

Brighton Area Buswatch

Representing local bus users



Part of Bus Users UK

Buswatch News – April 2015



Photo courtesy of Nick Hill

New buses and many bus service improvements this month

As well as new double deck buses on Coaster route 12 between Brighton & Eastbourne, these smart new single deckers are now running on Metrobus route 270 which provides an hourly link from Brighton to Haywards Heath and East Grinstead. All new buses meet to Euro 6 emission standards, exceeding the requirements of the low emission zone in Brighton City Centre.

There are many changes to bus services starting this week. As reported last month, routes 37 & 38 have been combined into one service between Meadowview and Bristol Estate and all journeys are now operated by Compass Bus. There are more buses on routes 7 & 50 and improvements to other services, including the 1, 2, 6, 5, 5A, 12, 13X, 21, 21A, 77 & 78. Full details on www.buses.co.uk and in the new issue of Bus Times which is now widely available.

With both local and national elections approaching, Buswatch hopes the all party agreement on promoting buses in Brighton & Hove will continue. However further improvements are needed to make buses more attractive or usage will begin to decline. Some outer areas like Woodingdean have been suffering from unreliable bus services for some time. All too often buses are delayed due to traffic congestion and by roadworks which need to be planned and co-ordinated more carefully, with accurate details conveyed to bus users through real time signs and social media. Traffic lights need to be re-phased at the Clock Tower and other junctions to speed the flow of buses and reduce waiting times for pedestrians. More bus company staff should be based at Churchill Square and North Street to assist passenger enquiries and keep buses moving through congested areas.

Top up Key card tickets before 22 April

Bus tickets bought off bus on Brighton & Hove Buses and on Compass Bus and Big Lemon services supported by Brighton & Hove City Council will be increased from Wednesday 22 April. Prices charged on buses are frozen at the current rates but the cheapest prices remain those on Key cards and M tickets.

The popular One Day Key Card and M ticket increases from £4.10 to £4.20 (compared with £4.70 from the driver) but the discount is reduced for multiple buys. Multi-buy tickets are currently £3.90 but will increase to £4.10 and only for purchases of 15 or more tickets. A seven day ticket increases by £1 to £19 on Key Card or £23 on a scratch card. The best value ticket is the annual Key card, currently £510 which increases to £540.

In East Sussex fares on services operated by Compass Bus are increased by up to 30% as a result of the withdrawal of funding from East Sussex County Council. Most services in the Lewes area will be run commercially (so without subsidies) by Compass Bus so they need to make up the shortfall or they would have been unable to run these services.

Paddle around the Pier bus launched



Look out for this multi-coloured bus which promotes the Paddle around the Pier charity event which is being held on 4th and 5th July. More details on www.buses.co.uk and on facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/PaddleRoundThePier>.

Working in conjunction with members of Surf Lifesaving GB and supported by Brighton & Hove Bus and Coach Company, the event now continues to facilitate disabled groups and individuals - allowing children and young people a safe, supported (and controlled) access to the sea. Delivering what people say is “a life changing experience”.

A few members have criticised design which obscures a few bus windows, something Brighton & Hove has avoided until now. Let us know what you think.

National Bus Users manifesto

Our national group has issued a manifesto for political parties as a plea for them to support bus services and campaign for improvements. There is no need to repeat it here because we have already achieved most of their aspirations in our area. Sadly many parts of the UK lack the level of bus services we take for granted in Brighton & Hove. They suffer from regular service reductions and relations with local authorities and bus companies are poor. We may complain when buses don't turn up on time but we really are very lucky!

New Worthing Area group

A separate group is being set up to cover the Worthing area. Worthing and Adur Buswatch will be enthusiastically co-ordinated by Gavin Muggeridge who is local to the area. Brighton Area Buswatch has always been more Brighton based as that is where most of us live. Our quarterly meetings in Brighton will remain as now, covering the entire area and Gavin will attend as a Worthing representative. Worthing members remain welcome to attend our meetings. If you are interested in joining please contact Gavin at worthingandadurbuswatch@gmail.com

Reports from the Brighton Area Buswatch April meeting

Our meeting on 15 April was attended by around 20 filling most of the space available. With representatives from Brighton & Hove City Council, Brighton & Hove Buses, Stagecoach and Compass Bus we had lively discussions on a number of issues. Roadworks in North Street were a major concern because of the impact on buses and bus stopping places which have varied at short notice. Mike Best from Brighton & Hove Buses explained the difficulties that had arisen and hoped services would settle down with most services diverted via the seafront between 8am and 4pm on Mondays to Fridays. Routes 7 & 25 would continue to serve North Street in both directions during these times to maintain links to Churchill Square, Brighton Station and Western Road. The roadworks are expected to continue until June.

The difference in fares for teenagers was raised. It was pointed out there was no consistency between bus companies. Some operators charged full fares from 14 or 16 while others allowed reduced rates until 19. Hopefully this can be addressed through the Quality Bus Partnership for journeys within Brighton & Hove.

The listed bus shelters in the Old Steine outside the Royal Pavilion are in a poor state and will be repaired soon. The Council have appointed consultants to review conditions for buses at the Downs Hotel crossroads in Woodingdean which are an increasing cause of delays.

At the end of the meeting special thanks were given to Councillor Ian Davey, transport spokesperson for the ruling Green Party who is standing down at the forthcoming Council elections. Ian has been a great supporter of our group, regularly attending our meetings. He has invited me to represent bus users at a number of meetings including the Transport Partnership, Local Sustainable Transport Fund Project Meetings (including Lewes Road) and various transport projects. Most recently I have been invited to join the Quality Bus Partnership.

This involvement has enabled me to be much better informed about transport issues so I can (hopefully) make more constructive comments and influence decisions in the interests of bus users. We usually have all party agreement on transport policy in Brighton & Hove and I very much hope this will continue.

Brighton Area Buswatch meetings

The next meeting with bus company managers and Brighton & Hove City Council will be on **Wednesday 15 July 2015** at 5.15pm in Brighton Town Hall (note earlier start time). Meetings are open to all members and supporters but please let us know in advance if you wish to attend as space is limited.

Buswatch News is produced and edited by Andrew Boag, Chair, Brighton Area Buswatch. We welcome your comments and suggestions. Printed copies of this newsletter are available from Hove town hall reception and a pdf version is available on request. The next issue is due in mid May 2015.

E mail: brightonbuswatch@gmail.com. Phone: 01273 323075



brightonbuswatch.org



Brighton Area Buswatch is part of Bus Users UK bususers.org