



North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

ANNUAL REPORT 2013 - 2014

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 - SERVICE PROVISION

Buses

Richards Bros:

- *Monday - Saturday*
 1. St Davids connected to Haverfordwest and Fishguard [subsidised]
 2. Fishguard connected to Haverfordwest and Cardigan[subsidised] > Aberystwyth via Aberporth, New Quay & Aberaeron [subsidised]
 3. Crymych connected to Cardigan and Narberth [subsidised]
 4. St Dogmaels connected to Poppit Sands and Cardigan
 5. Fishguard - Goodwick Town Service
- *Coastal shuttle bus services* [Monday - Saturday in summer; Thursday & Saturday in winter]
 1. Puffin Shuttle: St Davids - Marloes [subsidised]
 2. Strumble Shuttle: Newport - St Davids, via Fishguard [subsidised]
 3. Poppit Rocket: Cardigan - Fishguard, via Moylegrove & Newport [subsidised]
- *Limited services*
 1. Fishguard - Puncteston - Haverfordwest, Friday [subsidised]
 2. St Davids - Llandely - Haverfordwest, Tuesday & Friday [subsidised]

Community Transport

Green Dragon Bus:

- *Town Rider*. Services operate in Cardigan (including St. Dogmaels and up to Aberporth) 4 days a week, St. David's 1 day a week (including to Solva) and Fishguard/Goodwick, Milford Haven/Hakin, Pembroke/Pembroke Dock and Haverfordwest each 2 days a week.
- *Rural services*. Services operate from Bwlchygroes/Crymych to Narberth, to Cardigan and the Sunday evening service via Newport to Cardigan one day a week each.
- *Clydau Car Club*. The large, accessible 7 seater (with additional wheelchair space) and the small 5 seater make essential journeys with a mix of hirers (25 years old or above with a valid drivers licence with 6 points or less).
- *Green Dragon Scooter Scheme*. Four Honda 125cc scooters are available to provide 'wheels to work' for those who do not have vehicles and cannot access any other means of transport to get to work. Potential users have to be over 17 years of age. Green Dragon supplies the scooter, the training and the safety clothing. The end user has to sign a contract, pay a deposit and an amount per week to use the scooter. Six new scooters have now been ordered; 2 are 50ccs, which will enable 16 year olds to use the scheme.

Royal Voluntary Service (RVS):

- *Country Cars*. Weekdays, and some weekends - if a driver is available. Within a 40 mile radius, transport for essential journeys, with the exception of hospital consultant appointments.

Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme (RSVP):

- *Cars for Carers*. In principle, transport anywhere in Pembrokeshire, 7 days a week, plus evenings - subject to availability of drivers.

Cycling, Walking and Horse Riding

Cycling:

- Main routes that pass through the area include the National Cycle Network, the Celtic Trail, and Lôn Teifi (from Aberystwyth to Ocean Lab in Goodwick). Cycling for work and leisure is promoted by the County Council and has been facilitated by linking communities with a growing number of shared-use paths.

Horse Riding:

- Information about bridleways can be found on the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority website.
- The Activity Pembrokeshire website reports that the North Pembrokeshire beaches at Newport Sands and Poppit Sands have adequate parking and access and good riding opportunities at low tide. However, during the summer season they are very busy and it is advisable to ride in the early morning or evenings!
- Local horse riding providers: Crosswell Riding and Trekking, Llanwnda Stables, Havard Riding Stables and Penty Parc Stables.

Walking:

- There are over 950 km of public footpaths and bridleways in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, and its website provides guides to circular walks, walks without stiles or steps, guided walks, footpaths, and easy access paths. The Pembrokeshire Ramblers get together for walks every weekend, and the St Dogmaels Footpath Association go for walks on most 1st and 2nd Sundays of the month.
- Improvements for walkers have been put in place by Pembrokeshire County Council through Welsh Government Safe Routes in Communities grants. And the Council has facilitated travel to work and/or recreation by bike between communities with a network of 'utility' shared-use paths.

Trains

Arriva Trains Wales - Fishguard & Goodwick and Fishguard Harbour stations.

- *Monday - Saturday*. Seven trains per day.
- *Sunday*. Two trains per day.
- *Free parking* in the Fishguard and Goodwick station car park.

MATTERS OF CONCERN

Information Problems

- *Real Time Information*. For a variety of reasons, the information displays at bus stops and on the Fishguard and Goodwick station platform are not always able to provide 'real-time' information. If too frequent, these failures to display information about changed arrival times, delays or service cancellations can be extremely distressing for both locals and visitors, as well as a powerful disincentive to travel by public transport.
- *On Board Information*. Passengers have reported on inaccurate or incomplete information provided on the 'scrolling destination indicators' on trains; on one occasion the indicator reported that the next station after Whitland was Fishguard Harbour! Locals might chuckle at this, but new visitors to the area would be left completely in the dark if they intended to get off at Cluderwen, Clarboston Road or Fishguard and Goodwick stations.
- *Roadside Signage*. There are ferry symbols on all of the numerous green primary route signs in and around Fishguard and Goodwick. Very few include the standard red railway station symbol.
- *Some Examples of Misinformation*.
 - An individual in Cardiff who wanted to buy a ticket for someone to travel on the 19:03 out of Fishguard and Goodwick on a Saturday was told by staff at the Cardiff Central information desk that that service only runs Monday-Fridays.

- A visitor reported to staff in the Fishguard TIC that she had asked for information about trains to Fishguard at Birmingham New Street Station on three occasions, and had been told each time that there were only two trains per day: to meet the ferries at mid-day and mid-night.

Integration

Bus-Rail Connections.

- St Davids - Haverfordwest connections are particularly poor. In the morning, buses arrive 43 minutes before and 17 minutes after the departure of the 09:23 train and only 3 minutes before the 11:23 train leaves the station. In the afternoon, they leave 11 minutes before or 54 minutes after the arrival of the 16:06 train. The last bus leaves the station 21 minutes before the arrival of the 18:08 train.
- Fishguard and Goodwick station connections are good, apart from the following exceptions. In the evening the bus leaves 4 minutes after 18:46 train arrives at the Fishguard and Goodwick station. The bus is unable to wait if the train is even slightly late, as it has to be in Fishguard Square at 18:54, for its onward journey to Newport. On Monday-Friday the 20:35 bus makes a good connection with the 20:23 train. However, on Saturday the train arrives later, at 20:48, 13 minutes after the bus has left.
- While there are good Monday-Saturday bus connections with mid-day ferry services at Fishguard Harbour, there are no bus connections on any night of the week with either the late night trains or the mid night ferries.
- Regrettably, there are no bus services to either railway station on Sundays.

Funding

There is widespread concern about whether or not there will be sustained funding for the additional Fishguard rail services after the three year trial period ends in September 2014.

There is also concern about changes that have been made to the bus and community transport funding processes, and the reduction in funding for bus service support. 2013/14 was to be a transition year, as much remained to be resolved. From April 2014 the Regional Transport Consortia Grant and Regional Transport Services Grant managed by the Regional Transport Consortia, will be replaced by a Road Safety Grant, Local Transport Fund and Bus Services Support Grant. While these will be allocated directly by the Welsh Government to local authorities (some on a competitive basis), local authorities will be able to work collaboratively to submit joint applications.

LOCAL, REGIONAL & NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Fishguard & Goodwick Regeneration Plan

The plan is being developed by a Town Team, set up by Fishguard and Goodwick Town Council and Fishguard and Goodwick Chamber of Trade and Tourism, and assisted by Pembrokeshire County Council's Regeneration Department. Transport proposals include improved rail access to service the link to Ireland, improved shelter and tourist information at Goodwick station and improved signage to the new railway station.

SWWITCH Rail Strategy

Adopted by SWWITCH Joint Committee on 6th December 2013 and shared with the Welsh Government, Network Rail, Arriva Trains Wales and First Great Western. Proposed short term measures include:

- Retention of the extra Fishguard trains.
- Co-ordination of bus and rail services in rural areas.
- Further growth in rail travel to support the vibrant Swansea Bay City Region economy.

Medium term proposals include replacement of the current service pattern with a two-hourly service to Fishguard.

National Assembly Enterprise & Business Committee - Integrated Transport Inquiry

In June 2013 Edwina Hart AM, Minister for Economy, Science and Transport, accepted or accepted in principal, all but one of the 25 wide-ranging recommendations in the Committee's final report.

National Assembly Enterprise & Business Committee - Inquiry into the Future of the Wales & Borders Rail Franchise

In February 2014, Edwina Hart AM, Minister for Economy, Science and Transport, accepted, or accepted in principal, all the recommendations in the final report. Key points:

- Powers and funding for the specification and procurement of the franchise should be devolved.

- Consultation with passengers and other stakeholders to identify priorities for the franchise specification and performance management of the operator.
- Prompt action to ensure the right rolling stock is available in the right quantity.
- The Committee has no fixed view on the management model. The approach should allow a closer relationship between the operator and Network Rail, and the Government must show how it will deliver the best outcome for passengers and taxpayers.
- The next franchise has to be framed within policies for better integration of the public transport network and build on the Committee's previous report on Integrated Public Transport in Wales.

The Commission on Devolution in Wales (The Silk Commission)

The Commission's report on wider powers of the National Assembly was published this month (March 2014). The Commission recommends further devolution of powers on rail, ports, bus and taxi regulation and the development of a more integrated transport strategy for Wales. While inter-city cross-border rail franchises should remain non-devolved, the Welsh Government should have a greater role in the appointment of a new franchise operator.

WORKING & LIAISING 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 groups:

- Arriva Trains Wales
- Bus Users UK Cymru
- Community Transport Association Cymru
- First Great Western
- Fishguard and Goodwick Chamber of Trade & Tourism
- Green Dragon Bus
- National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Government
- Network Rail
- Passenger Focus
- Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations (PACTO)
- Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services (PAVS)
- Pembrokeshire County Council
- Pembrokeshire Rail Travellers Association
- POINT, Fishguard & Goodwick Young Person's Trust
- Preseli Rural Transport Association
- Richards Brothers
- South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium (SWWITCH)
- Stena Line
- SUSTRANS

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.

The Executive Committee

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.

During the period Cllr Raymond Llewelin and Mary Smith were co-opted onto the Committee.

In closing, we wish to express our appreciation to all of the members of the Committee for their steadfast contribution to the work of the Forum throughout the year, and in particular to Kate Hawkins who is standing down from the Committee. She has made a valuable contribution to our deliberations, and we wish her well in her future endeavours.

Stephen Hale
Chairman

Hatti Woakes
Secretary