

Save Our Bus – Dumbiedykes residents are planning action

Locals at the packed meeting in Dumbiedykes last night were of one voice. They want to save their last bus service, and they want the bus company and the council to talk to them about it.

Every person who spoke at the meeting said they need to keep their bus service, the number 6 bus, which is the only one which comes anywhere near the area.

They also want to enter a dialogue with Lothian about changing the bus route to make it fit their requirements, and said they hope that this would mean the route would be more viable for the transport company.



Dumbiedykes residents at a meeting in Braidwood Centre on 10 March 2020 PHOTO ©2020 The Edinburgh Reporter

So far the bus company announced the ending of the number 6 bus without consulting with the residents at all. This follows a campaign in previous years to save the number 60 bus. Locals claim that when this was changed to the number 6 the bus company assured them this service which also stops at The Scottish Parliament would never be axed.

There were locals and politicians at the meeting convened by the Dumbiedykes Residents Association and the management of the Braidwood Centre. Sarah Boyack MSP recalled that she was involved with trying to save the bus service the last time there was a problem. One resident said that they should rename

this bus the number five – as it is every five years that the future of the service is called into question.



Jim Slaven Chair of Dumbiedykes Residents Association takes a point from a resident.

One woman explained that it is the only way for her and her husband to get to Waverley Station for onward commuting to Glasgow. She said: “Parking is difficult. We have been encouraged to get rid of our cars so it is now difficult to get to the station without walking there.”



Sarah Boyack MSP listening to the comments from residents
PHOTO ©2020 The Edinburgh Reporter

Sarah Boyack MSP said after the meeting: “I am fully in support of the number 6 being retained. It’s completely wrong that this service is to be cancelled without the local community even being consulted to give their views on how the service could be improved and made more successful. The fantastic turnout at tonight’s meeting was testament to the fact that the whole community needs a proper bus connection.”

Local councillor Joanna Mowat attended the meeting taking notes to go back and speak to the council’s Transport Committee. She is not part of that committee which meets this week, but some of her Conservative Group colleagues are of course. She said: “I will be speaking to colleagues about whether we can do something jointly to support the other affected communities and will consider options for the full council meeting on 12 March and the Transport committee on the 20th. I am trying to look at financial solutions too, but have no definite answers at this stage.”



City Centre councillor Joanna Mowat attended the meeting to hear what residents had to say
PHOTO ©2020 The Edinburgh Reporter

All of the comments from the floor reflected the same concern

– that this is the last connection to Dumbiedykes and it simply cannot be lost.

Residents suggested that this was such an important link for them that the council should subsidise it. One explained that the only alternative to the number 6 is the number 35 which runs up and down the Royal Mile. This is a short distance away up a steep slope, and as one man put it “the number 35 is the most fragile bus service”. He and others also commented that when there are events on the Royal Mile this is the first bus to be stopped or diverted.

Jim Slaven the Chair of Dumbiedykes Residents Association who called the public meeting along with the management of the Braidwood Centre explained the issues to us. He said: “The Dumbiedykes residents are extremely unhappy at Lothian Buses’ decision to cut the number 6 service which is the very last bus service in Dumbiedykes.

“So this decision was taken by Lothian Buses without any consultation with local residents or local businesses and it’s going to leave the most vulnerable citizens in this community completely isolated. If we were to take away the number 6 service the nearest place that any resident could get a bus would be up on the on the High Street on the Canongate.

“Following previous cuts the bus that previously went into Dumbiedykes no longer exists and we were left only with the number 6 bus – not only does it not go into Dumbiedykes it also does not go where people want to go.

“It does not take the residents to the commercial hub of the Southside where they can access services like doctors, dentists, post office, chemist etc. So this is the last bus we have so we’re defending it , but we are very clear, and have been for years, that previous cuts to our services have left a very unacceptable situation with the bus service in this area. We need to find a lasting solution that works for everyone.

“We have spoken to Lothian Buses but they are very uncommunicative with residents. They have not consulted with any of the businesses here, and so far they’re refusing to correspond with our MSP and to our MP as well So what we are calling for is for the council and Lothian Buses to agree to continue to run this service in the short term to create space where we can have a dialogue with local residents and the local community and Lothian Buses and the council. We can then come up with a long term sustainable solution that suits everyone.”

We spoke to Chair of the Dumbiedykes Residents Association, Jim Slaven, ahead of the meeting. Helpfully a number 6 bus came along just at the right time, before the service would stop for the night.

There is a residents’ meeting tonight to discuss the number 6 bus service. Here’s Jim Slaven Chair of [@DumbiedykesRA](#) talking to us about why it’s important to keep the bus service running. pic.twitter.com/4dFKM1yECj

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [March 10, 2020](#)

No representatives of Lothian attended the meeting last night and we have asked them today for comment on any plans they may make in response to the meeting.

Cllr Claire Miller is the Transport spokesperson for the Green Group as well as the councillor for the City Centre Ward. She was unable to attend the meeting last night due to illness, but she was happy to explain to The Edinburgh Reporter this morning that she had already been working on this before the news broke that Lothian were to stop the service. She said: “I’ve been working with either the concept of whether the proposed hopper bus mentioned in the City Centre Transformation project could pick people up here or a change

to the route. What they need primarily is to link up to the Southside rather than a more central location.

“I was determined not to go down the route of getting a subsidised service as it could later be scrapped. I wanted to get something more permanent.

“As soon as we heard the route’s being cut I then spoke to Cllr Lesley Macinnes, the Transport Convener, and said we needed to deal with this as an emergency. I have been working with a council officer who has come up with four routes for a subsidised service. The business case is not quite finalised, but one of the hopes is that perhaps some other routes which are already subsidised could be freed from that if they have become commercially viable. That money might then be applied to this bus service.”

Cll Miller also said she would also be getting information on other transport options such as taxi cards and sending that to the Chair so that people who are eligible can be made aware. While she recognises that is not a solution, it is something which some people with mobility issues may qualify for.

At the meeting a suggestion was made that Rockstar North, The Scottish Parliament and Citibank might do something to help even in the meantime.

“Holyrood and Dumbiedykes are ill served by buses”

“The council shuts the city centre during the festival. They divert the buses the 35 in particular. The 6 is the only one left. They have an obligation to provide us with a service.”

“It is a wee island away from the city centre which works if you have public transport.”

Armed with their banners and posters the residents will take to the streets in the next couple of weeks to try and persuade Lothian to keep the service in some form or another.

