



The purpose of this Report is for Members to consider a proposal for an extension of the level of service provided by the 31 Bus in St Lawrence.

No. DETAILS

1) BACKGROUND

- a) The future of the 31 Bus has been discussed in recent months by an informal working group of Councillors Tony Marvin, Jason Mack and Stephen Cockett, staff members Nick Cox, Alison Killick and David Bartlett and the Chair of the Bus and Railway Users Group Stuart George.
- b) Discussions have ranged from discontinuing the service through maintaining it for a further year while other options for its development are explored to extending it.
- c) During those discussions Councillor Stephen Cockett has developed a proposal to introduce a Demand Responsive Travel (DRT) approach to the St Lawrence Loop of the current 31 Bus route; his proposal is attached to this Report.

2) THE 31 BUS SERVICE: COSTS

- a) The service started in September 2011 following the closure of the Wightbus routes that month in an initiative led by the then Town Councillor Jim Morgan supported by an initial 2011 grant by the Town Council of £200
- b) As the service provider has moved from a Community Interest Company set up by Councillor Jim Morgan to Minibus Plus from August 2014 the required level of subsidy has grown significantly following the withdrawal of funding support for it by the Isle of Wight Council.
- c) By 2014/15 the basis of its funding by the Town Council has been to fill the gap between the income received from fare paying (£2.50 per journey) passengers and the Isle of Wight Council's refund of 50% of the fare of those qualifying for a bus pass and the charges levied by Minibus Plus.
- d) The consequent charge to the Precept for recent years has been that subsidy as follows:

Year	Cost	Income	Subsidy
2015/16	16,818	7,898	8,920
2016/17	19,363	6,344	13,019
2017/18	19,470	7,461	12,009
2018/19*	13,843	7,491	6,352

* 9 months to 31 December

3) THE 31 BUS SERVICE: USAGE

- a) The current service provision consists of three loops repeated three times daily from Monday to Friday inclusive.
- b) The numbers of passenger journeys – as recorded by the driver – for each of the loops/runs are shown on a monthly basis on the attachment to this Report for 2017/18 and the current financial year to 31 December.

4) DEMAND RESPONSIVE TRANSPORT PROPOSAL

- a) The proposal, as outlined by Councillor Stephen Cockett in the attachment, is intended to offer both an improved service for St Lawrence residents and a reduction in the required subsidy due to a resultant increase in passenger journeys.
- b) The provider has confirmed a willingness to operate on this basis with an additional charge of £5 per day, or £1,300 for the full year.

5) RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to consider the piloting of a Demand Responsive Transport element for the St Lawrence loop in 2019/20.

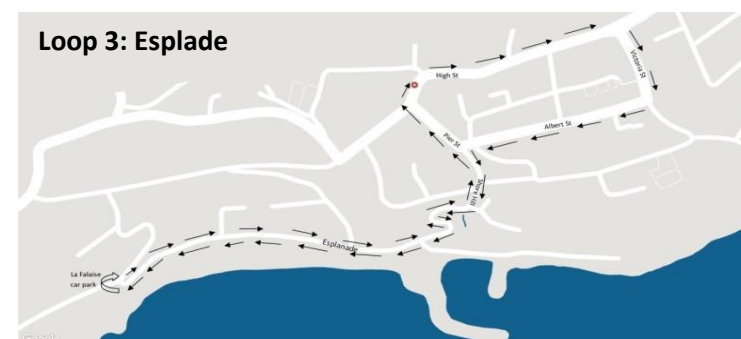
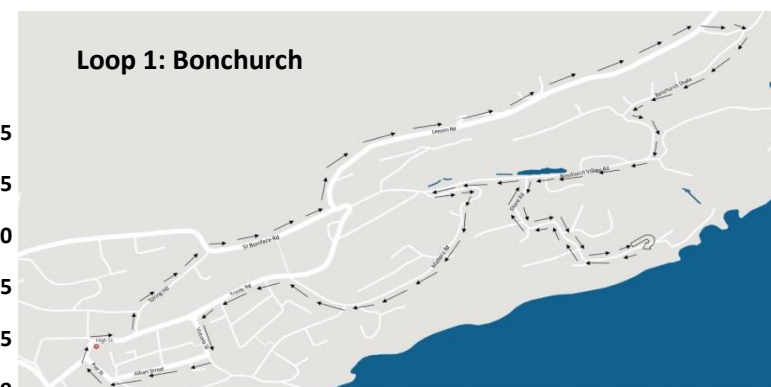
2017/18 Passenger Journeys, 31 Bus

Month	First Run				Second Run				Third Run				Total
	Loop 1	Loop 2	Loop 3	Total	Loop 1	Loop 2	Loop 3	Total	Loop 1	Loop 2	Loop 3	Total	
April	44	89	6	139	32	101	2	135	29	109	3	141	415
May	37	90	9	136	34	99	12	145	41	109	14	164	445
June	71	113	11	195	72	110	11	193	71	124	7	202	590
July	64	76	9	149	59	76	9	144	48	78	6	132	425
August	82	77	9	168	68	81	10	159	70	79	9	158	485
September	48	53	4	105	53	65	9	127	46	52	19	117	349
October	83	91	25	199	72	95	21	188	61	76	17	154	541
November	106	75	23	204	87	83	20	190	71	73	17	161	555
December	80	72	16	168	75	70	10	155	67	60	11	138	461
January	94	65	20	179	86	66	18	170	64	51	13	128	477
February	88	66	14	168	84	74	14	172	66	59	11	136	476
March	91	68	19	178	76	65	17	158	76	62	13	151	487
Total	888	935	165	1,988	798	985	153	1,936	710	932	140	1,782	5,706

Cost per passenger journey

£ 2.10

Average	74	78	14	166	67	82	13	161	59	78	12	149	476
Half year 17/18	346	498	48	892	318	532	53	903	305	551	58	914	2,709
Half year 18/19	949	766	241	1,956	795	686	214	1,695	742	599	185	1,526	3,597



2018/19 Passenger Journeys, first 9 months, 31 Bus

	First Run				Second Run				Third Run				Total
Month	Loop 1	Loop 2	Loop 3	Total	Loop 1	Loop 2	Loop 3	Total	Loop 1	Loop 2	Loop 3	Total	
April	93	67	21	181	82	71	14	167	74	60	4	138	486
May	121	84	25	230	97	82	29	208	86	71	21	178	616
June	101	83	29	213	88	79	23	190	85	65	18	168	571
July	125	112	33	270	100	102	30	232	94	88	28	210	712
August	111	89	30	230	93	75	29	197	89	67	31	187	614
September	107	95	28	230	91	76	27	194	85	66	23	174	598
October	108	106	24	238	95	71	25	191	88	86	26	200	629
November	117	95	32	244	88	79	21	188	83	57	19	159	591
December	66	35	19	120	61	51	16	128	58	39	15	112	360
Total	949	766	241	1,956	795	686	214	1,695	742	599	185	1,526	5,177
Average	105	85	27	217	88	76	24	188	82	67	21	170	575

Number 31

The number 31 bus service runs Monday to Friday and links the town centre with three areas: Bonchurch, St Lawrence and the Esplanade. The bus performs each of these three loops three times during the morning.

The service has required subsidy from the town council due to passenger numbers not generating sufficient revenue.

Boosting passenger numbers.

An approach has been developed that alters the operation and remarkets the service to remind residents the service is in existence and to inform them about proposed operational changes.

Marketing:

Visibility. Unlike other community buses the 31 does not have a branded livery, due to the bus being owned by a third party that option is not open. Suggestion is to reinstate placards that can be displayed in the windows of the bus to increase visibility. And the re-installation of 'flags' at bus stops.

Public awareness. As part of the re-launch it is proposed to deliver leaflets detailing the operational changes to homes in the affected area. Further to this it may be worthwhile to leaflet the areas in Bonchurch to raise public awareness.

Operations:

Overview:

It is proposed to introduce a Demand Responsive Transport DRT operation into the St Lawrence portion of the buses serviced area. Specifically, a semi-flexible DRT whereas the bus will maintain a fixed route and timetable on a core route but collect (and subsequently drop off) passengers from roads off of that core route following advance booking.

Rationale: User group is elderly and frequently being of poor mobility, therefore leaving home and making an extended journey by foot to a point on the core route impractical, especially considering that some properties are in the region of 1 kilometre from the core route.

The bus cannot visit every road on a scheduled basis but is able to make ad-hoc trips onto roads adjoining the core route, thereby bringing the service into the reach of all residents.

Booking:

It is proposed that booking will be made by sending a text message containing the required information to a mobile phone, from there the data can be collated in a logical manner and forwarded to the driver. The administration of these tasks shall be handled by the supplier.

The data required comprises of three parts.

- 1, a number to denote the loop up which the pick up is to be made.
- 2, a letter to denote the zone in which the passenger will be waiting.
- 3, a name to confirm bookings are fulfilled.

The precise nature of the collection and distribution of this data is still to be determined but the screen shots below demonstrate the fundamentals. In practice the task of collating the data is very quick to perform, 20 texts can be converted to a sorted Excel list in 3 – 4 minutes.

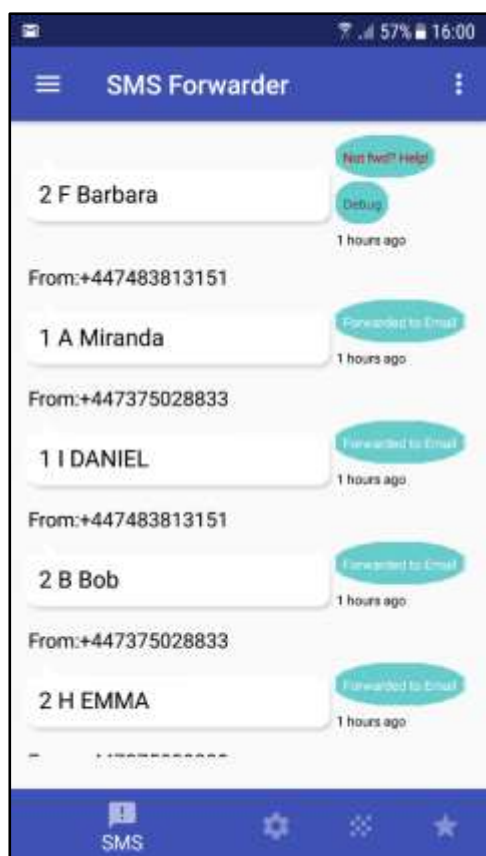


Fig 1,

A	B	C	D
	DATA		
	1 a alison		
	1 a miranda		
	1 b Morgan		
	1 f jane		
	1 g mike		
	1 i Daniel		
	1 L fiona		
	1 n edmund		
	2 b bob		
	2 d David		
	2 e elizabeth		
	2 f barbara		
	2 f Morgan		
	2 f tony		
	2 h arthur		
	2 h emma		
	3 a Barry		
	3 e terry		
	3 j Baldrick		
	3 l paul		
	Sheet1		

Fig 2,

Fig 1 shows how text messages can be collected into an easily readable form using an app which prevents the requirement to individually open each message.

Fig 2 shows that data entered into Excel whereupon it can be quickly sorted into a logical manner, firstly by loop number and then alphabetically into a logical route for the driver.

It is proposed that the administration of this is carried out by the supplier, and verbal agreement has been given.

Route:

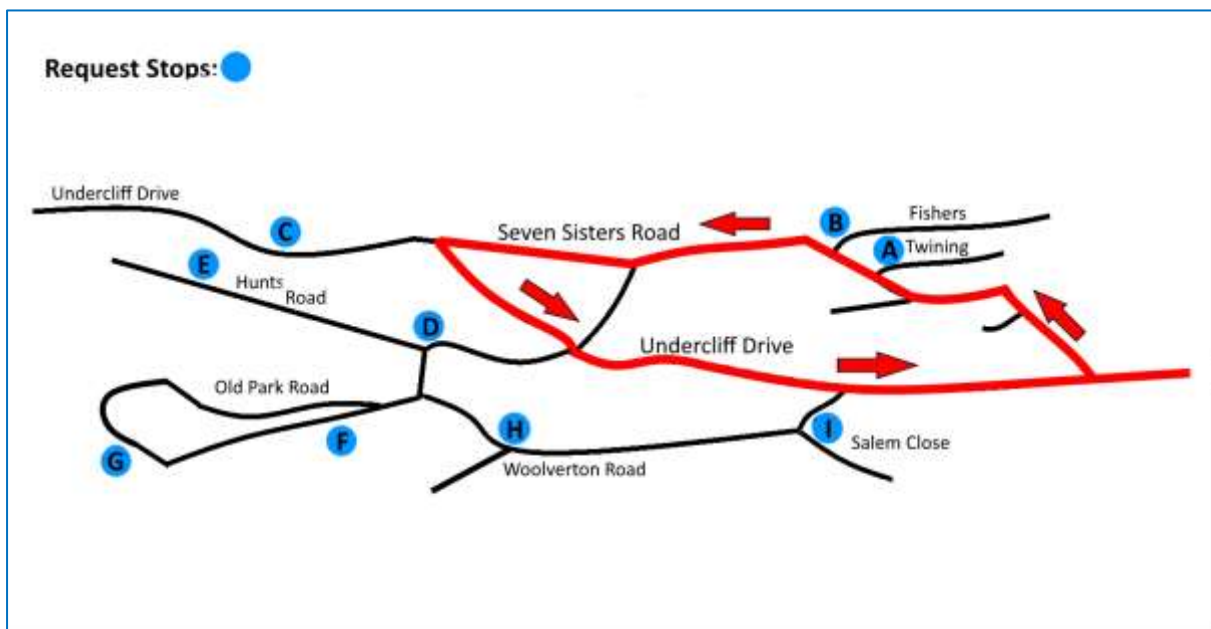
It is considered that because of the road network there is little to be gained from rolling out a DRT scheme in Bonchurch, due to the much shorter distances between residential properties and the existing core route.

Due to very low utilisation at the Esplanade it is also proposed to remove that loop from the core route. However, the regular users of that loop will be invited into the DRT scheme.

The red route in the attached maps shows the current core route on which existing customers live and existing bus stops are situated.



Eastern portion.



Western portion.

Timetable:

Currently due to the low utilization of the bus there is 'slack' time where the bus pauses either during or between loops. It is believed that by removing the Esplanade portion and the pauses there will be sufficient time to deal with increased activity. The existing timetable will be re-jigged to best fit predicted changes, and times will be published to fit around the existing bus stop locations.

Days of operation:

To capture a new market, it is also proposed to run a service on Saturday morning, to prevent a subsequent increase in costs it is suggested to remove one day of service (which day as yet to be defined) from the schedule. This has been verbally agreed with the supplier.

Finance:**Breaking even:**

Based upon subsidies, the current operation needs 16,000 journeys and subsequent refunds of £1.25 to break even.

The bus operates 260 days per year, meaning 61.5 single journeys per day to break even.

Increased costs to council:

As indicated supplier has offered to carry out new service for an additional £5 per day, therefore equivalent of 4 single trips.

Launch:

As ward councillor for St Lawrence I will make myself available during the launch period to meet the public and address matters related to bookings.

Additionally, I have offered to distribute information flyers door to door within the village. Draft flyer attached.

NUMBER

31

VENTNOR
COMMUNITY
TRANSPORT

***NOW COVERING ALL OF ST LAWRENCE**

(Including Ventnor Botanic Gardens)

***NEW SATURDAY SERVICE**

Mondays to Saturday except Thursdays

The number 31 makes three trips through St Lawrence to Ventnor town centre, giving the perfect amount of time to pop to the shops or onwards to Bonchurch and the Esplanade.

With a concessionary bus-pass it's completely free, and under 16's can travel for free. Otherwise just £3 for a days travel,

In addition to the established regular route, with the new service you can text in advance and get a pick up from the following locations: Old Park Road: Hunts Road: Seven Sisters: Twining & Fishers: Undercliff Drive: Woolverton Road: Inglewood Road: Steephill Road: Castle Close.

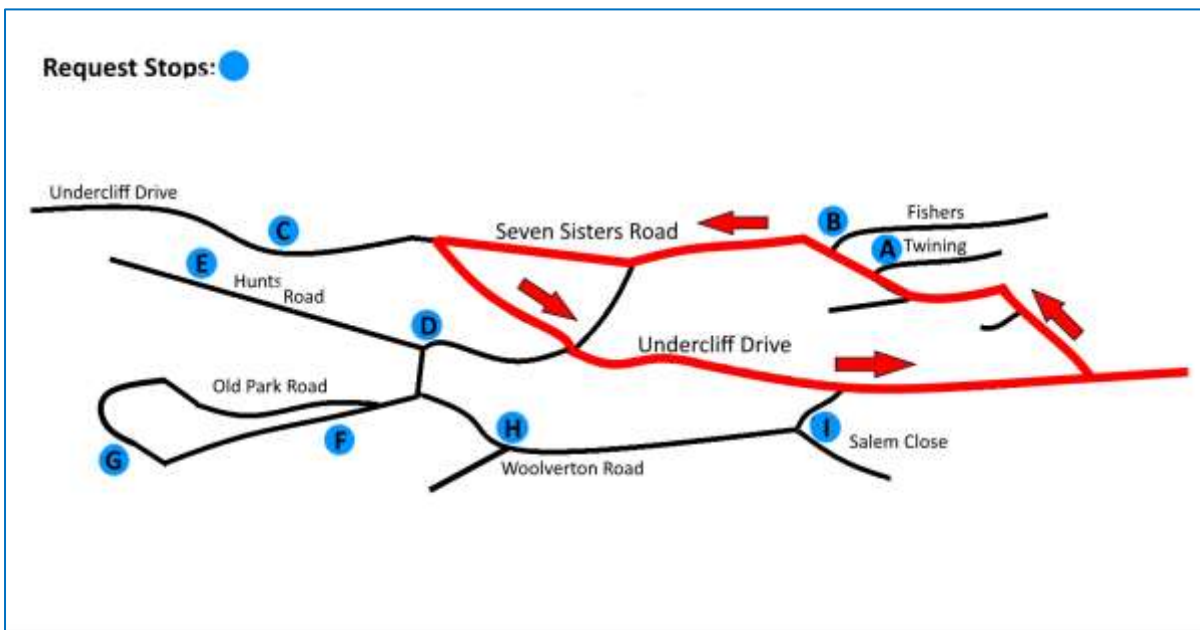
How to book:

1, Send a text message the evening before or by 8.30am stating: Loop number, pick-up location and your name, for example 1 k Joan or 3 b Andy etc

Stop		Loop 1	Loop 2	Loop 3
Ventnor Boots		10:06	11:06	12:06
Seven Sisters Road	A B	10:12	11:12	12:12
St Lawrence Tollgate cottage & Undercliff Drive West	C	10:15	11:15	12:15
Hunts Road	D E	10:18	11:18	12:18
Old Park & Wolverton	F G H I	10:20	11:20	12:20
Inglewood	J	10:21	11:21	12:21
Steephill / Castle close	L K	10:25	11:25	12:25
Ventnor Boots		10:28	11:28	12:28



Eastern portion.



Booking number: 07*****

For info and booking assistance call Stephen on: 07711*****

