

TravelWatch - ISLE OF MAN

Representing and promoting the interests of Isle of Man Passengers

BULLETIN 27 - FEBRUARY 2013

Dear Members and Supporters

Public Meeting and AGM - Saturday 16th March - Villa Marina
doors open at 09.30 for a 10.00 start.

Our main focus in the first part of the morning will be on the fast expanding **London City Airport** and the services provided by **BA City Flyer**. Our guest speakers will be Bernard Lavelle, Sales Director of LCY Airport and Luke Hayhoe, GM Commercial and Customer, BA CityFlyer. This will be a double-first as it is the first time we have had a speaker from an off-island airport (and a particularly passenger-focused one at that) and it will also be the first time we have been able to welcome a speaker from British Airways.

We would welcome your support both at our Public Meeting and the Annual General Meeting. Please note that the AGM will be held *after* the coffee break - this is to allow time for our Guest Speakers to have as much time as possible with us before catching their flight back to UK.

AGM

Notice of the AGM is given at the end of this Bulletin. We would welcome some new blood onto our committee and are pleased to advise you that Mrs Jane Tatchell from Peel has agreed to stand for election. If anyone else is interested in standing please contact our secretary Steven Bevan ahead of the meeting. Under our current constitution committee members are elected for 12 months at each AGM. Only members of TWIOM are eligible for election - but there is still time to join before the AGM (see below).

Air services

- We have submitted our views to the Tynwald Economic Committee currently examining the Island's "**Open Skies**" aviation policy -this is on our website at http://http://www.travelwatch-isleofman.org/uploads/5/6/8/7/5687674/open_skies_-_tw_submission_dec12.pdf
- We are pleased to report that **flybe** are re-starting their services to Luton and Bristol at Easter, as well as the Saturday summer route to Norwich. The Southampton route is also to re-open in May.
- **CityWing** is now the new branding following a management buy-out at manx2.com. The recently withdrawn routes to Leeds/Bradford and Oxford will operate again, but only during the TT race period.
- Following the cancellation of three successive **easyjet** Gatwick flights during January's bad weather (when flybe flights continued to operate) we have worked through the Airport Director to establish the reasons for this. A breakdown of the aircraft de-icing equipment at Ronaldsway (provided by the handling agent working for the airlines) affected the flight one day but also led to the cancellation of Aer Lingus Dublin flights. There seem to be real advantages in having services operated by IOM based aircraft.

Bus Developments

- With **Bus Vannin** being Government controlled its operating budgets have come under great pressure and one of the challenges for TWIOM is to ensure that economies which need to be made are not unduly detrimental to vulnerable passengers.
- We naturally regret the uncertainty which the prolonged dispute between management and drivers has produced, not least in the introduction of the 2013 timetable.
- We note with interest the decision to again evaluate the possibility of running "bendy buses" on certain routes. Our chairman has been invited to act as independent assessor on the panel which is evaluating the trials now taking place.
- Whilst the decision not to proceed with a **Bus Station** in Victoria Street is to be welcomed, no alternative proposal has yet been put forward officially - although we note that the development plans for the Lord Street site appear to have been dropped.

Maritime Developments

- We have continued to participate in the various consultations being undertaken by the Irish Sea wind farm developers, and took part in a joint media briefing organised by IOMSPC with Government, Chamber of Commerce, and Manx Hospitality Partnership. The objective of this co-operation is to ensure the continued availability of the Island's major shipping routes.
- EU Maritime Passenger Rights were introduced as anticipated on 18 December 2012. The Steam Packet Company have revised their Passenger Charter to reflect this and set out their commitment to assist Passengers with Reduced Mobility and provide information and assistance to all passengers in case of delayed or cancelled sailings.
- Whilst there have been a small number of weather cancellation during the winter there has usually been better advance notice of the possibility given to passengers. Whilst the Ben-my-Chree has been taking a few minutes longer on passage, this has not normally caused passengers any significant inconvenience.

TWIOM Membership

- Our Treasurer Paul Moncaster will be in touch with those of you whose subscriptions are about to expire and we would welcome your continued support by renewing promptly - please.
- As our activities expand - Government and Windfarm Consultations are getting quite time consuming - we need to broaden our membership base, so we would particularly welcome those of you who have attended our Public Meetings regularly over the years without becoming subscription paying members to please consider Joining us. The cost of running our public meetings is likely to go up next year - so we would prefer to increase our numbers than our subscriptions.

Next Supporter Meeting

- Following the success of our Ramsey Supporter Meeting last year we are now planning one in **Peel on Saturday morning 11th May**. Full details will be available nearer the time - but please put the dates in your diaries.

Your continued support is both welcome and appreciated, and we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Villa Marina on Saturday March 16th.

With every good wish

Dick Clague

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Notice of Annual General Meeting

The 6th Annual General Meeting of TravelWatch Isle of Man will be held at approx 11.15 am on Saturday 16th March 2013 at the Villa Marina, Douglas for the purpose of transacting the following business:

1. To receive a report on Travelwatch's work during the year
2. To Receive a Financial Report
3. To appoint an independent examiner
4. To elect Officers and Committee.

Nominations for Officers and Committee may be made in advance to the Secretary or can be made at the meeting.

Steven Bevan

Secretary