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October 2025

Valley Gardens 3 Special!



Valley Gardens is one of the biggest changes to road infrastructure in Brighton, in half a century. In discussion for 12 years. The entire Valley Gardens scheme from Ditchling Road to the A259 includes additional green space, new footways, seating, lighting and revised bus lanes, together with new tree planting. Valley Gardens 3 (VG3), including the area around the Old Steine and the Pier, is the most complex and controversial element of the entire project. This includes removal of the Aquarium roundabout, and road swapping. There will be a substantial increase in pedestrian areas, largely at the expense of reducing space available for buses to layover. Problems have not been helped by the Albion Hotel fire and incidents in North Street.

VG3 was being planned before my tenure as Chair of Buswatch, so I have quickly needed to become up to speed. There has been considerable concerns from our members and the public, which Nash feels until recently were overstated. Some reassurances were given at a meeting with councillors and Brighton and Hove City Council.

We appear to be over the worst of it, for the moment. Next the removal of the Aquarium roundabout.....

Changing sides:

October saw northbound traffic switched from the west side of the Memorial at Old Steine, to the east side, with a new two-way layout. The useful Art Deco bus shelters are no longer functioning as shelters, and will be used as an art space and for other community based uses. The whole area will be pedestrianised. The previous three bus stops will mostly be merged into a single bus stop Royal Pavilion (R1), making it more difficult to catch a bus here. The other stop being located in Marlborough Place, for the services 21 and 22.

There is an updated crossing at the junction of St James Street and the Old Steine (by the War Memorial). Some concerns have been raised about its suitability, especially as the new eastbound left turn movement, by the War Memorial, could confuse pedestrians.

Bus stop changes: Previously many bus stop locations had the same lettered bus stops (A-Z), causing confusion. This has been replaced by location and numbered stops (e.g. B1- for Brighton Station).

Here is a summary:

Brighton Station (B1- B6) - Stops have been renamed to better reflect the location of services.

Clock Tower (T1/T2) – Have been lettered and dis-associated with Churchill Square bus stops.

Churchill Square (C1 - C8)- This label includes Imperial Arcade bus stops.

North Street (N1-N6) – Portland Street becomes North Street *N1*, serving London Road routes; *N2* serves Coastal services; *N3* serves 1, 1X, 7 (etc.); New *N4* stop for routes 2, 18, 21, 22 & 700. Regency services do not stop in North Street, eastbound. Stops N5 & N6 will serve westbound services, as at present.

Royal Pavilion (R1/R2) – Is split into two stops – R1 for most routes that served the Art Deco stops, R2 for routes 21 & 22 only.

Old Steine South (S1-S4) – Served by all routes heading into the city. S1 for almost all cross city routes, and Brighton Station; S2 for Churchill Square terminators and S3 for 25, 25X, 78 and 700. S4 is previous Stop Z.

SeaLife Centre/Palace Pier (P1-P3) – SeaLife Centre stops are lettered P1 & P2, serving existing routes; while the Palace Pier bus stop become P3- for the '77' and City Sightseeing.

St James Street (J1) - is treated as a separate stop.

Stops at St Peters Church, London Road Shops, Open Market and The Level, are labelled L1-L9. These stops are lettered together, but names remain and there are no changes to stopping patterns.

Overall, these changes have been viewed positively by Buswatch, but have received mixed views from members of the public. *Some observations since the change:* the route 700 buses is continuing to use stops N1 and N3 as shown on their app. There is also a concern about the distance from stop N4, to the shops.

New bus stops: North Street (N4) is a new bus stop, in Castle Square. It is due to be given a shelter and will receive seating in the interim. The new King & Queen bus stop, in Marlborough Place, is much requested. The stop is now known as Royal Pavilion (R2), will be used by routes 21 and 22. This complements stop N4.

The westbound SeaLife Centre bus stop had its shelter replaced with more robust design, with digital advertising. The previous shelter was destroyed by a coach two days after installation!

Disruption: Changes to the road layout and resurfacing, has led to a difficult two weeks for buses. Due to the subsequent congestion in North Street, this required on occasions- route 7 and Coaster services being diverted via West Street and the seafront. Services 1, 1X, 7 needed to use Rock Gardens to avoid the east side of Pavilion Parade. Various short journeys have taken place, with routes turning at Old Steine. Lastly, some services were running via North Road. Compass Travel routes were also affected. The latest of the overnight closures for resurfacing took place on Friday 24th October, leading to severe congestion and confusion.

It is understood that though planned as a contingency, the notice to closure- was a late decision. Our Buswatch committee undertook an emergency site visit, during which, we met a council member who talked us through the issues.

Gasworks site given the go ahead: The former gasworks site at Marine Gate, which will provide some 495 homes; has been given the go-ahead. This will mean relocating the Compass Travel and Big Lemon depot. It has been suggested that the '12X' should stop at Marine Gate.

Some bus fares rise, but other fare offers continue:

It was announced at the end of October, that discounted tickets for Under 19's, supported by Brighton's BSIP (Bus Service Improvement Plan) funding, will continue at least until the end of the year. So travel for under 19s will remain free, when accompanied by an adult (up to four under 19s, excluding night services). Unaccompanied under 19s fare will continue at 50p, for a single off-peak journey. The daily £6 citySAVER ticket on Brighton & Hove's app (or online Keycards) will continue until the end of the year.

However, **from 8th November** (1st November- Stagecoach) some other mostly BSIP supported fares will rise. The daily TOTO cap and CitySAVER paper ticket will increase from £6 to £6.60, a weekly ticket goes from £25 to £26 on app, but the TOTO or paper ticket becomes £28.70. The Short hop fare rises from £1 to £1.30 and the two-stage ticket becomes £2.60 (a 10p increase). This includes some significant increases. TOTO- stands for when you **Touch On, Touch Off**, using your debit card or phone, on the ticket machine.

Coach Station: Brighton & Hove City Council have introduced an Experimental Order 2025, involving various Restrictions on Stroudley Road, at the back of Brighton Station. The plan would make Stroudley Road one way, heading north from the roundabout. This would permit bus and coach stands, along with other changes. It is understood this will be used to support existing coach services in Brighton. We await further information. To date, it is still unclear what the future holds for Pool Valley.

RTI screens update: RTI screens have now been installed and brought into operation at North Street and Churchill Square. New totems are to be brought in at Churchill Square with a summary of services from all stops, and another at Old Steine stop S1. The audio equipment is said to be working now, following a recently fault. However, many other RTI screens which were previously working well (including along New Church Road), now have faults.

The Service 700- is now a 24/7 bus service:

Two 700 Coastliner buses have been adorned in a striking design of black with various orange, green and blue shapes promoting the new 24 hour, seven-days-a-week service, provided by both the 700 & N700. At our Buswatch meeting, special praise was given to this much welcomed service improvement.



Poppy buses:

Brighton & Hove and The Royal British Legion (RBL) in Sussex have partnered together, in support of the 2025 Poppy Appeal. This marks the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) and Victory over Japan (VJ). Eighty Brighton & Hove buses have been given poppies, displayed on the lower left front. A full list of Brighton & Hove poppy buses are available on the website.

Buswatch meeting:

The next Brighton Buswatch meeting takes place on 21st January 2026 at 16.00 – ground floor, Brighton Town Hall, Bartholomew Square, Brighton BN1 1JW. Space is normally limited, so please e-mail Buswatch or message via Brighton Buswatch Facebook group; if you would like to attend as a guest or raise an issue.

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

Brighton Area Buswatch 2025