



North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

November News Briefing, 2019

Special Trains Issue - Introduction

Every day (and night) travellers make use of train services from the Fishguard Harbour and Fishguard and Goodwick railway stations. These stations are part of the EU transport system that links, Ireland, Wales and the rest of the UK with the whole of Europe. Surveys carried out over the years by the North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum (NPTF) always ask for participants' destination information, which consistently reveals travel much further afield than that. Moreover, in order to reach their destinations a large proportion of travellers are required to make multi-modal journeys.

Bearing all of this in mind, it is essential that train services to and from both the Fishguard rail stations are reliable and able to facilitate these passenger journeys. In particular, provided with appropriate timetables and up to date information provision, as well as appropriate rolling stock and well maintained rail infrastructure.

Significant November Developments

1. Transport for Wales (TfW) – May Timetable Workshop

The workshop, held at the Clayton Hotel, Cardiff on 13th November, was attended by Rail User Groups and Community Rail Partnerships.

Objectives

- To engage with stakeholders and work together on future service changes and improvements.
- To gather the thoughts of user groups and community rail partnerships on the forthcoming May timetable.
- To consider how to gather their feedback in the future and to relay back TfW decisions and reasoning.
- To encourage two-way communication – 'rather than tell you, we want to ask you.'

Challenges

- Gauge clearance issues.
- Depot space – Canton full. Opening Landore, negotiations not yet concluded.
- PRM mods (Persons of reduced mobility modifications) – Impossible to speed up due to availability needs. Refurbishments (175s) put back to help a little.
- Delayed introduction of ordered rolling stock, due to a wide variety of reasons.
- A large proportion of services in south Wales had to be retimed to allow for the new Great Western Railway (GWR) timetable.

Group Discussions

In the discussions participants provided their comments, feedback and suggestions regarding the timetables. Matters raised by NPTF Secretary Hatti Woakes included:

- Putting in place and maintaining timetables that allow for effective and seamless multi-modal connections – equally important in both rural and urban areas.
- Tight connections presenting difficulties for persons of reduced mobility, persons with heavy or large amounts of luggage, persons travelling with children; as well as in stations where there are significant distances between connecting services.
- Examples of resulting inadequacies in the Fishguard timetable in response to changes in the ferry timetables.

2. Network Rail – Essential Vegetation Work between Clarboston Road & Fishguard

Introduction. On 17th October an oak tree fell onto the Clarboston Road rail track and was subsequently struck by a train. Although considerable damage was done to the train, fortunately none of the passengers or train crew were injured.

Network Rail's Report on Clearing the Vegetation – Key Points

1. Initial activities/decisions:

- Decision taken to close the line to remove potential risk of re-occurrence.
- An emergency possession (PICOP) was granted.
- Swansea off track supplied a PICOP.
- An emergency plan was implemented for an Engineering Supervisor (E.S) & vegetation teams to start works 19.10.19.
- RRV (road-rail vehicle) machines with vegetation attachments were procured.
- RAM team and off Swansea had a joint site visit to access the area of concern to agree the extent of the works.

2. Dealing with Third Party Trees

- Land searches made via land registry.
- Land owners contacted.
- Access and removal of trees agreed.
- Trees assessed and TEF/3245 forms completed.

3. On Site

- PICOP (Person in charge of a possession): 336 man hours.
- POS (On-track plant operations scheme – to support safe planning, control and use of on-track plant): 336 man hours.
- Machine Controllers: 624 man hours.
- RRV (Road/Rail Vehicle): 624 man hours – including log grabs, flail, tree shear, trailer units.
- 2 x welfare units.
- Vegetation Gangs: 3336 man hours including tree climbers and roped access teams.
- Tracked chippers: x 4 for the duration of the works.

On 15th November, after the work had been completed, copies of the full report were provided to representatives from Transport for Wales, Network Rail, Amey and the North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum during a special train journey down the line to see the completed work.

3. TfW Stakeholder Manager's Fishguard Visit

TfW has now appointed Regional Stakeholder Managers 'to lead and manage local relationships, aiming to find ways to maximise the impact of our work and better understand local people's needs to bring rail closer to communities'.

After the Cardiff Timetable Consultation, Katie Powis, our region's Stakeholder Manager, contacted the NPTF Secretary about meeting to discuss matters of interest and/or concern about rail services in our area. Subsequently, during a mid-day visit on 27th November, she held very detailed meetings with both Tanya McVeigh (proprietor of the Old Station Café) at the Fishguard and Goodwick station and Carl Milne (Stena Line's Travel & Freight Operations Manager) at Fishguard Harbour. She also had the opportunity to talk to waiting ferry passengers, as well as train staff on the mid-day boat train.

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
Tel: (01348) 874217. Email: hattwoakes@gmail.com

TfW Timetable Consultation



Best wishes,

Hatti Woakes

HATTI WOAKES
Secretary, North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum