

## Cllr Anna Box statement

I'll keep this brief, and I would like to thank my fellow residents and councillors for coming here tonight to speak about the importance of rural bus networks.

The comprehensive Big Bus Survey this year – shared with all of you – states that 40% of residents use the x91 and 99 for leisure. Now, I will never stand in this chamber and state that buses are not vital for work or important weekly activities like food shopping – but my point is a different one. Without joy, we are simply failing as a species. Leisure isn't simply about indulgent frolicking, like having a few ciders or in Bath – Dom Perignon – but exercise, social interaction, social mobility and to combat isolation.

Research shows time and time again that loneliness and isolation are an increased risk factor for all-cause mortality in all ages. Our duty as public servants is to look after our residents. I therefore urge you to continue to support and lobby WECA for rural buses as a high priority, thank you."