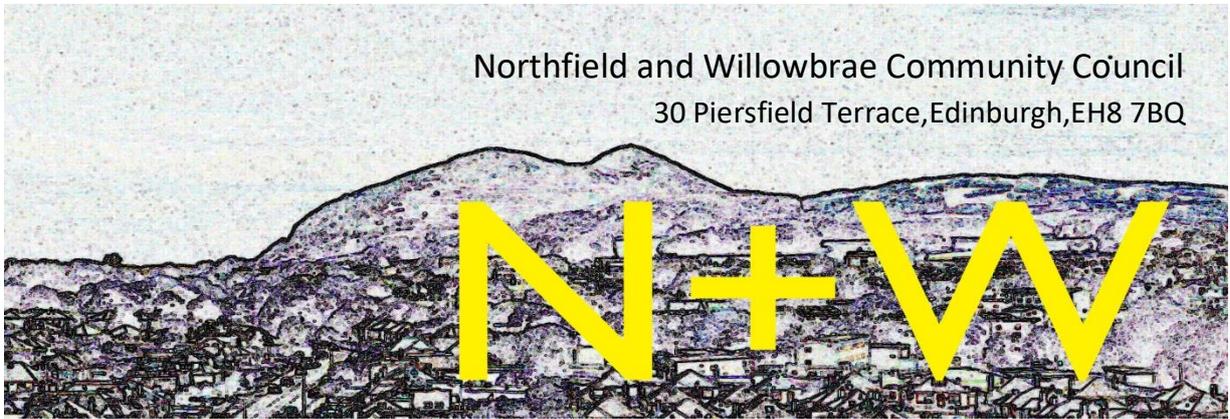


Northfield and Willowbrae Community Council

30 Piersfield Terrace, Edinburgh, EH8 7BQ



Councillor Lesley Macinnes
Convener,
Transport and Environment Committee
City of Edinburgh Council
City Chambers
Edinburgh

by email

5 March 2020

Dear Convener

WITHDRAWAL OF THE No 69 BUS SERVICE

The 69 bus is to be withdrawn from 28 March, without consultation. Recognising the importance of this service to the residents of our area, the Community Council has consulted the users. At its meeting on 4 March, the Community Council decided to ask you to reconsider the ending of the service unless appropriate alternative arrangements are in place.

We held a drop-in session on Friday 28 February, in the Northfield Community Centre. Despite a very wet day, many users diverted from their bus journeys to discuss with us the impact the withdrawal will have. The results of our discussions form Appendix 1 to this letter. At the drop-in we were given 8 pages of signatures obtained by a lady who spent her day on the bus – talking to actual travellers. This list forms Appendix 2.

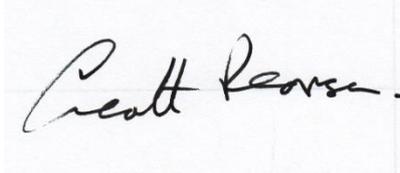
The essence of the problem is that many elderly or infirm people live up the slopes of Lady Nairne and the Paisleys, often in sheltered accommodation which, in hindsight, perhaps should have been built in more accessible places. Not only is the hill steep, the road network is tightly laid out making car driving difficult and requiring a non-standard bus. Without the 69 any resident seeking to travel will have to walk up and down steep roads before they see a bus, which even then does not pass the services these people use regularly.

The expectation must be of a higher demand on social and medical services being delivered in the home. What the Council might save here is lost in other parts of its support to the community.

It might be that a service provided by a community transport business could be organised but that would still require the Council to provide financial support.

The Community Council meets next on 1 April; we hope that we will be able to record a reprieve at least or, preferably a restitution of the 69 service.

Yours sincerely

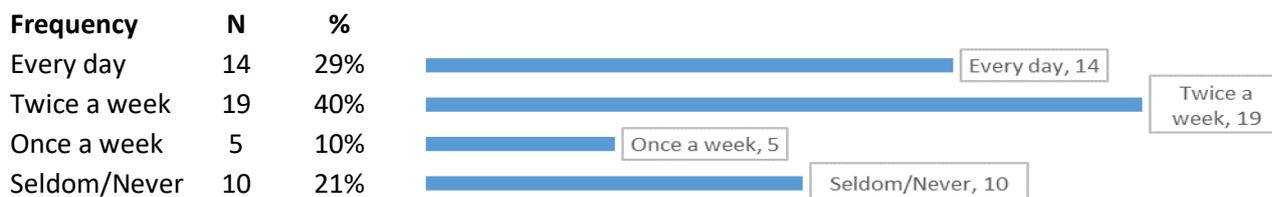
A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Geoff Pearson".

Geoff Pearson
Secretary

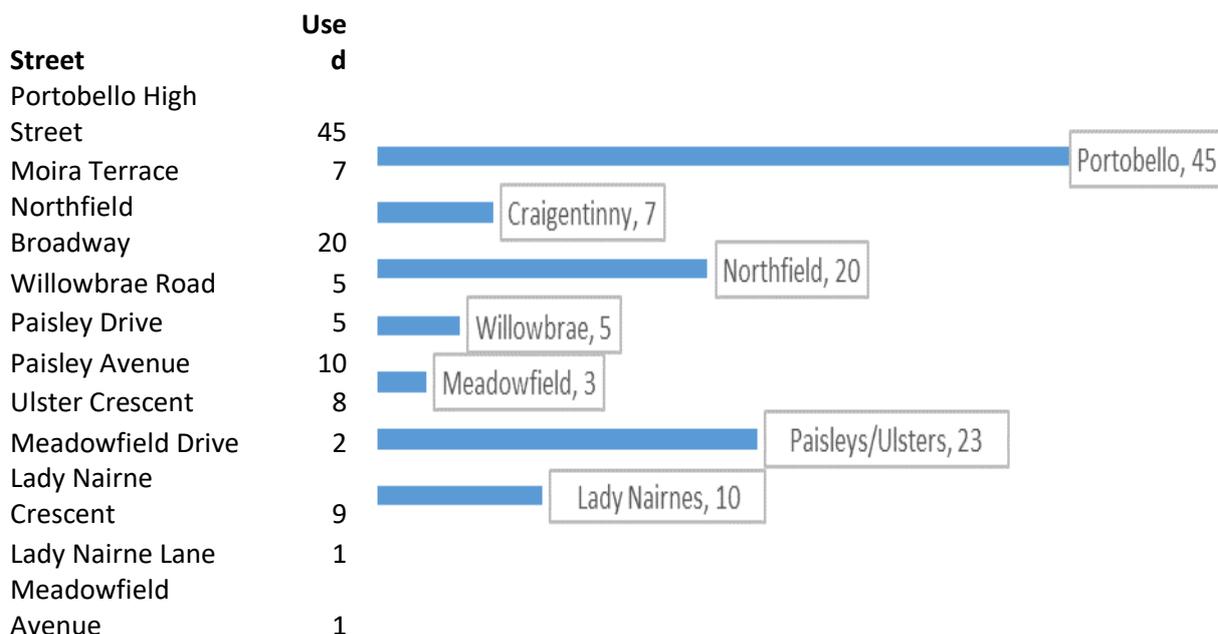
Appendix 1 – Survey outcomes

48 respondents

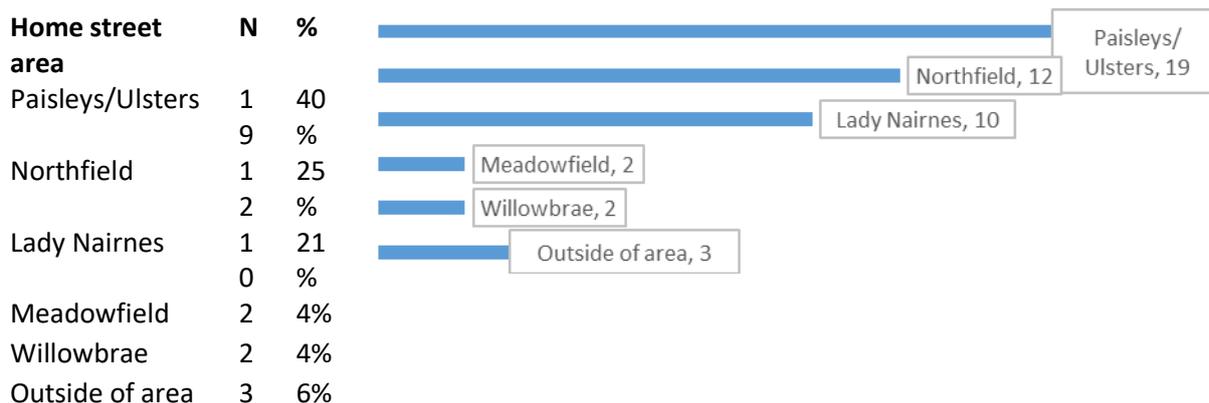
Frequency of Use



Bus Stop Usage

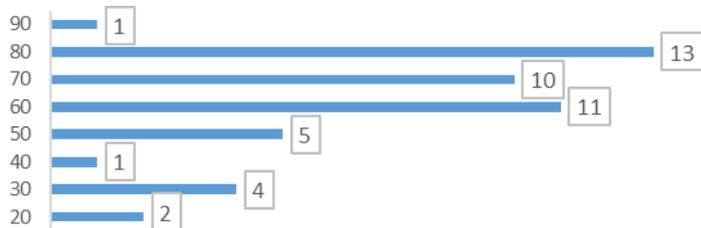


Home street



Age distribution

74% of respondents are aged 60 or more



What are you going out for?



Service if mentioned	N	Other activities
doctor	15	Beach and cafes
library	11	Beach with 2 year old grandson
chiroprapist	5	Granddaughter to gym nippers at Tumbles
bowls	2	Multiple reasons
bank	1	Pills, messages
charity shop	1	Visits to the beach
dentist	1	Volunteer for dementia group
optician	1	With grandchild
swimming	1	

When do you travel?



What will you do if the bus goes?



Travel comments (40% of respondents)

42 bus service inadequate; Knock on effect on Portobello from shopping elsewhere.

Bus service no 42 only alternative to Portobello every half hour??

Devastation; Lifeline to those affected.

Don't know [* 2]

God knows. Be devastated

Have to take 2 buses either way. No other option

No choice; Be very upset

No keep fit bowls, no bus

No!

Not go out as often

St Triduanas Surgery; Two buses to surgery or Portobello

There will be no other option

Very upset & worried about my relatives

Walk

Will have to walk down to the bottom of road to get 44 then a 26 to get to Portobello but may have to walk further

as I have read in the media that they going to take away some bus stops on Willowbrae Road!!
Will need to get help from neighbours as I have no family
With a long walk from it

Anything else? (75% of respondents)

Alternatives? Smaller bus. Introduction small charge. Restricted to three days a week. Can't over-estimate importance to quality of movement for older residents.

Contrast in giving up to 19 years olds free and taking off pensioners who paid tax and national insurance for 46 years!!

Dissatisfied in this decision

Don't know how the people at the Lady Nairn can do without this bus.

Fairly able but does not get any easier. This applies to my wife also 79-80.

How are we climb back up with messages?

I am disabled and totally depend on the 69. I couldn't get out otherwise. Myself and most residents in Lady Nairne depend on the 69 bus and 1 neighbour is a blind man who took a good while to familiarise himself with the route so him myself and most others would be housebound totally without the 69 bus.

I am very worried that the 69 bus might no longer exist. It is an essential service for many people in my area, people who through no fault of their own are unfit and/or unwell and who depend on the availability of this service. What do they do for transport now? The drivers are excellent, very patient & very helpful.

I can drive but I also walk a lot, I am fit. However I use the bus frequently for various reasons and also helping the environment. However there are many people un in the Ulster/ Paisley/ Meadowfield area who are not fit, elderly and can't drive due to various reasons. It would be disastrous for them for this bus to go for socialising, shopping, GP access etc. There are literally well over 100 people in the above area who are well into their 80's and 90's. We need the bus!!

I have problems with arthritis. Bus was a great help from door to door. Been using it for over 20 years. It will be very hard for the other people who are older & live at the top of the hill. This is the only way to get out of house to go to doctors, chemist which are on bus route. This is such a shame, as the elderly will suffer the most to be confined to the house.

I would fully support the 69 bus to stay in place. I work in social care & see first-hand the impact of social isolation.

It would be very disappointing if this service was taken away from the community as most of them that live in the area (which is on a very steep hill!!) are elderly and some also live alone & rely on the bus for shopping and social interactions. I do not drive so I would really miss this service.

Mainly used by myself or my wife when picking up grand children from Towerbank Primary School (normally do it by car, but use when car is unavailable)

Mental health & mobility

Mobility issues

My Parents and Auntie & Uncle rely on this bus [live next door to each other] they are all in their eighties. My uncle has recently been told he can no longer drive. They are all totally reliant on this bus. None of the drive now.

Removal of this bus will penalise the elderly community. In particular "Lady Nairne" residents.

Removing this service will make a lot of people housebound who otherwise make the effort to get out and retain some of their independence.

Retired and disabled. I wouldn't be able to do any shopping as I can't carry heavy parcels, as I also have back problems.

Retired, busy, involved in the community. I know many local people (dementia group, bowling club) - most have no car and their visits "Porty" form a big part of their lives. How are those who currently depend on the 69 supposed to manage, especially around Meadowfield?

Retired. Like a Day Centre. A lifeline. Knock on effect on families.

Retired. What will the pensioners do from Lady Nairnes.

Struggle downhill with lots of stops. Even without shopping couldn't get back.

The bus is essential. Lady Nairne/ Meadowfield Paisley Ulster is an aging population. The bus gives freedom to the elderly to get them to doctors dentists shops even the community centre. The Ulster Crescent & Paisley Drive hill is a killer for the elderly. Until recently one chap whose mother was wheelchair bound used the bus would now need to push a wheelchair up Paisley Drive. The No 69 bus is our community centre where we can meet and keep in touch.

The bus is great for getting around with a pram and will be greatly missed if it stops.

The bus means more to the elderly than transport. It's a means of the only communication for lots of people. It could also be advertised as a route from the sea to the hill (Arthur Seat). Stopping this bus will cause more problems because people will get lonely and depressed.

There are no shops available for the elderly in this area. Supermarkets, doctors surgeries, Post Office & Banks are all on the bus route. The bus is also a social service for the local elderly. They will now be confined to their homes. PS the hairdresser in Lady Nairne is now closing.

This bus is essential for the elderly and disabled, some will be virtual prisoners if this service is terminated.

This bus provides an invaluable service to older folk without cars. This bus passes two GP surgeries and is ore convenient than the 26 alternative bus. There has been very poor publicity about the ending of this service.

This will be devastating for the OAPs who depend on the bus for shopping etc. + community getting together.

Took 69 more when it came down to Northfield Grove so less of a hill to climb. Also more when diverted recently. Two buses otherwise to Portobello or a longish walk and a bus.

Very social. Hate staying at home.

We need a bus in this area especially for the elderly. There is a lot of folk in their 70's, 80's that need it for shopping etc. And I believe they will be taking some bus stops away from the 44 bus route so there will be at least one that will disappear from Willowbrae Road. I would also say that some of the elderly people who use it don't see anybody from one week to the next and it's a very friendly bus and it is company for them too. I feel to take this little bus off would be terrible for the elderly and the other folk who use it. We most definitely need some form of transport as it is very isolated and hilly.

We would have increasingly relied on this service as we get older, especially in poor weather. It links people in the Ulster/Paisley/Lady Nairn area to two doctors' surgeries, shops and two libraries. We will miss the 69 if it is discontinued. We only found out about this change indirectly.

Will need to get help from neighbours as I have no family. I have had to get a neighbour to write this for me. I will be very much stuck in the house without this fantastic wee bus e would miss speaking to all the other people who make use of this service.

Without this service an old man loses the will to live

Fitness (92% of respondents)

Arthritis

Average

Average

Bad hips

Chronic illness, breathing and walking difficult sometimes difficult

COPD vascular problem

Developing a limp. Slowing down. Appreciate the bus.

Disabled

Failing eye sight can't see very well at all.

Fair

Fairly fit

Fairly good

Fit

Fit

Good

Good

Good

Good health

Hard to walk uphill

Have arthritis - have had hip replacement

Have COPD. Have Asthma. Have to stop a few times

I walk with a stick

Legs not good

Limited mobility

Limited mobility

Mid

Mobility problems, asthmatic

My husband uses a walking stick (he is 85 yrs old)

Nil

Not good ps troubled with arthritis

Not good walk with 2 sticks

Not so fit

Not so fit & have bad knees

Not too bad yet although left hip and groin failing

Not very fit

Ongoing illness

Poor

Quite fit

Reasonable

Reasonably well at moment. But will require it more in the future

Restricted mobility

Short walks then stop or sit

Trouble walking

