



## Monimail Community Council

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Fife Council  
Roads & Transportation Services  
Bankhead Central  
Bankhead Park  
GLENROTHES  
Fife  
KY7 6GH

[REDACTED]

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023

Dear Sir,

On Monday 18th of September 2023 Monimail Community Council held its bi-monthly meeting and the subject of local bus service cuts was discussed. The meeting had a record attendance with nearly 25 people from our small community present.

At the meeting I was tasked by the Community Council to write to you to summarise some of the points raised at the meeting and to see if we could negotiate a return of at least some of the 64 service that has been withdrawn.

It is important to firstly outline the context in which these cuts are being made.

In 2016 Stagecoach stopped operating their X54 express service to Dundee. This was a bitter blow to the residents of Letham who used the bus to commute to Dundee. It also meant the village was solely reliant on the 64 bus service. Despite attempts at a car sharing scheme, this resulted in more car travel from the village.

Since that time the demography of the village has changed significantly and a large number of children are in their teenage years and keen to use the bus service. They advise me that the changes to the 64 bus service have negatively impacted upon them and many children at Bell Baxter High School. This will be particularly acute during exam time when children are not necessarily travelling at school bus times.

The village itself has a proud environmental heritage and was the location of one of the most successful "transition town" movements in Scotland promoting a shift to public transport. We have recently been exploring how we can promote less car usage by introducing community electric bikes and are trying to encourage car free travel to events such as Letham Nights, an acclaimed local music project. Cuts to our public transport service provision therefore feels like the rug has been pulled away from under our feet.

Whilst I of course passed on your apologies for not consulting on the cuts, there remains an anger that changes were introduced in such a sudden and chaotic manner. The bus drivers themselves didn't know what was happening.

We also have the ludicrous situation of the Traveline Scotland website now advising that Letham residents should walk to Annsmuir if they wish to get a bus to the local train station. Annsmuir is 2 miles away and

can only be accessed by walking down the A92 Trunk road- there isn't even a pavement. This is a fatality waiting to happen.

The village is also home to the famous Secret Garden Outdoor Nursery. The withdrawal of services has impacted on staff who work there just as it has the primary school support staff. We now have a situation where more people are having to revert to car usage- it is heartbreaking and counter to the Councils environmental objectives.

In fairness there are some elements of the timetable that some may find beneficial, but the reality is that the average wait for a train to Edinburgh at Ladybank has now increased from 44 minutes to 64 minutes and the removal of morning services has destroyed the integrated travel commute to Edinburgh. If you wish to get the 1107 train to Edinburgh you now need to get the 0855 bus and wait 2 hours and 7 minutes at Ladybank!

Similarly when returning to Letham, people will simply not wait over an hour in Ladybank, local taxis are extortionate (it costs £30 single Letham to Cupar, more from Ladybank). We have significant public safety concerns arising from these changes, especially at night.

I shared news of the Flexibus scheme with the meeting. This scheme hasn't been advertised to residents and when one of our residents contacted the number (that I supplied her before the meeting) she was advised that there "were no guarantees" and that she'd struggle to get a service unless she booked a week in advance. That is not helpful for short notice medical appointments! Others have said that they need a reliable regular service not a potluck service. Experience elsewhere in Fife seems to support the view that the service is well over subscribed.

We wondered if an Equality Impact or Human Rights Assessment had been carried out as protected groups are clearly being disproportionately detrimented.

Monimail Community Council is however known for its pragmatism and we understand that the 64 is likely to be a heavily subsidised route. It was however pointed out that that is probably down to the circuitous routes and lengthy journey times (1hour to St Andrews- a 25 minute car journey, 20 minutes to Cupar, a 6 minute journey.)

It is the community's position that had we been given the opportunity we could have worked in a collaborative way to find alternative solutions.

- We would like to have explored the rationale for cutting the service and see if there were other mitigations, eg running the 64A to the Letham road end on the A92 and travelling down the Bow Road, a diversion that would add about a minute to the 64A route.
- We would also like to look at how the buses integrate with trains at Ladybank, especially during rush hour and at night.
- We would like to have understood the Flexibus better and reassured members of our community who are anxious and feeling isolated by the suddenness of this action.
- We would also like to have explored why the removal of Letham from the 64A route was necessary at all.

Our preferred option now is for the service to be fully reinstated to allow the community the opportunity to work with you on a revised service provision. That gesture would go a long way to appeasing the community and give service users a voice and if necessary, a chance to make other arrangements.

I would therefore be grateful if you could revert the service to what we had and allow us to work with you to make the service more efficient.

Please note that in the interests of transparency, we intend to publish this and future correspondence (with personal details redacted) on [letham.org.uk](http://letham.org.uk).

Yours sincerely



David Hamilton  
Chair  
Monimail Community Council

