



North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

ANNUAL REPORT 2015 - 2016

INTRODUCTION

The North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum is an independent voluntary group that works for the provision of an effective integrated transport system to, from and within North Pembrokeshire, promotes the benefits of public transport and works towards the greater use of public transport systems. The Forum is funded by the membership subscriptions of its Individual, Family and Corporate members.

The Forum supports strategic objectives that:

- Provide for the greater integration and interchange between different modes of transport.
- Put in place public transport services that meet the needs of individuals and communities by improving, for example, the quality of passenger information, and increasing the responsiveness, reliability, and security of public transport services.
- Promote social inclusion (making services available to all members of the public) through the further development of an affordable, accessible public transport system which meets user needs and works to remove access and mobility barriers for all public transport users.
- Encourage more sustainable modes of transport and reduce the need for travel by car.

THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

Buses & Community Transport

Coastal Bus Passenger Data. Pembrokeshire County Council reported that 66,775 journeys were made on the coastal buses in 2015, an increase of 2,250 from 2014. The service is run by the County Council and funded by the County Council and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority.

Transport to Health Services. Centralisation of some services from Haverfordwest to Carmarthen is a problem for those living in rural north Pembrokeshire. The park and ride bus service to Glan Gwili Hospital operates half-hourly, but without a timetable; a missed bus can mean a missed appointment. Moreover, the system doesn't really work for those with early appointments.

Bws y Bobol. CT services have really taken hold and are going well in the St Davids area. Apart from the usual types of journeys, the service also helps people go to visit relatives in outlying communities. Those with dementia are helped by others to get out and do their shopping.

Preseli Rural Transport Association. The Association has been kept very busy during the last 12 months and is now operating 21 services each week in Pembrokeshire and South Ceredigion. 'Passengers continue to tell us how much they rely on our services which enable them to use their bus pass and get out of the house. They do get fed up of looking at four walls so the services help them to spend time with their friends and indeed to make new friends'. The Wheels2Work scheme has also been busy during this time, with all scooters out on loan.

National Assembly Enterprise & Business Committee Inquiry into Bus and Community Transport Services in Wales, September-December 2015. From the North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum's perspective, key points made in the inquiry sessions include:

- Public transport that meets the needs of passengers affected by: the reduction in revenue funding, short-term funding, lack of certainty connected to the annual funding round, and limited capital investment. Only with TrawsCymru is five-yearly funding in place.
- Public transport for rural areas affected by: dispersed populations and the need to travel greater distances to pick up passengers, funding reductions of marginal services and services to areas outside cities. Discretionary services like bus services will be at risk.

The Committee's final inquiry report (including recommendations) is in preparation. To check for its availability visit <http://senedd.assembly.wales/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=228>.

Cycling & Walking

Improvements. The 300-metre extension to a shared-use path across Goodwick Moor provides a safer walking and cycling route - avoiding the A487 St Davids/Fishguard road - for local journeys to schools, shops, hotels and the seafront. It will also provide a potential route for the National Cycle Network 4 to link up more effectively with the Fishguard and Goodwick Railway station, ferry port and the proposed marina in the future. This latest phase is part of a package of schemes at Goodwick and Milford Haven to improve access to railway stations. The whole package cost £179k and was funded primarily by the Welsh Government through the Local Transport Fund.

National Assembly Enterprise & Business Committee Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 report - The Start of the Journey', February 2016. From the North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum's perspective, key recommendations include:

- The Welsh Government should have a specific budget line dedicated to supporting active travel. The budget for active travel should be used for both supporting active travel infrastructure projects and promoting active travel.
- The Welsh Government should ensure that there is sufficient expertise and capacity within the transport team to effectively assess the Existing Route Maps and Integrated Network Maps prepared by local authorities.
- The Welsh Government should make sufficient resources available to local authorities for developing their Integrated Network Maps.

To consult the report visit www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld10582/cr-ld10582-e.pdf.

Ferries and Fishguard Harbour

Stena Europe's Annual Maintenance. During the ship's annual maintenance in dry dock, Fishguard ferry services were suspended from 16th February to 12th March 2016. A replacement service ran between Pembroke dock and Rosslare at 0245 and 1445 daily, tickets/reference numbers remaining the same.

The following arrangements made by transport operator Stena Line provide an excellent example of good practice during a planned service disruption:

For foot passengers which includes those with "rail and sail" reservations:

- For passengers travelling to Ireland, as there may not be time to take them from Fishguard station to Pembroke, 'we have to intercept the boat train' at Whitland where a Richard Bros coach will transfer them direct to Pembroke Dock. Rail operators and rail manager/conductors have been advised, and (days and nights) Stena staff will be on hand to assist.
- For those travelling from Ireland, a coach will meet ferry arrivals at Pembroke Dock and take passengers direct to Carmarthen station where there is a more regular train service.

For any foot/rail stragglers arriving at Fishguard expecting a Ferry we will have transport on hand to hopefully get them to Pembroke Dock.

National Assembly Enterprise & Business Committee Inquiry into the Potential of the Maritime Economy in Wales, July 2015. Final report and recommendations, February 2016. From the North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum's perspective, key recommendations include:

- Work with relevant ports and other local stakeholders as well as Network Rail and the Department for Transport to consider how rail modernisation schemes in Wales can make possible potential future development of rail freight serving Welsh ports.
- Develop a Welsh Ports Policy which integrates ports into key Welsh policies particularly on development of the maritime economy, transport policy, environment and planning policy and wider policies supporting economic growth.

To consult the report visit www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld10575/cr-ld10575-e.pdf.

Trains

Fishguard and Goodwick Station Improvements. Pembrokeshire County Council obtained £176,000 grant funding for 2015/16 from the Welsh Government's Local Transport Fund for the station improvements at the station. In addition, the Council is providing £20,000 of match funding towards the scheme. To date the following improvements have been made:

- Provision of an additional 18 spaces in an extension to the car park (doubling the total number).
- Provision of an additional bike shelter.
- Repair to the broken station window and painting the building's exterior.
- Installation of Altro flooring in both building units.
- Electric meter and mains connection to the station building's consumer unit.

The new station building external 'access to all' toilet is nearing completion, the memorial to the station cat has been put in place facing the car park on the brick building, POINT (the Fishguard and Goodwick Young Persons Trust) has been planting the baskets and tubs, and the 'Greening Out Town' volunteer group has agreed to maintain the landscaped areas soon to be planted on behalf of the Town Council.

Fishguard Train Passenger Data. The most recent ORR Station Usage data (for 2014-2015) reveals a continuing increase in the usage of Fishguard and Goodwick station. Fishguard & Goodwick 19,872 (+ 2,812) while usage of Fishguard Harbour 26,522 (-2,882). The total for both stations was 46,396 (-70).

Train Training Scheme - Great Western Railways Customer and Communities Improvement Fund Award.

Working within Communities First areas across the Swansea Bay City Region, the Train Training scheme works to encourage train use. Staff skilled in training will provide 'Train Training', beginning with Junior Rail Ambassadors at primary school level. An existing project has already developed support material to take into secondary schools. This new project will aim to extend this existing initiative to work with all age ranges, FE establishments, Job Centres and vulnerable groups across the South West Wales region.

Welsh Government Consultation: Setting the Direction for Wales and the Borders Rail. Date of issue: 22nd January 2016. Action required: Responses by 18th March.

From early 2017, it is expected the Welsh Government will become a franchising authority with responsibility for awarding the next Wales and Borders franchise, likely to start in October 2018.

The Welsh Government is developing the future strategic approach for rail services in the Wales and Borders area. Our vision is to see a not for dividend model with a strong connection with the communities it serves. "Transport for Wales", our not for dividend company will deliver the next Wales and Borders franchise as a modern high quality service, contributing to an integrated public transport system across Wales.

This consultation continues our commitment to engage with the people of Wales as we take forward work to develop rail services in Wales. Following the consultation, we will publish a summary of the views expressed during this engagement. Views expressed to us will inform development of the detailed proposals and specification for the award of the next Wales and Borders Franchise, together with rail services to be provided as part of the south east Wales Metro concept.

Based on the outcome of this consultation, wider public engagement and discussions with the railway industry, we will develop detailed proposals, which will be the subject of further consultation and public dialogue.

The consultation document is available at <http://gov.wales/consultations/?lang=en>.

MATTERS OF CONCERN

Unresolved Issues

- Problems connected to poor connections with other transport. Train station platforms and bus stops should not necessarily be regarded as final destinations, but rather as possible transport hubs. Missing a connection can be a real problem in areas with infrequent services and a significant disincentive for making the shift to public transport from the car.
- Problems associated with the collection of tickets purchased online close to train departure times; in particular the lack of a ticket collecting machine at either of the Fishguard train stations.
- The lack of information about services/connections to Fishguard at Paddington and on trains from London.

- Problems with the lack of facilities or information at or near the Clarboston Road station, particularly during dark winter mornings and evenings.
- Overcrowding, limited luggage space and dirty toilets on trains, particularly on the boat trains.
- Inability of cyclists to carry their bikes on buses and the limited number of bikes that can be carried on trains.

WORKING & LIAISING WITH OTHERS

Although the Forum's principal focus is on North Pembrokeshire, it functions within a broader geographic setting and over the years has continued to liaise with others on transport matters. During the period under review the Forum represented the transport interests of North Pembrokeshire through its involvement (working and/or liaising) with the following bodies, organisations and groups:

- Arriva Trains Wales
- Bus Users UK Cymru
- Community Rail Partnerships in Wales
- Community Transport Association Cymru
- First Great Western/now Great Western Railway
- Fishguard and Goodwick Chamber of Trade & Tourism
- Fishguard and Goodwick Town Team
- Heart of Wales Line Travellers Association
- Hywel Dda Health Board Passenger Transport
- National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Government
- Network Rail
- Older Person's Commissioner for Wales
- Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations
- Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services
- Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
- Pembrokeshire County Council
- Pembrokeshire Rail Travellers Association
- PLANED, Pembrokeshire Local Action Network for Enterprise and Development
- POINT, Fishguard & Goodwick Young Person's Trust
- Preseli Rural Transport Association/Green Dragon Bus
- Regional Transport Forum for South West Wales
- Richards Brothers
- Stena Line
- Transport Focus
- Traveline Cymru

The Forum also wishes to express its gratitude to the many bodies, organisations, companies, special projects, grant schemes and groups that have provided funding and other forms of support for the many transport projects and services that bring such benefit to North Pembrokeshire. We owe them all an immense debt of gratitude.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Forum continues to value the positive relationships that it has developed with its Individual, Family and Corporate Members, as well as with transport providers, a wide variety of groups with a transport interest, and elected representatives and officers in all levels of government. We extend our sincere thanks for their interest, encouragement and support.

Finally we wish to put on record our appreciation for the sustained commitment of the members of the Executive Committee: Sally Francis, Peter Harwood, Sophie Hurst, Cllr Mike James, Emma Lewis, Cllr Raymond Llewelin and Mary Smith. And to express our deep gratitude for the valuable contribution they make to the work of the Forum.

Stephen Hale
Chairman

Hatti Woakes
Secretary