



PRESS RELEASE

Council Bus Services Trial

Stone Town Council has been sponsoring a three month trial of four, once a week services between the town centre and each of the Aston Lodge, Stonefield, Walton and Cherryfields areas to help residents isolated by the withdrawal of former D&G bus routes. The services have been operated in conjunction with Community Link Stafford & District and were a direct response to the bus route cuts made by Staffordshire County Council earlier in 2018.

Disappointingly, the usage of the service has been at a much lower level than the Council had hoped for. Due to the low numbers travelling, each return journey taken has cost the Council, on average, £17, resulting in a £13 subsidy after taking into account the fare paid by the passenger. This is a higher subsidy than the Council can afford to pay, and is more than the cost of the equivalent taxi fare.

As a result, the Council will cease to operate the service at the end of January 2019.

The Council will be making arrangements to refund the £7 membership fee paid by passengers to Community Link to enable them to use the service.

Councillor Rob Kenney, Chairman of the Council's General Purposes Committee said: *"I'm an pleased that the Council were able to offer this opportunity to continue a bus service into the town for people affected by the withdrawal of the D&G service. Unfortunately, usage of the service was less than the Council had hoped for, and to continue it at current usage levels would have required an increase of almost 4% to the Town Council's share of the Council Tax for the bus service alone. The Council has therefore reluctantly decided to withdraw the service from the end of January."*

ENDS

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