

Brighton Area Buswatch

Representing local bus users



A branch of Bus Users UK

Buswatch News – May 2018

Buswatch News makes the news

The last edition of Buswatch News certainly generated plenty of feedback. The erratic opening hours of the Brighton & Hove Bus company kiosk at Churchill Square was an issue picked up by The Argus. We have now been given an assurance from B&H Managing Director Martin Harris that improvements will be made. The Argus letters page has included criticisms of the A259 bus lanes in Rottingdean and Peacehaven, which we have vigorously defended as they are extremely effective.

Over the past five years Buswatch has spoken out on the Valley Gardens scheme. We were often the sole voice defending bus users whose journeys are likely to become slower. Consultants have recently been appointed to design the next phase from the Edward Street junction to the Old Steine and the Palace Pier. There are some great opportunities to improve conditions for bus users and pedestrians here, so passengers can cross busy roads or change between buses more easily. We will continue to press for improvements to benefit bus users and report progress here.

Do you want to keep receiving Buswatch News?

The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) are changing this month. We want to make absolutely certain that all of our supporters are happy to continue receiving updates about our work.

We need your consent to send you Buswatch News.

Your details will not be shared outside of the organisation.

To **give your consent**, please reply to this email with the words **'Yes, please keep my details'**

To **remove your details** from our lists, please reply with the words **'No, please remove my details'**

If we don't hear from you by 25 May 2018, your details will automatically be removed from our mailing list.

If you want to change or update your preferences at any time after 25 May 2018, simply contact us on brightonbuswatch@gmail.com

Deaf awareness week

A special event was held at Churchill Square on 17th May as part of Deaf Awareness Week. A new Brighton & Hove bus fitted with the latest design of hearing loop was on display. This has been developed over three years in conjunction with the manufacturer and Action on Hearing Loss and it has been extensively tested with hearing aid users. The new design cuts out much of the unnecessary background noise that earlier loop designs suffered from and covers a bigger area. A specialist contractor will be employed to fit the loops to all the newest buses on routes 1, 7 & 49. Brighton & Hove hopes other bus companies will take the opportunity to benefit from this development.

New buses for Coastliner 700

Stagecoach is introducing thirty new double deckers onto the Coastliner service this month between Brighton, Worthing and Littlehampton. They have the latest Euro VI low emission engines, helping to improve air quality in urban areas.

A trip to Crawley on the 273

The 273 service runs from Brighton, Churchill Square to Crawley Bus Station. The service is operated by Metrobus with newly refurbished blue double deckers, recently transferred from Brighton & Hove Buses. With just seven journeys a day it isn't the most frequent service but it is well worth the ride as there are some lovely views across the South Downs as the bus makes its way north.

I took a ride on one fine spring day recently, joining the 10:54 journey from Churchill Square. The 273 follows the main A23 out of Brighton through Patcham, paralleling other Metrobus routes 270, 271 and 272 plus the Stagecoach 17. There were about fifteen passengers on board and a few more joined us around Preston Park and Patcham. We leave the A23 at Pycombe by the BP garage where the route appropriately joins the A273 road through Clayton. We pass near the Jack & Jill windmills and the South Downs Nurseries garden centre before grinding to a halt at the Stone Pound crossroads at Hassocks. Roadworks have been causing long delays here recently. Fortunately, we were only held up for a couple of minutes. We leave the 270, 271 & 272 routes here as they make their way towards Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath. Instead the 273 heads westwards to Hurstpierpoint. I'm not sure whether Hurstpierpoint should be described as a large village or a small town but it has a fair few shops in its centre and is probably worth a visit in its own. Indeed, several people left us there and the bus was almost empty as we travelled along country lanes towards Albourne.

Our bus hit lots of branches along the tree lined road, so if anyone from West Sussex County Council reads this - you need to trim them! On the plus side some of the views from the upper deck between the trees are quite spectacular. From Albourne we start to parallel the A23 again, mostly following the old road rather than the dual carriageway. After Sayers Common, Hickstead and Bolney we turn off the main road to reach the pretty village of Handcross, which is a short walk from the National Trust gardens at Nymans. Then on to Pease Pottage which is another attractive village and more than just a service station signposted on the M23!

Within a few minutes the 273 is on the outskirts of Crawley passing housing estates built in the 1960s after it was designated a New Town, and the K2 leisure centre. We use the level crossing by Crawley station to reach the town centre and the Bus Station, which is next to the County Mall shopping centre. County Mall has a similar range of shops to Churchill Square and there are plenty of other stores in the town centre for those making a shopping trip.

Crawley bus station includes a proper enquiry office (much better than Churchill Square kiosk!). It was fully staffed with a good range of timetables and leaflets available. The 273 took just over an hour and while this could probably have been achieved more quickly by train, that would involve a change at Three Bridges. Metrobus routes 271 & 272 also provide direct links to Crawley albeit via Haywards Heath, so they take around two hours from Brighton.

For those paying fares the best value day ticket is a 'Metrovoyager' valid on all Metrobus and Brighton & Hove Buses. This costs £6.90 as a mobile phone M ticket or £7.50 on the bus. There is also a family M ticket for £12.50 covering up to two adults and three children. Another option is the £9 Discovery ticket which is valid on all buses in East and West Sussex, Surrey, Kent and Hampshire with a few minor exceptions. This can be bought from drivers.

Brighton Area Buswatch meeting

The next meeting with bus company managers and Brighton & Hove City Council will be at 5pm on **Wednesday 18 July 2018** in Brighton Town Hall. Meetings are open to all, but space is limited so please contact Buswatch at the address below if you wish to join us.

Buswatch News is produced and edited by Andrew Boag, Chair, Brighton Area Buswatch. We welcome your contributions and suggestions. The next issue is due mid-June 2018.

Don't forget to reply to this if you want to continue to receive Buswatch News by e mail. Otherwise it will be available at www.brightonbuswatch.org or www.bususers.org

E mail: brightonbuswatch@gmail.com. Phone: 01273 620215



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