

Brighton Area Buswatch

Representing local bus users



A branch of Bus Users UK

Buswatch News – April 2017

The A259 bus lanes are a huge success



Rottingdean Ward Councillor Lynda Hyde has claimed the A259 bus lanes make congestion worse. Campaign group 'Safe Rottingdean' is petitioning for road improvements using the photograph above. They say the City Council is denial about the extent of the congestion. Petition organisers have told Buswatch they are not seeking to remove the bus lanes. What they are asking for is "a proper evidence based analysis of the problems without taking preconceived positions on link roads, bus lanes or car pool lanes".

According to Brighton & Hove Buses, morning peak buses travelling along the A259 coast road between Peacehaven and Rottingdean carry almost 50% of the people in just 2% of the vehicles. They have reduced bus journey times leading to a 63% increase in bus use. Later this month improvements will be made to the highly successful 12X express service. That should encourage even more people to leave their cars at home and travel by bus. A bus can carry 80 people in the space of around three cars so the case for bus priority measures is overwhelming. Without them more people would use their cars resulting in more congestion, yet the bottleneck at Rottingdean would remain. Buses provide a great alternative for car drivers who see the benefits when buses whiz by while they are stuck in a slow moving queue. They should be seen as part of the solution not the problem.

People often blame bus lanes for the increase in congestion. In fact, congestion has been getting steadily worse throughout the city in recent years, including roads where there are no bus lanes, like Dyke Road and Old Shoreham Road.

Brighton & Hove fares changes

There are a few increases to fares on Brighton & Hove Buses from 25 April. The £2 cash Centrefare (unchanged since 2012) increases to £2.20 but remains £2 as a smartphone M ticket. Passengers using some period tickets face large increases for the second year running. The biggest increase is the Annual Network Saver, up from £600 to £625. It was just £540 before April 2016. Full details at www.buses.co.uk.

New summer timetables start on 23 April

More details can be accessed at www.buses.co.uk or www.compass-travel.co.uk and in the new edition of Bus Times which will be available in local buses. Here is a summary of the main changes:

- N1 (Mile Oak – Whitehawk night service) increased to run every 30 minutes Monday to Saturday nights and limited service introduced on Sunday nights.
- 12/12A/12X - (Brighton – Eastbourne) – improved service with 12X increased to every 20 minutes and more late evening buses
- 21/21A – (Goldstone Valley – Brighton Marina) revised times with daytime buses running Goldstone Valley – Queens Park and Churchill Square – Brighton Marina. Each service runs every 30 minutes, giving a 15-minute frequency Churchill Square – Queens Park.
- 23 - (Brighton Marina – Universities). Revised times. At Sussex University runs via Boiler House Hill to A27 Falmer Station. No longer serves Park Village, Northfield Crescent, Brighton University at Falmer or Amex Stadium.
- N25 (Universities – Old Steine – Portslade night service). Withdrawn between Old Steine and Portslade, see N1 for replacement service.
- 30/31 - (Haywards Heath) – re-routed via Backwoods Lane between Haywards Heath and Lindfield.
- 37 – (Meadowview – Brighton Station – Bristol Estate). The 1615 journey from Lewes Road Sainsbury's to Meadowview is withdrawn.
- 40 – (Brighton – Haywards Heath – Cuckfield – Crawley) Compass Bus route withdrawn – see Metrobus 270/271/272 and Compass 33 for replacement journeys from Haywards Heath to Balcombe and Crawley.
- 50U (Churchill Square – Hollingdean – Universities) extended within the University of Sussex to serve Park Village and Northfield Crescent.
- Metrobus local routes 34/35 in Burgess Hill are withdrawn after 28 April. Compass Bus routes 134/5/6/7 in Burgess Hill have been renumbered 35A, 35C, 36A, 36C – with some minor timing changes to improve reliability.
- Metrobus routes 270/271/272 (East Grinstead (270) or Crawley (271, 272) - Haywards Heath - Princes Royal Hospital – Brighton, Churchill Square (270) or Royal Sussex County Hospital (271, 272)). These services are improved with extra journeys from 29 April providing a 30-minute daytime service Haywards Heath – Brighton. Route 270 is introduced on Sundays and route 272 is introduced on Saturdays to Royal Sussex County Hospital. There are also changes to route 273 (Crawley – Bolney – Hurstpierpoint – Brighton).
- Coastliner 700 (Brighton – Worthing – Littlehampton – Arundel). Withdrawn Littlehampton (Wick) – Arundel but Stagecoach route 9 (Holmbush – Littlehampton) extended to Arundel, hourly. Revised daily timetable from 30 April with an improved evening service daily. However, the last bus from Brighton on Sundays is 2230, 70 minutes earlier than other days – crazy!

Up and down on the 50 by electric bus



(photo courtesy of Brighton & Hove Buses)

Brighton & Hove Buses is trialing an electric single deck bus on route 50 between Churchill Square and Hollingdean. The route was chosen as it provides a good variety of conditions including steep hills and it is relatively short. I boarded the bus at Churchill Square one morning soon after the trial began. For those who are interested in bus types, the vehicle is a 'Wrightbus Streetair', built in Northern Ireland by the same manufacturer as recent B&H double deckers. The green and blue bus didn't look out of place next to the similar Coaster buses on service 12 and in any case bus users in Brighton have got used to buses turning up in different colours.

Inside, there was little evidence of any difference from other buses except that the seats were blue instead of the customary red. A faint humming noise was evident while the bus was stationary which was not intrusive and it was much quieter than a stationary diesel bus, with virtually no vibration. As we moved off the noise changed to the low whine of an electric motor, similar to the the diesel-electric hybrid buses on route 7 which can run in electric mode at low speed. The ride was very smooth and the vehicle seemed to have plenty of power with good acceleration. I have been on similar but slightly older electric buses in Milton Keynes which were not as smooth or as quiet as this one. As passengers got on many commented on the 'new bus', and the driver explained it was on trial. Passengers seemed to be aware something was different when they got on and saw that the card reader was on the top of the ticket machine as it is on Compass buses.

At London Road shops around a dozen passengers boarded and again many commented on the new bus, although there was actually nothing on the bus inside or outside to explain that it was electric. Hollingdean folk are a friendly crowd and there was a lot of chatting going on; it was like taking rural bus to the nearest town on market day where everyone knew each other! The electric bus made light work of climbing up Ditchling Road before turning into Upper Hollingdean Road where we changed drivers. The outgoing driver warned the new (female) driver that the bus might fail at Mountfield stop. He advised her to shut it down and start again if that happened. Mountfield is at the stop of a steep hill in Hollingdean and while we had plenty of power to get up the hill, the bus wouldn't move forward after we stopped to

let passengers on. In fact, rather worryingly, it began to roll back down the hill. Fortunately, the driver swiftly applied the brake, followed the advice of the previous driver and re-booted it. That fixed the problem - to the relief of everyone on board! The journey back into Brighton was uneventful, being largely downhill. I got off at Old Steine and as the bus moved away I noticed how quiet it was compared with the diesel double deckers following it.

Overall I thought the bus was very impressive and look forward to more electric buses arriving for further trials. Another electric single decker is due soon and there is the possibility of a double decker on loan from London.

Norman Baker joins The Big Lemon

The Former Lewes MP and Transport Minister in the Coalition Government has been appointed Managing Director of the Big Lemon Community Interest Company (CIC). He takes over from Tom Druitt who is now CEO and will be concentrating on developing new CIC companies around the country using the Big Lemon brand. I was invited to meet Norman recently. We discussed opportunities for developing the local bus network, working with others and a strategy for tackling congestion in the city. We wish Norman well in his new role and look forward to him joining us at our meetings.

Brighton Area Buswatch meeting on 12 April

The next meeting with bus company managers and Brighton & Hove City Council will be on **Wednesday 12 April 2017** at 5.15pm in Brighton Town Hall, Bartholomew Square. Meetings are open to all members and supporters but please let us know in advance if you wish to attend as space is limited. The following meeting is on Wednesday 12 July.

Buswatch News is produced and edited by Andrew Boag, Chair, Brighton Area Buswatch. We welcome your contributions and suggestions. Printed A5 copies of this newsletter are available from Hove town hall reception and a pdf or large print versions are available on request. The next issue is due in mid-April 2017.

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