

Save Our 6-7 Buses - ONE YEAR ON

Good evening and congratulations to new and returning Councillors.

When did you last stand waiting 40 minutes for a bus?

If I told you that when you are ready to leave this meeting you have to cross over the road and stand opposite the Guildhall for up to 40 minutes or possibly even longer in the cold, in the wind, in the rain, in the dark before even beginning to make your way home, how would you feel about that?

In fact, the evening interval is hourly, so let's stick to the daytime frequency of 40 minutes. This is the worst in Bath for a route serving one tenth of the urban population, with statistically more elderly than in other parts of Bath.

A month ago, over a period of only 10 days, 235 residents of north east Bath returned questionnaires deploring the 40 minute frequency, demonstrating that feelings are as intense as ever about the need to improve our bus service.

One year ago First Bus cut the connecting link between two halves of our community, and removed 2 out of the 5 buses serving the area. After a massive outcry, they reinstated the connecting route, but failed to reinstate either of the two missing buses. This has left our community with only half the former frequency which used to be 20 minutes. In view of economic constraints we are only asking for the return of one bus to approximate a 30 minute service. We need a 4th bus on our route.

In the meantime,

- our local shops are suffering with the disgraceful bus frequency. To preserve a viable community, the mix of shops must be maintained and the loss of even one will deter custom for all.
- Elderly and infirm people are condemned to unnecessary exposure contributing to the 'excess winter death' rates so high in Bath.
- It affects students, mothers with children and workers who suffer enormously extended journeys and waste hours in commuting.
- Many residents are resorting to using their cars more, frustrated at the inadequate bus service

All despair at the poor transport with full buses which leave people behind at peak times.

Campaigners are angry and frustrated that First claim it is the Council's responsibility to fund the 4th bus and some Councillors claim it is First's responsibility. It is the job of our elected representatives to inform themselves about how the public transport system is organised, to ensure sufficient infrastructure is in place and to find a way of delivering improvements without delay.

We call on the Council to tackle this problem head-on, helping to achieve reduction of congestion and CO² and respond to the needs of our community by ending the outrageous wait of a whole year.

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