

# TravelWatch - *ISLE OF MAN*

## ArreyTroait - Ellan Vannin

Representing and promoting the interests of Isle of Man Passengers

[www.travelwatch-isleofman.org](http://www.travelwatch-isleofman.org)

## BULLETIN No 31 - JULY 2014

### Department of Infrastructure Consultation on Public Transport and Parking Provision

This consultation, which covers Concessionary Fares, School Bus provision and Parking provision and charging, runs until the end of July. Full details and instructions on how to respond (including an on-line questionnaire) are available on the Government website at <http://www.gov.im/ConsultationDetail.gov?id=443>

No doubt opinions on these issues will vary considerably according to how directly you and your family and friends may be affected so we would encourage you to respond direct to Mr Derek Sewell, Head of Transport Policy at the DoI, Sea Terminal Building, Douglas IM1 2RF - email: [derek.sewell@gov.im](mailto:derek.sewell@gov.im)

We are pleased that the consultation document provides a significant amount of background information, and note the many options from which we are invited to choose. However, we are concerned that there is no indication of the financial implications (to the Govt or to the public) of each of the options. Whilst such costs cannot be expected to be precise, we would be disappointed if the DoI had not made some initial estimates, and will be asking for sight of these before making our TWIOM submission.

By way of background it should be noted that concessionary schemes for bus fares in UK have been under great pressure because of budgetary constraints for some time, so we are by no means unique in that respect. Where we appear to have an advantage is that we in IOM are being consulted before the decisions which will affect us are made - so hopefully "least bad" decisions will be made. Current fare proposals, if implemented, may still leave us in a better position than passengers in the adjacent Isle. Government money is limited and all services can only be funded by charging the user and/or the taxpayer.

There is no "free meal!" and we are all taxpayers through both Income Tax and VAT. We have a significantly better bus route network and frequency of service than many comparable parts of the UK. Such a level of service can only be retained if the public is prepared to pay. If not, then the level of service will have to be reduced.

From the TWIOM perspective and based on recent experience at Ronaldsway Airport, we believe it should be a priority that there continues to be short term car parking at the Sea Terminal for dropping off and picking up Steam Packet passengers, and that the existing facilities for passenger car parking are maintained. There are other parking issues raised in the document on which you may wish to comment individually - and we would encourage you to do so, but some of these fall outside our remit as a Passenger watchdog.

If you have any views you would like share with us as we prepare the official TWIOM submission please e-mail [travelroger@aol.com](mailto:travelroger@aol.com) putting Questionnaire response in the Subject line - not later than 15th July

## **Air News**

Following the closure of their IOM base at the end of March the new pattern of flybe services operated by Manchester and Birmingham based planes with , two of which stay overnight on the Island, has yet to produce the level of reliability to which we were previously accustomed. This has caused particular concerns for those travelling to Liverpool Hospitals where appointments may be missed and return travel arrangements compromised. TWIOM are monitoring the situation and are in contact with relevant parties.

The measures implemented by the new management to improve the financial health of flybe seem to have been successful and the carrier has introduced a 60/60 scheme whereby passengers can claim £60 if their flight is more than an hour later arriving - for reasons within flybe's control (i.e excluding weather delays).

No figures are yet available which enable us to see how service changes have impacted on passenger numbers - these are awaited with interest.

## **Sea News**

The Steam Packet's charter of the freight vessel ARROW enabled adequate services to be maintained during the BEN MY CHREE's refit after Easter, through the TT race period and during her subsequent short dry-docking in June for the refitting of her damaged stabiliser. Despite earlier indications that the ARROW would be kept on the Irish Sea to provide short notice emergency cover, she has subsequently been chartered to a Mediterranean operator, so her future availability is currently unclear.

The next sea issue on the Agenda appears to be the possible extension of the User Agreement which currently runs to 2020/2026. TWIOM has been involved in discussions with both Government and IOMSPC and will be meeting the Minister during July.

## **TravelWatch News**

- At our Annual General Meeting in March, Professor Roger Carey was elected as secretary, replacing Steven Bevan, who remains on the Committee. Mike Bathgate has been elected Treasurer and Paul Moncaster has taken on the role of Membership Secretary.
- Following questions asked by passengers during the TT we have now added information on Taxi Fares to our website and on our Notice Board in the Sea Terminal
- We continue to welcome new members - the minimum subscription being £10 - and are looking at ways of widening our membership base. Details of how to join TWIOM are on our website at <http://www.travelwatch-isleofman.org/join-us.html>
- Our next Public Meeting is scheduled for Saturday morning 8th November at the Villa Marina in Douglas. Please put the date in your diaries - details to follow near the time.

As ever please feel free to forward this Bulletin to any friends, family or colleagues who might be interested in the work of TravelWatch IOM - and please encourage them also to respond to the Government Consultation.

Issued on behalf of TravelWatch - ISLE OF MAN  
by Dick Clague