

John S. Gorman

I wish to register my dismay and disappointment at the proposed closure of Gilshochill, Maryhill and Kelvindale Stations by the SNP Government Ministers. I would prefer to call the “reasons” that they have given excuses, and derisory which have little or no substance at all to the people and the communities they serve. In fact I think they are nothing short of dismissive and insulting to them.

Travel like most things, has a cycle. It has popular methods at different times caused and supported by many things which have an impact on their popularity and use, paddle steamers, ferries, trucks, trains, buses, cars and planes. Each method is and was popular, effective and affordable at various times and different ages. I was disappointed when Beeching closed stations and ripped up train lines in the sixties eventually making great cycle paths, but also causing congested roads, travel difficulty and unnecessary expense to the Government and private investors to reinstate later. I am now bewildered that the politicians and “bean counters” of the present Government are considering doing the same for such little gain. Are the politicians so short sighted that they can see no further than the length of a single span of their elected tenure and give little or no consideration to the effect that these proposals will have on the future of local Glasgow communities their, “valued electorate”?

I agree that these stations may not be as well utilised as others in the national network and are, as the crow flies, close to each other, but they are highly valued by the very people living nearby who use them, or may need to use them in the future. Bearing in mind that none of them are Manned Stations and two of them were only opened in 2005. My nearest station is Anniesland and is only a five or ten minute walk from my home but I would think twice about using a service where I had to walk for over half an hour to the nearest station in the cold and wet, and especially in the winter when it can be treacherous underfoot.

The effects of the economic situation are still being felt all around the world especially in these very communities we are discussing. People are reluctant to give up their cars and personal transport. At the moment they seem to be a less “affordable” expense as household budgets are adjusted, but it's becoming extremely difficult to justify these decisions. I am speaking as someone who has recently changed an average family car for one which is more economical. My wife and I often use the bus, underground or train to gain access to the city rather than take the car when we have the difficulty and expense of parking.

No doubt the politicians, decision makers and civil servants will justify the statistics and figures in the future which explain that their decision to close the stations had been proved correct and there was no desire for a rail network as the public had chosen to use the local bus service instead. Of course they would choose the bus service as it's the only method left that they would have. They also know, and may have used the bus service for years they know which service to use, when it's likely to come, where to get a return service back home, and what alternatives there are if their preferred service is taking too long. It can be difficult to change the habits of the public and take them out of their comfort zone and change their usual method of transport. It takes time to encourage the use of an alternative service, especially if it

may be less convenient and less frequent than their usual method, but having alternatives I feel, can only make things better.

This brings me back to one of my initial points. The public who are still using their cars will soon begin to consider other modes of transport for some, if not all of their journeys. The removal and closure of some of these stations, to my mind, is so short sighted as to be considered borderline stupidity and criminal. All of these stations are well used and will be used more in the future as conditions change and people become more used to their frequency, availability and familiar with the service they provide, especially with the continuing rise in the price of petrol and costs of running a car. I would find it idiotic that the Government would consider closing some of the stations around London which transport the public to the city. If the number of rail passengers had to switch to other forms of transport, the city would grind to a halt, the roads and bus services could not cope. This has been proved when there is a problem with the rail network or a strike by the rail workers.

I would like to implore the people behind this document to reconsider their proposals and leave the stations functioning as they are, as I believe they will improve. This can benefit the community, the city and enhance the transport system in Glasgow. The proposers only need look at the problems, upheaval and costs that Edinburgh is having at the moment with the Proposed Tram Service. Especially when Edinburgh did have an inner city rail and goods service which probably would have cost less to develop than the proposed tramway. Glasgow and its citizens have long been more forward looking than most British cities, does this proposal mark a change and does it allow the Politicians and mandarins at the Scottish Government to relegate the needs of the residents of these communities of Glasgow to the mercy of a poorly thought out and short sighted monetary policy?

I would like my disgust and resentment to this proposal to be noted, and would also state that I am dismayed that it is SNP Ministers whom I voted for and have supported for many years, that are seriously considering this proposal. I would urge them to think about ways to maintain, increase and enhance the public transport systems in and around Scottish cities and not reduce them.