

Island Link Forum, Yarmouth

Thursday 27 April 2023

Ferry prices and reliability

The Wightlink booking system is set up to recognise Isle of Wight customers and ensure they benefit from the fare discount for island inhabitants. An analysis of bookings has shown that the average price paid by Islanders is £34 for a crossing with vehicle and £8 for a foot passenger crossing which suggested customers are aware of available discounts.

Customers acknowledged Wightlink's Multilink products offering further discounted crossings solely for Islanders are good value and suggested they could be extended further.

There was a discussion about reliability. On an average day, there are 122 crossings across the three routes and reliability averages at 98%.

FastCat timetable changes

The return of more evening sailings on the Portsmouth-Ryde foot passenger route and the removal of the mid-afternoon gap was appreciated. Customer numbers are building ahead of the summer and crews have been recruited as permanent members of staff with the route currently available to book until the end of 2023 (in line with the rest of our route timetables).

Parking on Ryde Pier was discussed. There are fewer spaces at present because of the construction works for Island Line and Wightlink's pedestrian walkway but these projects are scheduled to end this summer, which will ease much of the pressure on parking spaces. We will look at the possibility of reserving spaces for regular travellers.

One member of the Forum expressed concern that a traffic calming hump on the road leading to the Pier was causing problems after the road resurfacing. Island Roads has now confirmed this was a temporary structure and has now been replaced with the permanent one, which is of the right height.

Projects and accessibility

Wightlink managers updated the Forum on recent investment at Portsmouth Harbour to repair structural issues and refurbish the terminal. Improvements are also planned for Ryde. The retail outlet on Deck 4 on Victoria of Wight has been enlarged to give customers greater choice.

A Forum member suggested mainland train departure information should be shown on screens at Yarmouth and we are looking into how to supply this.

Wightlink in the Community

Managers briefed customers about Wightlink's programme of environmental grants for schools, sponsorship for Island good causes and talented athletes etc.

Future meetings

Customers were invited to submit topics for discussion at future Forum meetings. The next one is scheduled for Fishbourne on Wednesday 20 September 2023.