

TravelWatch- **ISLE OF MAN**

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Representing and promoting the interests of Isle of Man Passengers

Information Bulletin 20 – January 2011

Best wishes for 2011 to all our Members and Supporters.

May we remind you that our next informal **Supporters' Meeting will be held on Monday 10th January** in the Committee Room at the National Sports Centre starting at 7.30 pm. Do please come and raise any issues or experiences that you think it would be useful to share with us.

Many of us who have been travelling on or off the Island in recent weeks will have experienced considerable disruption due to the weather - whatever our mode of travel. Roads and airports have been closed, railway services on the adjacent island (and even our own Santa trains) have been disrupted. Bus services too have suffered but the Steam Packet sailed on. Whilst we may have our own views on the adequacy of preparations, and the funding of equipment for dealing with such extreme weather, one of the commonest complaints across the board was the difficulties which passengers had in finding out what was going on. This is a recurrent problem whenever there is travel disruption – and the Call Centre for one of the airlines serving the Island was seriously under-manned because staff were having difficulty in getting to work through the snow. Passengers need reliable information to be available as quickly as possible and TravelWatch continues to press for this at every opportunity. If a passenger wants to find out what is happening to a potentially disrupted journey there are three sources of information - the carrier, the departure point and the arrival point. Often conflicting information is provided – usually because information has not been updated. This is an area in which we will continue to press for improvements.

Travel Consultative Group

Hopefully this group – when formed - will also be able to take up such issues. The Public Consultation on Terms of Reference for the group was closed on 24th December and we look forward to the response on this from the Department of Infrastructure. Thanks to those of you who copied us with your submissions – a copy of the formal TravelWatch submission is being circulated with this Bulletin.

Ferry Services

There has been much public comment and discussion over the possible effects on passenger services arising from the competition which the Steam Packet is now facing for its freight business. Whilst no specific proposals have been made publicly to which we can re-act, we have taken the opportunity to brief members of Tynwald on the situation from a passenger perspective. As a result of this initiative TravelWatch have been invited to meet the Minister of Infrastructure to discuss the situation. A copy of this briefing paper is also attached.

The Marine Accident Investigation Branch report on the gangway collapse at Heysham last March has now been published. The very full report can be viewed on:

http://www.maib.gov.uk/publications/investigation_reports/2010/ben_My_Chree.cfm

The IOMSPC have also issued a statement which can be viewed on the News section of their website or via <http://tinyurl.com/2cb4f3x> We are pressing for information over the provision of a replacement facility.

Improved services at Liverpool South Parkway

Since mid-December First Trans-Pennine Express trains have been stopping at Liverpool South Parkway providing 16 daily services between Yorkshire and Liverpool, except on Sundays when there are 14. Direct direct services run to Scarborough, York, Leeds, Huddersfield and Manchester. Advance purchase tickets, which include travel by First TransPennine Express trains and the Airlink 501 service to Liverpool John Lennon airport are available from 2 January.

Full timetable information for these trains to and from Liverpool South Parkway and online booking can be found at www.tpexpress.co.uk and details of the Airlink 501 service and airport information at www.liverpoolairport.com - Northern Rail, London Midland and East Midlands Trains services continue to call at the station bringing passengers from across the region to the Airport.

Public Meeting and AGM - 19th March

Please put this date in your diaries – the morning meeting will be held at the Villa Marina – details to follow nearer the time. The committee would welcome suggestions – within the next couple of weeks please – for topics which members and supporters would like to see covered.

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