

## TUNBRIDGE WELLS PUBLIC TRANSPORT FORUM

**Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday 27 January 2010 at the Town Hall, Tunbridge Wells.**

**Present:**

Councillor Peter Davies, TWBC (Chairman) (PD)  
 David Batchelor, Passenger Transport Systems Officer, KCC (DB)  
 Lene Beynon, Borough Engineering Officer, TWBC (LB)  
 Cheryl Clark, Committee Administrator, TWBC (CC)  
 Michael Coggles, Chairman, Access Group (MC)  
 John Goodfellow, on behalf of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum (JG)  
 Graham Harmer, General Manager, Arriva (BH)  
 Alan Hewett, Travel Planner, NHS (AH)  
 Norman Kemp, Company Secretary, Nu-Venture Coaches Ltd (NK)  
 Martin Lewis, Chairman Tunbridge Wells & District Railway Travellers' Association (ML)  
 David Nichol, representing Kent Association of Local Councils  
 Brian O'Kane, General Manager, Arriva (BoK)  
 Richard Phillips, on behalf of Sandhurst Parish Council and Hawkhurst Accessibility Group (RP)  
 Tom Pierpoint, Public Transport Planner, KCC (TP)  
 Councillor Brian Ransley, TWBC (BR)  
 Daniel Washington, Public Transport Planner, KCC (DW)  
 Tim Walker, on behalf of Lamberhurst Parish Council (TW)

**Members of the Public in attendance:**

None

**Apologies received from:**

Mike Appelbe, on behalf of Hawkhurst Parish Council  
 David Candlin, Head of Economic Development and Regeneration

**Action  
By:**

**MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

- (1) **Accuracy:** The minutes of the last meeting held on 10 June 2009 (previously circulated) were agreed as correct subject to an amendment to a future agenda item under minute (37) d. to refer to the Coastal 254 Sundays only service.
- (2) **Matters Arising:**
  - a. Minute (11) b.- The impact of the polyclinic on traffic flows in St John's Road would be assessed after it became operational and MC advised he would be willing to engage volunteers to monitor the situation;
  - b. Minute (17) – The Chairman advised that he considered it would be helpful for the appropriate Select Committee to look at wider issues relating to the timetables and train transport for the Borough and he had asked for it to be added to their work programme going forward.
  - c. NK confirmed supplies of timetables to the Gateway.

**PD**

## PRESENTATION – REAL TIME INFORMATION AT BUS STOPS

- (3) DB gave the presentation (attached with these minutes as Appendix A), which included both the Real Time Information (RTI) and Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) systems. In answer to questions from MC, DB confirmed that the systems were secure, but there was also provision for the system to be overridden by the Emergency Services. He did not believe this included control over the traffic lights by the new hospital but they could look at that as a separate issue. MC asked about audible information at bus stops and DB advised that a number of bus stops had the facility but were not yet activated until wider issue of new smart cards. TW asked whether the new bus stop facility would be available in all rural areas but DB advised this would depend on the importance of individual bus stops and their set up within the overall hierarchy. DW confirmed that KCC would liaise with parishes in ascertaining key bus stops but the higher priority areas would be at train and bus stations or major interchanges or shopping centres. Otherwise DB advised that s106 monies might be used to extend the provision of the service. DB also advised that priority for buses could be allocated at individual junctions.

## UPDATE: PEMBURY HOSPITAL TRAVEL PLAN

- (4) **AH** advised that the hospital development was running ahead of schedule. In respect of RTI he would liaise with DB on issues relating to the traffic lights. Bus routes had been included in the Section 106 agreement but further information was awaited in respect of the delayed Kick-Start bid due end February 2010. AH highlighted concern over the Tunbridge Wells bus fare zones and the boundary just before the hospital which meant that fares to the hospital would be more expensive.
- (5) He advised that work on travel plans for Maidstone had been favourably received by KCC and they were now intending to work further on the plan for Pembury and re-activate the working party. Responses to recent staff surveys indicated numbers of car users as 67% to K&S, 77% to Maidstone and 85% to Pembury. Targets within the travel plan would consequently need to be reviewed. An increase in the need for parking of approximately 100 spaces was being considered and a planning application was being drawn up in preparation but timescales in this respect could not be confirmed. The Chairman recalled that planning permission had been granted for 1200 cars on the site and AH confirmed that this had already been built just beyond the works entrance. There was further discussion regarding car parking requirements and concerns that bus services would not be suitable, would not provide direct services from villages, nor would they be commercially viable.
- (6) **MC** made suggestions on possible parking restrictions in Pembury Village to ease congestion and AH confirmed that they had requested double yellow lines and the removal of a traffic island and this was now with KCC. He considered problems would reduce with the number of contractors on site during 2011.
- (7) **BOK** indicated that the new bus routes under discussion with the hospital were hourly services from Tunbridge Wells, Monday to Saturday, an hourly service to Maidstone via Pembury village and an extension of the existing Crowborough to Tunbridge Wells service to Pembury every 30 minutes. TW reiterated concerns on access from west Kent villages.

## UPDATE FROM SOUTHEASTERN

- (8) **LB** advised that in the absence of both MG and MM that she would request and append any updates received to these minutes.

## UPDATES FROM BUS COMPANIES

- (9) **BOK** advised that the results of bus tenders for introduction in April 2010 would soon be known and outcome of Kick Start bids was awaited. Arriva had received good press following disruption caused by snow and not too many complaints. DW advised that KCC had given priority to bus routes when gritting the roads. They had done what they could in the circumstances.
- (10) **MC** complained about the 281 route and that the last bus at night was often not accessible. He also complained that the ramp would not operate on 24 January 2010 and the driver's fingers had become trapped in an attempt to free it. The ramps should be checked as part of the daily checks.
- (11) **NK** advised that Nu-Venture were working with KCC to look at use of options and solutions for use of smart cards and ticket machines.
- (12) **RP** had complaints about the No. 5 service from Arriva no longer connecting with trains and that he had been advised that a change would not occur until the end of January when timetables were due to change. BOK thought this could have been due to the notice period required to be given to the Traffic Commissioner.  
**Action - KCC would report back at the next meeting concerning the No. 5 Service.** **DW/TP**
- (13) **ML** noted that BOK was standing down from his role as General Manager at Arriva and requested thanks for his work. His vote of thanks was seconded by MC and the Chairman on behalf of the Public Transport Forum.

## UPDATES FROM KHS

- (14) **DW** introduced his colleague TP: either one of them would be in attendance at future meetings.  
**Action: They were unable to comment on tenders which were due to be published shortly but would update this forum at its next meeting.** **DW/TP**
- (15) **Meadow Road bus stop:** DW advised that work was due to commence in February to extend the bus stop outside Royal Victoria Place in Mount Pleasant to accommodate 2 buses. The Meadow Road stop would then be used as a stand only. Press releases would be made to advertise the new arrangements.
- (16) **Tactile markers at bus stops:** DW advised that there were no plans for these in Kent but they would continue to be investigated.  
**Action: KCC to report back to the forum at a future meeting.** **DW/TP**
- (17) **Timetables:** DW asked that they be advised over missing timetables. RP advised that frames had been set up but timetables had not been supplied in his area. He also advised that a bus stop on the east bound side in the centre of Hawkhurst still said 'Victoria Hall' when it should be 'Alms Houses'.  
**Action: KCC to update.** **DW/TP**

- (18) **Kent Freedom Pass:** -DW advised that from September 2010 this would be available to pupils in Kent who went to school outside the county. There would be no change to age limits
- (19) **Concessionary Fares:** DW advised that the DfT had announced that this scheme would become a full County responsibility from April 2001, although this would probably not impact on the service. The basis of the scheme and reimbursement was under challenge and further news was expected in February on any changes to the method of calculation. NK confirmed that bus operators had serious issues with the scheme which had been forced upon them. JG also considered the scheme an issue with regard to the cost to the Borough and the lack of incentive to bus companies to improve services.
- (20) **Bus Service Operators Grant:** DW advised that changes were due to the way this would be funded.  
**Action: KCC to update at next meeting.** **DW/TP**

### **MASTERPLANNING**

- (21) LB advised that in the absence of DC, there was no update at this time.  
**Action: Masterplanning to remain as a standing agenda item** **DC/LB**

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- (22) MC- Local Transport Plan.
- (23) DW/TP- Presentation from Sussex Community Railway Partnership (within the boundaries of the Borough at Ashurst).
- (24) DN – Further update from Alan Hewitt.  
**Action: Any further agenda items for the next meeting should be submitted to the Chairman by 16/09/09 and copied to LB.** **All**

### **NEXT MEETING DATES**

- (25) The next meeting was confirmed as 16 June 2010 **All**