

Brighton Area Buswatch

Representing local bus users



Part of Bus Users UK

Buswatch News – April 2016

Introduction

Fares issues dominate Buswatch News this month. Brighton & Hove Buses has announced a raft of changes which take effect from Tuesday 26 April. Many bus users who travel within the city and use a Key Card or M tickets on a smartphone will see little change and the popular £2 Centrefare is frozen. Those travelling between the revised (smaller) City Zone and destinations beyond will face some significant increases with the annual network wide Saver increasing by a whopping 11% from £540 to £600. Annual tickets remain by far the best value if you can afford them in one go. Paying by monthly direct debit for a Network Saver works out at £70 a month or £840 over a year, a huge difference. Period tickets bought before 26 April will be valid throughout the network.

The One Hour ticket arrives

Brighton & Hove Buses is taking up our suggestion and introducing a One Hour single M ticket, so passengers can change buses without paying again. This follows successful trials on Metrobus services in Crawley and Redhill earlier this year. The new 60 minute ticket will be available as an M ticket on a smart phone for £2.40 which is 10p less than the new city wide cash single fare. Time based tickets are common throughout Europe and America but UK bus companies have always resisted them. Hopefully this innovation will be repeated elsewhere. Two London Mayoral candidates have already pledged to introduce something similar. We lead the way!

The 'Quattro' ticket which allows up to four people to travel for one hour on one M ticket for £7 after 6pm is being extended. It will now be available all day and on night buses where standard single fares will be charged from 26 April. City Savers will NOT valid on night buses but the more expensive Network Savers will be accepted which is bound to create confusion. Apparently night services only just break even and this move is intended to increase revenue to avoid cuts.

Why fares are changing when inflation and fuel prices are low

No one wants to see higher fares and one of the main aims of the changes is to encourage bus users to buy in advance rather than paying cash on buses. Brighton & Hove Buses points out that bus schedules are now 14% slower than they were eight years ago. This is due to increased traffic congestion and the fact that more bus passengers are being carried, so buses spend longer at each stop. As a result more buses are needed to maintain timetables and this increases the cost of running each service. Even when inflation is low, the cost of running a bus service increases, because of the cost of running more buses and employing extra staff. Speeding up buses, or at least preventing them becoming even slower is therefore a priority. Bus lanes and other priority measures certainly help and we need more. The new two door buses to be introduced on route 1 shortly should also make a difference.

The new fare zones explained

The fare zones are being altered so passengers making longer journeys will have to pay more than those within the city. The City Saver zone now ends at Saltdean and Falmer to the east, Shoreham to the west and the A27 by-pass to the north. Passengers travelling from the City Zone to destinations beyond will need a Network Saver ticket although return cash fares are available outside the City Zone. Returns are usually cheaper than a Network Saver. This won't go down well with people living in Peacehaven or Lewes and there is already a petition for Lewes to be in the new City Zone. However it could be argued those outside the city previously benefitted from relatively low fares for long journeys, subsidised by people paying the same price for shorter trips around Brighton or Hove.

The main adult fares are summarised below. Full details are available at www.buses.co.uk.

Our new bus fares and how they compare with other areas

Adult fares	Brighton & Hove Within new City Saver area	Brighton & Hove Outside City Saver area	Stagecoach Routes 17 & 700 within City Saver area and beyond	Transport for London (TfL) bus services using Oyster or contactless card	Reading Buses urban area
Single journey	£2 or £2.50 on bus £2.40 One hour M ticket	£1.80 - £5.20 according to distance	£2.20 in City variable beyond	£1.50 Pay As You Go	1.90
One day ticket	£5 cash on bus £4.20 Key/M ticket £4.80 scratch card	£6.50 on bus £4.50 Key/M £4.80 scratch	£3.80 in City £8 beyond	£4.50 Pay As You Go max £5 in advance	£4.30
Weekly ticket	£19 Key/M ticket £23 scratch card	£20 Key/M £23 scratch	£12.50 in City £22 beyond	£21.20	£16 on bus £14.50 on line
Monthly ticket	£69 Key/M ticket £67 by direct debit	£73 Key/M £70 dir debit	£45 in City £80 beyond	£81.50	£55
Annual ticket	£570 Key card	£600 Key	£478 in City £885 beyond	£848	£575

All prices displayed on bus company & TfL websites April 2016. Other fares may be available. Some monthly prices are 4-weekly.

Since this comparison chart was compiled for Buswatch News in December 2014, all bus operators have increased fares, with the exception of Council owned Reading Buses. London fares are controlled by the Mayor of London. There are no cash fares on London buses and Reading Buses drivers do not give change. London bus fares include Croydon trams but not Underground, DLR or rail travel for which higher prices are charged.

Stagecoach and SussexBus.com do not currently accept Brighton & Hove Key Cards, M tickets or scratch cards. Compass Bus and The Big Lemon services operated on behalf of Brighton & Hove City Council charge the same fares as Brighton & Hove Buses and accept Key Cards, M tickets and scratch cards.

More 37s to Meadowview and more Sunday 17s to Horsham

Compass Bus will be running extra shuttle buses between Meadowview and Lewes Road Sainsbury's from 25 April, restoring three buses and hour to Meadowview and a half hourly service to Coombe Road. Compass Bus is also doubling the frequency of Sunday buses on route 17 between Brighton & Horsham to run hourly. Stagecoach operates route 17 for the rest of the week and provides a half hourly daytime service.

A great day out with The Big Lemon



Passengers boarding the minibus at Devil's Dyke after the walk

I joined The Big Lemon on the first of their regular Sunday walks for 2016. A Big Lemon bus leaves Old Steine at 10:30 on the first Sunday of each month and takes passengers to the start of the walk. The same bus meets us again at the end of the walk which is always a pub with an opportunity for lunch. The April walk began at Bramber Castle near Steyning with a stroll around the castle remains. We then walked through the pretty village of Upper Beeding to the South Downs Way. It was a fairly steep walk up-hill from there, but the views from the top were outstanding. From there, we remained on an undulating ridge for most of the way to Devil's Dyke, which took about two hours.

Sheep with their new born lambs were plentiful as well as cows and a field with what looked like young bulls – it was difficult to tell from a distance and we weren't going any closer! The walk finished at the Devil's Dyke pub where some of our group ordered lunch and we all sat outside enjoying the sunshine and views. The Devil's Dyke pub was very busy but the food was good and better than some expected. Pub food isn't included and some of the group had bought their own sandwiches or snacks. It was suggested that this walk should go in the opposite direction as the smaller pubs in Upper Beeding looked more interesting and the last part would be down hill.

About twenty people had joined the walk and they were a very friendly crowd. I felt welcome as soon as I arrived at the Old Steine where Mick and his dog Becky (in the photo) were standing outside the bus. Everyone seemed to talk to everyone else during the course of the walk; it was interesting to meet people from a variety of backgrounds and ages. They included students, a yoga teacher as well as older couples. The walk was led by Anna from The Big Lemon who had a map and made sure we all kept together. As I boarded the bus to return to Brighton I discovered that driver Neil used to drive buses in Canterbury where I grew up, so we had a good chat about that. We arrived back in Brighton at 3.30pm, but this time varies according to the length and location of the walk.

It was a really splendid day out, well organised and with a very welcoming and friendly crowd, many of whom tried to make it a regular event. The next walk on Sunday 1 May is to the Ashdown Forest. Thoroughly recommended! For more information go to www.thebiglemon.com/walks

Brighton Area Buswatch meetings

The next meeting with bus company managers and Brighton & Hove City Council will be on **Wednesday 13 July 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 May 2016.

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