

Brighton Area Buswatch

Representing local bus users



A branch of Bus Users UK

Buswatch News – February 2019

Valley Gardens Phase 3 plans

The Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership approved funding of £6million for the scheme on 22 January. This was followed by a special meeting of Brighton & Hove City Council's Transport & Sustainability Committee on 7 February which approved revised Phase 3 proposals, as expected. The latest plans include a new southbound bus lane in Old Steine between Edward Street and the Royal Albion Hotel and provision for an extra bus stop on the northbound traffic lane which Buswatch and the bus companies asked for.

The Council has listened to our concerns which is welcome, but even with these improvements, conditions for bus users will be worse than now, with smaller bus stops and longer walks between stops for those needing to change buses. The opportunity to provide an attractive bus interchange facility on the west side of Old Steine has been lost and latest plans show considerably less space for terminating buses to wait between trips. At present seven or eight buses can park around the Steine but this will reduce to one or two. We predict this will create huge problems, especially when there is disruption in the City Centre. Buswatch will continue to work with bus companies to press for more space for buses and bus users.

There has been fierce opposition to the latest proposals from the Valley Gardens Forum which represents local businesses and residents. They asked for the scheme to be put on hold and have the support of Conservative Councillors but Labour and the Greens have a majority and voted it through. Forum members are opposed to the removal of the Aquarium roundabout resulting in Madeira Drive becoming one-way and are concerned at the the lack of space for major outdoor events.

Why has the Marine Parade bus lane been deferred?

During the initial planning for Valley Gardens, Brighton & Hove Buses put forward an excellent idea for a new westbound bus lane in Marine Parade. This would help coast road buses coming into Brighton to pass queues between Lower Rock Gardens and the Sea Life Centre. It was a simple concept intended to be implemented in advance of phase three of the Valley Gardens scheme, so buses could avoid some of the delays during construction. We have now been told the bus lane will not happen before the Valley Gardens scheme is finished. This came as a complete surprise as the bus lane should be cheap and easy to implement with a few signs and road markings! We urge the Council to reconsider.

How local bus fares compare with other areas

Revised fares came into effect on all local bus services in January. 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 and are frozen until 2020. Reading Buses is the nearest Council owned bus company which runs frequent local services and longer routes to other towns.

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 urban area and beyond
Single journey	£2* £2.20 Centrefare or £2.60 on bus £2.60 One hour M ticket	£2 - £5.70 according to distance (highest to Tun.Wells)	£2.45 in City variable beyond	£1.50 free transfers within one hour	£2 or £2.50 for one hour. Variable beyond urban area
One day ticket	£5 on bus £4.50 Key/M ticket £5.30 scratch card	£7 on bus £5 Key/M £5.30 scratch card	£4.40 in City £4.15 M tkt £8.80 beyond £8.20 M tkt	£4.50 Pay As You Go max £5 in advance	£4 urban area £7 beyond
Weekly ticket	£20.90 Key/M ticket £26 scratch card	£22.90 Key/M ticket £26 scratch	£14.50 City, £13.90 M £24.60 beyond £23 M tkt	£21.20	£17 on bus £16 on line £21 beyond
4 week/monthly ticket	£77 Key/M ticket £74 by direct debit	£83 Key/M ticket £77 direct debit	£49.50 City £86.50 beyond	£81.50	£59/61 urban area £81 beyond
Annual ticket	£635 Key card	£693 Key card	£515 in City £907 beyond	£848	£575 urban £830 beyond

See bus company and TfL websites for the full range of tickets available

* - £2 is the 'short hop' on-bus fare. The distance covered varies considerably.

All bus companies (except The Big Lemon) accept Contactless for on-bus payments. Single fares tend to be highest on Brighton & Hove services but there are cheaper options for under 18s and students and those buying in advance. London has easily the cheapest single 'hopper' ticket at £1.50 which allows unlimited transfer within one hour. However weekly and monthly prices in London are similar to B&H and annual tickets are much higher. Reading Buses fares are generally lower than Brighton & Hove within the town but similar for longer out of town journeys.

West Sussex consultation

West Sussex County Council is consulting on proposed changes to supported bus services. Most changes involve reductions of some sort as the Council aims to achieve savings of £300,000 a year. Compass Travel route 16 will no longer run between Lyons Farm and Lancing, Burgess Hill routes 36A/C are withdrawn from the west side of town and replaced by route 100. Some infrequent services in the Haywards Heath area are reduced to operate on two or three days of the week only. Full details are available at www.westsussex.gov.uk

The Chatty Bus comes to Brighton

Last month, Brighton & Hove Buses and several Go Ahead bus companies in the UK launched Chatty Bus, a campaign aimed at encouraging conversations between passengers and reducing social isolation. A bus was parked at Churchill Square with staff offering cups of tea and snacks and an opportunity to chat.

The company has been working with various charities and local community groups including Brighton & Hove Impetus, a charity which works to connect people to reduce social isolation and improve wellbeing. An estimated one in three adults go at least one day a week without talking to anyone, while 33% of Britons admit to catching a bus to interact with others. While primarily aimed at older people, a recent survey showed that many young people under 30 feel isolated too.

New buses to reduce emissions

Lots of new buses are on the way. This month, The Big Lemon has taken delivery of four zero emission electric single deck buses. These are recharged through solar powered from panels on the roof of its depot near Brighton Marina. They are replacing a collection of second hand buses and should revolutionise the experience for passengers on routes 16/66, 47, 52, 56 & 57 which it operates for Brighton & Hove City Council. Even more electric buses will follow in the coming months as The Big Lemon has recently been awarded funding from the Government's Office for Low Emission vehicles towards the purchase of a further five electric buses.

Brighton & Hove Buses is buying 30 double deck hybrid buses of a new design which enables them to operate in pure electric mode through the Low Emission zone in North Street and Western Road and other sensitive areas. The batteries will be recharged from a diesel motor on the bus, so they won't require recharging points. They will operate on routes 5/5A/5B (Hangleton – Hove – City Centre – Preston Circus - Patcham or Hollingbury) enabling the existing modern diesel buses on these routes to replace some of the uncomfortable 12-15 year-old Scania buses which rattle and shake badly and people increasingly complain about them. The new buses should arrive in late summer.

Outside our area, the company has won Government funding to buy 20 hydrogen powered electric fuel cell single deckers which will run on Metrobus Fastway services 10 & 20 around Crawley and Gatwick.

Bus statistics show Brighton & Hove in the lead

Every year the Department for Transport (DfT) publishes the number of bus journeys in England. Outside London, the number of bus journeys in the Brighton & Hove City Council area is much higher than in similar sized towns and cities in the south. There were almost 50 million journeys in 2017/18, compared with just 9 million in Portsmouth, 12.6 million in Southampton and 8.2 million in the Medway towns. Bus journeys in East and West Sussex totalled 16.4 million and 27.3 million. Perhaps more significant is the number of bus journeys made per head of population. Brighton & Hove is again top on this measure with almost 171 trips, way ahead of its nearest rivals, Nottingham (145) and Reading (133) and in a different league to East Sussex (30) and West Sussex (32).

These results are a credit to our local bus companies and to Brighton & Hove City Council. They have worked as a partnership for over twenty years. As a result, we have frequent services throughout the day operated by modern low emission buses, with an excellent real time information and good bus priority measures around the city. However, there is no room for complacency. These latest figures are slightly down on the previous year. Brighton & Hove Buses puts this down to the increased congestion due to roadworks and the closure of North Street for six weeks in 2017. With roadworks in Valley Gardens for the next three years or more and in the Barracks development Lewes Road it will continue to be a big challenge to keep buses running reliably. If bus journeys become slower people will find other ways of getting around.

Brighton Area Buswatch meeting

The next meeting with bus company managers and Brighton & Hove City Council will be at 5pm on **Wednesday 10 April** in Brighton Town Hall. Meetings are open to all, but space is limited so please contact Buswatch at the address below if you wish to join us. Later 2019 meetings will be on 24 July and 16 October.

Buswatch News is produced and edited by Andrew Boag, Chair, Brighton Area Buswatch. We welcome your contributions and suggestions. The next issue is due mid-March 2019. E mail: brightonbuswatch@gmail.com. Phone: 01273 620215

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 **Bus Users**
Working for passengers

Brighton Area Buswatch is a branch of Bus Users UK www.bususers.org