TransWilts

Connecting Wiltshire's Communities

incorporating TransWilts Community Rail Partnership

NEWSLETTER THIRTY FIVE – AUGUST 2021

Steady as you go

On the 19th July the much heralded relaxation of many virus restrictions has led to calls for rail travellers to still exercise caution when on board trains or at stations. Face coverings are no longer a legal requirement but while GWR has not made the continuing wearing of one a condition of carriage, it is urging people who are not exempt to continue to wear one, particularly on crowded services. If you are travelling to London it is still mandatory to wear one on Transport for London trains and buses.

All seats on buses are now available for use, and while people are being encouraged to use window seats on trains as they become busy it is recognised that on occasions people from different households may have to sit next to each other. GWR is encouraging people to reserve seats in advance, but those without will not be denied travel.

Travel with confidence

We are

Ventilating trains to refresh air

Extensively cleaning trains and stations

Improving information about journeys and trains

In crowded spaces, wear a face covering out of respect to others

Events at Melksham Hub

A number of community events have been held at the Melksham Hub since restrictions have eased.

On the 17th July there was a Bric a Brac sale, tombola, live music and family fun day to raise finds for Project SEMH.

The group, which is based adjacent to the station and café in Melksham provides an alternative option for students who find mainstream education not suitable for them.

Proud Melksham has also staged two meets at the Hub.

On Saturday 14th August there will be a car boot sale at the Hub. Full details in the panel opposite.

Bristol work continues

Network Rail's project to improve access to and from Bristol Temple Meads is continuing.

Between the 9th and 13th August there will be no direct GWR trains from Temple Meads to London, Cardiff, Gloucester or the South Coast. In addition Cross Country services will not call at Temple Meads.

From the 14th and 30th August trains to and from Temple Meads will be diverted via Bristol Parkway and will not call at either Chippenham or Bath Spa. Buses will run between Temple Meads and Bath Spa, where there will be trains to and from Paddington.

There are no engineering works planned for August on the TransWilts route however disruption is due on Sunday 5th September. Details will be available shortly.

Children's Discount at STEAM

Until 5th September Swindon's STEAM museum is offering every adult buying an admission ticket the opportunity to add up to four Under-16s for a £1 each.

Tickets must be booked in advance on line.

TransWilts reliability takes a dive

A combination of staff absence, rolling stock issues and infrastructure problems saw a big increase in the cancellation rate of TransWilts services during July.

Traincrew being forced to isolate caused a number of trains to fail to run at short notice including the morning and evening rush hour trains. Alternative road replacement buses and taxis were laid on but not always well advertised. This was particularly the case at Melksham where the screen which should carry the information has been out of order for a while. TransWilts and the Melksham Transport Users Group have both been chasing GWR to get it repaired.

A broken down freight train and a points failure on the Berks & Hants route through Newbury led to several long distance expresses being sent through Melksham at the expense of the local service.

With changes due to the self isolation regulations from the 16th August as well as the end of the peak holiday season a fortnight later GWR are hoping the staffing situation will improve

GWR launches Flexi-Season tickets

With a move away from the traditional five days a week office commute GWR, alongside other operators, has brought in more flexible multi journey tickets. The tickets are aimed at those who travel into the office less frequently. They are valid for eight days in a given month. The greatest savings can be had the longer the distance travelled. However a Westbury to Swindon (via Melksham) flexi-season is £83.20 which gives a slight saving on buying eight Anytime Day returns at £11.60 each.

GO-OP unveils latest plans

GO-OP, which is hoping to run long distance trains from the West Country to the Midlands via Melksham, unveiled its latest plans at its AGM last month. Its long term ambition is to run its service using battery trains. However the meeting was told it is looking at acquire up to three diesel trains. It currently hopes to start a service from Bishop's Lydeard on the West Somerset Railway to Swindon in 2022 with three return trips seven days a week.

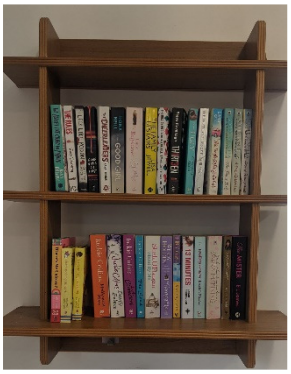
White Horse Room now taking bookings

The final legal documents have been signed and bookings are now being taken for the White Horse Meeting room at Westbury Station. It was converted with funding from GWR and the Community Rail Network. Details from Sophie Martin sophie@transwilts.org

Volunteers complete outdoor area for Melksham Hub

A group of volunteers from TransWilts and Melksham Transport Users Group have completed over a month of work to erect a large gazebo outside the café at the Melksham Hub. The structure will provide a covered area for those eating and drinking adjacent to the building.

Book Swap launched



If you have any books you have finished with you can exchange them for an alternative one at the newly launched bookswap at the Melksham Hub café.

It's free and available during opening hours.