

Transport

Although sited on one of the main road routes from London to the South-West the Seavingtons were bypassed by both main rail routes. However, the station at Ilminster, three miles distant, offered branch line links to both of these main lines at Chard Junction and Taunton respectively. This branch line was closed in the Beeching era but left no legacy of frustrated dispossessed rail commuters. The nearest railway stations today are Crewkerne, 7 miles away, and Taunton, 17 miles away; neither station is served by direct public transport from the Seavingtons.

Local bus services linking the villages with the surrounding area have also become victims to operating economics and public transport is now limited to subsidised services. Undoubtedly the growth in car ownership contributed to the loss of these services but, conversely, lack of public transport has forced car ownership on some. The consultation process revealed that 10%, or 22 households still had no car in spite of these pressures - a decrease in car ownership since the 2000 census - the households with cars averaged 1.9 cars per household.

The 2000 census also showed that residents of the Seavingtons travelled an average of some 10 - 12 miles to their places of work; current bus service timetables suggest that most Seavington commuters travel to work by car.

The consultation brought out a number of criticisms of the, then current, bus services. These included:

1. the failure to connect with the mainline railway services at Crewkerne or Taunton
2. the impossibility of taking a direct bus from Seavington to Taunton and returning on the same day
3. the lack of a direct bus service to Yeovil
4. the lack of a bus service permitting access to the main supermarkets in Taunton or Yeovil

Since the consultation the bus service timetables have been revised and new services introduced. A service aimed at students at SCAT in Taunton is open to the public offering the opportunity to leave the Seavingtons at 7.11 am and return back at about 6.15 pm - a very long day in Taunton! Revisions to other services permit short shopping trips to Chard or Crewkerne, albeit not every day.

Further routes N6 and N7 have also been introduced in 2005, N7 as recently as the end of July; it is thus difficult to assess their utility to the average resident. Whereas Route N7 is a classic bus service with predetermined stops N6 has a short core service with the addition of pre-bookable pick-ups and drop-offs over a wide area including the Seavingtons. Important features of the N6 service are the taxi-like operation for Seavington residents and the inclusion of scheduled stops at doctors' surgeries in South Petherton and Martock.

Unfortunately, these bus services are poorly advertised and little known to residents who might otherwise use them. As demonstrated by the changes and additions during 2005 there appears to be no adequate consultative process to ensure that bus services accommodate residents' needs.

Proposals		
No	Proposal	Proposed Actionee
G 1	Contact major supermarkets to request that their free shoppers' bus services be extended to include the Seavingtons	Parish Council
G 2	Contact Somerset County Council and South Somerset District Council to seek direct bus connections to main-line railway stations	Parish Council
G 3	Maintain contact with Somerset County Council and South Somerset District Council to ensure that the Seavingtons' interests in the subsidised services are protected.	Parish Council
G 4	Arrange adequate publicity for local bus services and distribute timetables	Seavingtons' News

Utilities

In general residents were tolerant to shortcomings in utility provision in the villages such as the unreliability of the electricity supply. The lack of a piped public gas supply is covered in the Energy section of this plan. Concerns were expressed over shortcomings in telecommunications provision and the waste collection and recycling arrangements of the local authority.

Seavington telephone subscribers are reached as remote outposts from BT's South Petherton telephone exchange which is, itself, a subsidiary to a larger telephone grouping under the "01460" area code. Geography dictates fairly long cable routes from South Petherton to individual Seavington subscribers and BT blames this for late provision and poor performance of its ADSL broadband services; only half the promised speed is available here.

This has a detrimental effect on home-workers in the villages and, perhaps more importantly, on gaining the educational benefits of the Internet in an area which is already educationally deprived. Further, capacity restrictions have prevented some residents from gaining access to ADSL.

Technology developments already available to BT would allow economic provision of much faster Internet access and this near-monopoly provider should be pressed to accelerate its implementation for the Seavingtons. Under no circumstances should the villages be left until almost the last in the UK for further service improvements.

Turning to waste and recycling services, the local authority has changed the collection arrangements since the consultative process was completed. Nevertheless, one of the main criticisms still remains valid - the Council refuses to accept plastic waste for recycling. The consultation revealed strong feelings regarding the need for a plastic waste recycling service even if this is a recycling skip alongside the existing skips at the Millennium Hall.

Since the public consultation over this Village Plan the Royal Mail has begun a process of re-assessing mail collection services. At present the Seavingtons have three mail collection boxes and the services have included twice daily weekly and Saturday pick-ups together with Sunday collections from one box. The proposed rationalisation would have seen the Sunday collection disappear but representations from villagers have preserved it for the time being although the daily services have been reduced to a single afternoon service. It is understood that Royal Mail are regularly checking the volumes of post collected in the villages so that it is important to use the post-boxes to ensure their retention.

Proposals		
No	Proposal	Proposed Actionee
H 1	Press BT for early implementation of the technology to improve ADSL Internet access speeds in the Seavingtons	Parish Council
H 2	Press BT for early improvements to exchange capacity to permit all who request it to be given ADSL connections.	Parish Council
H 3	Press South Somerset District Council to arrange a plastic waste recycling scheme for the villages	Parish Council
H 4	Monitor Royal Mail collection schedules and intervene if collection arrangements are threatened with downgrading	PCSG