

## **Swale Rural Forum - 27 August 2013**

### **Agenda Item No. 10**

#### **326/327 Bus Service:**

As you may be aware, 80% of bus services in Kent are operated commercially for profit with the remaining 20% supported financially by KCC. The majority of the 326/7 timetable is operated on a commercial basis by Chalkwell with little involvement from KCC. KCC provides financial support for certain early morning and evening journeys and the weekend timetable. KCC are aware however of the reasoning behind changes made in April this year to the service. Changes were made due to traffic problems causing significant delays to journeys which in some cases were causing students to be late for school. Chalkwell were aware that they were having issues serving the previous timetable due to delays getting to and from Sittingbourne in both the morning and the evening peak, a view which was confirmed through observations by the KCC local bus inspector for the area. Times were therefore changed to help the service run as close as possible to the registered timetable and meet school times. It is a requirement of the Traffic Commissioner for services to run to time as far as possible so this was not just a "nice to do" but a legal requirement. Chalkwell have received a lot of positive comments in relation to the changes made and did advertise the revised timetable through on bus notices and contact with schools.

The service timetable is constantly under review and comments are welcomed from users. It is suggested that in the first instance comments or concerns are raised with the operator Chalkwell due to the commercial nature of much of the timetable. The Operations Manager at Chalkwell is Andy Bates ([andy.bates@chalkwell.co.uk](mailto:andy.bates@chalkwell.co.uk)).