



# North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

## News Briefing – September 2010

### Buses

TrawsCambria Network Consultation. The TrawsCambria bus network provides an essential public transport link between key centres. The network is designed to connect into the rail network at key stations such as Carmarthen, Aberystwyth, Wrexham and Bangor. This consultation, which closes on 12<sup>th</sup> December, is seeking views about TrawsCambria's plans to improve the network. Potential improvements include:

- Reduced journey times between key centres by public transport
- Better connections between TrawsCambria services and the rail network in Wales
- Potential new services to provide a wider range of choice when travelling between key centres across Wales
- The introduction of new more comfortable coach style vehicles which are better suited to longer distance services
- Improved "on board" facilities for passengers
- Improved ticketing and fare options

Further information about the consultation, including the consultation questionnaire, can be found on: <http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/transport/trawscambria/?lang=en>.

Bouquet for Pembrokeshire Bus Drivers: A regular bus passenger has reported to the Forum's Executive Committee: "Travelling on an extremely wet Wednesday I was impressed with how helpful the bus drivers were, taking passenger as close to their destinations as possible. It's what rural bus services are all about, with real people drivers. First, Silcox and Richard Brothers are to be commended".

### Community Transport

Preseli Green Dragon. Organisers report that their summer services have been well received this year. The new Gwaun Valley service, from Fishguard to Bwlchgwyt, is very popular. They have resumed running the Sunday evening service to Theatre Mwldan in Cardigan.

Bws y Bobol. The Bws y Bobol organising group has decided to continue providing services with the assistance of volunteers after lottery funding ceases next May. The group now requires a back-up co-ordinator, a person to check the minibus fortnightly for any repair work that might be required, as well as someone to act as press officer. Members of the St David's peninsula community are invited to attend a public meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> October to discuss plans for the future operation of Bws y Bobol. The meeting will be held at 7.00 pm in the St Davids Memorial Hall.

Fishguard Minibus. Fishguard now has its own community transport minibus. Called Millie, she can be used to travel between Fishguard, Mathry and Letterston. This door-to-door service runs on Fridays between 8.30 am and 1.30 pm and already brings people in the area to Fishguard Friendship Circle meetings. The service can be pre-booked on 01348 891295. The minibus is operated by Pembrokeshire Voluntary Transport with funding from the Big Lottery Fund, and is managed by the Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations (PACTO).

### Safe Routes in Communities

The North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum has written to Pembrokeshire County Council expressing its full support for the Council's bid for grant funding for Safe Routes in the Communities schemes for Fishguard and Neyland. The Forum has also welcomed Fishguard and Goodwick Town Council's backing for the Fishguard scheme.

## **Trains**

Update on the Proposal to Close Rosslare-Waterford Rail Services. At the beginning of the month the National Transport Authority (NTA) approved Irish Rail's proposal to suspend the Rosslare-Waterford rail service. The rail service is to be replaced by an enhanced bus service. The NTA approval is subject to several conditions, in particular, maintenance of an asset management regime on the line. The NTA will support the Regional Authority in effecting policies which facilitate rail travel in the region and will also support any initiatives to develop a Community Rail Partnership (CRP). Attempts to set up a CRP have now begun.

Fishguard Trains Petition. The Assembly Petitions Committee considered the Fishguard Trains Petition once more on 28<sup>th</sup> September. Following its last consideration of the petition in June the Committee wrote to the Deputy First Minister asking when the Rail Forward Programme would next be reviewed.

The Deputy First Minister has responded that the business case for additional trains to Fishguard is being refreshed and he expects to receive the findings in the autumn. His first priority is to continue delivering projects within the Rail Forward Programme that is contained in the National Transport Plan. New proposals that can demonstrate strong policy outcomes, as well as good value for money, should be considered for inclusion in future iterations of the Plan. While he has no plans to fundamentally review the Plan, he is open to including new projects subject to the business case and affordability and he looks forward to receiving the refreshed business case for additional Fishguard services.

The Committee has now agreed to write to the Deputy First Minister, asking to be informed about the refreshed business case once it has been received.

## **Inquiry into Rural Tourism in Wales**

The National Assembly's Rural Development Sub-Committee is carrying out an inquiry into rural tourism in Wales (1) to assess the effectiveness and impact of the various Welsh Government strategies to rural tourism and (2) to make recommendations to the Welsh Government and any other appropriate bodies. The North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum provided a response that dealt exclusively with 'rural tourism-related transport services' to/from and within the North Pembrokeshire area; noting that its comments were likely to be relevant to similar rural areas.

In its response the Forum observed that a number of government plans, strategies and assessments refer, to a greater or lesser degree, to the link between transport and tourism in general. The Spatial Plan, the South West Wales Regional Tourism Strategy, and the Coastal Tourism Strategy draw attention to the crucial role that transport plays with regard to tourism in south west Wales and, in particular (in the Spatial Plan), in North Pembrokeshire. Welsh Government support for transport is delivered through a variety of channels. Fragmentation in the provision of support has hindered the development, provision and operation of an effective integrated, sustainable and environmentally friendly transport system to/from and within North Pembrokeshire for tourists and/or residents.

The Forum recommended that the Rural Development Sub-Committee should make recommendations that the Welsh Government and any other appropriate bodies should:

- Develop an integrated policy linking the provision of fully integrated transport services with the rural tourism 'industry', and
- Develop a more unified system of oversight/delivery of policy objectives and strategies relating to transport and tourism.

The full response can be found on the Forum's website at: [www.nptf.co.uk/materials/cat\\_view/9-documents.html](http://www.nptf.co.uk/materials/cat_view/9-documents.html).

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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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