

Petition to Reinstate the 176/177 Arriva Bus services to ASDA Gillingham Pier.

Information provided by Cllr Pat Cooper.

Written 11th October 2016.

Reason for petition.

I started this petition because I am a regular user of this bus route and my residents were telling me, when I got on the bus from my stop in Grange Road, and at various stops along the route, plus phone calls, emails and in the High St, how upset they were that this service to ASDA Gillingham Pier had been stopped.

I have been gathering signatures by travelling on the bus route, as well as in the High St. and at the Walnut Tree Club in Gillingham.

Other places where the petition was placed was in the two local shops in Grange Road .

The Sunlight Centre has taken a couple as well.

Residents have also taken the petition to take to various community clubs at the other end of the route.

I want to thank all those that have taken the time to help with this petition.

It has been very popular, and has at times been literally snatched out of my hand by people eagerly wanting to sign it.

Not only this, but the now 20minute service is also causing a lot of difficulties, the buses at times are full up, and there have been instances of buses not turning up, and buses being late and a driver asking recently if there was anyone needing to go to Gillingham. He was not going to stop and he said that he was going to go straight to Chatham.

This angered passengers, and I believe they have been in touch with Arriva about this. They had to wait for another bus.

Also the ridiculous bus that TERMINATES at Gillingham High St??

Why does this bus not continue on down to Lower Gillingham?

One morning last week, I was waiting at my usual stop, and there were passengers also waiting. School children as well. The 8.38 did not turn up. The 8.57 bus was late(this timing is causing upset as well, because some elderly people are walking further up the hill to the next stop so that they can use their bus passes at 9am). I wrote a message on one of my cards to the School saying why the child was going to be late, because the previous bus did not turn up.

To go back to the ASDA issue.

Not only do people want to go to the store to shop, I have since learned that the cafe at ASDA is providing, especially elderly residents, a meeting place to meet their friends and this is stopping social isolation . Do we seriously want this to stop?

Now we come to the roads.

The Gillingham Gyrotory System , Pier Road, is a nightmare for pedestrians. I have had reports that now that ASDA cannot be accessed, there have been elderly people and disabled people struggling with shopping bags crossing this system.

2.

I have also been told that there is a FREE bus going from Chatham Waterfront to ASDA in Chatham?? Horstead?

Is this the case?

How come they get one, and we don't get anything down here?

I realise that we as a Council cannot place one Supermarket over another, but stopping this bus, is taking away people's CHOICE, from both ends of the route but disenfranchising the residents of Gillingham primarily.

The bus takes in not only residents from Gillingham North and South Wards, but from the Walderslade end as well.

The UTC was shocked about this bus no longer running from the ASDA stop.

I was informed by the principle Karon Buck that Students also use this stop.

In my earlier email to Arriva and Medway Council, I was informed that the route is no longer viable because not enough people are using it.

I was also informed that the bus takes 5 or 6 minutes to go into and out of ASDA and is taking time out along the route. I argued that we have pinch points along this route, specifically Medway Hospital, but buses are not being axed from there.

My suggestion was therefore to run a bus say twice an hour, but to leave us with nothing is taking away the choice again.

I have heard rumours that the Traffic commissioner did not give permission for this route to go to ASDA.

I have heard that the loading bay at ASDA is causing difficulties, and last but not least that ASDA won't pay for the bus. So who is paying for the FREE one to ASDA in Chatham?

One of the petitioners who was in the Medway Messenger as well as myself, has even asked Peel Ports if they will do something. Nothing forthcoming yet.

Yet another glossy timetable has been produced for the new route (amongst others), these are costing a fortune to produce no doubt.

So to sum up.

At least take a good look at this petition.

I want to suggest that a meeting is held as soon as can be arranged, with Arriva, Ward Cllrs, (specifically Gillingham) Medway Council, ASDA, and any other interested parties. Also to include passengers who use this bus route.

Cllr Pat Cooper.

28 Dial Road

Gillingham

ME7 2RL.

Regular user of the 177/176 Bus route.

01634/575599

07505 097509

patcooper@virginmedia.com