

Press Release

New Year's Day Bus Service For Hailsham Residents

Working with Hailsham Town Council and other parishes in the Wealden district, local bus operator Cuckmere Buses has stepped in again to fill a big gap in the seasonal timetables over the festive break.

Hailsham Town Council, along with Polegate Town Council and Heathfield & Waldron Parish Council, is part-subsidising the cost of running a special service on New Year's Day on Cuckmere Buses's route 50 from Heathfield to Eastbourne via Hailsham and Polegate.

Cuckmere Buses, which is run entirely by volunteers was concerned that Hailsham would be left without any public transport on 1st January 2014, 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.

The number 50 service will start operating from Heathfield at 8.59am (Hailsham 9.21am and Polegate 9.30am) and hourly until its last return journey at 17.10 from Eastbourne.

This is the third consecutive year that Cuckmere Buses has run this special bus service.

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 last year, expressing their delight and thanks to the drivers.

He said, "This service is vital for the passengers who will use it and is just one example that demonstrates how working in partnership with our local bus operators will provide a service aimed at benefiting everyone."

Added Councillor Marlowe: "Cuckmere Buses has worked closely with the Town Council over the last eight years to develop supplementary public transport links in and around Hailsham. It is a privilege for the Town Council to underwrite these essential services and we will continue to support local bus operators to make service improvements, specifically for those who cannot access the conventional public transport network."

Philip Ayers, managing director of Cuckmere Buses said: "Cuckmere Buses has tried hard to provide services for the local communities it serves for 37 years. We cannot replace the commercial companies, but try to complement them. As public purse strings tighten, we expect demand for our services to increase over the coming years."

"I will be out driving myself again this year and look forward to welcoming lots of passengers onto the bus!"

Speaking on behalf of the young people of Hailsham, Youth Mayor Musta Rahman said: "The running of this much-needed service is excellent news and means that people can travel to and from Hailsham and get in early on the January sales. I would urge young people to make full use of the opportunity given to them by using the specially derived bus service."

Full details of the New Year's Day number 50 service are available now on the Cuckmere Buses website (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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