

West Coast Motors – Update

Submitted by Neil Stewart

I had a meeting with Kirstie Reid and Michael Breslin to discuss services this week which I think we all found productive. There were some minor tweaks that could be accommodated in the next service change, likely to be August for the return of the schools. This is due to minor route adjustments often required at school times to meet all the council issued pupil passes. A couple of trips on service 489 around school times could be alerted by a few minutes to better meet the ferry connection, rather than arrive at the ferry terminal as the ferry leaves. Another comment of diverting some 489s via North Campbell Road is unlikely to happen due to the shore road being the primary stops in Innellan. Which led onto the Pingo service which could cover users wishing to board here and sometimes being unable to get through to the office to book.

We are trialling a new guaranteed pre-booking service in Dunoon giving Pingo users a guaranteed pick-up window of within 10 minutes. This means at the point of booking if a passenger requests 1100 pick-up the system tells us due to other bookings the bus is expected at 1115 and do you want to confirm the booking or try a different time. Previously pick-ups were assigned to the Pingo driver on the day leaving some passengers wait up to 40 minutes (maximum). The new set-up is proving reliable and we have seen growth in Pingo passengers. Within the next couple of weeks we will be transferring the Pingo line to a Customer Service team that will be open 0900-1700, 7 days per week. Currently the Pingo line is answered by Dunoon office but on occasion the office must be closed if we have any operational issues. Transferring to a dedicated team will give those that wish to book via the call centre a wider offering of opening times and will always get through to someone.

For our statistics we are operating 88% of mileage comparing with the same period in 2019 but carrying 79% of passengers. The largest variable is the concessionary passes which are only at 58.7% compared to 2019 but the gap has only been narrowed with the launch of the under-22 concessionary passes last year. There is a planned marketing campaign to encourage concessionary travellers back on bus over the coming months. This hopefully aiding the recovery of these passengers to pre Covid levels