



# North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

## ANNUAL REPORT 2004 – 2005

### Introduction

During the past year the Forum has continued to work for and promote improved transport in North Pembrokeshire. This year the Executive Committee held its monthly meetings in different communities within the area, providing the committee and members of the public with a useful opportunity to discuss local transport concerns. The Forum has also continued to liaise and work with all who share our transport interests: elected representatives, government at all levels, transport operators, and other transport groups. The support and information gained through all of these exchanges has been invaluable.

Although there have been disappointments during the year, the Forum welcomes the establishment of the Pembrokeshire Community Transport Strategic Partnership and the Community Rail Partnership for West Wales. Both partnerships have the potential to bring about major improvements in transport services in our area.

### Buses and Community Transport

Shuttle bus services. The summer and winter coastal shuttle bus services continued to be successful, enjoyed by both locals and visitors. They provide wonderful opportunities for visitors and local residents to meet and interact with one another. The pilot Preseli Green Dragon dial-a-ride Walkers Bus, operated by the Preseli Rural Transport Association, extended the provision of this type of service to Crymych, Mynachlog-ddu, Maenclochog, the Gwaun Valley and Newport last summer. A grant application has been submitted to fund the year round operation of this service.

Additional services. Throughout the period the Forum has been approached by a number of communities with regard to requests for additional bus services or the diversion of existing services to serve their areas. The Forum has advised transport officers at Pembrokeshire County Council of these requests and attended a number of meetings at which the officers and members of the communities involved have sought to find solutions to their transport requirements. Some services have been extended, while other communities are preparing to undertake surveys to gather information about local transport requirements.

Preseli Green Dragon Community Transport. Apart from the Walkers Bus the Preseli Green Dragon minibus provides a wide range of dial-a-ride and community transport services, in response to identified needs in its area of operation. The organisers are now seeking funding to expand services within the Maenclochog ward and the surrounding area.

Pembrokeshire Community Transport Strategic Partnership. This organisation has recently been set up with the specific aims to work for:

- Better co-ordination of existing transport services across the public, private and voluntary sectors;
- Improved information about transport resources and services available;
- Identification of transport needs; and
- Development of existing services and new initiatives to meet unmet needs.

The Forum is one of the partnership's specialist advisors.

#### Unresolved issues:

- The lack of information in rural areas about transport services
- Poor utilisation and integration of the schools and social transport services
- Inadequate bus services on Sundays and Bank Holidays
- Limited evening services.

Complaints have also been received from Country Cars drivers who are now required to pay parking charges when bringing people to Withybush Hospital.

### **The Sswitch2share.com Car Share Scheme**

The new scheme, which was launched in September by the South West Wales Integrated Transport Consortium (SWWITCH), works with Liftshare, the UK wide car share scheme. Notices about the launch were forwarded to Forum members, and our Chairman helped out at the Haverfordwest launch. Promotional material about the scheme has been distributed at the Forum's monthly meetings, and posters and leaflets have been sent to town and community councils in North Pembrokeshire.

### **Trains**

Consultation on the Proposed Arriva 2005 Timetable. The Forum opposed Arriva's proposals that Carmarthen should be the hub for rail services to and from West Wales and that all but one train service from Pembrokeshire should terminate at Carmarthen. The Forum also expressed its dismay that there were no proposals for enhancements to services in Pembrokeshire or improvements to Sunday services. In its response Arriva withdrew the proposal that Carmarthen should be the hub for the area's rail services and agreed to restore the current through services from Pembrokeshire.

Community Rail Partnership for West Wales. The CRP is now being set up and a Community Rail Officer has been appointed. Arriva, SWWITCH, the local authorities and Network Rail are committed to the project, which also has the backing of the Welsh Assembly Government. A consultative forum will be set up in which local supporting interests will work with the Community Rail Officer to produce a development plan for the area's railway lines.

#### Unresolved issues:

- Inadequate and often conflicting information about rail services to and from Pembrokeshire
- Poor rolling stock
- Complaints about substandard and dirty toilets

### **Goodwick Station Site**

The site is currently under the management of BRB (Residuary) Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Strategic Rail Authority. BRB (Residuary) Ltd is responsible for the management and disposal of remaining land and buildings, which are surplus to the needs of the operational railway. Land is only disposed of when it has been agreed with the Strategic Rail Authority that there is no need for it to be retained for future railway purposes. The JUDP reserves the land at this site for the development of new transport infrastructure and for related employment uses. The Forum understands that the SRA / BRB responsibility for these properties will be transferred to the Department for Transport when the SRA is dissolved.

In the meantime the Forum has advised those with the responsibility for the Goodwick site that the site is insecure and in an extremely poor condition. Recent photographs taken both outside and inside the building were also passed on. We have subsequently been advised that the site would be made secure.

## **Road Safety**

Goodwick. The Forum liaised with Pembrokeshire County Council with regard to the provision of traffic calming on Heol Penlan, adjacent to the entrance to Goodwick School. A crossing island is to be placed close to the school entrance in order to focus crossing activity to one point. The road narrowing and central hatching should also have an effect on reducing speed.

Solva. The Forum has provided Solva Community Council with copies of the Welsh Assembly Government's "Rural Town and Village Trunk Road Initiative" and "Road Safety Strategy for Wales". These documents provide useful information with regard to the council's campaign to have a speed camera or a reduced speed limit on the A487, to address the problem of speeding vehicles on this trunk road that runs through the village.

Safe Routes to School. The Forum has provided material about the operation of "walking bus" schemes to a group of parents in Fishguard who have been looking at ways of improving safety for children who walk to the Junior School.

## **Centenary of the Launch of the Fishguard-Rosslare Boat-Train Service**

The Forum is represented on a working group that is planning a commemoration of the centenary in 2006.

## **Fishguard Rail Survey, April – June 2004**

The survey was carried out in order to gather information to feed into the production of the Community Rail Partnership development plan. The survey attracted 245 responses from residents in the Fishguard Station catchment area and revealed profound dissatisfaction with the current rail service to Fishguard. Survey responses indicated that there is a direct correlation between the limited use of the service by most of the respondents and the inconveniently timed and limited frequency of the current service.

All but four respondents provided examples of service improvements that would attract them back onto the train or cause them to use the train more often. Chief among these was 'more regular, convenient services during the day'. While the main purpose for current train journeys from Fishguard is to visit family and/or friends; most respondents stated that they would also like to use the train for shopping trips as well as for leisure and recreational purposes. Although a wide variety of destinations to which respondents currently travel or would like to travel were cited, London was by far the most popular destination among all groups, followed by Cardiff and then Swansea.

## **Transport Development**

During the year the Forum put forward the case for improved transport in North Pembrokeshire in the following consultation responses:

- Arriva Trains: Standard Pattern Timetable Proposal
- Strategic Rail Authority: Community Rail Development
- Draft Transport (Wales) Bill
- Addendum to the SWWITCH Rail Study
- Pembrokeshire County Council: Draft Walking and Cycling Strategy.

We also represented the interests of the area at the following meetings:

- ACoRP Community Rail Development Strategy Conference, Peterborough, 26 March 2004
- Fishguard and North Pembrokeshire Regeneration Plan Consultative Group, Fishguard, 31 March 2004
- Welsh Assembly Government Economic Development and Transport Committee, Cardiff, 1 April 2004
- Meeting with Arriva Trains Wales representatives, organised by the Pembrokeshire Rail Travellers Association, Herbranston, 8 April and 28 October 2004
- Rail Passengers Committee for Wales, Wrexham, 11 May 2004
- Meeting with Arriva Trains Wales representatives, Fishguard, 8 June 2004
- WAG Economic Development and Transport Committee and the Parliamentary Welsh Affairs Select Committee, Cardiff, 21 June 2004
- RPC Wales conference on Railways in Wales, Cardiff, 26 January 2005
- Institute of Welsh Affairs, Llanelli, 26 January 2005
- Pembrokeshire Greenways Forum, Pembroke Dock, 23 February 2005.

### **The Executive Committee**

During the year the Executive Committee held 8 meetings. We wish express our appreciation to the members of the committee for their steadfast contribution to the work of the Forum throughout the year. Finally, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to our Treasurer, Bryn Davies, who is stepping down from the committee. He has provided an invaluable and good-natured contribution to the work of the Forum since its launch 5 years ago and we wish him well in his future endeavours.

Cllr Byron James  
Chairman

Cllr Hatti Woakes  
Secretary