

RAME PENINSULA PUBLIC TRANSPORT USERS GROUP

PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS CUTS TO LOCAL BUS SERVICES

SHEVIOCK MEMEORIAL HALL, CRAFTHOLE

Monday 20th June 2022 6pm

AGENDA

<p>1.</p>	<p>Welcome Guest Speakers- Mel Watson (Transport Co-ordination Service Manager, (Cornwall Council)) James Church (Commercial & Customer Manager Go South West Bus) Chair – Kate Ewert (Cornwall Councillor for Rame Peninsula & St Germans).</p> <p>Over 100 people attended the meeting. There were 99 who signed the attendance sheets, comprising of 48 from Crafhole, 10 from Portwrinkle, 8 from Sheviock, 10 from Torpoint, 5 each from St. Germans & Millbrook, 2 each from Cawsand/Kingsand, Antony & Donderry plus 1 each from Maker, Widegates, Tre-rulefoot, Looe, Cremyll, St. Winnolls, & Eglarooze. In addition there were four people from the top table who did not sign the sheets including the speakers, and possibly a few in the audience who did not sign in.</p> <p>Introductions Cllr. Ewert put into context the need for the meeting. The meeting was called to discuss the bus cuts on the Rame Peninsula. She thanked the officers for attending from Cornwall Council tonight. Cllr Ewert thanked Geoff Cadwallader and Eric Parkin of the R.P.P.T.U.G. for their contribution over many years. She further explained that there has previously been a very good relationship between Cornwall Council and the Rame Peninsula Public Transport Users Group but this relationship has been strained just recently.</p> <p>Context given by Mel Watson. Cornwall were bucking the national trend in that passenger numbers were rising pre covid. Passengers have not come back after covid. Demand has changed. Concessionary passes have not returned, 35% down. Fare payers are 15% down. Operators are not getting the revenue. This is a nationwide issue. The 4th of April we received information that we would be granted 17% of what we asked for. We still don't know what that funding is and we are still waiting to hear from Government as to when we get it and how much. Cornwall Council wrote to all M.P.'s in the South- West about the loss of bus funding. We have had to adapt our bus services to reflect the new normal. We have had to take actions to reduce costs on the network. Services are further compounded by significant driver shortages, rising fuel costs and wage increases. In February we had to agree small changes to the network looking at Cornwall as a whole to make sure Go Cornwall would not make further losses. The day after these decisions were made James Church informed R.P.T.U.G. of these cuts/changes. The changes made in April have not gone down well.</p>
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	<p>Cllr. Desmonde says that we need people back on buses, we have to get revenue back in. We will be looking again at services in September. Mel challenged the assembled group to use the bus service where and when they can to help build the system back up again.</p> <p>James Church James explained that the covid period had been tough. It was a break- even business prior to covid and we were comfortable with where we were. Torpoint had a brand new fleet of buses at the beginning of covid. Coming out of covid we were £6 million in debt. Government funding would have helped but it has ended. There is a new C.E.O. of Go Cornwall. We had to target the gaps, the biggest cut being 70 Craffhole to Plymouth. Where we were it had to happen. September we can rejig a little. We need to see growth back on the network.</p>	
2.	<p>What makes a good bus service? Regular, frequent reliable, direct through services, easily accessible, good bus/rail connections, real time information available, simple easy to use timetables, affordable fares, reducing carbon footprint by encouraging drivers to leave their cars at home.</p> <p>For the places in our area affected by the bus cuts bus services are far less regular and frequent. Bus/Rail connections are drastically reduced. Many direct bus services to Plymouth have been discontinued. The new timetables are more complicated. The new affordable fares scheme does not apply to fares into Plymouth.</p> <p>The Pilot Fare Scheme does not work in Plymouth it should be the same throughout the County. (Cawsand/Cremyll issue cited). Mel replied that the Bus Fare Pilot was introduced as a way to simplify and reduce fares for the County.</p>	
3.	<p>About the bus cuts. Geoff Cadwallader pointed out that it was very important that Craffhole & Sheviok should be included as well as Great Park in the re-routing of the 70 Bus in both directions the same as the remaining four 70B buses are currently routed. James Church agreed to give consideration to this proposal.</p> <p>James Church said that in September we will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make improvement on the 70B bus in the morning and afternoon. • Tidy up the 75 bus between Plymouth and Liskeard. • Great Park will be included with the 70 bus in both directions. • The 75A Torpoint to Plymouth will be withdrawn entirely as it doesn't work. • There will no longer be a bus service from St Germans to Plymouth during the day. • The 75 service does not connect with the 70 (there is a half hour wait). An improved connection can be looked at here. 	
(i)	<p>Reasons given for the cuts, dates information received, prior knowledge and consultation and dates cuts implemented. Original reason cited was that the Pandemic Support Grant was not extended. Cllr. Kate Ewert and Geoff Cadwallader were informed on the 24th February, 1 day before the revised timetables were sent to Traffic Comms-42 days notice</p>	

	<p>requirement. £150million additional pandemic support was announced on March 1st.</p>	
(ii)	<p>Brief Summary of the local bus cuts</p> <p>Withdrawal of 70B Portwrinkle to Torpoint to Plymouth R.P. Bus Service via the Railway Station- leaving Torpoint Town Aea with only 1 bus an hour for most of the day crossing to and from Plymouth on the Ferry all day instead of 2 buses a day. Torpoint Estates, Portwrinkle, Crafhole and SheviocK have all lost 9 through buses on weekdays to Royal Parade. 10 lost from R.P. all running via Plymouth Railway Station.</p>	
(iii)	<p>What is new apart from the cuts?</p> <p>New No 75A Service Torpoint to Plymouth and return via SheviocK and St Germans.</p> <p>No 75 All buses now call at all villages. 5 buses daily Torpoint, Liskeard and 6 buses Liskeard to Torpoint.</p>	
(iv)	<p>Comments from members of the public attending the meeting (and responses)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pricing structure/fares have not been communicated well to drivers. Advertising of fares needs to be better. • Bus for short journeys... are you going to change your strategy? A product and pricing strategy should have started two years ago. There will be opportunity for the community to feed into this strategy. • Can the 75 b re- routed due to an inability to get into Plymouth in time for work. <p>The problem is that the bus has to meet the Cremyl Ferry at one end and the Torpoint Ferry at the other end.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evening buses don't go to Cremyl they just go to Millbrook and turn around again. • The Transport Act explains that local transport must provide appropriate public transport for travel to and from work, travelling for medical purposes, travelling for education and travel for social reasons. • The cutting of our services is in danger of breaking the law. People are finding difficulty in getting to hospital appointments, School or College etc., etc. • 75/75A services are sometimes cancelled without warning. <p>How does the bus company get the message out quickly if there is a problem? James acknowledged that RTI is not used to full capability presently. The company were 50 drivers short in Cornwall at one point.</p> <p>Mel said we do not want any cancellations at all and we are working with GO Cornwall on this. Mel urged the public to let Go Cornwall know if buses aren't turning up.</p> <p>James will do some research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More integrated transport needed, more connectivity between Downderry, Seaton and St.Germans. • Portwrinkle, an issue with residents having to walk up a very steep hill to get the bus. • Parents are concerned about safeguarding in that school children are often left stranded when the 34 bus does not turn up. It is not a reliable service and parents have concerns. <p>James will look at this issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portwrinkle cut off. Passengers have to walk from Tregantle to Portwrinkle. Formal complaints have been made but no response given. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small buses, small operators work well in Truro and St Austell but there are not the small operators in this area. We need to work with the community and community buses on this. • Issue crossing at Trerulefoot (Ref. Carkeel-Trerulefoot Safety Consultation) <p>To get young people using buses issuing of card discounts for up to 25yr olds suggested.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue of second home- owners in Cornwall discussed. 	
4.	Recent Government Grants received by Cornwall Council & how they have been used (particularly in relation to benefiting S.E. Cornwall.	
(i)	What proportion of Government extra £150 million Pandemic Support Grant did Cornwall Council receive? Cornwall Council asked for £77million and were granted 17% of what was asked for, £13.2million. Not sure when it will be received. There is no timeline and nothing has been received yet.	
(ii)	In April 2022 Cornwall awarded indicative funding of up to £13.3 million to deliver a package of schemes within its BSIP over the next 3 years. Council to work with Dof T to agree priorities for this spend during Spring/Summer 2022. (Refer agenda 8)	
5.	Proposed solutions. Cllr. Kate Ewert said we are where we are... What can we do going forward? Proposed solutions discussed see agenda item 3.	
A (i)	Reinstate 70B Bus Service (already proposed under agenda item 3	
(ii)	Operate the 75A from Millbrook (instead of Torpoint), to really link up the Rame Peninsula with St. Germans, Kernow Mill and Saltash etc.	
(iii)	Continued need for a through bus service from Donderry and Seaton to Plymouth.	
B	Alterations using existing resources that could substantially mitigate the effects of the bus cuts.	
(i)	Existing 70/70A Bus Services to run via Crafhole, Shevioc and the Torpoint Estates (or on an alternative basis).	
(ii)	Re- route the 75A preferably via Portwrinkle and Crafhole or at least via Crafhole.	
6.	Bus Fares. There will be no short- term changes but the anomaly of the £5 fares will be looked at.	
7.	Bus stop improvements. Lee Quinney, Public Transport and Systems Manager for Cornwall Council has been very helpful dealing with bus stop improvements. The money comes from Transforming City Funds as part of Plymouth Travel to Work Areas. In Tranche 1 grant money was received and used to install RTPI at 12 Bus Stops in Torpoint plus another 6 in Cremyl, Cawsand (2), Millbrook (2) and Antony. Tranche 2 was unsuccessful and as a result Donderry, Seaton, Crafhole, Shevioc, Portwrinkle and Freathy are still without RTPI. Can money be taken from Cornwall BSIP's funding for this? Mel has no update at the moment. She said that we want the whole package but the monies are not available yet.	
8.	Consultation	
(i)	Re recent Bus Cuts Geoff Cadwallader expressed his frustration over the lack of consultation prior to the bus cuts.	

	<p>Dept of Transport National bus Strategy Bus Service Improvement Plans- Guidance to Local Authorities and bus operators-Item 48 states 'It is mandatory that BSIP's seek and report on the merits and demerits of bus services locally and the local operators. These should include local transport users' groups. M.P.'s, local services and business organisations and so on. Passenger survey data, if any should be reported.'</p> <p>Cornwall Council did not claim to have so consulted and simply stated in its BSIP submission that Cornwall Council has worked with local operators to develop a BSIP. This presents a shared vision for the future of buses in Cornwall.'</p> <p>Mel said that Cornwall Council worked with Plymouth and did a four week period of consultation. The decision had to be made so quickly and there was no time for wider consultation. It was agreed that something had broken down which has caused general upset and frustration. Where was the consultation about dropping some of these services? Mel said that she understands the priorities in this area but we can not support every route that everybody wants.</p>	
(ii)	It was agreed that going forward the RPTUG to be contacted.	
9.	<p>Update report of the St. Germans & Rame Integrated Transport Scheme-Survey results given by Tracey Collett.</p> <p>It has taken six months completing the survey. There were 388 responses. The report will be ready for September. There were responses from a range of ages and work situations. The destinations were interesting. Responses indicated that there is a need for buses to travel into Cornwall. Many people make more than one journey a week. Millbrook to St Germans easy travel would be good. Access to Derriford Hospital for health needs was mentioned. A lot of feedback given relating to timetables.</p>	
10.	<p>Any Other Business &? a follow up meeting.</p> <p>Cornwall Council are looking to meet up with community bus users. They recognise that these groups could help out and want to help. However, the problem with community buses are the booking systems. Cornwall Council could help these community bus groups with infrastructure.</p> <p>Armand Toms said that Looe have similar issues to our area e.g. direct routes to Derriford Hospital but working together we can find solutions.</p>	