

WATAG General meeting no. 130
2 July 2026
Held at Mountfield, Bridport at 6.30pm

Present:

WATAG: Nick Hurrell (Chair), Phyllida Culpin (Vice Chair), Nick Boothroyd, Bob Driscoll, Sal Robinson; Paul Everall (online); Alan Williams

Others: Jim Davison; Adrian Glover; Pamela Hatton; John Booth; Elaine Glover; Sue Bailie (?); Sue Baker; Hannibal Hayes; Yvonne Hewitt; Nigel Rawlings;

Online:

"Jane", "Penny", John Dancy, "JohnM", Stewart Palmer, Sarah Herring, Susan Stancombe, Rick Dyke (Broadwindsor PC), Alan West, Rosa Wells, William Neal (First Bus), Tom Hams, "512988", "Robert", Linda Snelling, David Redgewell.

Apologies: Tim Christian; Diane Stanley; Sheena Fox; Andrew Ardley; Billy Shearer; Belinda Bawden; Colin Divall, Anne Sankey, Craig Monks

1 Introduction by the Chair

1.1 The Chair reported the sad news that Anna Dunn died on 9 June and John Collingwood died on 1 July. They will be much missed and we send our deepest sympathies to their families.

1.2 The Chair gave his report which is summarised here.

At last meeting, we discussed improving the service to Dorchester and we have launched a survey to assess the likely demand for a better service between Bridport and Dorchester: 300+ responses to date. Essential that we improve the service from Bridport to Dorchester and work together to do this. There have also been requests to improve CR6 and we will assess how best to do that once we have completed the work on X51. It will certainly require input from people in the Beaminster and surrounding areas.

1.3 Our relationship with bus operators has been generally good and we have supported First Bus with timetable adjustments to improve connectivity.

1.4 6 TAGs across Dorset met and agreed our key bus-related objectives which were submitted to Dorset Council in April, prior to a scheduled TAG Leader meeting with them. That meeting was cancelled at short notice, and thus far DC has not responded to requests to re-arrange. We still need passenger numbers for buses – we do not see these as confidential (we already get them for rail).

1.5.1 We need to strengthen our committee – please consider joining us particularly if you have an interest in Active Travel.

2 Buses

- 2.1 Buses update presented by Adrian Glover from Dorset Council. Still trying to get the TAG Leaders meeting (originally scheduled for April) as we recognise the importance of working with you alongside other local stakeholders. NH commented that we have had no response or acknowledgement. AG – we are also frustrated that the meeting is not happening. AG was not able to provide the reason for the cancellation.
- 2.2 LB1 is a great example of how working together achieves great results. There are other examples around the country of how people working together have developed services. Vehicles have to be driven by public service operators. NH – what we want is a regular local hourly service to Dorchester. We will provide you with the evidence. AG – we are on side with this but would you be happy with two hourly. Comments from audience demanded hourly.
- 2.3 NH stated the objectives of our campaign and quoted the strategy from LTP4 which specifically mentioned the desire to enhance service frequencies on the Bridport – Dorchester and Bridport – Yeovil routes. Nick Boothroyd – are you suggesting that Bridport runs its own services or rather than double the services run by First. AG – no but we need to work together and build on existing links. Phyllida Culpin – we understand the benefits of improved services which are echoed in LTP4.
- 2.4 William Neal (WN) from First Bus – keen to see the results of the survey. Grateful for the help I've had to review timetables. We are about to register the winter timetable and will be in touch with you. I'd love X51 to be hourly. The challenge as an operator is the cost of running the service which does not "wash its face". We are always looking at ways of improving the service and believe that we are slowly getting there.
- 2.5 Pamela Hatton: are single deckers cheaper to run/why do we always have double deckers? WN – certain routes have to be doubles and some singles but need to get buses back to the station and also doubles are used for school routes so then carry on during the day. Cost is not very material, although singles cheaper to run.
- 2.6 Alan Williams (AW) – made a suggestion which could help provide an hourly service to Dorchester from Bridport.
- 2.7 WN – looking to see if the 10s could go to Bridport. The corridor between Dorchester and Weymouth is very successful but there is no driver break location in Dorchester. No solution as yet but looking at it. I will look again after winter timetables sorted.
- 2.8 Sarah Herring – the services to Dorchester are vital. Disappointing to hear AG talk about setting up services. What do I pay my rates for? Dorset Council seem not to

be interested. AG – I, and team, very interested in public transport and want to make it as good as we can within our resources. Bob Driscoll – increased frequency will bring increased revenue.

2.9 David Redgewell (DR) – where are we with Bus Service Improvement Plan, Access Map and other documents required by Government from DC. Bring to us these documents in the way that Somerset Council has. Doing this work may bring additional revenue from central government.

3 Report from Belinda Bawden DC councillor for Lyme Regis

- 3.1 NH read out her report but in summary:
Working with MP and operators to try and keep the services going with the road closures. Chideock council has prepared full list of A35 closures.
- 3.2 Site visits planned with councillors and officers to discuss parking. Idea to make resident access only in Lyme.
- 3.3 Charmouth bus stops in the centre of the village and the one at the top by Broad Street will have RTI installed by Dorset Council as part of BSIP programme.
- 3.4 LB1 – very popular particularly with young people.

4 Other comments received

- 4.1 CR6 – used by lots of older passengers – buses need to be fixed to allow the doorstep to lower properly to enable them to get on. Hole in bus stop needs to be looked at. Raised in writing by Sheena Fox.
- 4.2 RTI and speaking bus stops – good to have them but not good if bus stops is incorrect. Others have raised this. AG – identified the way the data is taken from the database has caused inaccuracies. Working to resolve this before new RTI devices are rolled out which should start to happen before year end. AW – problem on RTI on X53 near Weymouth rail station. NH – can you update us in couple of months. AG – yes.
- 4.3 Bus stop in Allington – Hibernia Close – buses no longer stopping there. Raised by John Booth. AG: Highways team is doing a safety assessment to see if a stop can be put there.
- 4.4 **CR6** Resident (Jim Davidson) from Hazelmead – would like to see all CR6s coming up to Hazelmead including school times. AG and WN looking at options to improve CR6 to share with us. Beaminster resident – CR6 new timetable great and very good drivers. DCT buses are not accessible.
Linda from Yeovil and represents Somerset Bus Partnership – we would be very interested in any CR6 changes. WN and AG said they would.

5 Rail

- 5.1 NH – West of England line – more timetable amendments due to hot weather are likely from end July. Important that separate page is put on SWR website to highlight the changes. Bus connectivity at Axminster will also be impacted.
- 5.2 Platforms at Dorchester South and Axminster – where possible, SWR have agreed that trains will run into the platform adjacent to the entrance/exit, to avoid having to use the footbridge to the platform on the other side. This is working well at Axminster but not so well at Dorchester. DR - If you ask at Bournemouth, they will often pull train over to the level access side at DCH for people who require assistance (disabled or heavy luggage). NH – Yes we know that, but it needs to be consistent for all travellers.
- 5.3 Continued frustration within SWR about the required West of England line improvements due to lack of funds.
- 5.4 BD – SWR no longer have through tickets to Bridport and Lyme on their websites. Can buy tickets through BRfares.com. NH will raise with SWR.

Meeting closed at 7.45pm