

Brighton Area Buswatch

Representing local bus users



A branch of Bus Users UK

Buswatch News – June 2019

Summer bus service improvements

Summer is here so let's start with some good news: the 13X limited stop service from Brighton Station to Birling Gap, Beachy Head and Eastbourne now runs every 30 minutes on Sundays and public holidays until mid-September. This provides excellent opportunities for a scenic trip along the coast and should relieve overcrowding problems on routes 12 & 12A on Sundays.

The 13X now runs on Mondays to Saturdays too until 31 August, but with only three journeys each way leaving Brighton Station at 0910, 1240 and 1610. Buswatch suggested it should run at least hourly. However, on weekdays the 12X runs every 20 minutes to Seven Sisters and many visitors walk from there. It is worth noting that the 12X is far quicker than the 12A to Seven Sisters. The 12X takes 50 minutes while the 12A takes 68 minutes.

In addition, the 77 to Devil's Dyke now runs daily until the end of August, every 45 minutes from Brighton Pier, Churchill Square and Brighton Station. Unfortunately, there are no open top buses running this summer, but it is still a great ride into the countryside, finishing with spectacular views from the top of the downs and plenty of opportunities for walks.

The Big Lemon is again running its Sunday walks programme. The next one is on 21 July with a trip to the Pevensey Levels followed by a visit to the Bluebell Railway on 18 August. Walks are between four and seven miles long and the bus leaves Old Steine at 1030 returning in the late afternoon. Booking ahead is advised. Full details at www.thebiglemon.com.

Take the 11X to Middle farm, Charlston or Drusillas

Along with the 13X improvements, don't forget the new 11X which links Brighton with Newhaven, Middle Farm, Charlston Farmhouse, Selmeston and Dusillas Zoo Park, continuing to Eastbourne Pier via the District General Hospital and the new Beacon Centre (formerly the Arndale Centre). The service runs on Sundays and public holidays with three return journeys, leaving Brighton Station at 0900, 1220 and 1545, arriving at Drusillas an hour later.

I took a journey recently. It has now been running for a couple of months and the first journey from Brighton was well used on a fine morning with several families on board. We picked up a few passengers in Rottingdean and Saltdean before heading

along the A26 from Newhaven to the Beddingham roundabout. It has been suggested there should be an extra stop near Southease Station where the South Downs Way crosses the road and there is a YHA hostel. Unfortunately, this isn't possible at present as the traffic is fast moving. East Sussex County Council says there is nowhere safe for the buses to pull in and they cannot justify making improvements for such an infrequent service, which is a shame.

Middle Farm proved a popular destination, and a couple more got off at Charlston. This stop is in a small lay-by on the fast moving A27 but unlike Southease it has been established for years. At Drusillas the bus goes through the car park and stops close to the entrance. Quite a number of passengers alighted here, including most of the family groups. B&H have done a good job providing timetable information here. The pretty village of Alfriston is a short walk from here. A few passengers remained on the bus to Eastbourne where we arrived on time at 1030. The views from the top deck were superb, especially between Newhaven and Polegate.

I returned to Brighton on the 13X at 1100 which was also well used for a Sunday morning. Interestingly the demographics of 13X users leaving Eastbourne were quite different to those on the 11X out of Brighton with many older folk, no young families but several foreign visitors, mostly heading to Beachy Head or Birling Gap. A round trip between Brighton & Eastbourne on the 11X and 13X is highly recommended and of course you can get off at many places along these routes for a country walk.

I used a 24 hour Network Saver bought on the M ticket app for £5 which is excellent value. When bought on the bus it costs £7 so you save £2 on a phone. Families and those travelling in groups can buy a one day M ticket for £9 or £10 on bus. This covers two adults and up to 3 under 16s. For those travelling further a one day Discovery ticket is best value. This costs £9 for one adult, £7.20 for under 16s or £17.50 for families. Discovery tickets allow unlimited travel on Brighton & Hove, Stagecoach and most other bus companies in Sussex, Kent and Hampshire.

Changes to the 16 in Hangleton

In April The Big Lemon changed the local 16 service between Hangleton, Knoll Estate and Portslade so the route through Hangleton became variable and passengers could book a bus to pick them up anywhere by phone. This was a bold experiment, but it didn't work out. Many passengers resented having to make a phone call to catch a bus.

So, starting on 17 June the service changed again. It has reverted to a fixed route, starting at Portslade Tesco then Portland Road, Knoll Estate, Hangleton Grenadier and in a one way loop to Poynings Drive and Hangleton Valley Drive. Buses run hourly, leaving Portslade Tesco ten minutes later than previously, at 15 minutes past each hour. Buses return to Portslade from Hangleton Valley Drive at 38 minutes past each hour and arrive at Portslade Station at 52 minutes past before continuing to the Health Centre and back to Boundary Road. The full timetable is available from www.thebiglemon.com Don't forget the new 47 which also provides local links between Knoll estate, Hangleton and West Hove Sainsbury's. The 47 also provides Hangleton with a direct service to the Royal Sussex County Hospital, Brighton Marina and Saltdean. It runs every hour during the daytime.

Local Transport Plan

Brighton & Hove City Council is preparing its update its Local Transport Plan (LTP). This is a statutory requirement for each local authority which outlines how the Council plans to manage and deliver transport in the future and where it plans to invest from. The city intends to become carbon neutral by 2030 which is an ambitious target. Brighton Area Buswatch will be pressing the Council for the LTP to include measures to improve and speed up bus services.

Rural bus report

Bus Users UK has published a plan to reverse the decline in rural bus services. In many rural areas, buses have provided a lifeline to education opportunities, employment, health care and social services. They also support local economies, build social connections and reduce congestion and pollution. Over the past two decades, however, rural bus services have experienced a 'perfect storm' of rising operational costs, increasing regulation, particularly for community transport providers, funding cuts from local authorities, and a lack of competition to run services.

The report examines ways of reversing the decline examines the reasons behind the fall in rural bus services and looks at the costs in terms of rising inequality, social isolation and deprivation. It sets out a 10 point plan to regenerate the industry and ensure that rural transport meets the needs of local communities. You can read the full report at www.bususers.org.

Victoria's medal

Congratulations to Victoria Garcia, Accessibility and Communities Officer at Brighton & Hove Buses who has been awarded an MBE. Victoria has done a huge amount of work with disability groups and local community groups over the past few years and this award is well deserved.

Brighton Area Buswatch meeting

The next meeting with bus company managers and Brighton & Hove City Council will be at 5pm on **Wednesday 24 July** in Brighton Town Hall. Meetings are open to all, but space is limited so please contact Buswatch at the address below if you wish to join us. The following meeting is on 16 October.

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-July 2019.
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