



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Parish Councils
Faversham and Mid Kent

Reference No. HW51681

2 November 2022

Dear Parish Council

RURAL BUS SERVICES

I am writing to update you on rural bus services and the work I've been doing with Kent County Council.

As you know KCC is reducing the number of rural bus services it subsidises and will focus support on the routes that are most heavily used. However, they are at the same time increasing the funding available to communities to support local bus services.

When KCC was consulting on the bus route proposals earlier in the year, I wrote to you to encourage you to respond to the consultation. I also shared my own consultation response, in which I expressed concern about the impact this reduction in bus services would have on rural communities across my constituency.

I specifically asked that KCC discuss with Parish Councils whether there was scope for local solutions to help those residents who are dependent upon public transport to get out of the village for shopping, socialising and accessing healthcare.

The good news is that KCC has now decided to increase its Community Transport Grant Funding from £100,000 to £450,000. This additional money is in recognition of the difficulties faced by rural communities in accessing public transport.

I attach a statement issued by the Leader of KCC which sets this out in more detail.

The scheme is set to launch some time in November and I have written to KCC to ask that I be informed of how the criteria for allocating the funding. In the meantime you might wish to sign up to the e-newsletter, as set out in the attachment so you will hear directly when the fund is launched.

As well as this fund, I would also encourage you to promote the Kent Karrier to your local residents. This is a dial-a-ride service which will take people from home to set locations, such as the nearest town centre or supermarket. It charges a fare for each journey, but please note concessionary fare passes are not valid for this service. To be eligible to join, you must: have a medical condition that makes travelling on public transport difficult; or live in a rural area more than 500 metres from a bus route or railway station; or be aged 85 and over. The attached link provides all the information you need and I hope you can share it with your residents: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/travelling-around-kent/community-transport/kent-karrier>

I hope this information is helpful. Please do let me know if there is anything I can to support you in developing new solutions to providing your communities with access to public transport.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Helen Whately', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Helen Whately MP
Member of Parliament for Faversham and Mid Kent

I write a regular newsletter to keep people up-to-date with what I'm doing for Faversham and Mid Kent. If you're interested in my campaigns on local and national issues, please sign up at: <https://www.helenwhately.org.uk/newsletters>