

# Brighton Area Buswatch



**We are a branch of Bus Users, the national charity representing bus passengers**

## Buswatch News – May 2021

### More evening buses from 13 June

Brighton & Hove Buses has confirmed plans to increase evening services on routes 14, 18, 22 & 48 from 13 June which will restore the levels of service provided pre Covid.

Services 14, 22 & 48 have been running just hourly in the evenings for the past year and these changes mean half hourly evening buses will be restored, making it easier for people to have an evening out and go home by bus.

Improvements to the 18 mean a 20-minute frequency will apply all day and all evening between Brighton Station and Queens Park. There will also be an improved early morning service from Queens Park to Brighton Station from 6am.

The latest lockdown easing came into effect on 17 May and with it the Government advice to restrict buses to around half capacity was lifted. All forward facing seats on buses can now be used which should mean fewer buses showing 'Sorry Bus Full'.

Several people have asked whether the 11X service between Brighton and Eastbourne via Newhaven, Firle, Middle Farm, Charleston Farmhouse and Drusillas Zoo Park, which ran successfully on Sundays in summer 2019 will run again this summer. Brighton & Hove Buses says a summer Sunday service is under consideration and they have not ruled it out. Watch this space!

### New app launched

Brighton & Hove Buses has a new mobile phone app, replacing the old one which was widely criticised for being difficult and confusing to use. The new app is more intuitive and easier to follow. Use the app to plan journeys, buy tickets at the cheapest rates and check when buses are due. You can save departure boards from specific stops, see if there are delays or how busy approaching buses are. The new app also includes full timetables for the first time. <https://www.buses.co.uk/app> The old app will no longer be supported from 1 June. Passengers who have bought tickets on the old app should find they are automatically transferred to the new one.

## Nice shelter, shame about the seat



This smart new bus shelter has appeared in North Street. Its installation was delayed by several weeks, but it was finally erected on 4th May. Three weeks on, the seat is still missing, making it difficult to use for some elderly and disabled passengers. Hopefully seating will be fitted soon.

Unfortunately, the next stop down by Lloyds Bank, has not been given a new shelter. This is a particularly busy stop, served by the two main routes to the hospital and all coast road services. However, the Council told us no consideration was given to replacing the old shelter and there are no plans to do so. Please reconsider! All other bus stops in North Street have been upgraded with modern shelters in recent years.

## New superstore would be bad for bus users

Aldi is planning a large store in Hove at the top of King George VI Avenue, near Dyke Road Avenue and the A27. With a large car park, the store is clearly designed to appeal to car based customers from a wide area. The nearest bus service is the 21A in Goldstone Valley which stops in Woodland Avenue and King George VI Drive. This service currently runs hourly so it will not be attractive. The 77 to Devil's Dyke passes near at weekends but existing bus stops are not close to the supermarket site and would involve crossing busy roads. The top end of Dyke Road Avenue becomes very congested and already causes delays the 27 & 77 routes on a regular basis. The addition of a superstore here would encourage car use and make this congestion even worse. It would make buses slower and less attractive to new and existing users.

The fundamental issue here is that the location. While it would be close to a proposed development of 900 homes at Toads Hole Valley, the Council has a responsibility to encourage developments that are close to existing bus services. Contrast this with the recently opened Aldi store in Lewes Road which is close to several frequent bus services and the new Lidl store in Hove, which is a short walk from the 5, 5A & 5B bus services in Sackville Road and the 47 in Old Shoreham Road.

## Martin Harris to retire



After eight years at the helm, Brighton & Hove Buses Managing Director Martin Harris has announced his decision to retire later this year. Martin has always been prepared to listen to our concerns. He has often attended our meetings where he was keen to encourage feedback from bus users. We've had a few disagreements over the Valley Gardens scheme but there is no doubting his passion for improving our bus services. Martin certainly knows what he is doing: prior to the pandemic the numbers using buses in Brighton & Hove since 2013 had increased by 6.5% whereas usage fell in most of the UK, with a 12% reduction in London.

The Brighton & Hove bus fleet has become more colourful with special liveries for some routes and in support charities or events, including the Paddle Round the Pier, Albion in the Community and Brighton Pride. 54 new extended range hybrid buses, capable of zero emissions in the city centre have been introduced over the past two years. Martin has made a huge contribution to this city and he will be a hard act to follow.



After more than a year of travel restrictions, Bus Users is celebrating one of the best things about getting back on board the bus – the view from the window. Whether it's the open countryside of a day trip, or the city skyline of our regular commute, nothing offers quite the same opportunity to enjoy our surroundings as bus travel.

So we're asking people to share their favourite bus-window-views on Facebook and Twitter. If you don't use social media don't worry - just send your images to us and we'll post them for you. The last year has been challenging for everyone but being able to travel again means we can get back to our daily lives. So let's celebrate getting back on board and sit back and enjoy the view.

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## Brighton Area Buswatch meetings

In normal circumstances, meetings with bus company managers and Brighton & Hove City Council are held four times a year. Meetings will resume when we are able to use Brighton Town Hall again, hopefully this summer. In the meantime, please send in your comments and we will take them up with the operators or the Council.

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

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