



North Pembroke Transport Forum Fforwm Trafnidiaeth Gogledd Penfro

News Briefing – May 2009

Buses

Service Withdrawals and Inconvenient Connections

Tourism providers are concerned about the withdrawal of National Express's Sunday afternoon 14.30 service from Haverfordwest. This eliminates a reasonably priced option for visitors who wish to travel to the area by public transport on weekend breaks, who understandably do not wish to return home on the 09.20 Sunday morning service. The withdrawal of the afternoon service will also have an adverse effect on the local businesses that cater for this extremely popular and expanding part of the tourist industry.

Our attention has also been drawn to the fact that the 09.20 National Express coach to London leaves Haverfordwest 4 minutes *after* the arrival of the Richards 412 service and 16 minutes *before* the arrival of Richards 411 service from St Davids. Other concerns have been raised about poor Fishguard Town Service connections with the 412 service to Haverfordwest and the tight bus connection with the day-time train at Fishguard Harbour.

All of these matters are being taken up with the operators and with the relevant transport authorities. We wish to make it clear that we are well aware of the difficulties involved in drawing up timetables, and the fact that improvements made to solve particular problems often unavoidably lead to the creation of difficulties elsewhere along the line.

Timetables

Richards Brothers' new 8th April timetables helpfully provide train arrival and departure times with the time tables for the 411 St Davids - Haverfordwest route and the 412 Cardigan - Haverfordwest route.

Community Council Requests.

We have been informed that Nevern Community Council would like a bus shelter at Temple Bar and would also like to see the inclusion of Nevern in the coastal bus service. The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and the Community Council are involved in a joint venture to promote 'Nevern Walk' which coincides with a CADW grant for an archaeological dig at the castle.

Community Transport

Community Transport Forum for Pembrokeshire.

The next meeting of this Forum is scheduled for 8th June, in Letterston Memorial Hall. The agenda includes updates about the Town Rider service, the Country Cars and Accessible Car service, Cars for Carers, Pembrokeshire Voluntary Transport (PVT), the Preseli Rural Transport Association, Bws y Bobol (the St Davids Community Bus), Community Transport in Wales, and public transport news and developments. The Forum will also include the formal launch of the new "Minibus Match" booking service. After lunch the Annual General Meeting of the Pembrokeshire Association of Community Transport Organisations (PACTO) and PVT will be held; followed by a choice of one of the following sessions: (1) Community Minibus User Forum and (2) Driver Forum and Minibus Emergency Evacuation Training.

Preseli Rural Transport Association

The Association's Annual General Meeting will be held on 1st June, at Café Beca, Efailwen. It will include a presentation regarding the Digital Switchover and a talk by Coordinator Caroline Wilson about her Antarctic trip. The Association has been awarded the contract to run the Preseli Walkers bus this summer. The service will run on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 21st July until the end of September and will operate between Crymych and Bwlch-fgwynt, including Llys Y Fran and Maenclochog by request, linking in with the service buses that go from Narberth to Cardigan and Haverfordwest (from Maenclochog) and Fishguard (also from Maenclochog).

Bws y Bobol

The inaugural run of a new dial-a-ride service to the Friday Friendship Circle in Fishguard will commence on 5th June. The trial service, run with funding from the Rural Development Fund, will operate for 6 months. If there is a reasonable uptake, the longer term aim is to develop the service into a dial-a-ride service open to anyone on the route between St Davids and Fishguard wanting to get into Fishguard on a Friday. It is important to note that the same Bws y Bobol concessionary eligibility rules will apply, and the service is intended to complement the Fishguard Town Rider, which does not run on Friday.

Trains

Passenger Focus Board Meeting

Forum Executive Committee members Owen Williams and Hatti Woakes attended the recent Passenger Focus Reception and Board Meeting that were held in the Millennium Centre in Cardiff on 13th and 14th May.

At the reception useful conversations about the proposed Fishguard service enhancements and other matters connected to rail services to West Wales were held with representatives from Arriva Trains Wales, Network Rail and the Welsh Assembly Government.

Following official presentations at the Board Meeting, the chair opened the meeting to questions from non-official attendees. The Forum made the following comments:

Because train services have so significantly improved with regard to punctuality, reliability and rolling stock, more people now wish to travel by train. To make the most of this, current disincentives such as limited Sunday frequencies, overcrowding in the tourist season, limited cycle provision, lack of public transport to meet late evening trains, poor information provision and closed toilets when stations are unmanned need to be tackled.

Arriva stated that it is having a look at how Sunday frequencies might be improved, and the Forum was subsequently informed that they will let us have a copy of their draft Sunday plans once they are complete. There is still likely to be quite a bit of engineering work on Sundays, but they are hoping to make some progress with Network Rail in getting the amount of disruption reduced.

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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, the Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services 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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