



North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

News Briefing – November 2012

Buses

Requests for the return of Sunday bus services. The withdrawal of Sunday bus services continues to be a matter of deep concern throughout affected areas. The amendments to subsidised services are due to a significant reduction in Welsh Government funding, and Pembrokeshire County Council transport officers have made every effort to limit the negative effects of these reductions.

Poor bus-rail connections at Fishguard & Goodwick Station. Passengers on the first evening Fishguard train all too frequently miss the connecting bus service because of the extremely tight connection between the 18:46 train arrival and the 18:50 bus departure. We have been informed that if the driver can see the train is coming in the bus will wait. However this bus cannot wait for long because it has another service to run. As the next bus doesn't arrive until 20:35, the operator (Richards Brothers) is currently revising its timetables to include the 413 bus stopping at the Railway Station at a slightly later time so that in the event the train does arrive late there will be another bus departing for Fishguard Square. The 413 change is subject to the usual registration notice period, and the requested starting date is the 2nd of January.

Community Transport

Fishguard Community Minibus. Ruby, the new community minibus, operated by Pembrokeshire Voluntary Transport (PVT), is now available for use by community groups and non-profit organisations in the Fishguard area. The minibus is wheelchair accessible, with low steps to help people with mobility difficulties. While groups will normally provide their own driver (who should be MiDAS trained), volunteer drivers are willing to help if needed. The membership fee is £5 p.a. per group. There is a minimum charge of £20 (includes first 20 miles) + 90p per mile thereafter for group use. The mileage rate includes fuel, insurance and a contribution towards vehicle maintenance costs. For more information call Mary Smith PACTO on 01239 821095 - email: mary.smith@pembrokeshiretransport.com or Barrie & Eleri on 01348 891295.

Preseli Green Dragon. The 'From Anywhere in Clydau' service operates on Monday, Wednesday and Friday - to school, to college, to anywhere. All buses are fully accessible. They will take passengers to Cardigan, or drop them off at Boncath for the Narberth bus. Pick up from 08:30 for Cardigan by 09:30. Pick up from Cardigan from 14:00 (call for details). The charge is £4.50 return (£3 for under 16s) and free with an All Wales Travel Pass. Anyone can use the bus who has no access to other services for any reason. Everyone using the service should use GOBus: from £5 p.a. per household. Please ask the driver for a form. To book a seat, call 0800 783 1584 by 12 noon the day before you wish to travel. For enquiries call 0845 686 0242.

St Davids Friday Dial-a-Ride. A service for people who find it difficult to use bus services will start from 14th December. There is no set route or timetable, passengers can be picked up and dropped off at the time they choose, anywhere in the following areas: St Davids, Rhodiad Y Brenin, Berea, Abereiddy, Abercastle, Porthgain, Trefin, Mathry, Croesgoch, Llanrhian, Whitchurch, Solva, Treffgarne Owen and Llandeloy. All Wales bus pass holders can travel free. For more information or to book a seat call 0800 783 1584 - Open during Office Hours Monday to Friday.

Trains

First Year's Operation of the Additional Fishguard Services. Welcoming the news that in the first year of the three year trial 45,334 passengers used the new trains in 2011/12, the Forum wishes to make the following points:

- Office of the Rail Regulator data (www.rail-reg.gov.uk/server/show/nav.1529) reveals that in the 4 previous years 24,775, 24,838, 23,746 and 30,832 passengers travelled to Fishguard by train. The increase in 2010/11 included a temporary blip at the beginning of the period, caused by the take-up of rail-sail travel by air passengers as a result of the Icelandic ash cloud disruption.
- Care must therefore be taken in comparing 2011/12 passenger numbers with those of 2010/11. A more realistic comparison of the 2011/12 figures with those for 2009/10 gives an increase of 21,588 passengers (or 90%). This is in line with consultants' reports which predicted around 20,000 - 21,000 additional passengers in the first year.

- Significantly, passenger numbers on the first year's Fishguard trains are almost exactly the same as the 45,640 on the trains to Pembroke Dock (another ferry port) in 2010/11 (figures for 2011/12 are not yet publicly available).

It is also noticeable that the additional trains to/from Fishguard are causing an uplift in passenger numbers elsewhere, in particular to/from Clunderwen which now boasts an hourly service Eastbound in the morning, and an additional Westbound evening peak hour train from Swansea.

The Forum's evaluation of the new train services is already providing a great deal of information. To date responses have been received from 190 local residents and 73 visitors. It is regrettable that although questionnaires have been handed out to a large number of visitors, the return rate has been disappointingly low. Copies of the responses are being forwarded to Arriva Trains Wales, the Welsh Government's Rail Unit, the South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium, Pembrokeshire County Council transport officers, various elected representatives, the Public Transport Users Committee for Wales and Passenger Focus.

National Assembly Enterprise & Business Committee - Integrated Transport Inquiry

On 15th November the Committee held a special event in the National Waterfront Museum, Swansea - to listen to the views and experiences of public transport users and user groups to provide an evidence base for its inquiry into integrated public transport in Wales. Pembrokeshire was well represented by members of the North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum, the Pembrokeshire Rail Travellers Association and the Preseli Rural Transport Association.

Committee Members facilitated a series of round table discussions on:

- *Fares and ticketing*: how far fares provide value for money and whether ticketing systems simplify or complicate travel.
- *Coordination of services and timetables*: issues involved in changing between different modes of transport and service providers, and also travelling between different areas, as well as how easily users can access public transport.
- *Marketing, communication and information provision*: how easy users find it to access information on services both before and during their journey.
- *Integration with other policy areas*: how well public transport services are coordinated with wider policies such as land use planning, housing, education and health to ensure that transport services are provided when facilities or services are being developed.
- *Quality and reliability of services and infrastructure*: the quality of services and interchange facilities such as bus stops and bus and train stations.

During initial evidence sessions (on 21st and 29th November) members of the Committee received presentations and questioned representatives from:

1. Bus Users UK Cymru (Margaret Everson - Senior Officer for Wales), Passenger Focus (Stella Thomas - Board Member for Wales, David Sidebottom - Passenger Team Director and David Beer - Passenger Executive) and SUSTRANS Cymru (Lee Waters - National Director and Allan Williams - Policy Adviser).
2. The Wales Transport Research Centre, University of Glamorgan (Prof Stuart Cole - Emeritus Professor of Transport) and the Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers (Richard Cope - Monmouthshire County Council Passenger Transport Unit Manager and Tracey Mcadam - Newport City Council Integrated Transport Unit Manager).

Transcripts of all Enterprise and Business Committee meetings can be found on the following link: <http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=1307>.

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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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