

## Receipt of Petition – Churchinford 387 Bus Service

Dear Alun

Thank you for your e-mail and enclosure; if you could please forward the petition referred to in your e-mail to my colleague Richard Bryant (who is copied into this correspondence) when you get your copy back, then he will arrange for it to go onto the agenda for the full meeting of the Taunton Deane Borough Council to be held on 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2015. At the meeting you will be given the opportunity to introduce the petition with a 5 minute statement and the councillors will be permitted a 15 minute debate on the issue.

Yours sincerely

Bruce

Bruce Lang

Assistant Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer  
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**From:** Alun Tarr

**Sent:** 20 April 2015 12:59

**To:** Bruce Lang

**Cc:** 'Ken Pearson'; 'Ross Henley'

**Subject:** PUBLIC TRANSPORT.CHURCHINFORD.387 SERVICE

Good Morning Bruce

Councillor David Reed suggested I direct correspondence to you on this matter.

You may not be aware that Devon County Council (DCC) have been consulting on public transport provision. The 387 bus service is a route under consideration. This bus service, currently funded by DCC, operates as follows:

Sidmouth - Tipton St. John - Wiggaton - Ottery St. Mary - Gittisham - Honiton - Monkton - Rawridge - Upottery - Smeatharpe – Churchinford-Culmhead-Blagdon Hill-Staplehay-Taunton.

This DCC funded service currently has 5 stops in Somerset. This Bus service runs as one return trip daily. The proposed changes would mean that this would be reduced to once a week. Churchstanton Parish Council have written as part of this consultation process to oppose any reduction. Our response is attached.

Whilst we acknowledge that DCC currently fund the service a decision to reduce it should not be made without paying due regard to the Somerset stops and the service they provide. Information from our County Councillor, Ross Henley clearly demonstrates that Somerset do fund buses that have routes into Devon. Provision of any cross border service should be examined generally and not just with regards the

specific funding base for that Service. We would expect that dialogue between SCC and DCC should occur before any change is considered further.

Public transport provision was a fundamental tenant to Churchinford being designated a Minor Rural Centre within the TDBC Core Strategy. I would hope that TDBC show full support for this basic bus service being maintained at the current levels. If it does not, this raises a real question as to how Churchinford can be deemed a Centre for Sustainable Development.

This Community could well be caught in a 'Perfect Storm' - DCC fund the bus so will not consider the impact on the Somerset Stops. SCC will pay lip service to maintenance of the bus service but shrug their shoulders and say 'its not our decision'. TDBC whilst recognising public transport within core strategy designation distance themselves from any responsibility for maintenance of service.

I hope that TDBC will stand up to be counted. This vital link between the Minor Rural Centre of Churchinford and the County Capital needs to be maintained.

This matter has resulted in a 200 signature petition being sent to SCC Transport. Unfortunately, the petition was sent by a Parishioner without being copied. I am currently waiting on SCC sending a copy back and I will then forward that to you.

I would request that TDBC consider this matter at full Council and offer whatever support they can to ensure the service is maintained in line with the Core Strategy status of this Community. As a first step I would ask that TDBC request SCC and DCC work together on these cross border routes to ensure rural communities are not disadvantaged due to their close proximity to the County border. We are aware that Somerset and Devon have each been recently awarded approximately £300,000 to look at public transport provision. Working together to deliver an effective cross border solution would seem to have good fit with use of these significant amounts.

Please let me know how this matter can be effectively pursued through TDBC. I will also be writing to SCC along similar lines.

Best wishes

Alun Tarr  
Chair. Churchstanton Parish Council.