



No. 31 Bus

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 70/13

9 SEPTEMBER 2013

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the future of the No. 31 bus service and identify the options following the information that the current operator will be unavailable for a period of several months from the end of September and that the Ventnor Community Bus CIC is to cease operations.

No. DETAIL

1) INTRODUCTION

- a) The No. 31 Bus Service is provided by Island Minibus & Coach Services under guidance of Ventnor Community Bus CIC, running five mornings a week and funded by the Isle of Wight Council – currently at £60 a day – until March 2014.
 - b) The Town Council meeting of 12 August was informed that the future of the service is under threat due to the require for its operator to have a period of three months' absence and the fact that Ventnor Community Bus CiC is to close.
 - c) The meeting resolved, in Minute 115/13: a Working Group be established including Councillors Ken Knapman, Brian Lucas, Tony Marvin and Jason Mack and the Town Clerks to consider the matter in more detail.
 - d) A meeting of the Working Group on 23 August was joined by the operator, Stuart George and Evelyn Knowles in her capacity as a Director of the CiC.
 - e) Three options have emerged from that meeting and a subsequent helpful meeting the Clerks were able to have with Stuart George. Each of those is set out in the following three sections of this report.
 - f) The Working Group was informed that the current operator has already given notice to the Traffic Commissioners of the termination of the service from the end of this month.
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2) SUBSTITUTE DRIVERS

- a) Most of the discussion at the Working Group meeting revolved around the possibility of recruiting at least two substitute drivers with the necessary licences to take over, on a voluntary basis, the running of the service using the current minibus under the supervision of the present operator and Minibus owner.
 - b) Details of names and addresses and availability of two potential drivers under these circumstances were promised to be forwarded to the Assistant Clerk and have been supplied this week.
 - c) However, the two proposed volunteers both have caring responsibilities and there is currently no certainty that they could provide full cover of the present service level – copy of timetable attached with this report.
 - d) The current operator is proposing to continue to provide oversight of the service and the necessary licensing and registration qualifications.
 - e) If the service is to continue on this basis then no other involvement from the Town Council would be required other than a continuation of the banking function it provides.
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3) SERVICE POSTPONEMENT

- a) Given the apparent uncertainty about availability and cover for the service and the level of licencing required for drivers using the current Minibus it might be necessary to allow the termination of the current arrangements for the service with the Traffic Commissioners.
 - b) Another factor relevant to the available options is the uncertainty about the continuation of the Isle of Wight Council funding beyond 31 March next year; that position, the Isle of Wight
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Council have said, will not be clarified until the February budget meetings.

- c) In that context, an option is to allow the present service to stop with a view to it being restarted by either the current operator of the Town Council when and if ongoing funding is confirmed, by which time the present operator is likely to be in a position to resume the service.
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4) SECTION 22 COMMUNITY BUS PERMIT

- a) Following his meeting the Clerks, Stuart George emailed Working Group members with a third option involving the Town Council taking over responsibility for the service under a Section 22 Community Bus Permit.
 - b) Stuart George's email identifies the advantages of this: *This costs £55 and lasts for 5 years. It allows the holder, which must be non-profit-making, to run community bus services which can be used by any member of the public and allows fares to be charged. The permit can be used on any bus up to 16 seats and is transferable between vehicles without notice. The service has to be registered with the traffic commissioners for a fee of £13, normally requiring 28 days' notice, but this period can be reduced with their agreement. The permit also allows the holder to run other unregistered services for special events, which might be useful.*
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5) OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- a) If the Town Council is to have a direct involvement with the operation of the service it would need to be assured that the arrangements for its delivery were reliable in view of the commitments to the Traffic Commissioners.
 - b) Direct responsibility for the service would involve the Town Council in effectively employing drivers for a service that is required to be regular and reliable as volunteers and without pay: a significant change from the Town Council's established practice as a good employer.
 - c) An essential element of volunteering is that the volunteer is entitled to not provide whatever service she or he is involved in whenever they choose. Requiring regular and reliable commitment five mornings a week, every week is an employment relationship and should be remunerated as such
 - d) These considerations could be addressed by entering into a sub-contracted hire arrangement with another mini-bus provider and that possibility is currently being explored by the Clerks with the much appreciated assistance in all these discussions of Stuart George.
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No 31 Bus: Arctic Road (e)

Mon-Fri (not bank hols)

1032 to Ventnor (Boots)

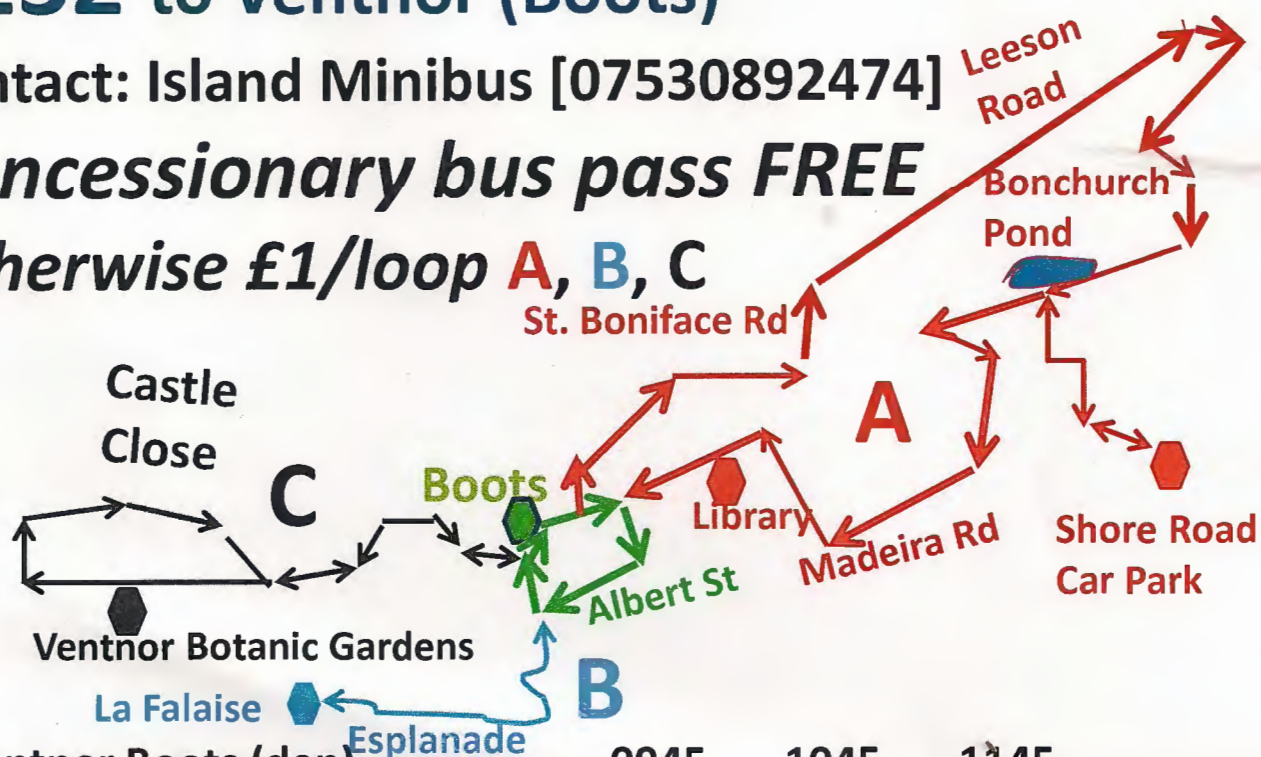
1132 to Ventnor (Boots)

1232 to Ventnor (Boots)

Contact: Island Minibus [07530892474]

Concessionary bus pass FREE

otherwise £1/loop A, B, C



A Ventnor Boots (dep)	0945	1045	1145	
A Bonchurch Pond	0953	1053	1153	
A Shore Road Car Park	0956	1056	1156	
A Madeira Road (Ventnor Towers)	1001	1101	1201	
B Ventnor Boots (dep)	1007	1107	1207	1235
B Ventnor Esplanade	1012	1112	1212	1240
C Ventnor Boots (dep)	1018	1118	1218	
C Ventnor Botanic Garden	1025	1125	1225	
C Castle Close	1028	1128	1228	
Ventnor Boots (T = terminates)	1034 T	1134 T	1234	1245T