

Brighton Area Buswatch

Representing local bus users



A branch of Bus Users UK

Buswatch News – March 2019

Welcome to Buswatch News, our monthly newsletter. This issue is being sent out slightly later than usual to include details of forthcoming bus service changes.

Bus Service changes

A number of changes will be made to bus services from Sunday 28 April. Details are now available on the City Council website and new timetables should be available shortly. There are substantial changes to bus services 16/66, 47, 52, 56 & 57 which are funded by Brighton & Hove City Council and operated by The Big Lemon. The number of passengers using these services has reached the point that they are no longer financially viable. New timetables are an attempt to rectify this situation by providing more frequent services and new cross city links. There are also timetable changes on routes 37 & 37B. The main changes to Council funded services are:

Routes 16 & 66 (operated by The Big Lemon) will be revised to run as one hourly service 16 between Portslade and Hangleton via Knoll Estate. It will have a flexible route to improve links within Hangleton and it will continue to serve South Portslade, including the health Centre. Passengers requiring a pick up or drop off away from the fixed route must call 07766 335506.

Routes 37 & 37B (operated by Compass Travel). To improve reliability, both routes will have new timetables with more time for buses to complete their journeys in the afternoons. Some journeys will run up to ten minutes later than now – but hopefully more punctually.

Route 47 (operated by The Big Lemon) will run hourly from East Saltdean to Brighton Station via Brighton Marina and the Royal Sussex County Hospital. It will be extended via Old Shoreham Road to Knoll Estate replacing route 56 and then continuing via Hangleton Grenadier and Hangleton Valley Drive to terminate at Sainsbury's, Benfield Valley. This service will run via Queens Road and Brighton Station which means the section of Dyke Road between Buckingham Road and Seven Dials will have no northbound bus service. Route 18 provides a southbound service between Seven Dials and Churchill Square via Dyke Road. Passengers travelling from Churchill Square to Homelees House can use the 18 from the Clock Tower stop in Queens Road and travel via Brighton Station.

Route 52 (Operated by The Big Lemon) will run from Woodingdean to Old Steine hourly via Ovingdean, Brighton Marina and the Royal Sussex County Hospital. From

Old Steine it will continue to London Road, Five Ways, Hollingbury and Patcham replacing route 56. Most buses will not serve Churchill Square and North Street but there will be new links to the Royal Sussex County Hospital and Brighton Marina.

Route 56 will no longer run. Routes 47 & 52 will provide more frequent replacement services between Brighton and Patcham or Knoll Estate every 60 minutes instead of every 75 minutes.

Route 57 (operated by The Big Lemon) will no longer run except on Sundays when it is unchanged. Instead, route 47 will run more frequently and route 52 will serve Ovingdean during the week.

There are also **Changes to Brighton & Hove Bus Company** services, including a new express route **11X** on Sundays and Bank Holidays from Brighton to Eastbourne via Newhaven, Drusillas Zoo, Middle Farm, Charlston, Firle Place and Polegate. There will be three journeys in each direction. This service starts on Good Friday, 19 April. It is in addition to existing Sunday only route 13X which runs from Brighton to Eastbourne via Beachy Head. The 13X will be increased to run every 30 minutes on Sundays from 17 June and from the same date it will run daily, but unfortunately only every three and a half hours on other days. We had been pressing for a much improved service daily service this summer to relieve overcrowding on other services.

Other highlights are night bus route **N1** which will be restored to Old Steine and North Street while continuing to start at Brighton Station. New night route **N21** will run from Brighton Station to Queens Park, Freshfield Road, Manor Hill and Whitehawk. Buses will divert on request to serve the top of Whitehawk (Swanborough Drive) or Bristol Estate before returning to Brighton Station. Route **23** will have a new timetable. Buses are retimed to fit with student lecture start and finish times when buses tend to be busiest. Routes **25 & 25X** will have new timetables with more all stops buses on the 25 during the summer vacation when each route will run every 12 minutes. Route **27** will no longer serve Brighton Marina on Sundays. Route **50U** will be reduced from half hourly to hourly but buses will be better timed to fit with student lecture times. There will be extra 50s between Churchill Square and Hollingdean to replace the withdrawn 50U journeys.

Changes to City Centre bus stops

Several bus routes will use different stops around Churchill Square and North Street from 28 April. The number of people travelling by bus has doubled over the past twenty years but the bus stop arrangements have hardly changed so some stops have become more congested. Brighton & Hove Buses carried out a review last year which we were invited to comment on. The overall aim is to reduce congestion at bus stops and keep traffic moving more smoothly.

By relocating all coast road buses (11X, 12, 12A, 12X, 13X, 14, 14C) from Western Road stop E (outside M&S) to stop Dyke Road stop K (outside Pizza Hut) delays in Western Road should be reduced as it removes up to 16 buses an hour at peak times. Route 27 towards Saltdean will be re-routed away from Queens Road via Buckingham Road and Dyke Road to also serve stop K instead of stop N (by Boots), so all buses towards the Sea Life Centre will use the same stop. This will apply 24/7

(including night buses N12 & N14) so there will no longer be different stops in the early mornings and evenings. Buses on these routes will then run non-stop to the bottom of North Street (stop C). They will no longer call at stop Stop M (Portland Street).

The other main change is that Lewes Road services 24, 48 & 49 will no longer use stop A at the bottom of North Street by the Chapel Royal. Instead they will use stop M (Portland Street) by Decathlon, currently used by coast road services. All Lewes Road buses will stop at Old Steine as now. Stop A will be closed and services 5, 5A, 5B, 26, 46 & 50 move to stop B.

Buses 37, 37B, & 47 towards Kemp Town (St Georges Road) will all use Clock Tower stop N outside Boots and stop B at the bottom of North Street. There are changes to routes serving stop F outside M&S which will move to adjacent stop E (by Currys/PC World)

Problems with the new B&H phone App

A few months ago Brighton & Hove Buses introduced a new mobile phone app for buying tickets and planning journeys. Unfortunately, the supplier of the old app then decided to stop repairing faults, so the old app had to be turned off sooner than planned.

The new app is clearly very good for buying tickets, as M tickets seem to be more popular than ever amongst bus passengers. However, people don't seem to be so happy with other features. Real time bus information is available but in a different format; it is no longer possible to select and save a stop from a route list. Now you have to find your stop on a map and click on it, but that doesn't always work. Then, when you've worked out how to save it there's no indication which stop you've saved at say, Brighton Station where there are several stops close together. Timetable information is no longer available and there are no twitter updates to warn of delays. The new app feels much less intuitive and less useful overall. It should be much easier to work out what you can and can't do but there's no full menu. The app scores only 1.5 out 5 stars at the Apple App Store which is a very poor rating.

Buswatch is on the case! We have raised these issues with Brighton & Hove Buses and they assure me improvements will be made in the coming months.

Valley Gardens

There is little new to report this month. Work on phases 1 & 2 has continued and the contractors have managed to create minimum disruption, even when they removed the central reservation between the Church Street and Edward Street junctions. There was an Environment Transport and Sustainability Committee meeting on 19 March which confirmed that further Phase 3 consultations would take place before a final decision was made. However, it is unclear when, as council elections take place on 2 May and the next ETS Committee is not until 25 June. The Council is about to enter the pre-election 'purdah period' when it is banned from producing publicity on issues that are politically controversial. The Valley Gardens Forum is presenting a petition with around 1,000 signatures to the last full Council meeting on 28 March. This calls for design work on the Phase 3 scheme to be paused.

North Street – seventh most polluted street

Friends of the Earth have named Brighton's North Street as the 7th most polluted street in the country (outside London) for breaching the annual air quality objective for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) levels. These can affect asthma sufferers and lead to coughing or breathing difficulties. The Council monitoring station in North Street shows NO₂ levels at 77 compared with the legal limit of 40.

Buses are clearly the main users of North Street and they are becoming cleaner. Martin Harris, Managing Director of Brighton & Hove Buses says buses should be seen as part of the solution not the problem.

The Council's Low Emission zone requires all buses to meet Euro V emissions standards by 2020 and recently delivered buses have helped to reduce emissions. This year The Big Lemon has introduced zero emission electric single deckers and in the summer Brighton & Hove Buses plans to put 30 new hybrid buses on routes 5, 5A & 5B which can run in electric mode through the city centre. Brighton & Hove Friends of the Earth and Brighton & Hove Buses are pressing for changes to traffic light phasings at the Clock Tower junction which only allow a short period for buses heading to Western Road. This often leads to long queues in North Street with buses stationary on a hill. It is when they pull away on a hill-start through slow moving heavy traffic that emissions are highest.

Key card season ticket reminders

Good news from Brighton & Hove Buses is that they will now notify Key Card season ticket holders before tickets expire. If you have a 28 day, 90 day, or annual ticket you will receive an automatic e mail reminder so long as you have opted in to their promotional and/or service e mails. This is an issue often raised at our meetings with the bus company as Key Cards do not show an expiry date.

Brighton Area Buswatch meeting

The next meeting with bus company managers and Brighton & Hove City Council will be at 5pm on **Wednesday 10 April** 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. Later 2019 meetings will be on 24 July and 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-April 2019. E mail: brightonbuswatch@gmail.com. Phone: 01273 620215



brightonbuswatch.org



Brighton Area Buswatch is a branch of Bus Users UK www.bususers.org