



North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

News Briefing – May 2017

Big Access Talk - Pembrokeshire Access Group

Pembrokeshire Access Group is an independent charity which aims to promote improved access to services and facilities for disabled people. Supported by the Big Lottery Fund, the Big Access Talk, held in Haverfordwest on 18th May, was part of the Group's Community Voice – Planning Together Project. The aim of the project is to empower disabled people to participate in the service, design and commissioning processes which effect their lives and to create a web-based Centre for Independent Living.

Hosted by BBC broadcaster Jamie Owen, speakers told the large gathering about the services available to disabled people in Pembrokeshire, followed by a question and answer session with key council and NHS officers responsible for delivering services. The meeting closed in the afternoon with the "The Big Access Awards" - recognising those tourism providers that go the extra mile and provide good access for disabled people.

Bus Services Policy Discussion – Improving Local Bus Services in Wales. The purpose of this Welsh Government consultation was to begin a discussion with bus operators, local authorities in Wales and passengers about how local bus services can be organised in the longer term. The consultation closed on 31st May. The Forum's response included the following comments:

- The different arrangements for changing bus, train and ferry service timetables makes the provision of effective multi-modal integration difficult.
- Local authorities should be allowed to set up bus franchising schemes in their areas, as long as the tendering process is open, fair, democratic and open to all interested parties. There would be a need to be mindful of any unfair practice, so an independent adjudication panel would be helpful. There should be a national, cohesive plan. Within that, there will be specific local needs, which would be met locally. Even within that, however, there will need to be cross-border transport between counties, as is now the case.
- Current service provision is good, with the caveat that sufficient time is given to timetabling to ensure that 'seamless' travel is achieved between bus and other transport services.
- There is concern that a loss of evening services can cause an increase in isolation, particularly in rural areas, preventing customers from using facilities such as local cinemas and restaurants – thereby reducing the viability of such facilities in rural areas.
- Bus services must, quite simply, meet the needs of local people and be viable financially for the bus companies. When there are transport connections, it is vital that transfer time is allowed for. The key words are relevance and reliability.

Community Transport – PACTO Annual General Meeting

The Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations held its AGM in Narberth on 8th May. The Association's priorities for 2017 are:

- To continue to oversee the Pembrokeshire Town Rider services and the transport element of PIVOT (the Pembrokeshire Intermediate Voluntary Organisations Team) provided by British Red Cross.
- To recruit a team of volunteer Bus Buddies and start to offer the service to people who would otherwise struggle to use public and community transport services.
- Following completion of the Car Chums Feasibility Study, to secure funding to implement its recommendations, in order to expand the use of lift-sharing in Pembrokeshire.
- To work with our other Community Minibus operators to secure funding to replace some of the older vehicles within the Pembrokeshire community transport fleet.
- To support the development of a new Transport Action Group for people with disabilities in Pembrokeshire.
- To develop the capability to offer Wheelchair Passport assessments, to help operators ensure the safe transport of wheelchair users on all community transport services.
- To provide a range of mobility equipment to help less mobile passengers travel more independently on public and community transport services.

- To continue to deliver MiDAS Training and Car Driver assessments to drivers within the voluntary and community sector, schools and the local authority, as well as a range of other training courses to meet the needs of community transport services across the county.

Transport for Wales – Wales and Borders Rail Service Consultation

The consultation closed on 23rd May and sought views about the rail service across the Wales and Borders area. In the last consultation, the quality of the trains and services on board were clear areas for improvement among passengers. As a result, Transport for Wales (TfW) Policy Priorities state that future trains should provide more capacity and improve the quality to meet increasing passenger expectations.

Over the course of the contract the Welsh Government will expect the next Operator to run high quality trains that will have accessible toilet provision, CCTV for personal safety, priority seating, passenger information facilities and mobile internet technology.

In designing the trains to utilise the available space effectively, TfW wanted to understand what is important to consultation respondents. The Forum's response included the following comments:

Supporting and facilitating active travel

- Consideration needs to be given towards balancing maximising space for passengers whilst accommodating cyclists with bicycles, particularly at peak times.
- Make clear booking arrangements and protocols to ensure "active travel".
- More posters on trains and at travel interchanges.
- To prevent theft of luggage, there should be secure storage space in each carriage. The space between back to back seats will only hold a single case. Might this be enlarged so that cases and bags can be closer to their owners?
- Provide sufficient carriages - replacing 3 coach trains with 2 coach trains.

Safety and security concerns - A second member of staff is essential

- To provide information, answer queries from passengers, and be ambassadors for rail travel.
- To provide courteous customer service and provide a sense of safety and security throughout the journey.
- To ensure revenue protection.
- To provide for train dispatch and train protection in case of accident/driver incapacity.

Difficulties travelling on more than one type of service

- Not enough time to change train for the next part of the journey. 'I would rather a 15-20 minute connection which I could rely upon rather than a 5 minute connection which often misses connection, causing stress'.
- Changing trains, particularly when stairs are involved and timing is critical. Having to find information about which platform to change to and then to locate it.
- Train connections not being there. Robust connections.

New services or issues with the current timetable which cause difficulties

- Provide more services to rural areas – to enhance and develop tourism (particularly day trips; particularly at weekends). It is often difficult for travellers to reach North Pembrokeshire at weekends and return the same day.
- Passengers need to know at the start of a journey if there are complications ahead.
- There should be a gap of 20 to 30 minutes where major changes of train need to be effected.

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 The North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum is an independent voluntary group that works for the provision of an effective integrated transport system in the North Pembrokeshire area, promotes the benefits of public transport and works towards the greater use of public transport systems.

The Forum's work is supported by:

Individual Members (£5 p.a.), Family Members (£8 p.a.) & Corporate Members (£12 p.a.)

(Corporate members include town and community councils, transport operators, and groups, organisations and associations with a transport interest)

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