



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Nikki Bridle
Chief Executive
Clackmannanshire Council

Date : 27 June 2024
Our Ref: KB3259



Keith Brown MSP

Dear Nikki,

Re: Muckhart Bus Service Needs

As MSP for Clackmannanshire and Dunblane I am writing to you once again regarding this issue, following a very positive meeting with representatives from Muckhart Community Council (MCC), and Drew Smart from Glenfarg Community Transport (GCT).

At this meeting we discussed the urgent need for public transport links for the residents of Muckhart. They said that, as things stand, there are no public transport options for the village, meaning that anyone without access to a car is, effectively, cut off from essential services such as health care, despite their understanding that the premise of the Forth Valley Royal Hospital build was that it would be a hospital for all villages and towns in the area. It is also difficult for children from the village to benefit from extra curricular activities because they cannot get home from them. An issue that is further compounded by a lack of a safe walking or cycling route between Muckhart and Dollar.

We also discussed the success of GCT who, having begun with small numbers of passengers now transport approximately 1000 passengers every week as well as the survey of residents carried out by MCC which showed that of the 83 responses, the vast majority were in favour of the reintroduction of bus services and would use them if they were reintroduced. One comment said, "We all need a bus – getting to the health centre or connection to the hospital, connection to Kinross for Scotland wide bus connections or our younger people being able to go to after school activities." Some current residents even said that they were considering moving because of the lack of transport options, with one family already having taken this step.

I understand that the 202 service has recently been contracted to Glenfarg CT, who will take it over in the coming weeks. They had hoped to be able to bring Muckhart into the route but have been unable to arrange this due to an apparent lack of investment from Clackmannanshire Council. Whilst Muckhart residents understand the funding constraints faced by councils, they believe that the comparatively small amount needed to connect them to other Hillfoots villages is a necessary investment, particularly with the addition of more housing in Muckhart by the Springfield development. Muckhart CC tell me that this development will increase the village housing stock by 50%, which is likely to put



Constituency Office: Unit 4, Townhead Institute, 39 Drysdale Street, Alloa, FK10 1JA
Telephone: 01259 219333
Email: keith.brown.msp@parliament.scot

considerable pressure on the limited services that are currently available and may lead to an increase in vehicle usage.

My constituents in Muckhart would like to understand why it is that they are unable to gain support for their addition to the 202 route. They say that they have discussed options with GCT, including utilising the app already used by Glenfarg which would allow Muckhart residents to book a pick up in the village, meaning that unnecessary diversions to the village could be minimised. Drew said that GCT are keen to reach a solution to assist Muckhart residents and could, if funding was made available, begin running services through Muckhart as early as the beginning of 2025. There was a feeling that even if Clackmannanshire Council were willing and able to provide a minimal amount of financial support, Perth and Kinross may be willing to allow the addition. MCC representatives also reported that they had discussed how best to make sure the service could work, in terms of health care provision and had confirmation from the Health Centre in Dollar that appointments could be arranged around bus times, if this meant that patients were able to utilise the bus service.

It is clear from our discussions that the Community Council have put a great deal of work and thought into how best to implement a sustainable bus service for the village and surrounding area. They say that they understand the need for the service to be sustainable and would welcome consideration from the council in the hope that a solution can be reached for all involved. I would be grateful if you would please look into this matter and offer my constituents some information regarding the possibility of reaching a solution for the residents of Muckhart.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KB', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Keith Brown MSP
Clackmannanshire and Dunblane