

Statement by Cllr Dr Eleanor Jackson, Full Council. 30 November 2023
They say that as you get older, time runs faster. Certainly at my age, I am an 'angry old woman in a hurry'. I find it very hard to explain to residents why getting the facts about bus services, Westlink or even bus stop provision takes so long. On the other hand, standing here making yet another statement to council, I feel time has stood still. The problem is not a broken Tardis, but tardiness. Arguing about whose fault this is, is a waste of time, but I would plead with council at least to work with other unitary authorities to maintain the cross border services.

We also need inter-agency work to produce precise data on the savings to the health services and to the environment. And to speak plain Yorkshire, if the problems are not resolved, the reckoning will come in the forthcoming elections.

We need an up to date Equalities Assessment on the effect of the cuts, which from observation seem to have affected young and old disproportionately. Then the pre 2005 school children's bus pass should be re-introduced. Habits of a lifetime might develop.

Route combinations such as the 82/424 should be trialled.

Parish councils should be enabled to set up franchises.

'Better bus stops' campaign in partnership with parish councils.

Highways should introduce more bus lanes and remove road obstacles.

A levy on all developers of more than 10 houses created through an SPD and attached to the Local Plan to replace the present scattergun S106 and CIL demands. Developers should not be required to fund bus stops when there are no buses running past.

Today is St Andrew's Day, and while it is unlikely Andrew bar Jonas ever visited Scotland, or, as is rather more likely, followed St Thomas to India, it is hard not to interpret his fishing and ferry service as being more reliable than the various bus services in Bath & North East Somerset! While community supported public transport is vital for residents' mental health, for reducing our carbon footprint and enabling the rural economy, elderly people should not be driven to riding round and round a particular route to keep warm and have company, as happens now. Buses are only one element in a wider social context. I call on this council to show compassion and imagination and do everything it can mend a broken system.