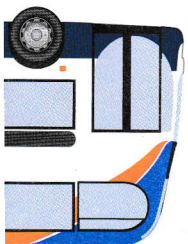


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Miss Fiona Young  
Clerk, West Hunsbury Parish Council  
32 Holdenby Road  
Spraton  
NORTHAMPTON  
NN6 8JD  
18<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Dear Miss Young

Thank you very much for your letter of 2<sup>nd</sup> May.

We do appreciate the concerns of residents of West Hunsbury with the cessation of the bus service to this area. However, such matters are not taken lightly and given the reduction in revenue following the covid pandemic and increasing costs through soaring inflation, we have had to make some difficult decisions where routes or parts of routes have become unsustainable without additional sources of funding.

We do appreciate the work that you have undertaken to ascertain the operating costs of bus services and certainly this is of value when trying to understand our costs, but I regret this is just the tip of the iceberg. The cost indexes that you have seen represent averages across the industry, but regrettably do not in this case accurately reflect the costs of adding your suggestion to our services.

Whichever way we look at it, whether that be an extension of service 3, or as a separate service, we would need to operate one additional bus than we do today, to operate this service around West Hunsbury because it would not fit into the existing clock-dependent operational cycle of our routes. Not only do we have the driver, fuel, direct vehicle costs to maintain and insure to consider, but there are a number of other overhead costs that come with additional fleet that will also increase and need to be considered. Regrettably when we look at the costs to introduce what you are suggesting this adds up to a significant amount of money, likely to be around £150k per year, at today's cost levels. The costs of adding this service as you can see are more than the £4.25 per mile index costs and would need to generate more than 25 passengers a trip all paying a commercial fare to cover those costs and be viable for us.

We do understand the impact of communities such as West Hunsbury not having a bus service, but unfortunately we do not believe that it is sustainable for our business to provide the service that you are seeking without financial support for the service. The maths of this re-enforce the decision that we made to withdraw this part of the service. Leading up to the decision we made, and indeed since, we have maintained that if there is a sufficient amount of funding available to support the costs of providing the service we would be pleased to provide a service. Where services, as in this case, are not commercially viable it is the responsibility of the local transport authority, in this case West Northamptonshire Council, to consider funding a service within the resources available to the authority. We will again raise this matter with West Northamptonshire Council to see whether any forms of funding may be available but I do regret that in the absence of such we would not be able to reinstate a regular service to West Hunsbury.

Thank you again for your letter and I am sorry that I cannot be more positive in the short-term.

Yours sincerely



**Patrick Stringer**  
Commercial Director