



incorporating TransWilts Community Rail Partnership

NEWSLETTER TWENTY FOUR – OCTOBER 2019

TransWilts achieves accreditation

Accreditation of a Community Rail Partnership is the formal recognition by the Department for Transport (DfT) that a community rail partnership (CRP) operates to a high standard and with objectives and activities that are supported by Government. The accreditation system for community rail partnerships in England and Wales commenced on April 2019 and is being administered by ACoRP.



There are five principles for accreditation of a CRP which are to show they have:

- Effective, beneficial engagement of the community;
- Transparency, openness, and ease of contact;
- Working in a safe, responsible, ethical manner;
- Collaborating constructively with the rail industry and local partners;
- Demonstrating how their activities promote equality, diversity and inclusion.

The meeting to review the operation and activities of TransWilts CRP took place on 5th August with representatives of the CRP, GWR and Network Rail present where the TransWilts CRP governance policies, financial accounts, annual report and future activities were reviewed. Following this meeting the evidence was submitted to the DfT who then awarded the CRP with their accredited status on 27th August noting that "Accreditation should provide assurance to others, including potential funders and partners, that the CRP



operates to high standards of governance and financial propriety; adopts a collaborative approach; is worthy of trust by others; and is a suitable entity for receiving public funds. Further Government considers it a good representative of the local community." Paul Webster, Operations manager at ACoRP, said "TransWilts CRP shows how the link between the community and its railway is so important with many examples along its short line demonstrating this. Passengers should feel

proud of their local railway and its stations, so the involvement of volunteers at Chippenham and the plans for Melksham stations clearly show how the CRP have embraced this philosophy."

Paul Johnson, chairman of TransWilts, added "We are delighted to been one of the first CRPs to achieve Accreditation. This enables us to display the accreditation logo as assurance to our partners and contractors that we operate to high standards and importantly use our grant funding effectively. Our CIC status has been extremely helpful in reaching the standard. I must particularly thank our Board for their support and advice in gaining Accreditation."

December Timetable – All change

On the 15th December GWR will introduce what it is billing as its biggest timetable change since 1976. It estimates 75% of train times will change as it takes advantage of the quicker acceleration shown by the IETs and shorter station dwell times. Trains will also have different stopping patterns. Some express services to Paddington will not call at Swindon or Reading (or both!).

TransWilts services have been amended to fit in with main line services and the fact the Swindon to Cheltenham Shuttle is largely replaced by through trains from London for much of the day. There will be a new earlier train from Westbury on Mondays to Fridays leaving at 05:17 and reaching Swindon at 05:59. At the other end of the day there will later last trains leaving Westbury at 20:06 and Swindon at 20:45. However the lunchtime service to and from Frome will no longer run.

On the Berks & Hants Line Pewsey gains an extra train to London in the mornings at 09:30 however that means off peak tickets are no longer valid on the retimed 08:17. Defending this GWR says “In the past we have given Pewsey an ‘exception’ allowing off peak fares on peak time trains because we had a limited off peak service. This started in 2004, when the concession was offered on the 08:25, arriving 09:38 and this transferred to the 0810 more recently.

From December we introduce an improved timetable, and the weekday departure pattern becomes 08:17 (Peak), 09:30 (Off-Peak), 11:02 (Super Off-Peak), instead of the current 08:10 (Off-Peak – as a concession) and 10:18 (Super Off-Peak).

The 08:17 from Pewsey arrives into Paddington at 09:19. The first off peak arrival on any other GWR service is at 10:07, almost an hour later. The 08:17 is a peak time service, and with the new improved off peak service, we can no longer offer off peak travel from Pewsey at peak time.”

There will also be similar changes in peak and off peak fares from Bedwyn as GWR brings restrictions in line with the rest of the network.



Reliability on the up

After the catastrophic level of cancellations in the summer reliability has slowly started to climb in recent weeks.

In August 49 of the planned 508 trains due to run, were cancelled. The cancellation rate almost halved in September.

Staff shortage was the primary cause of trains failing to run, but infrastructure issues – particularly at Thingley Junction where the single line meets the main line – were also to blame.

Following representations from TransWilts GWR did arrange for replacement road transport to be on standby to cover for cancelled services rather than trying to source it at the last minute. Looking forward GWR has identified improvements it can make to holiday arrangements and training requirements to avoid a repeat of this summer's problems.

Work is also starting on a joint marketing campaign for the line in the New Year.

November Stakeholder Meeting

Jon Morgan – GWR Regional Performance Manager – will be one of those attending the next TransWilts Stakeholder meeting on Monday 18th November. He will be outlining the latest position on timekeeping and reliability and the work which has been going on to ensure a smooth introduction of the December Timetable change.

Please note the event has been moved from Chippenham to Trowbridge Civic Centre in St Stephens Place.

You can book to attend at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/transwilts-6-monthly-meeting-for-stakeholders-and-members-tickets-72501364533>

Friends of Chippenham Station



The group promoting Chippenham Station are now official members of ACoRP.

TransWilts will be working closely with Friends of Chippenham Station to help deliver the government's Community Rail Development Strategy.

FOCS members help to promote Chippenham station use as part of sustainable transport and connectivity for the whole town. They have a positive view of conservation and the re-use of town buildings (e.g Brunel office) and artefacts such as the station red phone box which they hope to adopt in the not too distant future.

Engineering Work affects trains to the West of England

Between Saturday 9th November and Thursday 14th the railway will be closed between both Castle Cary and Weston super Mare through Taunton to Tiverton Parkway. A two hourly service will run between Pewsey/Westbury and Plymouth via a longer route while replacement buses will operate for journeys to and from Taunton and Exeter St Davids.

Looking ahead to Christmas, engineering work will affect London Paddington, South Wales, services to Gatwick Airport and in the Salisbury area. More details will be in the next newsletter.

Friends Renewals

Most membership renewals fall due at the end of October and we very much hope you will renew for another year. Subscription rates are unchanged but a proposal will be going to the AGM to increase them for the first time. You can beat the rise by subscribing for two years at the current rate – as an individual you would pay £10 to take advantage of the offer which is open until 31st December 2019.

Full details will be on your renewal notice.

ACoRP award for Graham Ellis



Former TW Community Rail Officer and current vice chairman of the Melksham Rail Users Group, Graham Ellis, was named runner up in the Outstanding Volunteer Contribution at the recent ACoRP Community Rail Awards. Generally regarded as the most keenly contested award of the night, Graham was recognised for his work over many years to improve and maintain the service through Melksham.



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