

# WEST DORSET WESTERN AREA TRANSPORT ACTION GROUP (WATAG)

Minutes of general meeting No. 76 held in the W.I. Hall, Bridport on January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2014

**Present:** John Burbidge (Bridport); Monica Burt (Bridport over50's Forum); J. Collingwood (Customer carless); Anthony Cogan (Bridport); Bob Driscoll (WATAG); Brian Cox (Bridport); Mike Farmer (Pedestrians First); M. Ferren (Bridport); Deborah Fiddik (DCC); John Green (Walditch); Freda Hennessey (Corscombe); Sue Herman (WATAG sec); J. Jones; T.G Jones; Adam Keen (Damory); Dominic Knorpel (POPP); Mary Marsh; Ben Marlborough; Mike Nicks (West Bay); Paul Oatway (Charmouth PC); Geoff Parr (West Bexington); Peter Smith (WATAG chair); Janet Proctor (Burton Bradstock); Sally Samuel John Snow Beaminster Yarn Barton); Richard Webster (Bridport); Alan Williams (WATAG); Mark Williams (First); Sally Welford (Thorncombe) Ignacio Gomez (Save 47)

There were 37 people signed in, but some of the names were illegible.

**Apologies:** Ron Coatsworth; Tessa Greenway; Ros Kayes; Erica Pretty; Philip Sankey; Daryl Turner

- 1. The Minutes:** the minutes of November 28<sup>th</sup> 2013 were approved and signed.
- 2. Matters Arising:** None
- 3. Real Time Information Displays:** Alan reported that there were still issues with this as in many cases it was checking the position of the buses by the timetable and not by where they actually were. Also, in the case of the 47 both the current and new timetables were being used which gave rise to "phantom" buses and duplicate buses. Also the driver has to sign on at the start of the registration and when there is a change of driver sometimes the signing on is at the wrong place. When updates are made there seems to be problem with other information going adrift so should be checked There is also a problem with audio in that information given on X53 & 31 has not been updated. Including routes on planned diversion  
Re the audio there are still confusing and inaccurate stops being given out.  
Bob remarked that wrong information is worse than no information.

#### **4. Update on DCC Subsidised Transport, including route 47.**

a) Debbie said that the review of the subsidised network had gone on for longer than expected so the printing of new timetables had been delayed.

b) Route 47. DCC had subsidised the Sunday service which was run by Damory and the college holiday service till 5<sup>th</sup> April – ie early bus to Yeovil and late coming back and then Somerset and Dorset CC will subsidise college bus until the end of term, June 27<sup>th</sup>. There is no decision as to what will happen after that as it depends on whether money can be found. Other options will also be looked at. It was also pointed out that there was no publicity for the Sunday service Though this service is ending on 5<sup>th</sup> April anyway.

There was then a long discussion on finances and possible ways of saving the money and the issue of bus-card holders paying towards their journey was also raised again..

It was pointed out that the County Council has a duty to provide an integrated public transport system in rural areas.

There was a large group of 47 bus-users present who expressed strong feelings about the need to keep the link running for students and workers who had to commute. It was also said that the bus was an essential link for residents on the route to get to Doctor's appointments and to remain able to go out.

Freda Hennessey questioned the way routes are decided upon and it was stated that public transport in this country is abysmal and expensive.

Bob commented that no rail commuter route would be withdrawn in similar circumstances.

Peter urged those who needed the route and felt so strongly to go to their parish council meetings contact their councillors and make sure that councillors heard from communities all along the route.

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**5. Other Transport News:** Debbie reported that as the consultation had shown that passengers wanted to retain the Saturday 210 then another day would have to be cut, probably either a Tuesday or Thursday which were the least used days. Several people from the floor suggested they would rather keep the Thursday bus.

Options were still being looked at for the 14.

76 & 42 would both continue to run on Wednesday but the 42 would not now run on Saturday.

The 71 and 73 would not now run on Saturdays.

There was then a discussion about subsidised transport and it was suggested that Councillor Flower, should be invited to the next meeting as he had been reported as having said that removal of subsidised busses would empower the community.

**6. Bus and Rail matters:** a) Mark said that, as they operate the 47 from Bridport (depot) it might be possible to run the "college" bus in the holidays when Damory was not running it. It wouldn't be a long-term solution but might provide a breathing space.

b) Mark is still working on the RTI system with DCC to see if they can make it accurate!

c) First are working on the summer timetables for the 31 and X53 and hope to announce winter changes at the same time.

Paul Oatley from Charmouth PC said the removal of the Sunday X53 service from September is a detrimental effect on tourism as people no-longer could use it to walk the Jurassic coast then bus back Mark assured him that it would be back for the summer 2014.

Adam Keen from Damory introduced himself and said he had only been in post for a week so was still finding out about the issues.

Alan said that the agreed stop in North Allington for Court Orchard in the south direction was still not in place.

Alan also noted that some new drivers are unfamiliar with the routes especially on hail & ride routes Users prefer regular drivers

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.20

The next meeting will be on March 27<sup>th</sup> at 6.30 in the W.I. Hall, Bridport.

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