

# Brighton Area Buswatch

Representing local bus users



Part of Bus Users UK

## Buswatch News – March 2016

### Old Steine bus shelters get spruced up for spring!



It is good to see Council contractors refurbishing the three listed bus shelters in front of Brighton Pavilion. These elegant art deco style bus shelters (often wrongly described as former tram shelters) are used by thousands of bus passengers each week. They complement their surroundings perfectly and are often admired by pedestrians and passing motorists. It is particularly encouraging to see the glass panels replaced or thoroughly cleaned, as this didn't happen when they were last painted. Hopefully this work will be carried out every year in future, in time for the Brighton Festival and summer season.

### Cuts to Breeze Up to the Downs services 77 & 78

For the past year these two services have been running daily with the benefit of Council funding through the Governments Local Sustainable Transport Fund. Unfortunately this funding is not available from April 2016 so they will be unable to continue running to the present timetable.

From the start of the summer timetable on 24 April the 77 to Devil's Dyke and the 78 to Stanmer Park will only run on Saturdays and Sundays. A limited weekday service will run on route 77 from mid June but there will be no open top buses this year. Open top buses require a driver and a second member of staff to monitor the upper deck and prevent anti-social behaviour (which has been a problem in the past). Using closed top buses means the second member of staff is no longer required so the cost of running the service is much reduced. There are also some structural issues with the two open top buses used in previous years.

Even with these savings the high summer service will be less frequent, every 45 minutes at weekends instead of every 30 minutes. The 77 provides popular links from Devil's Dyke to the seafront and will serve the i360, so it is a great shame the half hourly open top service will not run this year.

## **City Sightseeing tour returns**

Passengers seeking an open top Open top bus ride may wish to try the red City Sightseeing Tour service which restarts on Good Friday. The revised route for 2016 will pass Brighton Pier, the i360 and Hove Lawns. There will be an hourly service, increasing to half hourly from late May. Much higher fares are charged on City Sightseeing Tour buses, starting at £12 for an all day adult ticket.

## **Changes from Metrobus and Sussex Bus**

Sussex Bus and Metrobus are making changes to their services from April. From Monday 4 April Sussex Bus 33 (currently Haywards Heath – Burgess Hill – Hassocks – Hurstpierpoint – Patcham – Brighton) will no longer serve Brighton at all. It will operate between Haywards Heath and Hurstpierpoint only, terminating at Willow Way. Timings will be similar with an hourly service at most times. From the same date Sussex Bus will no longer operate route 40X on Saturdays.

From Sunday 24 April there will be further changes, this time affecting Metrobus services. The Metrobus 40X is withdrawn (although the Sussex Bus 40X will continue to run hourly on Mondays to Fridays). Metrobus is introducing a new route 272 between Crawley, Haywards Heath and Brighton, Royal Sussex County Hospital every two hours. It is also re-routing the 271 (which also runs approximately every 2 hours) to the Royal County Hospital. Routes 271 & 272 combined will maintain an hourly service to and from both hospitals at generally similar timings to the current 40X. There are a few changes so it is advisable to check the new timetables before travelling. The 271 will serve Haywards Heath town centre and the Princess Royal Hospital as will the 272 which will also provide useful new links to Wakehurst Place and Turners Hill. There are also some minor timing changes on route 270 (Brighton – Burgess Hill – Haywards Heath – East Grinstead) and route 273 (Brighton - Hassocks – Hurstpierpoint – Handcross – Crawley). Full details of new Metrobus timetables are available on [www.metrobus.co.uk](http://www.metrobus.co.uk). 'Bus Times' will include details of all local bus services in and around Brighton from 24 April. The free publication should be available on buses and at One Stop Travel from mid April.

There are special arrangements for staff and patients with hospital appointments on route 40X. These will continue to apply on Sussex Bus 40X and Metrobus routes 271 & 272 for passengers travelling between the Royal Sussex County Hospital and Princess Royal Hospital - except on Saturdays - which will no doubt create confusion.

## **The Big Lemon bond issue reaches £250,000**

The campaign to raise £100,000 through a community bond issue was an outstanding success. The Community Interest Company eventually raised £250,000 towards the purchase of two zero emission electric buses which should appear on our streets later this year.

[www.thebiglemon.com/our-future](http://www.thebiglemon.com/our-future)

## **Free Travel for kids on Easter Saturday**

Accompanied children under 16 and Bus ID holders will be able to travel free on all Brighton & Hove buses on Easter Saturday 26 March. Up to three under 16s can travel with each adult. Kids can also look out for the little Easter Bunnies now on the front of several buses!

## **Key Cards could be coming to Stagecoach and Sussex Bus services.**

Discussions are taking place to extend the validity of Key Cards to all bus services in the Brighton & Hove area. They are currently valid on Brighton & Hove, Metrobus, Compass Bus and The Big Lemon services. The technology is now available to allocate smart card revenue without it being disclosed between bus companies. Talks are being led by Brighton & Hove City Council as an independent broker. Hopefully bus passengers will soon be able to use one smart card on all buses in Brighton & Hove, as they can in London.

## Grace Eyre community event and Disabled Access day at One Stop Travel

A few weeks ago I was invited to an event at the Grace Eyre Community. This is a charity which supports people with learning difficulties in Sussex to make independent choices. We were given an excellent presentation at the Purple Playhouse Theatre in Hove by Becky Ellis. Becky produced a film of her experiences using Brighton & Hove buses as a person with learning difficulties. The film was produced with Dee McDonald a Research Fellow from the University of Brighton who spoke at the event along with Martin Harris, Managing Director of Brighton & Hove Buses and the Mayor of Brighton. Becky explained the challenges she faced and was generally very positive about her bus travelling experiences. She found the real time information displays particularly helpful as they take a lot of stress away from wondering how long it would be until the bus would arrive. The film led to an invitation for Becky and Dee to visit the University of Toronto who were very impressed. Becky also valued the travel buddy scheme which involves someone being a companion to those who are not confident about using buses. Unfortunately funding for travel buddies would soon expire and it is hoped alternative sources of funding can be found to enable it to continue.

On Saturday 12 March Brighton & Hove Buses held a Disabled Access Day at One Stop Travel in North Street. Several disability groups were present and there were opportunities for visitors to find out about the many initiatives provided by the bus company. More details are available at [www.buses.co.uk](http://www.buses.co.uk) Initiatives include the helping hand scheme where some passengers show yellow cards to bus drivers which discretely inform them of their needs. This scheme has been very successful and has recently been extended to Streamline taxis which operate in our area.

Victoria Garcia, Accessibility Officer at Brighton & Hove Buses was involved in organising both events. Victoria has done much to raise the profile of accessibility and make public transport easier to use especially for those who may lack confidence to travel independently.

## 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 April 2016.

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