

PET(4)-14-12 : Tuesday 16 October 2012

P-04-380 : Bring back our bus! Petition against the removal of scheduled bus services from east Lampeter, Cwmann & Pencarreg

Response from Miriam Perrett

I am writing in support of the following petition:

"P-04-380 Bring Back our Bus! Petition against the Removal of Scheduled Bus Services from East Lampeter, Cwmann and Pencarreg

Petition wording:

We request the urgent implementation of a properly scheduled & timetabled bus service in these affected areas & would urge those governmental agencies concerned, to commit to this on our behalf, at the earliest possible opportunity."

The X40 timetabled bus service that used to run through Cwmann and Pencarreg was withdrawn at very short notice (most of us had a bare 3 weeks' warning, and that only because the Cambrian News found out about it and ran a story). It has been replaced by "Bwcabus". In a matter of weeks, the people in these villages went from having a timetabled hourly service to having a bus that is only available if someone else has not bagged it first, and which even if available has to be booked half a day in advance. A good deal of life is not amenable to advance booking in this way, especially if you are old, unwell or have children; and a lot of people cannot afford to use taxis. Co-ordinating the erratic availability of Bwcabus with such things as doctor's surgery times is very problematic. (When my cat needed to go to the morning surgery at the vet's at short notice, I was reduced to taking it in a wheelbarrow!)

People living along the road that runs through Cwmann and Pencarreg had in many cases chosen to do so expressly because there was public transport available, and are now in difficulties. It is the A485, the main road from Lampeter to Carmarthen; the expectation that there should be a proper timetabled bus service along it is surely not unreasonable.

It is a fast, busy road with no pavement or lighting on most of its length, but people are being obliged to risk walking along it in order to carry out their business. I live on the A485 and a recent visitor to my home (with whom I had not discussed the bus situation) remarked quite spontaneously that far more people were walking past the window than on previous occasions when he had visited. The walk is hazardous enough in daylight; with winter coming up, more people will be faced with having to risk it after dark. People who are too old or disabled to walk far do not, of course, have even this risky choice. It is about 3 miles from Pencarreg to Lampeter.

We really need a regular, timetabled service restored to this route.

Procedures should also be put in place to ensure that bus services cannot simply be discontinued at a few weeks' notice (or lack of notice) in this fashion. It creates havoc in people's lives. At least one person on the route came close to losing her job because it was not clear whether she could guarantee being able to get to work. Public transport is not some kind of optional extra; it is an essential service.

Yours sincerely,
Miriam Perrett