TransWilts Connecting Wiltshire's Communities

incorporating TransWilts Community Rail Partnership

NEWSLETTER THIRTY THREE – APRIL 2021

Melksham Café opens

After months of preparation the café at the Melksham Hub opened on the 29th March. Open six days a week the facility will provide hot and cold drinks, cooked snacks and desserts to all comers. On day one there was a steady stream of rail users and workers at local businesses near the station trying out the menu. Initially the café is open for takeaway only but as restrictions are lifted there will be outside seating. Both cash and cards are accepted although contactless is preferred at present.

The opening hours will be constantly reviewed based on customer numbers and the level of rail passengers.

March fare rises announced

The annual fares rise took effect from 1st March. The average increase nationwide is 2.6%, most rises on the TransWilts route are fractionally below that. Some sample fares are shown below. New prices in red.

Anytime return fares

Westbury to London (any route)	£208.80	£214.20
Chippenham to London	£183.00	£187.80
Melksham to Swindon	£ 10.50	£ 10.80
Trowbridge to Chippenham (via Melksham)	£ 6.90	£ 7.10

Super Off Peak return fares

Westbury to London (any route)	£ 63.10	£ 64.70
Chippenham to London	£ 57.40	£ 57.40 (unchanged)
Melksham to Swindon	£ 7.80	£ 7.90
Trowbridge to Chippenham (via Melksham)	£ 5.90	£ 6.10

Forthcoming engineering work sees bus replacement

Work by Network Rail will affect the TransWilts service on Saturday and Sunday 10th/11th April with all services being replaced by buses between Westbury and Chippenham. Trains will then complete the journey to and from Swindon. The same will apply on the 17th/18th and 24th/25th April. The first two services on Sunday 2nd May will also be replaced by road transport. No further work is planned on the line for the rest of May.

Further afield work will affect services south of Westbury on the first four Sundays in May. Extensive engineering work is also due in the Bristol Temple Meads area in July and August – details in the next newsletter.

More timetable changes

As the latest relaxations to the lockdown restrictions came in on 29th March GWR maintained its current timetable but returned more of its services to the usual number of carriages. The next timetable update is due in May when the half hourly service from London to Bristol Temple Meads via Swindon and Chippenham will resume and trains to the South West will be strengthened. Details are now in journey planners so you can find the most convenient train. Also back from now is the first train on a Sunday from Warminster to Swindon via Westbury and Melksham. However the replacement bus will continue to run on weekends where there is engineering work.

Discovery Day at Chippenham

TransWilts will once again be taking part in the Community Rail Network's annual Community Rail in the City campaign, now re-branded Discovery Day, on 30th June. There will be displays and events at Chippenham Station. More details will be added to the website nearer the time.

Wilton Junction Update

Over 30 people gathered for a virtual meeting to hear the latest progress on plans for a new station at Wilton west of Salisbury. The original proposal was for a two platform station on the line from Westbury but this has been revised and the station site has been moved slightly closer to Salisbury near where the line from Exeter meets the Westbury route.

A new four-platform station at Wilton Junction would link into emerging plans for enhanced services on both the West of England and TransWilts routes, and also complementing the proposed masterplan for the Salisbury Station area. The station would be located adjacent to the existing Wilton Park and Ride bus site and would provide sustainable access to Stonehenge World Heritage Site (WHS), Cranborne Chase AONB and National Cycle routes. An application has been made to the Restoring Your Railways fund to provide finance for a detailed business case.

The photograph shows the planned location for the Exeter platforms – the Westbury lines, which will also have platforms, are behind the trees to the left.

GWR MD to be keynote speaker at TransWilts June meeting

The TransWilts is delighted to announce that Mark Hopwood, GWR Managing Director, has agreed to be the main speaker at June's Annual meeting. The event – on 3rd June – will be held virtually. You can register for a free place via the news section on www.transwilts.org

He will be followed on the virtual stage by transport historian Dr David Turner with a talk entitled "Company, staff and community: the different meanings of Best-Kept station competitions. 1850-1939."

In the afternoon the members meeting will see the presentation of the TransWilts CIC Annual Report. Despite all the tribulations of the last 12 months there has still been plenty of activity to report.

TransWilts on BBC Radio Wiltshire

Paul Johnson, chairman of TransWilts, appeared on local radio in March to respond to the Government's announcement that cash would be made available to Wiltshire as part of the Bus Back Better campaign. You can hear the interview on the news page of the TransWilts website.

Reliability much improved

According to figures compiled by the Melksham Rail Users Group, only eight trains out of a total of 457 in February were cancelled and, of those which ran, 14 were significantly late. In March of 477 due to run only four were cancelled and again 14 were more than ten minutes late. These are some of the best figures seen for some time.

Passenger numbers remain low but anecdotal evidence points to a rise in numbers since the schools and colleges went back at the start of March and the slight easing of lockdown restrictions just before Easter.

Electronic car charging proving popular at Melksham

In the first three months of 2021 475kWh of electricity have been used to charge electronic vehicles at Melksham Station. Using industry standard comparisons this represents a saving of 226kg of carbon dioxide.

The amount of CO_2 saved is calculated using the following assumptions: the average electronic vehicle (EV) consumes 1kWh every 4 miles; the average petrol car emits 0.28kg of CO_2 per mile; and the electricity used by an EV will create the equivalent of 0.14kg of CO_2 per mile.

Melksham help point updated

Following the installation of new platform information displays at Melksham, the existing help screen, which previously showed train information, has been taken out of use. However the unit DOES still provide verbal information on request and a link to railway staff in the case of emergency.

Bike hire comes to Melksham Station

As part of the Melksham Masterplan, funded by GWR, the Community Rail Network and Knorr-Bremse, a bicycle hire facility is now available next to the café.

The six bikes can be hired for £2.50 an hour up to a maximum of £15 a day. Full details are available by downloading the "app-bike" app from your usual app provider.

Growth in the GWR Region

Two new Community Rail Partnerships have been set up in the GWR area in recent months. They engage communities and help people get the most from their railways, promoting social inclusion and sustainable travel, working alongside train operators to bring about improvements, and bringing stations back to life.

One is for the service operating between Reading and Basingstoke. Tentatively proposed to be called "Brunel Line" it will initially be under the guidance of Nick Farthing from Three Rivers CRP.

The Heart of Wessex CRP is being reborn as South Wessex covering the route Weymouth to Westbury including Frome. Bob Owens will be the chair and the CRP will operate as a Community Interest Company. TransWilts will continue with responsibility for Westbury Station as one of 10 CRPs in the GWR area.

MELKSHAM hub Café

Melksham Hub
Station Approach, Melksham, SN12 8BN
07554 153858
@Melkshamhubcafé

Menu

Breakfast

Light Bite Breakfast 3.60

4 Items - choose from
1 sausage, 1 rasher of bacon, fried or scrambled egg, mushrooms, beans and tomatoes.

Small Breakfast 4.25

5 items - choose from
1 sausage, 1 rasher of bacon, fried or scrambled egg, mushrooms, beans, tomatoes, black pudding and toast.

Regular Breakfast 6.40

8 items - choose from
2 sausages, 2 rashers of bacon, 2 fried eggs, mushrooms, beans, tomatoes, black pudding and toast.

Large Breakfast 7.85

11 items - 2 sausages, 2 rashers of bacon, 2 fried eggs, mushrooms, beans, tomatoes, black pudding and toast.

Kids Meal

Sandwich, packet of crisps and a drink in a kid's activity bag.

Kids meal 3.50

Burgers and Hot Dog

Comes with lettuce tomato onion and/or fried onions and a choice of burger relish, mayo, garlic, hot chilli sauce or tomato ketchup.

Regular Hamburger	3.85
Regular Cheeseburger	4.15
Large Hamburger	6.25
Large Cheeseburger	6.50
Hot Dog	3.15
Vegan Burger	6.50

Sandwiches and Baguettes

Cheese Sandwich	1.50
Cheese Baguette	1.75
Ham Sandwich	1.75
Ham Baguette	2.35
Tuna Sandwich	2.05
Tuna Baguette	2.65
Sausage Sandwich	2.05
Sausage Baguette	2.65
Bacon Sandwich	1.75
Bacon Baguette	2.35

Cakes

Chocolate Fudge Cake	2.25
Victoria Sponge GF	2.25
Coffee Cake	2.25
Cookie	1.00

Hot drinks

Americano 8oz	1.40
Americano 12oz	1.70
Cappucino 8oz	1.65
Cappucino 12oz	2.05
Tea	1.10
Hot Chocolate	2.45

Cold Drinks

Pepsi	1.20
Diet Pepsi	1.00
7up	1.00
Orange Tango	1.00
Bottled Water	0.50
Fruit Shoot	0.75