

# Brighton Area Buswatch



Working in partnership with Bus Users, the national charity representing bus passengers

## Buswatch News – September 2022

### September is Catch the Bus Month

Our national group, Bus Users, is calling on passengers, operators, local authorities, passenger groups and community transport providers to get on board for 'Catch the Bus Month' this September. While many people have now returned to schools, offices and social events, bus passenger numbers have remained below pre-pandemic levels.

Bus Users wants 'Catch the Bus Month' to celebrate the bus as a sustainable, inclusive and accessible mode of transport that reduces congestion, improves air quality and provides access to life's opportunities.

Launching the campaign, Claire Walters, Chief Executive of Bus Users said: "As life returns to normal we want people who used to travel by bus to get back on board. Research has consistently shown that buses are safe, despite what Government messaging said during the pandemic."

Claire is also calling on people who have never tried the bus to give it a go: "Most people would be surprised at what the bus has to offer now in terms of technology, comfort, affordability and accessibility."

**A dedicated Bus Users event is taking place in Brighton on Wednesday 28th September. One of the latest Brighton & Hove extended range hybrid buses will be parked in Western Road at Churchill Square, Bus Stop D by WH Smith between 1030am and 2pm.**

**Come along and meet us. Representatives from local bus companies and Brighton & Hove City Council will also be present to provide information and answer your questions.**

### New A259 cycle lane closes one bus stop

The Environment, Transport and Sustainability Committee has approved an extension of the A259 cycle lane through Hove from Fourth Avenue to Hove Lagoon. Some bus stops on the south side will be converted to floating bus stops where the cycle lane passes behind the bus stop. However, the westbound bus stop at Westbourne Villas (served by buses on route 700) will be lost in favour of car parking which seems a strange priority for a scheme designed to promote active travel.

## Lewes Bus Station has closed



Friars Walk

School Hill

New Information displays

As reported last month the bus station has now closed, the last day being Thursday 15 September. From Friday 16<sup>th</sup> the [new arrangements](#) came into effect with temporary bus stops in Friars Walk, and School Hill with the loss of some car parking spaces. East Sussex County Council has done a good job explaining the new bus stop locations. Buses on routes 28 & 29 from Brighton to Ringmer, Uckfield and Tunbridge Wells will continue to stop outside Waitrose, while buses towards Brighton will move to 'Temporary stand C' at the bottom of School Hill. These arrangements are far from satisfactory, the pavement in School Hill is narrow with insufficient room for a shelter and there is no real time information sign. There has been speculation a new bus station could be located off Phoenix Causeway as part of the North Street Quarter development but that would be further from the established town centre and could be some years away.

## £2 single fare promotion confirmed

The Government is funding a £2 maximum single fare on buses in England which will apply for three months between January and March 2023. This offers considerable savings for longer journeys and even shorter journeys within the Brighton & Hove City Saver area where the standard single fare of £2.80 would be cut by 80p.

Here are some examples of potential savings on longer single journeys from Brighton:

| Service                       | Current single fare | Promotional fare | Saving |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------|
| 2 to Steyning                 | £3.30               | £2               | £1.30  |
| 12/12A/12X to Eastbourne      | £5                  | £2               | £3     |
| 17 to Horsham                 | £5.40               | £2               | £3.40  |
| 28/29 to Uckfield             | £5.40               | £2               | £3.40  |
| 270/271/272 to Haywards Heath | £4.80               | £2               | £2.80  |
| 700 to Worthing               | £5                  | £2               | £3     |

Remember that these reductions are for single journeys only. Passengers changing buses or making several journeys in one day will still get a better deal from Day tickets or longer period tickets. More details will follow.

## A trip on the 23

Bus route 23 is unusual, it is the only regular all day bus service operated by Brighton & Hove Buses that doesn't go through the City Centre. It began in 2006 as route 25C to provide a link between the Royal Sussex County Hospital and the University of Sussex Medical school, assuming its own identity as the 23 a few years later (after a suggestion from Buswatch!).



The current service starts at the University of Sussex where it runs in a big loop serving the northern extremity of the campus at Northfield Crescent, returning via East Slope Road where there are new University buildings. It continues back over the A27 to Falmer Station. From there the 23 follows the 25 along Lewes Road to Elm Grove, then it turns left up the hill as far as Queens Park Junction where the 23 turns right into Queens Park Road. In recent years this area has become student land although increasing numbers of students now live in the purpose-built accommodation blocks that have sprung up along Lewes Road. From Queens Park the 23 continues to Eastern Road and follows the 7 to the Royal Sussex County Hospital and Brighton Marina. A half hourly service is provided at most times with extra peak journeys during term time.

Buses have been carefully scheduled to arrive at the Sussex University campus shortly before the top of hour to suit lecture times. This arrangement works well – when the service is running normally – but as I found when I made a journey a few days ago, things don't always go quite to plan. I intended to catch the 23 at 1551 on the Sussex University Campus but it didn't turn up. There should have been another bus ten minutes later (one of the term time peak extras) but that didn't appear either and the app on my phone was now showing that the next bus would be in 17 minutes to Brighton Marina. This looked like the 1621 journey, so I decided to walk to Falmer Station where there are other services. The 23 reached Falmer Station on time at 1632 and left full, following a one-hour gap. There was a 25 bendy bus right in front and for the next few stops many passengers were hailing the 23 instead of using the 25, suggesting they were travelling to stops only on the 23 route. The bus remained very busy all the way to Queens Park, where it picked up passengers travelling to Eastern Road and the Marina so the 23 is clearly fulfilling some very useful functions.

Cancelling two consecutive journeys on an infrequent service should not happen and I have raised it with B&H Buses. Unfortunately, when a service becomes unreliable passengers will find other ways to travel. There is a national shortage of bus drivers and vacancies in many other occupations. Bus companies in other parts of the country are suffering much more and are having to cancel lots of buses or reduce frequencies. In Brighton & Hove we are lucky not to be in this position but as my experience shows, some buses are being cancelled on an ad hoc basis, often at short notice without a warning on Twitter or Facebook.

A future development affecting the 23 is an extension from Brighton Marina to Peacehaven. This is supported by East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council and would be Government funded through Bus Service Improvement Plans for up to three years. It would provide new or improved links from Peacehaven, Saltdean and Rottingdean to Brighton Marina, Lewes Road and both Universities.

## Brighton Area Buswatch meetings

The next public meetings with Brighton & Hove City Council and bus company managers will be on **Wednesday 12 October** at 4.30pm in rooms 2 & 3, at **Brighton Town Hall**. Numbers are restricted so please e mail Buswatch at the address below if you would like to attend or raise an issue.

Buswatch News is produced and edited by Andrew Boag, Chair, Brighton Area Buswatch. Contributions and suggestions are always welcome.

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**[brightonbuswatch.org](http://brightonbuswatch.org)**



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