

TravelWatch- *ISLE OF MAN*

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Representing and promoting the interests of Isle of Man Passengers

BULLETIN 25

July 2012

Dear Members and Supporters

TravelWatch meetings

Our next **Public Meeting** will be on **Saturday morning 10th November** at the Villa Marina in Douglas. Full details will be advised nearer the time - but please put the date in your diaries.

Our **Supporter Meeting** in Ramsey on Saturday 12th May was better attended than our previous evening Supporter Meetings at the NSC in Douglas. This encourages us to plan further meetings around the Island from time to time, starting in 2013.

Debit and Credit Card Charges

We are greatly encouraged that following (UK) Office of Fair Trading enforcement action, 12 airlines have agreed to include debit card surcharges in the headline price rather than surprise consumers at the end of the booking process. Any surcharges for paying by credit card will be easy to find when booking online. All the main carriers serving the Island are covered by this agreement and, although outside that group, manx2.com have already adopted a no-surcharges policy. The OFT believes that traders may still impose surcharges for credit cards, which can be more costly to process. However, it is critical that these charges are transparent and not sprung on shoppers towards the end of the booking process. As part of the OFT's enforcement action the airlines agreed to make surcharges for credit cards more transparent so that these charges will be clearer and easier to find during the booking process.

The full OFT statement can be read on: <http://www.of.gov.uk/news-and-updates/press/2012/58-12>

Bus Transport

There are two important matters of public consultation in progress:

- The possibility of increasing the **maximum speed limit** for buses to 50 mph, subject to any general speed restrictions in force is the subject of a consultation to gauge public reaction. Further details of the proposals can be viewed at the following link: <http://www.gov.im/ConsultationDetail.gov?id=325> Comments on the proposal, may be made in writing to Mr Chris Hannon at Department of Infrastructure, Sea Terminal Buildings, Douglas, Isle of Man, IM1 2RF or by email to Chris.Hannon@gov.im - no later than 5.00 pm on 10 August 2012.
- TravelWatch were invited to a presentation of outline proposals to create a **new Bus Station** in Victoria Street - with canopies over the pavement, and passenger facilities in rented premises on Victoria Street. Particular concern is that proper passenger facilities and shelter should be provided and that the inevitable changes in bus routing should be made clear before public consultation takes place. We will advise you via our website when and how the formal consultation is announced.

In all cases of public consultation we would encourage members and supporters to respond direct - but to advise us of your responses, as we will also be responding as an organisation.

- A new Hop-on-Hop-off **Laxey Link Bus** Service started in Laxey on 11 June. With a 20 minute frequency the route links the Laxey Wheel - Tram Station and Laxey Promenade. The trial service has been extended until 7 September and is operated by **Tours (IOM)**

Windfarms

This topic was briefly mentioned in our April Bulletin and following further discussion with both IOM Harbours and the Steam Packet Company we have written to Celtic Array Limited (the Developers) setting out passenger concerns. A meeting with them is now scheduled for the second week in August. Whilst we take no position on the desirability or otherwise of windfarms, our objection is to the blocking of the long-established direct routes between Douglas and Heysham/Liverpool (leading to longer passage times) coupled with the restriction on weather diversion options which could lead to more cancellations or significantly extended journeys in poor weather conditions.

Our 25 June media release http://www.travelwatch-isleofman.org/uploads/5/6/8/7/5687674/windfarm_media_release_june_2012.pdf has been extensively reported on and off Island.

Air Travel

- The good news is the return of the London City route - now being operated by **British Airways**.
- Following accidental damage to one of **flybe**'s Q400 Island-based aircraft some services are having to be operated by a smaller chartered-in DenimAir Fokker 50. This has involved three crews trained to operate this type of aircraft also being required. It is not anticipated that the damaged Q400 will return to service until September.
- The **flybe** "Summer Saturday" Norwich route – actually operated by a Suckling Airways 31-seat Dornier 328 on behalf of Loganair(!) – has been extended to run until 22 September.
- **flybe** has announced an increase in its hand baggage dimensions. The new maximum bag size of 55x40x23cm equates to a 20% increase in volume over the previous limit.
- At the **Airport Parking Charges** have been increased with the Short-Stay car park costing more than the Long-Stay one. One hour parking bays have been shifted to the Car Park on the other side of the road - the one previously used for Hire Cars and contract parking.

As usual a copy of this Bulletin will be posted on our website - so it is a public document. Please feel free to pass copies to friends and colleagues. All information is provided in good faith but without warranty - please check with carriers in case there have been any changes of which we are not aware. We rely on feedback from passengers to keep our information as up to date as possible - so please feel free to contact us through our website www.travelwatch-isleofman.org

Issued on behalf of **TravelWatch Isle of Man** by
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