

Brighton Area Buswatch



Working in partnership with Bus Users, the national charity representing bus passengers

Season's Greetings



Buswatch News – December 2022

Western Road closure

From 9 January all eastbound buses will be diverted towards Churchill Square. They will turn left at Montpelier Road (by Waitrose) then turn right into Upper North Street and Regent Hill, re-joining their normal route at Churchill Square. This means the last stop in Western Road will be Norfolk Square and the stops at Waitrose and Clarence Square will not be served. Buses towards Hove are not affected.

These changes will last up to two years and are necessary because the 'Western Road Improvement project' which is designed to make the street more attractive by widening pavements, resurfacing the road and providing more cycle parking. The improvements for bus passengers are less obvious as the bus stops at Clarence Square will be removed. However, the Clock Tower junction will be redesigned to remove the traffic lights at the bottom of Dyke Road which should improve bus journey times by reducing waiting times for buses at the junction.

Details of the scheme are available [here](#)

Lower bus fares in 2023?

Bus companies throughout England are still waiting for confirmation that the Government will fund a £2 maximum single fare for the first three months of 2023. We are also hoping it will make funding available to Brighton & Hove City Council to enable free travel for accompanied under 16s to apply every day for up to three years.

We conclude Buswatch News this year with two reports from Buswatch supporter **John Nicholas** who regularly travels to our meetings from his home in Coventry:

Brighton Bendybus, last hurrah

I took the opportunity to visit Brighton on the last day of scheduled Bendybus operation thanks to advice on social media. Students aboard one packed journey commented on the logic of using double deckers in future.



Social media publicised that a farewell trip would be undertaken on Monday 7th November which Brighton & Hove then advertised on their website stating there would be no charge but encouraged donations to a local charity. I emailed request to attend the farewell, being reassured by information screen message on the bus I caught outside my hotel that I could turn up in the morning.

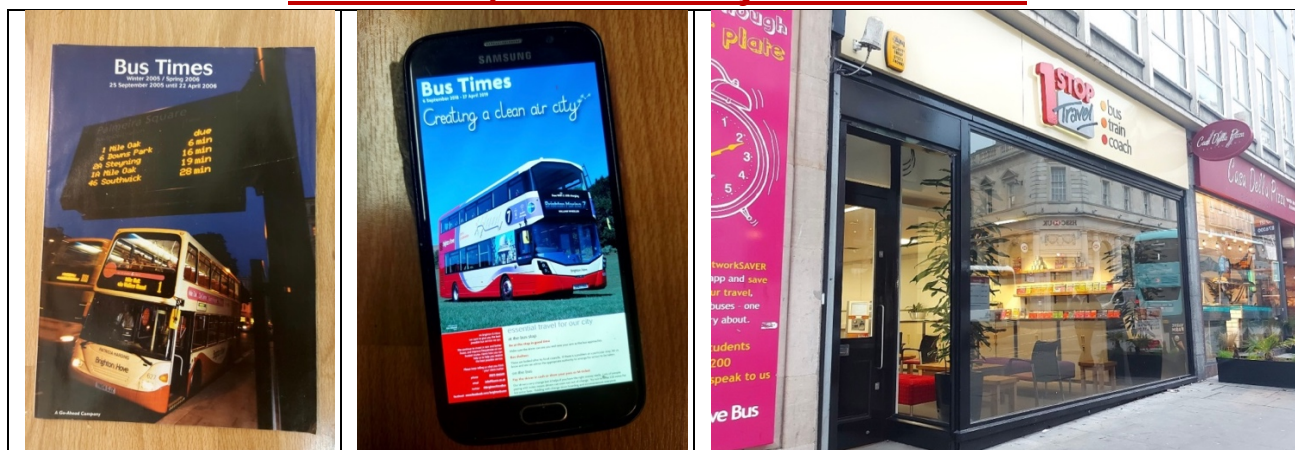
Monday morning dawned damp and at 8am sharp while travelling through Woodingdean I received an email saying a seat had been reserved confirming 10am departure from Portslade station. I arrived in plenty of time to see the growing number of folk gathering, impressed by the special destination for the occasion when the bendybus arrived. The “fans” first in the queue rushed to sit in the rear section of the bus, while along with “calmer” participants I sat in the front section of the bus. Everyone then readily signed consent forms to allow official use of photos taken.

There were a few seats left which were taken by a handful of students who were invited to board in the Lewes Road. The broad cross section of folk then travelling towards the University were asked about their bendybus experiences by a freelance journalist sitting opposite me, contributing to the excellent spirit amongst all those on board.

Staff announced we would stop with the Amex stadium as a backdrop to allow everyone to safely take pictures of the bus. When asked why I didn't get out I replied I'll look at the images on Facebook later! A couple accepted my offer to take their picture after they struggled to take a selfie while standing on the articulation. Before we knew it we were back at Old Steine, where staff and fans willingly stood in front of the Bendybus and its replacement for the final official photo. After taking a final snap I gratefully made a contribution in the bucket. The information screen on the bus I caught back to my hotel in the evening displayed a ByeByeBendy message thanking those who attended.

I thoroughly enjoyed the event and gave email feedback to the company regarding how well the event was managed by staff which was gratefully received and passed on to the individuals concerned.

Bus Times, farewell or just au revoir?



Brighton's buses have again been rewarded for sustaining their position at the pinnacle of Britain's bus operations. Until Covid the **gratis** biannual Bus Times underpinned this excellence by marketing **all** bus services in the region. Its namesake Radio Times met the needs of viewers by covering all channels after broadcasting was deregulated. Bus deregulation in stark contrast resulted in most privatised bus companies producing timetable leaflets for the routes they operated usually only showing their journeys.

Bus Times was something different, available to visitors as they left Brighton station, to commuters in bus luggage racks to pick up and read about forthcoming changes at their leisure, to staff at One Stop Travel able to provide one publication for local timetable queries. Advances in technology gave me the ability to download the latest edition to my mobile phone in seconds for easy reference regardless of online reception. My ability to download the National Rail Timetable has been unaffected by the virus having been protected by legislation since rail privatisation.

Bus Times readers have lost a medium that welcomed them, seeking feedback and clearly stating the latest changes. Every page of Bus Times was used to its full potential, suggesting places to visit, helping those who needed assistance with their journey, including advance holiday timetables, even explaining the contribution Brighton's council makes to bus services. The large page format enabled coastal route 12 to be shown in eight pages that is now a 56 page book containing a diagrammatic map where Brighton city centre is shown as a series of blobs!

I recently travelled as a novice on the buses of Bournemouth and Belfast whose economies also thrive on tourism. Bournemouth has a comprehensive pocket size timetable including maps and fares readily available from helpful staff at Tourist Information Centres and Travel Centres. I spent two days making my own Belfast bus timetable with route diagram for their colour coded routes many having an array of variants that run only every 30 minutes. Ironically a fellow visitor who asked after timetables was told by the Travel Centre Assistant "Services are very frequent". These experiences will certainly influence my inclination to make a return visit.

The nationalised bus industry never strove to impose publicity standards, a legacy that had consequences in the modern era of open data for times and soon fares. The latter still often remains a closely guarded secret. Brighton's Bus Service Improvement Plan made dismissive reference to comprehensive publicity which proved a portent for future developments. High expectations and constant vigilance are required to prevent Brighton's familiar red and cream branded bus network evolving into a myriad of different coloured buses where routes, times and fares are changed at a whim.

Safety, reliability and convenience are my key requirements when travelling by bus. Convenience requires maps to navigate bus route networks with stop maps to clarify urban centres. Timetables then provide the detail of journey opportunities for the date I wish to travel. Excellent timetable books demystify ticket validities and their cost.

Bus Times met all these expectations and much more besides. Farewell Bus Times but it **can** be au revoir?

John Nicholas

Christmas and New Year buses

Special timetables will apply between Christmas Eve and New Year's Day. Details for Brighton & Hove Buses are [here](#). Similar arrangements will apply to services operated by The Big Lemon (16, 47, 52 & 57) and Compass Travel (37 & 37B) on behalf of Brighton & Hove City Council. Details for Metrobus services 270, 271, 272 & 273 are [here](#) and for Stagecoach services 17 & 700 are [here](#). Note that there will be no Stagecoach services on 25, 26 December and 1 January.

Brighton & Hove Buses will be operating services 1, 1A, 5B, 7 & 49 on **Christmas Day** this year. Buses will run hourly or half hourly between about 08:30 and 18:00. Normal fares will apply. The company will also be running its annual '**Kids Go Free**' promotion at weekends during December. Up to three under 16s can travel free when travelling with a fare paying adult. Note that this promotion only applies on Saturdays and Sundays. Buswatch suggested it should also apply every day between Christmas Day and New Year's Day when buses run to Saturday or Sunday timetables and people tend to forget what day of the week it is. Unfortunately, the company said this was not possible.

Brighton Area Buswatch meetings

The next public meeting with Brighton & Hove City Council and bus company managers will be on **Wednesday 18 January 2023**, at 4.30pm in Brighton Town Hall at a date to be confirmed, hopefully in the next issue. Numbers are restricted so please e mail Buswatch at the address below if you would like to attend or raise an issue.

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

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brightonbuswatch.org



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