

# Brighton Area Buswatch

Representing local bus users



Part of Bus Users UK

## Buswatch News – May 2016

### Deaf Awareness Week event is a big success



Lots of people attended the event at Churchill Square on 5 May. It was organised by Brighton & Hove Buses and Action on Hearing Loss to highlight the measures being taken to make travelling by bus more accessible. The left picture shows the busy stall with volunteers answering questions and giving out information. The right picture shows the opening ceremony with Brighton & Hove Managing Director Martin Harris and Deputy Mayor (now Mayor) Pete West. This particular bus is fitted with a hearing loop to improve communications between hearing impaired passengers and the driver. The new two door buses about to be introduced on routes 1 & 1A will all have an improved version this facility.

Visitors were able to take a hearing test and learn some basic lip reading skills. Brighton & Hove is the only bus company outside London which has fitted all buses with visual and audible next stop announcements. This was a well organised event which will have helped many people.

A similar event takes place this **Thursday 19 May** in conjunction with the RNIB, to focus on measures to assist bus users with sight loss. This will include an exhibition of tactile art and a tactile map of a new two door Route 1 bus which will be on display. RNIB staff will be on hand to give information and advice. They can also offer blindfolded guided walks for fully sighted visitors. All are welcome to attend between 11am and 2pm at Churchill square bus stop D which is outside WHSmith. Highly recommended!

## **More weekday evening buses on Stagecoach Coastliner service 700. Sunday evening service remains poor.**

There is a new 700 timetable from 31 May with more frequent evening buses to and from Brighton. Buses will run every 20 minutes to Worthing and Goring until 11pm (currently half hourly) with the last bus to Littlehampton at 9pm as now. Details are included in summer Bus Times published last month and there will probably be a separate leaflet produced by Stagecoach.

On Sunday evenings the changes are very disappointing. Despite our pleas for a decent service there is only one extra journey in each direction this summer - at 9.40pm from Worthing to Brighton and 10.25pm from Brighton. So on Sundays the last 700 is still at least 65 minutes earlier than other days and the evening frequency is just hourly instead of every 20 minutes. Sunday evenings may be quieter than other evenings but Brighton and Hove can be very busy during the summer months. In any event last bus times should be the same every evening to avoid confusion. Come on Stagecoach, you can do better than this!

## **Regency Route buses get a striking new look**

Refurbished four year old buses are replacing nine year old double deckers on Brighton & Hove Regency routes 28 & 29 to Lewes, Ringmer, Uckfield and Tunbridge Wells. They have free WiFi and are clearly identified by their striking gold and purple colours which should be a big improvement, especially for longer distance passengers. We just hope the staff at Lewes Road bus garage can be instructed to allocate them to the correct routes, as they've already wandered onto city services 18 & 49.

## **The 13X is running again - with full buses and some very long gaps**

The 13X is now running hourly from Brighton to Beachy Head and Eastbourne on Saturdays as well as Sundays providing spectacular views. From 13 June it will also run on Mondays to Fridays but there will be just three buses each way instead of the regular hourly service that ran last year. So miss one at Birling Gap and there will be a three and a half hour wait for the next bus. Brighton & Hove Buses blames staffing difficulties for the cutbacks. While we agree priority should be given to staffing the main network, the 13X is popular with visitors of all ages, not just concessionary pass holders. A high proportion of 13X passengers pay cash on the bus so they should be contributing to make this service very profitable.

The summer Sunday service is also reduced this year. Sunday is the busiest day for the 13X and last summer it ran half hourly at our suggestion. An hourly frequency this year means that on fine Sundays, 13X buses leaving Brighton Station at 10:40, 11:40 & 12:40 are likely to fill up at Churchill Square, leaving passengers behind at North Street, Sea Life Centre and Paston Place. Waiting another hour is unacceptable and we have urged Brighton & Hove Buses to run extra relief buses, but none have appeared so far. The Coaster 12 service provides an alternative for some passengers but this is also very busy and needs to run more frequently on Sundays. If you have had a bad experience please let us know.

## **Two new routes start in June**

A reminder that Brighton & Hove Buses is introducing two new seafront services on 12 June. The 7X is an express service between Brighton Marina and Brighton Station running every 20 minutes daily, while the i7 is a half hourly service from Brighton Station and North Laine to Brighton Pier and the i360, returning via Preston Street, Western Road and Queens Road.

## More days out

Metrobus route 272 from Brighton now provides a direct link to Ardingly, Wakehurst Place and Turners Hill. Buses run about every two hours on Mondays to Fridays only.

Compass Travel route 769 is running to Sheffield Park every Sunday, serving Sheffield Park Garden and the Bluebell Railway. The bus leaves Brighton at 9.40am returning at 4.45pm. Between these times there are buses between Sheffield Park and Haywards Heath so connections are available to Brighton on Metrobus route 271, but connecting times are not perfect so check to avoid a long wait.

Details of these services are included in Brighton & Hove Bus Times.

## Brighton Area Buswatch meetings

The next meeting with bus company managers and Brighton & Hove City Council will be on **Wednesday 13 July 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 June 2016.

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