

WEST DORSET WESTERN AREA TRANSPORT ACTION GROUP (WATAG)

Minutes of general meeting No.74 held in the W.I. Hall in Bridport on Thursday Sept. 26th 2013 at 6.30pm

Present: Darren Batten (Burton Bradstock PC); Monica Burt (\over 50s Forum); Barry Clarke (Puncknowle); John Collingwood (Bridport); Brian Cox (Bridport); Paul Oatway (Charmouth PC); Chris Denne (View from Bridport); Bob Driscoll (Bridport); Pamela Edwards (Puncknowle); Debbie Fiddik (DCC); Freda Hennessey (Corscombe/Halstock PC); Sue Herman (Sec. Watag); Anna Lovell: Ros Kayes (DCC); Dominic Knorpel (Dorset POPP); Martin Manning (Corscombe/Halstock District PC); Simon Newport (Damory); Mike Nicks (West Bay); Jo O'Farrell (Pathways to care & The Living Tree); Geoff Parr (West Bexington); Penny Pither (Puncknowle); Erica Pretty (Dorset POPP); Janet Proctor (Burton Bradstock); Sally Samuel (Beaminster Town Council); Philip Sankey (Lyme Forward); Peter Smith (chair Watag); Terry Spracklen (DCC); Alistair Strong (Damory); Daryl Turner (DCC); Richard Webster (Bridport); Alan Williams (Watag);

Apologies: K Brake; John Green; Neil Hurlock (TRIP); Peter Ridler; John Snow; Mark Williams

1. **The Minutes** of the previous meeting held on July 25th 2013 were accepted and signed.

2. Matters Arising: a) a new timetable for the 31 bus had been lodged and was due to start on Nov. 4th
b) the X53 Sunday service had now finished until next spring.
c) Route 40 has now changed. There was a discussion as to the exact points it needs to stop for Court Orchard and Simon Newport said he would be happy to listen to feedback. It was felt that the town service needed to be reviewed as Simon Newport pointed out road closures/events such as the hat festival etc. made timings very difficult. It was suggested that Damory should have discussions with Ros Kayes.
d) There was a further discussion on the possibility of bus-pass owners paying in order to keep buses running.

3. Abbotsbury Closures: Alan Marler had not come as the full plans and a map had been published the day before in the View from Bridport. It had been felt better if he came to the November meeting when all plans would be finalised.

4. Real Time information displays: Alan reported that the displays were better than they had been but still misled people.

5. review of Submissions to DCC Subsidised Transport Consultation:

- a) Bob said we all realised that the county council had to make savings but asked why small payments couldn't be made to keep services running. A small income might enable some routes to be viable. He hopes that the CC would look at this before cutting services. He also asked where the money was which was saved when the 31 and the X53 went commercial. Terry Spracklen replied that it had gone to reducing the overall amount which needed to be saved.
- b) Daryl Turner said that in the Parliamentary Rural Communities report there was a paragraph concerning representations re concessionary passes and it was noted how badly the S.W. had been hit by public transport cuts.
- c) Alan Williams said that he had met with Oliver Letwin and suggested that a flat rate concessionary fare of £1.50 for pensioners should be considered. He was awaiting a reply.
- d) Simon Newport said that a group of people who used a bus – or a sponsor – could pay a subscription say of £10 a year each to keep a bus running.
- e) Alan had asked for a quote from two local bus operators for a 3-hourly winter Sunday service for the X53 between Bridport and Weymouth, but there had been no response. He had talked to Stagecoach,

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via Devon CC to see whether it would come over the border to Lyme. It would be happy to – but would want it as an all-the-year round service.

So at present the only way from Weymouth to Exeter on a Sunday is to take the 31 to Axminster station and then the train. This will be put on the real-time information within 4 weeks.

There was then an open discussion on the possibilities.

6. Dorset Passenger transport: Terry Spracklen reported that the consultation had ended. There were approximately 1250 on line replies and 300 letters. All were being put into a cabinet report for 6th November. The bus companies had been asked to have another look at their figures and suggestions and there had been a number of meetings with them.

There was then a discussion about community transport.

7. Bus and Rail Matters: No-one from First or the rail companies were present. Damory was asked about the difficulty of contacting them by phone and Simon suggested that anyone who could should use his e-mail.

8. Democratic moment: a) Erica Pretty had leaflets about the non-emergency passenger transport service. It is now booked through a call-centre and not your doctor. Jo O'Farrell commented that the guidelines, although they were not supposed to change, appear to no longer cover people going to Poole regularly for radio-therapy. She will take it up with the radiotherapy department.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.10pm. The next meeting is on November 28th 2013

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