

WATAG NEWS

WEST DORSET WESTERN AREA TRANSPORT ACTION GROUP

LOCAL TRANSPORT ROUTES

X51/X53

Operated by First Wessex and marketed as the Jurassic Coaster.

X51 operates from Weymouth to Axminster via Dorchester, Bridport and Lyme Regis. Mon-Sat.

X53 operates from Weymouth to Axminster via Abbotsbury, West Bay, Bridport and Lyme Regis Mon-Sat. Operates Weymouth - Lyme Regis on Sundays. **Sunday services will change in January.**

6/6B

Operated by First Wessex and Buses of Somerset, Mondays to Fridays.

These buses operate from Bridport to Beaminster, Crewkerne and Yeovil.

CB3

Operated by Beaminster Town Council, every Saturday, connecting Beaminster with Bridport and Crewkerne.

7

Operated by Dorset Community Transport on behalf of Bridport Town Council on Wednesdays and Saturdays, as the 'Bridport Town Circular'. **Routing and timing changes due from 5th January 2022.**

Watch for press announcements.

9A

Operated by Stagecoach South West, this links Lyme Regis with Exeter via Axmouth, Seaton and Sidmouth, daily.

14

Operated by Dorset Community Transport, every Thursday, from Birdsmoorgate and Thorncombe to Chard.

71

Operated by Damory, on behalf of Lyme Regis Town Council, Mondays to Fridays, as the 'Lyme Regis Town Service'

688

Operated by Dorset Community Transport, every Thursday, from Thorncombe to Axminster.

PlusBus

Operated by Dorset Community Transport, the PlusBus service provides transport for people who are unable to easily access public transport: young or old and including those with mobility difficulties and offers a weekday trip from neighbouring villages to local destination towns. To book, call 01258 287980. Further details here: <https://bit.ly/37hK7hB>

YOUR LOCAL RAIL ROUTES

South Western Railway

Axminster & Crewkerne to/from Exeter and London Waterloo.

Weymouth, Upwey and Dorchester South to Poole, Bournemouth and London Waterloo.

Great Western Railway

Weymouth, Upwey and Dorchester West to Bath, Bristol and Gloucester.

LONG DISTANCE BUS ROUTES

National Express operates from Weymouth and Dorchester to London

CHRISTMAS CHANGES

Check before you travel!

CONTROVERSY

Tree felling and bridge demolition

Government-owned National Highways has been accused of selective reporting when defending its controversial tree felling near the old Bridport branch railway bridge at Barrowland Lane, Toller Porcorum.

Bob Driscoll, chair of the West Dorset Western Area Transport Action Group (WATAG), says "It is very disturbing that these public organisations are keeping people in the dark about their true plans. WATAG supports the principle of using the old railway line for active travel. But there is no obvious need for the bridge to be knocked down to achieve this."

WATAG says that Dorset Council has not consulted with the public or local landowners about the best way to provide access to the new path. The transport campaigners also point out that the new Dorset Local Plan and Local Transport Plan are still being prepared. They argue it is short sighted to get rid of a potentially critical piece of transport infrastructure before these plans are approved.

According to National Highways the demolition and other work asked for by the council will cost around £175000. WATAG believes that National Highways is keen to press on so it can use money it is finding hard to spend elsewhere during the national pause. The campaigners point out that the National Highways' business case lists no consultees outside Dorset Council. Bob Driscoll believes this is a deliberate tactic. "National Highways are willing to argue in secret that the council officers are keen to press forward with the works and are happy to write to, or speak with, anyone in order to ensure that the works are not halted.' It's a disgrace that neither National Highways nor Dorset Council have been open about their discussions."

CONTACT WATAG

WATAG normally holds public meetings regularly, however due to the ongoing COVID pandemic this has not been possible.

We will continue with online meetings at this time, with our goal, dependent on COVID restrictions, to hold meetings in person again.

You can contact WATAG via email or see our website.

Website: <https://watag.org.uk/>

Email: watag@hotmail.co.uk

YOUR LOCAL JOURNEY PLANNER: TRAVELINE SOUTH WEST

<https://www.travelinesw.com/>

SERVICE UPDATES

The latest news on our local buses and trains



A new winter timetable for the X51/X53 started on Sunday, 3 October 2021. The timetable is here: <https://bit.ly/3CLEJpv> and thanks to feedback from WATAG, Sunday services are preserved between Weymouth and Lyme Regis via West Bay and Bridport until 3rd January 2022 (a bank holiday service). A reduced Sunday service will operate from 9th January 2022 and will be sponsored by Alan Williams from WATAG.



Service 6 now serves Yeovil College at 16.45 Mondays to Fridays during term times - this has been a long term goal of WATAG. The new timetable is here: <https://bit.ly/3pbwqcn>. You can also download a copy of the 6/6B as part of the attractive Buses of Somerset timetable booklet (Page 64/65), available here: <https://bit.ly/3uYv9be>



Beaminster Town Council's CB3 continues every Saturday between Crewkerne, Beaminster and Bridport, with connections to Yeovil with South West Coaches. The timetable can be viewed here: <https://bit.ly/3oyPctz>



Service 7 operates as Bridport's "Town Service" every Wednesday and Saturday.

Services 14 and 688 continue to operate. Timetables are here:

Service 7: <https://bit.ly/35i4TN9> **An additional service will operate on Friday, 24 December 2021. A new service will be introduced from Wednesday, 5 January 2022.**

Service 14: <https://bit.ly/3wp2IYW>

Service 688: <https://bit.ly/3yz43ss>



Service 71 operates as Lyme Regis' "Town Service", Mondays to Fridays. The timetable can be downloaded here: <https://bit.ly/2X5HgGG>



Stagecoach South West's service 9A (Lyme Regis to Seaton, Sidmouth and Exeter) changed on 10th May, with services continuing to serve Greendale Vaccination Centre. The timetable is here: <https://bit.ly/2X1d2V7>



Between Weymouth, Dorchester and London: this timetable changed on 12th December 2021. The timetable is here: <https://bit.ly/3FU7vkm>. A history of the route is here: <https://bit.ly/3hvSVGz>

Between Crewkerne and Axminster and Exeter/London: The timetable from 12th December is here: <https://bit.ly/3l8ncWW>. Information on the route from Axminster to Exeter is here: <https://bit.ly/3FeGBUW>.



The new Great Western Railway winter timetable for the Weymouth - Bristol (Heart of Wessex) route commenced on 12 December. The timetable is here: <https://bit.ly/3o6rnuH>. Work on step-free access on the northbound platform at Dorchester West is completed, see the next page for more details. The Heart of Wessex Partnership has been replaced by a new South Wessex Community Rail Partnership. Further details will be available in due course.



The National Express service 190, from Portsmouth to Plymouth via Bridport is suspended, there is no date for resumption. The afternoon Weymouth/Dorchester to London service continues (service 035) Timetable: <https://bit.ly/34cqztg>. You must book in advance, either via the website or at Bridport Tourist Information Centre, where no booking fee is charged. Notably, most fares are cheaper when starting your journey at Weymouth rather than Dorchester.



Megabus has suspended their service from Weymouth and Dorchester to London. Meanwhile owner Stagecoach has agreed a merger with National Express.

BUS CHANGES

From Wednesday, 15th December, some fares will change or be withdrawn. Adult Single and Child Single/Return fares are unchanged.

Full details here: <https://bit.ly/3sb9T2r>

ROADWORKS: LYME REGIS

From 4th January to 18th February 2022 First Wessex are unable to service any stops between The Post Office and Fernhill Hotel. A temporary stop will be in place at Langmoor Gardens. Details here: <https://bit.ly/3ytWNYJ>

CHANGES TO RAIL SERVICES

Please check before your travel as engineering works are now planned to take place midweek and weekends.

BUS CHANGES

SERVICE 7: BRIDPORT TOWN SERVICE

From Wednesday, 5th January 2022, this bus will also serve the Wanderwell Estate in Bothenhampton. Timetables will be available soon.

DORCHESTER WEST

Finally step-free, after 10 years of campaigning!



Step free access to Platform 1 at Dorchester West is finally complete and opened on 22nd October 2021. The entrance can be found on Williams Avenue - across the road from the stepped entrance. The ramp opens to the end of Platform 1. This means that passengers who require step-free access no longer have to travel south to Weymouth for a northbound journey.



NEWS FROM TRAVEL DORSET

Bus Service Improvement Plan

On the 29th October, Dorset Council submitted its Bus Service Improvement Plan and bid for Government's Bus Back Better £3 billion fund. The plan requires c£92m of funding over an initial three-year period to deliver the council's ambitious vision to transform bus services across Dorset. The plan is available on the council website (<https://bit.ly/30E1utg>) and will shortly be made available at the council's libraries and customer contact points.

The next step is to create an Enhanced Partnership by the end of March 2022. In January, Dorset Council will be holding a statutory consultation on the content of the Enhanced Partnership and will be inviting Dorset TAGs to a briefing session ahead of launching this consultation to further outline the Enhanced Partnership process.

Dorset Council is proposing to create a Bus User and Stakeholder Group to ensure ongoing stakeholder engagement and to review and refresh the Bus Service Improvement Plan. WATAG will receive an invite to join this group and to attend engagement sessions twice yearly.

School Transport

School services operated by First Wessex have been operating as closed school routes during the pandemic and the company will be formalising this arrangement by cancelling the registrations with the Traffic Commissioner. This will apply to the following services:

A1, A2 to The Woodroffe School

B1, B2, B4, B5 to Beaminster School

C1, C2 to The Sir John Colfox Academy

WATAG Note: "closed school routes" means that the service is **not available to the general public.**

CHRISTMAS and NEW YEAR SERVICE CHANGES

Christmas Day and New Years Day fall on a Saturday, which means that Monday 27th and Tuesday 28th December 2021 and Monday 3rd January 2022 are classed as Bank Holidays with impact on local services.

There are no bus or train services on Saturday, 25 December and Sunday, 26 December in the region. There are no bus services on Saturday, 1st January.

Other alterations are shown below.

FIRST WESSEX 6: Bridport - Beaminster - Crewkerne - Yeovil

24 DECEMBER: Normal "School Holiday" Service

27, 28 DECEMBER: No service

29, 30, 31 DECEMBER: Normal "School Holiday" service

02, 03 JANUARY: No service

FIRST WESSEX X51/X53: Axminster - Lyme Regis - Bridport - Dorchester - Weymouth

24 DECEMBER: Normal "School Holidays" Service

27, 28 DECEMBER: Sunday service

29, 30, 31 DECEMBER: Saturday service

02, 03 JANUARY: Sunday service

STAGECOACH 9A: Lyme Regis - Seaton - Sidmouth - Exeter

24 DECEMBER: Normal "School Holidays" Service

27 DECEMBER: Sunday service

29, 30, 31 DECEMBER: Saturday service (all services end around 2000hrs)

02, 03 JANUARY: Sunday service

DAMORY 71: Lyme Regis Town Service

24 DECEMBER: Normal "School Holidays" Service

27, 28 DECEMBER: No service

29, 30, 31 DECEMBER: Normal Service

02 JANUARY: No service

BRIDPORT TOWN COUNCIL 7: Bridport Town Service

24 DECEMBER: Will operate additionally this day

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

Weymouth - Dorchester - Bournemouth - London

Axminster - Exeter, Axminster - Crewkerne - Salisbury - London

Full details here: <https://bit.ly/3mcTG9q> including planned engineering works

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY

Weymouth - Dorchester - Maiden Newton - Bristol

Full details here: <https://bit.ly/3E8AmA6> including planned engineering works.

PLAN YOUR CHRISTMAS JOURNEY HERE:

<https://www.travelinesw.com/>



WE

WISH YOU A

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND

A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The information in this issue is provided in good faith but please do double check information before you travel as schedules are subject to change.