

BUSES. This is a reply by Margaret Phipps, DCC Councillor for West Christchurch, to enquiries raised by Ena Webber (a resident) at a West Christchurch RA meeting held in November 2014:

Dear Ena,

It was nice to meet you on Thursday evening and I have now asked some questions at Dorset County Council in relation to the list of queries which you gave me regarding buses. It seems that all of the buses you mentioned are either subsidised by Hampshire County Council (not Dorset County Council) or are commercially operated by Yellow Buses or other Companies. As I am your Dorset County Councillor, I have made these enquiries and tried to get you some answers, but I suggest you contact the people I have mentioned below for further information. I have been told:

1) Dorset County Council will be told by Hampshire County Council about the final arrangements for services X1 and X2 in the near future as they are the ones who are dealing with these buses. It is likely that the service changes will take place in January 2015. The contract for these services was going to be awarded to a new operator to the area but as a consequence of this Go South Coast Ltd have declared most of the route "commercial".

2) Bus service 1a is commercially provided by RATP Yellow Buses Ltd, and other than pensioners fares reimbursements Dorset County Council do not pay any subsidy towards the route. If you know the time and date when the three buses were at Christchurch Library together you could contact Mark Ambler at Yellow Buses and ask for an explanation. His e mail address is mambler@yellowbuses.co.uk

3) Bus service 1c is also commercially provided by RATP Yellow Buses Ltd. So there is no subsidy from the Dorset County Council

4) Regarding your query about the reduction in bus pass subsidy, I am told that the reimbursement was reduced several years ago which is the main reason why Morebus M2 no longer runs into the Borough of Christchurch. The driver may have been talking in general terms and this reduction in pensioners fares funding could equally apply to Bournemouth Unitary, Dorset County or Hampshire County Councils.

5) You said that you were told that buses are being taken off before the end of the contract and that drivers are being laid off. I am told that as part of the new arrangements for services X1 and X2 that Lymington Depot may be closed and this is probably where drivers have been talking to the Public about their futures, which is a bit unprofessional, but my contact in Dorset County Council does not think the final arrangements for the drivers have been made as they may well be offered employment elsewhere within Go South Coast Ltd group.

As all the buses you referred to relate to Hampshire County Council, you might be best to contact them direct. The best person is Colin Wright and his e mail address is colin.wright@hants.gov.uk I am sure that he will be able to answer all your questions about the buses which they subsidise, and what changes are proposed.

I hope this helps.

Best wishes.

Margaret Phipps

Cllr. Margaret Phipps
Dorset County Council