



North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum

Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

ANNUAL REPORT 2006 – 2007

Introduction

During the past year the Forum has continued to campaign for improved and effective transport in North Pembrokeshire. And on the whole we are pleased to report that changes for the better have significantly outnumbered the setbacks.

Bus services in the area continue to provide a good quality ride. And the continued popularity of the shuttle buses must be a source of great pride to all who have a hand in their organisation and operation. There have been tremendous strides in the provision of community transport services; plus the promise of more to come if the PACTO Big Lottery application is successful. The provision and promotion of walking and cycling facilities has also been commendable. This is definitely a growth 'industry' which is attracting a growing number of users from near and far. Unfortunately, although train services have improved in terms of punctuality, the Forum continues to receive complaints about many other aspects of train travel.

Most heartening is the responsiveness and willingness to take action that we have received from those in all transport modes with whom we have liaised and worked throughout the year. We get a sense of real enthusiasm for the aspects of transport in which they are engaged and a refusal to be downcast for long when problems or roadblocks occur. We have learned a lot from these associations and only hope that the feeling is mutual.

Buses

Service News

- Following an extensive community consultation, new Hayscastle-Camrose services were introduced at the beginning of October. Three return journeys to Haverfordwest now operate on Thursdays, in addition to the existing single services on Tuesday and Friday. The new services extend to Roch and Wolfscastle on demand. Promotional fliers advertising the new service were distributed throughout the area.
- The Forum is pleased that the popular shuttle bus services continue to operate during the winter. The Poppit Rocket between Cardigan and Newport, via Moylegrove, operated on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays (connecting with the 412 Fishguard bus in Newport), and the Strumble Shuttle between Fishguard and St Davids via the coast road operated on Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays.
- A change in the Arriva train time table disrupted the mid-day bus connection at Fishguard Harbour and led to complaints from disgruntled passengers. Fortunately Richards Brothers was able to reschedule its services and provide a good connection with the changed service.

Bus Users UK (BUUK)

Since taking up her appointment, Ann Greaves, the new BUUK Area Representative, has held meetings with local authority transport officers in Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion. She has also been travelling on local buses carrying out a pilot survey of the conditions and information provided at bus stops and on the buses as well as the use of bus services by the disabled and those with pushchairs.

Community Transport

Service News

- The Town Rider dial-a-ride services began operating in Fishguard and Haverfordwest last summer. This pilot project, operated by the Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations (PACTO), offers a service for elderly and disabled people who are unable to use their bus passes on conventional bus services. Good consultation 'sounding board' sessions were held prior to the introduction of the scheme and again in January this year, and it was gratifying to hear that the targets for membership and journey numbers have been exceeded.
- Throughout the period, the Preseli Green Dragon continued to operate a wide range of dial-a-ride and community transport services within North Pembrokeshire and beyond. A Mercedes Sprinter

replacement for the Green Dragon minibus is now being fitted out with specialised facilities and will be available for community use. The new vehicle will be able to accommodate 15 passengers in wider more comfortable seats, will have two reclining seats and be able to accommodate two wheelchairs.

- PACTO held an excellent Minibus Skills Day at County Hall on on 2nd July, providing volunteer drivers with the opportunity to learn how to load wheelchairs onto community transport vehicles, drive some of the buses, and learn about emergency procedures. PACTO hopes to build on this event next year.
- PACTO is offering training and assessment under the Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MIDAS), which is now required of new drivers using community transport or community education minibuses. In order to encourage and facilitate the training of additional drivers, community groups will be offered two £20 vouchers towards MIDAS training and driver assessment.

Forthcoming projects

- PACTO has submitted a bid to the Big Lottery for funding for its Community Transport Links Project. The project will provide a new wheelchair-accessible minibus for the St Davids peninsula and an extra wheelchair-accessible minibus for Preseli Rural Transport Association. It will also provide a Link Worker to support community minibus schemes across Pembrokeshire and some seed funding towards the trial of new services.
- Pembrokeshire County Council is to carry out a survey of users' views of non-emergency patient transport to health facilities in order to find out what improvements are needed.

Cycling

The St Dogmaels community has been looking into the possibility of establishing cycle tracks in that area. Ideally these would include a link to Poppit Sands and the Coastal Path. However, land ownership in some of the proposed areas is a serious issue. The Community Council is now holding discussions about these possibilities with Pembrokeshire County Council officers.

Ferries

- Poor rail-ferry connections in Ireland continue to present real problems for travellers. The trains do not connect with the ferry services, which means that Stena Line cannot sell its rail/sail products effectively. The company is continuing to raise the issue with Irish Railways.
- Although the Arriva rail-ferry connections work well, rolling stock is an issue. There is no consistency in the service, with different trains arriving each day. While communication is fine, ticketing could be improved. Train operating companies insist on having their own tickets and will not accept Stena tickets.

Trains

Services

- Complaints included: difficulties in travelling to/from Fishguard for medical appointments in London; dirty trains and toilets, locked toilets on trains, problems with information provision when purchasing tickets and when services are delayed or cancelled; overcrowding when small trains are provided during holiday periods. Although disappointed that so many of these problems continue to be reported, the Forum has welcomed the prompt responses to correspondence about these matters that were received from Arriva Trains, the South West Wales Community Rail Partnership and Passenger Focus.
- The position regarding overcrowding began to change in December with the introduction of Class 175 trains on Pembrokeshire services, as most of these trains have three cars. However, as noted in the Ferries report, there is a lack of consistency with regard to rolling stock, and 158s and the extremely unpopular Pacers have not been phased out.

Enhancement of Fishguard Rail Services

- The South West Wales Community Rail Partnership has commissioned consultants to carry out a 6 month feasibility and business case study for the enhancement of passenger rail services on the Fishguard Harbour Line. The Forum and the Pembrokeshire Rail Travellers Association are represented on the study's management group, and representatives from Fishguard and Goodwick Town Council and the Fishguard and Goodwick Chamber of Trade and Tourism were involved in the initial development of the study brief.

- The consultants are required to consult with a comprehensive group of local stakeholders. While there are minimum enhancement options, the consultants may come up with alternative proposals. In preparing their forecasts of revenue and costs, they are asked to take into account local circumstances within the Welsh economy and rail industry and the lower operating standards that may be possible because of the rural nature of the line.
- Minimum options in the initial stage are: (1) An additional shuttle train service between Fishguard Harbour and Clarbston Road Stations to connect with ATW services between Milford Haven and Manchester; (2) As an alternative, additional trains between Fishguard Harbour and Haverfordwest or other stations on the Milford Haven to Swansea High Street line; and (3) Provision for possible additional station stops at Goodwick and Letterston [Mathry Road]. A £30,000 budget has been set for the study.

Working with Others

During the period under review the Forum represented the transport interests of North Pembrokeshire through its involvement with the following bodies, organisations and meetings:

- Bus Users UK meetings
- Ceredigion Association of Voluntary Organisations meetings
- The Ceredigion Community Transport Forum
- The Crymych Fair Trade Day
- The Dolen Teifi Group
- The Fishguard Harbour Centenary Committee
- The Newport Environment Day
- The Newport Stroke Club
- North Pembrokeshire Agricultural Shows (Fishguard, Nevern & Tegryn)
- Fishguard Rail Study Management Group Meetings
- The PACTO Minibus Skills Day
- The Network Rail - Wales Route Utilisation Strategy stakeholders meeting
- Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations (PACTO)
- Pembrokeshire Community Transport Forums
- Pembrokeshire Rail Travellers Association meetings
- The Preseli Circle launch
- The Preseli Green Dragon DVD launch
- The Preseli Rural Transport Association AGM
- The Preseli Walking Festival meeting
- The Regional Railways conference, York
- The Scenic Wales by Rail launch, National Assembly, Cardiff
- The South West Wales Community Rail Partnership Forum
- Town Rider meetings

The Executive Committee

During the year the Executive Committee held 8 meetings. During the period Cllrs Sion Rees and Barbara Stone tendered their resignations from the Committee. They had been nominated to serve on the Committee by Llanrhian and Nevern Community Councils respectively. These councils subsequently nominated Cllrs Nigel Davies and Judi Hartland as replacements. Regrettably, the Committee also accepted the resignation of the Treasurer, Dennis Walleth. Michael James was elected to take his place. Ann Greaves, the new Area Representative of Bus Users UK, was co-opted onto the Committee.

We wish express our appreciation to all members of the committee, past and present, for their steadfast contribution to the work of the Forum. They have made valuable contributions to our work.

Cllr Byron James
Chairman

Cllr Hatti Woakes
Secretary

North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

Income and Expenditure Account – Year ending 28th February 2007

| <u>Income</u> | 2007 | 2006 |
|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Membership | 496.00 | 342.00 |
| SDF Grant | 0 | 4010.66 |
| Bank Interest | 0.15 | 0.74 |
| | <u>496.15</u> | <u>4353.40</u> |
| | | |
| <u>Expenditure</u> | | |
| Membership subscriptions | 4.00 | 69.00 |
| Rent | 55.00 | 80.00 |
| Conferences | 0.00 | 702.30 |
| Refreshments | 5.58 | 28.17 |
| Postage | 75.42 | 493.89 |
| Printing | 143.65 | 379.02 |
| Phone | 0.00 | 120.00 |
| Office Supplies | 12.59 | 645.47 |
| Travel expenses | 54.60 | 332.80 |
| Translation Services | 0 | 1418.25 |
| Audit Honorarium | 25.00 | |
| | <u>375.84</u> | <u>4268.90</u> |
| | | |
| Income / Expenditure | 120.31 | 84.50 |
| | | |
| Bank statement at year end | 416.75 | 533.44 |
| Unpresented cheques | -58.03 | -295.03 |
| Unreconciled deposits | | |
| | <u>358.72</u> | <u>238.41</u> |
| | | |
| <u>Accumulated fund:</u> | | |
| Brought forward | 238.41 | 153.91 |
| Excess Income/expenditure | 120.31 | 84.50 |
| | <u>358.72</u> | <u>238.41</u> |

Examiner's Report:

From the books and papers exhibited to me, this appears to be a true and accurate record.

Date: 16/3/07.....

Signed 
R. A. Harries