

WEST DORSET WESTERN AREA TRANSPORT ACTION GROUP (WATAG)

Minutes of General Meeting No. 78 held in the W.I.Hall, Bridport, on May 29th 2014

Present: D. Broadley; Wendy Broadley; Monica Burt (Bridport over 50s Forum); Ron Coatsworth(DCC);John Collingwood (Bridport passenger); Bob Crutchfield (Damory); Alan Williams ;Bob Driscoll (Bridport);Richard Edwards (Bridport); Deborah Fiddik (DCC Passenger transport); Alan Glenn (Askerswell); Liz Haines (Bridport Passenger); Freda Hennessy (Corscombe); Sue Herman (secretary); Matthew Holboro (W. Bexington); Dominic Knorpel (POPP); Anna Lovell (WATAG); D.Marsh (Thorncombe); Mary Marsh (Thorncombe); Geoff Parr, West Bexington Andy Pennington (47 bus); Erica Pretty (POPP); Peter Ridler (Dottery); Sally Samuel (Beamminster TC); Philip Sankey (Lyme/WATAG); Peter Smith (chair); Richard Webster (Bridport); Mark Williams (First Bus);

Apologies: Neil Hurlock; Ros Keyes; John Snow; Sally Wexford.

1.Minutes: The minutes of the 77nd GM were signed as correct.

2.Matters Arising: there were none which were not already on the agenda.

3.Bus Operators' News: Bob Crutchfield reported for Damory that as from June 28th they were going to run the no.40 through to Crewkerne on a commercial basis. There were ongoing discussions about running it on to Yeovil.

Anna pointed out that some of the job centre services were being transferred from Bridport to Yeovil, and those people affected would need to get there!

For First, Mark reported that the summer timetables were now out and they were still thinking about the winter timetables. In Weymouth they were trialling running late buses through to Portland and, if it was a success, might look at the possibility of bringing a late bus from Dorchester to Bridport.

Bob Driscoll said that in spite of the new timetable the 31 was still often arriving at Axminster too late for the train. Mark said that the service was being monitored to see where the glitches were.

It was felt that there was not enough publicity for the new services and it was suggested that a separate timetable for the X53 would be helpful.

There had also been problems with the connection with the no.10 in Dorchester.

The loss of most 31 buses to the Winterbournes was brought up, but it was pointed out that originally the service had been started as a direct link between Dorchester and Axminster stations.

Ros Keyes sent the following report:

1) 47. there is progress towards an agreement being made between DCC, SCC and Yeovil College around the term time bus. I feel positive about this.

There is much less support at DCC for subsidising a workers bus. I think that's appalling and will be putting pressure on to challenge it. I gather that Oliver Letwin is of the same opinion now. Hopefully with both of us working together on this we can win through ! If not, I am looking at community transport options.

2) the 31. I am also of the understanding that First have put a workable offer on the table for 2 daytime buses in the village |7-35 to Dorchester arriving back at 17-39) DCC have been asked to subsidise this. I understand that as with the 47' the leader of DCC has vetoed this.

3) Children's fares on journeys to school:

Again, a very productive meeting with Mark and a discovery that Hardyes do a lower priced ticket which can be applied for through them. I am hoping to organise a meeting with parents and the Headteacher at Woodroffe to see whether they might be prepared to work out a similar scheme with First.

4.DCC Report: Debbie gave the following report:

Service review: Has been in place since 6th April.

Service 71 –Lyme Regis Town Service) some desire expressed for a Saturday service to be reinstated – unfortunately, the passenger numbers on a Saturday did not meet the criteria of an average of 20 passengers per journey.

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Service 14 – some letters/phone calls - some complaints but mainly queries/comments or suggestions with ideas for increasing days that the service could run. However, so far, we have been unable to come up with a solution that does not involve increasing the contract cost.

We have not been advised of any overcrowding on routes where journey frequency has been reduced. 210/44 decision to not run on Tuesday was decided on the passenger numbers – it was close but slightly less patronage on joint 210/44 on a Tuesday. To change will cost bus company £60 for a re-registration – Before any change can be made we would want to consult with current passengers as we have been asked by some passengers to keep Thursday while others would prefer to have a Tuesday journey at the expense of Thursdays. This service would have kept both Tuesday and Thursday days but there was a strong desire to retain Saturdays. The numbers just merited keeping a Saturday service but this could only be done by losing a weekday.

Currently we receive figures for passenger journeys per day on each route that we subsidise - we will be getting a software package that will enable us to closely monitor the services and see which journeys are most used and where the passengers are boarding.

Bus services:

Service 47 will end after service on 28th June. DCC still seeking a solution for a replacement for the College day peak journeys –at the present time, we are not seeking an all year round solution. A report will go to Cabinet on 2nd July with all the options so far. However, DCC would still have to find funding and that would need Cabinet approval or a direction as to what to reduce instead. Unable to comment further as discussions are ongoing and commercially sensitive.

Other services in the area appear to be running normally

Publicity/Timetables:

New timetable books were distributed in time for the service changes (just) and although there are some errors they have been welcomed. A County Map is being distributed this week. The plan, budget permitting, is to produce another book in the Autumn when any winter service changes are known. Frosts and Nationwide timetable displays up to date with generic display from Traveline. Likely that DCC will take this option for all sites that we have across the county.

It should be noted that the team is half the size it was a year ago and along with increased workloads, we are absorbing new tasks but the books were out before the service changes.

Country Cars

Concerns have been raised from Beaminster and Maiden Newton about changing the delivery model for Community Car Schemes. To allow time to address these concerns we will continue to subsidise these schemes while we seek a sustainable model.

Ron Coatsworth suggested that the POPP scheme not working.

Erica Pretty replied that Cllr Coatsworth had got the wrong idea about the Bride Valley Country Car scheme - not a POPP funded scheme, therefore his comment was completely inaccurate but the Bride Valley scheme was working as well as it can - but needed more volunteers. The scheme is one of the Country Cars that have taken the decision to apply for POPP funding and will be taking the scheme forward.

There was a general discussion.

5. Real Time Info and On Bus info: Alan reported that the final destinations of each bus was now correct on the display Real-time info was still not good for technical and administrative reasons, and bank holidays were still causing a problem which should improve in due course..

The parties involved are now moving towards correcting the glitches and sorting out the technical problems and the audio in the buses is being corrected but was still wrong west of Lyme Regis.

Any questions or queries should be directed to: Matthew Williams, Traffic Control Manager:

M.R.Williams@dorsetcc.gov.uk

Re the concessionary fare scheme Alan had met Oliver Letwin and is still waiting for a reply from DCC for a trial allowing people to pay a fare

6. Disabled access to Dorchester West: Debbie said Terry Sprachen was going to a meeting with Railtrack

7. Democratic Moment: Mary marsh reported that the restricted service of the 14 (Chard to Marshwood) was making it impossible for people to get to the medical centre or the pharmacy. She wondered whether it would

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cost more for Damory to run a Tues and Thursday morning service instead of an all-day Tuesday. Debbie will talk to Damory. Peter suggested that all Parish Councils of people affected should write to DCC

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.00pm.

The next meeting is on July 24th.

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