

**WEST DORSET WESTERN AREA TRANSPORT ACTION GROUP
(WATAG)**
website www.watag.org.uk

MINUTES OF WATAG AGM 18 - 24TH JANUARY 2019

1. Apologies

These were read out and are listed in the minutes of the General Meeting (107).

2. Minutes of the 2018 AGM

The minutes of the 2018 AGM were agreed and signed

3. Financial Report

During the year, WATAG received £250 from Dorset County Council for general running costs and £250 for additional activity in 2017-18. We paid £150 the use of the WI Hall, £10.09 on costs related to the website and £200.50 on other general expenses. Expenses directly on timetables amounted to £297.25. The opening balance of £715.60 has reduced to £592.99 at the end of the year..

4. Chairman's Report

Philip Sankey reviewed the main events and developments during the previous year. (see below).

5. Election of Officers

Chair: Bob Driscoll agreed to return as Chairman. The meeting expressed thanks to Philip Sankey for steering WATAG through difficult times.

Treasurer: Guz Tidy takes over from Janet Proctor.

Secretary: The role is to be split, with Philip Sankey acting as minute-taker and John Collingwood dealing with correspondence and administrative matters.

Webmaster – Richard Edwards has agreed to continue providing this valuable service.

The chair asked for further members to join the Advisory Committee. Existing members are John Collingwood, Colin Divall, Bob Driscoll, Sheena Fox, Ian Gray, Anna Lovell, Philip Sankey, Guz Tidy and Alan Williams, who all agreed to serve again for the current year. David Marsh and Mary Marsh left the Advisory Group at the end of 2018 and Janet Proctor stood down at this AGM.

The AGM concluded at 6.50 pm

Chair:

Bob Driscoll
Holmdene, Magdalen Lane
BRIDPORT DT6 5AD
tel: 01308 4255188
email: drisc.juggs@talk21.com

Treasurer:

Guz Tidy
16 Well Plot,
LODERS DT6 4NP
tel:01308 425805
email: guzcwffcw@msn.com

Admin:

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

WATAG CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT for 2018

This year has seen further change for WATAG as an organisation and in the public transport services in the area.

There is some ambivalence about WATAG's way of working. Some have advocated quiet diplomacy and discussion with relevant parties (mainly operators and councils) whereas others want a more high profile campaigning style.

We are anticipating changes on the Committee at the Annual Meeting. David and Mary Marsh, who had been instrumental in working to get Plusbus going as well as monitoring school services from the Marshwood Vale resigned during the year.

Having taken over as Chairman when Peter Smith moved to Norfolk, I now feel that my 80th Birthday marks the point at which I should step down as Chairman, although I am offering to remain on the Committee to represent Lyme Regis interests. Janet Proctor has covered the role of Treasurer but finds getting to meetings can be difficult. Guz Tidy, who has been on the Committee for this past year has agreed to take over. John Collingwood has kept our database of addresses and taken minutes of the public meetings. He still wishes to relinquish the latter task but has been helped by Geoff Parr who has made recordings of our meetings.

We are ably supported by the rest of the advisory group/committee. I am grateful for their support. Bob Driscoll continued as Vice-Chairman and with his many contacts has often been our spokesman on Bridport issues. Alan Williams' efforts on timetables have been less successful, but WATAG posted their version of timetables at key stops in April when the First publicity was delayed and more recently produced a leaflet highlighting the school services which are also available for public use. The other members are Anna Lovell (whose wide-ranging contacts with the County Council have proved useful), Ian Gray (whose inside knowledge of the bus industry has been invaluable), Colin Divall (with his academic analysis and who wrote our submission for the House of Commons Select Committee), and Sheena Fox (Beaminster).

We are also grateful to Richard Edwards who maintains our website. We have had good press coverage for a number of issues.

The bus services in the area fall into two groups – commercial services, which pay their way from fare revenue and supported services which require financial support from the County Council.

In order to reduce spending, the County Council implemented a revised policy on the services they would support in 2017. This was for a core inter-urban network operating Mondays to Fridays.

One consequence has been the greater involvement of Town and Parish Councils. Service 71 has continued to run with support from Lyme Regis Town Council and Beaminster Town Council have now established the CB3 to fill the gap between Bridport, Beaminster and Crewkerne on a Saturday (and also stepped in on 27 & 28 December) and Bridport Town Council are supporting service 7 on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Dorset Community Transport PlusBus services have continued to serve several villages.

The greatest problems have been with the service between Bridport (including the section to the Hospital) and Beaminster, Broadwindsor and on to Crewkerne and Yeovil.

Damory had run this as an hourly service between Bridport and Beaminster with some journeys extended to Yeovil.

First was supported to run the 740 (now 6A) school journeys and added as a commercial operation service 6, an hourly off-peak service between Bridport and Beaminster only with one round trip to Yeovil, missing out Broadwindsor. Until the autumn, this was supplemented by a Dorset Travel service 40 operating mainly between Beaminster and Crewkerne. Connections at Beaminster were never satisfactory and the issue remains since First Buses of Somerset has been contracted to provide an off peak service from Beaminster to Crewkerne. Onward travel from Crewkerne to Yeovil is by South West Coaches service 96 which is contracted by Somerset County Council.

WATAG had a meeting with Alex Carter, Managing Director of Buses of Somerset in November to discuss through ticketing and a more user friendly timetable with through working or guaranteed connections.

The key peak hour journeys used by commuters and Yeovil College students disappeared as well as a bus from Bridport picking up Colfox students in the afternoon. A partial replacement has been provided in the morning (but only during school terms) by running the B5 school bus in service from Bridport to Crewkerne. Our area also benefits from some services from Devon. The 14/688 operation receives some support from Devon County Council as it serves Devon villages on its way to Axminster from the Marshwood Vale. The daily Stagecoach service 9A from Exeter comes as far as Lyme Regis, but with no through ticketing. First has faced challenges since it took over the school contracts for Beaminster, Colfox and Woodroffe Schools. Over a year after the contracts started, some routes are still not able to operate with double-deckers as planned.

Services X51/X53 have continued largely unchanged but the Sunday service ceased in mid-September compared with November in 2017. With each route basically two-hourly and extra short journeys east of Bridport there have been issues with connections. WATAG was consulted about plans for the Summer services and made some suggestions. We await news of their final plans for 2019.

WATAG also looks at train services and contributed to South Western Railway's consultation on a revised pattern of services from December 2018 (which has been put on hold after large-scale changes in other parts of the country had proved chaotic). We also have an interest in the Weymouth – Bath and Bristol line.

WATAG works to improve public transport and to encourage people to use it. There are times when we question what is planned but we also encourage people to use what is there.

Thank you to everyone who supports us and we shall continue to do what we can in the coming year.