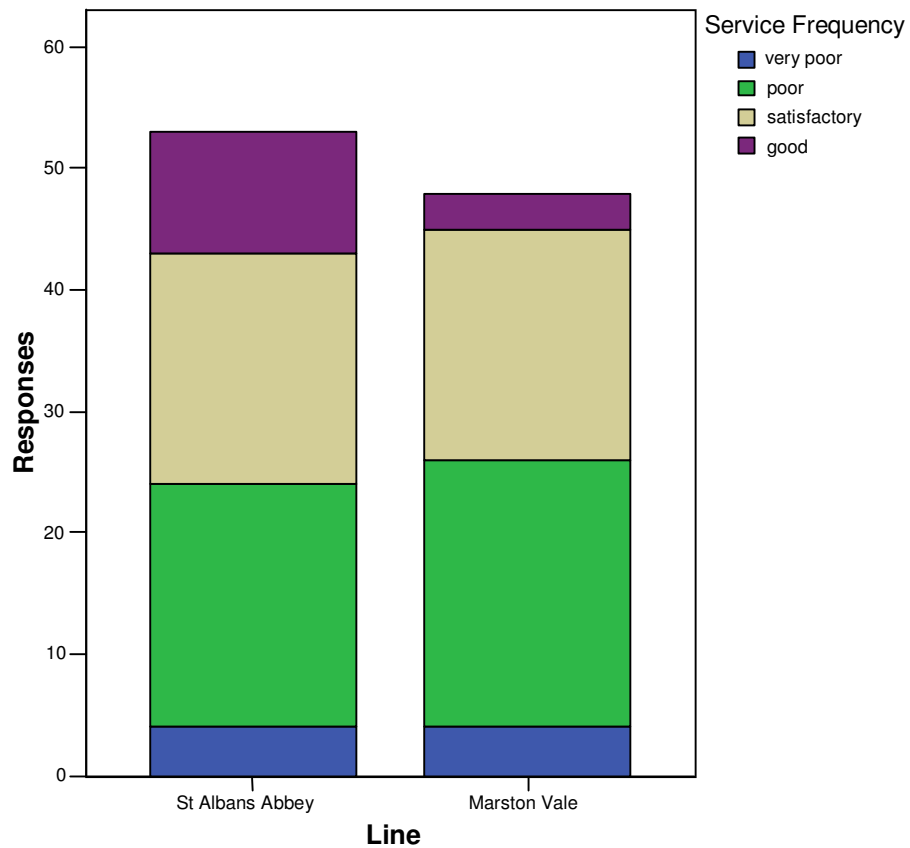
Quality of Service

Graph 6; Service Cost:



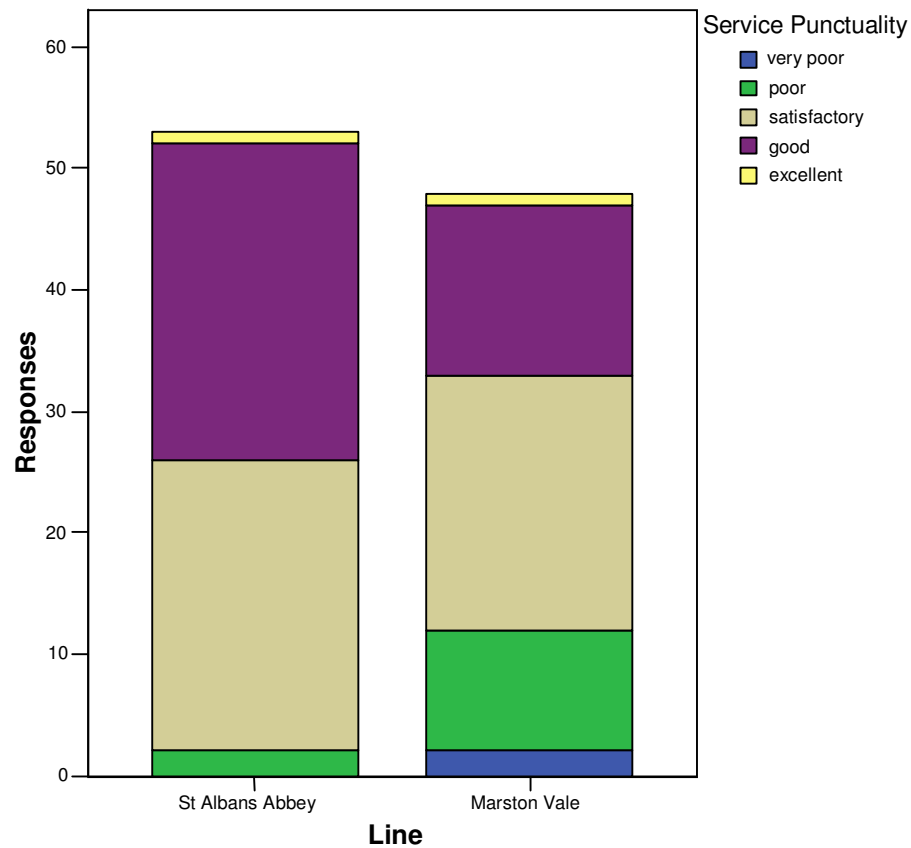
Graph 6 shows the opinion of passengers when asked about the cost of the service. This reveals that most respondents feel that the service is expensive, however there is a variety of responses ranging from cheap to very expensive which perhaps reflects the range of social groups these services are used by, as a service may be expensive to a person on a low income but reasonable to a wealthier traveller. Responses were similarly spread across the two routes; however the St Albans Abbey line received more 'cheaper than alternatives' responses.

Graph 7; Service Frequency:



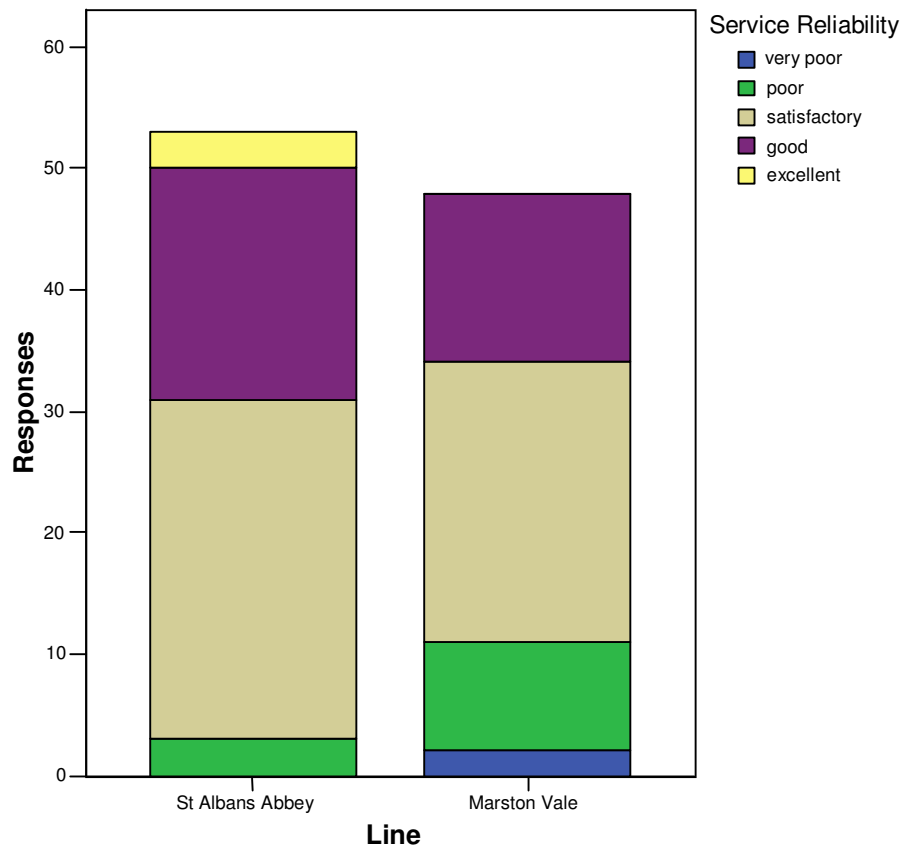
Graph 7 shows the respondents view on service frequency. On both routes the predominant response was 'satisfactory / poor'. The Marston Vale service is provided at hourly intervals and the St Albans Abbey more frequently so it would be expected that the responses would be more positive on the latter route. This is not the case however, which could reflect the irregular 45 minute service pattern on the St Albans Abbey line as passengers may find it confusing as to when their train will arrive.

Graph 8; Service Punctuality:



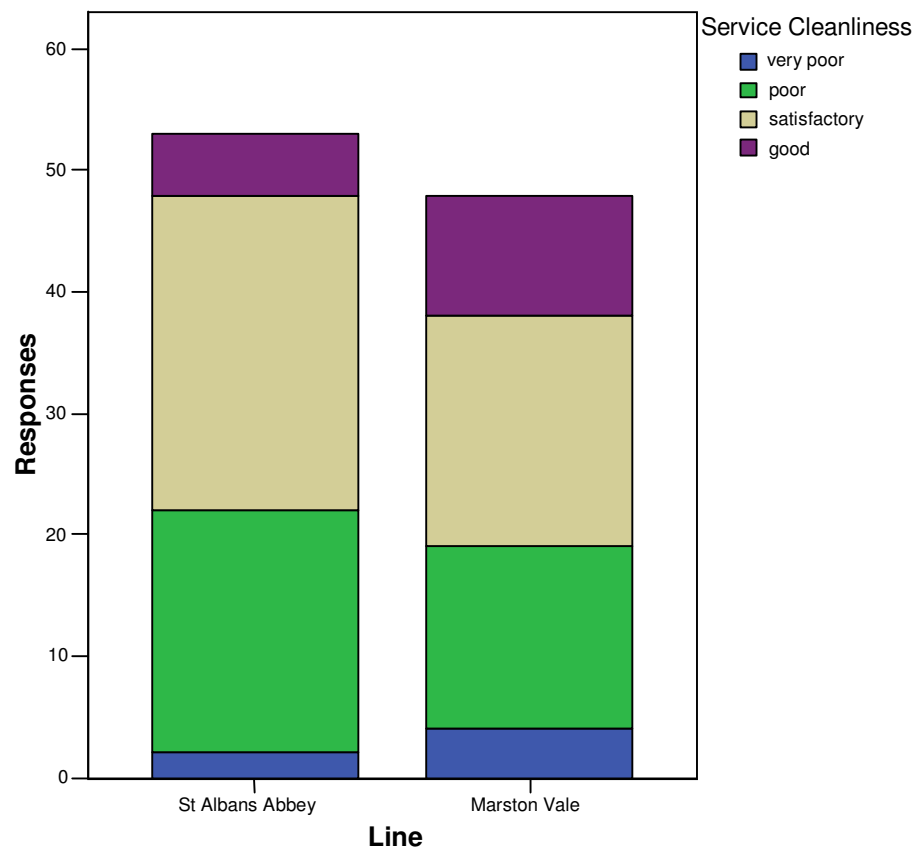
Graph 8 reveals that passengers' perception of the punctuality on the two routes is generally 'satisfactory/good'. This is especially the case on the St Albans Abbey line where only two passengers felt that the punctuality of the service was below satisfactory. On the Marston Vale the responses were generally more evenly spread with 'satisfactory' receiving the most responses. The Marston Vale, unlike the St Albans Abbey line received a number of 'poor' and 'very poor' responses, however this could be influenced by the fact that on the day the questionnaire survey was carried out there were minor delays to some services on this line.

Graph 9; Service Reliability:



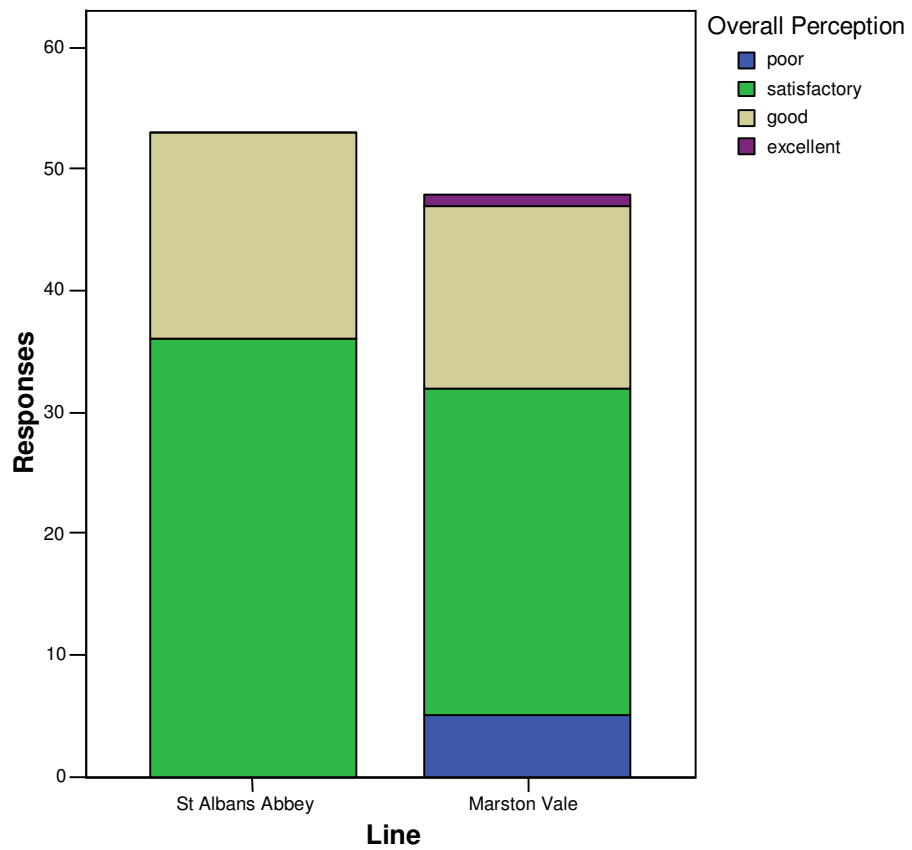
Graph 9 shows passenger views on service reliability on the two lines. This reveals that passengers generally feel that the service is reliable, however this varies between the two lines. The St Albans Abbey line received only two responses which were below 'satisfactory', whereas the Marston Vale received a number of responses which were below 'satisfactory'. This could perhaps be linked to the delay on some of the services on which the survey was carried out as a closer look at reliability and punctuality scores for both lines reveals that they are both performing similarly well and have done for the past 2-3 years with generally over 90% punctuality.

Graph 10; Service Cleanliness:



Graph 10 shows passengers' responses when asked about service cleanliness. This reveals that on both lines there was a range of responses from 'good' to 'very poor'. It is interesting to note that there was an 'excellent' option on the questionnaire however respondents from neither service choose to select this. The graph reveals that the majority of passengers felt that the services were 'satisfactory' or better but that there was also a number of 'poor' and 'very poor' responses.

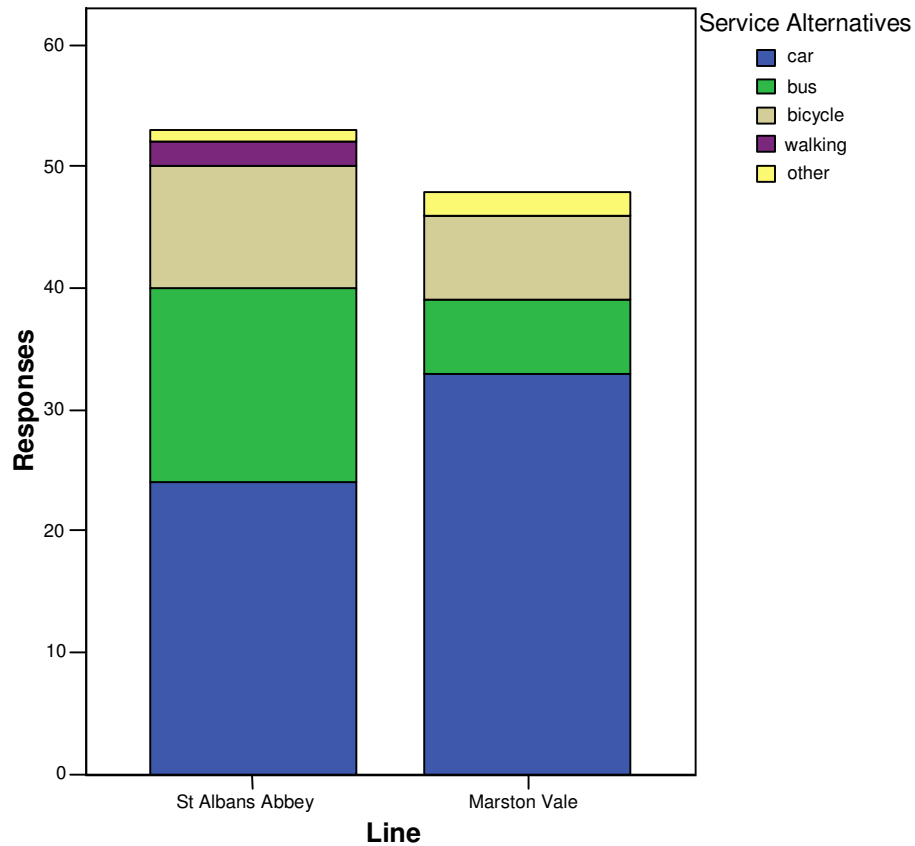
Graph 11; Overall Perception of the Service:



Graph 11 shows the overall perception of the service on the two lines. This reveals that all the St Albans Abbey line responses were 'satisfactory' or better with the majority of responses being 'satisfactory'. The Marston Vale responses were slightly more varied with five 'poor' responses. The overall perception on both lines however was positive and one passenger on the Marston Vale even thought the service was excellent.

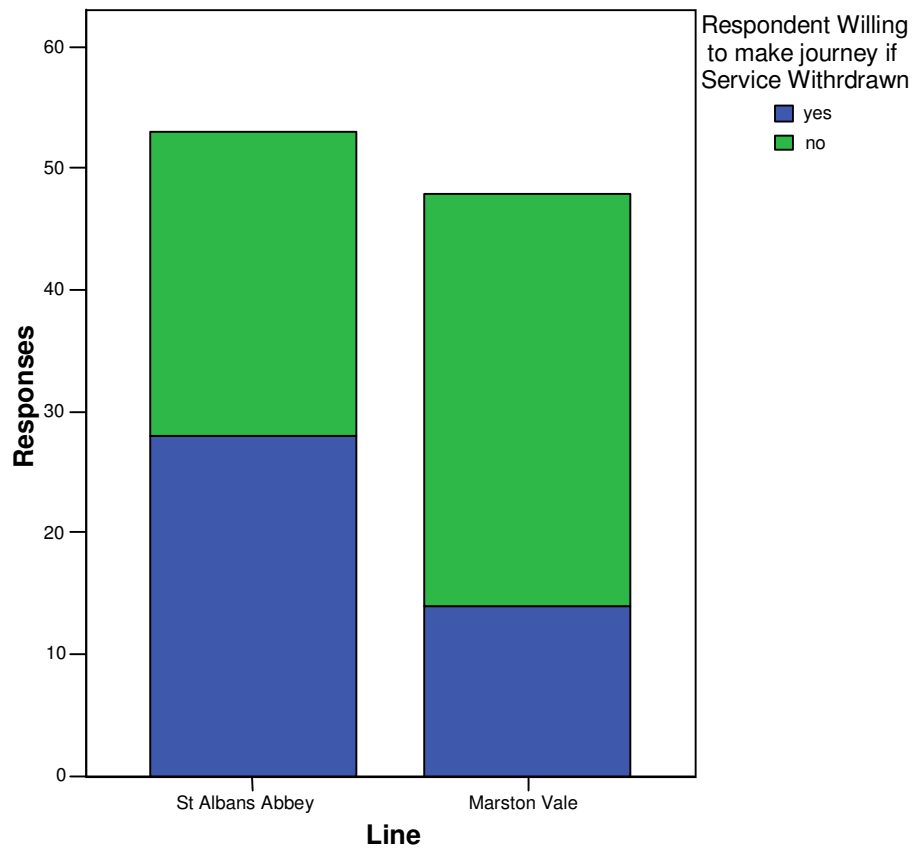
Role the Service Plays in the Local Community

Graph 12; Service Alternatives:



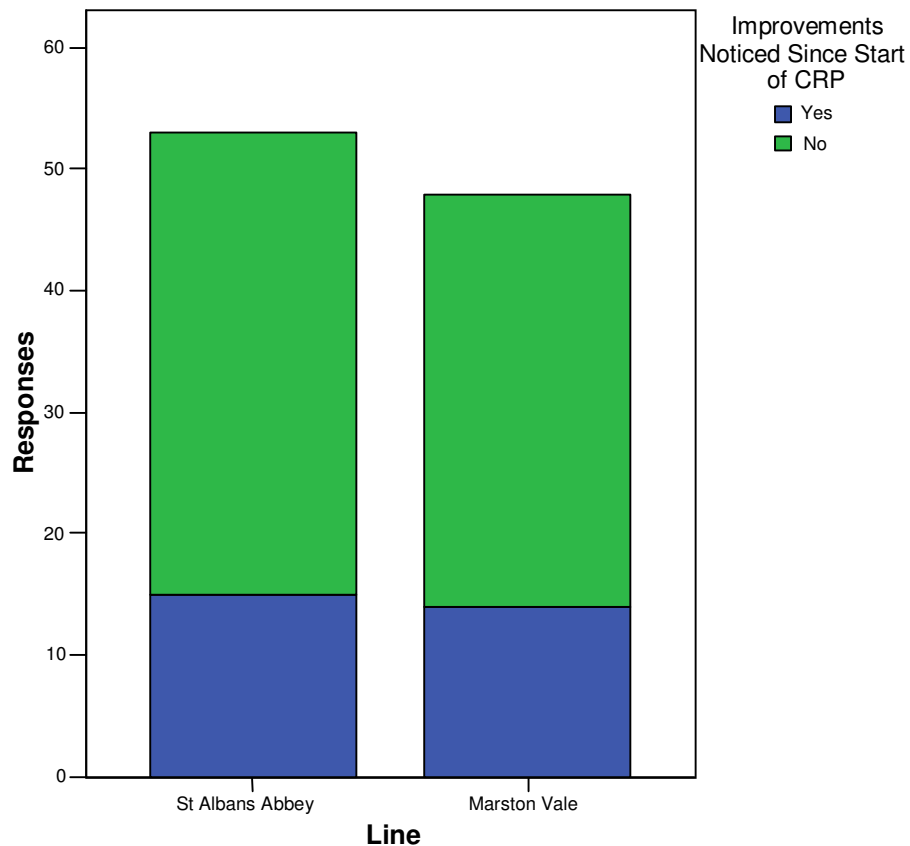
Graph 12 shows the service alternatives that passengers' have available to them if these services were unavailable. This reveals that the predominant alternative for both lines is 'car'. On the Marston Vale 'car' is the majority response with the other alternatives relatively far behind. On the St Albans Abbey line the responses are more varied with 'bus' and 'bicycle' receiving relatively high numbers of responses. The higher number of responses for these two options along with the two 'walking' responses could reflect the shorter distances involved on the St Albans Abbey line. Although the distance between stations on both routes may be similar, many passengers travel the entire length of the line which is possible by bicycle or walking on the St Albans Abbey line but less likely on the Marston Vale line. The relatively small number of 'other' responses for each route were mainly 'dial-a-ride'.

Graph 13; Willingness to make the journey if the service was withdrawn:



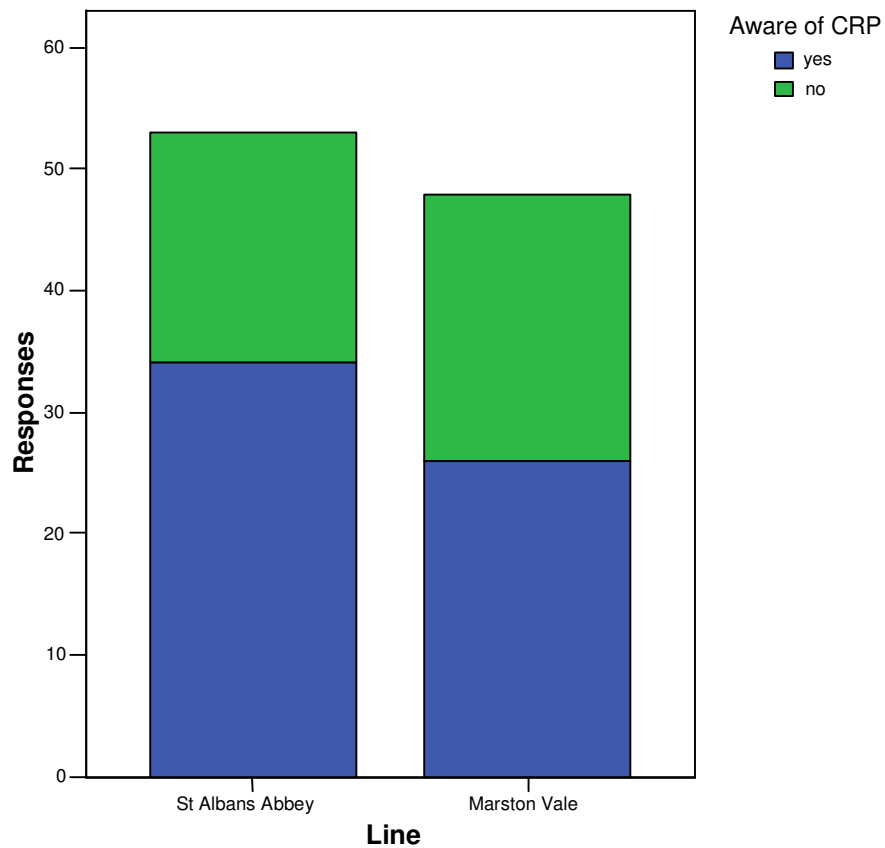
Graph 13 shows the willingness of the passenger to make the journey they are making if the service were to be withdrawn. The graph shows a different overall response on each of the routes. On the St Albans Abbey the responses are almost perfectly split between 'yes' (they would be willing) and 'no' (they wouldn't). On the Marston Vale this is not the case as the predominant response was 'no'. This could reflect the potentially longer distance travelled by passengers on this line compared with St Albans Abbey line passengers which suggests that factors other than time play an important role in the success of the two lines.

Graph 14; Improvements noticed since the St Albans Abbey and Marston Vale Community Rail Partnerships have been in place:



Graph 14 shows the responses to the question 'Have you noticed any improvements to this service since June 2005 (St Albans Abbey Line)/November 2006 (Bedford-Bletchley)?' These dates correspond with the formation of the Community Rail Partnerships on these two lines but this has not been stated so as not to bias the responses. The predominant response on each line was 'no' (the respondent had not noticed any changes). The levels of 'yes' (the respondents have noticed improvements) for each line are relatively equal showing that passengers on each route had generally not noticed any improvements since the dates listed which would suggest that time has had little impact on the awareness of passengers on each line.

Graph 15; Awareness of the Community Rail Partnership:



Graph 15 shows passengers' awareness of the existence of a Community Rail Partnership (CRP) on these two lines. The graph shows that awareness varies across the two routes with a majority of passengers on the St Albans Abbey line being aware of the CRP. On the Marston Vale line however the responses are more evenly spread between aware and unaware. This could be a reflection of the St Albans Abbey line CRP being established earlier than the Marston Vale CRP but could also reflect other factors such as the levels of advertising that each CRP has carried out on their line.

Multiple Response Tables

Tables 1 & 2; Willingness to make the journey and Reason for Travelling:

<u>St Albans Abbey line</u>		Willingness to make the Journey	
		Yes	No
Reason for Travelling	Leisure	75%(21)	64%(16)
	Commuting	25%(7)	32%(8)
	Other	0%(0)	4%(1)

<u>Marston Vale line</u>		Willingness to make the Journey	
		Yes	No
Reason for Travelling	Leisure	85.7%(12)	67.6%(23)
	Commuting	14.3%(2)	29.4%(10)
	Other	0%(0)	2.9%(1)

Tables 1 and 2 show multiple response tables for the questions regarding 'willingness to make the journey' and 'reason for travelling'. These tables show that leisure passengers on the St Albans Abbey line are more likely to make the journey if the service was withdrawn. Commuters on this line are roughly equal with half willing to make the journey and half unwilling. The table for the Marston Vale line shows that passengers on this line are less willing to make the journey if the service was withdrawn. Roughly two-thirds of leisure passengers and nearly all commuters on this line would be unwilling to make the journey they are making if the service was withdrawn.

Tables 3 & 4; Willingness to make the Journey and Service Alternatives

<u>St Albans Abbey line</u>		Willingness to make the Journey	
		Yes	No
Service Alternatives	Car	3.6%(1)	92%(23)
	Bus	53.6%(15)	4%(1)
	Bicycle	32.1%(9)	4%(1)
	Walking	7.1%(2)	
	Other	3.6%(1)	

<u>Marston Vale line</u>		Willingness to make the Journey	
		Yes	No
Service Alternatives	Car	7.1%(1)	94.1%(32)
	Bus	42.9%(6)	0%(0)
	Bicycle	50%(7)	0%(0)
	Other	0%(0)	5.9%(2)

Tables 3 and 4 show passengers responses to the question 'are you willing to make the journey?' and their responses to the service alternatives question. This shows that on the St Albans Abbey line the responses were evenly spread between 'yes' and 'no' but of the 'yes' responses the majority of these would use the bus as an alternative followed closely by bicycle. This was not the case on the Marston Vale line where the 'yes' responses were split relatively evenly between bus and bicycle. An interesting observation is that on both lines those that responded 'no', they were unwilling to make the journey, would have a car as their alternative method of transport.

Tables 5 & 6; Overall Perception and Improvements observed since start of CRP

<u>St Albans Abbey line</u>		Overall Perception	
		Good	Satisfactory
Improvements noticed since start of CRP	Yes	7.1%(3)	33.3%(12)
	No	82.4%(14)	66.7%(24)

<u>Marston Vale line</u>		Overall Perception			
		Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Improvements noticed since start of CRP	Yes	0%(0)	13.3%(2)	44.4%(12)	0%(0)
	No	100%(1)	86.7%(13)	55.6%(15)	100%(5)

Tables 5 and 6 show the overall perception of the service against improvements observed since the start of the CRP. The table for the St Albans Abbey line shows that the majority of passengers have not identified a noticeable difference since the CRP started but that they feel that the service is 'satisfactory' or better. Of those passengers who have identified a difference since the start of the CRP the majority feel that the service is satisfactory. On the Marston Vale line this is similar but with a higher proportion of passengers that have not noticed any improvements since the start of the CRP feeling that the service is good.

Table 7 & 8; Overall Perception and Awareness of the CRP

<u>St Albans Abbey line</u>		Overall Perception	
		Good	Satisfactory
Aware of CRP	Yes	76.5%(13)	58.3%(21)
	No	23.5%(4)	41.7%(15)

<u>Marston Vale line</u>		Overall Perception			
		Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Aware of CRP	Yes	0%(0)	40%(6)	66.7%(18)	40%(2)
	No	100%(1)	60%(9)	33.3%(9)	60%(3)

Tables 7 and 8 show the overall perception of passengers who are aware or unaware of the CRPs on each line. The table for the St Albans Abbey line shows that the majority of passengers are aware of the CRP but that the majority of those that are aware of the CRP feel that the service is 'satisfactory' but not 'good', which is also the case with people who are not aware of the CRP. On the Marston Vale line the number of people that are aware of the CRP is lower and a higher proportion feel that the service is 'satisfactory' but not 'good'. Of the people that are aware of the CRP, the majority is split evenly between 'good' and 'satisfactory'. These tables show that awareness of the CRP does not necessarily improve a passenger's perception of the service.

Questionnaire Results Analysis

The results of the questionnaire survey identify a number of interesting observations. Firstly, the make up of passengers on each line is very similar with a mean average age of passengers in their late 40's and evenly spread between male and female. This reflects the nature of the passengers on the line with most passengers being employed but using the service for leisure purposes. This could also however be the result of the times at which the research was carried out. Although questionnaires were handed out on trains which would be classed as peak trains (0700-0900/1600-1800), it was difficult to approach a large sample of people on these trains compared with quieter off-peak services. These quieter off-peak services contained a larger number of people who appeared to be leisure travellers and therefore this may have impacted on the results.

It was also noticeable that passengers on each service shared similar towns of residence. On each line the majority of passengers came from the urban areas at each end of the line. On the St Albans Abbey line this was St Albans and Watford and on the Marston Vale line this was Bedford and Bletchley/Milton Keynes. On each line there were also a smaller number of passengers from various stations on the line. This is relatively unusual for a Community Rail line as the majority of lines run through entirely rural areas or have a large population area at only one end of the line e.g. the Tamar Valley line, in Devon runs north into a rural area from Plymouth or the Bittern line which runs to rural north Norfolk from Norwich.

The type of passengers using the two lines appears very similar but their usage of the line is one area where the two lines differ. The St Albans Abbey line has a large number of passengers who use the service daily with only just over half using it less regularly. The Marston Vale however shows very mixed passenger usage, with a high number of passengers using the service less than daily and almost half of the passengers surveyed use the service monthly or less. The usage of the Marston Vale is more what you would expect to find considering the high number of leisure passengers using the line. The daily usage of the

St Albans Abbey line by a large number of leisure passengers is unexpected as leisure travel is often less regular and more sporadic.

Perception of the various aspects of the service on both lines reveals that passengers experience a similar quality of service on both lines. Although the results may have been skewed slightly by the delay to the Marston Vale service on the day of the survey, generally both lines displayed that passengers feel that the service provided is satisfactory or better in the categories surveyed. Passengers on both lines felt that the service was expensive however this is a trend in rail travel generally and a survey on any given rail line would probably reveal the same results for this question. The cleanliness of services was felt to be satisfactory or better by passengers of both lines and the overall perception of the service was generally satisfactory or better on both services.

When it came to the section on the role the rail service played within the local community, passengers on both lines identified the car as the main alternative to the rail service. Interestingly the second most popular choice of passengers on the St Albans Abbey line was local bus but also closely followed by bicycle. This differed on the Marston Vale line where there was a much lower response from passengers for bus and bicycle as alternative means of travel. This could reflect the difference in length of each line, with the St Albans Abbey line having a total journey time of just 16 minutes compared with the Marston Vale which is approximately 45 minutes. The longer the distance that a passenger is travelling the less likely it appears that they are prepared to travel by alternative means of transport. This in the case of cycling could be a preference but in the case of local buses it could be the fact that travelling by local bus takes a lot longer than travelling by rail and this extra time would make the journey less attractive.

Passengers responded evenly on the St Albans Abbey line and the majority responded 'no' on the Marston Vale when asked if they would be prepared to make the journey they were currently making if the rail service was withdrawn. Of the passengers who responded 'yes' they would be willing to make the journey on the St Albans Abbey line the majority of these were leisure travellers with commuters roughly evenly split as to whether they would make the journey. On the Marston Vale line this was not the case with the majority of passengers responding that they were not willing to make the journey. The response by commuters on the St Albans Abbey line is surprising as it would be expected that commuters are the group that have the least choice as to whether to make the journey. This could be a result of the alternative routes available for commuters travelling to London from each end of both routes.

Combining the alternative forms of transport question with whether passengers would still make the journey if the rail service was withdrawn produced some perhaps surprising results. On both lines passengers who chose bus and bicycle as alternative methods of transport would be prepared to undertake these journeys if the rail service was withdrawn. This was not the case however for those passengers who chose car as an alternative. These passengers stated predominantly that they would not be willing to make the journey by car if the train service was withdrawn. This shows how valuable the service is to many passengers as they are not just choosing the train over the car but would not even choose to do this journey if the rail service was unavailable.

When passengers were asked specifically about the Community Rail Partnerships on both lines the majority responded that they had noticed little improvement in the rail service since the dates that the CRPs started. This was quite a difficult question to ask as it was important not to let passengers know that the date in the question was when the CRP started as this may bias the results. Passengers may feel that they should respond that they have noticed an improvement in the service in order to support their local CRP. However just having the date was fairly ambiguous as it was very unlikely that passengers would be able to identify that specific date in their mind and assess whether the service had improved. It was also difficult

for passengers who may have only been using the service more recently or very infrequently to identify a change in service quality.

Awareness of the CRPs on each line was an area where the two lines differed. On the St Albans Abbey line awareness was greater and respondents who specified how they were made aware highlighted posters and the local press as the main ways they were informed of the lines status. On the Marston Vale this was less the case with roughly half of passengers being aware of the CRP and half being unaware. Those that were aware of the Marston Vale CRP specified posters as the way they were made aware. The results for this section were expected to some extent due to the length of time each CRP has been in existence. The St Albans Abbey line, being one of the pilot lines, should have received more press coverage in the rail press and local newspapers i.e. a factor other than time. The Marston Vale on the other hand is one of a number of CRPs that have been introduced across the country and therefore received less coverage in the rail press and perhaps in the local press. This shows that both time and other factors may have played a role in greater awareness on the St Albans Abbey line.

One of the most important areas when assessing the success of a CRP is the effect it has had on the quality of service. When overall perception was compared with whether the passenger had noticed any improvements in the service passengers on both lines responded that they were mainly satisfied but that they had not noticed any improvements in the service since the CRP started. This could suggest that they have always felt satisfied with the service or that improvements have taken place gradually and have not had a noticeable effect on the quality of service. An example of this could be the addition of extra trains in the evenings. This has taken place on the St Albans Abbey line to provide services for games at Watford football club but may be an aspect which of the service which does not affect a majority of passengers directly but that they may feel makes the service more satisfactory as many passengers would feel this is a service that should naturally be provided.

The last area combined concerned passengers overall perception of the service and whether they were aware of the CRP. On the St Albans Abbey line passengers were mainly satisfied with the quality of service whether they were aware of the CRP or not. This was not the case on the Marston Vale where passengers were 'satisfied' or better if aware but evenly spread between 'poor' to 'good' if unaware of the CRP. This could reflect the effect CRPs have on passengers whether or not they have a real effect on the quality of service. Passengers who live in the local community may feel that by there being a CRP on the line that they are somehow more involved in the service and therefore feel more satisfied with the service. There was quite a lot of negativity when British Rail was privatised as many felt that the rail service was going into the hands of private companies with little care about providing a service. The creation and continued development of CRPs may have made many feel that the railway is becoming more concerned with providing a service and that by using the service they are directly involved.

Interpretation of Results & Analysis

In order to interpret the results and analysis that are the outputs of this research it is important to return to the research questions that were originally set out at the start of this study. The first of these research questions concerns the issue of time and Community Rail Partnerships:

How does the success of a Community Rail Partnership increase over time?

When initially approaching this area of research it became clear that it was important to identify good case studies that could be used to demonstrate the issues that Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) face. The major difference between the two lines that I choose to focus on, the St Albans Abbey line and the Marston Vale line was the length of time that the respective CRPs had been in existence. By choosing these two lines the aim was to keep other variables to a minimum as they are owned by one company (Network Rail) and operated by the same company (formerly Silverlink Trains, now London Midland).

The selection of lines which appeared very similar made it easier to attribute any difference in the success of the two CRPs to the length of time they had been in place. The research that this project has conducted has revealed results which broadly fit the hypotheses that were outlined at the start of this study. The results for the CRP which had been established earlier, the St Albans Abbey line CRP, showed that passengers were more aware of the impact the CRP had made than that of the CRP on the Marston Vale line. Passengers highlighted posters at various stations on route and the coverage that the CRP had received in the local press as ways in which they had been made aware of the existence of the CRP. On the Marston Vale line this was less the case with a few passengers stating that they had been made aware of the CRP by posters on the route but a lower level of CRP awareness overall.

When it came to the improvements passengers felt had been made since the dates the CRPs were established the results showed that there was little acknowledgement of differences that the CRPs had made to the service. It may be expected that passengers would feel that this

was the case on the Marston Vale line where the CRP has had a little over a year in which to make an impact. But on the St Albans Abbey line the CRP has had over two years so it is expected that this would be enough time for noticeable improvements to be made. This reveals that time appears to play a limited role in the perception that passengers have of CRPs and it is specific events or changes to their service that they can associate with the CRP which have the greatest impact.

The second research question concerned the impact that factors other than time have had on the success of the Community Rail Partnerships involved:

How big a role do other factors play in the success of Community Rail Partnerships?

Although the organisations involved with the two lines appeared to be similar, a closer look into the make up of the CRPs on the two lines revealed that time was not the only factor which separated the two CRPs. Interviews which I conducted with the Community Rail Officers for the two lines revealed that the Officer for the St Albans Abbey CRP is paid for approx. 20 hours per week and has a role which is dedicated to the Community Rail Partnership. This was not the case on the Marston Vale line as the Officer for the line is combining this role with another position within the County Council. Although this is not an intentional situation (the previous Officer left the post a few months previous) it may have had an effect on the awareness of passengers of the CRP as the Officer may not have enough time to devote to producing and displaying posters advertising the CRP.

The two lines appear similar in the organisations that they have involved in their operation but there are actually a number of differences that make the two lines significantly different. The results show that the length of the two lines and their location has an impact on the reliance passengers have on the service. The St Albans Abbey line, being relatively short and linking two major urban areas means that passengers will seek an alternative form of transport if the service was withdrawn. This is not the case on the Marston Vale line as despite the line also

linking two major urban areas the length of the line and the lack of suitable alternatives combine to make the journey less attractive by other means.

Interviews with the Community Rail Officers for the two lines also highlighted the difference in between the way the two Community Rail Partnerships were formed and this may have an impact on the awareness and success of the CRPs. The St Albans Abbey line was one of three Pilot CRPs which were formed with a specific focus. The focus of this line was to develop a cheaper approach to infrastructure upgrades on branch lines (passing loop at Bricket wood to increase service frequency). This specific focus as well as the fact that it was one of the first CRPs to be officially unveiled means that it received greater coverage in railway press and its importance for future CRPs meant that it gained greater coverage in local and national press than the Marston Vale CRP. This could impact upon the overall awareness of both lines as passengers may be more likely to know of their local CRP if they read about it in the local or national press, especially if it is relatively rare. The Marston Vale CRP on the other hand is one of a number of CRPs which have been established simply with the aim of improving patronage and as such may not have drawn as many headlines either locally or nationally.

The questionnaire results show that time definitely plays a part in the success of a CRP. There is a clear divide between the awareness of passengers on each line and the St Albans Abbey line CRP having been around for longer is reflected in greater awareness amongst passengers. Other factors, it is felt, play a larger role than time in the success of a CRP in the sense that the St Albans Abbey CRP has received more support in terms of press coverage than the Marston Vale as it was a pilot scheme when it was first established. This project has shown that the two CRPs have both been equally successful in improving customer satisfaction however time has played less of a role in the success of the two lines than the other factors which have affected both lines. Had the Marston Vale been a pilot scheme then the awareness of the CRP by passengers would probably have been the same on both lines.

Recommendations

This study has identified a number of recommendations that should be considered by Community Rail Partnerships and anyone wishing to further research this topic:

Community Rail Partnerships

There are a number of areas that Community Rail Partnerships could focus on in order to improve their success. These include increasing awareness of the CRP both on the railway; in terms of posters and advertisements to make people aware of the existence of the CRP, and outside of the railway; articles in the local/national press which increase awareness of the CRP for groups that do not traditionally use the railway.

Another area which has been identified is that the CRP with an Officer who focuses solely on the CRP has higher awareness rates among passengers than that of the CRP with an Officer who combines his role with another. This could highlight the importance of an Officer who focuses purely on the CRP as it means he has more time available to increase awareness through poster provision and contacting groups who can advertise the CRP within local press.

Future research in this field

This study has successfully achieved the aims set out at the start but the research could be extended further in order to gain a better understanding of the issues that Community Rail Partnerships face. The limited sample size could be extended by surveying a greater number of services and with more researchers it would be possible to get a better response on busy peak trains.

The questionnaire survey which was carried out could be supported by a number of interviews with passengers to better identify specific elements of the CRPs that passengers feel are successful or lacking. This interview and questionnaire survey could even be

extended to include local residents who do not currently use the rail services and assess the reasons why they do not and what can be done to the service in order to attract them. This would enable direct comparisons to be made between the efforts that both CRPs have made and the impact this has had on attracting an increase in passengers from the local community.

It may also have been appropriate to have conducted this research in a few years time when Community Rail Partnerships have become more established. It would then be possible to compare a CRP that has been around for 3-5 years with one which has only been around for six months/a year as differences in the awareness and successes that the two lines have achieved may be more visible.

Appendices

Appendix 1; Interview Matrix

In the process of establishing the format for this research on Community Rail Partnerships the initial aim was to compare various aspects of the CRPs to establish which was the most successful in each of these aspects. The matrix below is a comparison of the areas established in interviews with the CRP Officers for the two lines. It later became clear that the information was not complete enough so as to offer a direct comparison so the questionnaire data became the focus of comparison. The matrix below however still offers additional context to the questionnaire results.

	Marston Vale	St Albans Abbey
Performance	Performance figures received from Silverlink. Performance very good, over 90% for the majority of previous periods.	Performance figures received from Silverlink. Performance very good, over 90% for the majority of previous periods.
Fares	50% of passengers commute according to LENNON data for the line. No special concessionary fares yet but aiming to introduce in future. Under-representation due to tickets not always being checked.	Special carnet card introduced which offers 10 singles for a reduced price as many passengers travel less than five days a week making a season ticket unsuitable.
Passenger Numbers	No independent passenger count currently undertaken but an ambition to have a voluntary count undertaken twice a year by the Rail User Group.	Passenger counts have taken place and reveal a 6% difference from LENNON data. This is attributed to 4% ticket less travel and minor inaccuracies.
Customer Satisfaction	No current independent survey undertaken but would like to in future.	Not conducted independently but Silverlink does carry out National Passenger Survey. Independent questionnaire conducted but only into why passengers make their trips.
Budgets	Approx. £10,000 for publicity and promotion, £10,000 for station signage. Also money available through Hidden Britain.	Normally £50,000 including wage of CRP Officer. LTP budget of £2 Million to cover cost of a passing loop, with an aim of introducing within 5 years.
Investment	£30 Million recently invested in upgrading signalling system, new rolling stock, reducing level crossing barrier timings and introducing staggered platforms.	Watford North level crossing has been upgraded and new bike shelters have been erected at How Wood and Watford North.
Stakeholders	20-25 overall, including Bedford-Bletchley Rail User Association, Silverlink, Network Rail, Forest of Marston Vale. Also affiliated with schools, Tourist Information Centres and other tourist attractions. Rural Transport Partnership forum.	Network Rail, Silverlink, Abfly Rail User Group, Watford Borough council, St Albans City & District council, St Stephens Parish council. Also local schools, residents associations, theatres, Watford FC.
Involvement	14hours per week for CRP Officer should be 20hours limited by funding. Meetings with key stakeholders every quarter. Workshops with the St Albans Abbey & Bittern line CRPs at Bletchley Park.	22.5hours per week for CRP Officer. Meetings with key stakeholders every 2 months and workshops with Marston Vale & Bittern line CRPs.
Other	Special trains; Santa specials, ghost trains at Halloween, Bedford beer festival, Woodworks and the River festival aim in future to run trains for fixtures at the new MK dons stadium near Woburn Sands.	Special trains; Santa specials, CAMRA, Watford football club late night trains.

Appendix 2: Blank Questionnaire

Sustainable Transport Questionnaire

I am conducting some research on Sustainable Transport services and would like to gauge your opinion on the rail service you are currently using. Please could I ask you to take a few moments of your journey to fill out this short, anonymous questionnaire on your experience of this service?

Personal Details:

1. Age: ____
2. Sex (please tick): Male Female
3. Town of residence: _____
4. Employment (please circle):
 Employed **Unemployed**
 Full time Student **Other (please specify: _____)**
5. Reason for travelling (please tick):
 Leisure **Commuting**
 Other (please specify _____)
6. How often do you use this service (please tick):
 Daily **2-3 times per Week**
 4-5 times per Week **Weekly**
 2-3 times per Month **Monthly** **Less than Monthly**

Quality of Service:

7. How would you rate the cost of this service (please tick):
 Very Expensive **Expensive** **Satisfactory**
 Cheaper than alternatives **Cheap**
8. How would you rate the frequency of this service? (Please circle)
Very Poor Poor Satisfactory Good Excellent
9. How would you rate the punctuality of this service? (Please circle)?
Very Poor Poor Satisfactory Good Excellent
10. How would you rate the reliability of this service? (Please circle)?
Very Poor Poor Satisfactory Good Excellent

Appendix 3; Questionnaire Cover Letter

Sustainable Transport Questionnaire

I would like to invite you to participate in this undergraduate research project. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Your decision will not affect your access to treatment or services. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

The results of this questionnaire will be used anonymously to compare and contrast the rail services of the St Albans Abbey and Marston Vale railway lines. The aim of this research is to establish a detailed comparison of passengers' perception of the services on the two lines as well as details of the type of person who uses the rail service, how often they use it and the alternatives available to passengers. Personal details will not be requested that can identify you, the individual, in any way but should you choose to receive a copy of the completed report your address will be needed in order to forward this on to you. This information however will not be used for any other purposes.

'It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part, will not affect the standard of care you receive.

In the event of you suffering any adverse effects as a consequence of your participation in this study, you will be compensated through Queen Mary University of London's 'No Fault Compensation Scheme'.

Independent Geographical Study Project in Environmental Science

Declaration

This report entitled:

How does the success of a Community Rail Partnership increase over time and how big a role do other factors have on the success of these lines?

was composed by me and is based on my own work. Where the work of others has been used, it is fully acknowledged in the text and in captions to tables and illustrations. This report has not been submitted for any other qualification.

Signed _____

Date _____

Appendix 5; List of Tables

Graph Number	Graph Title	Graph Number	Graph Title
Graph 1	Mean Age of Respondents	Chart 1	Town of Residence St Albans Abbey line responses
Graph 2	Gender of Respondents	Chart 2	Town of Residence Marston Vale line responses
Graph 3	Employment of Respondents	Table 1	Willingness to make the journey and reason for travelling St Albans Abbey line
Graph 4	Reason for Travelling	Table 2	Willingness to make the journey and reason for travelling Marston Vale line
Graph 5	Usage Frequency	Table 3	Willingness to make the journey and service alternatives St Albans Abbey line
Graph 6	Service Cost	Table 4	Willingness to make the journey and service alternatives Marston Vale line
Graph 7	Service Frequency	Table 5	Overall perception and improvements observed since start of the CRP St Albans Abbey line
Graph 8	Service Punctuality	Table 6	Overall perception and improvements observed since start of the CRP Marston Vale line
Graph 9	Service Reliability	Table 7	Overall perception and awareness of CRP St Albans Abbey line
Graph 10	Service Cleanliness	Table 8	Overall perception and awareness of CRP Marston Vale line
Graph 11	Overall Perception of the Service		
Graph 12	Service Alternatives		
Graph 13	Willingness to make the journey if the service was withdrawn		
Graph 14	Improvements noticed since the St Albans Abbey and Marston Vale Community Rail Partnerships have been in place		
Graph 15	Awareness of Community Rail Partnership		

References

The Association of Community Rail Partnerships (2006) AcoRP Website [WWW Document]. Retrieved January 4th, 2008 from World Wide Web: <http://www.acorp.uk.com/>

The Beeching Reports, Part 1; The Reshaping of Britain's Railways (1963) Beeching Report Info [WWW Document]. Retrieved January 4th, 2008 from World Wide Web: <http://www.beechingreport.info/>

Banister, D & Hall, P (1981) Transport and Public Policy Planning. London, Mansell.

Bedford-Bletchley Rail User Association (2006) BBRUA Website [WWW Document]. Retrieved December 4th, 2007 from World Wide Web: <http://www.tauruspr.co.uk/bbrua/>

Cloke, P *et al* (1999) Introducing Human Geographies. London, Arnold.

Ford, R (2007) 'Informed Sources', *Modern Railways*, October 2007, pp. 24-30

Jones, M *in* Lucas, K (2004) Running on Empty; Transport, Social Exclusion and Environmental Justice. Bristol, Policy Press.

Lucas, K *et al* (2001) Transport the Environment and Social Exclusion. York, YPS.

Shaw, J & Farrington, J *in* Docherty, I & Shaw, J (2003) A New Deal for Transport. Oxford, Blackwell.

Smyth, A *in* Docherty, I & Shaw, J (2003) A New Deal for Transport. Oxford, Blackwell.

The Department for Transport (2007) DfT Website [WWW Document]. Retrieved December 19th, 2007 from World Wide Web: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/?view=Filter&h=m&m=4552&pg=1>

The Department for Transport (2007) Delivering a Sustainable Railway [WWW Document]. Retrieved January 6th, 2008 from World Wide Web: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/about/strategy/whitepapers/whitepapercm7176/>

Shawcroft, C (1995) The Sustainable Answer: The Future of Transport in East and South-East London. London, Aequalis.

'Community Rail Partnerships' May 2007, *Railnews*, pp.24-25

'Sustainable Transport' Nov 2007 *Rail Professional*, P. 54

Williams, A (2007) 'Alan Williams', *Modern Railways*, October 2007, P. 80

West Midlands Euro Network (2006) WMEuronet [WWW Document]. Retrieved January 3rd, 2008 from World Wide Web: <http://www.wmeuronet.co.uk/>