



# North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

## News Briefing – April 2010

### Aid From Bus, Ferry & Train Operators During The Volcanic Ash Crisis

Extra foot passengers passed through Pembrokeshire ferry terminals as stranded air passengers made use of other transport modes. Capt Ian Davies, Fishguard route manager, reported to *The Western Telegraph* that on "some trips we've been taking nearly 600 foot passengers when we would normally have about 50. We have been working with Arriva Trains Wales on a daily basis and they have had to add five or six carriages". Arriva also sent down a very helpful customer service officer to assist travellers while passenger numbers were at peak levels.

Meanwhile personal contacts enabled Richards Brothers to help stranded Tenby school pupils get home from Spain. The bus company, through Cardigan twinning contacts, arranged for a French coach to pick them up at the Spanish border and take them to the ferry at Calais, where a ferry booking had been arranged by Richards, who then brought the group home from Portsmouth.

### Community Transport

A Pembrokeshire Community Transport Forum was held at the Queens Hall in Narberth on 27<sup>th</sup> April, preceded by a workshop on manual handling for community transport - how to keep safe when assisting people into and out of vehicles. Key points from the subsequent meeting:

Ceri Rees (Transport Strategy Officer and SWWITCH representative, Pembrokeshire CC): (1) The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) has provided £100,000 funding for the proposed north-south multi user walking and cycling route. (2) Haverfordwest will receive WAG funding to develop sustainable travel projects, including a real time system for key bus stops, to provide exact arrival times. Passengers will also be able to access this information on their mobile phones. (3) They will work with employers to encourage employees to use public transport, and will also work to encourage walking and cycling with schools.

Simon Rees (Public Transport Scheduling Officer, Pembrokeshire CC): (1) While the financial situation is going to be tough, so far costs haven't risen, and the Council is going into the new period in a good state. They are only looking for minor efficiencies with the core bus services. (2) The new PCC booklet will be out within the next few weeks, and new Gwaun valley services will provide very good links with the coastal buses and the 412 bus. (4) A new 1-price ticket for the old Dyfed area is soon to come out. (5) WAG has made clear commitments that the concessionary fares scheme is to stay as it is for the time being.

Bws Y Bobol. (1) A dial-a-ride service to Fishguard on Friday mornings, in conjunction with the Fishguard Friendship Circle, will provide access to the Fishguard Podiatry clinic, as these services are no longer offered in St Davids. The service is for anyone with mobility problems. Call Barrie and Eleri on 01348 891295 to book a seat. (2) User Forums have been very successful, and they are hoping to put together a questionnaire to find out people's perceptions about the bus and community transport in general.

Country Cars. (1) The service provides over 10,000 journeys a year for those who cannot access public transport and who don't have friends or family who can help them. There is no age criteria. (2) There is a need for more local organisers. In the meantime the County Council have allowed them to use the contact centres in three areas; the centres then contact the main call centre. The Fishguard contact centre is particularly busy and finds it quite difficult to handle the extra work.

Fishguard Minibus Trial Dial-a-Ride. There is a gap in CT minibus provision in Fishguard, and Pembrokeshire Voluntary Transport (PVT) has agreed to base one of their Haverfordwest minibuses in Fishguard on a trial basis. On 11<sup>th</sup> May a public meeting will be held in the Fishguard Leisure Centre at 7.00 pm. to explore the possibility of setting up the service.

Pembrokeshire Greenways. (1) Well-attended Bikeability demonstration days were held in December and February, where disabled persons could try cycling on specially adapted bikes. Funding has been obtained for a part time coordinator, and sustainable transport funds may enable the purchase of some special bikes. (2) The Greenways Officer has been developing Web Walks to help people explore areas around local towns. So far 8 have been developed, including the Goodwick and Fishguard areas. Further information is available on [www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/walking](http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/walking). (3) National Park funding for the Havenlink water taxi service is in place, and after work on the timetables has been completed the project will be put out

to tender. (4) Coastal bus services are going very well. They have taken delivery of the last two new buses, which will use waste oil, bringing a 90% reduction in carbon emissions.

Preseli Green Dragon. (1) The Green Dragon will be involved with the May Pembrokeshire Preseli Walking Festival. (2) They are developing a St Dogmaels dial-a-ride to the Tuesday local provision market and the monthly Saturday craft market. (3) The new Newport Friday dial-a-ride service, for people who find it difficult to get to services, operates in the Nevern, Brynberian, Crosswell, Eglwysrwr, Lwyngwair, Gwaun Valley and Newport areas. (4) The longstanding dial-a-rides to Narberth (Mondays) and Cardigan (Wednesdays) continue to operate successfully. (5) The Cardigan Town Rider operates on Mondays, Wednesdays and Friday, also serving St Dogmaels and Cilgerran in North Pembrokeshire. (6) Between 1<sup>st</sup> July and 30<sup>th</sup> September the new Gwaun Valley bus service will connect with the Preseli Hills bus (the former walkers bus) at Bwlch Gwynt, linking Crymych right through to Fishguard. The two services will run on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. The services are promoted by Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations (PACTO) in partnership with Pembrokeshire County Council and Pembrokeshire Greenways. The services are part funded by the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007-2013 which is funded by WAG and the European Union. (7) The wheelchair accessible Green Dragon buses are available for group use. Ring freephone 01239 698506 for information.

Town Rider. The largest number of calls to the County Council's Community Transport Booking Center (0800 783 1584) are for Town Rider services. Services now operate in Fishguard and Goodwick; Haverfordwest; Pembroke and Pembroke Dock; Tenby, Saundersfoot and Kilgetty; and Milford Haven. There are 657 registered passengers, and 1800 journeys were made in the last 3 months. Regular sounding board meetings reveal that people are very happy with the service. A new telephone booking system is coming in, which should speed things up.

## **Rosslare Rail - Ferry Connections**

### **Proposed Rosslare - Waterford Rail Line Closure**

Poor rail-ferry connections at Rosslare continue to be a matter of great concern to foot passengers on both sides of the St George's Channel. Modern Railways reports that Iarnród Éireann - Irish Rail has confirmed that it will end passenger services on the Waterford - Rosslare line; a date for closure, likely this year, will be announced shortly. This will close down rail access from Rosslare Harbour to the mid- and south-west of Ireland. This is especially disappointing when a major re-connection is planned for Fishguard.

The issue of cross-border links is important. These services will not attract passengers if they operate at inconvenient times and/or if they are not timed to connect. The classic rail and sea route to Ireland would be much more attractive if services provided easy trips to Dublin, as well as to destinations in the west of Ireland. Improved train connections to the evening ferry sailing are particularly important.

A very active campaign to save the Rosslare to Waterford railway from closure is being led by Cllr Joe Ryan from Wexford. The Rosslare - Waterford service provides a connection from the morning ferry arrival to Waterford and vice versa in the evening. It seems that the service does not attract many passengers, but this may be due to the fact that the services don't connect with trains on other lines.

**Save the Rosslare to Waterford Rail Line is on Facebook at:**

[www.facebook.com/group.php?v=info&ref=nf&gid=367387502018](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?v=info&ref=nf&gid=367387502018)

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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 specialist advisor to the Pembrokeshire Community Transport Strategic Partnership and a member of Bus Users UK, 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).

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