

# Brighton Area Buswatch

Representing local bus users



A branch of Bus Users UK

## Buswatch News – February 2018

### Going electric



I travelled to London recently to attend a presentation at Waterloo bus garage with members of the Brighton & Hove Quality Bus Partnership. Waterloo is the first all-electric bus garage in the UK. It is operated by Go Ahead, the same group which owns Brighton & Hove Buses. We were shown around by Richard Harrington, Engineering Director at Go Ahead London (second left). With him are Owen McElroy from Brighton & Hove City Council, Tom Druiitt, from The Big Lemon and Martin Harris from Brighton & Hove Buses. The Shard is in the background. Richard explained that the Waterloo site is extremely constrained and the parking layout had to be carefully re-planned to enable 46 electric buses to be re-charged and prepared for service. A further five electric buses are based at Camberwell, a couple of miles away.

The second picture shows buses being re-charged before they go out for the afternoon peak period. Waterloo garage only operates two routes, the 507 (to Victoria) and 521 (to London Bridge). Both routes are very heavily used by commuters during rush hours but fairly quiet at other times, so several buses can return to the garage during the middle of the day to be re-charged.

The Big Lemon already runs two (solar powered) electric buses and plans to add three more this year. At the presentation, Martin Harris said Brighton & Hove would

also like to buy electric buses, possibly powered powered hydrogen, in the next few years. Battery technology is continually improving and we were told the latest electric buses in London are able to stay in service all day, capable of achieving around 200 miles before they need to be re-charged.

## **Marine Parade bus crash**

Buswatch News doesn't usually report accidents involving buses but this one was particularly tragic. Just before 1am on the morning of Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> February a fifteen-year old boy collided with an out of service bus. It happened on the seafront in Kemp Town, near Burlington Street. The teenager died shortly afterwards in the Royal Sussex County Hospital. Brighton & Hove Buses Managing Director Martin Harris issued a statement later that morning expressing his sadness at the loss of life and his thoughts for the family and friends of the teenager. He added that the driver of the bus was distraught and the company was providing help. There is an ongoing police investigation and the police are appealing for witnesses. We add our condolences to the family and friends of the teenager. It was clearly an awful shock for the bus driver too and we wish him well.

## **Brighton & Hove responds to night bus complaints**

Brighton & Hove Buses has provided us with more information to explain why some night bus services were withdrawn or reduced in January. Managing Director Martin Harris points out that night bus services are not subsidised and there remain over 380 journeys running after midnight each week across the Brighton & Hove network (although a few of these journeys are buses returning to their depots and not all serve the city centre). Nevertheless, this is a big improvement on ten years ago when most day services finished before midnight. Martin adds that the overall mileage covered by Brighton & Hove buses increased by 3.3% over the past year so the company is continuing to improve services.

The company has committed to a 'process of engagement' with night bus users, which will start in early March to find out more about their journey needs. Feedback will be encouraged so that the company can identify gaps in the network that they might be able to fill. Brighton Area Buswatch has already suggested a few potential quick wins, such as restoring the N1 towards Mile Oak to start from Old Steine instead of Brighton Station, an extra late night bus to Patcham on route 5 and changing the last 1A to Whitehawk run as route 1 so it serves St James's Street.

## **Stagecoach fares increase**

Fares were increased from 28 January just two weeks after the increases on Brighton & Hove Buses. The single fare for local journeys within Brighton & Hove increases by 10p to £2.40. A one-day ticket between Brighton and Shoreham (route 700) or Brighton and Patcham (route 17) increases from £4 to £4.30 on bus or £4.15 with the M ticket app. A one-day ticket across all Stagecoach South services costs £8.60, up from £8.20, but remains unchanged on the app. However, a one-day Discovery ticket costs £8.50 on the bus. This is best value as it can be used on all buses, not just Stagecoach and it covers most of East and West Sussex and Kent as well as Brighton & Hove. Don't forget you can pay for your tickets with Contactless bank cards on Stagecoach buses.

## Look out for the green bus

A brand new green double decker has been running on Brighton & Hove route 23 (Universities – Queens Park – Marina) for the past few days. It is on loan from the Southern Vectis bus company which runs buses on the Isle of Wight. I've travelled on it a couple of times and it gives a very smooth ride. It seemed more powerful than recent B&H buses and made light work of climbing Elm Grove, even when full. The bus was commendably free from rattles and has deeper windows upstairs. If you have travelled on the green bus, please let us know what you think and we will pass on your comments to the bus company.

## The Big Lemon wants your help

Our local Community Interest Company already has two electric buses and it has recently won Government grants towards the cost of buying three new electric buses. The company now needs to raise £405,000 of its own money to complete the purchases and it has announced a Bond Issue with three and five year options with preferential terms for existing investors. Last year The Big Lemon raised £250,000 in just a few weeks for the first two buses, without Government funding. The first two buses run on solar power from panels above the depot. The new electric buses would replace most diesel buses on routes 47, 52, 56 & 57. If you are interested please in finding out more, please contact [anna@thebiglemon.com](mailto:anna@thebiglemon.com)

## Valley Gardens update

Our Committee members continue investigate ways the scheme could be amended to improve the flow of buses and we hope to be able to report some new ideas next month.

## Brighton Area Buswatch meeting

The next meeting with bus company managers and Brighton & Hove City Council will be at 5pm on **Wednesday 18 April 2018** in Brighton Town Hall.

Buswatch News is produced and edited by Andrew Boag, Chair, Brighton Area Buswatch. We welcome your contributions and suggestions. The next issue is due mid-March 2018. E mail: [brightonbuswatch@gmail.com](mailto:brightonbuswatch@gmail.com). Phone: 01273 620215



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