



31 Bus

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 3/20

13 JANUARY 2020

The purpose of this Report is to ask Members to consider a recommendation from the Town Council's Assets and Services Working Group to terminate the service in its current form from 1 April 2020.

No. DETAILS

1) BACKGROUND

- The 31 Bus started in mid-2011 running as a service linking Bonchurch to the Town Centre operated by Ventnor Community Bus CIC as an initiative by the then Town Councillor Jim Morgan assisted by the Chair of the Island's Bus Users' Group Stuart George in response to changes in Southern Vectis Services.
- It had no direct contact with the Town Council at that stage other than the provision of a banking facility for it to receive and disperse the funding it then got from the Isle of Wight Council.
- Informed of the resignation of the driver of the Bus from 30 September 2013, the August meeting of the Town Council agreed to establish a working group to explore options for retaining the service.
- The service relaunched on 11 October 2013 in the form of a Town Council contract with Minibus Plus and was extended to St Lawrence by the Town Council meeting 11 November 2013 following the Undercliff Landslide and consequent partial closure.
- Following the withdrawal of the funding from the Isle of Wight Council, an arrangement was negotiated with it for the Town Council to reclaim from it the amount of its subsidy to the passengers qualifying for subsidised travel on the basis of monthly passenger numbers supplied to the Town Council by Minibus Plus.

2) PASSENGER NUMBERS

- The monthly totals of passenger journeys as recorded by Minibus Plus for the financial year 2018/19 and 2019/20 to end November are set out in the following table:

Month	2018	2019	Variance	% Variance
April	501	663	162	32.34
May	631	680	49	7.77
June	588	553	-35	-5.95
July	750	732	-18	-2.40
August	642	658	16	2.49
September	624	465	-159	-25.28
October	650	439	-211	-32.46
November	615	544	-71	-11.4
Sub Total	5,001	4,734	-267	-5.34
December	375			
January	502			
February	532			
March	615			
Total	6,995			

- Councillor Stephen Cockett leafleted every home in St Lawrence in the early summer last year to advertise the service including an element of Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) that provided an option for residents to text a request to be picked up nearer their home address.
- Minibus Plus increased their charges to the Town Council by £5 a day to provide that service but it has been little used: August 14, September 5, October 10 and November 8.

3) FINANCIALS

- a) The following table sets out the amounts paid to Minibus Bus for the service and the income received from the Isle of Wight Council in the years since 2015/16.

FINANCIAL YEAR	COST	INCOME	NET
2015/16	16,818	7,898	8,920
2016/17	19,343	6,344	13,019
2017/18	19,470	7,461	12,009
2018/19	18,575	8,588	9,987
2019/20*	15,455	6,584	8,871

- *January to November only*

- b) During the last four months of 2018/19 the cost was £4,732 against income of £2,462; if that pattern is repeated this year ` the total subsidy required will be £11,640.

4) RECOMMENDATION

The Assets and Services Working Group considered the service in relation to both costs and reliability and decided to recommend that the Town Council terminate the current service from 31 March and consider alternative provision over the next year.
