

AYRSHIRE BUS USERS GROUP

bususersayr@lycos.com

<http://www.bususers.org/news-events/events/ayrshire-bus-users>

Minutes of Committee Meeting, Wednesday 26 July 2017, Irvine Library, 1.30 p.m.

Present

Helen Malcolmson (Chair); Alastair Sutherland (Vice-Chair); Robert Blackwood (N. Ayrshire Access Panel); Anne Cameron; Derek Hall; Miranda Kotnik; Cllr Craig Mackay (Troon South Ayrshire); Greig McKay (Depute Director Bususers Scotland); Kelly Malcolmson; Tom Parish (CAMRA); Cllr Donald Reid (Kilwinning, N. Ayrshire representative on SPT.); Fraser Smith (Commercial Director of Stagecoach West Scotland); Isabel Williamson (Constituency Support Manager for Philippa Whitford MP); Sandra McCallum (Secretary)

Apologies: Martin Dorans (Prestwick South Community Council); Paul Cairns (Senior Case Worker to Jeane Freeman MSP Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley)

Welcome

Helen Malcolmson welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially new members

Minutes

Minutes of the AGM on 17 July 2017 proposed by Anne Cameron, seconded by Alistair Sutherland and approved. (One typo – ‘son’ added to ‘Malcolm’)

Matters Arising

Helen Malcolmson brought a card to send to Frank Potter in appreciation of his work for the group.

Secretary’s report

It has been invaluable to have the draft AGM minutes checked by some members.

Correspondence

Isabel Williamson has forwarded copies of recent letters to and from Philippa Whitford on local transport issues. ABUG has been registered with South Ayrshire Life at Anne Cameron’s suggestion.

An Ayrshire Post reporter rang to ask for a comment for their forthcoming report.

Paul Cairns has forwarded information about requirements for notice when bus changes are proposed.

Cllr Donald Reid emailed that he would be happy to host any meeting in the council offices.

Numerous calls have been received from members of the public who are concerned about the 14 bus, especially the Monkton/Irvine changes

Andy Lee of SA Council would like a meeting to discuss possible funding support for the group, but nothing has been arranged as yet.

Donald Reid forwarded a copy of the letter the manager of Tesco Kilbirnie, Andrew Mexson sent to Stagecoach West Scotland about concerns by bus users who can no longer shop at Tesco a) because of the reduced frequency and b) because they can't carry their shopping to the nearest bus stop now that the bus doesn't call in to the store.

Anne Cameron passed on a form inviting the group to register with South Ayrshire Life this has been done.

Fraser Smith has sent the link where the most up to date information on amendments to proposals can be seen.

<https://www.stagecoachbus.com/news/west-scotland/2017/july/stagecoach-west-scotland-announce-amendments-to-proposed-ayrshire-service-changes>

Question and Answer Session with Fraser Smith

Fraser Smith outlined the current state of the proposed changes and explained the rationale for decisions in reply to questions from committee members.

There has been a very genuine consultation procedure with changes made in response. At present the proposals include running marginal services, but there is a ‘use it or lose it’ situation, as it is not possible to continue to run loss-making services. A major goal is to encourage tourist-lead trade. He is working with the National Trust on services to Culzean, although to date the National Trust has had to postpone meetings four times. There has been some resistance in the Maybole area to erecting additional bus stops along the A77 outbound.

Some services were made possible by house building permission being made conditional to helping to fund a bus service, for example at Doonfoot.

Many of the points made are included in the notes distributed of Fraser Smith’s meeting with Philippa Whitford. Please see these notes for more details of replies to specific concerns we had sent to Philippa Whitford on bus routes X16, 14, 52, 585 and Ayr hospital buses.

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Other matters raised

Transfers

There will be through fares with a transfer ticket. This proposal is with SPT at present. Craig Mackay asked how many journeys would be fragmented. Fraser Smith said a degree of bus change was unavoidable but timetables would be planned to facilitate transfers.

Ayr Bus Station

Fraser Smith said toilets will not be reinstalled at the bus station because of vandalism but that alternative local provision was being discussed. Several members felt this was unacceptable, not least for disabled travellers. There is an on-going programme of small affordable changes. SPT had funded Real Time Information Boards. A Guide will be produced on where to catch buses. Bill Grant had been to see Tom Bridge about seating.

Audio announcements on buses

Robert Blackwood asked if these would be introduced more widely. At present the X19 to the Queen Elizabeth hospital includes this facility.

Health and Safety

Discussion on how to encourage people to wait till bus stops before standing up.

Cleanliness of buses

Kelly Malcolmson asked if plastic seats were more easily cleaned and although this was agreed they are uncomfortable. Buses are deep cleaned every three weeks, with semi-deep clean in between.

Information

Miranda Kotnik asked about situations when a bus did not turn up and the driver of the next bus did not explain why. Fraser Smith explained that this driver might not know of the problem. Recently an elderly man let down by the service now had to wait two months for a new hospital appointment.

Fraser Smith has introduced a system of driver panels to consult drivers on ways to improve service. The Stagecoach App has real time tracking of buses, although it was acknowledged that this would not help everyone, as smartphone and wi-fi access is needed.

Derek Hall said that from the evidence of drivers' behaviour and demeanour Stagecoach's Stranraer depot seemed to have a different culture of customer care (compared to Ayr.) i Fraser Smith said that at Stranraer drivers were trained to be welcoming to travellers and took this role very seriously. Stranraer was a much smaller depot than Ayr. It was suggested that some other Stagecoach West Scotland personnel might come to the meetings and it was agreed that this would be very useful.

Any other competent business

Access

Kelly Malcolmson raised the issue of mobility scooters on buses. Recently, although she has a permit, she was not allowed to board a McGills bus, even though she has a vehicle which is accredited. Fraser Smith said that the Confederation of Passenger Transport has a code of conduct to which Stagecoach, Arriva and First subscribe. There is a list of acceptable vehicles and permits are issued. It appears McGills do not subscribe to the CPT code of conduct on this. Isabel Williamson noted details to arrange for Phillippa Whitford to send a letter to McGills on this issue. It was noted that this affected people travelling from Ayrshire to the Queen Elizabeth hospital.

Consultation

Isabel Williamson distributed notes of the meeting that Phillippa Whitford had with Fraser Smith where she had raised concerns that the Ayrshire Bus Users Group had passed to her. These include the replies.

Finance

Sandra McCallum asked that at the next meeting some discussion takes place on the work of the committee.

Date, time & place of next committee meetings

Wednesday 18 October 2017 in Irvine Library 168 High Street **Irvine**, KA12 8AN 1.30 p.m.-3.30 p.m.

Wednesday 15 November 2017, Irvine Library 168 High Street **Irvine**, KA12 8AN 1.30 p.m.-3.30 p.m.

Provisional agenda for next meeting

Please inform Sandra McCallum if there are any items you would like put on the agenda.