



North Pembroke Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

News Briefing – April 2014

Buses

Bus Users (BUUK) Cymru. The organisation has published the following Annual Report for 2013.

Wales has undergone a series of changes in the way transport is funded, with what used to be called BSOG now paid on live mileage instead of fuel used. The Welsh Government is funding Bus Users Cymru Wales to employ, lead and direct three Bus Compliance Officers and one of their tasks is to monitor live mileage operated on behalf of the Regional Transport Consortia. From 1 April there was a reduction in the amount of funding available to the bus industry in Wales but the concessionary fares reimbursement remained untouched. We have seen a couple of poorly performing operators cease trading.

The BCOs share a room in Brunel House Cardiff with the Traffic Commissioner, which helps us to maintain a seamless approach to performance reporting.

We took part in the Minister's Task Force Sub Group 5 dealing with Network Measures and Branding and now also in the North East Wales Taskforce and the TrawsCymru Delivery Groups which manage the performance of TrawsCymru services T4 and T2. We have taken part in the various accessibility sessions run by First Cymru and responded to all four transport network strategy consultations as well as the Senior Traffic Commissioner's consultation.

We have taken part in the development process for a passenger's charter and the quality outcomes consultation. Bus Users Cymru was co-opted onto the Public Transport Users' Committee (Wales) (PTUC) and we sit on the National Partnership Forum for Older People in Wales (ministerial advisory group).

We have met with Jane Hutt, Finance Minister and various other Assembly Members over the year and, together with the Bus Users UK Chair Gillian Merron, met with the Transport Minister.

BUUK Cymru also reports that the Petitions Committee of the National Assembly still wishes to hear what individuals think about bus and community transport services in Wales, particularly any recent changes to service provision and how these changes may have affected them as passengers. This is with regard to petitions the Committee has received concerning the funding of bus services. The terms of reference are:

- Whether current levels of public financial support for bus and community transport services are sufficient to secure an effective network;
- The effect of recent changes, and proposed future changes, in public funding levels and mechanisms on bus and community transport services;
- The social and economic impact of recent and proposed future changes in public funding levels and mechanisms for the bus and community transport sectors;
- The steps the Welsh Government should take to support bus and community transport services, given the overall reductions in Welsh Government budget since 2009-10.

Comments should be sent to Steve George, Petitions Committee Clerk, National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff. CF99 1NA.

Community Transport

Community Transport Association (CTA) Cymru. The Association has sent a submission to the above-mentioned Petitions Inquiry, including the following recommendations for the Welsh Government (WG):

- Longer term planning and funding of bus and community transport services;
- Implementing greater co-production processes with the sector and improved consultation;
- Developing an all-Wales framework for the development of CT services and organisations;
- Reinstating the previous 10% ring-fencing for CT, and ensuring better and more equitable targeting of spend;
- Ensuring that capital funding is available for the sector within future funding mechanisms;
- Working to change the legislation to enable the use of vehicles with less than 9 passenger seats on section 22 services to enable greater efficiency and cost savings.

The Association's April Bulletin reported that it has circulated to its members for information WG guidance to Local Authorities on the new Bus Services Support Grant (BSSG). The guidance now ring-fences a minimum 5% of BSSG to support CT services rather than the previous 10%. However, the document does recommend that LAs should aim to achieve the 10%.

The report adds 'In terms of capital funding, which now requires individual LAs to bid competitively into the new Local Transport Fund (LTF), it has become apparent that there will be no funding for a CT Capital Enhancement Grant from LTF in 2014-15, despite CTA Cymru flagging up this possibility with WG at the time'.

Green Dragon Bus. Sgwrt, the Green Dragon Bus scooter to work scheme, is up and running, with 4 scooters already in use around Pembrokeshire, getting people to work where there are no other options. There have been enquiries from across the County and beyond, and take-up is expected to continue, with more enquiries expected as needs arise.

A new service is being launched in Fishguard and Goodwick on Europe Day, 9th May, which is appropriate as the service is supported by the European Rural Development Plan. The new Dial-a-Ride service (which will operate alongside the existing Thursday and Saturday Dial-a-Ride services) will operate on Fridays, serving the established Friendship Circle and available for anyone in the area including Dinas, Letterston, Mathry and Strumble Head. As with all Dial-a-Ride and Town Rider services, the service is available to anyone needing transport for any reason, and all passengers must book their seats by 12 noon the day before travel. The service will be operated by Green Dragon Bus and anyone interested in using the service should call 0845 686 0242.

Trains

Disincentives to the use of services to Fishguard and Goodwick station. The Forum continues receive complaints about the lack of, or incorrect, information about services to Fishguard and, in particular, to Fishguard and Goodwick station. The following recent examples are characteristic:

1. Inability to purchase tickets to Fishguard and Goodwick station from the Swansea station ticket machine, which only recognised Fishguard Harbour. Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) reported that the supplier of the machine was supposed to update the locations on fares change dates, but it appears this one was overlooked. ATW has now purchased its own software which means they will no longer rely on the supplier to enable changes but will be able to do it themselves.
2. Incorrect on board announcement that the 17:05 ex-Swansea train had arrived at Fishguard when it had actually arrived at Carmarthen. A number of London passengers bound for Fishguard for a Preseli Venture weekend break duly got off the train. Although ATW put them on a minibus to Fishguard, they arrived an hour later than their hosts had expected to collect them. ATW is working to sort out this matter.
3. Lack of on board announcements about Fishguard connections from Swansea bound First Great Western (FGW) trains out of London; announcement of connections to other Pembrokeshire destinations are routinely made on these trains. FGW has referred this matter to the Paddington Station Manager.
4. Fishguard and Goodwick Station not recognised recently when attempts were made to book tickets on First Great Western's website. The matter was reported to First Great Western and the problem has been resolved.
5. A passenger requesting information at Birmingham New Street Station about train services to Fishguard was told on two occasions that there were only two trains per day to Fishguard Harbour, to meet the ferry services. A telephone call to the station from the Forum sorted this matter out!

.....
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.