

# **WEST DORSET WESTERN AREA TRANSPORT ACTION GROUP (WATAG)**

## **Minutes of General Meeting No.93 held in the W.I. Hall, Bridport on 22nd September 2016**

**Present (25):** Anna Best (Powerstock); ; Lynton Burse (Bridport); Ron Coatsworth (DCC); John Collingwood (Bridport); Maureen Dormer (Mosterton); Bob Driscoll (Symondsburry Parish Council); Alan Glenn (Askerswell); Jill Glenn (Askerswell); John Green (CPRE); Louise Greenham (Powerstock school); Freda Hennessy (Corscombe PC); Anna Lovell (50+ Forum); David Marsh (Thorncombe PC); Mary Marsh (Thorncombe, Tatworth and Marshwood bus users); Erica Pretty (POPP); Pamela Reed (Mosterton); Anne Sankey (Lyme Regis); Philip Sankey (Lyme Forward); Peter Smith (Chair WATAG); Tony Taylor (Puncknowle&Swyre Group PC); Daryl Turner (DCC); Richard Webster (Bridport); Lottie Welch (View from..); Alan Williams (WATAG); June Williams (Salwayash/Broadwindsor DCT bus users)

**Apologies:** Graham Bailey, Peter Body, Tim Christian, Sally Falkingham, Dominic Knorpel, Simon Newport, Peter Ridler, Stephen Seaman (SW Coaches), Valerie Smith.

### **1. Minutes:**

The minutes of the previous (92nd) meeting were agreed and signed.

**2. Matters arising not covered later:** none.

### **3. Rural Bus Service Review Consultation Response (Weekly Village Services).**

Several voices expressed scepticism about the validity of the process used and maintained that the decisions had been taken before the consultation had been completed.

### **4. 2017 Public and Schools Transport Review Consultation result.**

The DCC's report confirms that "the public transport network will be announced in Spring 2017 and the outcome of the review will be implemented in Summer 2017."

### **5. Information from Dorset Travel.**

No officers attended the meeting, but Community Engagement Officer, Amanda Evans submitted a report which was read to those present and is included at the end of these minutes. Bob Driscoll felt that the report was "rather bland" and incomplete; there was no mention of RTI (real-time information systems) for example. Peter Smith said that he understands that these systems will be discontinued. Bob also pointed out that the "Community Transport" section made no mention of the Fridays-only Maiden Newton/Bridport service being run by DCT. June Williams said that the report gave "old news" as, far from "trailing", the PlusBus initiatives have been running since April.

Anne Sankey asked what plans are in place for the Bridge St./Broad St. closures in Lyme Regis. Daryl Turner assured her that the situation was being closely watched with reports on-line on his Twitter account, as well as on the First and Damory websites. He added that it is the principal contractor's responsibility to liaise with traders – not the DCC's. The Lyme works are being carried out in six different places. The lime render used requires temperatures to remain above 8° and so must be applied in summer or autumn.

Residents of Mosterton reported that the road closures continued for almost 6 weeks. Beaminster cars could not provide a viable replacement, children were stuck in the village during holidays time and Damory's notices were "misleading".

### **6. Councillors' Slot.**

The Chair welcomed the presence of two DCC councillors.

Daryl Turner announced that a scrutiny working group had been set up to examine bus subsidies, under the leadership of Councillor Hilary Cox. Peter Smith advised that he had been informed by Dorset Travel's Service Manager, Andy Shaw, that bus subsidies in Dorset come to £11.28 per household in 2016, and that his current understanding is that for next year the budget will be reduced by £5.55 per household. Several of those present expressed the view that £12 is a very small amount from council tax revenues of around £2,000 per household per year. WATAG understands from the Sherborne Transport Action Group that there will be no further opportunity for comment or consultation before the changes are made in 2017. Daryl has suggested to the DCC that WATAG is given the opportunity to contribute to the scrutiny proceedings.

## 7. Bus Operators News

- i. First Bus - Winter service. First's winter timetables start on 9<sup>th</sup> October, giving a welcome extra two weeks to the summer schedules. It was reported that the company may introduce next year's summer timetable at Easter. WATAG has published winter timetables which are available at the Bridport Tourist Information Centre.  
The X51 will no longer run on Sundays in the winter and the X53 will run between Axminster and Weymouth every two hours. Connections at Lyme Regis between the X53 and 9A to/ from Exeter on Sundays are far from ideal. The X51 will run hourly to Dorchester apart from an awkward 2-hour gap between 15.22 and 17.22 on Saturdays. The X54 will be "virtually unusable" for Bridport passengers.
- ii. Damory - Update on service provision. No news and timetables remain unchanged.
- iii. South West Coaches – Future of truncated service 73. Bob stressed the need for dialogue with SW coaches to rationalize the 73 service. The vehicles start empty in Portland and only start to pick up passengers at Powerstock. Louise Greenham, head of Powerstock school, said that the 73 provides a lifeline to the school and transports 20/30 children (almost half of all pupils) from Bridport. Numbers are dropping due to the excessive wait at the end of the school day (bus usually departs at around 16.10 rather than at 15.35). Parents are having to make their own arrangements. Anna Best reported that children are falling asleep in the bus on the return journey. The school has to look after the children while they wait and accompany them on the bus. Ron Coatsworth reminded the meeting that the 73 was a "hangover" from the rail service and was only planned as a seven-year replacement following closure of the Maiden Newton / Bridport line in 1975, however he agreed to discuss the wait at the end of the day with the school. Anna Best astonished the meeting with news that taxi fares for her children into school from their home near Wytherston come to £60 per day!! Mary Marsh added that secondary school students from Thorncombe were only offered transport to Woodroffe School; no transport was available for pupils attending Beaminster or Chard. The DCC has a duty of care towards children. June Williams said that the situation in the Salwayash area is "chaotic": two children from the same address have to go to school on separate buses and a young boy has to make a mile journey from his home to catch a bus at Waytown.
- iv. Dorset Community Transport. Residents in Thorncombe are happy with the service. 11/12 passengers travel on the ex-42 and half a dozen on DCT's other route (ex-76). Thorncombe parish council is applying for matched funding through the DCC's Rural Transport Grant scheme for the three community services operating in the Marshwood/Thorncombe area, i.e the Wednesday Plusbus to Bridport and the two Thursday services (14 and 688).
- v. Stagecoach South West. No problems reported on the 9A/X9 service between Lyme Regis and Exeter.

## 8. Bridport Bus Station.

Repairs are in progress (WDDC) and the National Express flag has been replaced thanks to intervention by Katy Graham of Bridport Town Council

## 9. Bus stops in Bridport.

The situation is "being chased".

## 10. Railway news.

There will be no morning service on Sundays on the Heart of Wessex line from October to December. The first stage of the disabled access project at Dorchester West station has been "enabled" and progress is expected in January 2017.

## 11. Suggested link with Campaign for Better Transport.

Despite their strong support earlier in the year, Bus Users (UK) may no longer meet WATAG's needs. The Campaign for Better Transport may provide service.

**12. Democratic Moment & AOB.**

Bob told the meeting that the Chideock Bopper bus was being withdrawn, the main reason being a lack of volunteers - a key issue at a time when communities are being asked to provide their own solutions.

Peter Smith reminded the audience that the Bus Bill reaches the report stage on 10 October. One of the changes will allow bus companies to liaise with each other.

Bob stressed that the DCC has subsidised SW Trains to the tune of £60k on the Weymouth/Yeovil/Waterloo link and proposed that the council “should not support rail, subsidised by central government, while they are cutting buses.”

The meeting was told that it was International Car-Free Day on 22<sup>nd</sup> September, the day of the meeting, and was encouraged to put public transport in the wider context of global climate change. The event is celebrated in several major cities throughout the world (but not Bridport).

**13. Items for Chairman’s Committee or next Public Meeting.**

Nothing specific was suggested, as items will be dictated by fast-moving events.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

The next meeting is to be held in the WI Hall North St Bridport at 6.30pm  
on Thursday 24th November 2016.

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## Dorset County Council Officer Report WATAG – 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2016

### Public and School Transport Review

The Public and School Transport Review consultation ran for 8 weeks between Friday 27th May and Friday 22nd July. There were 2,664 responses and the response reports and detailed comments from the consultation are attached to this report<sup>1</sup>. Future service change decisions and any implementation information will be published on the following webpage: <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/travel-dorset/bus-services-review>. The results from the consultation are also available on this webpage.

To make the required savings, Dorset County Council proposes to focus on maintaining core bus routes that serve the most people (interurban services) whilst opening up school buses and supporting community transport in rural areas that may lose their bus. 55% of individuals either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' to this proposal plus an additional 18% who 'neither agreed or disagreed' or 'didn't know'.

The results of this consultation will help the Council decide how to proceed and help to form the future shape of Dorset's transport network. Technical work and discussions with transport operators will now be undertaken over the next few months.

The public transport network will be announced in Spring 2017 and the outcome of the review will be implemented in Summer 2017.

### Public Transport

South West Coaches service 73 is now running from Powerstock to Bridport only. The revised timetable was introduced on 2 September.

Roadworks: These can be seen on <https://mapping.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/TravelDorset/Drive/Roadworks>

Notable in the next few weeks - Abbotsbury Hill will be closed from 10 -18 October from 0900 to 1600 each day. Lyme Regis Bridge Street/Broad Street will be closed completely from 26 – 30 September, followed by two weeks of traffic control. The A35 will be closed overnight between Bridport and Dorchester on 20 September between 2000 and 0600 the following morning. The B3159 is closed between Martinstown and Winterbourne Abbas until 10 October. Bus companies are aware of these closures and have plans in place.

First Bus strike: There is no current strike action and DCC continues to discuss this with the company regularly.

### Community Transport

There are 2 PlusBus services to and from Bridport on Wednesdays currently being trialled by Dorset Community Transport.

One service starts from the Thorncombe area at approximately 9am and travels to Bridport via villages including Drimpton, Broadwindsor, Bowood, Salwayash and Dottery. The return journey leaves Bridport at 12pm.

The second service starts from the Catherston Leweston area at approximately 10.30am and travels to Bridport via villages including Wootton Fitzpaine, Whitchurch Canonicorum, Ryall and Symondsburly. The return journey leaves Bridport at 1.30pm.

Contact details: 01258 287980 (9.30am-2.30pm Mon-Fri).

### Dorset County Council Community Transport Grant

The Community Transport Grant has recently been made available to support the establishment of new community transport services or to expand existing schemes – meet the need of local communities.

If a group is looking for a grant of up to £2,000, the Community Transport Grant may be able to help. Applications will need 50% matched funding of the total cost of the project.

You may only apply if your project is non-profit making and that you also meet one or more of the following criteria:

- You are a community group looking to establish a new Community Transport scheme or a new community initiative which improves for local people
- Voluntary organisations with a constitution or governing document
- Parish councils or Parish meetings.

The Community Transport Grant will fund costs associated with starting up a community transport scheme including IT software that supports effective operation, marketing and training of staff and volunteers. Please note that the scheme will not pay for expenditure incurred before approval of the grant.

Successful applicants would have to agree to terms and conditions, such as providing reports on expenditure and outcomes. Full details are included in the application form which can be requested from Amanda Evans (e-mail: [a.j.evans@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:a.j.evans@dorsetcc.gov.uk)).

An application form has been sent to Councillor Ros Kayes and Katy Graham (Bridport Town Council) to possibly make an application for the Bridport Community Bus.

### **Bus Shelters and Infrastructure**

- The work to provide disabled access to The George bus shelter at West Bay has been completed and there is now a ramp up to the shelter and dropped kerb on the footpath.
- Bridport Coach Station shelter – damage was reported to the bus shelter however, on inspection, this is not the DCC shelter which is the black shelter you can see on Streetview if you click on this link: <https://www.google.co.uk/maps/@50.7335737,-2.7623358,3a,37.5y,274.09h,92.21t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sPqGtbWAM8Q1GHFIDoP0cTw!2e0!7i13312!8i6656!6m1!1e1>. The shelter behind this is not owned by DCC so Lacey Goodwin was looking into who it belongs to.

To help keep timetable cases up-to-date, a key for timetable cases has been sent to Peter Smith. The idea is that Peter, Bob Driscoll and fellow WATAG members can be ‘Friends of the Bus Stop’ for the WATAG area and look out for any bus stops that have any out-of-date timetables. If they simply need to be removed and not replaced, the key in Peter’s possession can be used to take them out. If there are any timetables that need to be replaced/updated, please inform Peter or Bob who will either contact the transport operator direct or Dorset Travel so that arrangements can be made for replacements.

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<sup>i</sup> Links to response reports and comments can be accessed via: <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/travel-dorset/bus-services-review>