

# TravelWatch- **ISLE OF MAN**

## **Arrey Troaitt – Ellan Vannin**

### **Representing and promoting the interests of Isle of Man Passengers**

#### **INFORMATION BULLETIN 17 – March 2010**

1. The 3<sup>rd</sup> **TravelWatch AGM** was held on 6<sup>th</sup> March at which the current officers were re-elected and Prof Roger Carey was elected to the committee. The **Public Meeting** that followed was addressed by Ann Reynolds, Airport Director, who explained the current security arrangements and reasons for 40 minute check-in for easyJet flights which start in May. Ian Longworth, Director of Public Transport briefed us on Heritage Railway changes as well as giving us an insight into some of the challenges of the bus operation and network review. TravelWatch Committee members updated the meeting on the Reciprocal Health Agreement (RHA) and on the proposed Consultative Body for transport to/from the Island. Some 70 people attended for all or part of the AGM and public meeting.
2. The **Steam Packet Company** introduced their **Passenger Charter** at the beginning of March. TWIOM had a very positive and wide ranging meeting with them in November 2009 following which we were able to comment on this at draft stage, and some of our comments appear to have influenced the final version. We believe this is a good initiative which we welcome and we are pleased to see that they expect the Charter to develop further in the light of experience. The charter, which is displayed on their vessels and in the terminals, can be downloaded from their website <http://www.steam-packet.com/SteamPacket/Onboard-Services/Passenger+Charter.htm> TravelWatch have also discussed with the Company the information provided (or not) in the on and off-Island versions of their 2010 brochure.
3. Meetings were held in November 2009 and January 2010 with the Airport and Harbour Directors to discuss the proposed **Consultative Body**. It is likely that a paper will go out for formal consultation later in 2010. During these meetings a wide range of air and sea issues were discussed.
4. In March TWIOM provided a spokesman to take part in a **Manx Radio** phone-in programme about the "open-skies" policy, along with the Airport Director and Senior management from the main airlines serving the Island.
5. In November 2009, TravelWatch met with the **Minister for Tourism & Leisure** and the Director of Public Transport, to discuss a number of issues including the RHA, the Bus Network Review and the continuation of facilities for TravelWatch Meetings. This was a very positive meeting. The Bus Network Review (BNR) went out to consultation in January 2010 and TWIOM submitted comments in early March. These will be found on the website [http://www.travelwatch-isleofman.org/BNR\\_response\\_11\\_03\\_2010.pdf](http://www.travelwatch-isleofman.org/BNR_response_11_03_2010.pdf) TravelWatch has commented on the large increase in cost of residents' tickets on the Railways, announced in March and cautiously welcomed the timetable changes for the trains and trams which show considerable initiative by the new Director of Public Transport.
6. TravelWatch has provided briefings on the RHA situation for passengers at our public meeting and by means of press releases. Our strategy is to avoid becoming too closely involved in the campaign around the RHA but to concentrate on providing the practical information that passengers need to make appropriate travel arrangements. The 6 month extension of the RHA (until the end of September) is welcome but we will monitor plans for arrangements thereafter.
7. The changes to Government Departments – to be implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> April – still leave responsibility for internal and external transport matters in separate Government Departments and now separate Tourism from on-Island transport. Travelwatch considers that there need to be good co-ordinating arrangements between the Departments to ensure that passengers experience "joined up" transport between the Sea Terminal, the Airport and internal transport.

8. TravelWatch is pleased to note a continued improvement in bus services between Liverpool Parkway station and John Lennon Airport, the opening of a coffee bar and passenger lounge at the station and also that further rail service enhancements are planned for later in the year.
9. TravelWatch Isle of Man is financed by subscriptions from members and benefits from having rooms made available for its meetings at the Villa Marina and National Sports Centre. The assistance of the local media in publicising TravelWatch work and meetings is gratefully acknowledged. The main costs are equipment hire and refreshments for public meetings, printing, postage and stationery. Costs are minimised by using e-mail and the website [www.travelwatch-isleofman.org](http://www.travelwatch-isleofman.org) as primary means of communication with members and supporters. Imminent increases in postal rates will inevitably add to the costs of the organisation. There are two ways in which Supporters can particularly help at this time:
  - If you receive information from TravelWatch through the post, but have an e-mail address that could be used please advise [web@travelwatch-isleofman.org](mailto:web@travelwatch-isleofman.org)
  - If you would be willing to support TravelWatch financially either by joining as a member (min £10) or by making a donation please download a membership application form from [http://www.travelwatch-isleofman.org/membership\\_form\\_03-10.pdf](http://www.travelwatch-isleofman.org/membership_form_03-10.pdf) or contact Paul Moncaster, our treasurer at Lorne House Lodge, Douglas Street, Castletown, IM9 1 AZ

**Finally:**

The next TravelWatch supporters' meeting will be in the Committee Room at the National Sports Centre on 19th April 2010 at 1930. This provides supporters with an opportunity to discuss passenger issues and provide feedback on an informal basis.

**Issued by:**

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