

# Brighton Area Buswatch

Representing local bus users



A branch of Bus Users UK

## Buswatch News – November 2017

### Bus Service changes brought forward to January Big cuts to night bus services

Many bus timetables are changing on 14 January, three months ahead of the usual date for spring changes in April. This unusual move is understood to be a response to a fall in the number of passengers using Brighton & Hove Buses and changes to supported services operated by The Big Lemon. A few daytime services will be less frequent but there are a couple of improvements too, affecting routes 1 & 7.

Brighton & Hove night bus services bear the brunt of the cuts with less frequent services and some areas losing their night buses altogether. Here are the main changes, more details should shortly be available at [www.buses.co.uk](http://www.buses.co.uk).

#### Changes to Brighton & Hove night bus services

- N1 (Whitehawk – RSC Hospital - Old Steine – Churchill Square – Hove – Portslade – Mile Oak and Downs Park) The N1 will no longer serve Whitehawk, RSC Hospital, Old Steine or North Street. **It will start from Brighton Station and buses will run in one direction only, towards Mile Oak.** There will be no night service from Portslade and New Church Road towards Brighton (currently every 30 minutes).
- N5 (Hangleton – Hove – Churchill Square – Old Steine – Patcham & Hollingbury) will run between Hangleton and Old Steine only, so **Preston Park, Patcham and Hollingbury lose their night service altogether.**
- N7 (Hove – Brighton Station – Old Steine – RSC Hospital – Brighton Marina) will be reduced to hourly after about 2pm (currently half hourly all night except Sundays).
- N12 (Brighton – Rottingdean – Peacehaven – Newhaven – Seaford – Eastbourne) is reduced to run on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights only, but the parallel N14 via North Peacehaven is unchanged, running every night except Sundays.
- N25 (Old Steine – Lewes Road – Varley Park – Universities) is unchanged but fewer connections will be available at Old Steine with just one bus an hour (N5) from Old Steine to Western Road and Palmeira Square. Passengers for New Church Road and Portslade will have to change twice. Until April 2017 the N25 ran through to Palmeira Square and Portslade every half hour.

### **Changes to Brighton & Hove daytime services:**

- 1/1A – Monday to Saturday evening service increased to run every 12 minutes (currently every 15 minutes)
- 7 – Sunday daytime service increased to run every 8 minutes (currently every 10 minutes)
- 21/21A – Frequency to Brighton Marina via Whitehawk and Wilson Avenue reduced to 60 minutes (currently every 30 minutes, was every 15 minutes before September 2016). Manor Hill retains a half hourly service with hourly buses direct to Whitehawk bus garage and the Marina. The frequency between Churchill Square and Queens Park remains every 15 minutes. Saturday service between Churchill Square and Goldstone Valley is reduced to every 60 minutes with all buses via Furze Hill (currently every 30 minutes).
- 28/29 – Sunday buses will no longer serve East Hoathly.
- 48 – Saturday daytime service reduced to every 20 minutes (currently every 15 minutes), terminating at Churchill square instead of Brighton Station.
- 50/50U – Saturday 50U service to Lewes Road and Falmer withdrawn and Saturday morning frequency between Hollingdean and Churchill Square reduced to every 15 minutes (currently every 12 minutes).
- 84 – The first morning journey towards the Universities is withdrawn.

### **Changes to The Big Lemon services for Brighton & Hove City Council**

- 16/66 – revised afternoon timings to improve reliability.
- 47/57 – some journeys retimed with later last bus to East Saltdean.
- 52 – Daytime buses terminating at the RSC Hospital will serve Brighton Marina on journeys towards the hospital only, returning direct towards Woodingdean with revised peak timings to improve reliability.
- 56 – revised timetable with all buses restored to run between Patcham and Knoll Estate, but frequency reduced to every 75 minutes (currently hourly, every two hours Patcham – Hollingbury Asda)

### **Changes to Sussex Coaches services**

- Sunday service 17 Brighton – Henfield – Horsham. Service reduced to run about every three hours (currently every two hours with some hourly intervals). Starts Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January. No change to the weekday service operated by Stagecoach.

## **Free travel for kids at weekends**

Good News! Brighton & Hove Buses is offering free travel for accompanied children every weekend until Christmas Day. The offer applies to up to three 16s or Bus ID pre-Christmas period. It is also a 'thank-you' from the company to its passengers for putting up with disruption during recent roadworks and diversions.

## **Valley Gardens scheme – Our campaign continues**

Brighton Area Buswatch is presenting a deputation to the Environment Transport and Sustainability Committee meeting on 28 November where the scheme is up for final approval. We believe the scheme has no benefits for bus users. It will make bus journeys slower due to increased congestion, leading to unreliability, higher fares and less frequent services. **Buswatch says this is unacceptable.**



*congestion approaching London Road at St Peter's Place (see point 4 below)*

The main areas for concern for us are:

1. There will be no formal bus lanes. Buses will have to share road space with local access traffic. Proposed 'bus gates' may be difficult to enforce, leading to more congestion.
2. Buses are predicted to take an average of 21 seconds longer at peak times to travel through Valley Gardens, while the prediction for cars is only 2 seconds longer. Extra running time for each journey means more cost for bus companies. This will result in higher fares and fewer services, which will encourage bus users to switch to cars.
3. Buses are already getting slower. Brighton & Hove routes 5/5A/5B now take 65 minutes between Hangleton and Patcham/Hollingbury compared with 56 minutes ten years ago, a decline of 16%. B&H says this requires four extra buses at a cost approaching £1 million p.a. just to keep the same daytime frequencies. When North Street was closed three years ago bus use fell because journeys were too slow. It is likely this will happen if the current Valley Gardens scheme proceeds.
4. The junction of St Peter's Place and London Road will become even more congested with 22 buses an hour (mostly 18-metre long bendy buses) turning right towards Lewes Road, crossing between southbound buses from London Road and other general traffic. Lewes Road bound buses 25/25X, 28/29 currently use a handy slip road south of St Peter's Church which will be closed. We need effective bus priority measures here.
5. The junction of Grand Parade and Church Street will have reduced capacity. Southbound vehicles turning right towards Church Street will utilise one of the two through traffic lanes, approximately halving the main traffic flow.
6. Parts of Grand Parade will contain two lanes for general traffic reduced from four which we believe will lead to long tailbacks, especially at weekends and event days. This will delay buses beyond the Valley Gardens area, making them less reliable.

7. The modelling of traffic flows is all based on Monday to Friday peak periods on a typical October weekday. It does not take account of heavier summer and weekend traffic flows which create unique conditions in Brighton.
8. We believe the City Council is placing too much reliance on new smart traffic signals to resolve issues, which have yet to be tested.
9. Buswatch produced alternative plans to address the main issues, which have been largely dismissed. We refute most of the criticisms made of our proposal. The report is available on our website [www.brightonbuswatch.org](http://www.brightonbuswatch.org) with maps showing how the proposals could be improved.
10. Due to past efforts, Brighton & Hove has the highest bus use per head outside London. This must not be undermined. Buses keep this city moving.

We have discussed these issues with bus companies and Council representatives on several occasions. We believe bus companies privately share many of our concerns but they are expecting the scheme to be approved. Instead they are pinning their hopes on new bus priority measures arising from a study the City Council has commissioned. The issue for us is that there is no funding available to implement recommendations from that study, so it could be many years before anything happens.

## Bus Industry awards

Congratulations to Brighton & Hove Buses which won 'Best City Operator' award and was runner up 'UK Bus Operator of the year' at the UK Bus Industry awards in London on 21 November. There were also individual awards for two members of staff and for its Bus Times publication which celebrates 30 years. The Big Lemon was also a finalist in the Environmental Award category. These are 'the Oscars' of the bus industry and are much sought after. It is easy to take our good bus service for granted but these awards show how lucky we are.

## Brighton Area Buswatch meeting

The next meeting with bus company managers and Brighton & Hove City Council will be at 5pm on **Wednesday 17th January 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-November 2017.**

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**Brighton Area Buswatch is a branch of Bus Users UK [www.bususers.org](http://www.bususers.org)**