

Letter received from Derbyshire County Council advising changes to the bus service in Parwich.

Dear Parish and Town Council

I am contacting you to make you aware of important changes to bus services which operate in and around the Ashbourne area.

Derbyshire County Council is introducing a new bus service - Derbyshire Connect – on Monday 13th February 2017. This will replace services 101 and 102 which operate from the Thorpe and Parwich areas as well as two school services – the 103 and 104 - that run from Hognaston to Hulland Ward Primary School, and Kirk Ireton to Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School.

Derbyshire Connect will use an accessible minibus and run between 7am and 6pm Monday to Friday, and 8am and 6pm on Saturdays. It will not run on Sundays. Instead of following a traditional timetabled route, Derbyshire Connect will operate anywhere within the times stated and operating zone (see map attached). Please note the emphasis on this service is its flexibility and the areas served can be changed, within this general operating area, to accommodate the journeys passengers may wish to make.

Journeys will have to be booked in advance, anytime from a week to two hours before travel. A standard fare will be charged but Gold card holders will be able to travel for free after 0930 during the week and anytime on Saturdays. Importantly, Derbyshire Connect will be available to everyone, including visitors, of **all ages** in the operating area.

Derbyshire Connect will be a pilot service for up to 12 months and if successful may shape the way that transport is provided in the future in the county's rural areas. There are many successful services of this type operating around the country and we hope that Derbyshire Connect will be more responsive to passengers needs and provide greater travel choices.

I have attached a press release for further information which we hope you will be able to include in your parish newsletters and on your websites, as appropriate. Service information leaflets will be available early in the new year.

To help promote and explain Derbyshire Connect we would welcome the opportunity to meet with your Parish/Town Council to provide further information. Please can you let me know if this is something you wish to arrange.

Thank you for your support in helping to raise awareness and promote Derbyshire Connect in your local communities.

Kind Regards

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## **NEW-STYLE BUS SERVICE 'DERBYSHIRE CONNECT' TO BE PILOTED IN THE ASHBOURNE AREA**

A new type of rural bus service is going on trial early next year in a corner of the Derbyshire Dales.

Derbyshire County Council has given the go-ahead to pilot a Demand-Responsive-Transport (DRT) style service in the wider Ashbourne area, starting 13 February 2017.

The new service – 'Derbyshire Connect' – will run for up to a year and is the first time this type of service has been tried in Derbyshire.

DRT services are more flexible than mainstream bus services in that they don't have to stick to fixed routes and timetables.

They are able to divert away from start and finish points depending on where pre-booked passengers want to go.

Details of how to book still need to be finalised. Anyone will be able to use these services including people who currently travel on mainstream buses and passengers using DAB and aCTive travel.

Services will run 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday and from 8am to 6pm on Saturdays. They will cover the area north of Ashbourne, including places like Brassington, Kirk Ireton, Middleton, Parwich, Thorpe and the town of Wirksworth.

Fares will be £2 adult single, £3.80 return, £1.20 child single and £2.40 return. Gold Card holders will travel free-of-charge after 9.30am Monday to Friday and all day on Saturday. b\_line cardholders will get 25% off adult fares.

As part of the trial, trips can also tie in more closely with non-emergency NHS patient transport and school transport and carry people just over the border into Staffordshire where similar schemes are already running.

Initially journeys will be run by Ashbourne Community Transport but if Derbyshire Connect is extended beyond the trial period other operators will be invited to pitch for the work on a more permanent basis.

Longer term, Derbyshire Connect may also be rolled out in other rural parts of the county.