



North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

News Briefing – April 2011

Major Improvements to Fishguard Rail Services

We make no apologies for devoting most of this News Briefing to reports on developments connected to the additional Fishguard rail services that will start operating in September. The new services will bring a major increase in the variety of travel opportunities available to both residents and visitors to North Pembrokeshire - from an already almost completely integrated transport hub.

Our actions are now focused on two key activities: (1) the forthcoming Welsh Assembly Government community timetable consultation, and (2) a major marketing and publicity campaign for the new services.

The Timetable Consultation. The aim is to seek to obtain clear community views on the most appropriate timetable for the new services. Once further information about the consultation is available this will be passed on to our readership (in the community and beyond) in a SPECIAL News Briefing.

The Marketing and Publicity Campaign. It is clear that marketing and publicity for the new services will be carried out both locally and further afield, by a number of players. Our focus will naturally be on the work that we can do closer to home: in Fishguard and Goodwick, throughout the North Pembrokeshire region, and in Pembrokeshire as a whole.

The Forum has already received some very imaginative suggestions of ways to make the most of this wonderful development. We are calling for further comments and suggestions about ways to publicise and market the new rail services to ensure that they will be fully used by both residents and visitors. Kindly pass your comments and suggestions on to the Secretary by email: info@nptf.co.uk or by post: 2 Hill Terrace, Fishguard SA65 9LU.

Here is a selection of responses that have been received so far: from Forum members, members of the local Chamber of Trade and Tourism and other civic groups.

Meeting the needs of locals and visitors

- People/families living in small towns, villages require access to the world at large.
- People could now think about getting jobs in Carmarthen
- Have discovered there are only two trains a day from where I live to Fishguard - at inconvenient times - but hope to visit sometime in the future.
- This arrangement should benefit the whole community and see a significant increase in the influx of tourists.
- The times and fares have to be customer friendly so that people will not use cars. Also, parking would need to be sorted, bearing in mind that it is free to park in H'west station.
- Our adult children in Derby and Brighton, and relatives in Scotland and elsewhere, all much prefer travelling by train.
- Our children and their families like coming to Pembrokeshire and our daughter is a keen horse rider and walker while our son loves cycling, kayaking and walking.
- Many older people just do not want to drive and many are no longer able. The availability of a station would open opportunities to many of these elderly people to visit children and grandchildren all over the UK. The effect would be to enrich their lives by strengthening family connections.

Rail/bus connections

- Existing bus services routed and timed to meet trains would further raise the profile of the new service.
- All elements have to be integrated for any of them to work at all.
- I feel there would be merit in buses from Cardigan and St. David's calling at the station. Furthermore to fully exploit the tourism potential of the new services some of the coastal services (e.g. Puffin and the like) could call at the station.

Re-open Fishguard and Goodwick Station

- A relatively small infrastructure project - would have a major positive benefit to the overall scheme - a good example of an integrated transport hub, combining trains, buses, taxis, pedestrians & cyclists.
- The Harbour station is convenient for ferry travellers, but hopelessly inconvenient for local rail travellers. Parking is expensive.
- Harbour terminal is too far from Goodwick for passengers to easily walk with luggage, & taxis are few & far between. An extremely long walk along an exposed, windy path, & people would be unlikely to want to leave cars at the seafront Parrog car park for an extended period.
- Goodwick station is a stone's throw from the village centre, and historically the station was by far the most popular for use by locals until the local service was withdrawn in 1964.
- High visibility - so a constant reminder - Chance to best profile business and leisure development opportunities at the nearby industrial site - Neighbouring retail businesses would both promote the service and benefit from new trade.

Marketing/Promotion

Launch:

- Special first service on Saturday before 'normal' service starts on Monday. With Goodwick Brass Band, Cor Newyddion Da, special headboards, banners, bunting and refreshments.
- Souvenir envelope for special franking; Souvenir mug for children; Souvenir tickets for first train and first day; Souvenir booklet on history of rail services to Fishguard & Goodwick and the Harbour; Vintage car and bus rally to coincide.

On-Going:

- Market the delights and beauty, history and coastal towns such as Fishguard and Goodwick.
- Get to know Wales in all its glory in so far as train travel provides some insight on Welshness and countryside. And I would have thought all children adore train journeys.
- Make sure it is known in Ireland so Fishguard is seen as a destination not just a funnel.
- The Coastal path takes off at the top of the bluff -- above the Harbour -- but the Town Service bus does go up there. It's a half-hourly service run by Richards Bros.
- We will advertise the service on our website and encourage tourists to use the service. Enthusing other accommodation providers to advertise the new service would be great
- Extra trains will potentially put us on the map particularly bearing in mind all the developments being talked about i.e. marina, harbour area etc.
- Petrol/diesel is becoming more like gold!! and bearing in mind environmental costs, train travel is a much better option. There can be good emphasis on the opportunity to reduce carbon emission by using the train instead of car.

The Pembrokeshire Preseli Walking Festival

The Festival, now in its fourth year, celebrates local culture and the heritage of the area, as well as offering a variety of ways to explore the great outdoors. Following the Festival's launch in Maenclochog on 28th April, over 50 walks and events will take place throughout the month of May. Walks are led by experienced leaders, to suit both beginners and active walkers, with charges between £1 and £8 (some walks are free of charge). Bus transport is provided by Richards Brothers, the Strumble Shuttle, the Poppit Rocket and the Preseli Green Dragon. Participants should book to avoid disappointment.

For further information phone 0134 862105/862109; email bethanyl@planed.org.uk or check the Festival website: www.planed.org.uk/ppwf.html.

For Preseli Green Dragon Bus Tours phone 0845 686 0242 (select option 3). All Wales Concessionary Bus Pass Holders travel free, and booking is essential for all tours. Transport for walkers provided by the Preseli Green Dragon Bus is supported by the Preseli Rural Transport Association. For further details phone 0845 686 0244.

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The North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum is an independent voluntary group that works for the provision of an effective integrated transport system in the North Pembrokeshire area, promotes the benefits of public transport and works towards the greater use of public transport systems.

The Forum is a member of Bus Users UK Cymru, the Environmental Network for Pembrokeshire and the Pembrokeshire Rail Travellers Association.

The Forum's work is supported by:

Individual Members (£5 p.a.), Family Members (£8 p.a.) & Corporate Members (£12 p.a.)
(Corporate members include town and community councils, transport operators, and groups, organisations and associations with a transport interest)

For further information, contact the Secretary, 2 Hill Terrace, Fishguard SA65 9LU
Tel: (01348) 874217. E-mail: info@nptf.co.uk. Website: www.nptf.co.uk.