

31/33 BUS ROUTES

PROBLEMS AND COMPLAINTS WITH THE NEW BUS TIMETABLE?

As Leader of Fenland District Council, and as a local councillor here in Whittlesey, I've been receiving complaints about the 31/33 bus service into Peterborough, both because the new timetable isn't suitable for some passengers making connections in Queensgate and because the peak hour buses aren't arriving on time as a result of the traffic restrictions on the Ralph Butcher Causeway at King's Dyke.

I've written to Stagecoach and to the Mayor of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) advising them, at the very least, that an emergency peak hour timetable needs to be put in place until the traffic restrictions are lifted on the King's Dyke bridge. Passengers need the certainty of the arrival times of buses, especially in the morning peak hours when people need to get to work on time.

I'm gathering information about what passengers need on the 31/33 bus service. If you are happy with the new service and timetable I need to hear that message too. But mostly I'm hearing the people are unhappy. I'd like to know what problems you are experiencing, where you need to get to and by what time, whether you are getting late to your destination, whether the new bus times are an issue and whether you are now experiencing problems if you need to connect with another bus.

Please email me with details of any problems you are experiencing. My email address is cboden@fenland.gov.uk. I will, of course, not disclose any names or email addresses when I report further to Stagecoach and to the CPCA. I'll keep in touch with developments with those who email me.

If you'd like some more information about the dreadful wider traffic issues surrounding Whittlesey, I've put a few notes on the back of this letter.

Kind regards,

Councillor Chris Boden

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ROAD CLOSURES AND ROADS RESTRICTIONS IN WHITTLESEY

There's increasing and justified frustration with road works and restrictions around Whittlesey. This is a quick note to explain some of what is and has been going on and what I'm trying to do to improve the situation.

KING'S DYKE BRIDGE: There's always some settling-in when a new bridge is built. But the amount of settling-in, together with some small surface cracks, is greater than anticipated for a bridge of this type, even allowing for the steep seventy degree banking there. I'm told contractors still haven't handed over the bridge to the County Council (CCC), and CCC (quite correctly) won't accept that the work is completed until all outstanding questions about the settling-in and cracks have been satisfactorily explained and (if necessary) rectified. The contractor has taken samples for analysis and is using all professional means to give County Council answers which satisfy the County council's challenge on this matter. I'm told that both carriageways are, technically, safe for traffic, but given that it's not yet known why there is slightly greater than expected settling-in issues experienced at the bridge, out of an abundance of caution the County Council will not put vehicles (and people) at any possible risk until the unknown reason for the extra settling-in is identified and (if necessary) rectified.

B1040 DOG IN A DOUBLET: Back in February, not for the first time, part of the A1040 supporting bank was washed away by flooding. The Whittlesey Washes are designed to flood to protect other areas both up and down river, so this sort of bank damage is not new. Unfortunately, as well as part of the bank being washed away, the safety railings also fell away which protect vehicles in the event of them going off-road as they travel over the banked area. Quite correctly, temporary traffic lights were put up as a safety measure where the safety railings and the bank have been lost. That was in February. Here we are, more than seven months later, and the work to reinstate the bank and railings still hasn't been done and (to the best of my knowledge) hasn't even been scheduled. Unlike King's Dyke Bridge, I believe we've been badly let down by CCC on the B1040. They have claimed that no contractor can be found to do the work. But a party political decision has been made since 2022 to shift a big chunk of road repair money away from Fenland and into Cambridge City every year. I strongly suspect that that is the real cause of this unacceptable delay. If anyone wants evidence of this massive roads spending shift from Fenland to Cambridge City, just email me.

A605 – KELLYVISION ROUNDABOUT TO CEMETERY ROAD ROUNDABOUT: Recently, many residents asked why this part of the A605 was suddenly closed and resurfaced when there are areas nearby with worse potholes. This section of road failed a regular skid test and CCC had to take immediate action on safety grounds – nothing to do with potholes! But the next section of the A605, to the new(ish) Dandelion Way roundabout, is in an appalling state. The good news is that it will be totally resurfaced at the start of November. The bad news is that that section of the A605 will be totally closed from 8pm to 6am for up to 10 nights.

OTHER REGULAR & SCHEDULED IMPROVEMENT WORKS: Weather permitting, the maintenance/improvement works on the B1040 traffic lights at Morton Fork should be finished in the next few days. Similarly, the long overdue road works on the B1093 from Eastrea towards Benwick, which started almost a year ago, are scheduled to finish early in November. These scheduled improvement works are important, but they do add to the frustration created at the King's Dyke bridge and at the Dog in a Doublet.

I've been increasingly angered by the problems at King's Dyke and on the B1040. King's Dyke restrictions in June were meant to last for only two weeks! I did get CCC to issue an update on the bridge situation earlier this month. But we are approaching the main flooding season again, and I've strongly advised CCC Officers that local patience is wearing thin – we must get the Dog in a Doublet work done as a matter of urgency, and the traffic situation in Whittlesey will go from serious to **critical** if the King's Dyke bridge isn't fully re-opened before flood alerts totally close North Bank and the B1040 again. If anyone wants more information or to be kept informed about the roads situation, please email me at the email address on the other side of this note.

COUNCILLOR CHRIS BODEN – 26th September 2024