

Brighton Area Buswatch

Representing local bus users



A branch of Bus Users UK

Buswatch News – September 2018

Looking ahead

Buswatch News is back monthly after a short summer break bringing you all the news you need to know about travelling by bus in Brighton & Hove and the surrounding areas.

Work has now begun on phases 1 & 2 of the **Valley Gardens** scheme and so far it is creating very little disruption. Detailed plans for phase 3 between Edward Street and the Palace Pier roundabout are due to be released shortly and a preferred option is due to be presented to the the Council's Environment, Sustainability and Transport Committee on 9 October. So there should be more to report next month. The **Preston Barracks** works in Lewes Road are continuing and here too, they are not resulting in significant delays to traffic. This scheme will eventually provide new accommodation for Brighton University.

Looking at the longer term, we've had informal discussions with Brighton & Hove Buses on plans for the massive **Waterfront** development which covers the area around the Clock Tower and down to the seafront, including the Brighton Centre and Odeon. This would see Churchill Square shopping centre extended to the seafront and a new conference centre at Black Rock. These ideas have been talked about for many years but there seems to be renewed optimism they will proceed. If they do, they may provide opportunities for re-routing some bus services to improve links to the seafront. It will certainly be a challenge to serve Black Rock by public transport. The Volks Railway is unlikely to be able to cope with thousands of people!

The Council's **Bus Network Review** is due to be published which will make a number of recommendations to improve journey times for bus users. Brighton & Hove Buses has offered to provide match funding for some of the proposals to make sure they happen quickly. Recommendations are likely to include some new bus lanes and bus priority measures at junctions.

More new buses are due shortly. **Compass Travel** has taken delivery of four new single deckers to upgrade routes 37 & 37B between Meadowview and Bristol Estate. They are branded as 'CityBuzz' with a distinctive bee logo and are fitted with Free Wifi, USB charging points. Later this autumn **The Big Lemon** is due to receive four new electric buses which will transform its single deck fleet running on Council supported services 16/66, 47/57, 52, & 56.

September timetable changes

There were a few late changes to the timetables introduced on 16 September outlined in the last Buswatch News. The good news is that reduced evening services on route 21A through Whitehawk have been reprieved with funding from Brighton & Hove City Council. This means that Wilson Avenue and Whitehawk retain evening links to Brighton Marina and to Elm Grove and London Road. On Saturday mornings the first 21A at 0600 from Whitehawk bus garage to Brighton Station via Wilson Avenue is also saved. It is now operated by The Big Lemon instead of Brighton & Hove Buses. Normal fares apply.

The 18 service from Queens Park to Brighton Station and Seven Dials has been altered to provide a partial replacement for route 22 in Dyke Road between Seven Dials and Churchill Square. Alternate daytime buses now return from Brighton Station direct via Dyke Road (as they do in the early mornings and evenings) instead of serving Vernon Terrace, Montpelier Road and Waitrose.

Smaller timetable displays



The humble timetable displays at bus stops have been redesigned. They are not easy to show in a small photo but the new layout makes it much easier to find individual routes and there are diagrams showing the direction and approximate journey times. However, in most cases the font size for departure listings has been reduced making times harder to read which has led to complaints.

Brighton & Hove Buses which maintains all timetable displays in the city has accepted the criticisms and is looking at what can be done to increase the font size. On stops without shelters that could mean adding an extra timetable frame. At stops with shelters we have suggested moving the fares information and other promotional material to the top, replacing the black 'Bus Information' panel. That should allow more room to enlarge the timetable panels lower down, making them easier to read for everyone. Hopefully we will start to see changes soon.

It is worth noting that there are around 2,000 bus stops involved and all had the new times on display by 16 September when the timetables changed. In many parts of the country, out of date timetables and incorrect information panels are all too common. Credit is due to the publicity team at Brighton & Hove Buses for making sure information they provide is always correct.

M ticket problems

Brighton & Hove Buses has been experiencing difficulties with the provider of its mobile phone app. Many customers have been unable to buy new tickets. The company has now launched a new improved app to replace the old one. M ticket customers should sign up to the new app as a new customer. Unused tickets purchased on the old app that cannot be accessed, can be restored and transferred to the new app by contacting Brighton & Hove Customer services. Around 30,000 people have now signed up to the new app.

Short hop fares

Buswatch has raised the issue of short hop fares with Brighton & Hove Buses. Managing Director Martin Harris has agreed to review particular the anomaly at Brighton Marina where the short hop on routes 7 & 23 take you just one stop to Lidl. Buswatch and the Brighton & Hove Older People's Council would like the £2 fare to apply to journeys between the Marina and the Royal Sussex County Hospital.

A good read

Former Brighton & Hove Buses Managing Director Roger French has started an on line blog called Bus & Train user www.busandtrainuser.com. It covers his travels around the UK by public transport – and he certainly gets around a lot! The blog is mainly aimed at those in the bus and rail industry or with an interest in transport. Roger doesn't hold back with his comments; he is often very critical of what he sees! This makes his reviews very readable and many posts cover scenic bus or train journeys which will be of wider interest.

Brighton Area Buswatch meeting

The next meeting with bus company managers and Brighton & Hove City Council will be at 5pm on **Wednesday 17 October 2018** 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.

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-October 2018. E mail: brightonbuswatch@gmail.com. Phone: 01273 620215



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