

Brighton Area Buswatch



Working in partnership with Bus Users, the national charity representing bus passengers

Buswatch News – April 2022

Success for Bus Service Improvement Plan

The Government has awarded Brighton & Hove City Council £27.9 million for bus service improvements as outlined in its [Bus Service Improvement Plan](#), submitted last autumn. This money is to be spent over the next three years. Both East Sussex and West Sussex have also been awarded substantial funding. The task now is to prioritise improvements and ensure they are implemented. Buswatch hopes to be closely involved in this process. More details in due course.

Mill Road Park & Ride trial ABANDONED

This decision was confirmed by Brighton & Hove Managing Director Ed Wills at the Buswatch meeting on 13 April. He said the company was required to give 70 days-notice to register the bus service, but this timescale was no longer possible. The trial was always intended to start in mid-June for the summer visitor season. Ed explained that no assurances had been received from the Highways Agency that advance signing would be provided in time on the A23 & A27 which is critical. It also transpires that the City Council has decided it needs to issue a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) which involves a three-week public consultation period. In addition, there has been a suggestion planning permission might be required.

The bus company clearly felt it had no choice but to pull out of the trial. Park & Ride was a strong recommendation from the Councils 2020 Climate Assembly, but Councillors and environmentalists were known to be divided on the idea. Some opponents believed P&R would actually lead to more people to using their cars or it would encourage people to use the P&R instead of local bus services. While there is some evidence from other places that this can happen, the Mill Road site is not near existing bus services. Clearly Brighton & Hove Buses would not have been so keen to run a completely new, unsubsidised express service if they believed it would have a detrimental effect on their other services.

The Mill Road Park & Ride was primarily aimed at people outside Brighton & Hove, especially those living in rural Sussex who don't have regular bus services and who currently park in the City Centre. Its strategic location by the A23/A27 interchange was already successfully used as a P&R site for the AMEX stadium. The opportunity to remove 500 cars from some of the busiest roads in Brighton, reducing congestion and pollution for everyone, has been lost, for this year at least.

How 2022 bus fares compare with other areas

Revised fares came into effect on most buses in Brighton & Hove on 11 April, the first increase for two years. The Government had provided financial support for bus companies to prevent fares increases during the pandemic. In our area bus fares on commercial bus services (the vast majority) are set by bus companies. The City Council applies the same fares on subsidised services operated by The Big Lemon and Compass Travel. In London, bus fares are controlled by The Mayor of London. Reading Buses is included as it is the nearest Council owned bus company. It runs town and country services with many similarities to those in Brighton & Hove.

Adult fares	Brighton & Hove Buses Metrobus Big Lemon Compass within City Saver area	Brighton & Hove Buses Beyond City Saver area	Stagecoach 17 & 700 to Patcham or Shoreham and beyond	Transport for London (TfL) bus & tram using Oyster or contactless	Council owned Reading Buses within town and beyond
Single journey	£1.70 short hop £2.30 Centrefare £2.80 on bus £2.80 One hour + Multi-buy App discounts	£1.70 - £6.20 according to distance (highest to Tun.Wells)	£1.50 - £2.55 in City variable beyond	£1.65 free transfers within one hour	£2.10/£2 App £2.60/2.50 for one hour. Variable out of town
One day ticket	£5.50 on bus £5 Key/App £5.80 scratch card	£7 on bus £5.50 Key/App £5.80 scratch card	£4.60 in City £4.30 App £9.10 beyond £8.40 App	£4.95 Pay As You Go max £5.20 bought in advance	£4.20 or £4 App in town £7.30 beyond £7 App
Weekly ticket	£22.75 (X - see note below) Key/App £29 scratch card	£25 Key/App (X - see note below) £29 scratch card	£16 in City £15.50 App £26.50 beyond £25.50 App	£23.30	£16 in town £23 beyond
4 week/ monthly ticket	£84 Key card or App	£91 Key card or App	£55 City £95 beyond	£89.50	£59 in town £80 beyond
Annual ticket	£715 Key card	£785 Key card	£570 in City £995 beyond	£932	£605 In town £920 beyond

(X) – a promotional weekly cap of £19 applies for Contactless tap on tap off. **This offer has been extended until 26 June.** It applies on Brighton & Hove Buses only.

On-bus fares are those paid with cash or Contactless. See bus company and TfL websites for the full range of tickets available. All bus companies accept Contactless for on-bus payments. In our area only Brighton & Hove Buses have a tap on tap off Contactless facility with daily, multi-day and weekly caps. There are cheaper options for under 18s and students and those buying in advance.

Brighton & Hove Buses reduced its short hop fares from £1.90 to £1.70 but the lowest short hop fares in our area are on Stagecoach buses. Old Steine to Palmeira Square on Stagecoach Coastliner 700 is just £1.50. Brighton & Hove Buses charges £2.30 for the same trip. The single 'hopper' fare in London has increased from £1.50 to £1.65 making it just 5p less than the lowest B&H fare. However, the £1.65 fare in London covers any distance and allows free transfers within one hour. Reading Buses fares are generally lower than Brighton & Hove for local journeys within the town. Its weekly ticket at £16 is a real bargain.

One Day, Weekly and monthly prices in London are actually very similar to Brighton & Hove Buses, within the City Saver area. Annual B&H tickets are significantly lower than London, even outside the City Saver area. Stagecoach and Metrobus have the highest priced annual ticket, both £995. This rate would apply for journeys from Brighton to Lancing (700) or to Pyecombe (Stagecoach 17 or Metrobus 270, 271, 272 & 273).

Fares on Metrobus routes 270, 271, 272 & 273 from Brighton to Haywards Heath and Crawley are different from Brighton & Hove fares. There are no £1.70 short hop fares within Brighton and Saver tickets are not valid north of Patcham. Stagecoach fares outside Brighton are generally much higher. A one-day ticket in Worthing and Lancing only costs £6.30 and a return from Brighton to Worthing is £8.20.

Child Fares

Child fare comparisons are difficult because every bus company seems to have a different policy, some charge a flat rate, some half the adult fare and some more than half fare. Obviously, London has the best deal with free travel, this is a political decision as fares are controlled by The Mayor of London not TfL.

Brighton & Hove Buses has one of the best deals with its Bus ID scheme and a 50p fare for accompanied travel or half the adult fare. £2.50 for a child day Saver ticket bought on the app is roughly in line with large city operators around the UK. Stagecoach charges much more than half the adult fare, a day ticket on routes 17 & 700 within the Brighton – Shoreham area costs £4.60 for adults or £4 for children.

Most bus companies offer family/group tickets for two adults and up to three under 16 or 18 for under £10 but be careful where you buy them. According to the Stagecoach website the charge is £5 for two adults and two children paid on bus but £9 for the same ticket in advance on the app. Brighton & Hove charges £11 on-bus or £9 on the Mobile app for up to three children. A one Day Family Discovery ticket valid on virtually all buses in the southeast costs £17.50.

Bus Times will not be published again

Brighton & Hove Buses MD Ed Wills has confirmed that the familiar free timetable book published twice a year since the 1980s will not be printed again. Printed timetables for each route and maps will still be available, from One Stop Travel in North Street. Timetables and maps are also available online. Bus Times is one of the factors that helped to make bus travel in Brighton and Hove such a success by putting all timetables together in one publication. It will be missed by many.

Bendy buses are on the way out



They've been a familiar sight on Brighton & Hove routes 25 & 25X for the past decade, but they'll all be gone by the end of 2022. They will be replaced by 'mid-life' double deckers transferred from London. There are several reasons for this; the 22 Mercedes Benz 'Citaro' bendy buses are now fifteen years old and with very few left in the UK, parts are becoming difficult to obtain; their fuel consumption is very high (averaging just 4.5mpg), they don't meet Ultra Low Emission Zone requirements and it would not be viable to modify them. Bendy buses have been well suited to carrying large numbers of students along Lewes Road to and from the Universities. However, the current usage of the 25 & 25X is well below pre pandemic levels and with more lectures going online, peak demand is not expected to increase anytime soon. Interestingly though, we are told the N25 night service is the only bus route in Brighton which carries more passengers than pre Covid!

Brighton & Hove Bus drivers to give change

From 30 April Brighton & Hove bus drivers will no longer issue change vouchers when cash paying passengers need change. Change giving stopped at the start of the pandemic as a precaution to prevent the spread of Covid.

Brighton Area Buswatch meetings

The next public meetings with Brighton & Hove City Council and bus company managers will be on Wednesday **6 July** at 4.30pm in rooms 2 & 3, at **Brighton Town Hall**, followed by Wednesday 12 October. Numbers are restricted so please email Buswatch at the address below if you would like to attend or raise an issue.

Buswatch News is produced and edited by Andrew Boag, Chair, Brighton Area Buswatch. Contributions and suggestions are always welcome.

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