



No. 31 Bus

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 31/14

14 APRIL 2014

The purpose of this report is to update Members in respect of the funding and operation of the No. 31 Bus for the financial year 2014/15.

No. DETAIL

1) BACKGROUND

- a) Established in January 2012 and operated by Ventnor Community Bus CIC until September 2013 on the basis of funding provided by the Isle of Wight Council the No. 31 Bus has provided a valuable service to residents not served by established Southern Vectis routes and become the most used of all the Island's Community Bus services.
- b) When the initial operator of the service had to withdraw due to personal circumstances, the Town Council set up a Working Group at its meeting of 9 September 2013 of Councillors Ken Knapman, Brian Lucas, Tony Marvin and Jason Mack and the Town Clerks to consider the matter in more detail.
- c) In the context of that group, the Assistant Town Clerk sourced an alternative provider in the form of the Lake-based minibus-plus with an already established track record in school transport for the Isle of Wight Council and holding all relevant licences.
- d) On this basis, the Town Council agreed at its meeting of 14 October 2013 to continue its only formal connection with the service: the receipt of funds from the Isle of Wight Council on a monthly basis and consequent payment to the operator, now minibus-plus.
- e) The service continued without incident for the remainder of the financial year 2013/14.

2) ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2014/15

- a) Arrangements for the current financial year were discussed at a meeting with the relevant Isle of Wight Council Officers attended by the Assistant Clerk and Deputy Mayor on 18 March.
- b) It was made clear that the Isle of Wight Council was in a position to continue funding the service on the existing cost basis for 2014/15 on the basis that in the absence of the CIC or any other community group responsible for the service, the Town Council took on that role.
- c) It was also clear that funding would not be available beyond 31 March 2015.
- d) Given that minibus-plus is willing to continue the service on a sub-contract basis to the Town Council, there are no insurance implications or costs for the Town Council.

3) RECOMMENDATION

The Town Council is recommended to take on responsibility for the operation of the service for the financial year 2014/15.

4) ADDENDUM

- a) Evelyn Knowles has received the following advice from Stuart George:
Southern Vectis now tell me they regard buses not going in to Shanklin station as "semi-permanent". In addition, the new service 3 timetable from 4 May (http://assets.goaheadbus.com/media/cms_page_media/2014/4/8/Route%203%20timetable.pdf) removes half the day time connections at the station. All this at the same time as the IW Council last Saturday started funding a bus connection between Sandown station, town centre and seafront. Perhaps it's time our councillors got involved.
- b) Members are asked to consider what action the Town Council should take.