

HOLBROOK PARISH COUNCIL

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Tom Morgan
Director of Service
Trent Barton
Mansfield Road
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01 June 2016

Dear Mr Morgan,

Re: Re-routing of the Nines Service.

I write to you on behalf of Holbrook Parish Council and of the residents of Holbrook and Coxbench. Trent Barton's plan to re-route the Nines so that they will no longer service Coxbench and Little Eaton is extremely disappointing. We now understand that the route will go directly down the A38 – only metres away from the communities it has served to date.

The implications of this decision are hugely negative for the area. There will now be:

- No bus service at all to Ripley, Alfreton, Sutton, Mansfield
- No bus service after 7pm to Derby
- No Sunday morning service (Only Amberline providing any Sunday Service)

The bus service not only allows for people to travel both socially and for family purposes, people also rely on the service to be able to get to and from work. As a Council we have already been made aware of people who will lose their jobs as a direct result of this decision. Businesses will also lose custom (both within and outside the Parish). 26.6 % of the residents in the Parish of Holbrook (which includes Coxbench) are over 65 and many rely on the bus services to travel.

Parishioners have been informed by Trent Barton that the driving factors forcing this decision upon TB are as follows:

- To improve punctuality of the service.
- An (unspecified) increase in complaints to TB over timekeeping in the last few months - (*We note that the Little Eaton island has been subject to ongoing delays due to roadworks – which limit the period over which punctuality data being used by TB is useful or valid for decision making.*)
- The belief by Trent Barton that the service is causing an (*unspecified*) issue for a 'large majority' of bus users and that this does not make commercial sense.

There have also been a variety of justifications given to Parishioners as to why the solution to the “problem” has to be the diversion of the Nines down the A38 instead of servicing Little Eaton/ Coxbench. These include:

- This route will be quicker - by one minute
- Every other option had been considered
- Someone had to be some disadvantaged by the decision (So it might as well be Coxbench/ Little Eaton - apologies, this is how the TB response has been presented to us).

With the bus merely saving a minute on the re-routed journey it does not appear to be a clear 'winning' solution that can be commercially justified against the loss of paying passengers (there can certainly be no passengers on the A38 route), the reputational loss to the company, and it does not even appear to resolve the 'large number of complaints'. The A38 is a road severely and almost daily challenged by hold ups that, at peak times, will impact on punctuality. It is not clear what other options have been considered. (It is after all a route of well over 20 miles in length with those passengers travelling the current route from Little Eaton/ Coxbench to Derby paying proportionately more for a 6-7 mile journey to Derby than a passenger from Sutton on a 20 mile journey (£2.60 single vs £3.80 single respectively)).

It is clear that local residents and businesses have options that they would welcome being given due consideration in preference to a complete loss of the Nines service.

After such a large turn-out at the recent meeting with Trent Barton representatives at Little Eaton Village Hall, it is clear that this service is much needed and valued in the area. It is our view that the reasons presented for the re-routing of the service via the A38 do not appear logical, fair or reasonable to local residents and businesses. These rural communities appear to be targeted for service loss with little

consideration given to “synergy” by the fact the service travels through the two parishes involved.

We ask for a higher level of consultation/information sharing with the communities served than has been the case so far – so that the councils involved can understand Trent Barton’s position as well as analysis and justification. This should include the development of feasible alternatives, i.e. the diversion off the A38 in the evenings to support continued service of the community.

We also urge you to reconsider this decision in its entirety.

Yours Sincerely,

Hannah Owen
Clerk
Holbrook Parish Council