

IMPORTANT THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE DAISY BUS FOR PORTSMOUTH HOSPITAL

" Our Chairman, Dave Kiely, having heard rumours of the withdrawal of funding for the Daisy Bus (Portsmouth) has contacted Wessex Cancer Centre (WCC) HQ and they confirmed the bus will cease running from 10.11.17. This is due to the withdrawal of funding by IOW CCG (Commissioning Group). The reason given is that they are interpreting an NHS rule that core funds should not be used for transport purposes. There is seemingly nothing new in this regulation it has so far as we know existed for some time. On the mainland it might make sense not to fund patient transport but for Island communities it does not. From an historical perspective the funding for the bus started with the IOW PCT who funded it for 3 years, despite the NHS regulations!. Under a reorganisation the PCT then became the CCG. WCC inform us that they flagged up the risk to the bus 2 years ago in an NHS review carried out on the Island. They also flagged up the issues of funding the bus to the CCG in early September of this year. The WCC have kept it going (without CCG funding) in the interim period but cannot do so any more. Hence their decision. Dave asked the key question which is of course what is the funding gap and it is seemingly £24,000. We understand patients on the bus travelling for treatment donate approximately £2,000 per year. So the gap is £22,000".

What price communication? Our other concerns about all of this is the lack of communication. It is not good enough to get to within two weeks of the end of a service without informing key stakeholders such as patients. Surely Support Groups should have been informed. WCC informed us that they do have a communication plan. They have been holding out a hope that a last ditch effort would be made by the CCG and this has delayed implementation of the 'communication plan'. It is now however being implemented. The first step was to talk to the drivers who are being made redundant. The 2nd step is to inform the CCG, then St. Mary's hospital, and patient groups (although they do not have contact details). But above all our disappointment has to be directed at the CCG. They chair the Long Term Care Conditions Group which we attend. We met recently and despite them seemingly knowing about the decision to withdraw funding they failed to alert us to the situation. As a group we will be considering very carefully our future membership of that group.

Wessex Cancer Centre 'Media Release': Our Portsmouth minibus service will come to an end on Friday 10 November. The minibus service was initially set up with a grant from NHS commissioners on the island – at that time the Isle of Wight Primary Care Trust (PCT). We have been told that funding rules dictate that the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) on the Island cannot fund patient transport services outside of the national eligibility scheme. This means the NHS can no longer make a contribution to the minibus. Therefore, it is with great sadness that we now have to tell our passengers and our fantastic, dedicated drivers that the service is no longer funded and cannot continue. We are proud to say we provided thousands of journeys to help people from the Isle of Wight get to their hospital appointments in Portsmouth, and we know patients really valued the support it gave them. We do understand that the Isle of Wight Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is investing in many other cancer services, and we would like to thank the CCG for helping us to help people during this time, and all our NHS partners for their hard work to improve cancer outcomes for local people on the Island. We would like to reassure islanders coming to Southampton for treatment that we have been able to sustain that minibus service through alternative funding and help from Southampton Hospital.

Trustee Activity: Under the leadership of our Chairman, Dave Kiely, an interview request to IOW Radio has been granted. We have also contacted the M.P. Mr. Bob Seeley and await a response. A media release is being prepared for the County Press by Peter Hunt our media officer. Dave is also in contact with Anne Snow (the lead Cancer Specialist Nurse at St. Mary's hospital). Ann is optimistic that a late intervention may yet save the day.

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