**19/285 Parish Plan- School Transport**

**Resolved:** noted the below correspondence and instructed the Clerk to publish in parish news in response to the consultation in the parish plan.

Below correspondence, received from Wiltshire Council via Fleur De Rhe Philipe regarding the question put to her by the Parish Council following the Parish Plan Consultation.

Thank you for your email to Terence Herbert dated 14 October 2019 regarding the query from Maiden Bradley Parish Council.

When the government changed the law to state that all 16 to 18-year olds must remain in some form of education or training, it did not introduce any new law about councils’ obligations to fund transport to enable students to attend their course. Instead, it maintained that local councils must simply publish their policy detailing what assistance was available through any channels such as the council, the colleges, employers and local bus companies.

While many councils have not provided post 16 transport schemes for many years, Wiltshire continues to do so. However, the level of assistance available is much reduced owing to austerity and since 1995, a charge has been in place. For many families this is now £781 for the year and so it is usually more viable for the parent to purchase a bus pass direct from the local bus company or college which may have arranged their own bus service. Unfortunately, in some cases, there is no alternative bus for students to use and some parents may find that the council’s scheme is the only one available to them.

For low income families, whose gross household income is less than £20,819 per year, the charge is much less, currently at £231 per year. This fits with Wiltshire’s commitment to assist those who are most vulnerable. Additional funds are also available for low income families, through colleges and school bursary arrangements.

It is not compulsory for young people to remain at sixth form or college and they can also enter an apprenticeship or employment with training attached. As such, it would be difficult for government to legislate that councils should assist with ensuring students can access and attend post-16 education.

While many parents find this situation very difficult to understand and find the cost difficult to meet, regrettably, the council is not obliged to offer any assistance but does what it can in difficult circumstances.

Sorry this response is not good news but hopefully clarifies the situation. Emma Knight Exec Assistant to Terence Herbert, Executive Director including DCS Corporate Leadership Team