



# North Pembroke Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

## REPORT ON A SURVEY OF LOCAL VIEWS ABOUT FISHGUARD RAIL SERVICES

### Introduction

The poor quality of rail services to and from Fishguard is reflected in criticisms provided by local respondents. The comments provided in this report were taken from a general survey of views about current services that was carried out by the North Pembroke Transport Forum between June and October 2000.

The survey was carried out in the run-up to the introduction of the single Welsh franchise. The survey was also undertaken in response to claims that there had been a reduction in the number of complaints about these rail services.

### Findings

Comments were provided by 107 respondents. Of the 1192 comments provided in the survey responses, 55% were negative and 20% were positive. Fifteen percent of comments reflected adequate or O.K. ratings, while 10% reflected mixed or neutral views.

Frequency of service received the greatest number of negative comments, followed by fares, comfort of stations, refreshments, connections and information. The following selection of comments is representative of the findings as a whole.

#### 1. Frequency of Service

- It is not practical to travel from Fishguard for a day's business in London.
- Would use the service more if a train left Fishguard about 8.00 am.
- Why are both trains to Fishguard at awkward times of day? Morning train [from London] too expensive to travel on – can't even get a Saver then, so have to wait 11 hours to get Supersaver in evening.
- We and a lot of other people would travel by train if there was a better and more frequent service. Very often the local people would like to go away for the day and not have the stress of driving and finding somewhere to park when you get there.
- Shopping service from Fishguard to Carmarthen, Swansea, etc. would be welcomed by many (especially with the ever rising cost of keeping a car).
- I personally do not use the trains because they do not run frequently enough and take too long. My student son used to but now prefers to drive as it is much easier and more convenient.
- Not enough trains. As an Estate Agent I deal with a number of purchasers who need to travel to London, Cardiff, Bristol etc for work but find it impossible because there are no trains and they take so long.
- Extremely poor as far as Fishguard is concerned...Residents in Fishguard prefer to travel at reasonable times – not just at 13.50 or during the early hours.
- I would like to travel by train from Fishguard to Cardiff, Birmingham & London at reasonable times, not midnight & mid-day.

- Single mother with two boys who like to travel by train to Swansea for the day, but I have to pick them up from Haverfordwest at 9 o'clock at night – no service to Fishguard.
- I would use the trains more if they were convenient from Fishguard. Also if they were punctual and more reliable I would be tempted from my car.
- Additional services from Fishguard directly to Swansea. Present frequency TOTALLY INADEQUATE.

## **2. Fares / Purchase of Tickets**

- No ticket outlets north of Haverfordwest.
- If I paid by credit card I had to collect the ticket in person. My son was not able to do this, even with a covering letter. I had to travel to Haverfordwest to pay by cheque/cash.
- Absence of ticket purchasing facilities after 1.30 pm at Haverfordwest Station.
- It is very difficult to get train tickets – nowhere in Fishguard, so at least a 35 mile round trip is required to get tickets. Impossible to get through to Great Western on the phone.
- Business travel cheaper by car.
- I was quoted several different prices for the same journey. I was required to travel on designated trains otherwise there would be an additional charge.
- Too complex. Super saver fares are so restrictive that it is impossible to return from London in the evening and arrive in Haverfordwest before midnight. Standard fares are extortionate.
- Why are Student Rail Card Holders not allowed to use them before 9.30 am? This poses problems for 'university interviews/opportunities etc.' Why issue rail cards if they can't be used for this purpose?
- Limited discounts for families.
- Difficulties understanding different types of discount fares.
- Far too high: travel for 2-plus makes car travel cheapest option. And why are single fares only coppers less than a return?
- Far too high and not enough availability of supersaver seats in high season.
- Can be expensive especially with a family on shorter journeys.
- Advertised fares are frequently not available. Conditions of ticket use change without notice.
- The booking service by phone is abysmal – virtually impossible to get through.
- Reasonable fares can be found but it's a minefield. Could be made simpler.
- Wide variation in total cost is unreasonable. "Top fares" are a positive disincentive to travel by train.
- Far, far too many variations in fares, the whole U.K. network needs to address this immediately.
- Expensive – will not compete with road vehicles until price is realistically competitive to cover the same distance.
- Would like to see more concessions for OAP's other than Railcard. Odd "concession days" would be welcome to go shopping in Carmarthen/Swansea/Cardiff.
- I would like to use the trains very regularly but the poor service from Fishguard and the high adult cost is prohibitive.