



Naomi Stocks  
Petitions Committee Clerk  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA.

6 April 2013

Dear Naomi,

As you have instructed, please find enclosed our Petition with supporting evidence. We would be grateful if you would confirm receipt of these.

We understand this will be presented to the Petitions Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> April, and we look forward to hearing the outcome.

Thank you for all your help in this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "B. Snowball".

Mrs. Barbara Snowball  
MAWDDACH BUS USERS

**WANTED – BUSES FOR MEIRIONNYDD  
PETITION**

**SUPPORTING MATERIAL  
FILE 1**

**MAWDDACH BUS USERS  
APRIL 2013**

## **We call upon the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to:**

- Review the funding for rural bus services to ensure adequate levels of service for the whole of Gwynedd but particularly south Meirionnydd.
- Consider funding to be ensured for additional services to improve access to health services, education, and employment, and thus support the economy and tourism of the area.

### **Current problems include:**

#### 1. Access to Health Services limited by inadequate bus services

- a. Bangor and Wrexham Hospitals are both 60 miles from the Tywyn-Dolgellau area. This makes attending for scheduled appointments and tests difficult.

For example:

i. Depart Dolgellau 9.15am    Arrive Wrexham 11.20

ii. Depart Wrexham 1.15pm to connect with the last bus from Dolgellau at 4.20 pm for Tywyn.

Two hours is not enough time to allow for waiting times and consultations.

- b. Radical changes are to be implemented at Tywyn Hospital. It will lose its X-ray facilities as well as having the hours of the Minor Injuries Unit reduced. In future patients will have to travel from Tywyn to Dolgellau Hospital for treatment. The last bus from Tywyn to Dolgellau on the number 28 bus is 2.10 pm, arriving at Dolgellau at 3.05. The last bus back to Tywyn is 4.20 pm. This is clearly not enough time to walk to the hospital from the bus stop (some 15-20 minutes), have X-rays or other investigations, then get back to catch the last bus back to Tywyn.

#### 2. Educational opportunities undermined by transport problems

Current bus services mean that students at schools and college are unable to stay on after the last bus i.e. 4.20 pm, and are thus prevented from attending any after school/college activities including extra tuition, sports, or drama.

Adults are also unable to attend evening classes in either Tywyn or Dolgellau because they are cannot to get home by bus.

### 3. Employment opportunites limited by poor bus services

People working in Tywyn but living outside the town, or working in Dolgellau but living towards Tywyn, have great difficulty in getting to and from work if they do not have a car. In addition, even when offered employment their hours are constrained by the transport difficulties.

For example: The first bus into Dolgellau from Tywyn arrives at 8.55 am, and the last bus back is 4.20 pm. This precludes any 9-5 full-time working day. It also has an impact on training which is offered 'after hours'.

### 4. Social Isolation

Elderly people with no car are becoming increasingly isolated because they cannot travel to see their friends and loved ones. It is very difficult for them to attend hospital appointments because even for them, Hospital transport is unavailable if they are not disabled. This means they potentially become a greater burden on the NHS, through the stress and depression which leads to more illness.

### 5. The impact on tourism and the local economy

The inadequate bus service has a detrimental effect on tourism and local economy.

- Tourists without cars cannot visit local beauty spots and attractions because the buses do not 'fit' with easy day returns. This means they spend less time and money in the area.
- There is the loss of income to the various educational establishments because locals and visitors cannot access courses, talks, and events held in the evenings.
- The lack of buses has contributed to the growth of online shopping in the area, e.g. without ready access to the local Co-op or Spar stores, the Asda Home delivery service has established a strong customer base in just 2 years. This money spent on groceries has gone out of the area to the detriment of local businesses.

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## INTRODUCTION

The materials provided here are supporting evidence for the e-petition presented to the Welsh Assembly Government in April 2013 by the Mawddach Bus Users group.

Mawddach Bus Users are campaigning for better bus transport in Gwynedd, especially the area of south Meirionnydd. This is the region which includes Dolgellau to Tywyn, with connections to Traws Cambria routes Bangor to Aberystwyth and Wrexham to Barmouth. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation rates part of this area (the Llangelynnin Ward) as 'poor' for access to services but the whole region has difficulties relating to public transport. For example, the town of Dolgellau, and the villages of Rhoslefain, Brynchrug, and Llanegryn have no train service so buses are vital.

We are appealing to you because of the profound spirit of discouragement and isolation which is spreading in this area. The cuts in the local bus services have affected many people, creating a growing sense of isolation. Access to healthcare, education and employment are all limited as is the ability to maintain social relationships or leisure interests.

The Mawddach Bus Users group is appealing to the Welsh Assembly Government to review the situation and facilitate better public transport. The current inadequate bus service in Meirionnydd is at odds with the Welsh Assembly's own transport aspirations and at present the basic human needs of the local population (in an already impoverished area) are being denied.

## MAWDDACH BUS USERS

### LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT – BRIEFING DOCUMENT

#### **No. 28 bus (Lloyds Coaches) from Dolgellau to Tywyn, passing through Fairbourne, Llwyngwrlil, Rhoslefain, Llanegryn, Brynecrug.**

Not many years ago, the Welsh Assembly Government was very proactive in promoting a good public transport system and encouraging people to use buses instead of their cars. The bus service was excellent but, mainly due to the economic climate, they were drastically cut. This is having a detrimental impact on the lives of people living in rural Meirionnydd. The public transport system is vital to society. The **Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation** rated our immediate area (the Llangelynnin Ward) “**poor**” for access to services but, more generally too, access is difficult because of timetabling and connection problems.

#### **E.G. Dolgellau to Tywyn**

The running times were halved, including cancellation of the two later runs, 5.40 pm and 7.45 pm. This means that going to Wrexham, Bangor or Aberystwyth for hospital appointments, shopping or visiting friends & family is a problem. These destinations are all approx 60 miles away and the bus service is the only way for many residents to access health services. For example, the bus arrives in Wrexham at about 11.15 am but travellers **MUST** leave again at 1.15 pm in order to catch the last connecting No. 28 bus from Dolgellau at 4.20 pm. Two hours is not enough time, particularly if you have a hospital visit.

In addition, people cannot access leisure and theatre venues in the evenings and the Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor students are unable to stay later than 4.0 pm for tutorials or extra sessions to increase their skills/sports, etc.

#### **Tywyn to Dolgellau**

The last two No. 28 runs were cancelled, and the last bus now, is 2.10 pm. The bus connections in Tywyn are very poor. For example – the X29 (Lloyds Coaches) bus leaves Machynlleth on the X29 (Lloyds Coaches) at 12.15, arriving in at Tywyn 12.47. The connecting No 28 bus leaves Tywyn for Dolgellau at 2.10 pm. - a wait of 1 hr 27 mins. with very little shelter.

## **Social Issues**

Many people, particularly the elderly and frail, are becoming increasingly isolated because they are unable to travel on public transport due to poor connections. This creates a greater demand for ambulance cars if they have no car of their own or anyone to take them to hospital appointments. If they do not qualify for an ambulance car there is a danger that they do not attend much needed appointments and may become a greater cost to the NHS in the long run.

This situation is likely to be exacerbated by the impending tragic reduction in working hours at Tywyn Hospital minor injuries, and the removal of x-ray facilities; this makes the need for an improved bus service even greater. People on the southern side of the Mawddach estuary, and down the coast, will have travel to Dolgellau hospital for consultant appointments and tests. The latest No. 28 bus is 2.10 pm from Tywyn, arriving in Dolgellau at 3.05pm. The last bus for the return journey is 4.20pm. The walk up to the hospital from Eldon Square (for a fit person) is a good 15 minutes each way. In the worst case scenario this allows a totally inadequate 40 minutes to be x-rayed and seen by a health professional.

Socially too, people are limited in what they can do because of inadequate public transport. For example (and there are many more) an 80 year old lady living in Fairbourne used to enjoy visiting her sister in Wrexham every week. She can no longer do this because of the current lack of connecting public transport.

Rhoslefain, Llanegryn, Brynchrug and surrounding areas are not served by the Cambrian Railway, so buses are the only option for people living there. Dolgellau too is not on the railway network so the lack of good bus connections and appropriate late buses creates very real difficulties. People are extremely disheartened with the situation.

Express Motors have extended the Llandudno to Blaenau Ffestiniog service through to Dolgellau (X1). However people living on the No. 28 bus route are not able to use the X1 service, because this would only give them a short time in Llandudno. This is a wonderful but wasted opportunity to socialise, shop and visit attractions along the route. People do not travel and engage with life in the community if they cannot get home.



The bus operators are saying that passenger numbers are reduced, making them not viable financially. Improving bus connections would lead to greater use of the longer distance buses as well as those for local trips.

**We are asking for the reinstatement of later buses from Dolgellau to Tywyn, and Tywyn to Dolgellau to ameliorate the social and economic problems.**

### **Business perspective**

There are good economic arguments for improving the bus service in south Meirionnydd. These are:

**Short term**                      **Better connections would act as a 'loss leader' motivating people to start using the buses more frequently and building up the bus using 'habit'.**

**Longer term**                      **Better connections should result in more passengers using the longer distance routes, thereby increasing overall profit to bus operators.**

**More buses on the road = more employment = more tax to the Treasury = more finance going to Gwynedd Council + other spending + reducing car emissions and fuel usage.**

### **BUT**

**Less buses = unemployment pay to drivers = less tax to the Treasury, + less money to spend on the local economy + strain on the NHS due to poor health and depression caused by the knock on effect of isolation etc.**

## **Money has to be spent to generate more money.**

The tourist industry needs to be encouraged. Some areas will die or become 'ghost villages' filled with holiday homes if they become inaccessible through a lack of public transport. With the increased popularity of walking and rambling groups, together with organisations like the U3A who seek out new places to visit, a good public transport system is essential to draw them to a location. For local residents too a regular reliable bus service encourages social activities. For example, the Fairbourne Senior Citizens Club goes on regular outings, to help them get out and meet people. They can only go to places served by public transport. It is important to help them to be able to do this.

**If the current bus service could be reviewed and improved, by reinstating later buses, it would greatly benefit all the local communities, and give tourism a much needed boost.**

If current economic stringency prevents a long term commitment to improving the bus services in the area, could a one year trial be implemented? We could do our part by making sure that local people are aware of the travel options and encourage greater bus usage.

**The recent Petitions (in paper and online) have shown the commitment of local residents**

**MAWDDACH BUS USERS**

EXAMPLES OF PRESENT TIMETABLE DIFFICULTIES IN SOUTH  
MEIRIONNYDD

Timings      These are erratic and inconsistent.

- |     |   |         |
|-----|---|---------|
| 1.  | First bus from Dolgellau to Tywyn                         | 9.10am  |
| 2.  | Last bus from Dolgellau to Tywyn                          | 16.20pm |
| 3.  | Last bus from Tywyn to Dolgellau                          | 14.10pm |
| BUT |   |         |
| 4.  | Service T2 from Dolgellau (via Corris)<br>to Aberystwyth  | 17.20pm |
| 5.  | Service X27 from Dolgellau (via Corris)<br>to Machynlleth | 17.55pm |

Connections      These are poor or non-existent.

E.G No 28 Dolgellau to Tywyn

- a) Leaves Dolgellau 9.10am arrives Tywyn 10.05am  
onward connection to Machynlleth (X29) 10.50am
  - b) Leaves Dolgellau 11.15am arrives Tywyn 12.10pm  
onward connection to Machynlleth (X29) 12.50pm
- In each case, a wait of over 40 minutes with no shelter.

E.G No X29 Machynlleth to Tywyn, then 28 Tywyn to Dolgellau

- a) X29 arrives in Tywyn 10.47am but 28 to Dolgellau does  
not leave Tywyn until 12.10pm.
  - b) X29 arrives in Tywyn 12.47pm but the 28 to Dolgellau  
not leave Tywyn until 14.10pm.
- In each case a wait of 1 hour 23 minutes, again with no  
shelter.
- c) X29 arrives in Tywyn at 14.42pm – there is NO onward  
connection to Dolgellau by bus for the rest of the day.

E.G Tywyn – Machynlleth via Dolgellau

- i) No 28 bus arrives from Tywyn at 8.55am  
X27 bus to Machynlleth leaves at 8.55am
- ii) No 28 arrives Dolgellau 11.05am  
X27 to Machynlleth leaves at 10.55am
- iii) No 28 arrives Dolgellau 13.05pm  
X27 to Machynlleth leaves at 12.55pm

It would seem that there is no requirement for the buses to wait for these  
connections.

**RESPONSES TO PETITIONS (ON-LINE AND PAPER) AND TO THE MEDIA  
COVERAGE**

**VERBAL SUBMISSIONS**

- Alf T. (Llwyngwriil)                      He is unable to use the train because of the high platform at Llwyngwriil station. His GP is in Tywyn and if his appointments do not fit with the bus times he has to rely on friends to take him there and to Bronglais Hospital, Aberystwyth, when required.
- Bob M. (Llwyngwriil)                      Travelled to Wrexham Maelor Hospital on the X94 bus service. He arrived back in Dolgellau at 5.30 pm. There was no bus service to get him back home to Llwyngwriil. He had to phone a friend to take him home.
- Danielle                                      Works in Tywyn on variable shifts. She has to get a taxi home from work 2-4 times a week because there are no late buses. This costs her between £7.50 -8.50 per fare and it is a struggle financially.
- Liz R. (Arthog)                              Had to stay in a hotel the night before an appointment at Bangor Hospital for extensive eye tests. Any later appointment would have made it impossible to get home the same day.
- Betty R (Llwyngwriil)                      She reluctantly feels that she has to keep and use her car because at 88 years old, she can not rely on the existing bus services. She worries about what will happen when she can no longer drive.
- Richy J. (Dolgellau)                      His son got a work placement in Arthog but was unable to take up the opportunity because he could not get there and back using public transport.

Sue W. (Llwyngwritl)

Works in Dolgellau but cannot get home by bus because she finishes at 5.30pm, and the last bus leaves Dolgellau at 4.20pm

Barbara S. (Arthog)

Would have been unable to attend her next appointment at Wrexham Maelor hospital because the earliest she could get there by bus from her home is 11.00am. Luckily, on that day her husband can get her to Dolgellau by car (before he goes to work) to catch the 6.30am bus from Dolgellau, arriving in Wrexham at 8.30am; this gives her time to walk to the hospital for her appointment at 10.10am. Without a car she would be unable to get to this appointment and have the consultation she needs for a chronic back problem.

## POSTAL/E-MAIL SUBMISSIONS

Mrs M.A.J (Arthog)

Is very worried about, and regrets the loss of any evening bus services which allowed access to leisure facilities and events in Dolgellau and Tywyn. However, her main worry focuses on the problems that her student grand-daughter experiences. Her grand-daughter attends Coleg-Meirionnydd Dwyfor in Dolgellau but can **never** attend any tutorials, seminars or events after 4.00pm because she would miss the last bus home to Tywyn which leaves Dolgellau at 4.20pm.

Mr RW. (Tywyn)

His main concern is the poor bus service between Machynlleth and Tywyn and the impact on tourism. He points to the fact that the last bus from Machynlleth on weekdays is 17.15pm, but on Sundays it is 13.30pm. However, in July and August, there is a Sunday service that leaves Machynlleth at 17.30pm. He cannot see the logic of this; why not run the 17.30pm every Sunday throughout the year to help locals and tourists alike.

D.M (Arthog)

She is very unhappy about the effect the cuts to bus services have had to her life. She points to the fact that her family and her dentist live in Wrexham She has no car and relied upon the connections of the 28 bus service with the X94 (to Wrexham) in Dolgellau. However, since the later buses were taken off the 28 route she can no longer go because of the very short time the current service allows her in Wrexham. She is asking specifically for a later bus from Dolgellau to Arthog.

Mrs Anne R. (Tywyn)

She has two main concerns about the local bus service. Her husband has complex health problems and uses a wheelchair or walker. Changes to the NHS services mean that she and her husband have to travel to Dolgellau hospital but the no.28 bus service running 2 hourly from Tywyn has no wheelchair/pram or luggage space. The no. 30 bus only runs to Dolgellau at 08.00am and 17.10pm, with a return at 16.20pm. This means having to spend a long and tiring time there. She points to the contrast with the X29 and X28 services which run from Tywyn to Machynlleth and on to Aberystwyth. These are well-equipped with wheelchair and pram space, as well as a platform lowering system. This makes it much easier for the elderly with sticks, and young mothers with toddlers. She asks for these welfare friendly buses to be used on the 28 route, and for there to be a later bus from Dolgellau to Tywyn.

Mrs C. (Arthog)

She describes how she has had to give up many of the activities she used to do in Tywyn because she can no longer get home on the bus. She has also given up visiting friends in Wrexham because the bus connections no longer make this practicable. She points to difficulties in arranging Drs appointments in Dolgellau to fit with the bus times, and mentions people she knows who work in Dolgellau but *have* to use their cars because of inadequate public transport. She asks that consideration be given to returning route 28 'back to a reasonable and sensible' timetable like the service that she found in the area when she moved here six and a half years ago.

Dave R. (Dyffryn Ardudwy)

He argues that the reduction of bus services has caused hardship to those who rely upon them, i.e. the elderly and non car owners. In addition, he points to the added difficulties caused by the withdrawal of a comprehensive printed timetable. He suggests that this has made it difficult to plan journeys using several routes and will lead to lower usage of the services. He urges Councils and service providers to recognise the need for a comprehensive and reliable service, with easily accessible timetables that all can use, i.e. locals and tourists alike. He concludes that the bus service is essential in this area and should be promoted and not allowed to decline further.

Cllr Louise Hughes

Louise Hughes  
Gwynedd ccl

Dear Cllr Hughes

If you can pass on to as many people as possible, my views, which are fully supported by my family, I'd be grateful:

My wife and adult daughter are shocked by the proposed cuts to the bus service in rural Meirionnydd. I accept that as occasional visitors we do not have as strong a voice as Gwynedd people, but having been visiting the area for more than 20 years, we have some knowledge of how it functions.

It is not only old people and children who depend on public transport in the countryside. For ecological reasons, we should all be trying to leave our car keys hanging in the hall whenever possible. It is, however, not possible to commute to work in, say, Dolgellau when the last bus towards Tywyn leaves before 5pm. Few bosses are going to allow a worker to leave in time for that bus so, because the terrain makes commuter-cycling over more than a few km mostly impractical, the would-be employee has to stay on the dole or somehow find the money to buy and run a car. One way and another, the result is more traffic and more pollution.

Coincidentally, I learnt of these cuts in the same week as I saw a programme on BBC-tv in which journalist Ian Hislop gave a very reasonable review of the Beeching rail cuts. It was noticeable that north Wales suffered more than most parts of Britain and that the public were expected to take up bus travel in huge numbers. In Meirionnydd 50 years on, that never happened and will not happen: the buses are being cut.


At the risk of seeming like a typical English incomer, let me explain that public transport is a key part of my holiday experience. My wife and I, and sometimes, separately, my adult daughter, rent the same cottage in Llwyngwrl, and either travel there from our London home or go by train (our preference). If by car, we park it, with the aim of using it as little as possible, preferring the rich experience of travelling on the local trains and buses with local people. (Incidentally, the behaviour of teenage schoolchildren on the buses in the afternoons is excellent, if occasionally highly entertaining.) Though we have visited for decades, during which time we have seen many signs of decline in the village and around, we find plenty to do, including hiking. I have long hoped that on one of the walk routes, the removed railway line along the Mawddach from Dolgellau will be reinstated, not just for tourism but mainly as a service to local people.

If bus services are run down in Meirionnydd, transport costs for the districts involved will rise. Road traffic will increase as residents and tourists abandon the remaining public transport and drive to their destinations, necessitating more expenditure on the roads. For example, the road used by the X28 that runs between Tywyn and Dolgellau will have to be widened.

Try explaining that to the voters.

Yours sincerely,

  
David Altheer

  
29 March 2013



## 'FACEBOOK' SUBMISSIONS – ON MAWDDACH BUS USERS GROUP PAGE

- Ruth RO Stresses the importance of buses for young people in outlying villages. Without a car they are 'well and truly stuck' if there is no bus service for their needs. She suggests that for young people to become fully independent they need to be able to live without having to rely on lifts from their parents.
- Susan J Used Traveline to see what public transport it would suggest for her needs. She lives in Llwyngwril and works part-time in Dolgellau. The Traveline results showed that if she had to rely on public transport it would add 2.5 hours to her day making it a total of nine hours. So she uses her car.
- Margaret B She feels that people are not using the bus service because they are not sure how the buses work and not everyone has access to the Traveline. She recognises that if people do not use the buses they may be reduced even further. Her experience is that if she misses a bus, she will have to wait for 2 hours for another – if she's 'able to find out when it's due or where to catch it.'
- Morag R Gave details of four incidents which make her feel the bus service is very unreliable and worries about the future.
1. Her son and girlfriend travelled from Cardiff to Penrhyndeudraeth for a connection to Trawsfynydd. The train arrived 'at 14.45 pm and the bus leaves at **14.43 pm**, the next bus is at 18.33pm 4 hours later !!!'
  2. She used to travel with her 96 year old aunt to Porthmadog, arriving about 10 am. There used to be a bus back at 12.10 pm but now the return is at 14.28 pm – 'much too long for an elderly lady' and they no longer use the service.
  3. There is no longer a bus travelling from Porthmadog to Bangor at 10.10 pm which was useful for people who did evening work.

4. Travelling back from Wrexham recently the bus seemed unfit for the two hour journey in that it was noisy and uncomfortable with no lowering platform. A disabled lady in a wheelchair needed to get out of her chair to get on and off the bus, and the driver had to assist her. The bus did arrive in Dolgellau on time but her connection to Trawsfynydd was driving off and had not waited to see if there were passengers arriving from Wrexham who needed to go onward.

SUBMISSIONS BY COUNCILS AND LOCAL  
ORGANISATIONS

- Barmouth Town Council
- Dolgellau Town Council
- Llanegryn Community Council
- Llangelynnin Community Council
- Gwynedd Council
  - Councillor Louise Hughes (Llangelynnin Ward)
  - Councillor William Gareth Roberts (Aberdaron Ward)
- Coleg Meirion Dwyfor
- Fairbourne, Friog & Arthog Senior Citizen's Association

**BARMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL – CYNGOR TREF ABERMAW**

**c/o Clerk to the Council**



1<sup>st</sup> April 2013

**BUSES MEIRIONNYDD**

Barmouth Town Council would like to offer their support to the Petition in regard of Bus and Transport services in Gwynedd.

The Council feels that any cuts in the services provided at present would be detrimental not only to the residents of the area but also to tourism which is such an important part of the local economy.

Yours faithfully,

Sue Phillips  
Clerk to the Council

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**CYNGOR TREF DOLGELLAU**

**RHYS R. WILLIAMS (BA HONS. GRAD I.C.S.A.)**

Clerc i'r Cyngor

Clerk to the Council

Barbara Snowball

03.04.2013

Dear Barbara

**Re: Mawddach Bus Users Group – Number 28 Bus Dolgellau to Tywyn**

I write on behalf of the Council to record the Council's support for your petition to have the later timed bus services which have serviced this route in the past, reinstated as soon as possible.

The Council is supportive of all your efforts regarding this matter and is appreciative of the fact that a local campaign group such as yourselves is actively seeking to defend such important services as these.

Please also note that with regard to the immediate vicinity of Dolgellau itself, the Council also places great importance on defending and encouraging public transport networks that assist the population in travelling to seek employment and / or for assisting people in attending hospital visits etc.

With best wishes for your campaign,

Yours Sincerely,

**RHYS WILLIAMS**

Clerk To The Council

Mrs Llywela Hughes



FOA Welsh Assembly Government

To whom it may concern:

The Councillors of Llanegryn Community Council are extremely concerned regarding the rapidly dwindling service of the No 28 bus service between Dolgellau and Tywyn.

For many young people, families and older people in the village of Llanegryn this service is vital and the only means of transport to the nearest shop or to visit the doctor or nurse. A taxi to Tywyn (one way) costs a minimum of £8 which makes it out of reach for people living on a low wage or limited income, therefore it makes them even more isolated.

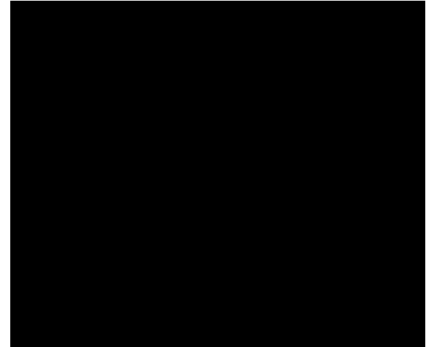
It is incomprehensible for people living in towns in the North and South of Wales who are within walking or public transport distance to every facility they need to realise how frustrated taxpayers who live in rural areas in Mid Wales are who see basic facilities such as health care being taken further away and yet their access to convenient public transport is being drastically reduced.

We appreciate that we now live in a difficult economic climate, but it seems that rural areas are in the front line when it comes to cuts.

Yours truly,

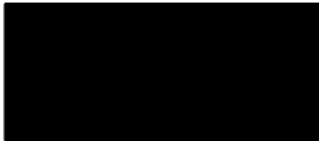
Llywela Hughes  
Clerk

Cyngor Cymuned Llangelynnin Community Council



24.03.13

**Ms Barbara Snowball  
MAWDDACH BUS USERS**



Dear Ms Snowball

Llangelynnin Community Council would like to support the local group "Mawddach Bus Users" in asking the Welsh Assembly to review the funding allocated for public transport in the South Meirionnydd area.

Due to recent cutbacks, the public transport service between Dolgellau and Tywyn has been drastically cut. This has proved detrimental to the lives of some people living in this area. Therefore, Llangelynnin Community Council would fully support your request to reinstate the later busses to run from Dolgellau to Tywyn and Tywyn to Dolgellau.

It is vitally important that the Welsh Assembly review the funding issues urgently – to ensure an adequate level of service be provided for the whole of Gwynedd – especially the No. 28 bus – from Dolgellau to Tywyn (through Fairbourne, Llwyngwriil, Rhoslefain, Llanegryn and Bryncrug).

Hopefully the Welsh Assembly Government will consider these points and offer a favourable solution to these issues.

Best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Glenda Edwards - Clerk

(rec'd 6.4.2013)

**Y Cynghorydd / Councillor**

Louise Hughes  
Ward – Llangelynin



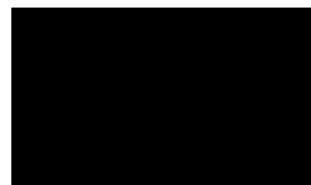
Dear Ms Hart,

I am writing to you on behalf of the people in my Ward with regard to the continuing loss of public bus services in South Meirionnydd.

I'm sure I don't have to stress the importance of a reliable public transport system to you, however the situation as it currently stands here is reaching crisis point. There simply is no such thing as a reliable bus service in South Meirionnydd at the moment and things are set to get much worse.

The Welsh Assembly has pledged to "develop a Transport Strategy which maximises the contribution of transport right across the economic, social and environmental agenda. Enabling people to access healthcare, education, employment, shopping and leisure facilities . To support economic growth through improved links and more reliable journey times. To achieve a more effective and efficient transport system by developing policies which will promote and encourage safe, integrated, sustainable transport facilities within Wales to meet the needs of persons living or working in Wales".

The Assembly has further stated "improving the transport system is critical to our goal of raising the quality of life for the people of Wales. Transport has a vital role in bringing forward our social justice agenda by helping people to access services and opportunities".







All well and good, and no doubt those promises were made with the best intentions; however the truth is that the reverse is happening here in South Meirionnydd. We are now down to an almost skeletal bus provision and this has taken a toll on the lives of all those who use the buses on a daily or regular basis .

Merely saying that the bus service provided in the past is unsustainable given the present financial climate does not take into account the limited transport choices available to many people across Gwynedd but particularly those living in rural South Meirionnydd.

Put simply, people are becoming prisoners in their own homes. It is a well documented fact that, statistically social isolation is the biggest killer of elderly people.

Although the emphasis is usually given to the impact on our older residents, it also affects younger people too; students trying to get to and from college in Dolgellau, anyone trying to attend out of county hospital appointments (because all our local hospitals have been curtailed or closed) or those just going about their daily lives. The particular problem here is the lack of return bus connections which causes untold problems for anyone endeavouring to get home. A bad situation has become much worse. This simply is not good enough and robs many people of employment opportunities, a varied social life and so much more.



A good bus service is vital for economic growth and unless a solution is found soon more of our small, independent shops and businesses will be forced to close. The consequences for the tourist industry will be equally disastrous.

I also have to say the majority of the people in this area feel completely abandoned by the Welsh Assembly and have lost faith in the endless, meaningless platitudes that emanate from Cardiff Bay. We are definitely the poor relations compared to our counterparts in South Wales.

Nobody expects a bus every five minutes by any means but the situation we have to endure is now tantamount to geographical discrimination. It is obviously easiest to make cuts in the rural areas albeit to the detriment of the people living here.

I fully support Mrs Barbara Snowball in her campaign to reach a workable resolution to this burgeoning problem. We need acknowledgement of our predicament and immediate action by yourself as Ministry for Economy, Science and Transport for the Welsh Assembly. Mrs Snowball has been in communication with Gwynedd Council's Portfolio Holder for Transport Councillor Gareth Roberts, who has stated "we would be happy to review the situation should the volume of users on the existing services increase substantially". In reality this will not happen, it is a case of putting the cart before the horse.



## Y Cyngorydd / Councillor

Louise Hughes  
Ward - Llangelynin



The obvious solution would be to re-instate a workable, reliable bus service and THEN the volume of users will increase.

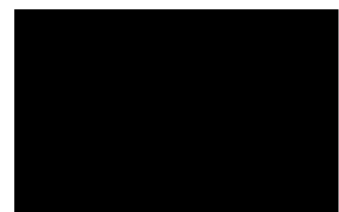
There is constant reference to a '21st Century education' or a '21st Century NHS' ~ well, how about a '21st Century bus service'?!

Many thanks for your time and I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Louise Hughes'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

05 - 04 - 2013



---Aelod Cabinet Amgylchedd Cabinet Member for  
Environment Y Cynghorydd / Councillor William Gareth  
Roberts  
Ward - Aberdaron



Ein Cyf / Our Ref:  
AD/gmo Eich Cyf / Your  
Ref:

Mrs Barbara Snowball

22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2012

Dear Mrs Snowball

#### **LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

Thank you for your recent correspondence relating to public transport issues and for the petition expressing concerns about service provision in South Meirionnydd. I believe that as Cabinet Member with responsibility for transportation, I should respond to some of the issues you have raised.

Firstly, I must stress that bus networks are dynamic and a number of factors will always influence or induce changes to services over time.

Unfortunately, the enhanced level of service previously provided on the 28 corridor between Tywyn and Dolgellau did not generate a sufficient increase in patronage to make them commercially viable. Average passenger numbers on the services were in fact low or very low and the public funding required to maintain them would therefore have been substantial.

In accepting the current timetable places constraints on members of the public wanting to make longer distance journeys via Dolgellau, I must stress the unprecedented pressures on the public finances available to support local bus services. With this in mind, one option maybe to reduce or rationalise the least used elements of the current service to strengthen others. This could mean withdrawing the winter Sunday services to allow a later service from Dolgellau to Tywyn Monday - Saturday. To achieve this, consultation would be required with members of the public and an agreement reached with the operator of the service.

Earlier this year, Gwynedd Council took the decision not to produce a comprehensive paper based guide of all local bus and train timetables for the County. Considerations, including the ongoing changes to the bus network and timetable changes for bus and rail services not coinciding were the basis for this decision. Providing inaccurate information was having a negative rather than positive impact on encouraging public transport use. The Guide did not therefore meet its core objective and resulted in a poor return on investment for the Authority.

The Authority has therefore re-focused resources on providing and maintaining information provision in alternative ways. This includes web based information but also the provision of timetables at bus stops. Paper based public transport information is also available for reference at over 70 outlets across the County. These

Swyddfa'r Cyngor  
Caemarfon Gwynedd.  
LL55 1 SH 01766  
771000  
[www.gwynedd.gov.uk](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk)

include libraries, leisure centres and tourist information centres. For a small cost recovery fee, print outs of timetables can be provided at a number of these locations.

Gwynedd Council also actively promotes and encourages use of the provision made by the Welsh travel information service, Traveline Cymru, which is supported by the Welsh Government.

An increasing number of operators have produced their own paper based materials which are more locally focused, less subject to change and show a healthy attitude towards marketing and promoting services. The long term sustainability of local bus services is increasingly going to depend on them being viable on the basis of the numbers of passengers carried as opposed to subsidies from the public purse. This will require a change in culture and involve the engagement of operators, to provide services that are attractive, and local communities, to make use of the services that are provided on a regular and ongoing basis.

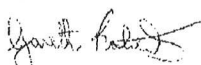
The X94, Monday - Saturday, service is provided on a commercial basis by Arriva Buses Wales. Gwynedd Council therefore has no direct involvement in managing or influencing issues such as the timetable or level of service. One can surmise that the company deem there to be a market on the route that justifies the level of service provided.

Budget constraints in Gwynedd as in all local authorities, combined with reducing levels of grant from the Welsh Government to support the provision of transport services, mean changes in service provision across Gwynedd cannot be avoided. The Council is currently undertaking a countywide contract re-tendering exercise for all public transport services supported by the authority. The process identifies and gives weight to issues such as value for money, access to work and access to services. Meeting rural community needs is an important element within the process used by Council.

"While looking to identify priorities it has to be recognised that bus services require a level of patronage that makes them sustainable both environmentally as well as economically. Unfortunately this means it will not be possible to meet all aspirations in terms of travel opportunities especially where levels of usage are, or are likely to be, low" .

As Cabinet Member, I am actively encouraging consultation and constructive dialogue with bus service providers and bus service users on any changes proposed to the bus network. I would welcome any further comments you may have on the provision of public transport services in Gwynedd.

Yours sincerely



**Cynghoryddl Councillor W Gareth Roberts**  
**Aelod Cabinet Amgylchedd / Cabinet Member for Environment**



March 26<sup>th</sup> 2013

Dear Ms Snowball

Re: Mawddach Bus Service

May I support your application for additional bus service for the route from Dolgellau to Tywyn.

A number of our students travel this route daily during college term time.

The last bus for them to travel home is at the end of the normal timetabled hours of learning.

Despite this we raise these concerns:

- There is some panic at the end of the college day for the Tywyn students. If they miss this bus there is no other available public transport home.
- Those who have teaching sessions outside of the normal timetabled hours cannot benefit from this provision. I am in this case referring to those who, as part of their college course, run the college Training Salon and the College Restaurant. This is essential in order to offer realistic working environment. Not all customers are able to use the salon/restaurant during day time and therefore an evening salon is necessary.
- Tywyn students are limited in their choice of additional curricular activities e.g. sports Activities, participating in concerts or skills competitions. This entire events taking place after the college normal working hours.
- We offer the use of all college resources plus additional tutoring on Monday and Thursday evenings. (The college being open until 10 p.m. on those evenings.) Obviously Tywyn students using public transport cannot take advantage of the provision. This is quite sad considering that they are contributing £180 annually towards transport costs.
- Work Experience is compulsory to all of our students and is part of the Government Recommendation for 16+ students. If the placement is outside of their vicinity then they have to leave the placement early in order to catch the 4.20pm bus. As you can imagine there is not sufficient placements for all our Tywyn students in Tywyn itself.

May I thank you for all you efforts in trying to ensure that the Tywyn residents are accessing an acceptable level of transport service. I hope that those who are reading your evidence will be able to conclude that the recent cuts in transport have restricted many of Tywyn Tax Payers.

Yours Sincerely

Rona Lewis

Director responsible for the Dolgellau Campus

Coleg Meirion Dwyfor

Grŵp Llandrillo Menai

## **THE PETITIONS COMMITTEE WELSH ASSEMBLY WALES.**

### **PUBLIC TRANSPORT.**

**As the chairperson of the Fairbourne, Friog & Arthog Senior Citizen's Association with a membership of 120 plus of pensionable age, may I ask the committee to consider the following comments?**

**A robust public transport system is vital in accessing services for those of us residing in rural areas .Our villages are within the Llangelynnin Ward and the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation highlights that access to services and the housing domains are poor. In addition the ward has 35.2% of pensionable age residents compared to 23.09% for the whole of Gwynedd this is a difference of 12.3%.The older members of the community experience real difficulties in accessing services as many do not drive and the geography rules out walking and cycling. Appointments and visits to the acute hospitals are heavily dependent on**

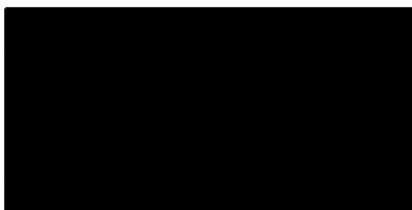
public transport for many residents; the majority of which are older vulnerable members of the community.

The Minister highlights "Access to Services" as one of the priorities for public transport. Our Association would appreciate if the Petitions Committee would recognise that our area has been identified by the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation as poor for "Access to Services". Lack of public transport further disadvantages a vulnerable section of the community.

Megan Wilding:

*Megan Wilding 6/3/13*

Chair of The Fairbourne, Friog & Arthog Senior Citizen's Association.





## CONCLUSION

From a combination of petitions, posters and media publicity organised by Mawddach Bus Users group there is compelling and growing evidence to suggest that the existing bus services in Gwynedd, and specifically in south Meirionnydd, are not fit for purpose. Increasingly all aspects of life are being limited for those people who have no private car and for whom buses are vital. Whilst accepting that any rural area will be challenging for bus operators there is a need to re-arrange timetables and improve connections so that residents and tourists alike have proper access to health, education, employment and social activities.

We call upon the Welsh Assembly Government to review the need for better local bus transport in this area so that their own promises \* can be fulfilled.

\*Welsh Government 2012 Progress Report :Rural Communities, Chapter 10, p.39