

**Statement from Peter Rollings, Rufforth with Knapton Parish Council  
20<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

I note that the Enhanced Bus Partnership is an agenda item for tonight's meeting but we can see nothing therein that addresses the sustainability of rural bus routes serving the outlying villages within the authority area.

We have a specific urgent issue within our Parish but I'm sure that the principles involved affect most of the villages surrounding the City. We understand that Connexions the operator of the 412 York to Wetherby route which services Rufforth and Knapton has given notice to cease operations with effect from December 10<sup>th</sup> unless some improved financial arrangement can be agreed.

We appreciate that the route is currently unprofitable with passenger numbers still significantly down on pre covid levels and a high proportion of those using the service being concessions, and exacerbated by the national driver shortage. It is also true that poor regularity and reliability will have adversely affected passenger numbers amongst those that have an alternative.

The problem we have is that the two villages have no services other than a small shop in Rufforth, and we have a small but significant proportion of the population, many of whom are elderly and vulnerable, who are totally dependent on the bus for day to day living requirements – provisions, doctors, dentist, chemist and so forth. Looking forward the proportion of residents in this category is likely to increase along with an ageing population and for these people life without a bus service would become intolerable.

It seems to us that the current financial model for rural bus services and in particular the payment for concessions is broken and is in need of urgent review. The launch of the new Partnership would seem to provide the opportunity for such a review.

We urge the Council to find an urgent solution for the 412 service. We appreciate that the route also serves parts of North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire but trust that this will not prove to be a barrier to resolving the problem.

At the same time we urge the Council to produce a long term strategy to ensure the sustainability of rural bus services. The outlying villages are part of the authority area, although we do feel somewhat forgotten at times.

Peter Rollings  
**Chairman**  
**Rufforth with Knapton Parish Council**