

Brighton Area Buswatch



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

Buswatch News – August 2022

Lewes Bus Station to close in September

The Generator Group which owns the bus station and intends to develop the site with flats, has given notice to East Sussex County Council that the bus station will be closed from Monday 19th September.

According to the ESCC website the [new arrangements](#) will come into effect a few days earlier on Thursday 15 September. 'Temporary' bus stops are being put in Friars Walk, and in School Hill with the loss of some car parking spaces. Buses on routes 28 & 29 from Brighton to Ringmer, Uckfield and Tunbridge Wells will continue to stop outside Waitrose, while buses towards Brighton will move to 'Temporary stand C' at the bottom of School Hill. These arrangements are far from satisfactory, and it is unlikely the new stops will have enough space for shelters. A potential alternative bus station site has apparently been identified by East Sussex County Council, but no information has been released.

An application to get the bus station listed was unsuccessful so the development now looks more likely to proceed although there continue to be strong objections from locals. The planning application has to be approved by the South Downs National Park Authority which has received over 600 objections, including Brighton Area Buswatch and Brighton & Hove Buses.

Bus service changes

A small number of changes will be made to bus services over the next few weeks. There are no significant changes to Compass Travel services, but school journeys will resume with the new term.

On Brighton & Hove Buses the 13X (Brighton – Beachy Head – Eastbourne) will revert to Sundays and Public Holidays only after 27 August but remains half hourly on Sundays until the end of September. Service 77 (Brighton Palace Pier to Devil's Dyke) will run on Saturdays and Sundays only after Friday 26 August. Routes 23 (Brighton Marina – Queens Park – Lewes Road - Universities) and 25 (Portslade/Old Steine – Lewes Road – Universities) will be increased from 18 September for the new term. The 25X limited stop service between Palmeira Square or Old Steine and the Universities will not be returning. There are also minor timetable changes to some school services.

£5 day ticket launched in East Sussex

Since 25 July bus users in East Sussex can buy a day ticket for £5 for travel anywhere within the county. There is also an improved family ticket offering free travel for up to four travelling with an adult fare paying passenger or a concessionary pass traveller. For young people under 19 travelling independently, a £1 fare applies.

However, these tickets can only be used on the same bus operator (although Brighton & Hove and Metrobus counts as one company) and can only be used for journeys starting and finishing in East Sussex. On Compass Travel and Stagecoach buses passengers buy the ticket from the driver, while on Brighton & Hove and Metrobus services the £5 ticket must be bought on the app.

These reduced fares are being funded by East Sussex County Council to encourage bus use. There are also reduced fares in Eastbourne on Stagecoach buses. It is hoped that these offers will be standardised between Council areas and between bus companies in due course. ESCC should be commended for bringing forward their plans to apply during the summer holidays. More fares reductions are expected to be announced over the next few months, including some in the Brighton & Hove area.

A £2 maximum single fare?

Grant Shapps the Secretary of State for Transport has said publicly he is keen on the idea, to help people with the cost of living. There has also been widespread speculation in the media, suggesting a Government funded £2 fare cap would last for either six or twelve months starting in October. The Mayors of Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire have confirmed that a £2 single fare cap will apply on all buses within these areas from September. Perhaps a national announcement will follow from the new Prime Minister?

In the meantime, the Government has made a further £130 million available to bus companies in England to maintain services at around current levels for the next six months. This is intended to protect services from cuts at a time of rising costs, because bus usage generally remains 20-30% lower than pre pandemic levels. Bus companies are required to provide the Department for Transport with evidence of usage on a route-by-route basis to be eligible for this grant. We have been assured this scheme is not designed to provide profits for bus companies.

Student verification required on Brighton & Hove Buses

Students are reminded that they now need to verify their student status before buying a discounted ticket on the app. Brighton & Hove Buses says this will ensure only those entitled to student rate tickets will be able to buy them.

Brighton & Hove Buses joins Pride Parade



Brighton & Hove Buses have long supported Brighton Pride and this year I was invited to join the parade on an open top bus. The bus had been renamed in honour of George Montague, the 'Oldest Gay In the Village' who sadly died earlier this year, aged 98. George was well known for taking part in the parade in his mobility scooter, accompanied by his partner who joined us on the bus this year.

It was a wonderful experience to be able to take part in the parade, seeing all the smiling faces and waving at the huge crowds with a rainbow flag. It took me a while to realise that many of those waving so enthusiastically were actually looking at Woody Cook (son of Fatboy Slim and Zoe Ball) who was a few seats further back!

I am hugely grateful to Victoria Garcia, Accessibility and Communities Manager at Brighton & Hove Buses for inviting myself and Claire Walters, Chief Executive of Bus Users. Victoria works so hard organising events for community groups, and she walked (and danced) in front of the bus all the way to Preston Park with tremendous energy, accompanied by her son Ben who also works for B&H Buses.

Brighton Area Buswatch meetings

The next public meetings with Brighton & Hove City Council and bus company managers will be on **Wednesday 12 October** at 4.30pm in rooms 2 & 3, at **Brighton Town Hall**. Numbers are restricted so please e mail 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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brightonbuswatch.org



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