

Dorchester Transport Action Group (DTAG)
Minutes from Christmas Special Meeting
10th December 2024, 10.00-11.30

Attendees: Stewart Palmer, Giles Watts, Richard Taylor, David Moss, Les Scarth, Frances Hogwood, Rob Hattersley, Dilys Gartside, Robin Potter, Julie-Ann Booker, Susan Blake, Wendy Allwood

Apologies: David Durose, Sally Falkingham



1. Welcome and Minutes (Stewart and Giles)

- No comments on the minutes of the previous DTAG meeting (on 12-11-24).
- We welcomed Susan Blake – a member of the former DTAG. Member of Dorchester strollers, the Access group and Dorchester West Station.
- We welcomed Wendy Allwood – Works for Help and Kindness, registered blind with a guide dog, member of the Access group. Has several ongoing access issues including e-scooters, taxis and Dorchester South Station.
- We reviewed the outstanding actions noting that several are on the agenda for this meeting.

2 Dorset Council

2.1 Question to Place and Resources Committee

- We missed the deadline for a question to the Place and Resources Overview Committee on 21st Nov. Instead, we decided to submit a question about the council supporting the Low Traffic Future challenge in the Local Transport Plan as described by Roger Geffen in his talk to the Dorset COP '24.

Action: Giles to agree text with Stewart and send off to Dorset Council

3. Media and Social Media

3.1 General Media Comments

- Web site & newsletter and newsletter going very well.
- Experimenting with Bluesky (alternative to X/Twitter)
- Julie has set up Facebook Page which is different from our existing Facebook group. She will migrate across when ready
- Automated newsletter has not been received by everybody. **Action:** Rob to investigate
- We should take every opportunity to talk to other groups interested in transport issues including other volunteer orgs, parish councils, WI etc.

3.2 Complaints

- We agreed we are not a complaints department but that we could provide people with information on where they can complain (generally the bus and rail companies, and eventually to the independent watchdog, Transport Focus: <https://www.transportfocus.org.uk>)
- Wendy mentioned that the audio information was very unreliable on the buses. **Action:** Stewart to pass email for Damory to Wendy to take up

3.3 DTC Community Lunch Fri 6th Dec

- Giles' talk went down well. We have made some good contacts with other organisations and a number of new people have signed up to DTAG.



4. Active Travel (Walking and Cycling)

4.1 Work on Maumbury Junction

- Work on Maumbury Junction will start in January with improvements for cyclists and pedestrians. However, the work is expected to be quite disruptive for several months.

4.2 Cycle to Work Schemes (Julie)

- Julie has researched into cycle purchase schemes and noted the government scheme (using salary sacrifice) www.bike2workscheme.co.uk and a similar private scheme: www.blackhawknetworkextras.co.uk.

Action: Giles to circulate Julie's notes on the schemes (Completed)

4.3 Guerrilla Gardening (Giles)

- Further Guerilla Gardening took place on the Bridport to Maiden Newton cycleway at Powerstock on 20th Nov and some tree planting on Sat 30th Nov. Both were under the eagle eye of George Sartin. More dates will be circulated in the New Year.



4.4 Other

- Wendy mention that she had seen several cyclists along South Walks without lights.
- Frances offered to take another look at Cargo Bikes in Dorchester.

Action: Frances to discuss at future meeting

5. Buses

- Concerns have been expressed about the reliability of the X51 bus and this impact this will have on the service. **Action:** Les to write to First Bus.
- Damory has placed a full-page advert about their Poundbury bus service in the Poundbury Magazine
- Stewart is progressing the London Road bus stop and associated road crossing but it's moving through Dorset Council bureaucracy at glacial speed
- The government announced funding for bus services. There is some increase on last year but there is more for Capex than operations. Also, Dorset's allocation is half BCP and a third of Devon and Cornwall. Even the head of Dorset Council does not know why it is so low.
- Emily McCurdy announced that £50,000 has been spent from the Household support fund on Community Transport Schemes with a further £20,000 now available and a £100,000 grant. She is currently dealing with applications.

6. Trains

- GWR have said there will be a transport forum in March.
- Heart of Wessex line will be very disrupted North of Frome due to renewal work at Westbury. Work is due to end on 16th March.
- Friends of Dorchester West is a small group looking after the station platform and would benefit from additional members.
- Work on Dorchester South station continues with the main entrance closed off. No news about the AfA bid for lifts on the pedestrian crossing and concern about the impact of renationalisation.
- Wendy mentioned that lack of a safe crossing in front of Dorchester South station. **Action:** Stewart to bring up with Andrew Ardley (Completed).
- Dorchester West have applied for a real time information board and better signage to the town and to the ramp.
- Meeting of the SouthWest Rail partnership on 19th Nov. Useful meeting but unfortunately there was a lack of some key personnel. The format of the meeting could have been a little more focussed (e.g. station updates).
- It has been announced that SWR will return to government ownership in May 2025. However, since Covid they have been effectively in government control anyway. David mentioned that better coordination between the franchises may make a difference. The key is that the passenger experience is improved. **Action:** Stewart to circulate note he wrote for Railfuture (Completed)

7. Roads and Vehicles

7.1 Transport Plan for Dorchester

- Draft Local Transport Plan is due next spring. David Moss mentioned the importance of the link to the Local Plan which needs to contain a transport strategy. He mentioned that sustainable development could be promoted along strings of villages if they had a good public transport network in place.
- David Moss continues to work on a paper about the “Walking Town”. He suggested that London Road, which for many people is the gateway to the town, needs to be made less straight to slow down traffic. David also suggested making much better use of urban spaces. Using space jointly requires a change in attitude that will take time. These are views similarly expressed by many national organisations including “Low Traffic Future”.

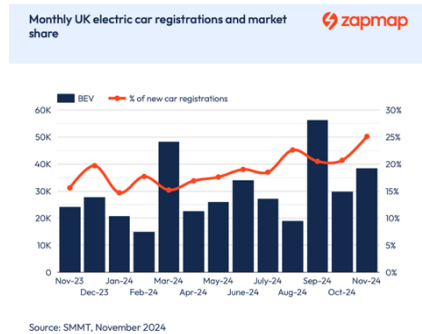
7.2 Car Sharing and Car Clubs

- Julie has researched into car clubs and car sharing schemes. Several options are available including WhatsApp groups linking drivers with people needing lifts. This is not just for older people. Many young people use them too when they need lifts or public transport breaks down. **Action:** note on her research to be distributed to members (Completed).
- Co-wheels will be our guest speaker for our meeting on 14th Jan.
- Wendy commented that Community transport is only available for medical journeys. There are not enough volunteers for social visits, and this leaves many feeling very isolated. **Action:** Stewart and Julie to produce a paper on the issues and to talk to Dorset Council to see if the system can be made more efficient and easier to find the links.

7.3 20 is Plenty

- A webinar was held on 12th Dec that included the Director for public health, Sam Crowe, local MPs, police and many councillors. Some 60 registered with half attending on the night with others viewing later.

- Dilys notes a backlash in Southampton that needs to be resisted as it takes time for attitudes to change. See “Hill of Hysteria”:



<https://wbrassociation.org.uk/why-changing-our-environment-is-so-hard/>

7.4 Electric Cars

- ZMAP reports that new registrations of electric cars were over 25% for the first time in November.

8. AOB

- No new planning permissions with transport related issues to report (Giles).
- Next meeting will be 14th January 2025.

Decision: We agreed that future meeting would be the second Tuesday of every month until further notice: 14.01.25, 11.02.25, 11.03.25, 08.04.25, 13.05.25, 10.06.25, 08.07.25, 12.08.25, 09.09.25, 14.10.25, 11.11.25, 09.12.25.

Possible Talks at Future Meetings

CPRE Transport project - Alice Roberts (January 14th '25)

Co-Wheels about car sharing – Robert Schopen (February 11th '25)

Ken Lambert, Dorchester Disabled Club

Bob Owen, South West CRP – West Dorchester Station

Colin Divall, WATAG – Maiden Newton to Bridport Railway

Joe Doak, Dorchester Civic Society – Transport planning and infrastructure

David Moss, DTAG/DCS – Shared Spaces

Cargo Bikes and their usage in Dorchester

Outstanding Actions (13-12-24)

Walking (Frances Hogwood) and Cycling (David Durose)

- Stewart/Giles to discuss best way to get support for stage 1 of cycle path from Dorchester to Poundbury [Giles to arrange meeting with councillors](#)
- David to get written permission from land owner of Lower Lewell Farm cycle path for permission to reduce the bend. [Awaiting a response](#)
- Frances to follow up about cargo bikes in the New Year.
- Giles to circulate Julie's notes on Cycle-to-Work schemes ([Completed](#))

Buses (Les Scarth)

- Stewart to write to First Group regarding the possibility of a Sunday extension of the No10 bus into Poundbury. [No response yet](#)
- Stewart to contact Yellow Bus company about option of new service in Dorchester. [Awaiting DC response to government's new Bus strategy](#)
- Stewart to ask Richard Wade (Morebus) how BSIP is working in BCP
- Wendy to find out from Damory why the bus audio system is unreliable.

Trains (Richard Taylor)

- Les to write to First Bus about unreliability of X51 service ([Awaiting reply](#)).
- Stewart to write to Andrew Ardley about status of AfA lifts and lack of safe crossing at Dorchester South ([Completed](#))
- Circulate Stewart's note about the future of UK's rail network ([Completed](#))

Roads and Vehicles (David Moss)

- Giles to share Julie notes of car sharing schemes ([Completed](#))
- Stewart and Julie produce a paper on Community Transport & talk to Dorset Council to about system efficiency and making it easier to find the links.

Communications and Media (Julie Booker)

- Stewart to organise working group to analyse the open meeting and propose a format for 2025. [GW to set a meeting date in January](#)
- Rob to provide login details for web site to Julie and Giles. [In progress.](#)
- Rob to investigate why some people are not receiving the newsletter.

Dorset Council, Dorchester Town Council and Other

- David and Giles to work on a local transport vision for Dorchester to be submitted to Dorset Council as part of the LTP4 discussions. [In progress.](#)
- Giles to ask Dorset Council whether they will support Low Traffic Futures challenge in their Local Transport Plan ([In Progress](#))