

Notes of meeting with Stagecoach reps - Wednesday 8th Feb 2023 - 2pm

Present for PC - Rebecca Simcox (PC Chair)
Tony Fielding
Clive Taylor
Jane Cook (Clerk)
Maria Fitzgerald (local resident)

Present for Stagecoach - Louise Sills + her Manager Dave

- RS - St Margarets service has been decimated; no bus from Deal after 2pm and no service on Sundays.
- LS - confirmed Stagecoach receives a lot of subsidies from KCC.
- RS - Parish Council has been instrumental in providing new bus shelters in the village and re-arranging the turning island at the top of the village to assist Stagecoach buses.
- RS - showed a digital map and raised the idea of introducing a “dog leg” into the village via A258 Westcliffe (Dover Road) turning, turning at the junction into the village and exiting via Station Road/A258 - RS will provide LS with a link to the digital map showing the suggested route on Parish Council website.
- LS advised that she could take this idea away but there may be concerns re safety on exiting on to the A258 junction. Also raised the question of passenger numbers using this proposed re-routing of the service and how would it impact the service (bus No 81).
- RS raised a question concerning historic passenger number - LS will check whether it is possible to provide this information to the Parish Council.
- MF advised that the No 80 bus had been completely scrapped.
- CT raised the issue of St Margarets being a tourist hotspot particularly through the summer months and a useful bus service is absolutely essential in this regard.
- RS raised the issue of possible better timetabling as the Dover-Deal bus and Deal-Dover bus often pass each other at pinchpoints in the village, creating traffic problems. She also commented that buses which are completely full with schoolchildren often run the entire length of the village without dropping off anyone or picking up; David and LS advised that the buses have to run the whole of the route as this is an agreed statutory requirement.
- CT - use of the suggested dog-leg would not have the problem of creating traffic issues as it would not pass through pinchpoints although LS stressed the speed of the A258 re exit and traffic being unwilling to allow the exit of a bus from Station

Road.

- LS - Service provision will not be looked at again until summer 2023, looking across the whole network.
- MF - asked that review of bus no. 93 is looked at again as last bus from Deal is 2pm - this does not allow for doctor/hospital appointments or indeed socialising,
- MF - residents without a car are starting to see themselves as second class citizens.
- RS - how does KCC fund Stagecoach? LS advised that Council needed to check this with KCC.
- LS - when looking at provision of services through the network, accessibility and numbers are studied.
- LS - any solution would probably need to come from joint initiatives - DDC has funded an initiative "Demand Response Travel" which covers Aylesham and surrounding villages to Whitfield.
- RS - how does Parish Council ensure our ideas are looked at - LS "use contacts at DDC/KCC and encourage collaboration".
- LS - she is not a decision maker but can listen and take back feedback.
- CT - raised the issue of creating a roundabout at Station Road/A258 junction. LS - this would obviously be a very expensive introduction to the road.
- MF - the current introduction of the £2 flat fare does not help St Margarets but only helps the busier routes/buses i.e. the No 12 from Deal to Canterbury.

Meeting ended at 2.45pm