

LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

No. 28 bus (Lloyds Coaches) from Dolgellau to Tywyn, passing through Fairbourne, Llwyngwrl, Rhoslefain, Llanegryn, Brynchrug.

Not many years ago, the Welsh Assembly Government was very proactive in promoting a good public transport system and encouraging people to use the buses instead of their cars. The bus service was excellent but, mainly due to the economic climate, they were drastically cut. This is proving detrimental to the lives of people living in rural Meirionnydd. The public transport system is vital to society. The **Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation** in our immediate area (the Llangelynnin Ward) is rated "**poor**" for access to services.

Dolgellau to Tywyn

The running times were halved, including cancellation of the 2 later runs, 5.40 pm and 7.45 pm. Going to Wrexham, Bangor or Aberystwyth for hospitals, shopping or visiting friends & family, creates a problem. These destinations are all approx 60 miles away and the bus service is the only way a lot of us can access our health services. Arrive at destination about 11.15 am and **MUST** leave at 1.15 pm in order to catch the last connecting No. 28 bus from Dolgellau at 4.20 pm. 2 hours is not enough time, particularly if you have a hospital visit.

Also, people cannot access leisure and theatre venues in the evenings and the Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor students are unable to stay later than 4.0 pm to further increase their skills/sports, etc.

Tywyn to Dolgellau

The last two No. 28 runs were cancelled, and the last bus now, is 2.10 pm. The bus connections in Tywyn are very poor. Example – depart Machynlleth on the X29 (Lloyds Coaches) at 12.15, arrive Tywyn 12.47, depart Tywyn on the No. 28 to Dolgellau at 2.10 pm., a wait of 1 hr 27 mins.

A lot of people, particularly the elderly, are becoming more isolated because they are unable to travel on public transport because of the poor connections. This means they will be forced to book ambulance cars if they have no car and no-one who can take them to hospital. Their health and well being will be affected and add to further strain and cost on the NHS system. For one example (and there are many more) a lady who lives near Fairbourne, who is age 80, has a sister in Wrexham who she used to visit every week. She can no longer do that with the existing lack of connecting public transport.

Rhoslefain, Llanegryn, Brynchrug and surrounding areas are not served by the Cambrian Railway, so there is no option at all for people living there. In any case, you can not use the railway to get home from Dolgellau. People are extremely disheartened with the situation.

We wish to request the reinstatement of later buses from Dolgellau to Tywyn, and Tywyn to Dolgellau.

Express Motors have extended the Llandudno to Blaenau Festiniog service through to Dolgellau (X1). People living on the No. 28 bus route will not be able to use the X1 service, because this would only give them a short time in Llandudno. What a wonderful but wasted opportunity, if they can't travel because they can't get a connection home.

The bus operators are saying that passenger numbers are reduced, making them not viable financially. Improving bus connections would lead to greater use of the longer distance buses.

Business perspective :-

Short term Better connections may be a 'loss leader'.

Longer term Better connections should result in more passengers using the longer distance routes, thereby increasing overall profit to bus operators.

More buses on the road = more employment = more tax to the Treasury = more finance going to Gwynedd Council + other spending + reducing car emissions and fuel useage.

Less buses = unemployment pay to drivers = less tax to the Treasury, + less money to spend on the local economy + strain on the NHS due to poor health and depression caused by the knock on effect of isolation etc.

Money has to be spent to generate more money.

The tourist industry needs to be encouraged and some areas are going to die if they become inaccessible through a lack of public transport. There are a lot more walking groups now, and they use the buses as much as possible. The Senior Citizens Club at Fairbourne go on regular outings, to help them get out and meet people. It is so important to help them to be able to do this.

If this situation could be reviewed and favourably resolved, by reinstating later buses, it would greatly benefit all the local community, and help give tourism a much needed boost.

If you cannot agree to a long term commitment, which would be understandable under the current climate, then could a one year trial be implemented? We could do our part by making sure that local people are aware of the travel options and encourage the bus services to be used.

The Petition has been signed by over 300 local residents

A further development is that due to the impending tragic reduction in working hours at Tywyn Hospital minor injuries, and the removal of x-ray facilities, this makes the need even greater. People must travel to Dolgellau hospital and the latest No. 28 bus is 2.10 pm from Tywyn, arriving at 3.05. The walk up to the hospital from Eldon Square (for a fit person) is a good 15 minutes each way, allowing a maximum 40 minutes to be x-rayed and seen by a health professional.

MAWDDACH BUS USERS