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Northern Branch

Newsheet

- Chairman..... Nigel Eggleton, 3 Anson Road, Newton, NOTTINGHAM NG13 8ZJ Tel. 01949 829060
nigel.eggleton@btopenworld.com
- Vice-chairman..... Andrew Tyldsley, 25 Abington, Ouston, CHESTER-LE-STREET DH2 1RD Tel. 07812 205833
editor & webmaster aptyldsley@aol.com
- Secretary..... Dave Sturrock, 8 Whiteley Grove, NEWTON AYCLIFFE DL5 4NH Tel. 01325 312636
dave.sturrock@gmail.com
- Treasurer..... Keith Wilson, 2 Windsor Gardens West, WHITLEY BAY NE26 3BQ Tel. 07802 564221
keithwilson13030@gmail.com
- Membership & Andrew Tyldsley, 25 Abington, Ouston, CHESTER-LE-STREET DH2 1RD Tel. 07812 205833
Newsheet Distribution aptyldsley@aol.com
- Committee Member. Peter Cardno, 22 Welldale Crescent, STOCKTON-ON-TEES TS19 7HU Tel. 01642 582947
pcardno976@btinternet.com
- Committee Member. Mark Westgarth, 15 Wasdale Crescent, BLAYDON-ON-TYNE NE21 6PZ Tel. 07581 020742
Boyof876@aol.com
- Committee Member. David Sharp, 59 Julian Avenue, SOUTH SHIELDS NE33 2EW Tel. 07989 401768
Sharpd11@outlook.com
- Committee Member. Simon Cowley, 7 Rowan Drive, Hetton-le-Hole, HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING DH5 9LF Tel. 01915 263661

JANUARY 2023

ISSUE 588



Your news correspondent is David Mallon - david2019mallon@outlook.com

COVER PHOTO

This month we report, on pages 8 to 11, the operation of bus services on Boxing Day December 26th 2022. Go North East Wright Gemini bodied Volvo B5TL 6310 (NK67 EBC) is seen in Druridge Drive, Newsham Farm estate, heading for Blyth on the normally Arriva operated service X10. (Geoff Stainthorpe)

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

These days, often via the Facebook social media platform, it's surprising how often a photo pops up that stirs the memory.

Of late we've seen a United Bristol REMH in the North Yorkshire village of Moulton, probably on an OS trip and in 'Green' and cream livery, a row of Newcastle Corporation trolleybuses and AEC Regents in Northumberland Street followed by earlier today three Sunderland District PD3s in Houghton Le Spring bus station.

Sad to say I look at the destination number and 9 times out of ten can quote the route as it existed in the 60s and 70s. Given a straight choice I'd rather have my father's DIY skills (being convinced such attributes would be of more value) but there we are - someone out there may be impressed.

Many utter "nostalgia isn't what it used to be" although we realise those memories from our childhood years are precious. The activities and changes that we read about in this very newsletter will, for some, be their memories in fifty years time. Which reminds me - where is my OS newsletter with details of the Northerns new X services...!

DIARY - MEETINGS

- January 21st, 2023 @ Stockton > Martin Green 'The East Riding in the 1960s (plus Scarborough)'
February 25th, 2023 @ Newcastle > "Are you going to San Francisco, be sure to wear some flowers in your hair" – Roger Davies
March 25th, 2023 @ Stockton > Branch AGM & 2023 OS President Anthony Delaine-Smith
April 22nd, 2023 @ Durham > Trevor Follows (Leicester Transport Heritage Trust) will give a presentation on the North East

Doors open at 1pm for a prompt 1.15pm start - meetings finish by 4pm.

Durham – North Road Methodist Church, 28 North Rd, Durham DH1 4SG.

This is the building next to the roundabout, adjacent to the Bus Station.

Newcastle - Conference rooms, Newcastle Arts Centre, 67, Westgate Road, NE1 1SG.

This is in central Newcastle, a short walk from Central Station.

Stockton - Jim Cooke Conference Suite, Stockton Central Library, Church Road, TS18 1TU.

This is just off Stockton High Street.

OMNIBUS SOCIETY PRESIDENTIAL WEEKEND 2023 –

Friday 6 October to Monday 9 October

The 2023 Presidential Weekend will be held at the Belton Woods Hotel, which lies just north of Grantham on the A607. A shuttle service is planned to the hotel from Grantham Railway Station, which is well served on the East Coast Main Line, as well as from the Midlands and North West via Nottingham.

Visits are planned to Lincolnshire operators such as Brylaine and Fowlers, using interesting vehicles from the Delaine fleet, the excellent Transport Museum in Lincoln, and of course that at Bourne will also be on the list. Other key events of the Weekend will be the Annual General Meeting of The Omnibus Society to be held at Belton Woods Hotel at 1730 on Friday 6 October, and the Presidential Dinner at 1900 on the following day. Final details of the programme will be issued, along with the booking form, with the April/May issue of the Omnibus Magazine, and there will be a closing date for bookings of 30 June.

Please consider attending all, or part, of the weekend, which gives you an unrivalled opportunity to meet and socialise with members from all parts of the country.

Members are reminded that they can attend all meetings organised by the Omnibus Society and the various branches/groups – details of meetings can be found on the OS website <https://www.omnibus-society.org/diary> and they also appear in Omnibus Magazine.

ROUTE NEWS

Your news correspondent is David Mallon - david2019mallon@outlook.com

(By post to 112 Stoopdale Avenue, DARLINGTON, DL3 0UD).

David's deadline for news items being submitted is the 7th of each month.

We welcome contributions, route news, articles & photographs, and thank Richard Hall, Andrew Tyldsley and John Yarham for their contributions this month.

Abbreviations used in reporting frequencies:

M-F = Monday to Friday

M-S = Monday to Saturday

Sat = Saturday

Sun = Sunday

ESu = Evening and Sunday

Eves = Evenings

Days = Daytimes (approx. 0800-1800 M-F; 0900-1700 Sat; 1000-1700 Sun)

GO NORTH EAST www.gonortheast.co.uk

Changes to Hexham area services occurred on Saturday 7 January 2023.

682 (Hexham - West Woodburn)

Go North East took over operation of the former Rural Link service 882 and renumbered it 682. It operates from Hexham bus station via Hexham Railway station, Acomb, Wall, Barrasford, Gunnerton, Barrasford Park and Ridsdale to West Woodburn, First School. Go North East has taken the opportunity to register the positioning journeys which would otherwise run out of service.

Saturday only from Hexham at 10:15 and 14:15, from West Woodburn at 11:05 and 15:05.



Go North East Optare Solo 669 (NK16 BXL) seen leaving Hexham Bus Station on Saturday 7th January 2023 operating the 2nd GNE journey to West Woodburn – the 1415 departure. (Andrew P Tyldsley)

689 (Hexham - Consett)

The Saturday service received a revised timetable in order to allow for interworking with service 682. The first service in each direction was retimed 30 minutes earlier whilst the last journey in each direction was retimed 30 minutes later. The M-F service was unaltered. *M-F from Hexham at 08:45, 13:15, from Consett at 09:45, 14:15; Sat from Hexham at 08:15, 12:15, 16:15, from Consett at 09:15, 13:15 and 17:15.*

Revised registrations for services 10, 10A, 10B, 12, 16, 16A, 16B, 47, 78, V5, X5, X15, X30, X31, X45, X71 and X72 in West Gateshead and Consett have been submitted for implementation on 29 January 2023. Some of these are revised timetables only in order to improve reliability. Details will appear in next month's newsheet.

STAGECOACH IN SUNDERLAND www.stagecoachbus.com

The strikes scheduled for 23, 24, 26 and 27 December 2022 took place. Different timetables were in operation on each day as follows: -

Friday 23 December 2022

3 (Hylton Castle - City Centre - Gilley Law - Farringdon)

From Hylton Castle at 07:09 then every 30 mins until 17:39; from Farringdon at 07:10 then every 30 mins until 17:40.

4 (Downhill - City Centre - Doxford Park, Mill Hill)

From Downhill, Kingsway Road, at 07:01 then every 30 mins until 17:31. Journeys from Kingsway Road at 09:01, 15:31 and 16:01 commenced from Town End Farm, Baxter Road, 5 minutes earlier; from Mill Hill at 07:02 then every 30 mins until 17:32. Journeys from Mill Hill at 08:02, 14:32 and 15:02 extended beyond Downhill to Town End Farm.

8 (City Centre - South Hylton)

From City Centre, John Street, at 07:23, 08:23, 09:43 then every 60 mins until 15:43, 16:53 and 17:58; from South Hylton at 06:53, 07:53, 09:13 then every 60 mins until 15:13, 16:18, and 17:28.

10 (Pennywell - City Centre - Grangetown)

From Pennywell at 07:25 then every 60 mins until 17:25; from Grangetown at 07:26 then every 60 mins until 17:26.

11 (Pennywell - City Centre - Grangetown)

From Pennywell at 06:55 then every 60 mins until 17:55; from Grangetown at 07:07 then every 60 mins until 18:07.

13 (Town End Farm - City Centre - Doxford Park)

From Town End Farm, Baxter Road, at 07:20 then every 30 mins until 17:50; from Doxford Park, Hall Farm, at 07:22 then every 30 mins until 17:52.

16 (Red House - City Centre - Hastings Hill)

From Red House at 07:11 then every 30 mins until 17:41; from Hastings Hill at 07:14 then every 30 mins until 17:44.

20 (City Centre - Pennywell)

From City Centre, Fawcett Street, at 06:59 then every 30 minutes until 17:59; from Pennywell at 06:55 then every 30 minutes until 17:55.

23 (Dene Estate - City Centre - Thorney Close)

From Dene Estate at 06:53 then every 30 mins until 17:53; from Thorney Close at 07:10 then every 30 minutes until 17:40.

E1, E2, E6 (Sunderland, Fawcett Street - South Shields)

E1 from South Shields at 07:01, 08:03 then every 60 mins until 17:03, from Sunderland at 07:20, 08:17 then every 60 mins until 17:17; **E2** from South Shields at 07:25 then every 60 minutes until 17:25, from Sunderland at 07:37 then every 60 mins until 17:37, **E6** from South Shields at 07:44 then every 60 minutes until 16:44 then 17:49, from Sunderland at 06:57 then every 60 minutes until 17:57.

There were no services operated on 12, 18, 18A, 99, 939, X1, X24, X24A.

Saturday 24 December 2022

On this day, services were operating between approximately 08:00 and 15:30. All bus fares taken on this date were donated to charity. Stagecoach in Sunderland matched the fares taken with a company donation. The charities benefitting from this were Pawz for Thought and St. Benedict's Hospice. Services operated were: -

3 (Hylton Castle - City Centre - Gilley Law - Farringdon)

From Hylton Castle at 08:15 then every 60 mins until 13:59, 15:09; from Farringdon at 08:10, 09:12 then every 60 mins until 15:12.

4 (Downhill - City Centre - Doxford Park, Mill Hill)

From Downhill, Kingsway Road, at 07:55, 08:47 then every 60 mins until 14:47; from Mill Hill at 07:57 then every 60 mins until 14:57.

8 (City Centre - South Hylton)

From City Centre, John Street, at 08:43, 09:43, 10:43, 12:43, 13:43, 14:43 and 15:43; from South Hylton at 08:13, 09:13, 10:13, 11:13, 13:13, 14:13, 15:13 and 16:18.

10 (Pennywell - City Centre - Grangetown)

From Pennywell at 08:25 then every 60 mins until 15:25; from Grangetown at 08:32, 09:02 then every 60 mins until 14:02 then 15:17.

13 (Town End Farm - City Centre - Doxford Park)

From Town End Farm, Baxter Road, at 08:25 then every 60 mins until 15:30; from Doxford Park, Hall Farm, at 08:30, 09:40 then every 60 mins until 14:40 then 15:21.

16 (Red House - City Centre - Hastings Hill)

From Red House at 08:30, 09:15 then every 60 mins until 15:15; from Hastings Hill at 08:28 then every 60 mins until 15:28.

20 (City Centre - Pennywell)

From City Centre, Fawcett Street, at 08:36 then every 30 minutes until 16:06; from Pennywell at 08:11, 08:41, 08:55 then every 30 minutes until 16:25.

23 (Dene Estate - City Centre - Thorney Close)

From Dene Estate at 08:00, 08:40 then every 60 mins until 14:40 then 15:20; from Thorney Close at 08:00, 08:40 then every 60 minutes until 14:40, 15:20.

E1, E2, E6 (Sunderland, Fawcett Street - South Shields)

E1 from South Shields at 08:05, 09:10 then every 60 mins until 15:10, from Sunderland at 09:03 then every 60 mins until 16:03; **E2** from South Shields at 08:42 then every 60 minutes until 15:42, there was a short journey from Seaburn, Morrison's, to Sunderland at 08:22; from Sunderland at 08:43, 09:33 then every 60 mins until 15:33.

There were no services operated on 11, 12, 18, 18A, 99, E6 and X24. Services 939, X1 and X24A are M-F services only so would not have operated on this date if there was no strike action.

Monday 26 December 2022

The only services operating on this day were E2, E6 (Sunderland - South Shields), which were funded by Nexus.

E2 from Sunderland at 09:14 then every 60 minutes until 18:14, from South Shields at 07:57 then every 60 minutes until 16:57; **E6** from Sunderland at 08:44 then every 60 minutes until 17:44, from South Shields at 08:27 then every 60 minutes until 17:27.

Tuesday 27 December 2022

Services operated on this day as follows: -

3 (Hylton Castle - City Centre - Gilley Law - Farringdon)

From Hylton Castle at 07:09 then every 30 mins until 17:39; from Farringdon at 07:10 then every 30 mins until 17:40.

4 (Downhill - City Centre - Doxford Park, Mill Hill)

From Downhill, Kingsway Road, at 07:01 then every 30 mins until 17:31. Journeys from Kingsway Road at 09:01, 15:31 and 16:01 commenced from Town End Farm, Baxter Road, 5 minutes earlier; from Mill Hill at 07:02 then every 30 mins until 17:32. Journeys from Mill Hill at 08:02, 14:32 and 15:02 extended beyond Downhill to Town End Farm.

8 (City Centre - South Hylton)

From City Centre, John Street, at 10:43, 11:43, 12:43, 14:43, 15:43, 16:43 and 17:43; from South Hylton at 10:13, 11:13, 12:13, 13:13, 15:13, 16:13, 17:13 and 18:18.

10 (Pennywell - City Centre - Grangetown)

From Pennywell at 10:25 then every 60 mins until 17:25; from Grangetown at 10:02 then every 60 mins until 16:02 and 17:17.

13 (Town End Farm - City Centre - Doxford Park)

From Town End Farm, Baxter Road, at 07:20 then every 30 mins until 17:50; from Doxford Park, Hall Farm, at 07:22 then every 30 mins until 17:52.

16 (Red House - City Centre - Hastings Hill)

From Red House at 07:11 then every 30 mins until 17:41; from Hastings Hill at 07:14 then every 30 mins until 17:44.

20 (City Centre - Pennywell)

From City Centre, Fawcett Street, at 06:59 then every 30 minutes until 17:59; from Pennywell at 06:55 then every 30 minutes until 17:55.

23 (Dene Estate - City Centre - Thorney Close)

From Dene Estate at 10:00, 10:40 then every 60 mins until 16:40 then 17:20; from Thorney Close at 10:00, 10:40 then every 60 minutes until 16:40 and 17:20.

E1, E2, E6 (Sunderland, Fawcett Street - South Shields)

E1 from South Shields at 10:05, 11:10 then every 60 mins until 17:10, from Sunderland at 11:03 then every 60 mins until 18:03; **E2** from South Shields at 10:42 then every 60 minutes until 17:42, there was a short journey from Seaburn, Morrison's, to Sunderland at 10:22; from Sunderland at 10:43, 11:33 then every 60 mins until 17:33.

There were no services operated on 11, 12, 18, 18A, 99, 939, E6, X1, X24, X24A.

It was announced on Wednesday 4 January 2023 that an agreement had been reached between management and the GMB trade union. The BBC website reported the following: -

Sunderland bus strikes end as drivers agree 11% pay rise

Bus drivers are to end months of strike action after agreeing to a pay offer.

Almost 200 Stagecoach North East drivers based in Sunderland staged a dozen walkouts in the last three months of 2022.

The GMB union previously accused the company of "failing to listen" to its staff and making an offer that "didn't match what drivers wanted".

On Wednesday, the union said drivers were offered an 11% rise backdated to 1 December along with a £150 bonus.

During the strike disruption, Stagecoach was forced to draft in management and workers from other depots to run key services.

Laura Maughan, GMB organiser, said: "After a gruelling couple of months, Sunderland's bus drivers have won themselves a double digit pay rise - the least they deserve.

GMB would like to thank the people of Sunderland for the support they've shown their drivers during this dispute - it means the world to them."

She added that Stagecoach "deserves credit" for "realising drivers' worth and negotiating" to reach a deal. Stagecoach North East previously said the strikes would damage businesses over the Christmas period and industrial action would not "deliver a resolution".

However, after the deal was agreed, Steve Walker, managing director for Stagecoach North East, said he was "pleased to have reached a positive agreement over pay.

We're very proud of our team, who do a great job in delivering vital transport connections for our communities," he said.

"Today's agreement means that we can now focus on the future ahead and making sure we deliver the best possible service." <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tyne-64168013>

ARRIVA NORTHUMBRIA www.arrivabus.co.uk

51 (Newcastle - Holystone - Whitley Bay)

On Monday 9 January 2023 the Monday to Saturday daytime journeys on this service were withdrawn between Whitley Bay, town centre, and Whitley Bay, Metro station. The terminus is now at Whitley Road/Clifton Terrace. A terminal loop operates from Park View via Whitley Road, Park Avenue, York Road, Oxford Road, and Whitley Road back to Park View. This alteration was due to inappropriately parked vehicles preventing buses from accessing the Metro station. There were no changes to the timetable. As noted on page 10 of newssheet 586, dated November 2022, the ESu journeys were cutback to terminate at Whitley Bay town centre on 30 October 2022. Not mentioned therein is the fact that the ESu journeys operate the same terminal loop in Whitley Bay as the daytime journeys. *M-S days every 60 mins, ESu every 60 mins.*

ARRIVA DURHAM COUNTY www.arrivabus.co.uk

Arriva Durham County operated a Santa Bus on Saturday 17 December. It commenced from Durham's North Road at 12:40 and operated via Ushaw Moor, Esh Winning, New Brancepeth, Brandon, Willington, Crook, Spennymoor, Bishop Auckland, Coundon, Ferryhill, Chilton, West Cornforth, Kelloe, Quarrington Hill and Coxhoe to Bowburn estate.

86 (Trimdon - Bishop Auckland College)

On 1 January 2023, the return journey from Bishop Auckland was retimed to depart from the college at 12:05 on Fridays only. This is due to the earlier closure of the college on a Friday. There were no other alterations to this service. The registration is from 1 January 2023, when no services operated, even though the service operates on schooldays only.

Schooldays only from Trimdon at 07:18; from Bishop Auckland College at 17:05 M-Th, 12:05 Fri.

RURAL LINK, Blaydon

882 (Hexham - West Woodburn)

Operation of this service passed to Go North East with effect from 7 January 2023. It comprised of one return journey on Saturdays only at 09:30 from West Woodburn and 12:30 from Hexham bus station.

As a result of this loss, Rural Link now operate services 613 (Whittonstall - Hexham) *Tue only from Whittonstall at 09:30, from Hexham at 12:30*; 815 (Ridsdale/Byrness - Bellingham) *Fri only from Ridsdale at 09:50, from Byrness at 10:45, from Bellingham at 12:00 (to Ridsdale) and 13:00 (to Byrness)*; 885 (Byrness - Hexham) *Tue only 09:30 from Byrness and 13:35 from Hexham*.

NOTE: the current status of 815 is unknown. Newsheets 548 and 549, dated September and October 2019 respectively, refer to the transfer of services from PCL Travel to Rural Link and state that this service was shown on both the Nexus and the Traveline websites as operating. Those newsheets make it clear that it was either not registered or it was on another registration. At the time of writing, 7 January 2023, the timetable was still shown on the Nexus website even though it was still not registered with the Traffic Commissioner. There was no longer any reference to it on the Traveline website, but it was shown on www.google.co.uk/maps.

In a further development, services 613 and 885 have been deregistered from 31 January 2023.

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR SERVICES 2022, 2023 - other operators

Details have now been obtained of the service provision for most of the minor operators in the area. It has not been possible to ascertain what services were operated by Dales and District, and North Yorkshire County Council's Fleet services over this period.

Saturday 24 December 2022

Coatham Coaches - no service.

Gateshead Central Taxis - normal service but finishing early.

Glen Valley - normal service but finishing early at 17:03 (service 472) or 16:52 (service 473).

Hodgson's - normal service.

JH Coaches - normal service.

Little White Bus - normal service but finishing early at 11:20 (service 113), 12:45 (service 30) and 15:30 (service 156).

Paul's Taxis - no service.

Peter Hogg - normal service.

Rural Link - no service.

Stanley Travel - normal service.

Travelsure 418, X18 normal service but finished at approximately 18:00; 32, 34, 236, 260 normal service.

Weardale Motor Services - normal service but with last journeys operating between 18:00 and 19:00.

Sunday 25 December and Monday 26 December 2022

No local bus services operated.

Tuesday 27 December 2022

Gateshead Central Taxis - Sunday service.

Travelsure - 418, X18 Sunday service; 32, 34, 236 and 260 Holiday Service.

No other services operated.

Wednesday 28 December 2022

Coatham Coaches - normal service.

Cumbria Classic Coaches - normal service.

Gateshead Central Taxis - Saturday service.

Glen Valley - normal service.

Hodgsons - normal service except on service 16 which operated a Saturday service.

JH Coaches - Saturday service.

Little White Bus - normal service.

Paul's Travel - no service.

Peter Hogg - school holiday service.

Rural Link - no service.

Stanley Travel - normal service.

Travelsure - Bank Holiday Service.

Weardale Motor Services - Saturday service except on 99, 763, 764, 765 and 773 which operated a normal weekday service. Service 51 did not operate.

Thursday 29 December 2022

Coatham Coaches - normal service.

Gateshead Central Taxis - Saturday service.

Glen Valley - normal service.

Hodgsons - normal service except on 16 which operated a Saturday service.

JH Coaches - Saturday service.

Little White Bus - normal service.

Peter Hogg - school holiday service.

Rural Link - no service.

Stanley Travel - normal service.

Travelsure - Bank Holiday Service.

Weardale Motor Services - Saturday service except on 99, 763, 764, 765 and 773 which operated a normal weekday service. Service 51 did not operate.

Friday 30 December 2022

Coatham Coaches - normal service.

Gateshead Central Taxis - Saturday service.

Glen Valley - normal service.

Hodgsons - normal service except on 16 which operated a Saturday service.

JH Coaches - Saturday service.

Little White Bus - normal service.

Peter Hogg - school holiday service.

Rural Link - normal service.

Stanley Travel - normal service.

Travelsure - Bank Holiday Service.

Weardale Motor Services - Saturday service except on 99, 763, 764, 765 and 773 which operated a normal weekday service. Service 51 did not operate.

Saturday 31 December 2022

Coatham Coaches - no service.

Gateshead Central Taxis - normal service but with an early finish.

Glen Valley - normal service.

Hodgsons - normal service.

JH Coaches - normal service.

Little White Bus - normal service but finishing early at 11:20 (service 113), 12:45 (service 30) and 15:30 (service 156).

Paul's Travel - no service.

Peter Hogg - normal service.

Rural Link - no service.

Stanley Travel - Saturday service.

Travelsure - 418, X18 Bank Holiday Service but finishing by 18:00; 32, 34, 236 and 260 normal service.

Weardale Motor Services - normal service but with last journeys operating between 18:00 and 19:00.

Sunday 1 January 2023

No local bus services operated.

Monday 2 January 2023

Gateshead Central Taxis - Sunday service.

No other services operated.

Normal services resumed on Tuesday 3 January 2023 except for Travelsure which continued operating a Bank Holiday Service up to and including Friday 6 January 2023. Normal timetables on Travelsure's services resumed on Saturday 7 January 2023.

BOXING DAY, 26 DECEMBER 2022

As is usual Boxing Day sees a comprehensive network of services across Tyne & Wear although there were fewer services operating on Boxing Day 2022 than in previous years. Go North East's services 9, 10B, 16A, 20, 27, 54, 58, 61, 311, Q3, X5, X21 and X30 operated in 2021 but not in 2022. Some services crossed the boundary into Northumberland and County Durham. However, this year the only cross-boundary routes into County Durham comprised of Go North East's services 6 and 21 which operated as far as Leazes and Chester-le-Street respectively. Most services were operating between approximately 09:30 and 18:30 although some GNE services were running by 08:00, and all services were finished by 20:30. As on Boxing Day 2021, Arriva



Go North East "Xlines" branded Wright StreetDeck 6360 (NK20 EMV) exits Newcastle Haymarket Bus Station on Boxing Day, 26th December 2022, operating the normally Arriva service X18 to Morpeth. (Andrew P Tyldsley)



Phoenix of Blyth have been an operator of Nexus and Northumberland CC secured bus services for a number of years. On Boxing Day 2022 they won the contract to operate the normally Arriva X21 service between Newcastle and Ashington. Their Wright Gemini bodied Volvo B7TL SN56 AFK is seen leaving Newcastle Haymarket – the route number was displayed on a piece of paper at the top of the windscreen!! This bus was new to Lothian but just still visible are the remnants of its last operator CT Plus. (Andrew P Tyldsley)

NOTE: The Stagecoach in Sunderland services mentioned above are those that operated on 26 December. Industrial action meant that only services E2 and E6 operated, as shown in the Stagecoach in Sunderland item earlier. All the journeys on E2 and E6 were operated by Stagecoach in South Shields, with South Shields' double-deckers 19644, 19645, 19682, 19683 in use for most of the day, but 19683 was replaced by 19211 in the early afternoon. In addition, on a normal Boxing Day, Sunderland would have covered South Shields services 3, 4, 10 & 11, but these were covered this year by South Shields depot.

The services **proposed to be operated** by Stagecoach in Sunderland on 26 December 2022, other than E2 and E6, are shown below along with the frequency.

Stagecoach in Sunderland (proposed services)					
<i>Route</i>	<i>Terminal Points</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Route</i>	<i>Terminal Points</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
3	Hylton Castle-Farringdon	30	13	Town End Farm-Doxford Park	30
4	Downhill-Doxford Park	30	16	Red House-Hastings Hill	30
10	Pennywell-Grangetown	30	20	Pennywell-City Centre	30
11	Pennywell-Grangetown	30	23	Thorney Close-Dene Estate	30

NEXUS CONSULTATIONS

Nexus announced on 3 January 2023 proposed alterations to some contracted services in Newcastle and on North Tyneside.

Six proposals are being consulted on, and each of the proposals contains the following statement from Nexus (shown here to save space):

“Why are we considering changes to services?”

In March 2022 Nexus carried out a widespread review of local bus services in Newcastle and North Tyneside at a time when commercial companies were making cuts to their own routes. As part of this rescue package, we introduced or kept on a number of routes, including this one, with marginal customer numbers. This allowed us to continue to review the route to see if passenger numbers would grow over time. Contracts for bus services that we currently fund in Newcastle and North Tyneside are due to end in March 2023 and we have now looked in detail at how the current contracts are performing. This review has highlighted some services which we consider are no longer offering good value for money due mainly to a long-term change in travel patterns following the pandemic. Cancelling these poorly performing services would allow the limited amount of funding that we have available to be spent on maintaining or improving services in areas that are less able to access alternative bus services.

All feedback received by Tuesday 23 January 2023 will be taken into consideration. Subject to feedback received, changes to bus services would then be introduced from Sunday 26 March 2023.”

Planned changes to Nexus funded section of services 41/41a

What are we consulting about?

We are seeking customer feedback on our proposal to cancel the Nexus funded extension of services 41/41a between Hadrian Park - Howdon.

What changes are we proposing?

Most daytime trips between Wallsend - Hadrian Park on services 41/41a are operated privately by Go North East. Nexus then pays for some of these trips to be extended to/from Howdon. We are proposing to cancel the Nexus funded extension with effect from 26 March 2023.

Services 41/41a operate half-hourly Monday - Friday (0740 - 1815) and Saturday (0915 - 1705) between Hadrian Park - Howdon. This extension provides direct connections between High Farm/Battle Hill/Hadrian Park - Howdon. During September/October 2022 an average of 1 customer per trip travelled on this service.

How would customers be affected by our proposed changes?

Services 41/41a

Most sections of route along the extension are covered by alternative bus services. The nearest alternative facilities from the unique sections of route are summarised in the table below. Some customers may be required to walk longer distances to access alternative services. Some customers may be required to transfer between bus services to access their destination. Some customers may be required to purchase multi-operator tickets to allow travel on services provided by different operators. Customers wishing to travel between High Farm/Battle Hill/Hadrian Park - Howdon would be required to transfer between bus services in Wallsend.

Unique sections of route	Alternative facilities
Howdon (Tynemouth Road between Churchill Street & Howdon Lane)	Walk to Howdon Lane/ALDI (350m) for access to service 317. This route operates half-hourly throughout each day and offers direct links to Wallsend town centre (this bus serves stops on Station Road outside the Forum Shopping Centre allowing easy interchange with services 41/41a for onward travel to/from High Farm/Battle Hill/Hadrian Park). Alternatively, walk to Churchill Street/Tynemouth Road for access to frequent services 1 or 22. These routes travel to Wallsend Town Centre.
Howdon (Archer Street)	Walk to Churchill Street (300m) for access to frequent services 1 or 22. These routes travel to Wallsend Town Centre. Alternatively, walk to Shafto Street/Archer Street (300m) for access to service 317. This route travels to Wallsend town centre (this bus serves stops on Station Road outside The Forum Shopping Centre, allowing easy interchange with services 41/41a for onward travel to/from High Farm/Battle Hill/Hadrian Park).

Your views?

Before we make a final decision, we would first like to know what you think about our proposal to cancel the 41/41a extension between Hadrian Park - Howdon.

You can write to us...

41/41a Bus Consultation, Commercial Team, Nexus House, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4AX

Or e-mail your feedback...customerrelations@nexus.org.uk

<https://www.nexus.org.uk/consultation/item/planned-changes-nexus-funded-section-services-4141a>

Planned changes to services 51 and W2

What are we consulting about?

We are seeking customer feedback on our plans to cancel service 51 between Holystone - Whitley Bay and to amend the route/frequency of service W2 in Whitley Bay.

What changes are we proposing?

Service 51 currently operates hourly throughout each day between Newcastle - Whitley Bay. Nexus pays for Monday - Saturday daytime trips between Holystone - Whitley Bay and daily evening/Sunday daytime trips between Newcastle - Whitley Bay.

We are proposing to cancel all 51 trips between Holystone - Whitley Bay.

Service W2 currently operates half-hourly Monday - Saturday daytime between Whitley Bay Metro - Briardene. This service is fully paid for by Nexus.

We are proposing to extend the route of service W2 to additionally serve Beaumont Park, Red House Farm, Sainsbury's, and Earsdon Village. The new W2 would operate at a reduced hourly frequency between 0700 - 2330 Monday - Saturday and 0830 - 2230 on a Sunday.

How would customers be affected by our proposed changes?

Service 51

Most sections of the 51 route between Holystone - Whitley Bay are covered by alternative bus services. The unique sections of route in Earsdon Village, Red House Farm, Beaumont Park, and Whitley Lodge would all be covered by the revised W2 service. Some customers may be required to transfer between bus services and/or the Metro in order to access their destination. Some customers may be required to purchase multi-operator tickets to allow travel on services provided by different operators. Alternative facilities for access to/from Newcastle city centre are summarised in the table below.

Area	Alternative access for Newcastle
Whitley Lodge/Beaumont Park	Revised service W2 to Whitley Bay Town Centre for bus & Metro connections to Newcastle.
Red House Farm/Earsdon Village	Services 57/57a to West Monkseaton Metro for onward connections to Newcastle.
Shiremoor	Direct connections to Newcastle available using services 54, 309 or the Metro.
West Allotment	Walk to Northumberland Park station for access to Metro, or service 53 to Palmersville for Metro connections to Newcastle.

Service W2

Most sections of the W2 route will continue to be served, but with a reduced hourly frequency. The new route would operate between Whitley Bay Metro - Briardene direct via Claremont Road. Buses would then serve the existing route around Briardene, before continuing from Whitley Lodge towards Earsdon Village via the current 51 route. Buses would no longer serve Cragside in Whitley Lodge, but bus stops on Woodburn Drive at either end of Cragside would be served as an alternative. Residents in Briardene would gain new direct links to/from Sainsbury's (Red House Farm) and a new hourly evening/Sunday service.

Your views?

Before we make a final decision, we would first like to know what you think about our plans for services 51 and W2.

You can write to us...

51/W2 Bus Consultation, Commercial Team, Nexus House, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4AX

Or e-mail your feedback...customerrelations@nexus.org.uk

<https://www.nexus.org.uk/consultation/item/planned-changes-services-51-and-w2>

Planned changes to Nexus funded services 84/84a

What changes are we proposing?

We are proposing to cancel services 84/84a with effect from 26 March 2023.

Service 84 operates hourly Monday - Saturday daytime (1000 - 1600). This route provides direct connections to Metrocentre from Arthurs Hill, Elswick and Benwell. During September/October 2022 an average of 3 customers per trip travelled on this service.

Service 84a operates hourly Monday - Saturday daytime (0940 - 1610). This route provides direct connections to Newcastle City Centre and the RVI from Spital Tongues, Fenham, East Denton and some local links in West Denton. During September/October 2022 an average of 2 customers per trip travelled on this service.

How would customers be affected by our proposed changes?

Services 84/84a

Most sections of these routes are covered by alternative frequent bus services. The nearest alternative facilities from the unique sections of route are summarised in the table below. Some customers may be required to walk longer distances to access alternative services. Some customers may be required to transfer between bus services to access their destination. Customers who travel between the Metrocentre and the inner west parts of Newcastle would be required to transfer between services in Newcastle city centre.

Unique route section	Alternative facilities
Broadmead Way (Scotswood)	Walk to Whickham View (350m) to access frequent services 30/31, & 38. These routes travel to Newcastle City Centre via Benwell (30/31) or West Road (38). There are frequent buses connecting Newcastle - Metrocentre operating throughout each day departing from Eldon Square Bus Station or Central Station.
Lanercost Drive / St Cuthberts Road / Heatherslaw Road (Fenham)	Walk to Two Ball Lonnen/Cedar Road (450m) for access to services 32/32a or frequent service 12. These routes travel to Newcastle city centre (12, 32/32a) or RVI (32/32a). Alternatively, walk to Netherby Drive (300m) for access to frequent services 36 or 63. These routes travel to Newcastle city centre (36, 63) or RVI (36).
Haydon Place / Whitbeck Road / The Drive (Slatyford)	Walk to Slatyford Lane for access to frequent services 1 or 11. These routes travel to Newcastle city centre (1/11) or West Denton Shops (11).
Thornley Road / Linbridge Drive / Apperley (West Denton)	Walk to West Denton Way (500m) for to access frequent services 6/7, 11, or 62/63. These routes travel to Metrocentre (6/7) or Newcastle city centre (11, 62/63). Alternatively, walk to A69 for access to frequent services 10, 39/40. These routes travel direct to Newcastle city centre via West Road.

Your views?

Before we make a final decision, we would first like to know what you think about our proposal to cancel services 84/84a.

You can write to us...

84/84a Bus Consultation, Commercial Team, Nexus House, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4AX

Or e-mail your feedback...customerrelations@nexus.org.uk

<https://www.nexus.org.uk/consultation/item/planned-changes-nexus-funded-services-8484a>

Planned changes to Nexus funded services 552 and M6

What are we consulting about?

We are seeking customer feedback on our proposal to cancel services 552 and M6.

What changes are we proposing?

We are proposing to cancel services 552 and M6 with effect from 26 March 2023.

Service 552 operates Monday - Friday only with a limited number of trips in the AM/PM peaks. The route connects Regent Centre Interchange - South Gosforth Metro - Benton Park View - Four Lane Ends Interchange - Tyneview Park. During September/October 2022 an average of 3 customers per trip travelled on this service.

Service M6 operates up to every 30 minutes, Monday - Saturday daytime (0910 - 1530). The route connects Jesmond Vale - Shieldfield - City Centre - RVI. During September/October 2022 an average of 2 customers per trip travelled on this service.

How would customers be affected by our proposed changes?

Service 552

All sections of this route are covered by alternative bus services and/or the Metro. Some customers may be required to transfer between buses or bus-Metro to make alternative trips. Some customers may be required to purchase multi-modal tickets which are more expensive than the fares currently paid. The table below shows the alternative provision available for trips currently made on service 552.

Trip	Alternative
Regent Centre Interchange - South Gosforth Metro / Four Lane Ends Interchange	Frequent Metro services connect these stations (customers required to change platform and transfer between trains at South Gosforth).
Regent Centre - Benton Park View	Frequent Metro services available to/from Longbenton which is short walk from Benton Park View (customers required to change platform and transfer between trains at South Gosforth)
Regent Centre - Tyneview Park	Frequent Metro services available to/from Benton which is within walking distance from Tyneview Park (customers required to change platform and transfer between trains at South Gosforth).
Four Lane Ends - Tyneview Park	Stagecoach's service 68 provides a frequent shuttle service between FLE - Tyneview Park during the AM/PM peak.

Service M6

Except for some local estate roads in Jesmond Vale, all bus stops on this route are covered by alternative bus services. The table below summarises the alternative provision available.

Trip	Alternative
Vale House - City Centre/RVI	Walk to/from Springbank Road/Blue Bell (350m) to access services 32/32a which provide direct links to City Centre and RVI up to every 30 minutes Monday - Saturday daytime and hourly Sunday daytime. Alternatively, walk to/from Cradlewell (500m) for access to frequent services 38, 51, 52, 306/308, 309/310/311 and X39. These routes travel to/from St Mary's Place or Haymarket Bus Station in the city centre. The RVI is just a short walk from Haymarket Bus Station.
Sandyford - City Centre/RVI	Bus stops in Sandyford are served by the same services which serve Cradlewell (see above) providing frequent connections to/from the city centre.
Shieldfield - City Centre/RVI	Bus stops in Shieldfield are served by services 32/32a which provide direct links to the City Centre (Blackett Street) and/or the RVI. These services are also funded by Nexus and operate up to every 30 minutes Monday - Saturday daytime and hourly Sunday daytime.

Your views?

Before we make a final decision, we would first like to know what you think about our proposal to cancel services 552 and M6.

You can write to us...

M6/552 Bus Consultation, Commercial Team, Nexus House, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4AX

Or e-mail your feedback...customerrelations@nexus.org.uk

<https://www.nexus.org.uk/consultation/item/planned-changes-nexus-funded-services-552-and-m6>

Planned changes to Nexus funded service K2

What are we consulting about?

We are seeking customer feedback on our proposal to cancel service K2.

What changes are we proposing?

We are proposing to cancel service K2 with effect from 26 March 2023.

Service K2 operates hourly Monday - Saturday daytime (0800 - 1715). The route connects Four Lane Ends - Quorum/Balliol Business Parks - West Moor - Forest Hall - Killingworth Village - Killingworth - Greenhills Estate. During September/October 2022 an average of 1 customer per trip travelled on this service.

How would customers be affected by our proposed changes?

Service K2

Most sections of this route are covered by alternative frequent bus services. The nearest alternative facilities from the unique sections of route are summarised in the table below. Some customers may be required to walk longer distances to access alternative services.

Unique sections of route	Alternative facilities
West Moor (Harriot Drive / Whitecroft Road / Reynolds Avenue)	Walk to A189/Whitehouse Farm (650m) to access services X7/X8. These routes travel to Newcastle City Centre. Alternatively, walk to Benton Lane/Great Lime Road (650m) to access frequent services 52, 54, 62, 335 or X63. These routes travel to Newcastle City Centre (52/54/62/X63), Four Lane Ends Metro (52/62) or Killingworth Shops (52/54/62/335).
West Moor (Killingworth Drive / Sharon Close)	Walk to Benton Lane/Great Lime Road (750m) to access frequent services 52, 54, 62, 335 or X63. These routes travel to Newcastle City Centre (52/54/62/X63), Four Lane Ends Metro (52/62) or Killingworth Shops (52/54/62/335).
Clousden Hill (Killingworth Road)	Walk to Great Lime Road/Station Road North (350m) to access frequent services 53, 55, 62, 335 or 342. These routes travel to Killingworth Shops (53/62/335/342), Forest Hall Shops (53/55/62/335/342) or Newcastle city centre (55/62).
Greenhills Estate (Greenhills)	Walk to Burradon Front Street (900m) to access services 52, 53, X7/X8 or 342. These routes travel to Newcastle city centre (X7/X8) or Killingworth Shops (52/53/342).

Your views?

Before we make a final decision, we would first like to know what you think about our proposal to cancel service K2.

You can write to us...

K2 Bus Consultation, Commercial Team, Nexus House, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4AX

Or e-mail your feedback...customerrelations@nexus.org.uk

<https://www.nexus.org.uk/consultation/item/planned-changes-nexus-funded-service-k2>

Planned changes to Nexus funded section of service W1

What are we consulting about?

We are seeking customer feedback on our proposal to cancel some Monday - Saturday morning and evening trips on service W1 between Whitley Bay - Earsdon Grange.

What changes are we proposing?

Service W1 currently operates hourly (0730 - 1930) Monday - Saturday daytime between Whitley Bay - Earsdon Grange.

We are proposing to cancel the Monday - Saturday 0730/1830 trips from Whitley Bay Metro to Earsdon Grange. During September 2022 an average of 0 customers per trip travelled on the 0730 trip and an average of 2 customers per trip travelled on the 1830 departure.

We are proposing to cancel the Monday - Saturday 1800/1900 trips from Earsdon Grange to Whitley Bay Metro. During September 2022 an average of 1 customer per trip travelled on the 1800 and 1900 departures.

How would customers be affected by our proposed changes?

The first W1 bus from Whitley Bay Metro (towards Earsdon Grange) would depart at 0830 with the last trip then leaving at 1730.

The first W1 bus from Earsdon Grange (towards Whitley Bay Metro) would depart at 0800 as now with the last trip leaving at 1700.

Customers wishing to travel outside of the new W1 operating hours would be required to use the Metro or alternative bus services (Arriva services 57/57a). Some customers may be required to walk further distances to access alternative services.

Your views?

Before we make a final decision, we would first like to know what you think about our proposal to cancel some morning/evening trips on service W1.

You can write to us...

W1 Bus Consultation, Commercial Team, Nexus House, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4AX

Or e-mail your feedback...customerrelations@nexus.org.uk

<https://www.nexus.org.uk/consultation/item/planned-changes-nexus-funded-section-service-w1>

Arriva Northumbria operates service 51; **Go North East** operates services 41, 41A, **Phoenix Coaches** operate services 552, M6, W2; whilst **Gateshead Central Taxis** operate services 84, 84A, K2 and W1.

Gateshead Central Taxis operated K2 from March 2018 until 27 March 2022 when it was withdrawn. It was reinstated on 4 September 2022.

The terminology used in the consultation implies that the other contracted services in Newcastle and North Tyneside (GNE's 19; Stagecoach's 18, 32, 32A, 35, 54, 317; Gateshead Central Taxis' 335, 342 and Stanley Travel's X46) will be retendered.

TYNE AND WEAR METRO www.nexus.org.uk/metro

Further to last month's item concerning the curtailment of South Hylton line trains at Park Lane, a replacement bus service 901 (Park Lane - South Hylton) commenced on Monday 19 December 2022 and should operate until the Metro service to South Hylton resumes. It was not possible to provide a service before this due to the shortage of drivers; staff for 901 were previously used on the Metro Flow services 900, X900. Most buses on 901 were timed to connect into and out of the Metro at Park Lane. This service was provided by Go North East. The timetables initially shown on the Nexus website showed X901 but they were changed to show 901 by 31 December. *M-F from Park Lane at 05:49 then every 20 minutes until 18:09 (except 09:09 and 10:09), 18:54 then every 30 minutes until 23:24 (except 19:54). From South Hylton at 05:26, 06:08 then every 20 minutes until 18:28 (except 09:28 and 10:28), 19:20, then every 30 minutes until 22:50 (except 20:20) and 23:15. Saturdays from Park Lane at 05:49, 06:09 then every 30 minutes until 09:09 then 10:11 and every 20 minutes until 18:11 (except 10:51), 18:54 then as M-F. From South Hylton at 05:29, 06:08, 06:36, 07:06, 07:36, 08:06, 08:38, 09:09, 09:33, 10:30 then every 20 minutes until 18:30 (except 11:10), 19:20 then as M-F. Sun from Park Lane at 06:57, 07:26, 07:47, 08:17, 08:47, 09:44, 10:11, 11:11 then every 30 minutes until 23:11. From South Hylton at 06:52, 07:22, 07:46, 08:16, 08:46, 09:16, 10:06, 10:36, 11:36 then every 30 minutes until 22:36 and 23:01. On 26 December departures were from Park Lane at 08:06 then every 20 mins until 17:46 except 11:06, 12:46 and 14:26. From South Hylton at 07:55, 08:24 then every 20 mins until 17:24 except 11:24, 13:04 and 14:44. On 31 December, a Saturday timetable operated but with the last departures at 18:54 from Park Lane and 18:30 from South Hylton. The usual vehicles employed are Graphite branded Optare Solos 676 and 677. The exception was on 26 December 2022 when double-deckers 6177 and 6180 were used instead. It should be noted that there was no replacement service 901 after approximately 12:00 on 24 December 2022 or on 3, 4, 6 and 7 January 2023 when the Metro was not running between Pelaw and Park Lane due to RMT industrial action at Network Rail.*

Nexus issued a press release on 16 December as follows: -

Metro replacement buses running between Park Lane and South Hylton from Monday December 19

16 December 2022

A replacement bus service is to start running on a section of the Metro network in Sunderland which has been closed due to flood damage in an electrical substation.

Network Rail, which manages the railway through Sunderland, is continuing repairs to an electrical substation damaged by flood water – an event which has led to Metro services being suspended between Park Lane and South Hylton into the new year.

Nexus, the public body which owns and manages Metro, is introducing a replacement bus service between the affected stations from Monday, 19 December, operating every 20 minutes.

John Alexander, Metro Operations Director, said: "I know how frustrating the disruption through Sunderland is and while this is beyond our control we want to do all we can for Metro customers in the city.

"There will be two buses calling at stations between Park Lane and South Hylton from Monday, providing customers with a 20-minute frequency in that area at times when Metro would normally operate."

Nexus is still able to run Metro trains on the Sunderland line between Pelaw and Park Lane, but with a 24-minute service frequency instead of the usual timetable of a train every 12 minutes. There is a 30-minute frequency on Sundays.

The line between Pelaw and South Hylton is owned and managed by Network Rail, which says this is the maximum frequency possible while the power supply is lower than normal.

Network Rail have said that the flood damage is such that they do not expect to offer us a service between Park Lane and South Hylton before the new year.

When the replacement buses start running on Monday the Metro ticket acceptance on Stagecoach bus services 8,10,11 and 20 between Sunderland and South Hylton will be removed.

<https://www.nexus.org.uk/news/item/metro-replacement-buses-running-between-park-lane-and-south-hylton-monday-december-19>

Sunderland Railway Station

After last month's report had been submitted, Nexus announced that Metro trains would not be calling at Sunderland on various dates due to industrial action by members of the RMT trade union employed by Northern Railway. Sunderland, managed by Northern Railway, is a "sub-surface" station and safety regulations state that staff must be on duty in order for trains to stop. The station was going to be closed for most of the time from 18 December 2022 until 31 December 2022 inclusive. During that period, the station was due to open as follows: - 20 December (05:15 - 14:45), 26 December (14:45 - 00:20), 27 December (05:05 - 00:20), 28 & 29 December (14:45 - 00:20). It was to be closed on the other dates.

On Tuesday 20 December 2022, following pressure from local politicians, Northern announced that the station would be open as normal for most of the period from 20 December until 31 December. On 20 and 21 December, Sunderland was open from 05:15 - 14:30 only whilst on 24 December the station was open from 05:15 - 14:45 only. The closures on 18 and 19 December happened as planned. During the closures Metro trains were passing through Sunderland without stopping.

In a separate incident, an announcement timed at 03:49 on Monday 2 January 2023 stated that following severe weather affecting the overhead wires, Sunderland station would be closed until at least Friday 6 January. The Metro terminated at St. Peters on 2 January. An additional Metro replacement, also numbered 901, operated between Park Lane and St. Peters using Optare Solos 653 and 664. In the event, Sunderland station reopened on Thursday 5 January 2023 but the announcement was made after Nexus had arranged for 901 to operate between South Hylton, Park Lane and St. Peters. Optare Versa 8320 was also used on service 901 on 5 January. The Metro was extended back to Park Lane on Sunday 8 January when the replacement service 901 reverted to operating between South Hylton and Park Lane only on the timetable mentioned earlier. On 5 January 901 operated every 30 minutes as follows: - *From South Hylton 05:47 then every 30 mins until 23:17, from St. Peters at 05:48 then every 30 mins until 23:18 then 23:53 (to Sunderland only).*

METRO FLOW

As mentioned in last month's newsheet, the Metro Flow resignalling scheme was completed in mid-December. The line between Pelaw and South Shields reopened on 14 December 2022 when Nexus issued the following: -

Metro resumes between Pelaw and South Shields following a 13-week major line closure 14 December 2022

The Metro line between Pelaw and South Shields has re-opened following the completion of the £104m Metro Flow project.

The first Metro trains were operated along the line, which has been closed for 13 weeks to allow for Metro's biggest ever improvement scheme, from the scheduled start of timetabled services this morning.

Nexus, the public body which owns and manages Metro, thanked the customers for their patience during the closure, which was extended by ten days to complete overhead line and signal works.

Major Projects Director at Nexus, Cathy Massarella, said: "I am pleased to say that the Metro line between Pelaw and South Shields is now back up and running following the completion of the £104m Metro Flow works.

I want to thank our customers for their patience during the closure, which we had to extend for ten days while we completed overhead line works and signal testing.

We got the line handed back to us from our contractor at the weekend and we then needed two days for drivers to be familiarised with the new track and signalling layouts.

Metro Flow has involved converting a freight line for Metro trains, which will ultimately help us to improve reliability across the system."

The £104m Metro Flow project was delivered through a line closure between Pelaw and South Shields planned to last 12 weeks and re-open on 4 December – the longest and biggest single project Nexus has undertaken on the original Metro network since it was completed in 1984.

A 4.6km stretch of Metro track has been replaced and completely new overhead line and signalling installed to remove three sections of single-track between Pelaw and Bede Metro stations.

Metro Flow will improve reliability across the whole network by removing these 'pinch points' which delay trains, as well as allowing Nexus to increase the frequency of Metro services in the future.

Nexus secured £95m from the Government's Transforming Cities Fund to deliver Metro Flow, with the work carried out by railway engineering specialists Buckingham Group Contracting Ltd.

<https://www.nexus.org.uk/news/item/metro-resumes-between-pelaw-and-south-shields-following-13-week-major-line-closure>

The news item in last month's newssheet concerning the reopening and dated 9 December was replaced by the above. The link contained therein is no longer valid.

TYNE AND WEAR METRO GOSFORTH DEPOT - Letter to Residents

James McCaffery, Programme Lead-Depot Construction, Stadler Rail Services UK, sent a letter to local residents concerning the rebuild of Gosforth depot.

4 January 2023.

Dear Resident,

Re: Construction of state-of-the-art depot for new Tyne and Wear Metro trains

I am writing to update you about the building of the new facility at Gosforth depot, with information on what has been achieved over the last few months, as well as what remains to be done, including planned activities for the coming weeks.

The project overall involves the complete demolition of the old depot, the construction of a brand new one, and the replacement of all the tracks across the site. Stadler has configured the programme of work to enable the current Metro fleet to continue operating from Gosforth depot, while construction takes place. VolkerFitzpatrick is building the new Gosforth depot on behalf of Stadler, which we expect to be finished by October this year. From early November 2022, we have been gradually moving our operations into the brand-new depot, located on the west of the facility. Vehicles have started using the entrance on that side, meaning that you may have noticed a reduction in business traffic (cars, vans, and trucks) coming in and out of the Cheswick Drive entrance. In December 2022, we brought three additional tracks into service, completing phase six of our programme.

The next phase of the construction is beginning in earnest now. It will mean a lot of activity at the east end of the site, as old tracks and power cables will be removed and new infrastructure installed. During the first two weekends in January (7th/8th and 14th/15th) we will be undertaking piling, which could be noisy and disruptive. This work is essential for the next phase of our construction, however we have taken care only to undertake this work in daylight hours and in the minimum time required. We appreciate that this may be a nuisance and we thank you for your forbearance.

At the end of February, most of the main depot building on the Cheswick drive site will be demolished, creating space for further new tracks to be laid. The project is progressing well and I look forward to updating you once we have completed this next, crucial phase.

If you would like to know more about the manufacturing of the new Tyne and Wear trains, set to transform rail travel in the north east, the new Metro depot, or anything else related to Stadler, then please send an email to community.relations@stadlerrail.com

OTHER NEWS

£2 MAXIMUM SINGLE FARE

The UK Government has announced an initiative to try and encourage people to travel by bus. The maximum single fare will be £2 for most journeys from 1 January until 31 March 2023 inclusive.

The following item was released by Nexus.

Millions encouraged to Get Around for £2 by bus

19 December 2022

Passengers are being encouraged to Get Around for £2 by bus from January to March next year, with bus operators launching a campaign to promote the Government fare cap scheme.

The scheme will help families, commuters and other passengers save money this winter, backed by £60 million of Government investment to cap single tickets at £2 from 1 January to 31 March 2023 across England, outside of London.

Around one in five adult bus journeys in Tyne and Wear cost more than £2.

Nexus, the public body which owns and manages Metro, is introducing a money saving fare cap for Metro customers who travel on Pop Pay As You Go.

Nexus will cap single journeys at £2, and at £4 for all-day travel, for pay as you go customers who travel with a Pop card or an Android smartphone with the Google Pay app from January 2 to 31 March.

The Government has confirmed over 130 bus operators, such as National Express and Stagecoach, managing routes from the north to the south of England will charge no more than £2 for their single tickets, helping passengers with travel costs for education, work, and medical appointments as they face pressures from the rising cost of living.

The bus fare cap will also help the bus industry continue its recovery from the pandemic by encouraging greater bus use.

This initiative builds on the allocation of more than £2 billion to support bus services in England through the pandemic and a commitment to fund improved services, new bus priority measures and new electric or hydrogen buses as part of Bus Back Better, the ambitious national bus strategy, published last year.

<https://www.nexus.org.uk/news/item/millions-encouraged-get-around-ps2-bus>

Operators in the Northern Branch area taking part in the scheme are Abbott's of Leeming, Arriva Durham County, Arriva Northumbria, Go North East, Little White Bus, Stagecoach in Cumbria, Stagecoach in Hartlepool, Stagecoach in Newcastle, Stagecoach in South Shields, Stagecoach in Sunderland, and Weardale Motor Services.

A full list of companies, and the services involved, taking part in the scheme in England can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/2-bus-fare-cap#new-bus-fare-cap-from-1-january-2023>

Exceptions to the scheme are Tees Flex, school services, works services and Metro replacement services.

PROPOSAL FOR THE NORTH EAST MAYOR TO TAKE OVER THE RUNNING OF BUSES

On Friday 6 January 2023, the BBC website reported a proposal for the North East Mayor (if elected in 2024 as part of a devolution deal) to take over the running of buses. The item is as follows: -

North East buses: Passengers want mayor to take over services

A North East mayor should take control of bus services "as soon as they take power", a passenger group has said.

Members of Tyne and Wear Public Transport Users Group (PTUG) want buses brought under public ownership if a regional mayor is appointed next year.

They say franchising would end the "confusing mix" of current services.

However, bus operators have previously dismissed the model as a "huge waste of public money".

The plea is aimed at politicians hoping to become mayor for the North East, a position announced as part of a [£1.4bn devolution deal for the region](#) - which is still subject to public consultation.

A change in ownership would protect the "most used and valuable transport service" in the region, according to PTUG spokesman Alistair Ford.

"Private bus services have been in a downward spiral recently, with large-scale cuts to routes and timetables, high levels of cancellations and driver shortages.

We're asking mayoral candidates to correct that as soon as they take power by committing to return our bus services to public control."

Mr Ford pointed to [changes made to public transport in Greater Manchester](#) as an example of how it could work.

"Mayors such as Andy Burnham in Manchester have shown how their transport powers can allow the integration of all public transport. We've also seen Greater Manchester introduce a £2 fare cap on bus services, making travel more affordable when people are struggling with bills.

Public control of buses would allow simple tickets that you could use on bus, Metro, and train services which could be designed to serve people instead of to generate maximum profit for private shareholders, and fares could be reinvested in supporting less-used services.

Franchising would also end the confusing mix of operators, each with their own tickets and fares."

Councillors have complained about the "utter misery" passengers face after cutbacks from companies including Go North East and Stagecoach, but the operators said they instead wanted to work with local leaders on a government-funded regional Bus Service Improvement Plan, worth more than £160m.

Speaking on behalf of the North East's bus operators, Andrew McGuinness of the Confederation of Passenger Transport said: "The wider investment the new devolution deal will bring to the region is welcome and follows on from the North East receiving the largest single Bus Service Improvement Plan allocation in England.

"We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with Transport for North East, in conjunction with the new combined authority and mayor, on a package of bus policies that are essential to achieving net zero emissions and unlocking major social, economic and health benefits."

A spokesperson for Transport North East said that a future mayor and North East Mayoral Combined Authority was "likely to want to consider bus franchising" along with other improvements to buses.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tyne-64156793>

PTUG spokesman Alistair Ford states: "Public control of buses would allow simple tickets that you could use on bus, Metro, and train services which could be designed to serve people instead of to generate maximum profit for private shareholders, and fares could be reinvested in supporting less-used services." He appears to be unaware of the Network One ticket valid throughout Tyne and Wear on buses, Metro, and the Shields Ferry. It is also valid on Northern Railway between Blaydon and Sunderland. It would be interesting to know his opinions on the Nexus consultations mentioned in this newsheet.

<https://www.nexus.org.uk/network-one-travel-ticket>

<https://networkonetickets.co.uk/>



Go North East "East Gateshead loop" branded Volvo B9TL/Wright Gemini 6160 (LJ62 KZD) stands at Blyth Bus Station on Boxing Day awaiting return to Newcastle on the normally Arriva operated service 308. (Geoff Stainthorpe)

Your news correspondent's deadline is the 7th of each month.

Reports should be sent to david2019mallon@outlook.com or by post to 112 Stoopersdale Avenue, DARLINGTON DL3 0UD.

Photographs should be sent to Andrew Tyldsley (address on page 1)