

Parish Transport Representative

This year, usage of the Red Rose Route 17 bus service appears to have remained stable. Punctuality on the school-days only school services has been excellent, but we are aware that services at other times of the day have had occasional delays, cancellations and route alterations, leading to inconvenience for passengers. Feedback about these, where provided, has been shared with Red Rose and they say they have taken steps to reduce the likelihood of reoccurrences. If you do have any feedback and you share this directly with Red Rose, please consider copying the PTR@launton.org email address (which goes to me) so that we are aware of it.

There was some gossip, shared with us recently, about what might happen to the service if passenger numbers remained as they are.

I've had confirmation from Taj at Red Rose that this is just gossip and doesn't relate to reality. He has confirmed there are no plans to change or stop the service any time in the near future. The only change will be that the 14.45 non-school day service will operate the same as on school days through Marsh Gibbon.

I've also heard from Dave Harrison at Oxfordshire County Council, who we asked about funding for the route, he said:

the current contract runs until August 2025 and is scheduled to use all the available Section 106 funds held or secured at the time of contract issue.

As only the Launton to Bicester section of the route is under contract to the Council, we do not have the overall picture of commercial viability. It will be up to Red Rose as to whether they wish to share that.

So the route looks safe until August 2025 - after that who knows, and maybe it depends on any further S106 gains from the development on Station Road. In all cases, maintaining high levels of usage will be important and the best way to ensure viability.

I should also mention, for wider interest, the Oxfordshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) which was successful in receiving over £14m of BSIP funding from the Department for Transport to deliver improvements between April 2022 and March 2025. This funding is going towards a number of projects from large scale bus priority measures in Oxford, to new bus services and discounted travel.

Unfortunately I'm not aware that any funds from this scheme will be spent on the 17 route through Launton but you may find it helps onward services from Bicester or Oxford.