



Serving the Communities of Castleton & Marshfield

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Press Release

Some Of the City's Most Vulnerable Left Isolated and Cut off Owing To Newport City Council's Budget Saving Decision To Withdraw Bus Subsidy

The support grant provided by Newport City Council to the X16 service will be withdrawn as part of budget saving measures for 2017-18. Withdrawal of these funds will result in our village becoming unsustainable. This service provides a much needed public transport link to many elderly and disabled residents, allowing passengers to either travel into Cardiff or access the A48 to catch a wider and more regular range of services.

Marshfield Community Council has embarked upon a campaign, to raise awareness of the impact losing a regular bus service will have on the community.

The Keep Us Connected Campaign will involve, tweeting, posting, writing and talking to decision makers and commissioners. The campaign aims to tell the story of the forgotten village, the village with no services and no public transport. Keep us connected is will enable the hidden voices of Marshfield and Castleton to speak out and have their voices heard. An online video has been produced which will be shared on social media using the twitter handle @Marshfieldcomm.

Newport City Council are under a statutory duty to carry out sustainable development and to take account of the five ways of working detailed in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, which includes a requirement to, when making a decision, involve people affected by that decision.

Users of this service have been left feeling disappointed at the lack of consultation by Newport City Council when considering cutting the subsidy supporting the service.

Jackie Tasker a regular user of the bus commented "We heard rumours that the service was ending from the bus drivers, this bus is crucial for me as I do not drive and rely totally on this service to get to and from work. I also care for my disabled daughter, cutting this service is removing our lifeline"

Public transport is essential in maintaining the health, independence and wellbeing of older people. Public buses in particular are crucial in keeping older people healthy, active and inclusive within their communities.

The local bus route, for many older people, is a 'lifeline' that connects them with shops and amenities, GP surgeries or hospitals, and visit family and friends. An increasing number of older people are also at risk of loneliness and social isolation as a result of the local bus route being withdrawn, leading to a range of detrimental, physical and mental health impacts.

The City Council have ignored calls from the Community Council to assess the impact on vulnerable residents and have so far not taken steps to discuss the options recommended in a Community Council report submitted last month.

Mathew Taylor Chairman of Marshfield Community Council said "Adequate public transport is essential in ensuring our community is sustainable. Marshfield is the forgotten village sandwiched between the two cities. We have many residents young and old who are wholly dependent on this service to shop, socialise and attend medical appointments. Newport City Council must make sure that the impact of this poorly thought out decision is minimised by acting on some of the recommendations highlighted in my report"

Newport City Council was awarded £14.988 million by the Welsh Government under its VVP regeneration funding framework to regenerate the City. A further 100 million has been spent on the Friars Walk development and enhancement of the city centre. The people of Marshfield have financially contributed towards this work but have limited access to gain any benefit.

Good public transport provides opportunities for young people to access learning, it could help build peoples' skills and prevent underemployment.

The Older Person Commissioner For Wales' report 'The Importance and Impact of Community Services within Wales' emphasises that you cannot afford not to provide key community services, including public buses.

Notes for Editor

The X16 service travels from Risca-Cardiff (return) and is the only regular service that travels through the village of Marshfield. The village of Marshfield is situated equidistant between Newport and Cardiff and has a population of approximately 3500.

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation shows that generally Marshfield is not deprived, however, due to the comparatively rural nature of the ward it ranks within the top 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of 'access to services'. The village has a high demographic of elderly residents who do not have access to a private motor vehicle.

Marshfield Community Council submitted a report to Newport City Council in January, making recommendations for public transport alternatives.

A public meeting in January was attended by over 50 angry residents, all fearful about the impact that losing a bus would have on the community.