

## **P-04-475 Wanted - Buses for Meirionnydd – Correspondence from the petitioner to the Committee, 14.11.2013**

Thank you very much for inviting my views relating to the ongoing Petition to be discussed on 26th November.

I would like to make the following comments please.

I have read with interest the letters addressed to yourselves from Age Cymru, the Older People's Commissioner for Wales and the Children's Commissioner for Wales. They have all made very pertinent points based on evidence from numerous consultations on transport, i.e.

- Human rights.
- Impact of transport on abilities to realise rights and entitlements.
- Older persons unable to reach essential services, which affects health and social care services, which will result in a greater burden on other services.
- There is great value in the holding of a bus pass - but set against this is the loss of/reduction in services.

A further example of one of the current difficulties being experienced in Meirionnydd:

- There is no longer a bus to take people from Dyffryn Ardudwy to Blaenau Ffestiniog to link up with the main line train to Llandudno, Chester, Manchester and beyond. The No. 38 bus from Barmouth now only goes as far as Harlech/Talsarnau. Alternative routes by train (Brewitt Bridge currently closed, so NO trains!) involve changes which are difficult, well nigh impossible for infirm/elderly. It is vital that a proper through link be established and public transport in Gwynedd becomes useable.

Hopeful outlooks:

Ease of travel to areas previously difficult to access.

Positive local economic impact created by extra tourism.

Increase of people using more accessible public transport.

Greater area access creates more job opportunities.

Health benefits as greater freedom to travel can ease depression.

School children and college students enabled to study later in the day.

Hospital appointments easier to attend.

Small rural areas matter - people matter.

Accessible public transport is a basic human right.

If I could give you a personal example from my own experience:

I have just returned from spending 5 days with my grand-children, who live in Port Sunlight, Wirral. We have one car, which my husband uses for work. Therefore, for me to visit them, involves a bus (No. 28) to Dolgellau, X94 to Wrexham, No. 1 to Chester, and then a No. 1 or 2 to Port

Sunlight. This sounds very long and arduous but it is well worthwhile. Due to the trial period of the No. 28 bus, I was able to return home today. Otherwise, we cannot get to Chester at all. How much worse it would be for people who do not own a car, or who simply cannot afford the fuel.

Please see attached letter to Councillor Gareth Roberts concerning the 6 months pilot for the No. 28 bus Dolgellau to Tywyn.

1) The lady in Fairbourne who is the Chair of the Senior Citizens' Club (membership of 120), commented to me that a lot of elderly people do not feel happy about returning home in the dark.

2) Due to the lack of tourists during the winter, this will impact on the figures during the pilot scheme.

Gwynedd Council Transportation Department have assured me that these facts will be taken into consideration when assessing the situation after the 6 months.

We realise the financial implications of providing improved bus services. However, set against this is:

- Our basic rights - of being able to attend hospital for consultations and treatment and return home on the same day.
- Less illness and depression in elderly/infirm, resulting in less financial burden on other services.
- Some elderly people have to choose between food and heating at the moment, how can they possibly afford to run a car in these circumstances?
- Improved employment prospects for students.
- People who can not afford a car, being able to travel to work.
- More employment for local bus drivers, less financial drain on the Government.
- Financial gain to local businesses (e.g. we used the new evening bus service to go to Tywyn for a meal with friends, and are planning a cinema evening).

Thank you very much for your further consideration of this Petition. I hope it is acceptable to you in the form of an e-mail, in view of my being away from home during this last week.

Yours,  
Barbara Snowball  
Mawddach Bus Users

***Correspondence from the petitioner to Councillor Gareth Roberts***

3-Nov-13

Councillor Gareth Roberts

Dear Councillor Roberts,

No. 28 evening service

On behalf of Mawddach Bus Users, we are very grateful for the opportunity of the 6 month trial period. We are doing our very best to ensure that more people use the services. We have had printed 5000 of the attached flyers to make people fully aware of when and where they can travel to. I am constantly being told that people have difficulty reading the timetables. So these flyers are meant as a pocket/handbag help, with the times in an easy to read format.

For such a long time now, people have stopped making journeys because they knew they would have difficulty returning home. It is unfortunate that the trial period is in the winter months because I have been told that older people, for instance, do not like returning home in the dark. We also have very few tourists at this time of year, so the expected numbers will not be as great as they would be in the spring/summer months. Nevertheless, it is an opportunity, and I remain positive.

We are also using Facebook as an advertising tool for the service, and encouraging people to go out in the evenings. We hope local businesses will prosper more as a result. The Cambrian News also publishes regular features for us. Sibrydion magazine, our community magazine with a circulation of about 4000, also features the bus services regularly.

Once again, thank you.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

Barbara Snowball  
Mawddach Bus Users