



North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum

Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

ANNUAL REPORT 2016 - 2017

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

T5 Services. Valued by a group of older children and young adults with learning difficulties because of the audio-visual messages on these buses. The provision of Sunday services last summer was appreciated by a local shop keeper, who frequently makes weekend visits to Manchester by train, and found the Sunday bus connection enabled him to go back to work on Monday. Needless to say he wished that it would be made permanent.

Coastal Shuttle Buses. Continue to be popular with visitors and locals and used for recreational activities, as well for shopping and travel to work.

New Bwcabus Service. Beginning on 20th February 2017, the service will operate mainly in the T5 section between Fishguard and Haverfordwest serving the villages to the east and west of the A40. Bwcabus allows people to travel between local towns and villages within the zone or connect to the main line bus services to travel to places such as Fishguard, Haverfordwest, Cardigan and Narberth. In addition, it offers opportunities to connect rural communities into the rail network with hubs at Clarbeston Road and Clunderwen on the Milford Haven / Fishguard branch line. This LINC project has received funding through the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (RDP), which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government.

Access Issues. Pembrokeshire County Council has acknowledged access issues that are still a matter of concern; Examples include: Not all mobility scooters are allowed on buses; Difficulties in managing large walking frames on buses; Wheelchair ramps not always working; Only one wheelchair space on buses; Lack of evening bus services.

Council actions include:

- A Driver Disability Awareness and Equality Training Course is being developed.
- A Wheelchair Passport Scheme to be looked at as part of Bus Buddies Scheme.
- Pembrokeshire Passport information now being sent out with every disabled bus pass.
- Marketing initiatives being undertaken to promote Concessionary Bus Passes, including companion passes.

Welsh Government. In January, at a 'first ever' Wales Bus Summit, the Welsh Government, local authorities, bus service providers and users met in Wrexham to discuss how best to develop an improved, more sustainable bus industry for Wales.

Bus Buddies Project. The Big Lottery Fund awarded £221,545 for the project from. Local volunteers will be recruited as "Bus Buddies" to help people who need additional support to use local community or public transport services due to physical or mobility impairments, mental health difficulties or social issues. The service will offer support and/or companionship in the vehicle during the journey, at the destination and on arrival home afterwards, as required.

Lift Sharing – Car Chums. The Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations (PACTO) is carrying out a feasibility study that aims to find out people's attitudes to lift sharing. The study is looking into whether and how more lift-sharing could be encouraged in Pembrokeshire, particularly to help people access social groups and activities, especially in the evenings and at weekends where public transport is limited. PACTO's research has found that 80% of people already give or receive lifts to family and friends on an informal basis. People prefer to share lifts with people they already know, and are more likely to offer a lift if asked.

Green Dragon Scooter Scheme. A grant has been received from the Prince's Countryside Fund for more scooters and for running of the scheme for the next two years. The scheme pays for CBT (Compulsory Basic Training), all safety gear, insurance and the scooter. All that scooter users have to pay is a returnable deposit(conditions apply) and £35 a week.

Cycling and Walking

Active Travel Activities. The Forum's May News Briefing reported that Pembrokeshire County Council had submitted its Existing Route Map (ERM) to Welsh Government (WG) in January and was working on the next stage of the process, the Integrated Network Plan:

- Contacting schools in the areas covered by the Act to mark on plans the routes they want to see improved or introduced.
- Working with the local Police Community Support Officers who know the towns well with regard to route improvements and new routes.
- Developing a questionnaire, linking in with Hywel Dda, which will look at levels of walking and cycling in the Active Travel towns and which will hopefully result in improvements and new routes being suggested.
- In the process of publishing a cycling and walking leaflet showing the ERM routes and other routes in the County.
- Developing a programme to monitor usage on existing Active Travel routes and new routes, along with walking and cycling as modes of transport in the Active Travel towns of the County.

In November the County Council launched a consultation to hear people's views on new or improved walking and cycling routes in the County.

Local Walking Guides. Two local residents have produced these imaginative walking guides:

- Wellies Not Included by Karel Mujica is a booklet with 10 Circular Walks for Families in Bluestone Coast and Country North Pembrokeshire. Priced at £4.95 this is an easy to follow, fun guide to short family walks based in North Pembrokeshire. The walks are: great for families of all ages, from locations with a toilet and eateries, short and circular walks, with easy to follow directions, colourful maps and photos, on a wide variety of different terrains. For more information contact carolmujica@gmail.com.
- Tiffo's Walks - Dog Walks in West Wales and Elsewhere by Mike Williams is a website he has created: <http://tifone.eu>. A message on the home page states that 'This is going to be a long project. There are a lot of walks to describe. So please be patient. Use the contact form if you try a walk and find we have made mistakes. Other comments are very welcome and if you have other walks to suggest, please let us know'.

Train Services and Stations

Improvements.

- **New Café.** The 'Old Station Café' opened at Fishguard and Goodwick Station on 14th April. Services include Sunday lunches, and take away menus are available. Old photographs have been put up on the walls in the café, which has also become popular for drop-in visits by 'non travellers'.

- POINT Station Adopters. The young people of POINT are continuing to plant flowers in the platform railing boxes, as well as in the concrete planters. They have support from the Fishguard and Goodwick Greening Committee who help with the watering and maintenance of these flowers.
- Station Ticket Machine. A ticket machine was installed in November. Pembrokeshire County Council and Arriva Trains Wales worked together to put this long called for service in place.

Memorial to the Goodwick Station Cat.

After Fishguard and Goodwick Rail Station reopened in 2012 the Forum received calls for a memorial to the Old Station Cat. The cat lived at the station in the years following the First World War and was buried under the railway bridge following her death in 1930. In its 17th January 2003 issue the *County Echo* noted that the station staff maintained the grave and its special headstone for many years, 'but where exactly it was situated is not so clear today'.

In 2015 the Forum provided a replica headstone memorial which is installed on a wall of the new station building. Following an offer from local sculptor Darren Yeadon, the Forum commissioned him to make a sculpture of the cat to go with the memorial plaque. The completed sculpture, made of local Preseli bluestone, was publicly unveiled on Saturday 14th January. At the event the Forum's gratitude was extended to all those who worked so tirelessly to reinvigorate the formerly derelict station and increase train services to the area; those who are now maintaining the station; and especially to the late Ken Williams, who provided a tremendous amount of background information about the station cat.

Unresolved Issues.

- Tight connections (5 minutes or less) negatively effect the provision of integrated transport, especially when services are delayed or disrupted. Especially a matter of concern at Clarboston Road.
- Insufficient information in Paddington Station and/or onboard trains from London about connections to South West Wales. Especially poor with regard to Pembrokeshire destinations.
- Lack of space on small CIS screens prevents provision of information about alternative bus provision when services are disrupted or cancelled. Especially a matter of concern at Fishguard and Goodwick and Clarboston Road.
- Regrettably website information about the new ticket machine at Fishguard and Goodwick station is either non existent or difficult to find.

Rail Consultations.

The Forum has submitted responses to the following consultations:

- The (Irish) National Rail Authority: The Role of Rail in Ireland and Funding its Delivery, November 2016.
- UK Parliament Welsh Affairs Select Committee: Rail Franchise Inquiry, January 2017.
- The National Assembly Economy, Infrastructure & Skills Committee: Rail Franchise and the Metro Project, February 2017.

Transport for Wales will be launching a public consultation on the Wales and Borders Rail Service including the South Wales Metro. As part of the consultation process they will be hosting half-day, morning workshops at the end of March and beginning of April in Shrewsbury, Llandudno, Nantgarw, Carmarthen and Aberystwyth to gather views on the new service. More details of the events and joining instructions will be sent out once the consultation has been launched.

Wales and Borders Rail Franchise Procurement.

Bidders have been selected to progress to the next stage in the procurement process to operate rail services in Wales and the Borders from October 2018. The four pre-qualified bidders are:

- Abellio Rail Cymru
- Arriva Rail Wales/Rheilffyrdd Arriva Cymru
- KeolisAmey
- MTR Corporation (Cymru)

The bidders' outline solutions have been received, and the final tender will be between July to September 2017. The contract award will be made in December 2017.

WORKING AND 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
- Fishguard and Goodwick Chamber of Trade & Tourism
- Fishguard and Goodwick Town Team
- Great Western Railway
- Heart of Wales Line Development Company
- Heart of Wales Line Travellers Association
- 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
- Transport for Wales
- 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.

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 commitment during the past year of the members of the Executive Committee: Sally Francis, Peter Harwood, Sophie Hurst, Cllr Mike James, Emma Lewis, Cllr Raymond Llewelin, Cllr Mike Phillips and Mary Smith.

At the end of the year, Peter Harwood tendered his resignation from the Committee. Peter was one of the founding members of the Forum, and chaired the steering group that put everything in place back in 2000. We wish to express our sincere appreciation for the valuable contribution that he has made to our work over the years. The Forum owes Peter a huge debt of gratitude, and the Committee welcomes the fact that he and his wife Janet will continue to support our work as Family Members.

Stephen Hale
Chairman

Hatti Woakes
Secretary