

# Brighton Area Buswatch



We are a branch of Bus Users, the national charity representing bus passengers

## Buswatch News – April 2021

### Getting back to normal

With most shops now open and pubs able to serve customers outside, Brighton & Hove is coming back to life. Buses are definitely getting busier. According to the latest figures from Brighton & Hove Buses, usage is now back to just over 50% of pre-Covid levels, having fallen to 10% during the first lockdown last year. It looks as though foreign holidays will be difficult again this summer which could make Brighton busier than ever. The big risk is that more visitors will use their cars, adding to congestion and causing pollution. Buswatch has been pressing for a new Park & Ride scheme to discourage motorists from driving into the City Centre.

### Spring in Valley Gardens

The completed phases of the Valley Gardens scheme are looking delightful with spring tulips now on display, traffic running smoothly and more space for pedestrians and cyclists. Walking through this green space is a real pleasure. New bus shelters have been provided but real time next bus displays are still not available at any of the new stops. The photo on the right was taken last October and shows the post in place ready for a display board to be attached. Why has it taken so long?



## Full buses – how to avoid them

With social distancing requirements restricting the passenger capacity on buses to around 30 on double deckers, more buses are showing 'Sorry Bus Full'. Brighton & Hove Buses tell us all available buses are now in use at the busiest times. Extra buses are being used on school services so frequencies on some less busy services remain reduced compared with 2019. The busiest periods are in the afternoons from 3pm to 5.30pm after schools finish and when shoppers and commuters are on their way home. Passengers can check how busy individual buses are on each route and where they are, on the Brighton & Hove Buses website [www.buses.co.uk](http://www.buses.co.uk) or by using the B&H app on a smartphone. Those without internet access can also call on 01273 886200 for information between 7am and 7pm.

## Take the bus for a ride

With movement restrictions easing there are lots of opportunities for bus trips out of the city to explore the countryside or coastline.

- The Coaster services 12/12A/12X from Brighton Station to Eastbourne run frequently. The 13X to Birling Gap, Beachy Head and Eastbourne is now running half hourly on Sundays.
- The Stagecoach Coastliner 700 goes westwards from Brighton, Old Steine and Hove to Shoreham, Worthing and Littlehampton, every 10 minutes (every 20 minutes on Sundays).
- Heading North, the Regency routes 28/29 go to Lewes frequently, then to Uckfield and Tunbridge Wells (every 30/60 minutes) while Metrobus 270/271/272 go to Haywards Heath and East Grinstead (270) or Crawley with the 271 serving Wakehurst Place. The 273 also goes to Crawley via Hurstpierpoint and Crawley Down ([www.Metrobus.co.uk](http://www.Metrobus.co.uk) for times). Stagecoach route 17 goes to Henfield and Horsham, hourly.
- Don't forget the excellent Breeze up to the Downs services from Brighton on Saturdays and Sundays:  
77 to Devil's Dyke – every 45 minutes  
78 to Stanmer Park – every 70 minutes  
79 to Ditchling Beacon – every 70 minutes

This is just a summary, there's an excellent leaflet [here](#) which shows all the opportunities with a superb map with times available on the [Brighton & Hove Buses](http://Brighton & Hove Buses website) website. A One Day Discovery ticket (£9 for one person or £17.50 for a family ticket) is valid on most buses throughout Sussex and beyond without restricting you to one bus operator.

Many of the regular city bus services take you to the edge of the countryside: take the bus for a walk to the end of these routes – 1/1A to Mile Oak, 2 to Bramber and Steyning, 2/22/52 to Woodingdean, 5/5A to Patcham, 5/5A/5B to Hangleton, 25 to Falmer, 27/47 to Saltdean.

## Brighton Area Buswatch welcomes new supporters

Unfortunately last month's appeal wasn't very successful so here it is again. Buses are very important to people in Brighton & Hove. More people use our buses per head than anywhere else in the country apart from London. Our local bus services are generally very good but could be even better. Fares are regarded as high but lower fares would require subsidies. More bus priority measures like bus lanes would help to speed up buses helping to prevent fares from rising further.

In the past few years we have:

- Achieved a one hour single M ticket with free transfers – copied in London.
- Campaigned for a new Park & Ride to reduce car journeys in the city centre, explaining how to avoid mistakes made in P&R schemes elsewhere.
- Responded to consultations by Brighton & Hove City Council, commenting on various road and cycle schemes to try to ensure the needs of bus users are taken into account.
- Opposed elements of the Valley Gardens scheme which worsen facilities for bus users, such as pedestrianising Old Steine in front of the Royal Pavilion.
- Campaigned for a northbound bus lane in York Place between Trafalgar Street and London Road to strengthen the visibility of restrictions and penalise drivers who continue to ignore 'Bus Gate' signs, creating delays for buses.
- Opposed the closure of St James's Street to buses. Working closely with B&H Buses we identified the Morrisons bus stop as the fifth busiest in Brighton which is used by more disabled bus pass holders than any other bus stop.
- Opposed the temporary A259 seafront cycle lane between Marine Parade, Palace Pier and West Street last summer which created gridlock – giving interviews on BBC Radio Sussex and South East Today.
- Worked closely with bus companies and are represented at the Council's Quality Bus Partnership and Transport Partnership.
- Made numerous suggestions for timetable improvements, including new all-day limited stop services 12X to Eastbourne and 25X to Sussex University.
- Opposed cuts to night buses, resulting in improvements to the N1 & N5
- Contributed to the Brighton & Hove Climate Assembly.
- Opposed plans to shorten concessionary bus pass times for Brighton & Hove residents from 09:00 to 09:30.
- Highlighted anomalies in the distances covered by 'short hop' bus fares.
- Opposed cuts to bus services on routes funded by Brighton & Hove City Council.
- Questioned why reduced services on some Council funded bus services continued long after the first lockdown ended, leading to the reinstatement of full pre-lockdown timetables in October.

If you use buses or know someone who might be interested to become involved with Brighton Area Buswatch please get in touch. Our current supporters are mostly male and over 40. We are very keen to change this profile by increasing diversity and representing all types of bus users. Women, young people and those with a BAME background are very welcome. Our work is entirely voluntary and non-political. We are not a protest group; our aim is to achieve improvements for bus users by working together with bus companies, local authorities and Bus Users UK, our national group.

## **Brighton Area Buswatch meetings**

In normal circumstances, meetings with bus company managers and Brighton & Hove City Council are held four times a year. Meetings will resume when we are able to use Brighton Town Hall again. In the meantime, please send in your comments and we will take them up with the operators or the Council.

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

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



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