



North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

News Briefing – June 2017

Cycling and Walking

A cycle trip to remember. Each June the U3A Cycling Group in Mawdesley (west Lancashire) explores 'somewhere new', and this year decided to ride a section of the route known as 'The Celtic Trail' from Fishguard to Swansea. After the trip the group shared these highlights from the trip with the Forum.

- Fishguard to St Davids via Porthgain (and a welcome cup of tea at 'The Sloop Inn'). One of the group, who rings the church bells in his home village, was delighted to be allowed to ring the Cathedral bells at St Davids.
- Cycling via Broad Haven and Haverfordwest, thrilled to see Pembroke Castle come into view as our hotel was close by. Again, our bell ringer was invited to join the local ringers at St Mary's Church.
- Cycled via Tenby and Saundersfoot through to Laugharne. Everyone was excited to stay at Brown's Hotel and learn more about the haunts of Dylan Thomas.
- Visited Dylan Tomas's Boathouse before heading via Carmarthen to Ferryside after some significant hills!
- After leaving Ferryside, lovely views over Carmarthen Bay, then on via Kidwelly and Llanelli to Swansea and the end of our ride.

'Twelve bicycles was not an option on the train! Our 'Man with Van' collected the 12 bicycles for transport back to our waiting cars in Fishguard, while we travelled there by train. We had an excellent week- some beautiful countryside, lanes banked with wild flowers, challenging hills and bracing sea views, castles too and plenty of fun. It was another trip to remember'.

New path for Poppit visitors. On 21st June The Western Telegraph reported on a new multi-user path between St Dogmaels and Poppit Sands. 'Visitors can now walk, cycle or ride to the beach more safely...The 500 metre path runs alongside the single lane B4546 between the Webley Hotel and the coast path at Poppit Sands. The work was carried out thanks to a £40,000 Welsh Government grant obtained by Pembrokeshire County Council'.

Economy, Infrastructure & Skills Committee's Rail Franchise & the Metro Inquiry

The inquiry report *On the right track? The Rail Franchise and South Wales Metro* was published on 30th June. Visit <http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld11093/cr-ld11093-e.pdf> to consult or download the document.

Points of interest from the perspective of North Pembrokeshire & the South West Wales area

02 Procurement of the rail franchise and South Wales Metro

- Transport for Wales (TfW) has been discussing individual aspects of the specification with each bidder since January 2017 in a series of weekly meetings. The final specification, expected in July 2017, will therefore have been prepared with input from all four bidders and TfW in the light of TfW's wider consultation and engagement work.
- The Welsh Government (WG) should publish a passenger-friendly summary of the key elements included in the draft specification document.

03 Delivery of the rail franchise and South Wales Metro

- WG/TfW must ensure that there is sufficient incentive in the final contract for the operator to innovate, invest in and to work hard to grow passenger numbers to meet the anticipated growth in demand over the lifetime of the franchise. The incentive and penalty regime should also be linked to passenger satisfaction as measured through the National Rail Passenger Survey, in addition to wider issues such as punctuality, reliability and the condition and maintenance of rolling stock.
- Replacing the rolling stock used on the Franchise, and maintaining it at a high level is a priority for passengers. It should be a priority for operators too.
- WG should establish robust passenger and stakeholder engagement structures including strong representation from the English regions. WG and TfW must set out clearly how these will influence them in franchise management. Additionally, the contract must require the operator to engage with these structures, and this should be considered in the context of our recommendation that passenger satisfaction levels should be central to the penalty and incentive regime.

04 Priorities for the franchise specification

The Committee's survey received almost 3,000 responses from all parts of the network. Key priority areas for passengers were:

Punctuality & Reliability (92.3%)	Handling delays & disruption (83.3%)
Capacity of seats when you travel (90.2%)	Connections with other train services (78.8%)
Journey times & frequency of service (88.5%)	Quality, clean trains (78.4%)
Price of fares (84.9%)	Access & facilities for older people & people with disabilities (76.6%)

05 Infrastructure issues arising from this inquiry

WG should seek urgent clarification on the electrification of the line between Swansea and Cardiff. It should continue to lobby for North Wales electrification, and the redevelopment of Cardiff Central Station, at the earliest opportunity.

Ten priorities for the new Wales and Borders Franchise

<p>1 Effective monitoring (of performance)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - passenger satisfaction - punctuality - reliability - passenger growth - condition & maintenance of rolling stock 	<p>6 New trains</p> <p>Sufficient, high quality rolling stock which meets demand now & in the future, which is accessible & with adequate space for wheelchair users & service dogs, space for luggage, cycle storage & prams.</p> <p>It should also have Wi-Fi connectivity, USB / plug sockets, air conditioning / functioning heating, improved cleanliness & adequate toilet facilities including baby changing facilities; catering & refreshments services that are appropriate for long journeys; & a contactable staff on board.</p>
<p>2 Greener railway</p> <p>The franchise needs to take full notice of WG's environmental commitments – reducing CO2 emissions & providing a greener, cleaner service over the course of the franchise.</p>	<p>7 Better communication</p> <p>Improved on-board communication & communication on connections & delays.</p>
<p>3 Integrated network</p> <p>Clock-face timetabling where possible in a franchise which prioritises integration, including smart ticketing & effective connections with the bus network & other train services.</p>	<p>8 Modern stations</p> <p>Stations that meet or exceed the minimum expectations of passengers, a commitment to & funding for community rail projects.</p>
<p>4 Adaptable services</p> <p>A willingness to explore new routes & services & service frequencies which meet passenger needs.</p>	<p>9 Fair fares</p> <p>Effective revenue protection systems to ensure that all passengers can & do pay a fair fare.</p>
<p>5 Affordable fares</p> <p>Affordable fares with clear, simple ticketing options.</p>	<p>10 Reduced disruption</p> <p>Improved management of delays & disruption.</p>

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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'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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