

# Sevenoaks District Seniors Action Forum

*Working together in the interests of people aged 50 plus*

## *What's happened to our buses? A summary of members questions and some answers ( updated 7th July2021)*

Most of the bus services in the centre of the SDC Area are run by Go Coach, with some services from Arriva.

Prior to the lockdown that ended in April 2021 we had scheduled bus services and the introduction of the bookable bus service.

During lockdown most scheduled buses were cancelled as people were advised not to travel on the buses. The bookable bus service was continued, primarily for key workers. We have had generally speaking good reports to this service. Prior to the October lockdown GO were carrying around 1000 passengers a week, this declined to about 200 in the Jan/March period and are now approaching the 400 mark

On April 12 we had a new service update. We have had a number of complaints about these revisions and a feeling that the literature and web sites are difficult to understand, with no overall, comprehensive guide.

The frequency of buses on the revised scheduled routes is so few as to make a mockery out of calling them a service- with no buses after 3.00 p.m. , except the bookable buses, which are designated as being peak time between 3.00- 5.00 p.m. . The return fare from Otford to Sevenoaks Town centre could be £10, with no concessions .We have the promise from Boris Johnson to fund increases in rural bus services in particular at evenings and weekends. - How much is this and how much is planned for Kent/Sevenoaks- and who will administrate it?

The bookable bus service continues, but the full rate of concessionary fares no longer applies even in off-peak times, with full prices for peak times. No explanation has been given. We have written to KCC to seek and still await a reply!

People without a car are dependent on buses for shopping and to avoid social exclusion. Scheduled services do not join up and at £4 for a return trip in off-peak for a 2mile journey ( bookable ) is out of reach for some pensioners and those on low incomes, who need to make regular bus journeys

We know that the bookable buses are not covered by the rules for concessionary fares, and the limited amount of concessionary fares available depend on subsidy from County, Local and Town councils. - how long can they continue to exist?

There is little public awareness of the new Go2 direct taxi style buses,

If we had access to passenger numbers, income and expenditure and details of subsidies we could make some informed ideas on what improvements we would like to see. Our first view is that the current limited scheduled services should be cut and the town circulars improved- with an increase in the on demand bookable services, re- introducing full concessionary fares.

In the mid to long term we would like to see if KCC can deliver a workable strategy to meet the objective set in August 2017 of promoting affordable, acceptable and connected transport for all to jobs, education, health and other services -in their "Growth without Gridlock "report. Also, whatever happened to the Sevenoaks District Strategy for Transport 2010 – 25 ?

## **Go2- buses Service update 12th April 2021**

### **Time tabled buses: -**

Route 1 Sevenoaks/Westerham 3 a day with the last bus 14.30 - (16 a day in 2019)  
Is a commercial route with no subsidy

Route 2 Sevenoaks/ Swanley 2 a day with the last bus 12.51 – (5 to 7 a day in 2019)  
This route is subsidised

Route 3 Sevenoaks/Orpington - Now discontinued, but serviced by the bookable service

Route 4 Sevenoaks/Edenbridge – Now discontinued but serviced by the bookable service

Route 5 Sevenoaks/Tonbridge 3 a day with the last bus 14.10, but Alternative has an alternative Arriva service – this route is subsidised(6 a day 2019)

Route 6 Sevenoaks/ Seal & Kemsing 3 a day with the last but last bus 13.51 – (6 to 7 a day 2019)  
Is a commercial route with no subsidy

Route 7 was a Sevenoaks commuter route – (Now discontinued)

Route 8 Sevenoaks Town Circular 7 a day with the last bus 15.00

Route E1 Edenbridge Town circular 9 a day, but none after 14.00

Fares:-

£2.50 single journey/ £5 all day ticket- applies to any distance  
Concessionary fare accepted after 9.30 a.m.

£1 per journey on Edenbridge town circular and as a timetabled route accepts bus passes

### **ADDITIONAL TO GO:-**

Route 402 Arriva Sevenoaks/Tunbridge Wells every 30 mins 6.30-19.30weekdaysThere is also a SAT/  
SUNDAY service

Route 308 Arriva Sevenoaks/Gravesend- about 14 a day and gets some subsidy

## “ Go” - Bookable bus services

These operate within an area from Swanley in the North and Cowden in the South. Westerham and Edenbridge in the West and Fairseat, Seal and Hildenborough in the East. Whilst “Go” refer to their service area as Sevenoaks District- It is not the SDC Area and a notable exception is New Ash Green ( see map ) On Sundays the on demand bookable service only covers Sevenoaks, the Darent corridor and West Kingsdown

**On demand shared bookable buses**  
**From bus stop to bus stop**  
**You will be advised of likely waiting time,**  
**Could be up to 30 minutes, but usually less**

**Go2- Direct pre bookable taxi service**

	Off peak	Off peak	Peak		Off peak	Off peak	Peak
	6.00 to7.30				6.00 to 7.30		
	9.30 to15.00		7.30 to 9.30		9.30 to 15.00		7.30 to9.30
	17.00 to 20.00		15.00 to17.00		17.00 to18.30		15.00 to 17.00
	SAT-6.30 to 17.30		SUN- 9.00to 17.30 Limited areas		All Saturday		No Sundays
<b>Distance *</b>		concessionary				concessionary	
Up to 1 mile	<b>£2.50</b>	<b>£1.25</b>	<b>£3.50</b>		<b>£5.00</b>	<b>£4.00</b>	<b>£7.00</b>
2 miles	<b>4.00</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>5.00</b>		<b>5.00</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>7.00</b>
3 miles	<b>4.00</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>5.00</b>		<b>5.00</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>8.00</b>
4 miles	<b>5.00</b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>6.00</b>		<b>8.00</b>	<b>6.40</b>	<b>10.00</b>
5 miles	<b>5.00</b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>6.00</b>		<b>10.00</b>	<b>8.00</b>	<b>12.00</b>
6miles	<b>5.00</b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>6.00</b>		<b>12.00</b>	<b>9.60</b>	<b>14.00</b>
7 miles	<b>6.50</b>	<b>3.25</b>	<b>7.50</b>		<b>14.00</b>	<b>11.20</b>	<b>16.00</b>
8 miles	<b>6.50</b>	<b>3.25</b>	<b>7.50</b>		<b>18.00</b>	<b>14.40</b>	<b>20.00</b>
8 miles plus	<b>6.50</b>	<b>3.25</b>	<b>7.50</b>		<b>18.00</b>	<b>14.40</b>	<b>20.00</b>

- As the crow flies

On demand have a Plus 1's charge of £1  
 For additional passengers on off peak services

Taxi service includes up to 7 passengers

To use any of these bookable services you have to be registered and then book each individual journey, you can't book a return journey in advance, except for the taxi service .This can be done on-line, or by telephone or in person at the Sevenoaks bus station M-Fri 10.00-15.00

## **Response from Go-coach**

Only scheduled bus routes, that's those that are numbered, qualify for the English concessionary fare schemes.

The fact that the On demand shared bookable buses and the Go 2pre bookable taxi service have some concessionary fares in their off-peak times it is at the discretion of the Local Transport Authority, which for the Sevenoaks area is KCC. They also get help from SDC and STC

School bus journeys make up most bus usage and currently these services can't be used by others under the need for social distancing currently in force, but mixed use should be re-introduced post lockdown, probably from the new term in September, with extra buses becoming available.- subject to KCC approval

The cost of using the on demand bookable buses for a return journey from Twitton to Sevenoaks Town centre is £4 for the off-peak times of 9.30-15.00 and 17.00-20.00 M-F with the subsidised concessionary fare. About the same as a cup of coffee and considered good value.

Some of the scheduled routes will be getting a greater frequency of service, details are yet to be announced, but for example Route 1 Sevenoaks to Westerham could be increased to one an hour

It is envisaged that whilst scheduled buses will continue and expand on a supply and demand basis there will be a greater use of the pre bookable services