



North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

News Briefing – June 2014

➤ FISHGUARD RAIL SURVEY ◀

- The survey of the trial services was concluded on 18th June 2014.
- Over 1,000 responses were received to community, business and onboard surveys.
- A report on the survey findings will be forwarded to Edwina Hart AM Minister of Economy, Science & Transport at the beginning of July.
- Sincere thanks are extended to all the survey respondents for the extremely valuable information that has been provided in the survey responses.

Buses - ‘Richards Brothers Cardigan and Newport’

A new book about Richards Brothers has just been published. Author Les Dickinson has produced a detailed history of this bus firm that now provides services both sides of the Pembrokeshire-Ceredigion border, as well as a range of long distance coach trips. The development of the firm over the years is vividly brought to life with a comprehensive collection of bus photographs dating back to the 1940s. A true feast for the eyes of bus lovers!

In a foreword to the book, Richards Bros partner Marteine Richards says: ‘Whilst the book focuses on the vehicles and services, ours is also a story of people serving the people, and much of the success is due to a loyal workforce. I am sure that enthusiasts and those with a thirst for nostalgia will all enjoy this account.’

Richard Brothers Cardigan and Newport is published by Venture publications, price £20, and is available at local book shops, including Seaways in Fishguard.

Community Transport

Preseli Rural Transport Association. The PRTA/Green Dragon Bus ANNUAL REVIEW will be held at the Picton Centre, Haverfordwest, 12.30 - 4.30pm on 22nd July. A light lunch will be served before the meeting. Come and find out more about the Green Dragon and its services. R.S.V.P. by 16th July. Transport is available - so please let them know if you need transport. *Telephone* 0845 686 0242 or *email* info@greendragonbus.co.uk.

Green Dragon Scooter Scheme. The first user has now finished with the scheme. He has moved into the village where he works, so no longer needs the transport. The scheme enabled him to save up in order to do this. Other scooter users include youngsters who have jobs in remote or ‘hard-to-get-to’ places from where they live. With no access to public transport, having a scooter enables them to keep their jobs. Users are currently in the Newcastle Emlyn area, Newport and Marloes. Enquiries are coming in almost weekly from others who are interested in the scheme.

Trains - Great Western Franchise Specification Consultation

The North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum has submitted a response to the UK Department for Transport’s Great Western Specification Consultation. Consult the full response on the Forum’s website at: <http://www.nptf.co.uk/materials/viewcategory/3-documents.html>.

Key points made by the Forum:

- We hope that the Great Western franchise continues to see itself as a mixed franchise with Inter City, Inter Urban, Commuter and rural flows. A focus on the commuter needs of London to Didcot, Swindon and Reading should not drown out the needs of other flows.
- The issue of connections between West Wales services and Great Western services to London needs to be considered. Problems with weekend connections remain a concern in West Wales. The need to consider passengers connecting into West Wales services also needs to be a particular focus during the forthcoming electrification work disruptions.

- The franchise should maintain rights to run through services between London Paddington and Fishguard Harbour. We also would hope that Great Western will be incentivised to promote the rail-sail offer via Fishguard Harbour and be mandated to play a role in more coherent advertising of the Southern Irish Sea rail and ferry corridor.
- Commuting into Cardiff continues to increase, and this is likely to continue with the development of the Cardiff metro area and the related Swansea Bay city region. Passenger flows between Wales' two principal cities need to be considered in developing the minimum service requirements.
- Restoration of the through London to Swansea service departing Cardiff at around 17:30 is critically important to passengers along the line to Swansea, but more importantly to those heading for Fishguard Harbour and Milford Haven, and to locations reached by connecting bus services across West Wales, for whom it would be the last bus service of the day.
- We agree with the Welsh Government that journey times for South Wales to/from London Paddington need to be improved. With the improved services on the WCML linking London to major English and Scottish conurbations, and the proposed HS2 bringing timings down further, the economic disadvantages to South Wales, as well as to Bristol and the West Country will increase further.
- With the planned 5 year franchise period covering the electrification of routes to Swansea, Bristol and Oxford the expectation should be that services, wherever possible, should be diverted around engineering work rather than suffer bus replacement. The provision of accurate, detailed information, suitably in advance of and during the expected engineering work, is critically important.
- We remain concerned about the lack of detailed information available at locations such as London Paddington about connections provided to West Wales destinations from South Wales-bound services.
- We strongly believe, at a time when accurate, up-to-date running information is available via sites such as realtimetrains.co.uk, information on station CIS displays remains patchy. We believe information should be provided across a range of media platforms, but that timely advance notice, especially for occasional travellers is available at the point where they enquire about train times and ticketing details.
- We remain concerned about the capacity available at Cardiff Central for increasing passenger numbers. Platforms 3 and 4 are increasingly a limit to capacity, and we wonder if restoration of the Westbound facing bay platform (number 5) ought to be considered to at least provide some capacity for Westbound local services. We note the complete unsuitability in the use of Newport as a transfer point between Great Western and Manchester–West Wales services.
- We remain concerned about the availability of sufficient rolling stock to cater for rising passenger numbers. We also remain concerned about the high costs of the Hitachi Super Express Trains that are proposed to replace the existing Great Western High Speed trainsets, especially in comparison to the more complex West Coast Pendolinos.
- Community rail partnerships should gain a more formal input into the service level requirements for routes and need to be involved in this from a very early stage in order to promote a sense of ownership among users.
- In order to provide a more integrated transport system, the Department needs to consider how it can ensure that partner organisations, such as bus operators, obtain finalised timetable information at least 2 months prior to the start of new timetables in December and May. Timely receipt of this information is required for the amendment of their connecting services and their timetables. This is especially important in rural areas with service frequencies likely to be hourly or two-hourly.

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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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