

Wem Town Bus Comments Correspondence from Cllr Towers

As you probably remember the Town Bus Service contract was put out to tender earlier in the year, just prior to May's election I think. Lakeside were doing an excellent job – it was a gold-plated service....we often had mention of the famous Gerald who drove the bus, he was so kind to all in the town....assisting with shopping and drop-offs, etc. The contract was awarded by Shropshire Council to Bennetts and they began their operation of this service at the start of September. This has come as a real blow, especially as their buses are dirty, let in rain water from the sky-light and do not operate on the streamlined regular basis that Lakeside did. Not only that but Shropshire Council, having asked for our opinions when the route went out to tender, never thought to tell either the Town Council or ourselves as Shropshire Councillors the result of their deliberations!

We as Town Councillors are probably all getting feedback on this change. The email below is part of one that I have received:

“Over the weekend I have received several concerns about the town bus which is now being run by Bennetts and according to the website they are based in Stafford!

The problem seem to be the times, which have altered and a large gap between 11am and 12.30pm and also the state of the bus used. I was told by one resident that the bus was leaking and the floor was wet which is not ideal when transporting elderly people, and indeed anyone!

Three separate people approached me at church, two elderly people who use the bus to access our Saturday Special services, and one of these ladies has very restricted vision.

Obviously Lakeside lost the contract, but replacing the service with something inferior and in fact dangerous is not a good move. Perhaps you can look into this as a County Councillor -did explain that it was not the Town Council who had appointed the company.”

We may decide we need to write to Shropshire Council and let them know how we are finding the new service they have chosen to give us. It will also help Peter and myself as we also bring up this matter as we discuss things with officers at Shirehall.

Many thanks,

Edward