

Brighton Area Buswatch



Working in partnership with Bus Users, the national charity representing bus passengers

Buswatch News – February 2023

£2 maximum single fare extended

The Government has announced that the three-month £2 fare due to end on 31st March has been extended for a further three months, to the 30th June. This will apply to most bus services in England, except those in London.

Buswatch News gets results - Route 18 saved

Last month we reported that Brighton & Hove Buses planned to cut the daytime frequency on route 18 (Brighton Station – Seven Dials – Churchill Square – St James's Street – Queens Park) from every 15 minutes to every 30 minutes, a massive 50% reduction. There would be no route 18 buses to Brighton Station, Seven Dials, Dyke Road or Montpelier Road. If implemented, the changes were due to be introduced on 23 April, just over a week before local Council elections.

Within hours of our January newsletter being sent out on the morning of 23rd January, a petition was started by a Candidate for the Council elections in Queens Park ward, and Brighton & Hove News and The Argus had the story on their websites. Later that day, Buswatch was contacted by Brighton & Hove Buses and told the changes were being deferred. It was made clear that the 30-minute frequency timetable was one of a number of options being considered. While this may appear to be a quick response from B&H Buses, the company had been aware of our objections to the proposal for over three weeks. We decided to go public because the 70 day deadline for the timetable to be registered with Brighton & Hove City Council and the Traffic Commissioner for an April introduction was approaching. Once a timetable has been registered it is difficult to make any changes. The current 18 timetable will now remain for the time being.

Buswatch has always valued its relationship with Brighton & Hove Buses, and indeed with all local bus operators, but our first priority is to bus users. Statistics recently published by the Department for Transport showed that Brighton & Hove has the highest bus use per head in England outside London. This is an accolade held for many years, so we are right to expect a high standard of bus service in this city. In this context it seems wrong to try to reduce a service to a hilly and densely populated inner-city area with low car ownership, where a low traffic neighbourhood is also being planned. Most transport planners would regard Queens Park and Hanover as prime bus territory with excellent potential for growth. Buswatch suggested Brighton & Hove Buses should engage with the local community to find ways to make the 18 more attractive, more reliable and increase usage

Bus service frequency changes since February 2020

Route	Destinations	Daytime frequency February 2020	Daytime frequency February 2023	Comments
1/1A	Mile Oak – Portslade – Hove – Churchill Square – RSCH - Whitehawk	6-7 mins	6-7 mins	Was 5-6 mins for social distancing
2	Steyning/Shoreham – Hove – Brighton – Woodingdean - Rottingdean	20/60 mins	20/60 mins	60 mins Shoreham to Steyning
5/5A/5B	Hangleton – Hove – Churchill Square – Patcham/Hollingbury	5 mins	5 mins	5 & 5A each 20 mins 5B 10 mins
6	Brighton Station – Hove - Portslade - Downs Park & Sainsbury's	10/12 mins	15/20 mins	Reduced
7	Hove – Brighton Station - Brighton Marina	6-7 mins	8 mins	Reduced
11X	Brighton Station – A259 – Newhaven – Middle Farm – Drusillas - Eastbourne	3 journeys Sundays	3 Journeys Sundays	Easter, Summer Suns & Bank Hols only
12/12A	Brighton Station – A259 – Newhaven – Seaford - Eastbourne	10/20 mins	10/20 mins	20 mins Seaford to Eastbourne
12X	Brighton Station – A259 – Newhaven – Seaford – Eastbourne (Limited stop)	20 mins	20 mins	Up to 10 mins peaks (unchanged)
13X	Brighton Station – A259 – Seaford – Beachy Head - Eastbourne	3 journeys Sundays	3 journeys Sundays	30 mins summer Suns and Bank Hols.
14/14C	Brighton Station – RSCH (14C) -A259 – Peacehaven & Newhaven	15 mins	20 mins	Reduced. Fewer journeys to Newhaven
16	Hangleton - Knoll Estate - Portslade (operated by The Big Lemon)	60 mins	60 mins	
17	Brighton – Henfield – Horsham (operated by Stagecoach South)	30 mins	60 mins	Reduced
18	Brighton Station – Churchill Square – St James's Street – Queens Park	15 mins	15 mins	30 mins via Dyke Rd or Montpelier Rd
21/21A	Goldstone Valley/Churchill Square Queens Park/Brighton Marina	15/30 mins	30/60 mins	Reduced. 60 mins to Goldstone Valley.
22	Churchill Square - Woodingdean	15 mins	20 mins	Reduced
23	Universities - Elm Grove – Queens Park – RSCH - Brighton Marina	30 mins	30 mins	Fewer extra afternoon journeys, term time
24/26	Churchill Square – Lewes Road – Coldean – Hollingbury – Ditchling Road – Churchill Square (Circular)	20 mins	20 mins	
25	Portslade (peaks) - Palmeira Square – Old Steine – Lewes Road - Universities	6-7 mins	5 mins	No service to Palmeira Square after AM peak
25X	Palmeira Square – Old Steine – Universities (Limited stop)	10 mins	No service	Withdrawn
27	Westdene, Park & Ride – Dyke Road - City Centre – A259 - Saltdean	15 mins	15/20 mins	Fewer PM peak journeys
28	Brighton – Lewes – Ringmer	28 & 29 10 mins	28 & 29 10 mins	30 mins Lewes to Ringmer
29	Brighton – Lewes – Uckfield - Tunbridge Wells	30 mins	30/60 mins	Reduced. 60 mins to Tunbridge Wells
37/37B	Meadowview – Lewes Road – Queens Park (37B) – Brighton Station – RSCH – Bristol Estate. Operated by Compass Bus	30 mins	30 mins	37 & 37B each hourly
46	Southwick – Portslade – Brighton – Ditchling Road - Hollingbury	20 mins	20 mins	

Route	Destinations	Frequency February 2020	Frequency February 2023	Comments
47	West Hove – Hangleton – Old Shoreham Road – Clock Tower – RSCH – East Saltdean. (Operated by The Big Lemon)	60 mins	60 mins	
48	Churchill Square – Lower Bevendean	15 mins	20 mins	Reduced
49	Portslade – East Moulsecomb	8-9 mins	10 mins	Reduced
50/50U	Churchill Square – Hollingdean – Lewes Road - Universities (50U)	12/15 mins	15 mins	Reduced. 50U withdrawn
52	Patcham – Stanford Avenue – Old Steine – RSCH – Ovingdean – Woodingdean (Operated by The Big Lemon)	60 mins	60 mins	
55	Mile Oak – Hangleton – Brighton – Varndean College - Hollingbury	Peak journeys	Peak journeys	fewer journeys
59/59A	Shoreham – Southern Cross – Old Shoreham Road - Brighton	Peak journeys	Peak journeys	fewer journeys
60	Steyning – Shoreham - Brighton	Three jnys.	One journey	Fewer journeys
77	Palace Pier – Brighton Station – Dyke Road - Devil's Dyke	75 mins Sat & Suns	75 mins Sat and Suns	45 mins summer, daily
78	Old Steine – Brighton Station – Lewes Road - Stanmer Park	60-70 mins Sat/Suns	60-70 mins Sat/Suns	
79	Old Steine – Brighton Station – Ditchling Road – Ditchling Beacon	60-70 mins Sat/Suns	60-70 mins Sat/Suns	
84	Woodingdean - Universities	Two peak journeys	No service	Withdrawn
270	Brighton – Burgess Hill – Haywards Heath – East Grinstead. (Operated by Metrobus)	Hourly	Hourly	
271/272	Brighton RSCH – Burgess Hill – Haywards Heath – Handcross (271) Wakehurst (272) – Crawley. (Operated by Metrobus)	Approx. hourly combined	Approx. hourly Combined	
273	Brighton – Hassocks – Hurstpierpoint – Bolney – Crawley (Operated by Metrobus)	7 journeys	7 journeys	Withdrawn Churchill Square – Old Steine
700	Brighton – Portslade – Shoreham - Worthing – Littlehampton (operated by Stagecoach South)	10 mins	15 mins	Reduced but increases to 12 mins from 5 March

Night Services

N1	Brighton Station – Old Steine – Hove - Portslade - Mile Oak – Downs Park	35 mins	65 mins	Reduced
N5	Hangleton – Hove - Churchill Square – Patcham and Hollingbury	Three journeys	Three Journeys	
N7	Hove – Brighton Marina	30 mins	60 mins	Reduced
N8	Brighton – Henfield - Horsham (Operated by Sussex Coaches)	Two journeys	No service	Withdrawn
N12/N14	Brighton Station – A259 – N Peacehaven (N14) Newhaven – Seaford - Eastbourne	Five journeys	Five journeys	
N21	Brighton Station – Queens Park – Whitehawk	Three journeys	No service	Withdrawn (was experimental)
N25	Old Steine – Lewes Road – Varley Park – Universities	7-8 mins term time	10 mins term time	Reduced. Vacations 30 mins (unchanged)
N29	Brighton – Lewes – Ringmer – Uckfield	One journey	No service	Withdrawn
N700	Brighton – Worthing – Durrington/Goring Operated by Stagecoach South	Hourly	Hourly	Thursday, Friday & Saturday nights only

All above services are operated by Brighton & Hove Buses except where shown. Brighton & Hove Buses says bus use is around 85% of pre Covid levels, but they are running 92% of pre pandemic mileage. They have not confirmed any further reductions but remained cautious in a recent press statement. Staff shortages have been a significant factor preventing the return of more frequent services on some of the busier routes. Fortunately these seem to be easing following recent pay increases for drivers and an extensive recruitment campaign. There is also considerable Government finance available to fund bus service improvements this year through the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and details should be announced soon.

A23 Active Travel scheme

Latest proposals for this scheme cover phase 1 which is the section of the A23 Preston Road between Argyle Road (by the railway viaduct) and the junction with South Road (just beyond Preston Park). Buswatch and Brighton & Hove Buses had objected to earlier plans for 'bus boarders' whereby a cycle lane passes in front of a bus stop, forcing bus users to cross the cycle lane to get on and off buses. These have now been changed at most locations but instead, some bus stops are now shown with a narrow 1.6 metre wide waiting area in front of the cycle lane while the bus shelter is still placed behind it.

Government guidance on cycling infrastructure says: 'The island between the cycle track and the carriageway needs to be wide enough for people to stand and wait for a bus and to site a shelter if one is to be provided. The island should be a minimum of 2.5m wide, which will accommodate parents and buggies, visually impaired people with a guide dog or a person using a wheelchair to allow a bus wheelchair ramp to be deployed.' Buswatch will be pressing for further improvements to match these standards.

Brighton Area Buswatch meetings

The next public meeting with Brighton & Hove City Council and bus company managers will be on **Wednesday 19 April 2023**, at 4.30pm in Brighton Town Hall. Numbers are restricted so please e mail Buswatch at the address below if you would like to attend or raise an issue. Further 2023 meetings will be on Wednesday 19 July and Wednesday 18 October.

Buswatch News is produced and edited by Andrew Boag, Chair, Brighton Area Buswatch. Contributions and suggestions are always welcome.

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