

NEWSLETTER TWENTY FIVE – DECEMBER 2019

Into 2020 at Melksham

Progress with Wiltshire Council has been slower than the TransWilts originally planned. Whilst it had obtained the planning permission in July, it still does not have a site lease to enable work to start. It was discovered that the water supply to the proposed café site has a higher than permitted level of lead content. Wiltshire Council have made arrangements for the old lead pipework to the site to be replaced and the necessary work is being carried out this month.

Consequently, and frustratingly, TW cannot progress further until the new year. There are still a number of legal points to be finalised and the contractors have been put on hold until a new firm start date is agreed in the first quarter next year. Negotiations regarding the use of vacant warehouse at the north of the site are continuing

In order to complete the HUB café conversion TransWilts will be seeking further funding in the next financial year from several sources. The election delayed the outcome of the GWR franchise Direct Award and further CCIF awards for 2020 until the new Secretary of State is available. The result of any grant applications are not expected until January. This delay in further funding will hopefully at least mean that plans to complete all the phases of site work consecutively next year can be drawn up.

TransWilts helps GWR with station survey

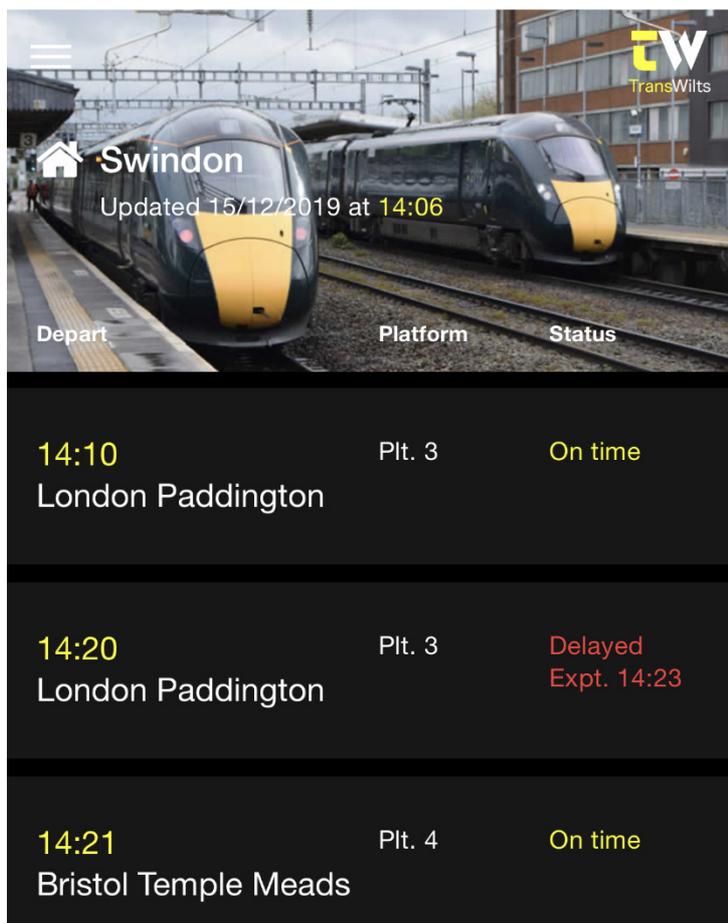
After the success of the passenger survey at Chippenham earlier in the year, GWR asked the TransWilts to assist with a similar project at Swindon Station in October. Over two days



volunteers spoke to passengers about their rail journeys as well as what modes of transport they would be using to their destination after leaving the station.

The results are now being processed by GWR as they look at future plans for the station and integration with public transport in the town including the nearby bus station.

TW App updated



The free TransWilts smartphone app has been updated to work with the latest software versions now available on handheld devices.

Recent updates to operating systems had stopped the app updating while in use. It has now been re-written and works correctly again. The opportunity has also been taken to add additional photographs to illustrate the station pages.

Users can bookmark their usual station and see the latest departures as well as details of the number of carriages for each service.

All Wiltshire stations are included as well as major stations and popular destinations across the South and South West.

It can be downloaded from the usual app stores.

New Year – new fares

The annual fares rise takes effect from 2nd January. The average increase nationwide is 2.7%, some rises on the TransWilts route are fractionally above that. Some sample fares are shown below. New prices in red.

Anytime return fares

Westbury to London (any route)	£203.00	£208.80
Chippenham to London	£178.00	£183.00
Melksham to Swindon	£ 10.20	£ 10.50
Trowbridge to Chippenham (via Melksham)	£ 6.70	£ 6.90

Super Off Peak return fares

Westbury to London (any route)	£ 61.40	£ 63.10
Chippenham to London	£ 55.90	£ 57.40
Melksham to Swindon	£ 7.60	£ 7.80
Trowbridge to Chippenham (via Melksham)	£ 5.50	£ 5.90

Membership renewals

A big thank you to all those who have renewed their Friends' subscription.

If you haven't there is still time. Up to the end of December you can renew for two years at double the current annual subscription and beat the anticipated rise to be decided at next year's AGM.

If you have mislaid your renewal reminder, please contact friends@transwilts.org

Seasonal engineering work

Network Rail will be working in several areas over the Christmas and New Year period.

- No trains will serve London Paddington on Christmas Eve or 27th December, there will then be a reduced service until New Year's Eve.
- Buses will replace trains between Bristol Parkway and South Wales from 27th December until New Year's Day.
- From 27th to 30th December buses will replace trains from North Camp to either Guildford or Gatwick Airport.
- Finally on 27th December there will be work carried out between Warminster and Southampton Central.

Full details are available on GWR's website.

January engineering work on the TransWilts

Engineering work will close the line between Trowbridge and Chippenham via Melksham on Sundays 12th and 19th January. Buses will provide a connection to Swindon at Chippenham.

Meanwhile on 4th January the early train from Warminster to Swindon will not run and the Weymouth to Swindon service will terminate at Westbury with the return service starting back from there.

New timetable up and running

GWR introduced its much heralded new timetable on 15th December.

Mainline services are now retimed to take advantage of the faster acceleration of the IETs which replaced the last of the HST 125s earlier this year. There are also some services which make limited calls. Chippenham will now have an early morning service which runs non stop to London Paddington service. Customers are being urged to check station displays before boarding trains to avoid being over-carried.

On the TransWilts line there is now a new early morning service from Westbury to Swindon in the mornings with a later final service heading south.

TW has produced a timetable leaflet which can be downloaded from the website.

Santa pays a visit

Over 70 parents and children enjoyed a train trip with Santa from Westbury to Swindon on 8th December. Organised by TransWilts and Westbury Lions, GWR kindly provided tickets to allow the group to experience the service as Santa and his elves handed out presents, food and drink throughout the trip.

