

**Minutes of the Oxfordshire Parish Transport Representatives
Meeting held in the council chamber of
County Hall on May 3, 2016**

Present: See appendix

Apologies: See appendix

The chair, Chris Robins, reported that Oxfordshire County Council were no longer providing a minute-taker for PTR meetings, nor administrative nor secretarial help with the distribution of minutes and agendas. The council would continue to provide a room for PTR meetings – although precise dates and availability of rooms will not be known until shortly before meetings. Helen Oldfield (Deddington) agreed to take the minutes of this meeting. [Apologies that I do not have the names of individual representatives in what follows.]

Minutes of the last PTR meeting on November 25, 2015, were approved.

Matters arising: The representative from Forest Hill asked whether contact had been established between OCC transport representatives and the health authority and whether collaboration in transporting patients had been jointly considered.

Alexandra Bailey, OCC Services Manager, (hereafter referred to as AB) said she would report on outcome from these discussions in future.

AB confirmed that all county council subsidies to bus services would end on July 21st, subject to a cabinet decision on May 24. She and her team had been meeting bus operators to discuss the post-subsidy future. Of eight operators already met, 50% were planning to continue the services they run in the hope that they would be commercially viable.

AB urged representatives and parish councils to encourage their communities to use the buses and so help preserve them.

Around 10 operators had not responded and AB's fear was that this was an indication their services would not continue. Details when known will be published on an OCC website - **supported-transport@oxfordshire.gov.uk** - and representatives and passengers who leave their email address will be kept informed about their services.

On 10 specific routes, school children will be taken off the special coaches and instead be issued with season tickets for regular buses (only for those entitled to free transport to school). These tickets should tip the balance to make the 10 services viable.

Answers from Thames Travel and Stagecoach concerning some of their at-risk services were expected imminently. A Stagecoach service contract ends on June

4 – details of a stopgap service between then and end-day July 21st will be available on the website.

Pilot scheme

AB explained that currently OCC has a fleet of vehicles that carry out the statutory duty of transporting children to and from school and older people to and from day centres. These buses are dormant between the morning and afternoon peak hours.

Cllr David Nimmo-Smith, responsible for transport, will propose a scheme to the May 24 OCC cabinet meeting whereby parishioners will be able to book passage on these buses during the downtime. The drivers are on full-time contracts, and are keen to operate the buses throughout the day, if necessary working shifts and even operating buses in the evening if there were a demand.

AB continued: The system would work best if groups of passengers from a parish booked a bus at the same time. For one passenger the service would cost £18 per hour; divided between ten passengers the cost would only be £1.80. Initially bookings should be made by telephone, and callers would be informed of the likely cost and would be required to pay up-front (fares will not be taken on the buses).

The model will first be trialled in one specific area. The support of parish councils will be essential in informing their communities of the scheme and encouraging groups – say, who want to attend market day in town – to get together and make maximum and most economic use of the buses.

Everything is on the table. Volunteers would be welcomed if they could help organise regular or one-off trips, ideally for groups.

Q: Is this asset county-wide?

AB: Depots are scattered across county.

Q: What should parish councils do if they want a slice of the cake?

AB: Find out what are patterns of behaviour – where people want to go.

Q: How big are the buses?

AB: They are minibuses. They are not panaceas. People have shopping trolleys, wheelchairs etc. Space is limited.

Q: What will the service be called?

AB: Favoured “Flower bus”. Others, she said, preferred Sparrow or Red Kite. (Hereinafter referred to as Flower Power bus by representatives)

Q: Does OCC have any residual duties [aside from the statutory duty of transporting children to school]?

AB: We have to understand unmet needs for transport. We don't have to do anything about them.

Q: For preventative health care it's important for older people to do things, go places, keep up social connections. Taxis too expensive. Short-sighted to cut off public transport?

AB: What will the effect be in 10 years? Can't tell.

Concessionary Fares

Q: If the problem for bus operators is lack of revenue, do concessionary fares make matters worse?

AB: Concessionary fares are a statutory duty. OCC receives a £4million grant for them, but has to make up the deficit of £3million to cover the total cost. Operators get 39% of the full fare when a concessionary pass is used.

Q: Should concessionary pass holders make a voluntary contribution when using buses?

AB: Not necessarily possible. One driver in Bodicote put out a hat for contributions. A policeman boarded the bus and said it was illegal – either the whole fare or no fare should be paid.

Real-time Information

Q: The new Real-Time system should have been working by the end of April – when will it restart?

AB: Will find out.

S106 contributions [legal agreements with developers to provide funds for infrastructure for new sites, eg for transport]

Q: Can this apply to existing routes?

AB: Yes. Several negotiations going on now for S106 contributions. The idea is to develop use of the service so that it becomes commercially viable.

It is worth getting a S106 wish list together and keeping alert to “growth” where developer S106 might be possible.

Community First (formerly ORCC – Oxfordshire Rural Community Council)

Emily Lewis-Edwards reported that quite a few parishes were interested in setting up community buses. She agreed that a template of how to set up a community bus service would be useful. Community bus services would be complementary to the pilot scheme (described above). Start-up funds of £8,500 were available.

Q: Are parish councils able to subsidise bus services?

EL-E: Yes, from S137 money.

Future of the Parish Transport Representative Meetings

The chair asked representatives whether they wished to continue these meetings in light of the fact that a) the rationale of the meetings was to monitor and discuss subsidised bus services and these would no longer exist and b) we were no longer to receive administrative help from OCC.

The feeling of the meeting was that **definitely the meetings should continue.**

The following comments/suggestions were made by representatives:

- We should stick together and explore every option – we make a stronger voice speaking together
- Now OCC has less of a finger in the transport pie with the end of subsidy, we should talk directly to transport operators
- Cllr Nimmo-Smith, the OCC cabinet member for transport, should attend Parish Transport Representative meetings
- PTRs should monitor progress of the Flower Power buses
- Representatives should have more email communication – some working reps are unable to attend midday meetings
- We should suggest to OCC they reconsider their decision not to support the PTR meetings. County councillors who are PTR members should lobby their fellow councillors to reinstate admin support
- In the meantime the chair will draw up agendas, and we will need minute-taker/s
- We need to collate email addresses and need authority to use them. Representatives present were assumed to have given this authority, but many were absent. OCC might provide a list, with contact details, of the non-attenders. It was pointed out that previous emails had included email addresses of all PTRs.
All correspondence could in any case be sent to parish council clerks
- OCC staff (although fewer of them) will continue to attend PTR meetings
- PTR meetings could in future be held twice a year. One rep suggested more often while uncertainty over bus services and the pilot scheme continues

Any Other Business:

None

Next Meeting:

It was agreed the next meeting should be in September. Date to depend on room availability

Appendix

Parish Transport Representatives present at the May 3rd 2016 PTR meeting at County Hall

Betty Griffiths	Appleton with Eaton
Richard Wilkins	Bampton
Anne Purse	Beckley & Stowood
David Cook	Benson
David Eldridge	Berinsfield
M St John Nicolle	Blewbury
Theresa Goss	Bloxham
Jenny Yates	Bloxham parish c'cil clerk
Margaret Christer	Bodicote
Elizabeth Glover	Brightwell-cum-Sotwell
David Turner	Chalgrove
Frank Dumbleton	Chilton
Eve Coles	Chipping Norton
MJ Dixon	Chipping Norton
Marilyn Dyer-Lynch	Cholsey
Rob Jones	Claydon
Chris Bates	Cotswold Line PTR incl. Bourtons PTR
Francesca Jones	Crowmarsh
Alison Jenner	Cumnor
Martin Hart	Cuxham with Easington
Helen Oldfield	Deddington
Mary Harrison	East Hagbourne
David Cooper	Ewelme
D Stukenbroeker	Eynsham
C Hitchens	Fifield
Malcolm Leeding	Forest Hill with Shotover
Geoff Price	Fritwell PC
Hope Price	Cherwell Valley
Rodney Pollock	Grove
Dave Green	Hampton Gay & Hampton Poyle
Jane Smewing	Henley
Tian Davidson	Hinton Waldrist
Heather Palmer	Horspath
J Allsworth	Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor
Mike Alderson	Kingston Lisle
Helen Macbeth	Kirtlington
Dorian Hancock	Littlemore
Gordon Rogers	Long Wittenham
Lesley Kinch	Longworth
Chloe Woodhead	North Aston
Veronica Gibbs	North Moreton
Sue Tanner	Oxford City Central, South & West Comm TR
Jean Fooks	Oxford City North Area Committee TR
Bartha Pitman	Shipton-u-Wychwood
John Lloyd	Shrivenham

Roy McMillan	South Stoke
SJ Ferguson	Steeple Aston
Mark Winstanley	Stonesfield
Mary Stiles	Thame
Jessie West	Upton
Jean Nunn-Price	Wantage
Ian Hill	Watlington
Terry Prichard	West Hagbourne
Eileen Langley	Wootton (Abingdon)
Mark Harris	Wroxton & Balscote

Emily Lewis-Edwards Community First Oxon

Apologies

Robert Hall	Abingdon
Gordon Crossley	Aston Rowant
Hilary Skaar	Duns Tew
Beth Sinclair	Enstone PC
M Gauld	Launton
Breyan Knowles	Moulsford
Pam Feltbower	Piddington
Barbara Naylor	Risinghurst & Sandhills
Geoffrey Thomas	Shiplake
Roger Templeman	South Moreton