

Important Transport News

NS Wheelers 01948880037

The Shropshire Link Has Gone.

It will be a blow to almost everyone in the county, and yes I can hear some people saying “*it's not going to affect me I've got a car*” But most people will have an elderly relative, or maybe a child that was transported and given valued independence by the Link. Now its gone you will have to provide, at least some of the services that were “*The Link*”

Community Transport will do its best to help out, but the voluntary sector should be additional to not instead of. It is fundamentally wrong to expect volunteers to be front line services,

It's not only relatives that will feel the effects, of the loss, shopkeepers and other businesses will come to notice a loss of footfall, just as they did in Market Drayton when the village services were cancelled in 2008. The Link had many members from all over the UK who visited Shropshire and spent money in Shropshire adding to the prosperity of our county

Doctors, and other health care professionals will struggle to get village patients to appointments, particularly with the threat that A&E may be moved. Ambulance services will be taxed and tested fully. For instance it will now be the exception for Wheelers to do individual trips to appointments, rather than the rule

Our group, *NS Wheelers*, has been running for ten years now with a board which is entirely voluntary and a largely voluntary staff. Originally we started as the Whixall village bus and like Topsy we grew. Now we are expected to grow even more. I should to say that whilst the prospect of growth does not daunt us one little bit, but there are limits. Everyone should know that we haven't suddenly had some sort of epiphany, I stress we are still volunteers. Our volunteers have pledged to soldier on but they are not miracle workers Our primary source of income is a service level agreement with Shropshire Council. For that we are expected to put on 2 services days per week. We do, we will continue so to do but remember we are being asked to increase the services, for which fares will be paid Even so unless we continue to be properly funded and very importantly more volunteers come forward we will not be able to do any more than a basic level of service

Oh dear, what a dark picture I am painting, Well the truth is I have a reason for spelling it out. There has been some fairly unpleasant criticism level at Shropshire Council, mostly unsubstantiated and unjustified and I don't want Wheelers to end up getting tarred with the same brush. Whilst I am not the biggest fan of Shropshire Council, I am a fan of fairness and everyone should understand that the root cause of the demise of the Link rests fairly and squarely with this Government who care more for the rail commuter who need a high speed train than your mother who has lived on a small holding in the sticks since birth. I tire of platitudes like “*its up to councils how they spend their money*” which have a hollow ring of desperation and are simply not good enough. Councils can only spend the money they are given and if we expect – as we are promised – lower council tax, the councils have to cut services and that's what has happened here

In order to help as many people as possible we will increase the number of bus services we put on. We will not be a bespoke “*taxi*” service. I've mentioned one or two examples above, such as doctors, so I would advise everyone to consider the transport situation and think before booking an appointment so that the appointment coincides with the bus service. You will then be taken at a reasonable fare to your chosen destination.

We are no longer individuals, we are community, now a very large community and will have to act as one

NS Wheelers Community Bus New Services

Tuesday for Ellesmere

Fortnightly a service to *Via Welshampton, Colemere and Lineal* leaving Whixall 0915

Wednesday for Market Drayton

- (1) *Woore, Pipegate, Norton;*Leaving Whixall 0830 am.
- (2) *Hinstock & Cheswardine;*Leaving..... 0945am.
- (3) *Whitchurch or Wem, Tilstock, Calverhall,& Fauls*Leaving.....Wem 0830am.

Thursday for Wem

A Circular, *Whitchurch, Hanmer, Bettisfield, Colemere, Cockshutt, & Myddle.* Leaving Whixall 0830am.

Friday for Whitchurch

- 1. **Via *Whixall***..... Leaving...Wem 0830am.
- 2. **Via *Preston Brockhurst, Fauls, Higher Heath, Prees***.....Leaving ...Wem 0830am.
- 3. **Via *Calverhall, Ightfield & Ash***.....Leaving Morton Wood 0930am.

Booking & Advice 01948 880037