

PADSTOW TOWN COUNCIL

REPORT OF A PUBLIC MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 27 JUNE 2008

RE: BUSES – RAILWAY LAND – MINUTE No: 032/2008 REFERS:

Report of a public meeting held on Friday 27 June 2008 at 12 noon:

Present: Dan Rogerson MP for North Cornwall
 Cllr A Rickard – Padstow Town Council (PTC)
 Cllr Mrs P Davis - PTC
 Ms M Sedgwick - PTC
 Mr M Howarth – Western Greyhound Bus Company
 Mr B James - “ “ “ “
 23 Members of the public

Apologies: Cllrs Mrs C Evans, K Freeman, Mrs J Reynolds, Mrs A Symons,
 DN Vivian Mrs T Walter, C Watson Smyth – working, Cllr D Edwards –
 illness, Cllr Mrs K Seaber – leave, Cllr M J Hunt – prior engagement

1. Dan Rogerson MP informed:

- i. That the reason for the meeting was to find a solution to the problem that the bus company had with parking at Station House and was not a remit for personal issues,
- ii. that the HSE had been invited but had declined and had sent a letter that morning which detailed its involvement with PTC:
 - a) It had served an Improvement Notice on PTC in 2002 and a further one in 2003,
 - b) that PTC had complied with the Notices in 2005,
 - c) that it had contacted PTC in 2007 advising that a further complaint had been received and that the design of the Railway Car Park should be re-visited.

2. The petitioners to the Council: Ray Delf, Alan House and Jerry Cockram, gave a verbal report of the background to the petition:

- i. The bus company had not been allowed to offload passengers on entry to the Railway Car Park at Station House since 2004 following notification from the Town Council that the HSE would not allow the backing-up of traffic in Station Road,
- ii. that the HSE had written stating that it had no record of vetoing the unloading of passengers from vehicles,
- iii. that PTC had issued press releases to the Cornish Guardian which appeared on the front page for two consecutive weeks stating that it had no knowledge of the petition,
- iv. that bus drivers were concerned that the service to the Railway Land would cease due to :
 - a) loss of the bus turning point behind the Council Offices,
 - b) being told not to offload outside of the Council Offices,
 - c) being fined for offloading outside of the Offices,
 This was corroborated by an email from Western Greyhound to a Padstow resident in April 2008,
- v. that the car parking spaces should be removed from the front of the Council Offices in order for the buses to pull in and offload as had happened some years ago,.
- vi. that they challenged the Council's statement that the HSE would not allow buses to unload at the entrance to the Railway Car Park.

3. The Council responded:

- i. That Padstow Town Council had not issued press releases,
- ii. that PTC had been served with an HSE Notice of Improvement following a complaint by a user of the car park in 2002/2003,
- iii. that the HSE was concerned that pedestrians, cyclists, motor vehicles, coaches, sand lorries and buses were in close proximity to one another and of the danger this caused to users. PTC were charged with re -designing the car park to minimise the risk to users,
- iv. that the HSE Officer in post in 2002 – 2007 had in several meetings with PTC's working party and Consultants stated that he would not allow vehicles (coaches as well as buses) to pull in at Station House to offload and that buses had to traverse the car park and pull in at the designated bus stop opposite Station House. This was not committed to paper but was a constant in the re-design of the car park and was discussed in Council meetings,
- v. that there were records of the meetings with the HSE and these documents would be made available to the public,
- vi. that the scheme, accommodating the bus opposite Station House, was drawn up and passed by the HSE in 2004/2005 and to this end the County Council erected a new shelter and installed a pavement that

- complied with the DDA Act to accommodate the new design of the DDA buses,
- vii. that the bus company was informed in 2004 of the Council's new parking and traffic management policy for the railway land,
 - viii. that in 2007 an HSE Officer new in post contacted PTC stating that he had visited the town following a complaint about the Railway Car Park and was concerned about the mix of cyclists, pedestrians and vehicles as well as the safety risk of the 'Park and Ride' bus stop in School Hill and the traffic management in the town, holding PTC responsible,
 - ix. that the HSE Officer was invited to a Town Forum Meeting with other stakeholders, including PCH, CCC, TIC, Chamber of Commerce and Devon & Cornwall Constabulary to discuss those concerns,
 - x. that one of the HSE Officer's concerns was vehicles queuing to get into the Railway Car Park causing problems for other vehicles entering the car park,
 - xi. that on 1 May 2007 a bus driver was run over by a car when he approached a bus parked at the entrance to the Railway Car Park, the bus company was invited by PTC to carry out a risk assessment but no response had been received.
 - xii. that in April 2008 a notice was erected at Station House stating that vehicles were not allowed to unload in that area¹,
 - xiii. that bus drivers were not complying with the PTC Car Parking Order 2008 and two of them were issued with Excess Charge Notices,
 - xiv. that the Town Council had no intention of removing the bus service from Station Road.

4. Western Greyhound Bus Company informed:

- i. That there were no plans to remove the buses from the Railway Car Park,
- ii. that drivers considered they would be forced out of the car park,
- iii. that PTC was contacted and it confirmed that this was not the case,
- iv. that there were problems with customers missing their connections due to buses travelling around the car park before stopping at the bus stop,
- v. that a solution to the problem would be either:
 - a) turning the bus around at the entrance
 - b) moving the bus shelter into the car park,
- vi. that buses took 5 – 8 minutes to navigate the car park due to vehicles manoeuvring into/from small car parking spaces causing a delay, therefore could they park at the entrance as a short-term measure?

¹ As a direct result of the Corporate Manslaughter Act which came into force in April 2008

5. Members of the public/Padstow Community commented:

- i. That the bus was vital to Padstow because older people felt threatened without the service,
- ii. that there was lack of trust as the HSE appeared to be hiding behind their letters,
- iii. could the public be assured by PTC that it had the residents', not the tourists, interests at heart?
- iv. that the lower part of the town would be cut off if the bus did not start from Station Road,
- iv that there was an accident waiting to happen with the 'Park and Ride' bus offloading passengers at School Hill/New Street,
- vi. that the 'Park and Ride' bus was dangerous as older people had to walk in the middle of the road due to the amount of passengers being offloaded,
- vii. that the bus company had changed its route and the altered plans had been disastrous since it cuts off the top of the town,
- viii. could there be an electronic 'Car Parks Full' sign at the top of the town?
- ix. could there be a staged solution with the first stage being implemented quickly?
- x. could the buses drive into the car park at one end and drive out of the other end?
- xi. in any future plan the HSE should look at the risk of reversing buses,
- xii. In an ideal world perfection was the aim but in today's world the HSE should look at the solution using the test of 'reasonableness'.

6. Further discussion and comments:

- xiii. People were asking why the buses turned right at the top of School Hill to go to St Merryn rather than turning left to stop at Tesco,
- xiv. Could the buses connect at the top of the town rather than at Station Road?
- xv. The buses were unable to connect since they came in via Tesco and went out via the Link Road,
- xvi. The bus route had been changed to increase the bus service to one every hour and the network was now a lot better than before,
- xvii. The County Council stated that buses were not to offload people at the School, this would require a lay-by and a pedestrian crossing,
- xviii. County Council would need to be involved in the moving of the bus shelter since there was a funding element,
- xix. PTC were due to re-align the Railway Car Park in October making the spaces larger which would address the car manoeuvring situation and hatched boxes at the end of rows would stop vehicles from backing up.

7. Dan Rogerson MP summed up the discussions:

- I. That the solution should ensure traffic was not backing up at the entrance to the Railway Car Park,
- II. that buses should not be held up by pedestrians and vehicles on the Railway land,
- III. that buses be allowed to stop at the entrance to the Railway Car Park,
- IV. that an electronic 'Car Parks Full' board be investigated,
- V. that a barrier at Station House be investigated,
- VI. that buses could pull in where the cars park outside of Station House so that the Council vehicles (employees and Members) park in the triangular area near to workshop unit 1,
- VII. that any revised scheme must have HSE involvement and any decisions and responses must be in writing,
- VIII. that the bus company proposes that as a temporary measure the buses should stop at the entrance to unload,
- IX. that the bus company was committed to delivering the bus service to the lower half of the town,
- X. that PTC was committed to keeping the bus service at Station Road,
- XI. that there was an agreement between PTC and Western Greyhound to find a solution,
- XII. that the Chair of PTC was prepared to put a proposal to the Council's Highways Roads and Transport Committee, "That for the short term buses be allowed to stop and offload at the entrance to the Railway Car Park subject to written agreement from the HSE".