

Brighton Area Buswatch

Representing local bus users



A branch of Bus Users UK

Buswatch News – November 2016

Valley Gardens scheme

As reported last month proposals for the first stage of the Valley Gardens project are due to be submitted to Brighton & Hove City Council's Environment, Transport & Sustainability (ETS) Committee on 29 November. We now understand that this will be followed by a further detailed design stage lasting a year, so work is unlikely to begin before 2018. Brighton Area Buswatch has expressed concerns about several aspects of the scheme but we will await publication of the report to ETS Committee before commenting on the latest plans.

Our main concern is that this scheme could make bus journeys slower, leading to a decline in bus use and the likelihood of more congestion if local people switch to cars. Our area currently has the highest bus use per head of population outside London. This is a fantastic achievement which must not be put at risk. Hopefully our concerns (which are shared by bus companies and others) will be addressed over the coming months before a final scheme is approved.

Compass Travel withdraws the 40X

The 40X bus from the Royal Sussex County Hospital to the Princess Royal Hospital at Haywards Heath ran for the last time on Friday 4 November. Compass acquired the service when it took over the operations of SussexBus a month earlier and sub contracted it to Southdown and Seaford & District who ran it very reliably. The 40X had been run by SussexBus in direct competition with Metrobus routes 271 & 272 which provide alternative facilities under contract to the NHS Trust. The former SussexBus route 40 which links Cuckfield and Haywards Heath with Brighton (Churchill Square) was also taken over by Compass Travel and this service remains unchanged.

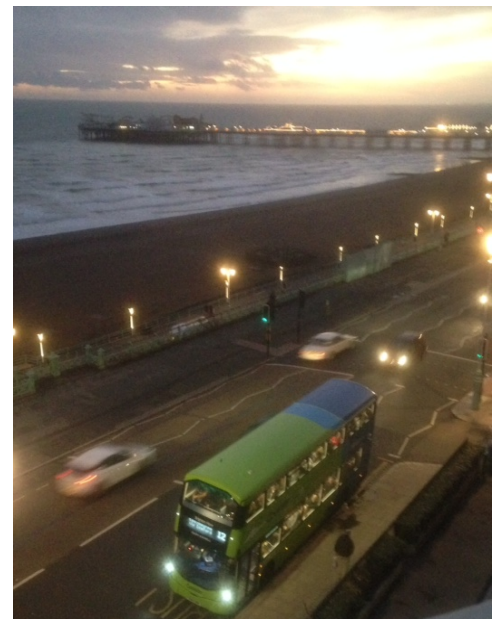
The Big Lemon wins solar panel funding

Congratulations to the Big Lemon bus company which with the Brighton Energy Coop won funding from the M&S Community Energy Fund to cover the roof of the Big Lemon bus depot with 120 solar panels. They will power fully electric buses. The first zero emission electric bus will run on route 52 between Brighton and Woodingdean from next spring. The solar panel project was one of 199 different applications to the M&S scheme which was approved following a public vote.

Suggestions for timetable improvements.

Brighton & Hove Buses invites comments and suggestions for timetable changes. Timetables generally change twice a year in April and September. B&H is keen to receive suggestions for the Spring 2017 timetable in the next few weeks before plans are finalised. Send your suggestions to info@buses.co.uk Brighton Area Buswatch has submitted a number of ideas including:

- 7 – last summer there was a 7X express between Brighton Station and Brighton Marina running non-stop along the sea front from the Sea Life Centre to the Marina. Usage wasn't great so we suggested this is re-launched next summer as an all stops service to provide better links from the sea front and Marine Parade to the Marina.
- The summer only i7 service between Brighton Station and the i360 was not well used even after the attraction opened. This may be partly because it suffered from cancellations during the driver shortage last summer. We suggested the i7 service is replaced by improving the 77 (Brighton Pier to Devil's Dyke) which also provides a link from Brighton Station to the i360.
- 12/12A/12X (Brighton – Newhaven – Seaford – Eastbourne). The Coaster services are becoming increasingly popular but buses are getting more delayed by traffic incidents and congestion, especially along the narrow country roads between Seaford and Eastbourne. We have suggested extra 12X limited stop buses and a more realistic timetable to mitigate the effects of traffic delays. There also needs to be some protection for the Brighton end of the service to prevent buses being turned short at the Sea Life Centre so often. When this happens they miss out the busiest stops in North Street and Churchill Square. Also, there need to be extra relief buses on the busiest summer days to cope with crowds so passengers don't suffer from very long waits. Some extra buses did run last summer but only on rail strike days.
- 13X (Brighton – Newhaven – Seaford – Beachy Head – Eastbourne) – This once popular service has been cut back to just three buses each way which is a very unattractive frequency. Who wants to be stuck at Beachy Head for three hours when the weather suddenly changes? We believe the 13X should run at least hourly, every day through the summer.
- The 21 & 21A (Goldstone Valley – Hove – Churchill Square – Elm Grove – Queens Park – Whitehawk – Brighton Marina). As reported last month the frequency of these services was reduced from every 15 minutes to every 20 minutes in September, leading to more crowded buses, especially over the busy section between London Road shops and Queens Park. We would ideally like to see the previous timetable reinstated or at least an improvement for the busiest section.
- 23 (Universities – Lewes Road – Elm Grove – Queens Park – Royal Sussex County Hospital – Brighton Marina). This service was reduced from every 20 minutes to every 30



minutes last summer and was not restored to every 20 minutes in September as it had in previous years. This is the only regular service providing direct links around the city without going through the congested City Centre. We would like to see this route promoted with distinctive branding and a more attractive frequency.

- 25/25X (Universities – Lewes Road – Old Steine – Palmeira Square). The 25 timetable is reduced to every 15 minutes during vacations while the limited stop 25X remains every 10 minutes. We have suggested both services run every 12 minutes so the stopping service runs at the same frequency as limited stop buses.
- 48 (Brighton Station – Churchill Square – Lewes Road – Lower Bevendean). At present the 48 runs direct from Brighton Station to North Street after 7pm whereas during the daytime all buses stop at Churchill Square. However, on Sunday evenings buses start from Churchill Square and miss out Brighton Station. These arrangements must be very confusing. We have suggested the 48 serves both Brighton Station and Churchill Square every evening.
- 50/50U (Churchill Square – Ditchling Road – Hollingdean – Lewes Road – Universities). The late evening service to Hollingdean has been halved in frequency and the 50U Universities service withdrawn after 7pm. While the 50U buses were not well used beyond Hollingdean, a 30-minute frequency replacing a 15-minute service is a big cut. Passengers have complained of cancellations leading to hour long gaps which is unacceptable. On Sunday evenings the frequency is only every 40 minutes.

Brighton Area Buswatch meetings

The next meeting with bus company managers and Brighton & Hove City Council will be on **Wednesday 18 January 2017** at 5.15pm in Brighton Town Hall. Meetings are open to all members and supporters but please let us know in advance if you wish to attend as space is limited.

Buswatch News is produced and edited by Andrew Boag, Chair, Brighton Area Buswatch. We welcome your comments 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 early December 2016.

E mail: brightonbuswatch@gmail.com. Phone: 01273 620215



brightonbuswatch.org



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