

22/131 Bus Changes - further feedback

Response:

I live in Ivybridge but work in Plymouth. I do not drive, so I rely on public transport. Trains are not an option as they are too expensive, unreliable and infrequent. The City bus no. 20 does not leave early enough, is also infrequent and takes an absolute age. Therefore, I catch the Stagecoach Gold into the centre of Plymouth most weekdays and then have to get a second bus up to the Derriford area. I have to catch the earliest possible bus in order to start work at 8.30am. Here are my initial observations after the first week of the timetable (and route) changes:

- I now have to catch the 6.20am bus instead of the 6.40am because the route takes longer. Thanks for that!
- The original route saw a significant number of passengers getting off at Marsh Mills. Conversely, I am yet to see a single person either catch or depart the bus at Sherford. In fact, I've only seen a couple of people in Sherford at all. Most of it is still being built. I feel for all those who now can't get to Marsh Mills quickly or in time for the start of their shifts etc.
- Stagecoach also seem to be toying with the idea of the Gold now being a single decker service. My journey home to Ivybridge on Tuesday 4th April in the rush hour was rammed and I had to stand all the way. Again, no one got off at any of the new stops, so it took longer for no gain to either passenger or Stagecoach.
- More positively, buses have been on time to and from Plymouth but this is probably because it is Easter – no schools etc. and less traffic on the roads in general. The real effects will be clearer from the week beginning 17th April, sadly a day after your deadline for comments. I suspect that my and the majority of people will have even less positive things to say once a truer picture emerges.
- Anyway for now, it appears that I am paying 70p more for my day ticket on a longer route that will be used by less people than before. Sadly, there is now no fast and efficient public transport link from Ivybridge to Plymouth for commuters and certainly not an affordable one. People who drive have even less reason not to get in their cars. A shame.

Response:

I would like to express how unpractical the new bus timetable is that goes from Ivybridge to Plymouth.

With the added areas of Sherford this will create a longer journey than before which as for myself who use the bus daily to get to work is going to make it very challenging.

This being said the new time table will have a massive impact due to the timings being completely different.

Ivybridge is a community with a lot of elderly people living here, an example of the impact is that I was at the bus stop and discussing this with a fellow town member who was 70+ - she was very concerned as the bus timetable has now completely changed its times and unfortunately she does not have access to the internet etc to see updates on this, which I can only presume is the case for a vast amount of people living in the community. With the change in route this also makes it very hard for her to get off at the desisted areas such as marsh mills and will now have to make a journey into town to then come back on herself.

Thankyou for taking the time to read this.

Response:

Hi the bus changes affected my son who gets the late bus home from South Brent when he has finished work now if he can't get a lift him he will have to walk back into Ivybridge and my daughter would be relying on the later bus home from Plymouth its not good at all.

Response:

Regarding the change from April 2nd to every bus route between Ivybridge and Plymouth, has the Council had any communication with the bus companies regarding these detrimental changes?

The travel time from Ivybridge to Plymouth will from April 2nd virtually double and by re-routing the services via Sherford will cut the direct connection from Ivybridge to the Marsh Mills retail parks along with the added employment opportunities this opens for people living in Ivybridge without a car. Not to mention the difficulties this is going to cause for the residents of Ivybridge who already have employment in the Marsh Mills area.

Given there is a lack of employment opportunities in Ivybridge, particularly given a minority of traders can influence decisions to stop new retail developments in Ivybridge, this is a very disappointing situation and a backwards step for Ivybridge residents who depend on public transport.

Only Sherford residents will benefit from these re-routed bus services with increased links to Plymouth, it will certainly not bring them to Ivybridge.

I look forward to feedback on the Councils position regarding this issue.

Response:

I am contacting you about the change of timetable with effect from 2nd April which will have an impact on the residents of Ivybridge. Please could you tell me if Stagecoach discussed the proposed changes with the council?. Due to these changes there will now be no buses out of Plymouth to Ivybridge after 8.10 pm Monday to Friday. Surely we are supposed to be encouraged to use public transport then the bus companies do this. As usual Ivybridge is the

poor relation with public transport. The only place to have gained from the change is Sherford!. I complained to Gary Streeter and he was not interested. I can show you his response if necessary. The population of Ivybridge is increasing again due to all the new builds and we cannot get a bus home if going out for the evening!, this is pretty poor especially for the youngsters and those of us who rely on public transport.

I would appreciate if this could be looked into as i know a lot of people are now going to be struggling to get to where they need to be.

Response:

I'm writing about the recent bus route and timetable changes for the Stagecoach Gold and X38 buses.

I work in Plymouth, in the city centre, and parking can easily be up to £8 for the day, combined with the increase in fuel prices last year, I started taking the bus, either the Gold or the X38. Their timetable worked well with when I needed to be in Plymouth and for when I finished work and needed a bus to get home. Not only has this helped me to save money in light of the living crisis, but it also means I'm using less fuel and doing less harm to the environment. Also, unless there was a delay, I was never on the bus for more than 25-30 minutes.

Following the bus changes at the beginning of the month, I was forced to look into alternate ways of getting to work, because sitting on a bus for a minimum of 40 minutes morning and evening isn't practical, especially when you can't always guarantee a seat during peak times. This week, the first week of April, I've been using the Coypool Park and Ride service. This service is the same price as the Gold and X38, but I'm using it for a shorter distance, so per mile I'm spending more money. It also means I'm still having to drive down to Marsh Mills to use this service and so use more fuel as well. There has also been a £1 charge proposed in this car park, which will bump the price of my commute up again if/when the proposal is accepted.

As a side note, for those who used to get off the bus at Marsh Mills, I can only assume that they've looked elsewhere as well, with the obvious alternative being Plymouth City Bus' 20 and 21 services.

Not everyone has the luxury of having a car and consequently, these people have to rely solely on our public transport network. I've lived in Ivybridge my entire life, I'm 21, I'm proud to live here, but if bus services are struggling to serve our citizens in a useful way, there's no telling what will happen next. By forcing people, such as myself, to look elsewhere, there will be less of a need for bus services in Ivybridge and eventually, they could diminish to nothing. I wanted to make the new timetable changes work for me, but I couldn't.

When the X38 timetable was altered last Summer, the 8.02am one at the town hall was removed and there were people, including myself, who had to alter their routines then. With another timetable change now, it could be thought that the workforce from Ivybridge who commute into Plymouth daily are not being prioritised as much as they should be.

To conclude, I appreciate the people of Sherford need public transport links, but to offer these by jeopardising other routes doesn't seem the right way to go about it. People who take the bus into Plymouth don't necessarily just take one bus, there's a high proportion who then take 1, maybe 2 other buses to get to their destination. By lengthening the journey into Plymouth, it will alter what buses they can take and their general travel preferences. The changing routes also mean more cars on the A38 during peak times, increasing the likelihood of crashes. This also means more fuel being used and more harm being done to the environment - I thought we were supposed to be reducing fuel consumption, not increasing it?

I'm not asking for the timetable to be changed back, all I'm looking for is a bus that goes directly between Ivybridge and Plymouth.

Response:

With regards to Stagecoach and their current timetables, I find the many recent changes to the Gold service ill conceived and not very customer friendly at all. With honesty, I cannot speak for any other Stagecoach routes apart from the Gold, as I do not use the other services, so it would be unfair to comment on them.

Firstly, Plymouth, Dartmoor, The South Hams is an area that attracts a lot of visitors all year round. An awful lot of revenue is generated by tourism and along with it the necessity to get from A to B. For those operating the various tourist attractions, restaurants, pubs, bars, theaters and other hospitality/tourist businesses, the current bus timetables, especially for the last bus back from Plymouth to Ivybridge (Gold) are far too early, especially on a Sunday (6pm). This means that an evening trip out for anyone living, or visiting is cut short to be able to catch the last bus home, resulting in a loss of revenue for those establishments, who due to the current cost of living crisis, are already suffering financially or are at risk of closure, which will result in loss of their livelihood and staff redundancy. If the last bus were to run later, this would benefit all these businesses, help keep them trading and keep local people in employment. A later bus would also have a more positive impact on discouraging drink driving. If people knew that there is a reliable, regular, safe and affordable alternative to driving for an evening out, they may be more inclined to use it.

Secondly, did Stagecoach consider its bus users when they conjured up the recent changes to the services? There are many people who work in the above mentioned hospitality/tourism industry, where they work long and unsociable hours. Not all may drive and may also need to rely on the bus service to get to and home from work. There are also many people who work in care homes, or hospitals, or industry, and may not have a car and work irregular hours. The care sector is currently struggling to recruit staff and the likelihood of not being able to get to and from work will not help with staff recruitment.

The alternative of using the train is not always an option, as it is far more expensive to use and the walk back from Ivybridge railway station into the town, particularly on a dark evening is not a pleasant one, as it is quite isolated and does not feel safe.

I would be grateful if my comments could be considered with regard to the current Stagecoach bus timetable situation and hope that in the future, between the council and the bus company, a more workable solution be found which benefits the user and not just Stagecoach.

Response:

I note that you are asking about the impact of the bus service in Ivybridge:- I use the 20 Citybus fairly regularly, it's actually a faster service now.

Response:

I am writing to you as I understand you wish to know the impact the recent changes to the bus timetables by Stagecoach have had. Due to this recent change there is no bus service on a Sunday to Marsh Mills or via Marsh Mills , there is no viable reason why Stagecoach would have needed to send both the Gold and X38 via Sherford surely just sending the Gold would have been adequate. It would be good if Citybus could run either or the 20 or 20a on a Sunday as they very helpfully are now going via Marsh Mills now. Without being able to get to Marsh Mills on a Sunday stops us workers taking weekend and evening jobs in the Plympton area, which is hard to swallow in this time when jobs are hard to find and you cannot get to them due to the lack of public transport. The other issue is Stagecoach have withdrawn the 21.10 and 22.10 bus from Plymouth Monday to Friday, not helpful when anyone is on a night out and especially when people are being encouraged to use public transport!. As usual Ivybridge is out on a limb . It's a bit of a joke really as all these new houses are being built and we are having services withdrawn. Sadly the train station only benefits those who live in the east of Ivybridge as it is too far to walk especially if you live in the very west of Ivybridge. Hoping you can help as Stagecoach don't respond to any emails or social media and Citybus were more helpful and directed me to you and Devon County Council. Gary Streeter was not interested !. I have been having to rely on public transport due to having a lot of surgery and being unable to drive.

Response:

Some personal feedback regarding the re-routed Gold service which I used myself yesterday, 4th April (10;18 which just to mention was 30 minutes late). Single decker bus was in service and by the time it left the Western Road bus stop (next to A38) it was fully seated and also crammed full with standing passengers of at least 20. Between Ivybridge and Plymouth City Centre not one passenger disembarked or boarded the bus.

On my return journey in the afternoon between Plymouth City Centre and Ivybridge again not one passenger disembarked or boarded the bus.

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