

## **Bus Users Conwy Valley Consultation Events**

**23 March 2023 - Blaenau Ffestiniog and Llanrwst**

**18 April 2023 - Dolwyddelan**

Bus Users in Wales, in partnership with Conwy Council, Gwynedd Council, TFW and Welsh Government, held drop in sessions at Blaenau Ffestiniog, Dolwyddelan and Llanrwst in March and April this year as part of the Conwy Valley Consultation.

The Consultation followed the decision by Llew Jones Coaches to withdraw its T19 services from Blaenau Ffestiniog to Llandudno serving the Conwy Valley in Gwynedd and Conwy as the service was no longer commercially viable. The withdrawal has particularly impacted Blaenau Ffestiniog, Dolwyddelan and Llanrwst which have areas of rural deprivation.

Over 30 people attended each session and were asked to highlight either their top three priorities for public transport or their concerns over service withdrawals and what they would like to see provided.

### **Issues**

#### **Frequency of services, including lack of evening and Sunday services**

This issue was raised by the majority of attendees:

“There is a large proportion of retired people living in the valley who rely on public transport not only just for travel, but to maintain their freedom of movement and mental wellbeing.”

#### **Access to Education**

With a number of schoolchildren using the service to travel to and from school and Coleg Llandrillo, this is an issue for many:

“My daughter had chosen to study for her A levels at Ysgol Duffryn Conwy Llanrwst. Cancelling the morning bus from Blaenau Ffestiniog to Llandudno has put plans in jeopardy. She is dependent on the bus to make the best choice for her future.”

#### **Access to Employment**

Most employers are in towns with limited access from rural areas, particularly outside regular working hours:

“There are no longer any services after 18.30 making it impossible for anyone who lives in these areas to work outside the Valley except during basic office hours, or if they drive.”

“We are a care home; we have staff that live outside of the town that are really struggling to get to work. The buses that we have do not run at a time to enable local people to get to work on time and then they stop early so staff struggle to get home.”

### **Access to Healthcare**

Getting to healthcare appointments at hospitals, GPs, optometrists and dentists was an issue raised by many people:

“As a non-driver it is difficult and inconvenient having to rely on people to take you to appointments in Llandudno Hospital.”

“The main priority should be access to the Conwy Valley. Hospital and optician visits are impossible.”

“Unable to go to Llandudno hospital for check-ups, unable to go to the bank or dentist and can't do shopping for essential things.”

### **Access to retail**

Being able to access shops and leisure activities is essential to leading an active and fulfilling life:

“Losing the bus would be a huge loss for us in Dolwyddelan. Having the bus call is a great help for going shopping, going to appointments, hairdressers and the library in Llanrwst.”

### **Integration between bus and rail**

It was felt that integrated ticketing would increase travel options and potentially reduce costs:

“The way the current timetable for the trains, 19 bus and 19X are set up, there are big gaps through the day when there is no transport and then a bus and a train within half an hour of each other. If these timetables could be arranged in such a way that there are less gaps, then that would be helpful.”

“Is there something that could be done to enable someone to travel one way by bus and the other by train? Would give passengers more options.”

“The train is expensive; it is more cost efficient to go to Llandudno by bus.”

### **Provision of information**

Information is needed in a range of formats to prevent digital exclusion:

“People without internet access need to be able to have a physical timetable or one at the bus stop.”

### **Feelings of Isolation**

Transport poverty is leading to loneliness and isolation:

“We feel isolated here, people without cars depend on buses.”

“Dolwyddelan is on the major trunk road between Blaenau and Llandudno. Surely in this day and age we deserve a regular bus service to access shops/doctors/opticians etc to lessen car and taxi use.”

“It seems to me that Blaenau is forgotten.”

“Blaenau Ffestiniog always seems to be left out of any planning and spending and with UNESCO world heritage status, more should be done to revive the area.”

### **Environmental issues**

Sustainability is a significant concern:

“Transport should be environmentally compatible. There are too many cars on the road!! Public transport should be promoted. Lack of it causes pollution!!”

“If you want people to use cars less, and I for one want to use my car less, there needs to be reliable, adequate public transport available.”

### **Rail Replacement Services**

A number of issues were raised around rail replacement services including confusion on pick-up points, buses failing to stop for passengers, termination of services at Llandudno Junction, no services to Deganwy and Llandudno, no early services and in some cases no service at all.

### **Meeting local needs**

Overwhelmingly, people want a return of the T19 service, with earlier and later services linking the Conwy Valley with Porthmadog and Llandudno.

Fflecsi is seen as part of the solution if the T19 fixed route bus service is not reinstated, linking to service 19 at Llanrwst or Bettws-Y-Coed and providing connections to Llandudno.

The present situation limits options for communities and is leading to isolation and loneliness, with all the associated impacts on health and social care. Very often the cost of dealing with the consequences of cuts to bus services outweigh the cost of providing the bus service.

“Why can’t the Fflecsi service be expanded to cover Blaenau and Dolwyddelan?”

“Fflecsi bus to cover more areas if existing bus is not going to be improved.”

“Some sort of transport service required to enable folk to travel from Dolwyddelan to other transport links.”

“The service needs to be changed by using Conwy Fflecsi Bus to come down to the town. The train service which is supposed to replace T19 is inadequate (too unreliable, too expensive and the timetable doesn’t work for local people).”

### **About Bus Users**

Bus Users UK is a charity that campaigns for inclusive, accessible transport. We are the only approved Alternative Dispute Resolution Body for the bus and coach industry and the designated body for handling complaints under the Passenger Rights in Bus and Coach Legislation. We are also part of the Sustainable Transport Alliance, a group working to promote the benefits of public, shared and active travel.

Alongside our complaints work we investigate and monitor services and work with operators and transport providers to improve services for everyone. We run events, carry out research, respond to consultations, speak at government select committees and take part in industry events to make sure the voice of the passenger is heard.

Bus Users UK Charitable Trust Ltd is a registered charity (1178677 and SC049144) and a Company Limited by Guarantee (04635458).

#### **Bus Users UK**

22 Greencoat Place  
London SW1P 1PR

Tel: 0300 111 0001  
enquiries@bususers.org  
www.bususers.org