



North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

News Briefing – October 2015

Inquiry into Bus & Community Transport Services in Wales National Assembly Enterprise & Business Committee

1. Public consultation

The Committee held a public consultation to gather evidence on this topic. Responses were submitted by a large number of interested parties. To view/download them visit <http://senedd.assembly.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?ID=188>.

The North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum's response relates mainly to conditions in the North Pembrokeshire region. Issues highlighted in its response include:

- The task of providing bus and community transport services has been made ever more difficult due to changes in funding arrangements, changes to concessionary fare reimbursement levels, reductions in the revenue settlement grant and reduced levels of subsidy from the Welsh Government.
- In particular the community transport sector finds it extremely hard to meet growing demand because of funding issues, a shortage of volunteers, problems connected to procurement and commissioning, concessionary travel and community transport regulation.

Comments in other responses:

- Bus Users Cymru: 'There have also been cases of hardship particularly for disabled people where services have changed suddenly without consultation'.
- CTA Wales: 'Community transport supports the more marginalised and disadvantaged in society. Reductions in commercial services often lead to increasing demands on community transport. Cuts to community transport therefore have a significantly greater socio-economic impact'.
- The Older Persons Commissioner for Wales: 'The Welsh Government must address the social, economic and environmental impact of reducing bus and community transport levels in Wales in order to address the objectives set out in the Strategy for Older People 2013-2023 as well as the seven national wellbeing goals within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act'.
- The Regional Transport Forum for South West Wales: 'Rural areas will require greater levels of financial support due to the challenges of topography and population dispersal if public and community transport is to grow in these areas'.

The North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum also endorses calls for:

- Clarification of the role/status of groups such as the Bus Policy Advisory Group, Bus Users Cymru and the Community Transport Association.

To meet the needs of North Pembrokeshire passengers, the Welsh Government needs to:

- Create and maintain stable, long-term, effectively integrated bus and community transport systems with sustained and consistent levels of investment.
- Put transport planning at the centre of all major developments and ensure that bus and community transport is considered early on as part of an integrated transport provision.

2. Inquiry meetings

The Committee's first meeting will be held on Wednesday 11th November. Among those attending are: Margaret Everson MBE (Director, Bus Users Cymru), Rhodri Evans (Senior Communications Advisor, Federation of Small Businesses), Rhyan Berrigan (Policy Officer -Access and Transport, Disability Wales), Graeme Francis (Head of Policy and Public Affairs, Age Cymru) and Siân Summers-Rees (Director for Wales, Community Transport Association).

Trains - Arriva Trains

Arriva Trains Wales Club 55 is back. This is a very popular special offer of low cost train tickets for everyone aged 55 or more, offering return journeys to hundreds of destinations. For more information visit www.arrivatrainswales.co.uk/club55. Travellers are urged to hurry as this is a time limited special offer.

Trains - Fishguard and Goodwick Rail Station

1. Station improvements

By the end of October the additional car park phase was nearly complete. All that remains to complete this work is the extra lighting and fencing. As reported in the September News Briefing the project also includes an additional cycle shelter and toilet provision. The station building is being marketed by Pembrokeshire County Council as follows: Fishguard & Goodwick Station Buildings, approximately 900ft² in total. Suitable for a variety of different commercial uses (subject to any necessary consents). For further information please contact Sarah-Kate Nicholas on 01437 776271 or sarah.nicholas@pembrokeshire.gov.uk.

2. Station Cat Memorial

Work on the station improvements has included installation of a replica plaque in memory of the station cat, given by the North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum.

At the time of her death on 2nd August 1930 *The County Echo* reported:

'The Goodwick Station cat passed away last week after 12 years of faithful service to the G.W.R. Her permanent home was the Signal box, and her great pal was Guard Peter Williams, Seagull Cottage, whom she visited everyday, and when the Signal box was closed she spent her weekends with Peter. At one time the station yard was infested with rats, and it was not safe to leave goods about. Pussy cleared them away, and not a rat is to be seen in the vicinity. She saved the Company many a claim..She was always on the alert when passenger trains were about, and inspected vans along with station staff. Once she did relief duty at Mathry Road station and within six days she cleared the place of rats'.

Trains - The Fishguard & Rosslare Railways & Harbour Company

A book about the Fishguard & Rosslare Railways & Harbours Company by railway author Ernie Shepherd has just been launched by Northern Ireland publisher Colourpoint. ISBN 978-1-78073-067-7 @ £20.00.

At the height of its existence, the Company owned a total of 104 miles of track in Ireland as well as just short of a mile of line at Fishguard Harbour. The Company is now jointly owned by Irish Rail and Stena, and board meetings are still held once a year, attended by representatives of both organisations.

A note on the back of the book states that 'to do full justice to the story, it was necessary to broaden the research beyond the actual Fishguard Company. For example, on the Irish side it was necessary to begin the story with Brunel's original schemes for railways connecting Dublin with Waterford and the latter city with Cork. On the Welsh side, the original South Wales Railway played an important part in the story, as did the line from Clynderwen through the Preseli Mountains to Fishguard'.

For more information visit www.colourpointbooks.co.uk/more_details.php?id=1873.

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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)

For further information, contact the Secretary, 2 Hill Terrace, Fishguard SA65 9LU
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