TransWilts

Connecting Wiltshire's Communities

incorporating TransWilts Community Rail Partnership

NEWSLETTER FIFTY – FEBRUARY 2024

Ten Years on the TransWilts

Those behind the success of the TransWilts joined well wishers at Westbury in December to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the enhanced service between Westbury and Swindon.

GWR Business Assurance director Joe Graham noted how more than a million miles had been travelled on the line since 2013 while others charted the growth in passenger numbers and hopes for the future.

See back page for more pictures from the day.

One dispute settled, another rumbles on

After more than a year of industrial action, members of the RMT have reached an agreement to end their dispute. Members, who mainly represent on board staff and station workers, had staged a number of walk outs and overtime bans since June 2022. Meanwhile drivers belonging to ASLEF are continuing their action with a series of strikes across the country. GWR members have been told not to report for work on Monday 5th February while SWR drivers walked out on the 30th January. An overtime is also in place until the 6th February.

Engineering Work – February/March 2024

Buses will replace trains between Swindon and Gloucester on Sunday 4th February while work at Trowbridge on the weekends of the 10th/11th and 17th/18th February means TransWilts services will be replaced by buses between Westbury and Chippenham. This will also mean buses from Westbury to Bradford-on-Avon or Bristol Temple Meads. On Easter Sunday and the first Sunday in April services west of Westbury will not operate due to track improvement work. Again coach replacements will be laid on.

On the weekend of the 24th/25th February there will be minor changes to TransWilts services as some West of England services will be diverted via Melksham due to engineering work in the Newbury area.

Passenger Numbers/Station figures

The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) has published its latest station usage figures. They cover the period from April 2022 to March 2023.

	2022-23	2021-22	% Rise
Bedwyn	81,534	74,180	9.91
Chippenham	1,444,874	1,124,226	28.52
Dilton Marsh	12,076	8,666	39.35
Melksham	64,206	52,342	22.67
Pewsey	181,100	158,872	13.99
Swindon	2,588,014	2,048,246	26.35
Trowbridge	734,768	640,376	14.74
Warminster	295,452	283,894	4.07
Westbury	518,996	438,970	18.23

All local stations have seen increases over the last 12 months as numbers continue to improve after the pandemic. However most are yet to return to the levels seen in 2019.

GWR's latest figures for journeys on the TransWilts line in November 2023 show a rise of nearly 10% compared to last year but it is still down 17% on 2019 levels. 18,661 journeys were made in the latest four week period.

Reliability no better

The TransWilts service continues to be blighted by cancellations and alterations. As before the reasons are various. Staff shortages and rolling stick issues account for some but also issues with the infrastructure such as points and signalling plus the occasional need to send long distance services along the single line when there are problems on the usual route via Newbury. In December there were only nine days when the full service ran without issue.

2024 fare rises

The Government has announced rail fares will rise by around 4.9% in March. It intervened after last July's retail price index, which is usually used to determine fare rises, hit 9%. Details on the effect on local prices will be in the next newsletter.

Siemens in new partnership with Community Rail

Technology giant Siemens, which has offices in Chippenham, has joined forces with the Community Rail Network volunteering project. Locally the company will be looking to provide staff working in their free time for projects at local stations along the TransWilts line.

TransWilts Community Rail Officer Sophie Martin (left) and Paul Webster – Community Rail Network meet Liz Chawner from Siemens Mobility in Chippenham

BTP on hand to help secure your bike

Officers from British Transport Police have been at Chippenham offering to security mark bicycles without charge. The process makes it much easier to reunite owners with their machines if they are stolen.

GWR have been increasing security of bike storage areas on stations with many being checked during the day and being covered by CCTV. However having your bike marked not only helps when leaving it at a station but also when unattended elsewhere.

BTP will be running other marking events in the future. Look out for details on our website and social media feeds.

Trowbridge
Swindon
Chippenham
Westbury
THE BRISTOLIAN
GWR

GWR
GWR
10
Over 1,000,000