

# **SHERBORNE TRANSPORT ACTION GROUP**

**Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2016 at 7pm,  
Wingfield Room, Digby Hall, Hound St, Sherborne.**

## Present:

Mike Keatinge (Chairman)  
Robert Gould (Dorset CC)  
John Warmington (Resident)  
Peter Henshaw (Secretary, DCN)  
Bruce Duncan (Holwell PC)  
Bob Owen (Resident)  
Susan Greene (Sherborne TC)  
Philip Lock (Milborne Port PC)  
Stan Darley (Friends of Chetnole Halt)  
Dora Hibberd (Resident)

## Apologies

Joy Rabbetts, David Greening, Garth Hentley, Hilary Townsend, Anna Finch,  
Mike Sage

## **2. Minutes of meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2016**

One correction – correct spelling for Caroline Rowland.

## **3. Bus Services**

New shuttle: Re new hotel, Western Gazette has reported there will be a shuttle bus service between hotel and town. Public exhibitions are on next week and MK will raise this issue.

Merging school/service buses: In the face of cuts, DCC is focusing on school buses, which it has a statutory duty to provide, and support for these make up most of the bus support budget. Robert Gould said allowing operators to use school buses to double as service buses will give more flexibility, and an incentive to boost passenger numbers. Adult social care transport is included. Mixing school/service transport has worked well in SE Dorset, though with more densely used routes than we have. Concerns were raised re space for more passengers on busy school buses and child protection. Which routes are involved is up to operators, who need to bid in February with new contracts starting in the summer. Service nos 57/58 won't be affected as these are commercial services – X10/X11 may be safe as inter-town routes, but 74 will be at risk.

Concessionary Pass: DCC currently allows free travel before 9.30 if the next bus isn't until after 10.30 – it now wants to remove this and a consultation is out by email with paper forms in libraries, response needed by 13<sup>th</sup> January. The proposal to withdraw concession pass pre-9.30 from blind/partially sighted people has been withdrawn. DCC has also asked for views on charging a nominal fare (£1-£2) for concession journeys – general agreement this would be a good idea if income spent on supporting buses, though it would require a national rule change.

Community Transport Grants: These are now available up to £5000 (capital) and £2000 (other costs) and will need 50% match funding. Recipients must be a charity, community

group, voluntary organisation or a PC. Full details at [dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/424073/Community-Transport-Grant](http://dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/424073/Community-Transport-Grant).

#### **4. Train Services**

New franchise: It was understood that the new Southwest franchise would not be decided until April, with implementation in August after major works at Waterloo.

Group Changes: Bruce Duncan reported on changes to the many and varied rail groups including SELCA, the West of England Line Strategy Group (which also includes County Council reps), the Peninsula Rail Task Force and user groups (Salisbury to Exeter Rail Users Group [SERUG] which is independent and the newly set up Community Rail Partnership which is partly SWT funded with a part-time salaried officer.) RG was asked to ensure that Dorset has a bigger say in overall rail strategy for the southwest. The two user groups on the Salisbury-Exeter line (east and west) are working together. The Blackmore Vale CRP is arranging a series of Christmas festive days at its six stations, including 15 December at Sherborne when a steam train will be bringing visitors for a carol service in the Abbey.

Increasing Passenger Numbers: BD provided figures showing continued increases at nearly all Salisbury-Exeter stations, with Sherborne up 2.1% in the year to November 2016. Crewkerne is up 9%, thanks in part to a very active Friends of group with several improvements made to the station. He added that one of the two franchise bidders (SWT and FGW) is now looking at new rolling stock to replace the 30-year-old trains we have now.

General: Bob Owen said that halts shouldn't be forgotten, especially with village bus services disappearing. There was general concern that upgrading the Bristol-Weymouth line is difficult with the current 45mph limit on one stretch. RG said that DCC is focused on rail and is lobbying for improvements with the rail industry, while local MPs are now onside. DCC is also talking to neighbouring County Councils. Improvements at Sherborne (covered cycle shelter and signing for step-free crossing) – no progress here but MK 'still hoping.' BO raised the issue of line guides for Bristol-Weymouth not available at Bristol – MK will chase again. MK has written a letter from STAG to newspapers arguing for longer franchises – this has appeared in the Daily Telegraph. Finally, discussion over the pros/cons of one body running trains and track, or two different bodies in alliance – general agreement that SWT/Network Rail alliance has worked well, but it needs full integration with funding from DfT.

#### **5. Cycling**

Peter Henshaw is to meet Kevin Humphreys next week – will raise issue of cycle parking in Sherborne then.

#### **6. Highways**

Ottery Lane – Discussion re the new sports centre and implications of extra traffic and boys crossing for Ottery Lane. General agreement that this issue is all tied in with changes at Barton Farm (which will also increase traffic) and the desire to change junction priorities at Westbury/Ottery. RG thinks there is a compelling case for the latter to discourage through traffic using Westbury/Acreman St. CC officers advice is to wait to assess the effect of Barton Farm traffic. STAG has asked for a new traffic appraisal.

Barton Farm Access: RG reported that the developer is in flagrant breach of planning conditions, which has caused a long delay to the new junction on A30. Work on this should start 9<sup>th</sup> January, though this gives little time to arrange traffic orders, and will

take 40 weeks. It will include calming measures on Marston Rd.

Budgens Crossing: RG said this is feasible, and road is wide enough, but focus at present is on the main A30 junction. JW asked if the pavement on south side of A30 could be extended from Budgens to the bus stop and RG thought this was included in the plan. Philip Lock asked whether section 106 funding couldn't be used now to make improvements – RG said that developer won't want to spend money until it has income from houses sold – currently 70-80 houses of around 200 are sold and occupied.

Highway maintenance/volunteers: DCC is now devolving more road maintenance to PCs/TCs, including encouraging the use of volunteers. Gave example of STC taking over amenity grass cutting from DCC, which has seen an improvement. STC has a 'devolvement fund' to cover this. PH asked if volunteers could be used to clear Sherborne Hill pavement – RG promised to check the condition.

20mph Limit: RG said has now been overtaken in priority by parking, the current hot issue which dominates his inbox, but added 20-limit would be pursued in the long-term, especially since less stringent rules on signage etc make this easier to set up.

### **7. Any Other Business**

After some discussion re recent consultation on unitary authorities, Stan Darley reported on the new Friends of Chetnole Halt, which is working with FGW and Catherine Phillips (Heart of Wessex CRP) to improve the station. A couple of safety issues have been raised, the group is promoting the train service in the Wriggle Valley Magazine and will be sending a rep to STAG meetings.

### **8. Next Meetings:**

2<sup>nd</sup> March, 8<sup>th</sup> June, 21<sup>st</sup> September