

'Tremendous savings' trumpets the Arriva Bus website. It's evident that the PR people don't live in Wrexham. I'm just back from a return journey on the Arriva 26 from Wrexham to Mold. I only travelled two fare stages – Gwersyllt Wheatsheaf to Caergwrle Station – and yet the return fare cost a shocking £3.00, which for two four minute journeys is close to extortion – in fact, 5 times what it costs to do the same journey in a VW Polo (60p). If I travel on a bus in Liverpool, I can go on a single journey anywhere in the wide city centre area for just £1.40 – and that £1.40 can take you a long way. However, here, if I want to travel two miles from Gwersyllt to Wrexham using the company's buses, I have to pay £1.70 single – 85p per mile. There is also a lack of a student fare. I am still in full-time education and yet must pay the extortionate adult price.

Arriva are a huge multinational corporation. They make a ludicrous amount of money each year through their bus arm. Why, then, are they charging 20% - and in some cases above 20% - more than the equivalent routes operated by competitors GHA Coaches and D Jones and Son? Not only are the competitors cheaper, the vehicles used are newer and clean. The majority of the D Jones fleet is extremely modern, consisting entirely of low-floor buses from the 21st century. Arriva, on the other hand, run a rag-tag fleet of buses that in the main date from 1996-1999 and have had a hard life in Liverpool. They have also recently cut local services to Summerhill to the bone, reducing them to every 30 minutes and constantly attempting to get one over on the far superior GHA Coaches service – somewhat akin to two bald men fighting over a comb. What basis, then, do they have for charging so much more than their competitors? I'd like to publicly challenge Arriva to answer that question. I'd be very interested to find out exactly what justification they have for charging so much for a poorer service.

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