

Brighton Area Buswatch



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

Buswatch News – October 2022

Christmas Day buses are coming!

Brighton & Hove Buses will be running some services on Christmas Day this year as a trial. Routes 1/1A and 7 will run half hourly and the 5B, 49 will run hourly along their normal routes. Services will start between 0800 and 0900 and continue through the day until around 1800 with a few journeys continuing until 1900. Christmas Day timetables are now available [here](#). There will be four buses each hour serving the Royal Sussex County Hospital in Eastern Road and a similar frequency through the City Centre between Old Steine, Western Road and Hove.

Ed Wills, Managing Director of Brighton & Hove Buses told the Buswatch meeting on 12th October he was confident the trial would be a success. He had experience of Christmas Day buses on the Isle of Wight where they have been running successfully for many years, helping essential workers and connecting loved ones on this day. Brighton & Hove's sister company Metrobus already provides a Christmas Day service Fastway route 10 between Crawley and Gatwick Airport.

Passengers will be reassured to know that normal fares will apply on Christmas Day. We understand buses will be staffed by volunteer drivers.

New printed bus timetables



These new pocket-sized timetables have been printed for most services. The full range should be available in One Stop Travel in North Street and in soon they will be in leaflet racks on buses. These timetables replace Bus Times which covered all services and will not be reprinted. There is also a new bus map leaflet which includes basic frequency details for each service. In recent times it has been necessary to change timetables more than twice a year and Individual leaflets can be updated more easily than reprinting a large book. They are also very handy to carry around. What do you think?

Stagecoach services reduced

New timetables have been introduced on Coastliner route 700 and Worthing Pulse service. The 700 now runs every 15 minutes during the day instead of every 12 minutes and the Pulse runs every 20 minutes instead of every 15 minutes. Evening and Sunday timetables are unchanged. These changes have been made in response to a national shortage of bus drivers and the company says it hopes to restore more frequent buses next year.

Brighton & Hove Buses has also been suffering from driver shortages. It is clear some buses are being cancelled at short notice. Fortunately, these tend to be concentrated on the most frequent services, but this has been leading to gaps of 20 minutes or more and some very crowded buses. There is some good news here because a 10.5% pay award has recently been agreed increasing potential earnings for B&H and Metrobus drivers to around £31,000 after six months.

A trip on the 14 to Newhaven



The 14 runs between Brighton Station and Newhaven although most buses finish at Peacehaven, Meridian Centre. The main 14 service follows the 12, 12A and 12X as far as Telscombe Cliffs Way where 14s turn left to serve more of Peacehaven and North Peacehaven while the 12s continue along the A259 South Coast Road.

Daytime buses leave Brighton Station every 20 minutes, with one bus an hour running as 14C via Eastern Road to serve the Royal Sussex County Hospital. In the evenings some buses run as 14A. These follow the 14 but continue along the A259 and turn left at Sutton Avenue to the Meridian Centre, continuing back to Brighton via the normal 14 route in an anti-clockwise loop. The 14A runs every 35 minutes between 9pm and 11pm which makes the times difficult to remember. On Sundays there is another variation, the 14B which runs hourly and is effectively the 14C but via Brighton Marina. Finally, there are some buses which continue beyond Peacehaven to Newhaven. These are mostly first and last buses starting from or returning to their depot in Newhaven. However, three journeys serve Newhaven Sainsbury's providing a very useful link in the middle of the day from Peacehaven to shops in Newhaven. Surprisingly for a service that only runs every 20 minutes during the daytime, the 14 has a night service, the N14 with three departures from Brighton to Peacehaven and two towards Brighton. As the map shows, it's complicated!

I took a 14 journey from Brighton to Newhaven recently, leaving Brighton at 1025. With a 12 running immediately in front (also timetabled to leave Brighton Station at 1025) we only picked up a few passengers. On a fine morning with light traffic conditions, the driver had little difficulty keeping to time. As the bus turned into Telscombe Cliffs Way we picked up one passenger and a few more at the following stops, who mostly travelled to the Meridian Centre. Continuing back to the A259 there were only a handful of passengers on board, and all got off at Newhaven town centre (Lower Place). One person got on there and travelled to Sainsburys where we arrived, on time at 1119.

It was disappointing to see so few passengers using the bus at Sainsburys. Perhaps this was because the next 14 back to Peacehaven was at 1317 which meant a two hour wait. That would be too long for most people and for me, so after picking up a few items in the store I decided to find the nearest bus stop on the A259. This involved a 5-10 minute walk along the busy A259 and then crossing the busy road. The bus stop at Drove Road, near McDonalds is served by the 12 but not 12A or 12X, so there is one bus every 20 minutes. Fortunately, the stop had a real time sign and I was reassured to see a 12 was due in four minutes. This bus would have started from Seaford, but it was already busy and by the time we left Newhaven the lower deck was almost full. Most passengers were only going a few stops, but some continued to Peacehaven or beyond. Those wanting to go back to North Peacehaven would have had to change buses at Telscombe Cliffs Way, cross the busy junction and then wait up to 20 minutes for a 14 or 14C at a stop without a shelter or real time sign. Not much fun with two bags of shopping in the rain!

Despite the 14 I travelled on being lightly used I'm sure the North Peacehaven – Newhaven link has potential. A few years ago, the 14 ran every 30 minutes to Newhaven and with new housing there should be scope for a more frequent service now. The Meridian Centre Co-op has recently been sold to Morrison's who intend to redevelop the entire site, leaving Peacehaven without a large supermarket for a while. Newhaven has a Lidl and Sainsbury's and other shops so it will continue to be a destination for shoppers.

Fortunately, there are plans to simplify the 14s, by running all daytime buses as 14 direct along the A259. The 23 (Universities – Queens Park - Royal Sussex County Hospital – Brighton Marina) would be extended to Peacehaven to replace the 14B & 14C and hopefully the 14A too. It would provide new links to Lewes Road and the Universities and an all-day service to Brighton Marina, Saltdean and Peacehaven from both directions. The Government's Bus Service Improvement Fund should enable both East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council to implement these improvements. What would happen to the North Peacehaven – Newhaven link is less clear. The full 14 service could be restored or the 23 extended further. Another possibility would be to improve and extend the Compass Bus route 123 to provide a Lewes – Newhaven – Peacehaven service.

Finally a mention of the excellent [Transport In Newhaven](#) Facebook page, provided by Nash Travelman. Nash lives locally and provides public transport users with day to day information. He also welcomes suggestions for improvements, and he regularly attends meetings with Buswatch and bus companies. Hopefully we can work together to ensure improvements are implemented.

Brighton Area Buswatch meetings

The next public meeting with Brighton & Hove City Council and bus company managers is expected to be in late January 2023, at 4.30pm in Brighton Town Hall at a date to be confirmed, hopefully in the next issue. Numbers are restricted so please e mail Buswatch at the address below if you would like to attend or raise an issue.

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

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