



North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

ANNUAL REPORT 2014 - 2015

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.

Without a doubt, the high-point this year was the announcement in August by Edwina Hart AM, Welsh Government Minister for Science, Economy and Transport, of the decision to retain the additional train services to Fishguard, which, in her words, 'demonstrated the Welsh Government's commitment to listen to the needs of passengers'. Words cannot adequately describe the delight and profound gratitude for this decision that continues to be expressed by members of communities throughout the region and beyond.

THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW - SERVICE PROVISION

Buses and Community Transport

Buses

- The PCC website provides information about the comprehensive network of local bus services that operate throughout Pembrokeshire and to adjoining counties. The commercial services that operate between the main towns are run by bus companies without financial support from the Council. All other services (which cannot be run at a profit) are subsidised by PCC. Richards Bros provides most of the services in North Pembrokeshire. Buses run to a timetable, which describes where the bus stops are located. In the countryside services operate on a 'Hail and Ride' basis. The Concessionary Travel Pass Scheme entitles elderly people and people with disabilities resident in Wales to free travel on local bus services.
- The popular Coastal Bus services provide transport around the entire length of the Pembrokeshire Coast. The Strumble Shuttle operates between St Davids and Fishguard. The Poppit Rocket operates between Fishguard and Cardigan. These services enable walkers to walk the coast path in one direction without having to worry about collecting a car at the end of the day. Reflecting demand at that time of year, they offer a reduced service during the winter.
- In January the new TrawsCymru T5 service was launched. TrawsCymru is a network of long distance bus services funded by the Welsh Government (WG) aimed at linking strategic areas. The new T5 route links Aberystwyth, Aberaeron, New Quay, Cardigan, Fishguard and Haverfordwest. PCC has worked closely with the WG and Ceredigion County Council (CCC) to achieve this. The new service replaces the existing x50 and 412 services. A fleet of new more fuel-efficient and environmentally-friendly Optare MetroCity single deck buses will be introduced for the route by the end of April. All of the new vehicles will feature coach style interiors, next stop audio announcements and free WiFi for passengers.

Community Transport

- The Preseli Rural Transport Association/Green Dragon Bus operates an extensive range of community transport services in North Pembrokeshire, namely:
 - Cardigan Town Rider – Monday, Wednesday, Friday
 - St. Dogmaels Dial-A-Ride (DAR) – Thursday
 - DAR to Narberth, primarily for the doctors surgery, collecting people in the areas of Llangolman, Maenclochog and Clarbeston Road
 - DAR to Cardigan from Clydau parish
 - Fishguard Friday Flier
 - Fishguard Town Rider – Thursday and Saturday
 - DAR Sunday evening from Crymych/Newport areas to Cardigan
 - DAR St. David's – Monday and Friday
- The Preseli Rural Transport Association also operates the Sgwt - Wheels2Work Scooter Scheme that was launched in April 2014. 110cc and 50cc scooters are loaned to individuals who cannot access any means of transport to get to work and possibly education. Applicants must have reached (or passed) their 16th birthday, have (or can have) a Provisional Drivers Licence, are insurable and have references. Applicants have to go through an interview process, explaining why they need a bike. If they haven't done any training, they have to successfully complete a CBT (Compulsory Bike Training) and are then fitted out with the appropriate safety gear - all paid for by the scheme. Participants pay a £250 deposit, returnable at the end of their contract as long as the scooter is returned in a satisfactory condition and all payments are up to date. A weekly payment is required for the duration of the contract. The contract is initially for six months but can be extended to a maximum of one year if the need is there. The successful applicant then has the use of a Honda Vision scooter, fully insured and maintained for the length of his/her contract.
- The Clydau Car Club is also operated by the Preseli Rural Transport Association and runs with two vehicles: a Kia Picanto (small 5 seater hatchback) and a Peugeot Independence which can seat 7 people plus a wheelchair. The cars have been busy throughout the year helping many people. Some users do not own their own vehicle, so find the Club extremely useful. The vehicles are available for use on a first come first served basis – a daily rate is charged plus an amount per mile – VAT is included as is insurance and fuel, all that is asked is that the vehicles are returned in a clean state and the fuel tank filled. Users have to become members of the PRTA.
- The Cilgwyn Electric Car Club started as a small group in Cilgwyn, near Newport - to enable more people who live rurally to get around. Now there are four groups (Cilgwyn, Goodwick, Trecwn and an independent group in St.Davids), each with a Nissan Leaf. This car club was the first in Wales using only Plug in Electric vehicles; there is dedicated charging at the car's designated parking bays allowing users to plug in after each use. The first two clubs cost £1 an hour and 10p a mile, and membership costs £30 pa. The club's present insurance, supported by a local company, is for any driver over 24 with two years experience. There is an excess of £250; all members must be willing to pay this if they cause any damage. The insurance options are currently being reviewed to reduce costs. Visit www.revcymru.co.uk/about-us.html for more information.

Cycling and Walking

- Websites of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (PCNP) (www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk) and Cycle Pembrokeshire (www.cyclepembrokeshire.com) provide a raft of information about cycling opportunities in North Pembrokeshire; including cycle-touring holidays, short family rides and off-road mountain biking. In any area you can plan a route that links villages, coastal views and historic sites via quiet country lanes and byways.
- Websites of the PCNP and Walking Pembrokeshire (www.walkingpembrokeshire.co.uk) provide comprehensive information about walks in North Pembrokeshire. There is a wide range of walks to choose from - easy, moderate and demanding walks, the Pembrokeshire Trail, and walks with the Coastal Bus, in addition to wheel chair and easy access paths.

Ferries

- As Part of the Trans-European Transport Network, Stena Line's ferry services provide international rail-sail connectivity between Fishguard and Rosslare. The Stena Europe leaves Fishguard Harbour for Rosslare at 02:30 (arriving at 06:30) and at 14:30 (arriving at 18:00). The return trips leave Rosslare for Fishguard at 09:00 (arriving at 12:30) and at 21:15 (arriving at 00:30).
- There is direct access to the rail network from the ferry terminal at Fishguard.
- The station at Fishguard Harbour regularly welcomes visits from steam and diesel charter trains, and six cruise ships will be visiting the port this summer.

Trains

- Between 23rd May and 18th June (at the request of Transport Minister Edwina Hart AM) the Forum and the Fishguard and Goodwick Chamber of Trade and Tourism (with support from the WG, Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) and PCC) carried out surveys of the trial Fishguard rail services. Over 1,000 individuals responded to on-board, community and business surveys. The responses pointed to the need for the extra services, providing evidence that the services have made it easier for people to access hospital services, have improved tourism to Pembrokeshire and have made a positive contribution to reduced reliance on cars.
- In August the Minister announced that the additional trial services would be extended until the end of the current franchise in 2018. Subsequent announcements have confirmed that the additional services will be included in the next Wales and Borders Rail Franchise.
- Arriva Trains Wales now provides 7 services to and from North Pembrokeshire on Mondays to Saturdays. The stations at Clunderwen and Clarboston Road also now benefit from hourly services in the morning, on either the Fishguard or Milford Haven trains. Passenger numbers have grown steadily, and the most recent (2012-2013) station usage data (from the Office of Rail Regulation website) reported a gain of nearly 5,000 passengers using the Fishguard and Goodwick station during the period. The combined usage for the Fishguard Harbour and Fishguard and Goodwick stations was 46,466.

MATTERS OF CONCERN

Information Provision

- *Real Time Information.* The Forum continues to receive complaints about the inaccuracies or absence of real-time transport information on the CIS displays at bus stops, station platforms and inside stations are not always able to provide 'real-time' information. Failures to display information about changed arrival times, delays or service cancellations can be extremely distressing for locals and visitors, as well as a powerful disincentive to travel by public transport.
- *On Board Information.* The Forum still receives far too many reports of inaccurate or incomplete on board information about Fishguard train services that are provided (or not provided) by verbal announcements or on the 'scrolling destination indicators'.
- *Roadside Signage.* The Forum is pleased to report that information on roadside signage has been improved with the addition of the standard red railway station symbols to the green primary route signs in and around Fishguard and Goodwick.

Integration

- Bus connections between St Davids and the Haverfordwest Rail Station continue to be poor in the morning, no buses meet the first (07:20) train, and the next buses from St Davids arrive 50 minutes before and 10 minutes after the departure of the 09:23 train.
- Fishguard and Goodwick station bus connections are good, apart from the following exceptions: (1) In the morning no buses meet the 06:50 train; (2) In the evening the 18:50 bus leaves 4 minutes after 18:46 train arrives; (3) On Saturdays the 20:35 bus leaves 13 minutes before the arrival of the 20:48 train (which arrives at 20:23 Monday - Friday).

- While there are good Monday - Saturday bus connections with mid-day ferry and train services at Fishguard Harbour, there are no bus connections on any night of the week with the late night trains or the mid-night ferries.
- Regrettably, there are no bus services to either railway station on Sundays.

Unresolved Issues

- Problems associated with the collection of tickets purchased online close to train departure times and the lack of a ticket collecting machine at either of the Fishguard train stations.
- Problems with the lack of facilities or information at or near the Clarbeston 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.

LOCAL, REGIONAL & NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Ministerial Announcements

In January 2014, Transport Minister Edwina Hart AM announced, in a statement on the future of transport planning in Wales, that:

- Capital funding for RTP projects would now come from Local Transport Fund and Road Safety Grant funding paid via Local Authorities (LAs).
- Revenue funding for bus and community transport support would now come from a new Bus Services Support Grant paid via LAs.
- Regional consortia (such as SWWITCH) were no longer required to oversee or co-ordinate funded projects or services.
- A new National Transport Plan (NTP) will be published by the end of March 2015. City Region Boards (where they exist) will be asked to highlight priorities in their areas for the NTP and to assist the Minister in her review of further improvements to transport planning and delivery. Pembrokeshire forms part of the Swansea Bay City Region.

On 18th February 2014, the Minister announced a new three-year funding package for Concessionary Travel across Wales that also includes the introduction of the Young Person Bus Pass.

Transport Plans

Joint Local Transport Plan for South West Wales

The South West Wales Regional Transport Forum was established by the former SWWITCH LA members (Neath Port/Talbot, Swansea, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire). The Terms of Reference state that the Forum 'seeks to build on the experiences, shared values and goodwill of the former (SWWITCH) Joint Committee and to create a political forum to discuss, share and influence proposals and progress in improving transport and connectivity in the region. The Forum will provide expertise on transport issues to the City Region Board'.

The four LAs in West Wales have worked together to prepare a Joint Local Transport Plan (LTP) plan which provides a strategic transport framework for the Swansea Bay City Region. After receiving approval from each LA, the Plan was submitted to the WG in January.

National Transport Plan 2015 (NTP)

The WG published its Draft NTP 2015 in December 2014 which is now out for consultation. The consultation period ends at the end of March 2015. The new NTP will set out in more detail how the WG proposes to deliver in those areas of transport for which it is responsible (e.g.; trunk roads, rail, ports and airports) to achieve the outcomes as set out in the Wales Transport Strategy from 2015 and beyond.

The Forum welcomes the bus and community transport interventions specified in the Draft NTP, in particular those that aim to:

- Provide funding to support socially necessary services.
- Develop options for targeted funding for bus and community transport services focused on rural services, access to hospital and other key services, and access to employment sites.
- Continue to provide a concessionary fares scheme for older people, disabled people and seriously injured service personnel and veterans.
- Deliver a Youth Concessionary fare scheme for 16 and 17 year olds.
- Evaluate pilots to inform development of longer term approach to supporting community transport.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of demand-led transport schemes to inform a future approach to these services, particularly in rural areas.

The Forum also welcomes the Draft NTP's recognition of the importance of Welsh ports, namely:

- Their potential to play a greater role within inter-modal freight networks and the support for their use as cruise liner call ports.
- The recognition and encouragement of the tourism aspect of ports and marinas.
- The wish to see an increase in the movement of cargo and passengers by sea between European ports through Welsh ports - to help improve the sustainability of the freight network, as well as enhancing local economic growth and jobs.

The Active Travel (Wales) Act (ATA)

- This WG Act, enacted in 2014, places new duties on LAs with respect to mapping current and aspirational walking and cycling routes. The intention is to create a step change in the way people make short or medium distance journeys and is focused on improving health and well-being as well as contributing to a reduction in congestion, single occupancy car use and improvements to air quality and urban environments. The Act also requires the WG and LAs to include provision for walkers and cyclists in any new road provision. This is critical in ensuring a move away from creating developments which are car friendly and anti-walking and cycling.

The next Wales and Borders Rail Franchise

- In November executive rail franchising functions were fully devolved to the WG effective from 2017, enabling the WG to specify and award future Wales and Borders franchises.
- On 4th February 2015 Transport Minister Edwina Hart AM updated the National Assembly's Enterprise and Business Committee updated on WG planning for the next rail franchise. Plans include a proposed not-for-dividend, wholly owned, subsidiary company of the WG, to provide the advice and technical expertise to drive forward the next rail franchise and then to establish an arm's-length body able to undertake and operate services. Purchase of new rolling stock is favoured over cascaded stock - to be compliant with Persons of Restricted Mobility (PRM) requirements by 2020 and able to meet expected future passenger demand. There is also a need to look at what stations will be required and to identify the station modernisations that will be required. The Minister reported that she will be clear in terms of the broad proposals by the summer and absolutely clear by Christmas about some of the other elements.
- The WG's commitment to listen to the needs of passengers was exemplified in recent meetings with rail interest groups held by WG rail officials at the Minister's request in Shrewsbury, Cardiff and Swansea. The Forum's Chairman and Secretary attended the Swansea meeting, which was both informative and productive. Both welcomed the Forum being given the opportunity to participate in the franchising process, in contrast to the complete absence of user involvement in the process that led to the first Wales and Borders Rail Franchise.

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
- 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
- Passenger Focus
- 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
- Richards Brothers
- South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium
- South West Wales Regional Transport Forum
- Stena Line
- SUSTRANS
- Traveline Cymru
- Visit Wales

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 under review the Executive Committee met every other month to direct the work of the Forum. At its May meeting Kay Mathias, SWWITCH School Transport Development Officer, informed the Committee about the train training material she is developing for young people, and in May the Committee met with Mark Youngman, First Great Western's new Development Manager for Wales.

Stephen Hale
Chairman

Hatti Woakes
Secretary