

P-04-475 Wanted - Buses for Meirionnydd – Correspondence from the Petitioner to Clerking Team, 21.01.2014.

For attention of the Petitions Committee for further consideration on Tuesday, 4th February 2014.

Re: X94 Bus service Barmouth to Wrexham

I would urge that further consideration is given to the continuance of the X94 service after the current trial period.

The loss of the service would isolate the community in Barmouth, Dolgellau and all the surrounding areas. There is no alternative route to Wrexham.

It would prevent people from attending Wrexham Hospital.

It would cause great hardship and deprivation to people who can not afford to run a car.

It would result in job losses for some people who use the X94 to commute to work.

It would cause financial deprivation on a large scale. Many businesses which rely on the summer tourist trade would cease to exist.

This would result in a major loss of revenue to Gwynedd Council.

Re: No. 28 Bus service Dolgellau to Tywyn – pilot scheme

I would urge that consideration is given to a further 6 months pilot scheme after the ending of the current pilot scheme (end March/early April).

Please convey gratitude to Taith for providing the funding.

- However, a winter pilot is not the best time and can not give a true picture. We requested a 12 month trial period to give a more accurate assessment.
- Elderly people do not feel safe venturing out for the day when they have to return home in the dark.
- There are no tourists in the area during the winter to increase passenger numbers.

Other important factors are:

- People have been let down by poor connections and are loath to put their confidence in the buses.
- Where so many bus companies are involved, there is lack of cohesion.

- When most journeys in the area were serviced by just one bus company (Arriva), the connections were a lot better. The drivers communicated with each other if they were running late.
- There was an incident where an elderly couple arrived back in Dolgellau from Wrexham. The X94 was running 10 minutes late and did not manage to catch up on time. It arrived in Dolgellau at 8.01 pm, and the No. 28 bus had left 1 minute earlier at 8.0 pm. The couple had to continue on the X94 to Barmouth, from where they walked over the Barmouth bridge and home to Fairbourne (the Cambrian trains are not running). They arrived home well over an hour later, utterly exhausted. Express Motors was later requested to wait for 5 minutes until the X94 arrives in Eldon Square, Dolgellau. They have complied with this request.

There has been evidence of more passenger use on the evening No. 28 buses but still not enough.

- There have been ‘cinema evenings’ to Tywyn on the bus. This also helps the cinema.
- There have been people having evening meals out in Tywyn and Brynchrug, helping local business.
- On one evening recently, there were 19 passengers on and off at different stops, which shows that there is a slowly growing trend to use the evening buses.

The most important aspect of a public transport network is its integration. This has clearly failed on many occasions due to so many bus operators, and misunderstandings between them, or just poor communications. There have been complaints from the public about missed connections. The public have had such bad experiences that they are not using the buses as they once did, hence the drop in passenger numbers. Unfortunately, the outcome is that bus services are reduced because they are “not being used enough”. The only way it can work is if there is someone who can proactively co-ordinate all the interconnecting services; and the only person / body who can do that is the Local Authority, and specifically the Transport Officer.

People need to see there is a good, integrated bus service they can rely on.

I would therefore urge that consideration is given to having the right “body” in place who thoroughly understands the Public Transport system and who has the knowledge and experience to effectively integrate all the services and timetabling.

Barbara Snowball
Mawddach Bus Users