

WEST DORSET WESTERN AREA TRANSPORT ACTION GROUP (WATAG)

Minutes of General Meeting No.100 held in the W.I. Hall, Bridport on 23rd November 2017

Present (33): Donald Bradley (Bridport); Lynton Burse (Bridport); Jackie Butcher (Mosterton); Tim Christian (DCT); John Collingwood (Bridport); Brian Cox (Bridport); Maureen Dormer (Mosterton); Bob Driscoll (Symondsburry PC); Sally Falkingham (Maiden Newton); Ian Gray (WATAG); Terry Harrison (Bridport TC); Ros Kayes (DCC/Bridport TC); Charlotte Kinghorn (LB&KR PC); Elizabeth Kingston (Litton Cheney); Anna Lovell (POPP), Maggie Luck (Bridport); David Marsh (Thorncombe PC); Mary Marsh (WATAG); Gavin Maxwell (Bridport); Simon Newport (friend of WATAG); Yvonne Norman (Bothenhampton); Erica Pretty (POPP); Sue Pugh (Bridport); David Redgewell (Bus Users UK); Pamela Reed (Mosterton); Peter Ridler (Walditch); Philip Sankey (WATAG Chair/Lyme Forward); Catherine Searle (Bridport); Tony Taylor (PSWB PC); Guz Tidy (Loders PC); Anne Waldron (Pymore); Dickie Webster (Bridport); Alan Williams (WATAG),.

1. Apologies: Peter Body, Mary Boughton, Colin Divall, Phil Dominey, Chris Everidge, Mike Farmer, John Firrell, Keith Fleet, Sheena Fox, Margaret Hayward, Maureen Jackson, Dan Okey, Bill Orchard, Geoff Parr, Janet Proctor, Helen Reed, Carol Sim, Sandra Ward,

2. Minutes: The minutes of the previous (99th) meeting were agreed and signed.

3. Matters arising not covered later: Philip Sankey reminded the audience of WATAG's dual role as both a group campaigning on behalf of passengers using transport services, and as a forum bringing together councillors, council officers, bus and train operators, the travelling public and other interested parties every two months to discuss transport matters in the West Dorset area in a spirit of co-operation and mutual respect.

David Redgewell felt that the transport situation in the area should be addressed by the area's Member of Parliament. He pointed out that the fourth annual UK Bus Summit will be held in London in early February 2018. The event is attended by key players in the bus world and could provide a good chance for Dorset's case to be put before the Secretary of State for Transport.

4. Dorset Travel: Dorset County Council Officer Report. Neither the DCC Cabinet Member for the Natural and Built Environment, nor any Dorset Travel officers were at the meeting. However, Elizabeth Shaw, DT's new Community Engagement & Infrastructure Support Officer sent a report which was read to the meeting and is appended hereto (appendix a.).

5. Councillors' slot: an opportunity for our elected representatives to give their thoughts and take questions. Ros Kayes came straight to the WATAG meeting from her work in Yeovil. She reported that she had met with Daryl Turner on Friday 17th November to discuss Saturday services on the 40/6 routes. The meeting was part of DCC's response to the petition submitted by Carolyn Emmett of Beaminster at a full Council meeting on 9th November. Bob Driscoll, who had attended the petition hearing, told the WATAG meeting that Carolyn was accompanied by a lady who had been dismissed from a position she had held in Yeovil for 13 years because she was now no longer able to get to work on Saturdays as there is no bus.

Ros told the meeting that the replacement for the 40/6 on Saturdays would be run by a mix of volunteer and paid drivers, with income coming from fares. She asked for volunteers to train as drivers. A vehicle may be donated for the service and analysis of costings and timetables will continue. Several speakers voiced anxieties about the direction community-based ideas were going. Although a Bridport town service may prove to be viable, schemes for other areas need the involvement of local councils and residents from outside the town were urged to lobby their town/parish councils.

When told that any DCC money for the scheme would be “kick start” funding rather than a match-funded grant, David Marsh drew the meeting’s attention to the situation in Thorncombe where a community service - much-quoted and much-lauded by DCC as an example of the way forward in rural transport - was only kept going by the enormous and continuous effort of a small number of committed individuals running all manner of fund-raising events and initiatives. He has now been told by DCC that a second annual grant will not be awarded without evidence of growing numbers and reports on expansion plans. “The goal posts have been moved.” Mary Marsh suggested that DCC have no understanding of the people needing and using Community Transport in rural areas. Although the majority of paying passengers are Senior Citizens, at least six new bus users had joined. Very sadly though, six regular users had either passed away, taken ill or sold up and moved into town. The £1,600 raised now seems inconsequential. The 'human' costs should outweigh simple pecuniary considerations.

Ros felt that DCC considers that it is more important to subsidise adult social care than buses and the Council is in contact with the Care Commissioning Group (CCG) on this subject.

6. Bus Operators.

a). First Wessex, Dorset and South Somerset: Philip Sankey pointed to “glaring errors” in First’s posted timetables and highlighted the problem of connectivity between the First’s 6 service between Bridport and Beaminster and DCC’s service to Yeovil. People are being deterred from travelling between Bridport and Yeovil by bus as they can (and have) been stuck in Beaminster for hours on end. Further concerns were raised about First’s decision to operate a “Saturday service” on weekdays between Christmas and New Year. Residents of Beaminster will have no usefully timed services to and from Bridport for 10 days! During the same period there will be no buses to and from Bridport Hospital.

Simon Newport announced that he was leaving First on the day after the meeting and that he was attending in a private capacity. He had been associated with bus services in the WATAG area since June 2000 and had seen “some things get better and others get worse”. The meeting acknowledged his contribution and thanked him. He confirmed that fares are being changed yet again: most up - some down.

b). Dorset Community Transport: Tim Christian reassured the meeting that DCT is committed to continue with existing services as much as possible. Increased journeys for SEN (special educational needs) pupils to Mountjoy School in Beaminster will mean that seating in some vehicles may be different in future.

c) Others: There were no representatives from other bus operators. Philip Sankey understood that Stagecoach South West will continue to serve Lyme Regis for the foreseeable future. David Redgewell said that although there are no scheduled buses between Dorchester South and Bridport on Sundays, travellers can take the 15.05 westbound National Express coach and the eastbound 13.00 coach at standard bus fares (no concessions). He also revealed that Megabus are reviewing their operations in Dorset, holding out hopes of fast cheap journeys to the capital

Sally Falkingham lamented the loss of the 212. With existing arrangements, passengers from Maiden Newton to Dorchester West find trains not as convenient as the 212 had been previously. She also wondered how the double-decker schools service between Maiden Newton and Beaminster will cope with roads around South Perrott in the winter. Simon Newport pointed out that double and single-decker buses are much the same weight, Double-deckers are shorter, just as manoeuvrable and easier to see.

The meeting heard that DCC's 40 service to Yeovil will continue until 29th March 2018.

7. Railway News. South Western Railway's proposals for timetable changes from December 2018 can be viewed on the company website. The consultation document can be accessed here:([link](#)). Phil Dominey had sent a summary of changes affecting the WATAG area, which was read to the meeting (appendix b).

Responses to the consultation can be made by e-mail only (timetable.feedback@swrailway.com). [When asked after the meeting, the company suggested that those without internet access should get a friend to send in their views by e-mail]. David Redgewell emphasized the need to respond to the consultation - "it is not a done deal". "There is not much synergy between Portsmouth and West Dorset" he said, adding that connectivity is key and, with the government's commitment to integration, bus services need to connect and join up. A show of hands indicated that the overwhelming majority of those present favoured the retention of stops at both Clapham Junction (for Horsham, Milton Keynes, Brighton, etc.) and Woking (for Heathrow, South-West London and its suburbs). Alan Williams addressed the meeting, adding further insight into the impact of proposed changes on local rail passengers (summarized in appendix c).

Sally Falkingham undertook to ask the Heart of Wessex line (GWR) about the potential impact on their timetables. Complaints about this line included the "third-world conditions" on a single-coach train to Weymouth at half-term and promised taxis for hospital nurses which never appeared.

A note from Robin Stapleton was read to the meeting regarding his discussions with Catherine Phillips of the Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership on the possibility of adding scheduled connecting trains times from Bristol Temple Meads to Gloucester for those trains that terminate at Temple Meads. The proposal was well-received and the partnership will see if it can be fitted into the summer 2018 timetable booklet.

8. Role of Public Transport in local and /or regional Healthcare Delivery Systems.

Gavin Maxwell has prepared a paper on this subject, in which he stresses that Health Care is undergoing rapid evolution. The focus is changing from clinical-based to patient-based care, from hospital to the community. The change has the full support of the government and the NHS. Much of the direction emanating from government places community-based services at the heart of the healthcare delivery system. Responsibility is placed on transport services, but there is no evidence of any plan to deliver what the authorities are now committed to give. Tim Christian very much understood Gavin's position and pointed to a pilot scheme in Greenford, where "blocked" appointments are picked up by empty school transport. Gavin stressed that the ability to access health care is fundamental to the changed health care delivery system.

9. Community Transport: Bridport Community Bus, Bride Valley and other local initiatives.

Ros Kayes had had to leave the meeting earlier, having spoken of progress on the Bridport Community Bus Project. Elizabeth Kingston asked whether Tim Christian could arrange for DCT's Bride Valley service to come through Long Bredy on Wednesdays. She received a positive response.

10. Democratic Moment: David Marsh also highlighted the difficulties that small fund-raising groups like TAVBUG (Thorncombe and Villages Bus Users Group) have in obtaining grants from the private sector. For example, the online application for TESCO's "Bags of Help" scheme, which grants between £1,000 and £4,000, contains mandatory fields, which unless filled in render the application void. Applicants must have a constitution, AGMs, officers and so on. Should groups become registered charities - a route which has both advantages and disadvantages? These questions are not covered in DCC's "toolkit" and David would like the Council to give further support, encouragement and advice. There is no easy way of finding out how other groups have managed these problems. Is there a national database? Erica Pretty told him that 64 schemes are in the PING (POPP Integral Neighbourhood Group) community transport directory. Simon Newport added that development trusts can bid for funding for community transport - "the big example is Torbay." Tim Christian told David that the case of Thorncombe is similar to that of Wimborne. "Stand-alone" schemes are very different from services which fit in with others. The meeting was also reminded that Parish Councils are currently preparing precepts for next year - What place for transport? Tim Christian noted the fact that this was WATAG's one hundredth general meeting and looked forward to the group's continued role in promoting public transport and its users for years to come.

11. Any Other Business:

There is still no news on progress on the construction of the crossing for disabled passengers at Dorchester West Station

Dates for next year's general meetings were announced: 25 January, 22 March, 24 May, 26 July, 27 September and 22 November 2018.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.10 pm.

The next meeting (AGM + GM 101) is to be held in the WI Hall North St Bridport at 6.30 pm on Thursday 25th January 2017.

Chair:

Philip Sankey
Woodmead
39 Silver Street
LYME REGIS. DT7 3HS
tel: 01297 442558
email: philipsankey10@btinternet.com

Treasurer:

Janet Proctor
14 Grove Orchard
BURTON BRADSTOCK
DT6 4QJ
tel:01308 898594

Secretary:

John Collingwood
213 St Andrews Road
BRIDPORT
DT6 3BT
tel: 07867 848 891
email: john@cjctrad.co.uk

GM 100: appendix a.

Dorset County Council Officer Report
WATAG – 23rd November 2017

School/Public Transport Report

Following some bedding in problems in September with the introduction of the new contracts, routes in West Dorset have settled down. Where possible, students are provided with passes on the public transport network thereby assisting their longer term viability.

School services into Beaminster School and The Sir John Colfox School have been revised and retimed to allow for the rural nature of the routes. Dorset Travel is continuing to work with First Bus to resolve any outstanding actions.

Current concerns over capacity on the X53 and X51 services at Woodroffe School are being addressed, again with DCC and First Bus working to resolve any problems.

Service 40, run by DCC between Bridport and Yeovil will operate 29 March 2018 while Dorset Travel continues to evaluate use on the northern section of the route from Beaminster to Yeovil. This service is supported financially by Yeovil College.

Cycling

Sea Road North Cycleway – Substantially complete. Work has started on upgrading the uncontrolled crossing opposite Central Motors to a toucan crossing.

East Street Roundabout Cycleway Safety Improvements – Construction work is now expected to start in January 2018.

West Bay Link – Construction is still anticipated to start in Autumn 2018.

Cycle parking improvements at Heart of Wessex Line Dorset Stations – still expected to be completed by end of Autumn 2017.

GM 100: appendix b.

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY - December 2018 Timetable Consultation

A)

This opened on the 29th September and will run until the 22nd December.

We have had so far, over 3000 submissions but we would welcome more from those who have an interest in railway matters and wish to highlight any areas of concern or where we need to review the proposals.

In terms of key points, the main issue will be Table 158 Dec 2018 Weymouth to Portsmouth/Waterloo proposed timetable that shows a faster service Weymouth to Waterloo by missing out several stations in Dorset and the second Waterloo service replaced by a Weymouth to Portsmouth service that will serve all stations in Dorset.

The consultation asks the following question:-

QUESTION: South Dorset and Hampshire Local Services Stakeholders have asked for faster journeys and improved service intervals. We plan that journeys from Weymouth to London will be up to 12 minutes faster and for the two trains per hour between Weymouth and Bournemouth to be spaced much nearer to a half-hourly frequency, Wool will see both Weymouth trains calling there. This however requires the link from some less busy stations to London to be broken at off-peak times with the trains instead providing cross Southampton connectivity to Fareham and Portsmouth. Same platform connections will be provided at Brockenhurst for passengers using the local service to connect to/from London. Do you support the speeding up of services from Weymouth with improved service intervals between Weymouth and Bournemouth and the change in connectivity for smaller stations?

The main changes are:-

Off Peak fast services will be significantly quicker than at present (12 minutes from Weymouth, 7 minutes from Bournemouth or 6 minutes from Southampton)

Majority of fast services will now run as a 10 car Bournemouth to Waterloo giving extra capacity

Wool two trains per hour throughout the day

Saturdays, off peak Monday to Friday service will operate throughout the day

Sundays, from 13.00 to/from Waterloo will have more services steadily increasing to the off peak weekday service.

Waterloo to Exeter line

This line of route, will see reduced journey times and extended services. Yeovil Pen Mill will have a better spaced out service and Dilton Marsh will be served for the first time. Additional evening services to Salisbury and more trains extended (to 5 or 6 cars) west of Salisbury to target known overcrowding.

06.16 Honiton to Waterloo will now start Exeter 05.50

06.44 Exeter to Waterloo speeded up

New 07.18 Yeovil J to Exeter service

New Yeovil to Waterloo services at 09.30, Yeovil Pen Mill 11.45 & 13.45 with the additional inward bound services extended from Salisbury

New Waterloo to Exeter service at 06.05

20.26 Exeter to Basingstoke extended to Waterloo

21.25 Waterloo to Yeovil J now extended to Exeter

22.25 Waterloo to Salisbury extended to Gillingham (Yeovil J on Fridays)

New fill in Half hourly services Waterloo to Salisbury up until 22.55 to Salisbury

Saturdays, off peak weekday services with Waterloo to Salisbury extended to Yeovil J on a two hourly basis

Sundays, AM hourly Waterloo to Exeter, PM hourly Waterloo to Exeter, hourly Waterloo to Salisbury

Waterloo to Bristol

Extra 16.25 Waterloo to Bristol TM returning at 20.00 to Salisbury which connects in with 21.25 Salisbury to Waterloo

Additional services Yeovil to Waterloo via Westbury (06.48 Yeovil Pen Mill, 10.42 Yeovil Junction, 16.46 Yeovil Junction, 19.28 Yeovil Junction, 21.28 Yeovil Junction)

Additional services Waterloo to Yeovil via Westbury (08.55 Wat & 17.25)

QUESTION: Saturday seasonal service Waterloo – Yeovil - Weymouth

Do you feel that the seasonal through service that operates between Waterloo, Yeovil Pen Mill and Weymouth, via Maiden Newton, should continue?

The consultation closes on the 22nd December.

GM 100: appendix c.

Notes on the South Western Railway Consultation for the Timetable change in Dec 2018

1. A **From Dorchester and Weymouth (eastbound)**

Hourly train to London at xx.37 from Weymouth, xx.47 from Dorchester. **Journey time 2h 31m (14 minutes faster than now)**, by omitting Hamworthy, Parkestone and Branksome. It will call at Wool, Wareham, Poole, Bournemouth, Brockenhurst, Southampton Central, Southampton Airport Parkway, Winchester and Woking.

Hourly train to Portsmouth at xx.00 from Weymouth, xx..12 from Dorchester. Stops at ALL* stations to Southampton (thence onto Portsmouth); if used to get to London, must change at Bournemouth (26 minute wait) or Southampton Central (10 minute wait) to connect into the following direct train from Weymouth - see above.

* except Redbridge and Millbrook

1. B **To Dorchester and Weymouth (westbound)**

London train departs xx.42 (from Waterloo), arriving Dorchester xx.05 and Weymouth xx.19. **Journey time 9 minutes faster than now.**

Hourly train from Portsmouth departs Southampton Central at xx.00, the connecting train from London having arrived at xx.56. It arrives Dorchester xx.33 and Weymouth xx.45.

1. C **X51 Bus Connections at Dorchester**

If the X51 continues to arrive Dorchester South xx.58, and depart xx.10/15/20, it will connect with the Portsmouth train eastbound and the London train westbound.

Therefore eastbound journeys to London will be increased by 49 minutes from Bridport.

=====

2. **Axminster**

No changes to departure times in each direction.

2. A **Trains FROM London**

Trains leave Waterloo at xx.25, giving a **reduction in journey time of 4 minutes**, by omitting Clapham Junction. Most trains from Waterloo to Salisbury departing xx.55 are extended to Yeovil, giving a half hourly service between London and Yeovil most of the day

2. B **Trains TO Exeter**

There are additional early morning trains; these depart at 05.55, 06.20, 07.00, 07.40 and 08.02. Thereafter, they depart xx.04/05.

2. C **Trains To London (eastbound)**

Services at 05.52, 06.22, 07.31+, 08.07, then xx.07 hourly.

Overall, the **journey time 9 minutes faster than now**, by omitting a stop at Clapham Junction.

From Yeovil, there are additional services - either via Sherborne or Westbury - at irregular intervals.

+ The Sarum Express, non-stop from Andover to London Waterloo (2h 32m from Axminster)