

# Parish Report – July 2021

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## **Bus Back Better**

Bus Back Better is being launched by central government essentially as a reaction to Covid 19, But on closer inspection it is an initiative that could lead to re-regulation of Bus services.

For this reason, it could be a positive move for Rural Suffolk.

The de-regulated services we have at present, have lead to the decimation of rural services in many communities, as this policy renders it unlawful to cross subsidise routes, I.E if an operator makes profit on a busy route, they cannot use that money to subsidise a loss making route elsewhere, This policy was originally aimed at city's and towns where multiple operators basically had turf wars on routes, this was a problem that never existed in rural areas.

Re-regulation will mean that an operator can cross-subsidise once again, this should allow for greater choice and service to our rural community.

Once again the offer from government asks for a plan from participating authorities, to bid into a central pot, to help fund not only this renewal of services, but also government are offering 4000, zero emission electric buses that can also be bid for.

We have asked the conservative administration how many of these zero emission buses will we secure for Suffolk, I am disappointed they would not commit to any number, as the small print in the government offer asks for up to 30% of the cost of each Bus bid for. With this being the case, it is highly likely that the most of these Buses will end up in a large Town or City. On a population split, Suffolk ought to able to secure 40 of these Buses, if they were focussed in say Ipswich or Lowestoft, we could radically reduce emissions as well as encourage much needed "Modal Shift" in transport.