

## **Save Our 6-7 Buses Campaign - Statement to B&NES Cabinet – 12th Sept, 2012**

I am here representing the Save Our 6/7 Buses Campaign because we hear you are considering cuts to bus services, including the subsidy that maintains the 30 min frequency on our routes.

These bus routes serve 10% of the population of Bath and there are a number of very important reasons why they need a decent bus service.

### **Elderly**

- According to a BANES NHS Consultation, our area has the highest number of elderly people in Bath.<sup>1</sup>
- An NHS study predicted that by 2025, Bath's elderly over 85 would increase by 44%.<sup>2</sup>

Only good public transport can keep these people active and living in their own homes, not in care homes.

### **Health**

- The Fairfield Park Health Centre, served only by this bus route, is on a steep hill and serves the whole area including Snow Hill. One of the reasons it was built there was because of the good bus service. When the service was cut to 40 minutes, there was an outcry from patients, and our campaign has been solidly supported by the Health Centre itself.
- South Lansdown, served by this bus route bus, is listed as one of the 10 Bath areas with the most health and disability deprivation.<sup>3</sup>
- Since 2010 BANES has worked to reduce its high level of 'Excess Winter Deaths'<sup>4</sup> and experts suggest these can be precipitated by standing for long periods at windy bus stops.<sup>5</sup> The 40 minute frequency regularly left people standing at bus stops when overcrowded buses passed them by – in bitter weather this could prove life-threatening.

### **Essential services**

- Many people of all ages access not only the Health Centre, but other essential services by bus. A 40 minute frequency proves difficult to remember and this discourages bus use. Since the 30 minute service took effect, ridership has increased and this has been confirmed by a Council survey.

We are one of the founder members of the Bath Bus Users Group and our campaign does recognise the wider context:

- the national government cuts;
- the threat to other bus routes;
- the commercial nature of the transport system

We are also aware of this council's pledge to prioritise greener transport including increased use of public transport

The residents of the area, many of whom are dependent on the 6-7 buses, care about their bus service and they are showing this by the increased bus use. However, they are not responsible for the wider problems and are relying on the council to live up to their ideals by ensuring the 30 min frequency is maintained.

Through our campaign they are expressing their views clearly and strongly - as voters they are informed and responsive. During the 2011 election, our campaign was supported by all political parties and resulted in the modest subsidy to ensure a 30 min frequency – it was the right decision then & it remains the right decision now.

The residents of our area are looking to you for assurance that their bus service will be maintained. They want to know where you stand.

Pamela Galloway - for the Save Our 6-7 Buses Campaign

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<sup>1</sup> Bath and North East Somerset Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment Consultation Document, 27 October, 2010, pub. by B&NES and Bath and North East Somerset NHS, chart p.14

<sup>2</sup> Health Profile of Older People Living in Bath and North East Somerset , Bath & North East Somerset PCT & Bath and North East Somerset Council, Philip Milner, Kieran Morgan , Helen Tapson, Publication Date: June 2008 Review Date: June 2009, p. 7, "In seventeen years time, the over 85s will number around 6,600 in Bath and North East Somerset compared with 4,600 in 2008 – an increase of 44% (Table 2.2)."

<sup>3</sup> Op cit, P. 10

<sup>4</sup> Thursday, January 13, 2011, Bath Chronicle

<sup>5</sup> Excess Winter Deaths, Review of the Evidence. Produced by Sarah Kinsella, NHS Wirral Performance & Public Health Intelligence Team, 2009, H:\WPWIN\PHIT\Reports\Evidence Briefings\Excess Winter Deaths\Excess Winter Deaths Review 2.doc