

WEST DORSET WESTERN AREA TRANSPORT ACTION GROUP (WATAG)

Minutes of General Meeting No 71 held in the W.I. Hall Bridport on Thursday 28 March 2013 at 6.30 pm.

Present: Ron Coatsworth (Dorset CC member); John Collingwood (Bridport); Richard Edwards (Bridport); David Ellery (Bradpole); Alan Glenn (Akerswell); John G Green (CPRE); Ros Kayes (Bridport Town council); Dominic Knorpel (POPP); Anna Lovell; Simon Newport (Damory); Geoff Parr (West Bexington); Philip Sankey (Lyme Forward); David Smith (Bridport 50+); Peter Smith (Bradpole); Peter Smith (Chairman). John Snow (Yarm Barton, Beaminster); R Webster (Bridport); Alan Williams (WATAG). Mark Williams (First);

Apologies: Valerie Baldwin, Monica Burt, Bob Driscoll, Mike Farmer, Sue Herman, Joy Michaud, Jean Minns, Yvonne Norman; Andy Roberts, Anne Sankey & Tessa Greenaway.

1 The Minutes of the previous meeting (no 70) held on 24 January 2013 were accepted. The shorter format met with general approval.

2 Dorset County Council are unable to send an officer representative at present.

3 WATAG Website: The domain name had been registered. Richard Edwards volunteered to help set it up and he will liaise with Joy Michaud. Meanwhile, the WATAG page on Dorsetforyou website is now correct.

4 X 53 (Mark Williams) New 'commercial' service started on 24 March. Timetable 'glitches' on roadside publicity now fixed and leaflets should be out after 2 April. X 54 is withdrawn and evening journeys curtailed. Buses will be refreshed with a revised livery (31 and X53 will be in a similar style but distinct)

5 31 & 47. The adjusted 47 timetable seemed to have worked (more reliable). Peter Smith noted it came into Bridport just before Colfox children came out of school - Yeovil College times are fixed so little leeway to change times. The 31 has now re-instated the 19.55 from Weymouth

A 35 Road works For the recent evening closures, buses were not allowed through. For the long closures in May buses will generally be allowed through (this is important for all school journeys as it is exam season). There will be three to four hour total closures at Mile Cross on the Monday and at Hunters Lodge on the Tuesday (affecting 31 to Axminster). The programme is weather dependent.

6. Dorset Passenger Transport had sent a written report (attached). Key issues : consultation on future support for bus services (1453 responses so far but only just over 100 on Community Transport); Damory will retime 47 weekday journeys they operate to match revised 'First' times; money 'saved by X53 going commercial' will be used elsewhere (but about half a million pounds has to be saved); there is a possibility they may seek tenders for winter X53; Concessionary Fares - now not pre-9.30 Monday to Friday except on specified journeys (list updated 25 March); passes administered by Euclid; timetable booklet should be reissued for summer and Jurassic Coast mini-guide; Smart cards to be piloted for young people at Beaminster School.

7. Other public transport - Damory 253 (Simon Newport) 1345 from Weymouth will change to run 15 minutes earlier (starting date 8 April ? but still to be confirmed). Service 40 to Bridport Hospital - route could be reversed (to Hospital via Court Orchard and return direct via North Allington. This section is contracted by DCC. WATAG to write to DCC to confirm that they support this change. Also 8.38 ex Monmouth Gardens which becomes 253 to Weymouth - request that it is advertised as going through. The cancellation of the 1400 ex Bridport recently due to roadworks was regrettable, but drivers are legally required to take a break and late running meant this could not happen as scheduled. Damory vehicles not yet equipped with chips for Real Time Information (County would pay) but relevant to getting RTI in Beaminster. Alan Williams will follow this up

8 Real time information Alan Williams reported that 'Frosts' was now working but Nationwide was not complete. 47 only showed Monday to Friday. The sign did not alternate second and third when three buses were due. Possibility of further signs at East Street stops. Audio description on the buses are still missing some stops with others in the wrong place. Devon should be able to update their part of 31 and X53 on master database. Mark Williams said it was not technically difficult.

9 Philip Sankey had attended (i) Axe Valley & West Dorset Ring and Ride Service Management Committee. A group of East Devon parishes had earmarked funding towards a new vehicle. Contrary to press reports, this was not enough on its own to get a new vehicle; (ii) TravelWatch SouthWest biannual meeting in Taunton : major focus was on First Great Western and the re-franchising or not of that area, concerns over BSOG and local

Secretary:

Sue Herman

Chair and Treasurer:

Peter Smith

Watton House Farm,

Watton, Bridport. DT6 5JZ

tel: 01308 424646

email: peter@smithwat204.fsnet.co.uk

<tel:01297 489658>

[email: watag@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:watag@hotmail.co.uk)

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authority funding cuts were an issue for bus operators and their passengers; (iii) Go South Coast stakeholders conference in Southampton (Damory is part of this) - speakers included Norman Baker, the Transport Minister (has ambition to standardise ages for children's fares); Miles Butler (wearing his hat as President of ADEPT as well as Director of Environment at DCC) - he stressed the pressure on local authority budgets on which social care was the largest slice- to make the 'cuts' required other services would be severely curtailed; Frank Thorpe spoke of work to a flywheel to store kinetic energy electrically on the buses.

Bob Driscoll had attended a Passenger Focus meeting in Bristol on 'surveys'. This was rail-dominated and Bob would report at a future meeting.

10 Democratic moment

- (i) Ros Kayes asked whether WDDC should be formally represented. Chairman would follow up in May. She was waiting the outcome of DCC Consultation before developing 'community' ideas. Community support might be needed to retain/replace existing provision rather than adding new things. The data from the "Hospital Campaign" survey could prove useful.
- (ii) Ron Coatsworth (DCC) stressed the financial pressures on the County Council. Access to workplaces should be a priority. Actual usage not 'fine words' (petitions etc) had to drive spending priorities.
- (iii) Dominic Knorpel (POPP) had been asked to mention on behalf of B&VLAP the issue of speeding buses in Whitcombe Road. Simon Newport noted this.
- (iv) John Snow said he had raised the issue of the costs of not running buses (traffic congestion, social isolation etc) at DCC consultation.
- (v) Ron Coatsworth suggested that organizations could arrange transport to events. POPP is providing 'signposting' and could possibly identify where drivers/vehicles may be available. There will be a directory of community schemes.
- (vi) It was commented that good public transport infrastructure is the mark of a civilized society.

The next meeting is on May 23rd.

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Report from Dorset Passenger Transport for WATAG meeting 28th March 2013

Please accept my apologies for not attending the next few meetings. I would hope that this is a temporary measure and that I will resume attendance in the autumn.

- **Consultation:** We are half way through the countywide consultation about public bus services and community transport services. Consultation forms can be filled in online at www.dorsetforyou.com/busconsultation or hard copies are available from Tourist Information Centres and libraries. They can also be printed from the above web address. If anyone has difficulties getting copies, please contact DPT on 01305 221700. For ease of analysing the results we would prefer that the online version is used where possible but we recognise that some people prefer to use hard copies or do not have access to a computer.

By the end of last week (22/03/2013), we had received 1453 responses: 793 paper forms received of which around 50 were community transport forms and 660 online responses received of which around 59 were community transport forms.

The consultation ends on 15th April 2013 and we would encourage anybody who has not yet done so to submit their views by this deadline.

DCC hosted two community consultation events - one in Ferndown and one in Dorchester. Invitations were sent to TAGs, Parish Councils and other stakeholder groups. Attendance at Dorchester was very good although fewer people were at Ferndown. It is expected that any changes to the current subsidised network will be introduced in September.

Secretary:
Sue Herman

[tel:01297 489658](tel:01297489658)
[email: watag@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:watag@hotmail.co.uk)

Chair and Treasurer:
Peter Smith
Watton House Farm,
Watton, Bridport. DT6 5JZ
tel: 01308 424646
email: peter@smithwat204.fsnet.co.uk

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It has been noted that Bridport Town Council had some criticisms of the questionnaire – we would like to point out that although anybody is invited to fill in the forms, the consultation is primarily aimed towards existing bus users to minimise the impact of any potential changes that would affect the people who are most dependent on public transport.

- **Bus Services:** First Bus has introduced minor timing changes to the timetable and to reflect this, Damory Coaches will be running their school holiday journeys at the same times as the term time journeys run by First Bus.

Service X53 is now running without subsidy from Dorset County Council. The summer service started on Sunday 24th March. It is probable that Dorset County Council will tender for a winter Sunday service but at this stage there is no guarantee that there will be funding. The savings to the County Council will be used to offset other remaining services that are essential to the community. Almost half a million pounds has to be saved from the Public Transport support budget between September 2013 and March 2014.

- **Concessionary Bus Passes:** The responsibility for the administration of the concessionary fare scheme in Dorset passes from the Borough/District Councils to Dorset County Council from 1st April. From that date, applications for passes should be sent to Euclid – the company who will be supplying passes on behalf of DCC. Full details are available at www.dorsetforyou.com/buses/bus-pass

The scheme will still offer free local bus travel in Dorset from 9.30am to 11pm on Monday to Friday and at any time during weekends and public holidays. Pass holders are also entitled to free local bus travel in all other areas of England during these off-peak times. This is the statutory government scheme.

Some rural areas of Dorset have less frequent public transport services. With this in mind we are continuing to offer Dorset residents pre 9.30am travel as an exception to the scheme where there is no other service or the next available service is 10.30am or later. The list of eligible services is included and it is also available on the Dorset For You website at the above address

- **Publicity/Timetables:** We are aiming to update the Southern Area Traveltimes guide for the summer. In addition, the Jurassic Coast team will be producing a mini guide which will contain bus route and frequency information.
- **Smart Cards for School Travel:** A pilot scheme will be introduced, based at Beaminster School. Students entitled to school transport will be issued with Smartcards that include photo ID. Eventually, the scheme should allow for parents to load extra money on to the cards so that students can use them for travel at other times.

Report prepared by Debbie Fiddik, Dorset Passenger Transport
28TH March 2013

Secretary:
Sue Herman

[tel:01297 489658](tel:01297489658)
[email: watac@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:watac@hotmail.co.uk)

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