

Tewin Parish Council

Clerk: Mrs Caroline McFarlane, 2 Badgers Walk, Tewin Wood, Welwyn, Herts AL6 0HP

Tel: 01438 798969 Fax: 01438 798969 E-mail: caroline.mcfarlane@virgin.net

Website: www.tewinvillage.co.uk

6th^t September 2004

Dear Parishioners,

388 bus – current service under threat, but now safe until April 2005

This is the second Parish Newsletter of the year. We had not expected to have any significant news to report over the summer, but on 21st June, shortly after the first newsletter was circulated, the Parish Council received a letter from the Passenger Transport Unit at County Hall, explaining that a funding shortage was threatening to cause severe cuts in the local 388 bus service. Comments on these proposals were requested by 9th July, barely three weeks ahead.

Rumours about the bus service had been circulating for months, but all efforts to substantiate these rumours had been unsuccessful. The proposed timetable would have amalgamated parts of the 388 Hertford – Welwyn Garden City service with the 379 which links Datchworth to Stevenage. Tewin would have been left without a daily service to Welwyn Garden City, with a very limited service to Welwyn North and a restricted service to Hertford.

Straightaway, a petition was started opposing the cuts. Support for a campaign against the proposals was quickly given by local County Councillor Bryan Hammond and MP Oliver Heald. The MP had already been warned of the proposed changes when approached by a well-informed parishioner at his surgery in Tewin Memorial Hall.

Many thanks go to all those who have shown their support by attending the Parish Meeting, organizing and signing the petition, by writing to County and District Councillors, and Members of Parliament. Thanks also go to those who have approached the local Radio Station and written letters to the local newspapers.

388 bus – use it or lose it!

Everyone who values the bus service and wishes it to continue beyond April 2005 is urged to use the bus as often as possible. The more passengers, and the more fares, the better!

Remember, you can reach all three local stations at various times throughout the day, starting just after 7am, and come back around 5pm, 6pm or after 6.30. Fares are still competitive with car parking charges.

You can also travel to Hertford Hospital, Hertford town centre and Welwyn Garden City (stop adjacent to the Howard Centre). Over 60s are eligible for free bus passes for concessionary fares.

Current timetables are displayed at bus stops (Rose & Crown, Desborough Drive, Burnham Green, Welwyn North, Hertford North and WGC stations) or by telephone - 0870 608 2 608.

Information is also available from the Passenger Transport Unit, County Hall
Tel 01992 588637, e-mail: feedback.ptu@hertscc.gov.uk or
www.intalink.org.uk

The bus operator is Trustline: Tel 01920 877 877

On 2nd July, Parish Council Chairman, Kristina Lawson attended a meeting with HCC's **Passenger Transport Unit**, accompanied by County Councillor Bryan Hammond. The reasons for the cuts started to become clearer. HCC and East Herts District Council share the cost of the subsidy for these contract bus services, with HCC paying 75% and EHDC 25%. EHDC does not have a legal obligation to pay, unlike HCC, and by the beginning of the year it had already stated that it could not agree to continue to pay the increasing costs of highly subsidised services.

As the Parish Council was due to meet on 5th July, an **Emergency Parish Meeting** was also arranged to discuss the proposed cuts. A representative from HCC's Passenger Transport Unit was invited to answer questions and the meeting was attended by County Councillor Hammond, District Councillors McMullen and Robertson and over 30 members of the public. Resolutions passed at both these meetings, opposing the cuts and urging the County Council to maintain the current service, were forwarded to the County Hall. A 14-page formal **Response to the 'Consultation'** was also submitted. It contained a summary of the main objections – highlighting the impact of the cuts on the timetable, the effects on the parishioners, the lack of time for consultation, and emphasizing that this action was contrary to all HCC and EHDC's current plans regarding rural transport.

Cllr Lawson attended Oliver Heald's surgery in Watton at Stone to emphasize the impact on the Tewin parishioners and others in his constituency and to ensure that he would continue to support our campaign.

Throughout this period, articles appeared in the Hertfordshire Mercury and Welwyn & Hatfield Times and parishioners and Cllr Lawson were interviewed on BBC Three Counties Radio. Parishioners and other bus users sent letters to MPs Oliver Heald and Melanie Johnston, John Wood, Head of Environment at County Hall and also to Transport Secretary Alistair Darling.

The **petition**, of 319 signatures, was presented to the **County Council Meeting** on the morning of 20th July. Cllr Lawson read a prepared speech, supported by Parish Councillors Keith St Pier and Steve Stott. No discussion on the petition took place during the meeting, but several County Councillors made particular reference to it.

In the late afternoon, a meeting was held at County Hall with the Executive Member for Environment, Cllr Derrick Ashley, and John Wood. Councillors Hammond and McMullen, Lawson, St Pier, Stott and two members of the public from Tewin attended, as well as the Chairman of Datchworth Parish Council. All views were expressed and Cllr Ashley was keen for some progress to be made, but as the key people from EHDC were not present there would have to be more meetings before any solution could be found.

On the evening of 28th July, Cllr St Pier presented another copy of the petition to the **East Herts District Council Meeting**. Then, on 9th August, Cllr Lawson attended a meeting at EHDC's offices in Hertford with EHDC Councillors Mike Carver, Tony Jackson and Michael McMullen and County Councillor Bryan Hammond. By this time it was almost certain that the bus service would remain the same for the rest of this financial year (to April 2005).

A succession of further articles, letters and editorials, continued to appear in the local press and Three Counties Radio maintained interest in the story.

Finally, on 20th August the Parish Council received a letter from HCC confirming that there will be no change to the 388 (and 379) service until April 2005, and this will allow time for further discussions between HCC and EHDC.

Tewin Parish Council is expecting to be able to work with the County and District Councils during this process, with the aim to find a solution that more closely meets the needs of the bus users, within the

budget constraints. We have completed stage one of the process, but more work needs to be done to ensure that we can maintain a sustainable local transport service for Tewin.

Any updates to this news will be posted on noticeboards in due course.

Refuse Collecting

In order to maintain the delightfully rural look of the village the Parish Council would be very grateful if all wheelie bins could be brought back from the boundary of your property as soon as possible. If you happen to be on holiday perhaps you could arrange for a neighbour to put your wheelie bin/refuse out on collection day. We thank you in anticipation of your co-operation.

Fly Posting

The Parish Council is concerned to note the increase in the number of out of date posters left on telegraph poles. Not only is this unsightly, it can also lead to litter as the posters gradually deteriorate.

Would all those who advertise an event please ensure that they remove their posters as soon as possible after the event.

Your co-operation in these matters would be most appreciated.

For details of the next meetings, how to put items on the agenda or contact details of Councillors please refer to the notice board outside Tewin Stores.

Useful Numbers/Websites

Highways Fault Line: 01438-737321

For reporting potholes and any other damage to the roads

East Herts District Council: 01279-655261 or www.eastherts.gov.uk

Regarding:

- Flytipping
- Abandoned Vehicles
- Environmental Health
- Animal Welfare
- Pest Control
- Waste Services
- Planning
- Tree Preservation Orders

Herts County Council: www.hertsdirect.gov.uk