**Brighton Area Buswatch**

**Representing local bus users**

**Part of Bus Users UK**

**Buswatch News – February 2016**



*Photo courtesy of Malc McDonald*

**Spring is coming!**

As I write this the sun is shining over Brighton. It won’t last of course, but hopefully it will return more often than last year as we now have details of summer bus services. One of the most attractive routes is the 12X limited stop Coaster service. Our photo shows a Coaster bus in Marine Parade Brighton which will arrive at Eastbourne Pier in just over an hour. The bus is named Dora Brian after the actress who lived in Marine Parade for many years. Similar style buses but with two doors and painted in traditional colours will be introduced on routes 1 & 1A in the coming months.

**Lots more bus service changes from Brighton & Hove**

Brighton & Hove Buses have announced further details of bus service changes from the start of the summer timetable on 24 April. Most are improvements but unfortunately there are a few reductions too. As mentioned last month, there will be more buses on **routes 1 & 1A** and night service N1 will be improved to provide a full 24 hour service between Mile Oak and Whitehawk. The single **N1 journey** which extends beyond Whitehawk to Woodingdean will be replaced by a **new N22** journey following the daytime 22 to Woodingdean, but this will only run on Saturday nights. **The N5 night bus** will be extended from Patcham to Hollingbury Asda providing a useful link to the 24 hour superstore.

**A new 7X** limited stop service will provide a faster, more scenic link from Brighton Marina to Brighton Station. It will run along the seafront via Marine Parade stopping only at Paston Place (for County Hospital) then non-stop to the Sea Life Centre, Old Steine and North Street. The 7X will run daily, every 20 minutes.

**New circular route i7** will run from Brighton Station through North Laine to Brighton Pier and along the seafront to serve the i360, returning via Churchill Square. This will run every 30 minutes. The 7X and i7 both start on 12 June. The number i7 could be very confusing to passengers, especially at Brighton Station as it doesn’t go the same way as either the 7 or the new 7X!

**Routes 21 & 21A** will be less frequent in the late afternoons with buses every 20 minutes to Brighton Marina instead of every 15 minutes. Furze Hill & Hove Town Hall 21A buses will be combined with alternate Goldstone Valley journeys running hourly via Furze Hill instead of half hourly. There will be an extra late night 21 from North Street to Goldstone Valley effectively restoring one journey withdrawn last November when Council funding was cut.

**Routes 24, 26 & 46** will be improved during Sunday daytimes. They will each run half hourly to provide a regular 15 minute frequency between Churchill Square and Hollingbury via Ditchling Road on routes 26 & 46, and half hourly via Lewes Road and Coldean on route 24.

Less good news is that **route 23** between the Universities and Brighton Marina is reduced to every 30 minutes Monday to Friday daytime (currently every 20 minutes) and to hourly on Sundays (currently every 30 minutes). The Sunday evening service on route 23 was withdrawn last year. The 23 is one of the few services that don’t pass through the City Centre and it is well used, with full buses common at peak times. It provides direct links from the Universities to Elm Grove and Queens Park and from Lewes Road to the Royal Sussex County Hospital and Marina. This is exactly the sort of service that needs to be developed and it is very disappointing to see such a well used route reduced. Brighton & Hove Buses says fewer passengers travel along Lewes Road during the summer months so we will be pressing them to restore higher frequencies from September. If you use the 23 please let us know what you think.

There will be additional late night buses on **route 28** from Brighton to Lewes and Malling Down at midnight and 12:30am on Mondays to Saturdays. Unfortunately **night route N40** from Brighton to Haywards Heath and **route N2** from Brighton to Shoreham/Steyning and Worthing are both withdrawn due to low usage. Stagecoach night service N700 provides an alternative service to Shoreham and Worthing while night routes N1 & 25 serve the Portslade area. **The N7** between Brighton Marina and Hove is reduced from half hourly to hourly on Sunday nights.

More details of all the timetable changes are available at [www.buses.co.uk](http://www.buses.co.uk) .

**Good News! No change to Concessionary Pass times**

Brighton & Hove City Council has abandoned plans to reduce the hours for Concessionary Bus Pass holders. They will remain valid from 9am through to 4am and at all times at weekends for Brighton & Hove residents. This is an excellent result. Brighton Area Buswatch, Brighton & Hove Older People’s Council and Brighton Line Commuters were strongly opposed to reducing the hours. We say thank you to Councillors who listened to our concerns and made the case to get this item removed from the budget spreadsheet before it was submitted to the Council’s Budget Committee meeting.

**The Big Lemon electric bus campaign is a big success!**

The campaign to raise £100,000 through a community bond issue was an outstanding success and over £160,000 was raised in just a few weeks. This is an excellent result. Managing Director Tom Druitt says the plan now is to raise £200,000 to buy two new zero emission electric buses this year instead of one. The cost of each single deck bus is £233,000 and remaining funding would need to come from Governments Office for Low Emission vehicles, which was set up to encourage these initiatives. The Big Lemon has submitted its application and is awaiting a Government response. For more information the project and how to support it by buying a community bond go to [www.thebiglemon.com/our-future](http://www.thebiglemon.com/our-future)

**Supported bus service funding maintained.**

Brighton & Hove City Council will not be cutting funding for supported bus services in 2016/17. This affects services 16/66, 37B, 47, 52, 56, 57 plus Breeze Up to the Downs services 77, 78 & 79 and some school services. However it is likely the first group of services listed will be re-tendered shortly with new contracts due to start in September. If bus companies submit bid tender bids which are higher than expected there is still a risk of reductions.

Route 37 between Meadowview, Brighton Station and Bristol Estate will be run commercially by Compass Travel. This should have been the situation since April 2015 but last summer Compass Travel told the City Council it could not continue to run the 37 without financial support and emergency funding was provided. Hopefully this situation won’t arise again. The 37 should be more successful now that Key Cards and M tickets are valid and most Compass buses are showing up on real time information displays. Usage certainly seems to have picked up recently based on our observations. Meadowview residents are pressing for an improved evening service to be restored – the evening frequency was reduced from two buses per hour to one bus every 75 minutes last September.

**Brighton Area Buswatch meetings**

The next meeting with bus company managers and Brighton & Hove City Council will be on **Wednesday 13 April 2016** 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 in mid March 2016.**

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**Brightonbuswatch.org**

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