

Press Release

New Year's Day Bus Service Well Used By Hailsham Residents

A Hailsham town councillor is "absolutely delighted" after hearing a special New Year's Day bus service he helped to secure was used by more than 100 people, demonstrating the effectiveness of working in partnership with local bus companies.

Local bus operator Cuckmere Buses (formerly Cuckmere Community Bus) stepped in to fill a big gap in the seasonal timetables over the festive break by operating a special bus service from Heathfield to Eastbourne via Hailsham and Polegate on New Year's Day.

Cuckmere Buses, which is run entirely by volunteers was concerned that Hailsham would be left without any public transport on 1st January, as the commercial bus companies normally serving the town do not operate on this day, leaving Hailsham residents without a transport link to Polegate train station or Eastbourne town centre.

This is the third consecutive year that Cuckmere Buses has run this special bus service part-underwritten by Hailsham Town Council, Polegate Town Council and Heathfield & Waldron Parish Council.

Barry Marlowe, oversight councillor for Public Transport Links at the Town Council and lead member of the Wealden Bus Alliance was delighted to hear about the positive feedback received from passengers who used the service this year, expressing their delight and thanks to the volunteer drivers.

He said, "The Town Council is pleased to have supported Cuckmere Buses once again in enabling this vital service, and is just one example that demonstrates how working in partnership with our local bus operators will provide a service aimed at benefiting everyone."

"Cuckmere Buses has worked closely with the Town Council over the last seven years to develop supplementary public transport links in and around Hailsham and will continue to support them and local bus operators to make service improvements in the future, specifically for those who cannot access the conventional public transport network."

Cuckmere Buses managing director Philip Ayers was one of the drivers on the New Year's Day service and commented: "We are delighted to have been able to provide a service through Hailsham and nearby towns when no other operator was running and were pleased with the number of passengers carried and their reaction to us was fantastic!"

"We shall certainly do it again when no other services are running, and are most grateful to Hailsham Town Council for their financial support of this venture. We look forward to continuing excellent partnership working in the town."

Full details of the Cuckmere Buses service are available at cuckmerebuses.org.uk and via the Wealden Bus Alliance's website: wealdenbus.org.uk.

Demand for the Cuckmere Buses service means that additional volunteer drivers are needed. If you are over 25 years of age, able to offer your services and would

like more information on volunteer training opportunities, contact Philip Ayers on 01323 870920 or John on 07802 305155.

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Notes to Editors:

- Cuckmere Buses, formerly Cuckmere Community Bus (CCB), is an independent charity run entirely by volunteers. It was launched in 1976 to supplement existing bus services and provide bus links from village residents to their nearest towns throughout the Cuckmere Valley area.
- Based in Berwick, Cuckmere Buses currently has around 50 volunteer drivers and 10 additional volunteers who run its fleet of seven minibuses, providing an important link with shops, doctors' surgeries and social facilities for those who do not live on a main bus route.
- Cuckmere Buses was awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award given to volunteer groups across the UK for outstanding work undertaken in their local communities.

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