

ASHHURST & COLBURY PARISH COUNCIL
 PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE LOCAL BUS SERVICE –PUBLIC MEETING
 SATURDAY 19TH FEBRUARY 2011

Approximately 139 residents attended.

Councillor Ken Kershaw welcomed them and before starting the meeting delivered the normal safety precautions for the hall.

Councillor Kershaw gave a very clear and direct presentation, pointing out the proposed changes to the bus routes, there likely effects on distances to bus stops and the reasons given by HCC for the change. He also explained that the Parish Council had received notice of the proposed changes by email on the 30 December 2010 and given until the 25 January 2011, approximately 3 weeks to respond. This had given no time to advertise in the local newsletter or canvases public opinion prior to the given deadline. The paperwork, being received over the New Year period, had also hampered any public discussion. The meeting today was the first opportunity for proper consultation and the Parish had already asked HCC to respect this and consider any points from the meeting.

Councillor Kershaw next went on to questions from the floor as related below.

On a vote for holding bus passes

- 119 holding
- 10 without

Items in red were Councillor Kershaw's response.

1	Mr. Beale	Does this mean that Foxhills and Ashdene Road will be taken out from the bus route?
		No
2	Mrs. Radford	How are residents going to get to Colbury Memorial Hall?
		The nearest bus stop will be about ½ mile which is not very satisfactory.
3	Mr. Searle	Bluestar have already printed the timetables and maps from which it can be seen that in the afternoon two eastbound buses at 1512 and 1542 turn up Whartons Lane rather than pass through Foxhills.
		I have not seen the new printed time table. No one has thought to send me one. But I do know that existing 56A buses are already using this alternative route at the time pupils leave Foxhills school. We need to know if this will continue in school holidays and also where the buses go and to which stop once at the top of Whartons Lane.
4	Mr. Searle	Have they thought of alternate routes?
		I have not been told of any
5	Mrs. Judd	During bad weather what will happen in future to the 56A route as at present the roads are not cleared of snow?
		This is correct and HCC has already been asked to address this. We also need to know if, should this happen again, whether or not the service will continue but using the A35 route.

6	Mrs Judd	Communication with Bus service office is nonexistent?
		I agreed with the statement concerning the lack of communication. I had firsthand experience just recently when at Lymington bus station. I needed to know if the buses had been cancelled owing to bad weather (see item above). The only available contact phone number displayed was out of date and I was transferred from this to London and then the Isle of Wight for information. When I was finally called back from the IoW who had to call the bus station (bus station phone numbers are not available to the public), I was told that the 56A service was running. It happened that although the bus I used displayed 56A it used the A35 and not the Ashdene Road route.
7	Mrs. Bennet	I would like to challenge the figures produced on the usage of the buses? From experience she has seen only 1 passenger picked up at Hounslow after leaving Ashurst on the 56A. The 56 is always well used.
		We should ask HCC to provide actual data on the various route usages.
8	Mrs. Humby [Hounslow]	What if you are disabled and want to go to Totton? To expect one to walk a mile is preposterous.
		Although this is outside of our parish the point is well made and will be passed on to HCC.
9	Mr. Hunter	Are there more buses running than every 2 hours?
		Yes, all buses will run through the Parish approximately every ½ an hour weekdays and every 2 hours on Sundays. But they will all use the current 56A route.
10	Mr. Hunter	What happens in the bad weather will they use the A35?
		We will ask.
11	Mrs. Symes [Hounslow]	What will happen to all the pupils and students who catch the bus at Hounslow, some for Brockenhurst College?
		Again although this is outside of our Parish your point is good and will be passed to HCC.
12	Mrs. Radford	Would you ask the public how many use the bus to get to Colbury Hall?
		Vote was taken and 13 hands shown.
13	Mrs. Martin	Ashdene Road is not wide enough for buses you can see this by the amount of grass verges that get damaged?
		Good point. I have also received comment about busses mounting the curb when turning into New Road.
14	Mrs. Baker	Money is being wasted and two buses an hour is not necessary. They pose a hazard for families trying to cycle along Foxhills and a danger to children. This is not justified when there are only 2-3 people at bus stops. Not enough custom to warrant so many buses.
		Yes, cycling route must be considered and there has been an increase in cyclists using Knellers Lane since the installation of the crossing at Colbury.
15	Mrs. Baker	Is the Hounslow railway bridge up to the additional traffic?
		We will ask.
16	Mr. Thomas [Hounslow]	At a recent meeting with Hounslow Residents Association Councillor David Harrison said he was unaware of these proposed

	Residents Association]	changes. He had since made enquiries and there is a meeting in three weeks time with Bluestar and HCC to finalise the proposals.
		We were unaware of such meeting but will now try to get our points to it.
17	Mr. Thomas [Hounslow Residents Association]	Suggested there are more pupils going to Hounslow and Brockenhurst than there are to Foxhills.
		Again although this is not in our Parish we will ask for figures from HCC.
18	Mrs. Bennet	Ashdene Road is not built for buses. When lorries refuse to move the grass verges are damaged.
		Point to be made to HCC.
19	Mr. Morris	West and east bound buses currently pass each other in Ashurst. If in future this occurs in Ashdene Road then it is likely to further damage the grass verges
		We will ask.
20	Mr. Searle	Ashdene Road and Foxhills need attention in bad weather. Is this also the case with Hounslow Railway Bridge?
		We have already reported the need for both roads in the Parish to be gritted. If this is also the case with Hounslow Railway Bridge and Rushington Lane then Totton Town Council should be made aware.
21	Mrs, Jenkinson	Do residents appreciate the bus passes?
		This was put to a vote with the majority appreciative.
22	Mr. Shotter	Am I right in thinking that if the proposal is accepted there will be one bus every half hour through Foxhills?
		Yes
23	Mrs. Wansley	On the timetable it only indicates one bus an hour?
		No this is wrong if the proposals are accepted they will be about every half hour on weekdays and Saturday.
24	Mrs. Craig	Why are we having these changes?
		Three reasons have been given by HCC with only that relating to cost being relevant to the Parish. It maybe that without the new arrangements HCC would have needed to increase its subsidy to the bus company. This would need to be included in our Council Tax
25	Mr. Turnell	Is it a possibility that once the new arrangements are in place Bluestar will find it uneconomic to maintain 2 buses through the Parish each hour and reduce this?
		Difficult to comment but a possibility and a point that needs to be made.
26	Mr. Shillabeer	They have not painted all the bus stops blue?
		Not sure. Will check.
27	Mr. Starnes	The 56A is not popular and very often goes by empty, can see no reason for the changes.
		We will seek information on passenger numbers.
28	Mrs. Crieghton	Does not agree with the proposed changes. If the buses have such few passengers why not run just single decked buses?
		Don't know but will ask. It maybe that Wilts and Dorset do not have that many single decked buses.

29	Mr. Hunter	Lives in Ashdene Road with a bus stop right opposite his home and are very well used. It is a mistake to say they are not full.
		We will ask for the passenger numbers.
30	Mr. Thomas [Hounslow]	The bus shelters are privately owned what will happen to these and the advertisements?
		All the bus shelters in Ashurst and Colbury are owned and maintained by the Parish Council which will address what to do with these for the future. It is thought that the route 56 shelters on the A35 in Hounslow may be privately owned and with advertisements but this is not within the Parish.
31	Mr. Joiner	Instead of cutting or making changes why not make a small charge to those with bus passes for example 50p for every journey?
		This is an interesting idea. Was put to the vote and about one third of the audience agreed.
32	Mrs. Radford	If these changes means making an extra 0.4 mile walk it is just not acceptable.
		No comment.
33	Mrs. Burton	Between the hours of 0930 and 1040 there are no buses. More buses would be great.
		Will check the missing buses.
34	Not known	Can we have some late buses in the summer to enable longer trips out?
		Will pass on to HCC.
35	Not known	Why are concessionary bus passes issued in blocks at set times? This will mean I will be 60 and 3 months before I can have concessionary fairs.
		Will ask NFDC
36	Not known	Now that the provider will be Bluestar can we consider some buses running from Southampton to just and around the Parish along the A35 and then back down Ashdene Road without the need to travel to Lymington?
		Will pass suggestion on.

To finish the public meeting Councillor Kershaw put the following motions to the residents.

Residents not liking the changes	80
Residents happy with proposals	33
Residents with no views	3

Councillor Kershaw closed the meeting at 1300 hours, after receiving a warm round of appreciation from the residents.