



Note of a Meeting with Parish Councils 12 May 2010

Representatives from 11 Parish Councils, Gillian Loughlin and Mark Evans from East Sussex County Council [ESCC], and from from Battle Area Community Transport, Val Greenwood, Bryn Newman and Will Reeves attended the meeting, chaired by Colin Harmer [BACT].

General

The meeting was a successful event, although there was no consensus, there was enough input to possibly have a further meeting at a later date. Also, there may be more partnership work with Parish Councils and County Council.

Our thanks go to Bernard Hibbs of the Church Communities for use of Conference room and facilities.

The main outcomes were:

1. In order to focus on transport development and to liaise with potential partners, **Council Parish Councils should consider appointing a member to take on these responsibilities.**
2. **Bus services may meet some transport requirements** but local car schemes could also be relevant. BACT can provide advice in setting up such a scheme.
3. **Where new bus services** are introduced additional local volunteer drivers would be necessary.
4. **Further publicity about existing and new BACT services would enable a greater understanding of their activities although information was already available on their website.**
5. **Parish Council representatives had mixed views:**
 - **Ticehurst** had regular monthly bus services to Tunbridge Wells, Eastbourne and Rye which had been developed in partnership with BACT thanks to the Parish organiser, and a volunteer car scheme lead by an active and dedicated individual.
 - **Bodiam** were concerned about weekend and Bank Holiday services which they felt could be developed in conjunction with the National Trust.
 - **Burwash** had a regular 2-hour service to Uckfield but no connection to Hastings. Day trips to Eastbourne for example may also be a benefit to their community.
 - **Etchingham** had a similar service to Uckfield but it terminated at the Station. No service was available to Hurst Green to enable access to other commercial routes. (They were unaware of the BACT service on Fridays)
 - **Whatlington** already had a commercial service to Tunbridge Wells, and Hastings via Battle, but were concerned about an easterly link to Rye.
 - **Ewhurst/Staplecross** were investigating local needs and had some consultation with residents, the final outcome of which was awaited. (The new BACT flexible route to Eastbourne each month may help if publicised more widely)
 - **Hoee** were unaware of BACT services to Eastbourne (Colin Harmer subsequently attended a Parish meeting where discussions on access to Bexhill and Glyne Gap were mooted)
 - **Robertsbridge** were happy with existing BACT and commercial services, although more publicity would be helpful.
 - **Sedlescombe** were also well served by BACT and commercial operators, although the connection at Hawkhurst for Tunbridge Wells caused problems by late running.
 - **Brightling and Crowhurst** had no further transport needs.
6. **East Sussex County Council**
ESCC indicated that there was still some money available for project work between Parish Councils and Community Transports but that they would have to apply for it themselves directly.

ESCC are still to hold a review of Community Transport in the Hastings and Rother areas. It is planned that a new Community Transport Officer is to be appointed. Further information is also available on their website

Mark Evans, ESCC Transport Officer, expressed the view that there will be hard decisions to be made in view of likely cuts in future funding to County. This could mean more expected Community Transport, as commercial subsidies may be cut back.

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