

Public Transport Liaison Officer Report 2017 -18

It was a very busy year. I provided updates to residents on all of the local bus changes, helped with residents' enquiries, with bus stop issues, with community transport and with the Long Strops public inquiry. On behalf of passengers I raised / worked on the following issues:

Route 66 Bus Stop Display Screens

In March 2017 SCC switched off all the electronic route 66 display screens as they had life-expired and could not be repaired. Work on the first replacements did not begin until December 2017 and then it stopped. Despite repeated communications, an SCC team have only just (April 2018) re-commenced work in Kesgrave to replace the remaining screens. The work is being done in phases: firstly to install new poles, secondly to connect the electrics and thirdly to connect up the new electronic screens. As part of this work, longstanding issues such as the drainage at Lummis Vale bus stop and the clearway markings / safety concerns at Kesgrave Fisheries will be addressed. New bus stop screens will also be installed at key locations in Ipswich such as at the Railway Station and Great Colman Street bus stops.

Other Bus Stop Work

A few of our bus stops still don't have a raised tarmac waiting area which is important to enable wheelchair users to access local bus services. Two of these bus stops (in Fentons Way) have no proper waiting area at all – there is just a grass verge. The path to one bus stop (Ropes Drive) needs repairing and widening so it is wide enough to accommodate wheelchair users. Residents have also requested 4 bus shelters. Kesgrave has not had any new bus shelters since approx 2008 and passengers have been asking for several years for shelters at two locations. It is an unpleasant experience to wait for a bus in the rain and wind with no shelter and a deterrent to bus use. Suffolk County Council provided a quote for the work in October 2017 and funding needs to be found.

Route 66 Changes July 2017

Evening services were cut back in July and now run every hour instead of every 45 minutes. The service also ends earlier. In response to complaints First Bus said the cuts were due to low passenger use.

Park & Ride No. 800 Bus Changes July 2017

First Bus now runs these services on a commercial basis without County Council support. The P&R service now stops at Kesgrave Fisheries in addition to Kesgrave High School. The service also extends to Woodbridge, Melton, Eyke and Rendlesham at off-peak times – calling at all stops after Martlesham P & Ride. Passengers have welcomed these changes. After the Park & Ride service ends in the evening (around 7pm), the route 66 bus calls additionally at Martlesham Park & Ride. We now have a faster inter-urban bus route using clean, modern vehicles. A complaint was raised that the service does not stop at Ipswich Railway Station (the nearest stop is the Fire Station). In response: First said this was due to low passenger demand for the railway station and concerns about traffic delays near the station.

New Hospital Bus Service No. 68 Bus from July 2017

In response to residents' petitions, First Bus launched the No. 68 bus service between Kesgrave and Ipswich via the hospital grounds, stopping outside the Garrett Anderson Centre. It runs between approx 10am – 3pm Mon - Saturday in between the morning and afternoon school runs. First Bus advise it would not be cost effective to extend the operating times. Also, they have been unable to accommodate suggested changes of route. There were some initial problems with this service – including drivers going the wrong way - but the service has now settled down and is generally very reliable. More people are using it but to help secure its future it would benefit from higher passenger use. It's a handy local service between Kesgrave and Ipswich whether or not you are going to the hospital. I have created a timetable/map for the service. It's available online and from Kesgrave Library and Town Council Office as the printed timetable from First is very unclear.

Revised 63, 64 and 65 services Changes July 2017

All these services were cut back in July. The 64 now runs hourly and the 63/65 runs at peak times only. First Bus advised that the cuts were in response to low passenger use. We are fortunate to have retained the very useful Sunday bus service along Main Road Kesgrave.

Community Transport Service

For those unable to access conventional bus services, community transport is available to take residents from their homes to places such as the doctors' surgery, hospital, supermarket and to day centres, in return for a payment of 45p per mile. In 2017 we met with local Community Transport operator BSEVC and helped them to recruit new drivers to enable them to offer an improved service in Kesgrave. This is a Community Car service where volunteers sign up to be a local driver using their own car, they are safety checked and trained by BSEVC and they receive a payment per mile for journeys they undertake. BSEVC also offer a wheelchair/scooter-accessible mini-bus service to residents where needed.

Pedestrians crossing the A1214 to access bus stops

It has taken about 4 years to get dropped kerbs installed at the traffic island on the A1214 near to Cambridge Road. The kerbs were finally installed in October 2017 and I organised a ribbon-cutting event to celebrate. The new dropped kerbs and widened central waiting area are very helpful to those who use wheelchairs and scooters and to those with baby buggies. Unfortunately it is still difficult to get across the road here as there is no pedestrian priority. Residents had asked for a zebra crossing here, like the one on Woodbridge Road near to the Two Rivers Doctors' Surgery. However SCC said that that Highway regulations precluded this.

Other Pedestrian Crossing Requests

Residents have also asked the Town Council for zebra crossings of the A1214 near to both Edmonton Road and outside All Saints Church. These would improve safety for those crossing the A1214 to access bus stops. The request for a zebra crossing outside the Church would also help those crossing the A1214 to access the new cemetery. A further request is for a zebra crossing near the bus stop on Ropes Drive, just before Battles Lane. These requests are with the Town Council to take further action.

Public Transport & the Proposed Persimmon Housing Development off Bell Lane

I spoke from a public transport point of view at the Public Inquiry into the proposed new housing at Long Strops. The Transport Assessment for the planning application states that the existing bus stop (on Bell Lane opposite Penzance Rd) is 450metres from the proposed new housing development. But this it is 450m to the *entrance of the proposed housing development only*. The actual distance to peoples' houses would be much further which would make bus use relatively unattractive. The inspector appeared to agree with this.

Information about Public Transport services

Detailed information can be found here: www.kesgrave.org.uk/publictransport and free Information Leaflets are available from Kesgrave Town Council Office and Kesgrave Library. This includes the **Kesgrave Bus Map** - researched and designed by the Town Council. This colour-coded street map identifies where local bus services run and which buses operate from which bus stop. The map is available from the Town Council office and online at www.kesgrave.org.uk/busmap

Any queries please contact: Sue Hall, Public Transport Liaison Officer, Kesgrave Town Council, Ferguson Way, Kesgrave IP5 2FZ Email publictransport2@gmail.com