Irish Rural Link

27th February 2017

**Irish Rural Link Concerned over Impact Bus Eireann Strike will have on Rural Routes**

Irish Rural Link (IRL) – the national network representing the interest of rural communities have raised their concern over the announcement of strike action by Bus Eireann from next Monday, 6th February. We are also concerned about that these strikes will feed into Irish Rail services.

Public transport in rural Ireland continues to be a major issue for people living in rural areas and is top of every person’s list of grievances when it comes to rural areas. The lack of public transport impacts both socially and economically on people’s lives.

Thousands of people living in rural areas, which IRL represent, will be adversely affected by these strikes. People rely on these services for employment; attend hospital appointments and other appointments and for leisure.

Irish Rural Link is calling for Bus Eireann management and Unions to reengage in talks to divert any strike action taking place. Alternative transport must be provided next week if strikes go ahead and people made aware of this in advance.

We welcome there will be a needs assessment carried out by NTA on three routes that will be cut over the next few weeks; Dublin – Clonmel, Athlone to Westport and Dublin to Derry. This must include a social impact assessment also and not just a value for money. Alternative transport must be put in place in advance of these routes closing.

Ends

**For further information, please contact (anytime):**

Seamus Boland (Chief Executive) 0862491153 or Louise Lennon (Policy and Communications Officer) 0861069244

**About Irish Rural Link:**

Irish Rural Link represents the interests of locally based rural groups in disadvantaged and marginalised rural areas by highlighting problems, advocating appropriate policies, sharing experiences and examples of good practice. It has a membership of nearly 500 rural community groups dedicated to sustainable rural development and represents rural communities at a national and international level