



# North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

## News Briefing – March 2015

### Annual General Meeting

The Forum's 15<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting at Llwyngwair Manor, Newport on 24<sup>th</sup> March featured the presentation "TrawsCymru - Unlocking Wales" by TrawsCymru Network Manager David Hall. Following a brief history of pre-devolution bus services in Wales, Mr Hall described post-devolution developments that led up to the establishment of the TrawsCymru "T" services. The TrawsCymru brand features: (1) Frequent and direct services across Wales; (2) Good connections with rail and bus services at key hubs; (3) Good choice of attractive departure and arrival times; (4) Attractive and comfortable interiors; (5) All buses equipped with bilingual next stop announcements; and (5) Uniformed drivers. The services are funded by the Welsh Government (WG), with contracts managed by Local Authorities on behalf of the Welsh Government, and provided by 6 operators (some provided commercially).

*Operation of the new T5 Aberystwyth-Cardigan-Fishguard-Haverfordwest service.* The contract is managed jointly by Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire County Councils. Services operate hourly weekdays and Saturday, providing connections with Bwcabus, 410 and T1 services. The services are operated by Richards Bros out of depots in Cardigan and Newport, and recent reliability checks showed that 97% of journeys operated on time.

### Charter Train Visit to Fishguard on St David's Day

As reported in *The Pembrokeshire Herald* (19<sup>th</sup> March), the Northern Belle, a luxury train carrying 250 passengers, arrived in Fishguard Harbour train station on St David's Day. Mayor Cllr Mike Lloyd was there to greet the train, joined by representatives of the local army and naval cadets, as well as Fishguard heroine Jemima Nicholas. The Goodwick Brass Band performed a mixture of classic jazz tunes and re-workings of pop songs that set a lot of feet tapping and encouraged several couples to take an impromptu twirl on the dance floor. Visitors also had an opportunity to view a selection of local crafts at stalls set up by local arts-and craft businesses. The visit was organised by Refreshing North Pembrokeshire, a new tourism initiative started by the Fishguard and Goodwick Chamber of Trade and Tourism and backed by the Coastal Communities Fund.

### Pembrokeshire Coast National Park - Pembrokeshire Walkability

*From the Park's leaflet:* Walking is enjoyable, sociable, healthy, relaxing and free! It can help reduce stress, heart disease, high blood pressure, the tendency to become overweight and the chances of having a stroke. Walkability is for all ages and abilities, and groups are accompanied by experienced leaders who will tailor walks to suit the needs of participants. Over 2,000 people a year take part, including wheelchair users, people with limited mobility, people with physical or learning needs, and people recovering from surgery, illness or injury. For Scooter and Wheelchair Loan, accessed through selected National Park information centres, visit: [www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/accessforall](http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/accessforall). For more information contact the Walkability Coordinator Paul Casson: [paulc@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk](mailto:paulc@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk), 07866 771107 or 01646 624880.

### South West Wales Regional Transport Forum

The Forum's meeting in Swansea on 27<sup>th</sup> March included a report on the Welsh Government's Funding Guidance to Local Authorities. Bids for transport funding of relevance to North Pembrokeshire, submitted for 2015/16 from Pembrokeshire County Council, included:

*Local Transport Fund:* Improvements to Fishguard and Goodwick Station, and the Glasfryn Road St David's Sustainable Access Project.

*Road Safety Grant - Capital:* A 20mph zone/speed limit programme in the vicinity of schools, and the B4329 Haverfordwest to Eglwysrwr.

*Road Safety Grant - Revenue:* Kerbcraft (Pedestrian training scheme for 5-7 year olds), Pass Plus Cymru (Young driver scheme to improve driving skills, knowledge and hazard awareness), National Cycle training (For pupils aged 10 and 11), Motorcyclist training (The Dragon Rider Training Package), and Drive for life (An older driver refresher course).

## Welsh Government - Rail Interest Groups Workshops

Meetings were held in Shrewsbury (13<sup>th</sup> January), Cardiff (19<sup>th</sup> February) and Swansea (20<sup>th</sup> February).

### Issues identified throughout Wales:

#### *The Next Franchise*

- Should provide for increasing capacity and growing demand; reviewed every 5 years to account for efficient use of rolling stock and meeting passenger demand.

#### *Services*

- Need for a 7 day service specifically including Sundays to serve people's need to travel locally/regionally/inter-regionally.
- Minimum of a 2 hourly interval service on every route.
- Case for new and reopened lines: Aberystwyth-Carmarthen, Brecon, Caernarfon – Afon Wen. Ystradgynlais is without a public transport link.
- Variation in fare prices needs to be looked at.

#### *Information/Integration*

- Include bus services and train connection times on station information boards.
- Up to date real time information relating to services needs to be provided consistently.
- On board screens to tell passengers next stop and station stops along the route.
- Connections need to be more robust in rural areas due to long gaps between services.
- Full integration between bus, trains and the community.

#### *Rolling Stock*

- Need for appropriate seating capacity on trains.
- Need for new, comfortable trains: more seats lining up with windows and bays of 4 seats.
- High quality toilets, properly maintained on board.
- Storage on trains is poor - more space is needed for bikes, prams, luggage, etc.
- Catering more widely on board (e.g.; vending machines).

#### *Stations*

- To be upgraded to full accessibility.
- Free car parking and sufficient spaces at stations.
- Ticket offices can be unfit for purpose (lack of opening hours, no extra facilities or toilets).
- Community involvement in managing, maintaining and improving stations.

#### *Infrastructure*

- Level crossing closures to improve safety and line speeds.

### Issues identified for West Wales:

#### *Services*

- Need for hourly services to/from Milford Haven and Tenby (currently 2 hourly).
- Suburban services around Swansea (e.g.; Gowerton) need to be at least half hourly.
- Need for half-hour stopping service Cardiff to Bristol.

#### *Stations*

- Need to reopen St. Clears station – could be served by Fishguard trains and others.

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The North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum is an independent voluntary group that works for the provision of an effective integrated transport system in the North Pembrokeshire area, promotes the benefits of public transport and works towards the greater use of public transport systems. The Forum is a member of Bus Users UK Cymru, the Environmental Network for Pembrokeshire and the Pembrokeshire Rail Travellers Association.

The Forum's work is supported by:

Individual Members (£5 p.a.), Family Members (£8 p.a.) & Corporate Members (£12 p.a.)

(Corporate members include town and community councils, transport operators, and groups, organisations and associations with a transport interest)

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