



Notes of Meeting

on Thursday 27 April 2023 at Purbeck Youth Centre

Present: Mike Whitwam (Swanage TC, Swanage Railway, PCRП); Elaine Glover (Purbeck Coast Radio); Rachel Martin (RSPB); Tony Smale (Friends of Wool Station); Adrian Glover (DC Transport Planner); Helen Sumbler (Corfe Castle PC, DCAN); Richard Wade (More Bus); Nigel Dragon (Corfe Castle PC); Chris Morris; Mary Weller; Alex Brocklesby (NT); Beryl Ezzard (Vice Chair, Wareham TC, DC); Nick Ward (Chair)

Apologies: Steven Booth (PCRП); Simon Newport (Transpora Group); Ken Morgan (Lytchett Matravers PC); Stewart Palmer Dorchester TAG); Parish Clerk (Langton Matravers PC); Robin Bowler (CKPC); John Williamson (Wareham St Martins PC); Debbie Weller (Treasurer); Ian Vaughan Arbuckle (Langton Matravers PC); Ross Kempson (Cycle Experience)

1. Welcome & Introductions

Chair welcome those attending the first face to face meeting in three years and invited those present to introduce themselves.

2. Action Plan responses

A template for an Action Plan had been distributed last year and the limited responses had been collated. Comments made at the meeting would be incorporated, including 5G travel messaging, together with any further inputs, to form a final draft for approval at the next meeting. There was a discussion about the pros and cons of bus laybys (services under pavements and not prioritising car traffic) and EV charging provision and the need for reserved spaces. BE advised that DC could not mark reserved spaces where there is no tarmac, as in Corfe Castle West Street car park. The dangers of the walking route on Washpond Lane were mentioned. MW said that DC Social Services were reported to be considering a minibus between the schools and Herston Yards. This fell outside the normal criteria for a school bus service.

3. International Car Free Day

Activities, such as Sustrans led bike rides, bike hire, special bus fares and free parking were being discussed, encouraging use of alternatives to the car on and around Sept 22. This would focus on Purbeck Park as a transport hub. It was agreed that a sub-group would take the planning forward (BE, AB, HS, NW) in cooperation with Sustainable Swanage and Sustainable Wareham. A temporary closure of Slepe Road was suggested – this would require 12 weeks notice and some expenditure.

4. Purbeck Transport Plan

No further updates, pending consultation on the Local Transport Plan.

5. Purbeck Heaths NNR Sustainable Tourism Plan

AB gave an update, outlining the schedule of events and mentioning the website and 'Car Free Days Out in Purbeck' leaflet. Again the importance of making Purbeck Park an effective transport hub was emphasised.

6. Bus Services

RW gave a briefing on the state of bus services in the area, in the light of the £2 fare scheme (now extended to end of October). Passenger numbers were gradually getting back to pre-covid levels. Enhanced summer services would again result in half-hourly buses between Swanage and Wareham. A continuing problem was congestion on Ferry Road and the loss of bus priority approaching the ferry. It was agreed that this was something that PTAG should be pressing to reinstate and it was agreed that letters should be sent to Ray Bryan and the Ferry company. There was a discussion about bikes on buses, with examples from round the world of how it can be done. However, safety and space problems were raised.

AG mentioned that the Red Lion bus shelter was due to be reinstated on 12 May with a new real-time display system showing bus departures.

RM provided leaflets and posters advertising the 2RN bus service, from Wareham Station via Purbeck Park to the RSPB reserve at Arne.

TS reported on the additional First summer bus services between Weymouth, Lulworth, Wool and Bovington. Scheduled bus services to Bovington were considered essential.

There was a lengthy discussion about lack of public toilets and how this discouraged use of buses, particularly by the elderly and disabled. Toilets on stations were often closed during the day, because of vandalism or lack of staff. However, those on Swanage and Corfe Castle stations were available to disabled people. Those on Wareham Quay were open during the day and buses could be asked to wait longer at the adjacent stop.

7. Rail services

MW reported that South Western Railway passenger numbers were gradually recovering, but this was more for leisure than business. The Swanage-Wareham scheduled diesel service was operating, but there was less transfer from mainline services than expected (possibly because of the £2 bus fare). Santa Specials and the popular Steam & Lights would be running again this year, but not the dining trains. The removal of disposable barbecues from (some) Coop stores was mentioned, with the charcoal being used for steam locos (mainly symbolic). Videos of car-free days out in Purbeck were available on You Tube. These are recommended and the Purbeck Community Rail Partnership is publicising them. MW informed the meeting that a new series with Michael Portillo would feature Swanage Railway.

The first workshop for the Wareham Strategic Station Review had taken place, considering the effects of an additional 2 trains per hour to Brockenhurst.

8. Active Travel

NW gave an update on the Norden-Corfe route – still held up in DC Legal/Property departments over land ownership. The Norden-Rempstone route was planned and mostly funded and should be implemented in 2024. The section of NCN Route 2 by Sharford Bridge had been improved with sections of cellular concrete to help with drainage.

BE reported that the concerns about soil contamination on the Cordite Way had been resolved and clearance could begin, by volunteers at the end of the nesting season (31/8). This should make it usable up to the viewpoint, with a history display, by November.

There was some discussion about the alternative path to the crossing at Wareham Station, via the bridge. BE stated that the Phase 2 of the cycle/pedestrian footpath over the flyover (A351) by Wareham Station would be delayed until 2024/25 as permissions from NR and extra funding were needed to complete the step-free alternative footpath into Wareham town.

9. Speed limits

Ian Vaughan Arbuckle was unable to attend because of illness, but reported that 8 applications for 20 mph limits were being considered that day by a DC Panel. He offered assistance to other communities wishing to make applications.

MW reported that the reduced speed limit (40 to 30) at the approach to Swanage appeared to be working satisfactorily, with definite safety benefits near the schools.

10. Other matters

There were none.

11. Next Meeting Date (AGM)

It was proposed and agreed the next meeting would be the AGM and would be held on Thursday 6 July at Swanage Town Hall. This was subsequently changed to 14 September. The Chair reiterated the need for a secretary.
