

Brighton Area Buswatch

Representing local bus users

Buswatch News - March 2014



Big Lemon 44 to end between Falmer and Saltdean

Since last September The Big Lemon has been providing a term time peak hour service to link Saltdean, Rottingdean and Woodingdean with Brighton University sites at Falmer and Moulsecoomb. Our photo shows Big Lemon MD Tom Druitt at the wheel of a 44 at Old Steine.

Brighton Area Buswatch campaigned for better bus links between Falmer and Woodingdean and many people asked for this service. Unfortunately usage has been poor with only a handful of passengers on most journeys. Despite free travel offers and financial support from Brighton University, the numbers of passengers using the 44 between Falmer and Saltdean have been insufficient to cover the cost of running the service.

The financial support from Brighton University was for six months and it has now decided to transfer its funding to improvements that benefit more users, so the service to Woodingdean and Saltdean will cease at the end of spring term, on Friday 4 April.

The successful section of the 44 between Brighton University at Falmer, Varley Halls and Old Steine via Lewes Road will continue. Brighton & Hove Buses continues to run route 84 three times a day between Woodingdean and the Universities.

Further bus service changes from April

In addition to the major changes to Brighton & Hove buses serving Queens Park outlined last month there will be some changes to bus times on other services with the start of the summer timetable on 13 April.

Breeze up to the Downs service 77 will be improved to run every 45 minutes on Saturdays and Sundays and daily during July & August when it will use open top buses. This frequency is slightly lower than last year because extra time has been added to the timetable to improve reliability.

There will be new a once a week Community Bus service 130 between Brighton & Rodmell, funded by the South Downs National Park Authority. This Friday only service is timed to assist visitors to the National Trust's Monk's House in Rodmell Village. Full details on www.bhct.co.uk.

Burgess Hill local services reduced

Metrobus is reducing its 34/35 town services in Burgess Hill. After 4 April they will only run on Mondays to Fridays during the middle of the day and the routes will be shortened.

Thesussexbus.com will continue to run its own 134/135 town service throughout the daytime period on Mondays to Fridays and Saturdays. Clearly there was not enough custom to support two competing services and (perhaps surprisingly) it seems the smaller operator based in Burgess Hill has been more successful.

Phase 2 20mph zones approved

Brighton & Hove City Council has given final approval to the extension of 20mph zones to many areas outside the current central area. Three roads, Surrenden Road, Preston Drove and Stanford Avenue which had been excluded from Phase 2 following an amendment by Labour Councillors will now be included again, subject to further consultation.

The City Council is now preparing to extend 20mph zones to the remaining areas of the city including Hangleton, Ovingdean, Rottingdean and Woodingdean. Brighton Area Buswatch will respond to the new consultation. Our main concern is that main roads served by buses should retain existing speed limits.

New 'Duo' M ticket from Brighton & Hove Buses

Brighton & Hove has introduced a further one day M ticket for two people travelling together. At £7.80 it is the same as the current price for two single M tickets, but saves £1.40 on the cost of two one day Saver tickets purchased on bus. M tickets can only be purchased on a smartphone using the B&H Buses App.

Brighton & Hove is planning further changes to bus fares to take effect from 13 April but details are not yet available. We recommend bus users stock up with Saver tickets now as prices are more likely to go up than down! Fares on Compass Bus and The Big Lemon services supported by Brighton & Hove City Council will change in line. Metrobus has announced some fares increases which take effect from 22 March.

Changes to concessionary travel times in East Sussex

A reminder that from 1 April Concessionary Bus Passes will be valid in East Sussex from 9.30am instead of 9am on Mondays to Fridays. For Brighton & Hove residents, travelling within Brighton & Hove the start time remains 9am and tickets are valid until 4am the following day. Outside the City the finish time is 11pm.

Meeting with Shadow Secretary of State for Transport

Brighton Area Buswatch members had the opportunity to meet Mary Creagh MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Transport since October 2013. The meeting was arranged by the Brighton Pavilion Labour Party to enable the shadow minister to meet local transport groups. We were joined by Shelley Atlas, Chairlady of Brighton Line Commuters.

We used the opportunity to explain the success of the bus service in our area where usage has been growing against the national trend. We explained how this has been achieved through voluntary partnerships with local authorities and bus companies providing frequent services. The Labour party has been suggesting that the bus industry should be re-regulated as in London where all bus services are tendered and fares are set by the Mayor. We pointed out that this works because London buses receive a huge public subsidy which is unlikely to be available in other areas. Other issues discussed included standardising child fare arrangements and consistent start times for concessionary pass holders.

Next Meeting

The next meeting with bus companies and Brighton & Hove City Council will be on Wednesday 9 April at 5.30pm in Hove Town Hall. Meetings are open to all members and supporters but please let us know in advance if you wish to attend as space is limited.

Buswatch News is edited by Andrew Boag, Chair, Brighton Area Buswatch. We welcome your comments and suggestions. Printed copies of this newsletter are available from Hove town hall reception. The next issue is due in mid April 2014.

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