



North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

ANNUAL REPORT 2012 - 2013

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.

COUNCILLOR BYRON JAMES, 1928 - 2012

The Forum was profoundly saddened by the loss of its Chairman Cllr Byron Davies who died on 1st December 2012. Byron served as the Forum's Chairman from the organisation's launch in 2000 until his passing. He was a truly remarkable man who, throughout the years, gave unstintingly of his time and energy to so many and in so many arenas, providing steady and unstinting leadership in his unique warm-hearted way. He will be deeply missed.

THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

Buses

Service provision

Most Monday - Saturday bus services continued to operate as usual. However, due to a reduction in Welsh Government (WG) funding, there has been a reduction in evening services, and the subsidy for the 405 and 412 Sunday services was cancelled.

Following Pembrokeshire County Council's consultation with users, the Coastal Shuttle Bus services have been reconfigured. The Poppit Rocket, Strumble Shuttle, Puffin Shuttle and Coastal Cruiser services will operate 7 days a week during the summer; and from 30th September 2 days a week (a reduction of one day). The Celtic Coaster will run 7 days a week but with a slightly reduced period of operation and frequency.

From April 2013 the four Regional Transport Consortia (RTC) will be responsible for administering a new funding scheme for bus and community transport services – the Regional Transport Services Grant (RTSG). The total budget available to the Consortia in 2013-14 will be £25m. The Consortia will develop Regional Network Strategies (RNS) that will be used to prioritise their expenditure from the Grant according to local circumstances.

The TrawsCymru long distance bus network will be developed to provide improved services to major towns that are no longer linked by connecting rail services. Work is being carried out on the development of a statutory bus Quality Partnership Scheme for Traws Cymru services between Aberystwyth and Cardigan.

The free concessionary bus travel scheme will continue to operate at any time of day, and on every day that services run, including weekends and bank holidays.

Information provision

Information about bus services is provided in a variety of formats by Traveline Cymru, transport operators, local/transport authorities, the regional transport consortia, the WG, the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, as well as by transport interest groups.

Integration with other transport modes

Richards Brothers has made changes to their bus timetables to provide significantly improved bus connections to the new train services. However, St Davids - Haverfordwest station bus-rail connections are still poor, as are Fishguard - Newport - Cardigan -Aberystwyth bus connections. All too often, tight connection times (ca. 5 minutes) result in missed connections when one of the connecting services fails or is delayed. Missed connections when there are infrequent train and/or bus services can cause extremely severe problems to passengers.

The provision of effective integrated bus-train services is hampered by the fact that bus and train timetables come out at different times. This leads to delays in the co-ordination of bus and train services and to growing calls for packaging all timetables changes together.

Community Transport

Service provision

A growing variety of community transport (CT) services are provided by Bws y Bobol in St Davids and the St Davids Peninsula, by Ruby (a new community minibus) in the Fishguard-Letterston-Newport area, and by the Green Dragon Bus services in the Preseli and St Dogmaels areas. The innovative Clydau Connections Car Club, launched on 1st February, will provide an affordable alternative transport option for private car users and will also be accessed as an additional resource by local CT scheme volunteers (where demand for transport in smaller accessible vehicles is not currently being met).

In May the National Assembly Petitions Committee considered a petition submitted by the Wales Community Transport Association (CTA) calling for continued funding of the Community Transport Concessionary Fares Initiative (CTCFI). This scheme provided the funding for the very successful Pembrokeshire Town Rider dial-a-ride services. Carl Sargeant AM, Minister for Local Government and Communities, informed the Committee that funding of projects would continue during an evaluation regarding their benefits. At the end of January, it was announced that the scheme would cease after 12th April 2013, as the evaluation had found that an all-Wales roll-out of CTCFI would be unaffordable.

WG funding for community transport services in 2013-14 will be £2.5m. Moreover, ring-fencing of 10% of the new Regional Transport Services Grants (RTSG) presents the existing CTCFI projects and other community transport providers with an opportunity to secure funding for their services. Community transport providers will work with the four RTCs to develop services that meet local requirements consistent with regional strategies.

Information provision

Information about community transport services is provided in a variety of formats by Traveline Cymru, transport operators, local/transport authorities, the regional transport consortia, the WG, CTA Wales, as well as by transport interest groups.

Integration with other transport modes

Community transport services connect with local bus services when this is required by users. CT operators will also take users to rail stations when there is one in the area where the particular service operates.

Trains

Service provision

The additional rail services that commenced in September 2011 were enhanced following the re-opening of Fishguard and Goodwick station 8 months later in May 2012. In October 2012 POINT, Fishguard and Goodwick Young Person's Trust, signed a station adoption agreement for the new rail station with Arriva Trains Wales. The young people of POINT will work to create a space which the local communities can be proud of as the gateway to the area and will also help promote the use of the trains within the community.

In the first year it was reported that 45,334 passengers used the new trains; a considerable increase, as an average of just over 26,000 passengers per year used Fishguard train services

during the preceding four years (data from the Office of the Rail Regulator). The additional trains to/from Fishguard have also caused an uplift in passenger numbers elsewhere, in particular to/from Clunderwen which now boasts an hourly service eastbound in the morning, and an additional westbound evening peak hour train.

Between June and December 2012 the Forum distributed an evaluation questionnaire to passengers to gather views about the new services. Two hundred responses were received from local residents and only 74 from visitors. An analysis has not yet been made of visitor responses as the number of responses was regarded as insufficient to provide meaningful information.

Key points from the analysis of local responses:

- Passenger profiles: 54% were over 60 years old, 41% between 20-60, and 5% under 20. 53% were employed, 45% were retired and 17% were 'in education'.
- Journey Types: To visit family/friends, for work/business, to go shopping or for social, leisure and/or recreational reasons, to go on holiday, for day trips/short breaks or for medical appointments, for education, for 'convenience', for environmental reasons and because of physical difficulties. Most of the 64% who connected to other trains had positive experiences. Cardiff, Swansea, Carmarthen and London topped the list of over 500 named destinations.
- Comments: More positive than negative comments were made about services and journeys. Top positive comments: overall satisfaction with the journey, staff attitudes and helpfulness, punctuality and reliability, and overall satisfaction with stations. Top negative comments: insufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand, poor frequency/timetable of trains on the route, poor quality of rolling stock, and poor connections with public transport.

In December the South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium (SWITCH) included the preservation and enhancement of Fishguard rail services in its short term rail priorities for the region - in order to maintain the behavioural change and modal shift which have occurred as a result of the improved connectivity.

Information provision

Although standard information is provided at the new station and at the new bus stops outside the station, there is a need for additional directional signage in the car park to guide visitors to the bus stops, the two towns, the Parrog, the Coastal Path, and the Cycle Routes.

It is also disappointing that the CIS (Customer Information Service) display on the platform is unable to provide 'real-time' information about train arrivals or delays because there are no train describers (TDs) on the track between Clarbston Road and Fishguard. This leads to confusion and distress for departing passengers, as well as for those who have come to meet incoming passengers.

To begin with onboard and station announcements along the line about the new services and the new station were inconsistent, incomplete or non-existent. By the end of the period under review they had improved significantly.

Integration with other transport modes

Re-opening Fishguard & Goodwick station considerably improved connections between train services and other transport modes. Bus-rail connections are referred to above under Buses.

It should be noted that there were two rail accidents on the line between Clarbston Road and Fishguard in July 2012. In the first incident the train hit a tree that had fallen on the track, and in the second much more serious incident the train struck a number of cows on the track. Fortunately there were no injuries to those on board either train. Bus replacements were required on both occasions. The arrangements were not suitable on the first occasion, as the bus that was sent was inadequate to provide transport for the large number of rail-sail passengers that had come off the mid-day ferry. However, on the second occasion when the line was closed for several days while Network Rail repaired the track, appropriate buses called at both stations at all scheduled train times.

Walking and Cycling

As we report each year, there is a great variety of paths and tracks in North Pembrokeshire that meet the needs of all types of walkers or cyclists. Indeed those who wish to get out and about in the fresh air on a bike, on foot, in a wheelchair or a mobility scooter are almost spoiled for choice.

Information provision

Information about walking and cycling can be found in Tourist Information Centres, on the websites of Pembrokeshire County Council, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, Pembrokeshire Greenways, Visit Pembrokeshire, Wales Coast Path, Cycling Wales, Walking Wales, Ramblers Cymru, Sustrans, Cyclists Touring Club, and many others.

Integration with other transport modes

Cycle and walking paths and tracks in the area integrate well with the other transport modes.

Considerations of Transport at a National Level of Relevance to North Pembrokeshire

The Public Transport Users Committee (PTUC) Wales

In *Provision on Public Transport Information* (2012) the Committee recommended that the Welsh Government should:

1. Produce guidance in respect of the provision of public transport information in Wales;
2. Undertake further research into best practice in the provision of public transport information from users perspective, including meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010;
3. Lead on establishing Wales-wide protocols on the provision of public transport information during service disruption. This guidance should include the delivery of the maximum information to the passenger in a timely and effective manner;
4. Conduct a review of funding mechanisms to bodies responsible for the provision of public transport information and develop ways of ensuring standards, accuracy and completeness are part of the funding criteria;
5. Consider the implementation of a Joint Transport Authority as outlined in the Labour Government's manifesto; and
6. That mechanisms be put in place to restrict timetable changes in respect of buses to twice a year in line with train timetabling changes. Appropriate mechanisms should be put in place to inform public transport information providers and the public of these changes.

The WG accepted and will take forward all but the second recommendation. The second recommendation was rejected because service providers are responsible for providing information to their customers and ensuring that it is compliant with their obligations under legislation. The Government will keep this under review and will revisit the recommendation if more evidence emerges that this is a major issue for public transport users.

The National Assembly Enterprise & Business Committee

During the period the Committee carried out a wide-ranging Integrated Transport Inquiry, with the following terms of reference:

1. How well is Welsh public transport integrated, particularly in relation to bus, rail and community transport services, and what factors limit integration?
2. How successful are legal, policy and administrative / delivery arrangements in Wales in supporting effective, integrated public transport services that meet the needs of Welsh travellers?
3. What steps can be taken to improve public transport integration in Wales?

The Committee took evidence from all key players, including user groups. It is expected that its final report and recommendations will be published in spring 2013.

The National Assembly for Wales Active Travel (Wales) Bill

The purpose of the Bill is to require local authorities to continuously improve facilities and routes for pedestrians and cyclists and to prepare maps identifying current and potential future routes for their use.

The Bill aims:

1. To enable more people to walk and cycle and generally travel by non-motorised transport;
2. To make walking and cycling the most natural and normal way of getting about;
3. To bring about health benefits, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and help address poverty and disadvantage

4. And at the same time to help the economy to grow and to take steps that will unlock sustainable economic growth.

The general principles of the Bill will be considered by the Enterprise and Business Committee (between 20th February and 22nd May) and then debated in Plenary. Succeeding stages will include Committee and Plenary considerations of amendments, passing of the Bill in Plenary and finally Royal Assent.

Working and 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
- Fishguard Minibus
- Fishguard Town Rider
- 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 Community Transport Forums
- Pembrokeshire County Council
- Pembrokeshire Local Action Network for Enterprise and Development (PLANED)
- Pembrokeshire Rail Travellers Association
- Pembrokeshire Voluntary Transport (PVT)
- POINT, Fishguard & Goodwick Young Person's Trust
- Preseli Rural Transport Association
- Public Transport Users Committee (PTUC)
- Richards Brothers
- South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium (SWWITCH)
- Stena Line
- Sustrans
- Transition Bro Gwaun

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 Caroline Wilson (having moved out of the area) resigned from the Executive Committee. Emma Lewis and Kate Hawkins were co-opted onto the Committee to replace Caroline and our late Chairman, Cllr Byron James.

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.

Stephen Hale
Chairman

Hatti Woakes
Secretary

North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum

Accounts 2012 - 2013

Community Account

Income

Balance at year ending 18 th February 2012	£278.40
Membership	467.00
Cheque transfer	102.79
Donation	<u>917.00</u>
	£1,765.19

Expenditure

Admin	£391.67
Membership	£18.50
Printing	107.22
Rent AGM	24.00
	£541.39

Balance at year ending 18th February 2013 £1,223.80

Business Money Manager Account

Income

Balance at year ending 18 th February 2012	£104.24
Interest	<u>0.12</u>
<u>Balance at year end 18th February 2013</u>	<u>£104.48</u>

The Accounts were audited by:

Yvonne Wiltshire
The Post Office
St Dogmaels
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