

SHERBORNE TRANSPORT ACTION GROUP

**Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 9th June 2016 at 7pm,
Wingfield Room, Digby Hall, Hound St, Sherborne.**

Present:

Mike Keatinge (Chairman)
Robert Gould (Dorset CC,)
John Warmington (Resident)
Anna Finch (DCN)
Peter Henshaw (DCN)
David Rayner (Resident)
Bruce Duncan (Holwell PC)
Garth Hentley (Yetminster PC)
Bob Owen (Resident)
Alan Ward (Battery Vehicle Society)
Shaun Brimble (First Bus Yeovil)
Paul Adams (First Bus Yeovil)
Judith Saunders (Resident)
Mike Sage (Resident)
Susan Greene (Sherborne TC)
Fred Welland (Resident)
Mollie Carr (Resident)
Gwen Hooper (Resident)

Apologies

Joy Rabbetts, Jane Smith, David Greening

2. Minutes of meeting held on 10th March 2016

Minutes were passed.

3. Chairman's Report

Accepted by the meeting.

4. Annual General Meeting

Mike Keatinge (Chairman), Jane Smith (Deputy Chair), Peter Henshaw (Secretary), Anna Finch (Treasurer) and Brian Clist (accounts) approved to continue, unopposed. Bruce Duncan (BH) proposed a vote of thanks to Mike, and AF to Brian Clist. Joy Rabbetts to be added to the email committee, which is open to anyone. STAG grant from DCC is to be increased to £500 – this could fund a Sherborne bus timetable produced by STAG. Sherborne Town Council continues to fund meeting room and photocopying.

5. Bus Services

General: Greenhill turn trial has been a success and is now permanent. Bob Owen raised the case of a 91-year-old passenger who was abandoned after a bus breakdown – Shaun

Brimble promised to look into it. During A30 roadworks, diversion means service 57 misses one end of town, necessary to maintain an hourly service – A30 is on schedule to reopen 24th June. Abbey View bus stop – flag has been moved to the new post.

Budget Cuts: Consultation on the severe budget cuts is in process now, with online form on the dorsetforyou website – open to all but needs to be completed by 22nd July. Link is <https://consultationtracker.dorsetforyou.com/00,consultation,12163,330,00.htm>. There will be a second consultation in the autumn on how and where the cuts will apply. RG said the cuts are part of a whole raft of reductions, as DCC has lost 1/3 of its revenue budget. Key bus routes between towns will still be supported, but 'fill in' rural services will face cuts. DCC will seek to make more efficient use of existing services – eg opening school buses to adult passengers. BO said that any assessment of space on school buses should take into account pupils who aren't entitled to free transport but need to use the bus.

BD said that the fill in routes are difficult to support as spread across a wide area, and many of the villages don't count as key routes. MK said DCC's aspiration is that community-based car services run by volunteers will replace these, and that Corscombe is already running a community bus. BO was sceptical, saying that the rules on hire/reward have been tightened up, which makes community car schemes more difficult to administer. He added that the Clinical Services Review is relevant to bus cuts, moving more medical services to Bournemouth, which assumes that patients have access to a car. Story in the Western Gazette that the 57 faces cuts, but SB said that he has no knowledge of this happening – MK to follow up, as the story may be mistaken. But service 74 is a marginal route for subsidy so may go.

David Rayner (DR) asked for a breakdown of the transport budget, detailing which routes get money, and how much. RG said this information should be available, and that dorsetforyou.com already has a map showing which routes are supported.

Timetables: DCC has stopped producing its comprehensive county-wide bus timetable, as it cost more than £40,000. Bridport WATAG have produced their own local timetable (around £300) for a donation of 20p which is covering its costs. But SG noted that this only shows local journeys, and she has been approached by a user who wants to see connections. MK said that Traveline.info is a good resource, but no help if you don't have access to a computer. AF suggested a system of 'bus buddies' for anyone who needs help using the buses. The Tourist Information Centre will also help. General agreement that STAG should produce a Sherborne and villages timetable, but problem is finding someone to do it.

STAG Response: MK will draft a response to DCC's budget cut proposals, but will need comments very quickly.

5. Train Services

Passenger Experience Consultation: MK had sent a response, noting that survey figures were dominated by those from London and SE. It's clear that passengers' priorities are 1) a train and 2) a seat, before any technology improvements. Passenger numbers have doubled but service capacity increased only 10%.

South West Trains Franchise: BD said this is now between SWT and First Great Western, and that Treasury are likely to pick the cheaper option. Whoever wins will need management skill to cope with the suburban network and major works around Waterloo next summer. Contract should be awarded Feb 2018 and start in the summer. MK thought that FGW gaining contract would mean less competition and Competition & Markets

Authority might look into it. RG thought that Bristol-Weymouth should also be part of the SWT franchise.

Community Rail Partnership for SWT: BD reported establishment of the Blackmore Vale Community Rail Partnership (CRP) covering Tisbury to Crewkerne; Caroline Rowlands is being funded by SWT to work on this two days a week. Work will include items like Heart of Wessex's CRP leaflet. Also the Salisbury Exeter Rail User Group (SERUG East) covering the same section, but campaigning independently for improvement to the infrastructure. MK added that there are now a plethora of rail groups – SELCA continues and the new West of England Line Route Strategy Group includes Local Enterprise Partnerships (funded by Government and representing business interests), but not user groups.

SWT Line Developments: BD said that two trains/hour Yeovil Jct-Waterloo would be enabled by doubling between the Tisbury loop and Dinton, which already has the second track bed. Tisbury south platform may be returned to Network Rail ownership, which would help. SWT rolling stock now over 30 years old and replacement is uncertain – possibly bi-mode diesel/electrified as FGW are introducing, and able to use both third rail and overhead lines. 20 Year aspiration for SWT line is double track, overhead line electrification and two trains/hour. BD added that with more housing being built along the route, demand will inevitably increase.

Yeovil Junction-Weymouth summer service: PH's brother had used this, and reported that it was well used, and full in the evening. Only problems were lack of announcement of destination when leaving Yeovil back to Weymouth, and that the guard thought that Network cards aren't valid on the service, which they are.

7. Cycling

PH has talked to Kevin Humphries (DCC) re cycle parking in Sherborne. The new covered cycle stand at the station is still on, but KH is still waiting to hear back from SWT. KH has also promised to do a survey on cycle parking in the town, and PH/AF will offer to help.

Sandford Orcas PC has complained about cyclists riding fast downhill into the village, and Sustrans is advising. This led to a general discussion about fast cyclists. PH thought that all types of road users speed, not just cyclists.

8. Dorset County Council

Road Diversions: BO said that signs need to be further back and MK thought that all DCC employees should be asked to keep an eye open for diversion issues when out and about. General agreement that public, PCs and bus operators all need good prior warning of diversions, where this is possible.

9. Any Other Business

Press coverage: Joy Rabbetts has offered to promote STAG in the press.

Rights of Way: Several bridleways are being upgraded to restricted byway status, which allows for any non-motorised wheeled vehicle.

Car parking: RG said that DCC, STC and Chamber of Trade have met to discuss increasing on-street parking in Sherborne during the day, which is causing congestion. He thought applying restrictions just moves the problem elsewhere. Possibilities include residents' permits, changing the car park fees or offering the terrace car park as an alternative, though SG said the latter had already been suggested, and rejected by those working and parking in town. RG is open to ideas. General agreement that Barton Farm

will make the parking situation worse, as some residents will probably drive into town.

8. Next Meetings:

8th Sept and 8th Dec.