



# North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum

## Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

## North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum

### Fishguard Train Services Survey

1 April – 30 June 2004

#### INTRODUCTION

The new Wales and Borders Rail Franchise and the proposal to set up a West Wales Community Rail Partnership (CRP) have the potential to bring improved rail services to Fishguard. Acquiring a knowledge and appreciation of the views of both current and potential users about the existing service is crucial if the aim is to provide meaningful enhancements to existing services and bring about an increase in passenger numbers.

The present survey was carried out to update information about user views gathered in the three previous surveys conducted by the North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum in 2000 and 2002. Survey sheets (see Annex I) were available in post offices, Tourist Information Centres and shops located in the Fishguard catchment area. They were also distributed at Fishguard Station to passengers travelling to and from Fishguard. As the purpose of the survey was to ascertain the views of those travelling to or from Fishguard and the North Pembrokeshire area, ferry passengers were not asked to participate.

A total of 245 responses were received from local residents. Only 55 responses were received from visitors, indicative of the fact that the survey was conducted outside of the main tourist season. It was felt that the number of visitor responses was insufficient to provide meaningful information about the views of this group, and therefore an analysis of these responses is not included in this report.

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Just over half of respondents lived in Fishguard/Goodwick, more than a fifth lived within a 4 mile radius of Fishguard, and just under a fifth within an 8 mile radius of Fishguard. Half were in employment and more than a third were retired.
- 80% of respondents rated the Fishguard train service as very poor or poor.
- Although more than half the respondents never use the train or use it on very few occasions, all but four respondents provided examples of enhancements that would attract them onto the train or cause them to travel by train more often.
- The provision of 'more regular, convenient services during the day' was the top improvement called for by respondents.
- At present visiting family and/or friends is the main purpose for train journeys among all types of respondents.
- Future journey preferences include visiting family and/or friends, for shopping, and for leisure/recreation.
- London, Cardiff and Swansea are the top three destinations to which respondents currently travel or would like to travel by train from Fishguard.

## **SURVEY RESULTS**

### **1. Where do you live?**

The highest number of respondents, 136 (55.5%), live in Fishguard / Goodwick. The next highest number, 35 (23.3%), live in Dinas Cross (4.3 miles from Fishguard); followed by 21 (8.6%) in Newport (7 miles from Fishguard). Looking at the figures from a geographical point of view, 57 (23.3%) respondents live within a 4 mile radius from Fishguard, and another 43 (17.6%) within an 8 mile radius of Fishguard.

### **2. How often do you use the train to/from Fishguard?**

More than half of the respondents stated that they either never use the train or use it on very few occasions: 61 (24.9%) 'never' or 'almost never' use the service, while 75 (30.6%) use it 'rarely', 'occasionally' or 'not very often'. The following comments are representative of those made by this group of respondents:

- *I would use it 10 times a year but cannot because of times - so [use] H'west.*
- *Never because I cannot get back here on the same day.*
- *Rarely as the times are not convenient for long journeys.*
- *Not at the moment. Waiting for the service to improve.*
- *Have never used it - the timetable is inconvenient, so travel by car.*
- *Have never used it as it's not frequent enough.*
- *Seldom - one cannot go to Carmarthen or Swansea for a day's shopping.*
- *I would use it very often as it suits me better than Haverfordwest, but only limited service.*

Very few respondents (23) make frequent journeys (e.g., several times a week or several times a month). 20 use the train every 1 – 3 months; 18 travel 5 – 10 times a year; another 18 travel 3 – 5 times a year; and 13 travel 2 – 5 times a month.

### **3. How do you rate the current service to/from Fishguard?**

There were 239 responses to this question. Over 80% rated the service as very poor or poor: 127 (53.1%) as very poor and 68 (28.5%) as poor. Only 30 (12.6%) rated the service as average; while 12 (5%) and 2 (0.8%) respectively considered the service to be good or excellent.

### **4. What would make you travel by train to/from Fishguard more often?**

All but 4 respondents provided answers to this question (See Annexes II – IV). The key prerequisite mentioned by all types of respondents was the provision of 'more regular, convenient services during the day' - those in work (41), those in retirement (37) and 'others' (11). In addition, there were 29 requests for convenient morning departures and 13 for convenient evening return services. Among each of the three groups of respondents the times cited as convenient varied widely: between 06.00 – 11.00 and between 18.00 – 23.30.

#### **4.1. Respondents in work.**

Respondents in work also wished to see:

- Better facilities, e.g., for luggage, trolley service, cleanliness, comfort, better/cleaner toilets (14);
- Improved reliability and punctuality (10);
- Direct trains to/from Swansea, Cardiff, London (10);
- Day returns to Carmarthen, Swansea, Cardiff, London (9);

- Sensible fares, cheaper fares, more Apex tickets (7);
- Shuttle to/from Haverfordwest (6);
- Better bus service to Fishguard Station (6);
- Fewer changes/quicker trains/through trains (5);
- Larger trains / more carriages and better rolling stock (5); and
- Better connections, without long waiting times or use of alternative transport (4).

#### **4.2. Retired respondents.**

In addition to more frequent services, retired respondents called for:

- Improved reliability and punctuality (11);
- Fewer changes / quicker trains / through trains (10);
- Direct trains to/from Swansea, Cardiff and London (7);
- Not having to terminate or start journeys at Haverfordwest, Whitland or Carmarthen (7);
- Sensible fares, cheaper fares, more Apex tickets (7);
- Day returns to Carmarthen, Swansea, Cardiff, London (5);
- Larger trains / more carriages, better rolling stock (5);
- Better facilities, e.g., for luggage, trolley service, cleanliness, comfort, better/cleaner toilets (5); and
- Better connections, without long waiting times or use of alternative transport (4).

#### **4.3. Other respondents.**

Apart from a desire for more regular and convenient services, respondents in the 'others' category did not provide many additional comments.

### **5. Purpose of your train journey.**

Respondents were asked to indicate if they currently use the train for: Business / travel to work; Education; Shopping; Holidays; Leisure/recreation; Visit family/friends; Other journeys. They were also asked to indicate what type of journeys they would like to make in future.

#### **5.1. Journeys taken now.**

The main purpose for current train journeys among all types of users was to visit family and/or friends: 64 for those in work, 52 for those in retirement, and 17 for 'others'. Holiday journeys was next on the list for those in work (41) and those in retirement(36), and third on the list (10), just behind shopping (11), for the 'others' group.

- For those in work other current journeys were: business/travel to work (38), shopping (29), leisure/recreation (27), and education (16). Additional journeys included: hospital appointments (2) and visiting museums/galleries (1).
- Retired respondents also travel for: shopping (21), leisure/recreation (19), business/travel to work (6) and education (1). Other journeys by retired respondents included: attendance at meetings/conferences, etc (3), hospital (2), air travel (1) and child minding (1).
- The 'Others' group of respondents currently travel for: education (9), leisure/recreation (7), business/travel to work (1). Additional journeys in this group were: hospital (2).

#### **5.2. Journeys respondents would like to make.**

Visiting family and friends, for shopping, and for leisure/recreation were the main journey preferences among all types of respondents.

- Future journeys for those in work were: visit family/friends (49), shopping (48), leisure/recreation (40), holidays (39), business/travel to work (33), and education (13). Other types of journeys they wished to make were: day trips (1), visiting museums/galleries (1) and visiting son in education.
- Journeys that those in retirement would like to make were: shopping (48), visit family/friends (45), leisure/recreation (38), holidays (36), business/travel to work (2), and education (1). Other journeys were: family/others coming to visit (2), Cardiff and Bristol airport connections (2), hospital appointments in Swansea (1), to keep appointments in Cardiff/London (1), travel to sports venues and meetings (1), county council meetings (1), and explore Wales (1).
- The 'Others' group of travellers wished to visit family/friends (8), go shopping (5), go on holidays (5), travel for leisure/recreation (5), for business/travel to work (3) and for education (1). Other journeys were: hospital (1).

## **6. Destinations to which passengers currently travel / or would like to travel by train from Fishguard.**

For all types of travellers London was the top destination (71 in work, 46 in retirement, and 18 others), followed by Cardiff (62 in work, 36 in retirement and 15 others) and Swansea (33 in work, 31 in retirement and 15 others). For those in work other favoured destinations included: Bristol (11), Carmarthen (11), Birmingham (9) and Manchester (9). Significant additional destinations for those in retirement were: Carmarthen (18) and Bristol (15). (See Annex V for full list of destinations).

## **7. Passenger profile.**

### **7.1. Employment status.**

Half (50.6%) of the 245 respondents were employed, while 38.8% were retired. The remaining 'others' group made up 10.6% of the total. Among those in employment, most (54) were in full-time employment, 39 were employed part-time, and 31 stated that they were self-employed. Nine employed respondents indicated that they were also in education. Among the 'others' group, 11 were in education, 6 were unemployed, 1 was 'long term sick' and another a Buddhist nun. Seven respondents did not provide any data about their employment status.

### **7.2. Marital status and children.**

Many respondents did not respond to this section of the survey. After an examination of the responses provided under Other (Please specify), it became clear that the categories provided in this section were unsatisfactory for the purposes of the survey. Therefore an analysis of the responses to this section is not included in the report.

## **CONCLUSION**

The survey revealed that there is profound dissatisfaction with the current rail service to Fishguard – on the part of all types of travellers and among those living within an 8 mile radius of Fishguard and Goodwick. The survey responses indicated that there is a direct correlation between the limited use of the service by most of the respondents and the inconveniently timed and limited frequency of the current service.

Encouragingly, all but four respondents provided examples of service improvements that would attract them back onto the train or cause them to use the train more often. Chief among these would be the provision of 'more regular, convenient services during the day'. While the main purpose for current train journeys from Fishguard is to visit family and/or friends; most respondents stated that they would also like to use the train for shopping trips as well as for leisure and recreational purposes. Although a wide variety of

destinations to which respondents currently travel or would like to travel were cited, London was by far the most popular destination among all groups, followed by Cardiff and then Swansea.

It is the view of the North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum that the information provided in the responses to this survey provides a useful basis for the development of enhanced passenger services to Fishguard, particularly as envisaged in the forthcoming Community Rail Partnership for West Wales.

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