




**Proudly supporting bus users in  
Brighton, Hove and the  
surrounding areas**

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## June 2026

### Pool Valley brought into use:

Valley Gardens 3 is nearing the end. As part of the final stages of work around the South-west corner, stop S3 was suspended for a period. During this time Routes 25 & 25X used Pool Valley to set down and wait time before returning, via the Aquarium Junction, to restart from the Royal Pavilion bus stop. Route 700 was moved and remains at S4. Following the opening of the stop this week, buses appear to have returned to S3. It was hoped that use of Pool Valley would become a semi-permanent solution for buses (and Coaches), including for tourists; but the council is putting forward plans to pedestrianize the area. While Valley Gardens will look better, much of the extra pavement area has been created by removing bus layover space and bus lanes. So further removing access to Pool Valley, will reinforce the problems buses are currently facing, and are expected to face, from the scheme.



Bus stop N4 remains out of use, because of work on the corner of Castle Square. It's not clear whether the bus stop will open in time for the start of the new route 20. If not, access to Queens Park will be split between two bus stops.

### Route 20 due to start:

On Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June route 20 will replace routes 18 & 50.

This new, but quite controversial, link has been brought about following ongoing concerns over reliability, cost issues, and operational difficulties with route 18. It is also hoped this will also bring about improved reliability on route 50, as the service often turns early- at the Old Steine. As part of the new route, a new limited daytime connections will be created between Hollingdean and Lewes Road Sainsbury's. This follows concerns over connectivity issues from Hollingdean, following the post COVID loss of the 50U route. This route 20 will operate every 15 minutes- Monday to Saturday, and every 30 minutes- evenings and Sundays. Linking the 18 and 50 was not one of the suggestions put forward by Buswatch (the bus number might have been). The Hollingdean residents association is planning a joint meeting with Brighton & Hove Buses to discuss the changes.

### Service 49 cutback:

Also from 14<sup>th</sup> June, route 49 will be reduced between Hove, Palmeira Square and Portslade Station; meaning the western half of current high frequency cross city service would be reduced to every 20 minutes. This move, understood to be an economy measure, will reduce what could be a 5 minute service along the major Portland Road thoroughfare, to basically a 10 minute service (as the 2 & 46 routes run almost together towards Brighton). Although buses are better spaced- returning from Brighton. It also means that from Portland Road, each central Hove destination only receives a 20 minute service. Brighton Buswatch is very concerned about these planned cuts to service 49. While Brighton & Hove Buses may have good reasons to implement these cuts in the short-term, we see no good reason for implementing such cuts in the medium to longer-term.

## Other service changes:

From the same date, the following changes also apply:

- 3X – Extended to Sports Complex at University of Brighton. Minor timetable changes. At Brighton Station, buses to Brighton University will use stop B2 (instead of B4).
- 13X – Summer service updated – 5 buses per day (Mon-Fri), Hourly (Sat) and every 20 minutes (Sun).
- 21 – Will stop additionally at North Street (N1) alongside the new route 20.
- 25/25X & N25 – Vacation timetable.
- 27 – At Brighton Station, buses to Saltdean depart from stop B5 (instead of B2) providing a common stop for Coaster buses (alas without any real-time information).

## Cashless trial:

26th May saw Express services 1X, 3X & 25X accepting only non-cash payments on board. According to Brighton & Hove buses 'Cashless boarding reduces delays and keeps buses running more reliably by speeding up payments, which leads to quicker boarding, shorter stop times and more punctual journeys.' Buswatch has expressed concern at the scheme, citing concerns such as:

- The trial being extended across the city and entire network
- Not all bus users have access to bank accounts and not all bus users can afford or use a smart-phone.
- Cash-payments should always remain an option to cover situations such as emergencies or when technology fails.

We have also considered that if smartphones are being banned in schools, some children may be limited to using cash to pay for their bus journey. Unlike in London, where there are over 3,700 retail outlets at which Oyster cards can be topped up with cash, there remains only 2 sales points in the whole city, where bus users can pay cash for their tickets. 44% of disabled people use cash at some point (source Bank of England). Particularly for those on a tight budget, using cash can help passengers better manage their finances. So its absence goes against Brighton & Hove's policies on inclusivity. The previous MD of B&H buses stated that 7% of passengers choose to pay by cash. He also pledged to continue accepting payment by any means, including cash. Buswatch asks that the trial be suspended, until future decisions have been made on franchising, integrated ticketing with the railways and/or future decisions under devolution.

## 11X Withdrawn:

Route 11X will not operate this summer, as a result of low patronage over the last few years. Started in 2019 (and withdrawn during the 2020 COVID lock-down); the summer Sunday route to Middle Farm and Drusillas Zoo, had previously seen its operations gradually reduced. Operated commercially by Brighton & Hove Bus Company, and marketed as a Coaster service, there were latterly three return journeys on Sundays. Starting in Brighton, it was very useful for families. Limited alternative services are still available on Cuckmere Community Bus routes:- [24](#) (Wednesdays & Fridays), [25](#) (Tuesdays, Thursdays & Saturdays) and [47](#) (Saturdays, Sundays & Public Holidays); and 26 on Sundays all year round. Both the 26 & 47 run from Seaford.

## Exeat Bridge woes:

Changes to Coaster routes including improvements on the N12 & N14 to a combined half-hourly service! will happen in July. However other positive changes originally planned for June, have been suspended. Going against previous indications, East Sussex now plans to completely close of the A259 at Exeat Bridge, for a substantial period, next summer. This will require an emergency timetable with buses being diverted via the A27. There is the fear that all this extra traffic being diverted on the A27 will cause severe congestion problems on the A27, and risks bringing services to their knees. The bus company aims to keep bus services going to all areas, which remain accessible. News of the bridge closure came just as the planned changes were about to be sent to the traffic commissioner.

## **A23 Bus lane complete:**

The new bus/cycle/taxi lane has been built on the southbound direction of the A23- between Brangwyn Crescent and Brangwyn Drive. The lane will operate 24 hours a day, and replaces the former cycle lane. Routes 5A, 17, 270 – 273, 025, 066 & 998 are expected to benefit from this new bus lane, although the council has also reduced the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph.

## **Buswatch meeting**

The next Brighton Buswatch meeting takes place on **15th July 2026 at 16.00 – Location to be announced.** Space is strictly limited and interest is gathering, so please e-mail Buswatch or message via Brighton Buswatch Facebook group to be included.

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Buswatch Newsletter is produced and edited by Brighton Area Buswatch. Contributions and suggestions are always welcome.