

LITTLETON AND HARESTOCK PARISH COUNCIL

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The Hall Way, Littleton
SO22 6QL

Gary Westbrook
Chief Executive
Hampshire County Council
The Castle
Winchester
SO23 8UJ

15 August 2025

Dear Mr Westbrook

Re: Concerns regarding new Bus Timetable Changes for Littleton & Harestock

1. It is with consternation that Littleton & Harestock Parish Council feels compelled to write and express our concerns upon hearing news of the impending alterations and reduced bus services affecting our parishioners.
2. Stagecoach state the new timetable reflects a new contract with Hampshire County Council, which begs the question why weren't the Parish Council and our wider community consulted or notified well in advance. These changes are being introduced at short notice and will have a significant detrimental effect on the daily lives of many as they attempt to go about their daily business, whether that be work, shopping, social or leisure.
3. As we understand it, the weekday No 7 service is being largely withdrawn from serving Littleton village (apart from three services into the city in the morning and four services later in the day returning from the city). It is being totally withdrawn from running through Harestock and onto Peter Symonds College. Because the only Littleton stop is Deane Down Drove, the No 7 isn't realistically a viable option for those who live further up Main Road toward the Running Horse or the church, especially if the return journey involves carrying heavy shopping. The timetable is also very unclear about what routes the No 7 will take for the services that serve Deane Down Drove and where they will stop. Similarly, given that two of these services will also serve Teg Down, it is unclear which bus stops at Weeke / Dean Lane Corner will be used.

4. We also note that the last weekday 17.50 bus will only run on Sparsholt College days. This adversely affects those who work in Winchester. We urge that this service also runs on non-college days to help those who commute by bus.
5. We note that the new route No 77 will not serve Littleton village.
6. We also understand that the existing No 16 service to and from Stockbridge will continue to serve Littleton village. The amended service will now replicate the route on the section of the existing No 7 along Kennel Lane, through Harestock, onto Peter Symonds College and into the city, and similarly for the return journey. However, this will only provide 3 buses a day Mon-Sat, whereas the existing No 7 currently operates on an hourly basis through the parish.
7. **The impact of this reduction is to reduce a service for Littleton (at Deane Down Drove corner) from 13 buses (combining routes 7 & 16) each weekday to 6, i.e. a more than 50% cut! The Saturday service will also see a reduction.**
8. **For Harestock (March Hare) the service to and from the City via Berewecke Avenue is reduced from 10 to 3 per day i.e. a cut of 70%!**
9. Such reductions in service will inevitably make it harder for residents to get about the city area at times largely suitable to themselves. For instance, the new routing of the No 16 service will have a major impact on the elderly and mobility-impaired folk who don't have access to a car and currently use the 09:27 No 16 service to shop in Aldi / Waitrose or visit the Friarsgate medical centre at Weeke. At the moment, they have a reasonable hour to do their shopping or see the doctor before catching a return bus to Littleton. This will no longer be possible.
10. With less frequent or in some cases no services, residents will face unnecessary difficulties in planning return journeys. When potential poor connections are added to a more inconvenient timetable, it will not be surprising if people turn their backs on using the bus. It will only take one or two bad experiences to lead users to change their habits. There is already strong concern that our elderly residents without the App or access to online timetables will be very confused. The new No 7/77 timetable containing all its route variations is already confusing many as it is.
11. Furthermore, the continued timetabling of the No. 16 bus to pass through Littleton a couple of minutes before 9.30 means that the elderly will continue to be hit by the recent raising of the threshold for use of the concessionary bus pass use in Littleton. Bus drivers have been told that passengers have to pay. The revised timetable perpetuates this situation. Given the No 16's limited service, why can't an exception be granted in this

case, or perhaps more easily, why not amend the timetable so that this service runs, say, 5 minutes later through Littleton?

12. Additionally, it appears very little thought has been given to students and staff of either Henry Beaufort School or Peter Symonds College. The new timetables effectively dispose of any appropriate bus services that will make attending these establishments by public transport impossible. This will likely either add to parents 'doing the school run' or hinder students of Peter Symonds. Surely there must be scope to add-in appropriately timed services to link these facilities with Littleton and the surrounding area, rather than focussing on Sparsholt College alone?
13. We are also concerned that as a Council keen to initiate and support efforts to combat climate change, the service cuts will only encourage those with cars to use them and therefore undermine efforts to encourage the use of public transport as a means of mitigating climate change. Winchester City Council have been reducing the attractiveness of car parking in the city, so making cuts to bus services at this time doesn't appear to embrace any joined-up thinking.
14. In summary, the changes to both the No 7 and No 16 services will have a big negative impact and make simple things like shopping, getting to and from school or visiting the doctor more difficult, if not impossible at times. It is pushing people to shop in town rather than more locally and involves potentially long waiting times for return services. It seems inevitable that car usage will increase, so adding to congestion, pollution and climate change.
15. The danger and fears are that the less frequent and more inconvenient the service becomes, the fewer people will use it; the fewer people who use it, the less frequent it becomes, and so it goes on in a perpetuating circle of decline leaving Littleton, especially, with the future prospect of eventually having hardly any bus services at all.
16. It would also be true and crucial to say that the more you remove an individual's independence, the more dependent they become, increasing the burden on social services, which in itself becomes self-defeating.
17. Even at this late stage, and on behalf of our parishioners, we urge Hampshire County Council and Stagecoach to reconsider these changes, so that a more co-ordinated service can be provided which also includes linking with our local educational establishments. Whilst we acknowledge a current tough financial climate, cutting bus services which are a lifeline for many without cars and diminish people's ability to go about their daily lives and make for a thriving community is clearly a step in the wrong direction.

We await your response with interest.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Tozer'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'David' and the last name 'Tozer' clearly distinguishable.

Cllr David Tozer

(Vice Chair, Littleton & Harestock Parish Council)

Cc

Cllr Nick Adams-King, Leader of HCC

Cllr Lulu Bowerman, HCC Executive Member for Highways and Passenger Transport

Cllr Jan Warwick, HCC Deputy Leader and HCC member for Winchester Downlands

Stagecoach South Customer Services

Danny Chambers, MP

Cllrs M. Tod, K. Learney, J. Batho, J. Morris, C. Horrill, S. Godfrey, P. Cunningham