

Email sent on 26th September 2018 by Tansley Parish Council to Simon Spencer, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

Dear Cllr Spencer,

Further to my previous email regarding the withdrawal of the school bus serving Tansley please find the following information, also note the request by the Parish Council.

The school bus picking up in Tansley village is full --- children have been standing, I am informed there are about 25 children from the village going to Highfields School.

The proposal of Slacks coaches to pick up at the Tavern, could cause problems as there are only between 15-20 seats available.

Children living opposite The Gurkha (I am informed there are 6) will need to cross the A615 twice to get to the bus stop.

As previously stated there are issues related to safety because we have no pedestrian crossing on the A615, we also have serious concerns related to the tenure of the footpath.

On behalf of Tansley Parish Council I am requesting a Health and Safety assessment of the pavement opposite the Tavern public house, I also need sight of insurances related to public liability at this location.

I request a distance assessment - for children walking from Tansley to Highfields Upper School - the route needs to be on adopted pavements and have street lighting.

I also request the same assessment related to distances to Highfields Lower School.

Finally I would like an assessment of the surface condition of pavements from Tansley to Matlock Green, to include the provision of adequate street lighting.

Because the bus ceases to run from the first week of October, and Tansley children have no guarantee of transport to school, the above issues need to be addressed at your earliest.

With Thanks

Vicki Raynes

Reply received on 27th September 2018:

Dear Vicki

Cllr Spencer has discussed this issue with officers and below is their response:

"There are a number of issues raised in your message and I would like to provide a comprehensive response which explains the Council's position.

Since April 2012, G&J Holmes have provided a commercial school bus service from the village and this does not receive any subsidy from the County Council as all pupils who travel live within three miles of their normal area school and, therefore, do not meet the criteria for travelling assistance. For clarity, the Home to School Transport policy is available from the related documents section from the following link www.derbyshire.gov.uk/get2school . Over the years, the commercial school bus service has been extended to include Wessington and South Wingfield and students from these areas are also not entitled to any assistance with transport from the Council as they are not attending their normal area school.

With regard to the distance from Tansley to both sites of Highfields School, the Council undertakes measurements using GIS software and this is taken from a student's home address to the main gate of the school. This measurement is accurate to within one or two meters. Officers from the Children's Services Department assess entitlement to travelling assistance and confirm that the shortest available walking route from The Tavern to the Starkholmes site is 1.73 miles and to Lumsdale 1.46. The distances will obviously vary from individual properties. If you would like to clarify the walking route, or suitability of the route, you will need to contact the Admissions and Transport Team (Admissions.Transport@derbyshire.gov.uk – Tel. 01629 537499). Reference to hazardous routes is made in section 2.6 of the Home to School Transport policy and the assessment criteria is detailed on Appendix A.

During the summer break, the proprietor of G&J Holmes notified the Council of his intention to cancel the commercial school bus service on Friday 5th October 2018. Although the Council has no responsibility to arrange, or provide, a replacement service it was recognised by officers that it would cause difficulties for families because of limited public transport options in the area. A number of bus and coach operators were approached to see if they would be interested in providing a replacement commercial service but I regret that no interest was received. Officers have looked at other possibilities and you are obviously aware that an arrangement has been put in place to allow students from Tansley to access the school bus service which operates from Lea. This vehicle has between 15 and 20 spare seats each journey and students have the option to board at the bus stop opposite The Tavern and pay a fare to the driver for each journey they make. For information, a similar arrangement is in place with another school bus service for students from South Wingfield but no solution has been found for those from Wessington and families will have to consider their position.

I appreciate that some students from Tansley will have to cross the main road each morning to access the bus stop and we would obviously encourage families to remind their children to be sensible and take care when doing so. This advice was included on the school's newsletter to parents. I understand the bus stop opposite The Tavern has been in place for many years and was upgraded following the development of housing in the area. There is no specific health and safety assessment for bus stops across the County and this includes the stop you have referred to. However, officers are not aware of any particular safety issues or concerns about this stop.

In respect of an assessment of the surface condition of the footpath between Tansley and Matlock, a request has been made through the Council's reporting system for an inspector to check this and findings from this will be available in due course.

I hope this information is helpful."

Regards

Sue Brown
Members Secretaries
County Hall, Matlock