

CODDENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Agenda Paper



Thursday 18th April 2019

Report to Council

Item 11. To **RECEIVE** a report on the Provision of School Bus Services

Cllr Darell-Brown requests that Council revisit a previous discussion concerning school bus restrictions

In 2018 parishioners were made aware of a local council spending cut to school buses. In summary, it was decided that school buses would only be provided to the closest school. In Coddenham's case that would be Claydon. However, historically, Debenham has always been the school of choice for most of Coddenham's residents.

Our main issue is that Coddenham does fall into the Debenham catchment area and no children are currently going to Claydon from the village. It would seem wasteful to put on a bus to Claydon when there is already one going to Debenham.

There are a number of families with older siblings already at Debenham and especially for these families it would be nonsensical to send the younger siblings in the opposite direction. What has not been taken into consideration is the fact that children attend after school clubs/extra lessons and that parents are often driving after the school bus has left. How can a parent be in different places at the same time? In addition for those parents and children who are dependent upon public transport there is currently a bus service to and from Debenham, but there is no service to Claydon.

Our education system is such that children take entrance exams to secondary schools within the catchment. Parents are ambitious for their children and rightly want the best outcomes for them. The catchment area system allows for choice amongst both parents and schools. It is outrageous that a school bus should influence this so profoundly.

There have been many references made nationally to the impact on the environment of road transport and locally e.g. in recent articles about the proposed Northern Bypass. The government is, rightly, keen to reduce the amount we use our cars. The parents I have spoken to about this bus issue are adamant they will not sacrifice or even compromise their children's future. Even though it will be harmful to their careers, they will drive their children to Debenham rather than send them to Claydon. They will be following a bus with their older children in it, clogging up our already very full roads. Surely there are more pragmatic savings to be made that don't compromise our children's futures?

Cllr A. Darell-Brown