

*Note: This is the basic template, it was correctly addressed and personalised to the individual*

January 2024

Dear [Member of Parliament], we really need your support please.

Since my last email, the tender has closed and we heard this week that very disappointingly, the outcome is that Stagecoach have rejected the proposal made by the transport team to run a bus through the villages of Motherby, Newbiggin and Greystoke.

For a community that was expecting the Bus Service Improvement Plan and the HS2 money to make an actual difference to our lives, this is devastating news.

Yesterday and on behalf of the BAG, I met with the scheduled bus service officer, Judith Derbyshire and Kellie Bradburn Sims to try and understand why the proposal had been rejected. I have listed their reasons given by Stagecoach below, but it is the opinion of the action group that the well publicised decision made by WFC to run a 30 minute service Penrith and Keswick has meant that there is simply no leverage to challenge this refusal.

Stagecoach know this decision to fund a 30 minute service has already been agreed and they know they are the only viable provider, and so despite our lobbying and promise to use the bus and make the service commercially viable, they have no incentive to help us.

Having discussed this with Judith Derbyshire, one of the barriers to us having a 'plan b' and funding a smaller operator to run a regular shuttle into at least Penrith, is because WFC are disproportionately funding this 30 minute service; so despite it connecting with Keswick and beyond, Cumberland council are not contributing at all.

What we would like, is one of two things. Either lobby to overturn the WFC decision to run and fund a 30 minute service and give them some leverage to renegotiate; or lobby Cumberland council to contribute. That should release some funding to allow a reduced service through our villages.

Currently the belief in this community is that the local council and stagecoach are colluding to provide a service for tourists and do not care about the people that live here and pay council tax.

Please do watch our film and see the impact that having a bus would have on us; or ideally, allow myself and a couple of members of the Bus Action Group a slot on one of your advice surgeries; Whatsapp video call works well for us.

Your sincerely, Pam Wood, Chair, Bus Action Group