TransWilts

Connecting Wiltshire's Communities

incorporating TransWilts Community Rail Partnership

NEWSLETTER TWENTY NINE – AUGUST 2020

The new normal

The easing of lockdown restrictions has seen rail services returning to near pre-virus levels but, with passengers having to keep their distance, lower capacity.

On the TransWilts line Sunday services were restored from the 12th July with six services each way between Swindon and Westbury. These have been particularly welcomed by those who work in shops in Swindon on a Sunday as the early morning northbound service has been re-introduced.

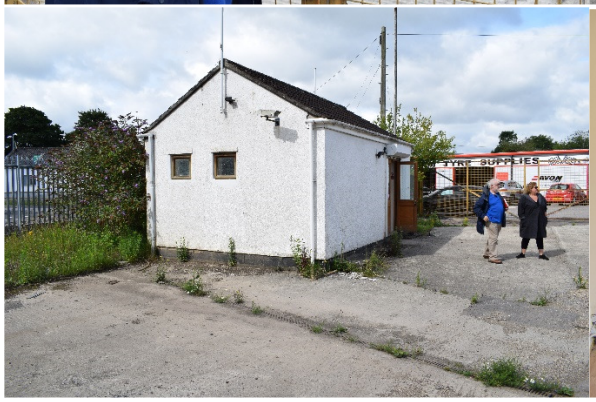
Across the GWR network the company is running over 80% of its previous timetable but is urging passengers to follow guidelines. Where possible customers are asked to book ahead and buy their tickets on line to prevent queues at stations. Face coverings are obligatory except for those excused in the regulations and there is only limited on board catering on a few services on a trial basis.

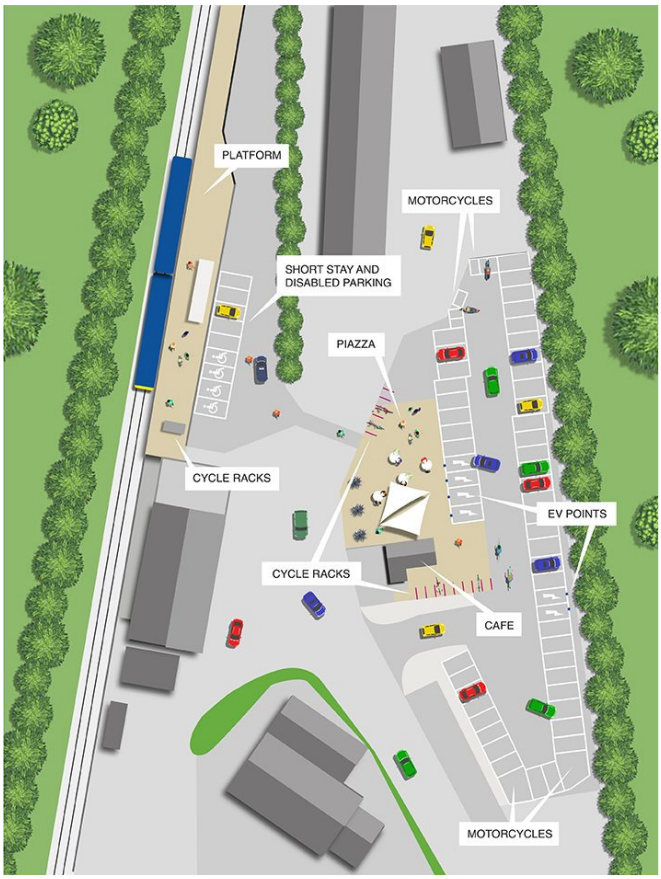
New waiting room at Swindon

While stations have been quieter contractors have taken the opportunity to install a new covered waiting area at the London end of the island platform at Swindon station. The structure will be welcomed by those travelling on the trains calling at platforms 1 and 3 parts of which stop beyond the station canopy. Being of an open air design it is in use while the enclosed ones in the station buildings are closed as part of the virus restrictions.

Work starts at Melksham Station

On 1st July TransWilts signed a lease with Wiltshire Council to take over part of the land at Melksham Station. Work is now starting to convert a disused building into a café and community hub with the surrounding land being converted into additional car parking. The initial phase of work is due to be completed this month.





Once the carpark has been laid out charging will be introduced but a lower level than other station car parks in Wiltshire. Income will be used to cover running costs with any surplus ploughed back into the facilities. Charging in the existing car park was introduced on the 31st July. (See back page)

Cllr Bridget Wayman, Cabinet Member for Transport on Wiltshire Council, said: “We’re delighted to work with TransWilts on this project to improve the facilities for rail users and the people of Melksham. “This community partnership will help to improve public transport provision in Melksham, and indeed the rest of Wiltshire, as the TransWilts line links the county from Royal Wootton Bassett in the north to Salisbury in the south, and on to Swindon, London, and the south coast.”

New notice boards for TransWilts Stations

New TransWilts noticeboards have been erected at Swindon, Melksham, Trowbridge and Westbury stations. They were purchased after a successful application to GWR's Customer and Communities Improvement Fund. The one at Westbury is illuminated by mains power as it is under the station canopy but the other three have solar batteries. Chippenham station's Listed status has precluded installing one there at this stage. They will be used to promote the work of the TransWilts CIC and other rail campaigns.

Engineering work – August, September and October

For the first three weekends in August trains between Swindon and Gloucester will be replaced by road transport while Network Rail carry out track improvement work. Over the bank Holiday weekend at the end of the month trains to and from Swindon and South Wales will be diverted and call at Patchway rather than Bristol Parkway.

On 5th and 6th September buses will replace trains all day at Melksham linking Chippenham and Westbury. A second bus will be required for those travelling between Chippenham and Swindon. Trains between London and Bristol Temple Meads will be diverted via Newbury and not call at Swindon or Chippenham.

Then in October the first three weekends see buses replacing Melksham services on both Saturday and Sunday although trains will be running on the mainline through Chippenham.

Looking for a meeting venue?

Bookings are now being taken for the new White Horse meeting room at Westbury Station. The room offers flexible facilities at an easily accessible location. For details please contact sophie@transwilts.org

Follow the latest progress at Melksham Station at www.melkshamhub.co.uk

Improved platform departure screens for Melksham

Following the introduction of new platform indicators at Chippenham some of the old ones have now been installed at Melksham to provide clearer information than the existing help point.

Don't forget to buy your ticket!

As work continues to lay out the new car park around the site of the future café and community hub at Melksham Station, charging has been introduced at the existing car park on the station approach. Payment is currently via machine but an online facility via RingGo will shortly be available.