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**Minutes of Paddock Wood Youth Council,  
14 May 2018, 6 – 7 pm,  
Day Centre, Dowding House, Commercial Way, Paddock Wood**

**Present**

Emily Mackie, New Gen, St Andrew's Church (Chair)  
Caitlin Marks, Pathfinders, St Andrew's Church  
Alice Boyle, Guides  
Sarah Woodcock, Youth Leader, St Andrew's Church  
Councillor Eileen Wilson  
Councillor Carol Williams (notes)  
Councillor Derek Boyle

**Apologies**

Adam Fleming, New Gen, St Andrew's Church

**YC 1 Introductions & Apologies**

CW introduced Bernie, who was from Arriva to answer questions regarding the bus service.

**YC 2 Minutes of last meeting & matters arising**

Young Person of the Year Award was discussed and the following were agreed:

- The back and gold logo illustrated by Sarah at a previous meeting would be used
- We need to finalise the post and will do this at the next meeting
- Youth Council judging panel will have external people to provide objectivity
- The criteria will be to identify and young person who has had a positive impact in Paddock Wood – either helping others, helping a cause, helping the environment
- It was suggested that we reduce entrants to the top three and then ask local people to vote. If we do this, it will prolong the process depending on the number of applicants. Sarah suggested running it like the adult award, where the panel select the winner and give a prize and a trophy.
- Winner needs to know before the event, so that they turn up at Paddock Wood Lights Up to receive the award.
- It was agreed entrants should be between 11 to 18 years old. There would be one award only to keep it simple for the first year.

### YC 3 Questions for Arriva Bus Company

Bernie explained that he was attending in place of Andy Creba and may have to take some issues back to colleagues to answer as he does not work in the same department as Andy.

Young People raised the issue about the lack of buses during the day to travel between home and school, for example when they only attended school for exams.

Young people raised the issue of the use of single decker buses during the school run. This is also a public service with children being stranded as there is no room on the bus. EM reported that this happened twice last week on the number 6 service. Bernie stated that there should be two decks if specified, but if a bus was broken down there are no other buses. He agreed to check what was in the contract.

DB cited an example of a service in Portsmouth which used family tickets for travel. Bernie was unable to comment specifically on this but told the group that there would not be a subsidy from Arriva and all services must be commercially viable. DB explained that it was a return ticket & suggested that there should be joint working to look at similar schemes. Bernie suggested that in Portsmouth this may be viable due to more people using the buses. A twilight ticket has recently been introduced in Tonbridge and is being monitored via ticket data. The group asked how the twilight ticket applies to young people whose pass is only useful until 7.30 pm? Bernie will pass these issues onto the commercial team for a response (CT).

Young people asked why they must pay full fare before 9 am? Whilst during the week they can use their pass, they are not able to use this at weekends. This penalises young people and does not encourage bus usage (*note: this has subsequently changed*).

Buses between Paddock Wood & Tonbridge are provided by Autocar, with one service in the morning and afternoon to access schools. If young people are doing any after school activities, they must get the train, which is more expensive. Some rely on family to collect them if they are not able to get the one school bus. DB reported that the school have not been able to get Bernie will pass issues onto the commercial team (CT). he times changed to accommodate school hours and there are often problems with single deckers. Buses are full of children and public and auto bus use a double decker during the day and single decker at school times. Bernie was not able to answer issues on behalf of Autobus but Arriva does prioritise school buses and would aim to provide a double decker where this was part of the agreement.

Young people asked whether the new developments will influence bus services? Arriva are aware that there will be additional money attached to new developments, but unclear how many children this will be.

Bernie told the group that last September, when bus services changed, Arriva had to put on an extra bus at their own cost, as there were too many children for the available buses. Arriva have problems accessing information about future pupil numbers to plan the number of buses required.

The young people asked why the 6X could not be diverted through Paddock Wood. Bernie explained that this is funded by the hospital and needs to travel quickly between sites (staff) and is paid for by the hospital trust.

The young people asked why they could not have a combined bus & train pass? This is available in other areas, but different companies operate the services here. DB gave the example of London with different companies & free passes. Bernie explained that companies get paid individually in London, although passes are free for children. This does not happen here. SW raised the issue that passes are Kent wide, but most young people do not travel further than school. Would it be possible to have a ticket for a specific radius and monthly season ticket including buses and trains, paying extra for additional journeys.

Young people asked whether the bus services are likely to increase in the future. Bernie explained that there would be a new depot built this year. This will hold up to 90 buses, whereas there are now only 40, so Arriva will have to increase services in the future but these services must be viable and it is unclear yet where they will be required.

Young people's passes have increased significantly in cost over the last 5 years. The Young person's travel card has risen from £100 to £290/year over five years and the 16+ card is now £400/year. Usage of both cards is now restricted to school times (this has changed in May). DB raised the question of whether the times could be increased. He asked whether KCC subsidise this and by how much? Is the council paying less of this and parents now pay more?

It is not always possible to use the 16+ pass as young people travel at different times as they are not always required to be in school full time, but there are no buses to travel between Maidstone and Paddock Wood at certain times during the day, so parents have to collect young people. Is this likely to change? Some children have more choice of Arriva buses, but for Paddock Wood children there is only one bus available. Bernie stated that it is difficult to run buses when they don't get used and the ones running now need to be used or they are likely to change.

Bernie agreed to follow up the issue about use of double deckers and single deckers stating that sometimes they send out two single deckers on a route. EW pointed out that young people are vulnerable if they miss a bus as parents are often not able to get to them as they are working, often at a distance. Bernie acknowledged that he had dealt with an example of this problem today. AB explained about an incident in the winter when the bus did not come during the snow which caused anxiety when bus was subsequently late(Autobus). Bernie explained that Arriva will always run the school bus, even if it runs late. Bernie referred to the Arriva app (free) and the twitter feed informing about bus delays/incidents enabling young people to track buses. EM reported using the app for information.

Young people asked what they should we do when adults were bullying them on buses – Bernie suggested complaining to the bus driver or the company. Arriva will check CCTV footage. EM gave an example of a lady who throws children's belongings around on the bus. If Arriva receive a complaint from schools, they deal with it - schools generally call immediately & Arriva deal with issues as they arise, such as single deckers, so keep schools informed.

The young people asked about more bus stops with shelters – Bernie reported money for bus stops last year, which DB did not know about. In Paddock Wood, Arriva are responsible for some bus stops and PWTC are responsible for others.

Carol agreed to send minutes to Bernie to remind him of the issues to be followed up.

#### **YC 4 Training – Eileen Wilson (15 Minutes)**

The training was postponed due to lack of time following an interesting discussion with Bernie.

#### **YC 5 Community Centre Working Party update – Sarah Woodcock**

Eileen showed draft plans which were briefly discussed, looking at issues such as toilet access and proposals for facilities that would be in the centre. The group wanted to know whether the terrace café have a canopy.

Carol will send information from previous discussions with Young People's groups about the Neighbourhood Plan and the Community Centre to Eileen.

Eileen asked where they thought the best place would be for youth facilities and the young people thought this should be on Memorial Field, making the tennis courts into MUGAs, so they are more flexible & provide space to hang out.

#### **YC 6 Any other business**

Date of next meeting: **11<sup>th</sup> June 2018, 6 – 7 pm**, Day Centre, Commercial Road, Paddock Wood