



BULLETIN 26 - OCTOBER 2012

Dear Members and Supporters

Public Meeting - Saturday 10th November - Villa Marina, Douglas

- doors open at 09.30 for a 10.00 start

The main topic for our next meeting will be the potential impact of the planned Irish Sea off-shore wind farm developments on the Island's life-line ferry and shipping services. Captain Michael Brew, Director of Harbours, will explain these plans to us and John Pennington will give us a TravelWatch perspective on the on-going issues and our contacts with the developers. The currently planned developments are all outside IOM waters but could have a significant effect on passengers and the Manx economy - but the IOM Government is also looking at potential developments within IOM waters. TravelWatch is not taking a position on the merits of windfarms - only their impact on shipping services.

In his "Agenda for Change" statement to Tynwald this month, Chief Minister Allan Bell said the Steam Packet User Agreement would be reviewed by March 2014, and the Open Skies policy would be reviewed by June 2013. These are both areas in which TravelWatch is involved on an on-going basis and we hope to be able to bring you up to date at our public meeting.

If the on-going bus situation remains unresolved, it may not be appropriate to discuss bus issues on this occasion.

Everyone is welcome at the meeting, so please invite friends, neighbours and colleagues to come and join us. As usual there will be a coffee break mid-morning for informal discussion and plenty of time allowed for questions from the floor.

Off-shore windfarms

We have now set up a special section of our website to provide easy access to windfarm information - with links to the main developers and interested parties. This can be accessed from our home-page or direct on www.travelwatch-isleofman.org/windfarms We hope you will find this useful.

Celtic Array are holding a Public Consultation about the Rhiannon Wind Farm - which they plan to build between IOM and the North Wales coast. Whilst this will not affect the direct route between Douglas and Liverpool, it will reduce bad-weather routing options - so could lead to cancellations or extended passage times in rough weather. The consultations are:

- Friday 30 November - 11.00-19.00 at Mount Tabor Methodist Church Hall, Port St Mary
- Saturday 1 December - 10.00 - 17.00 at the i museum, Kingswood Grove, Douglas
- Monday 3 December - 11.00 - 19.00 at Ramsey Town Hall

Air travel

- The flybe Bristol route is closing at the end of October - but Manx2.com is adding extra Gloucester flights to its winter schedule.
- Treasury Minister Eddie Teare has recently confirmed that IOM will not be following the UK next year in applying Air Passenger Duty (APD) to 19-seat (or smaller) aircraft. TravelWatch had actively lobbied for this.

- easyJet flights from London Gatwick to the Island started at the beginning of October, but it is too early to see whether new business is being generated or being taken from existing carriers. Additional flights are being offered on the Liverpool route through the winter. Pre-allocated seating is being introduced on all flights by November. You only need to pay for this if you wish to select your own seats.
- At Manchester Airport Car Hire has now been moved out of the terminals/car parks to the "Car Rental Village" on Ringway Road - which is accessed by shuttle bus from the terminals.
- We are pleased to see that Juan Watterson MHK has persuaded the management of Gatwick Airport to permit people making domestic transfers to change gate without having to re-enter security.

Sea Travel

- *Manannan* fast craft services finish for the season on Sunday 4 November. The *Ben-my-Chree* will then run to Birkenhead on Saturdays and Sundays.
- Steam Packet Company 2013 timetables are now available on-line and tickets can now be purchased on-line up to 9 January 2014.
- Sail & Rail tickets are likely to continue to be available as currently during the extension of Virgin Trains contract for the West Coast Main Line. Whilst we would anticipate that any new franchise holder would continue to offer these tickets this would have to be confirmed at the appropriate time.

Government Consultations

Since August TWIOM has responded to three recent IOM Government Consultations -

- Proposals for re-locating the Bus Station to Victoria Street
- Scope of Government review - this included the arrangements for running the Airport, Harbours and Public Transport on the Island.
- IOM Marine Plan - Development Consenting procedures - this covers off-shore developments within Manx territorial waters.

In each case we have only expressed opinions on topics of relevance to passenger travel - and our submissions can be accessed through the Media and Publications section of our website www.travelwatch-isleofman.org

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

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