TransWilts

Connecting Wiltshire's Communities

incorporating TransWilts Community Rail Partnership

NEWSLETTER FIFTY TWO – JUNE 2024

Eyes down for a full train

A dozen people from wellbeing group Live Well Swindon joined TransWilts and GWR for a train journey with a difference in April. While travelling from Swindon to Westbury and back they enjoyed several games of bingo with prizes donated by a number of organisations including Siemens in Chippenham. For many it was their first experience of train travel. Sadly we cannot promise they will have bingo on board when travelling again, but we do hope to organise other sessions.

Melksham gets a sign

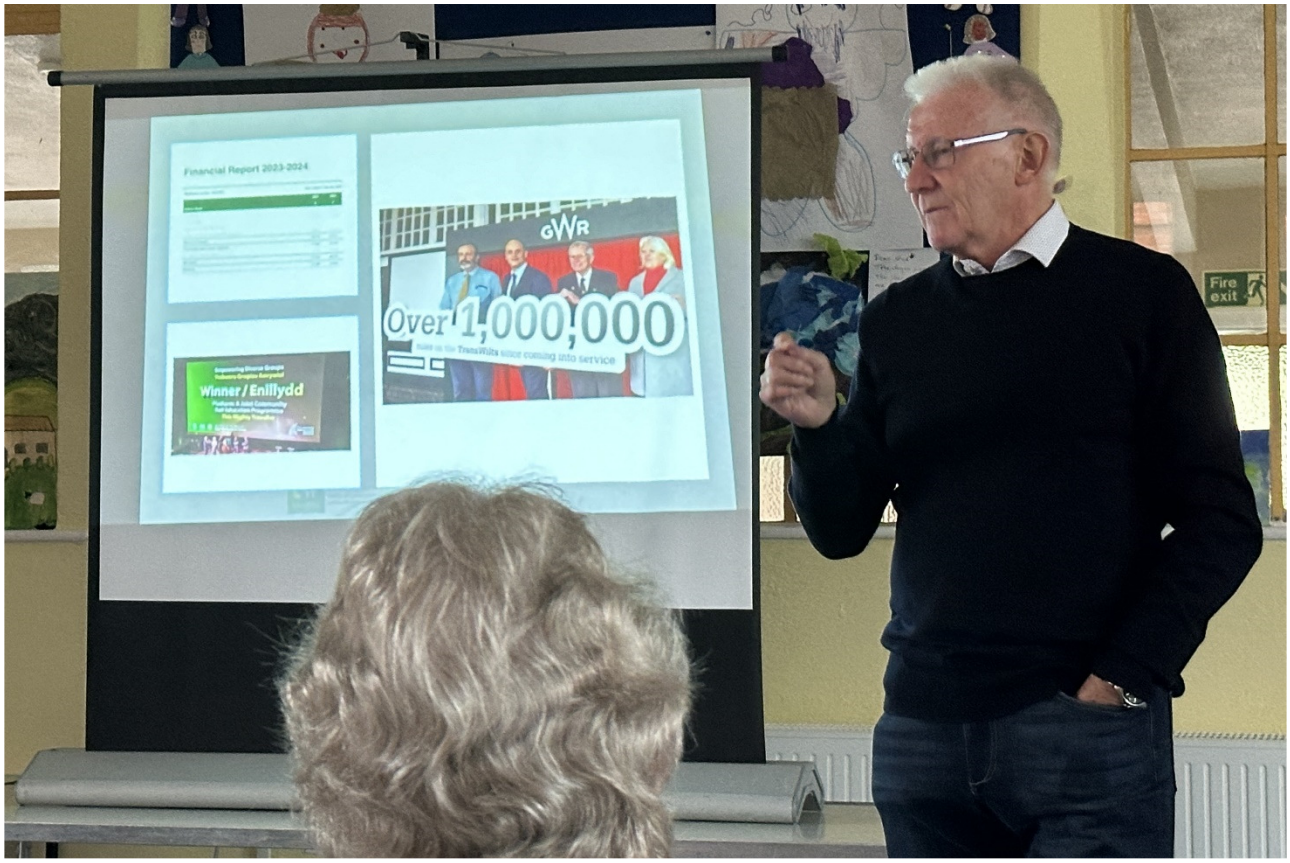
After years of protracted negotiations, Melksham Station has at last got a totem advertising its presence. Investigations to establish the ownership of the land and find the whereabouts of underground services had frustrated attempts to get the post erected. However in May it was put up at the junction of Station Approach and Bath Road.

Passenger numbers static

The number of people using the TransWilts line in April was virtually the same as April in 2023 at 17,145. GWR believe the statistics were affected by industrial action and the earlier date for Easter this year. Numbers are still down on pre-Covid levels.

New chair outlines priorities

In one of his first public engagements since taking up the role of chair, Paddy Bradley spoke to a packed meeting of the West Wiltshire Rail Users Group in Trowbridge in May.



In an hour long talk he expressed the desire to build on the firm foundations of the past and make rail and bus travel a viable proposition for those who currently drive. A reliable service was vital to this in the short term while more frequent trains and new stations closer to people's homes linked by buses were the next step on the way. TransWilts can help as a catalyst with this but looks to work with other stakeholders to deliver it.

TW prepares for annual meeting

Members have been sent details of the Annual meeting to be held on the 17th June. In the meantime our latest annual report is available to download from the front page of the website.

Parking to be reduced at Salisbury Station

The pay and display spaces at the front of Salisbury station will be suspended from June 10th for around 12 months. This is to allow to allow work on a five million pound scheme to improve the appearance and accessibility of the station and provide better bus interchange facilities. Parking will still be available at the western end of the carpark and a new car park is due to open over the road from the station by the Royal Mail Delivery office later this year.

SW Trains has advised anyone having problems trying to park can use the facilities at nearby Andover station.

Imber Day 2024

The lost village of Imber on Salisbury Plain will be open for the annual bus rally on Saturday 17th August. The entire population of the village was evacuated in 1943 to allow the wartime forces to train. It was expected the villagers would return after the war but that never happened and the area has remained off limits except on a few days each year.

Each year a number of transport professionals come together to organise a series of bus routes across the Plain from Warminster station. Heritage Routemasters and more recent models have featured over the years with the money raised going to various charities including the Royal British Legion and the friends of St Giles Church in the village.

New Timetable

GWR's new timetable comes into effect on 2nd June. The TransWilts service sees little change except for the usual Saturday summer extension to and from Weymouth.

June/July Engineering work

On the 9th June and again on the 21st July the first Sunday morning TransWilts round trip from Westbury will be replaced by a bus to and from Chippenham with rail connections to Swindon.

Further afield the Severn Tunnel will be closed for improvement works from 3rd to the 18th July and again on the weekend of the 27th/28th July. During this time trains between Swindon and South Wales will be diverted via Gloucester with only a limited service to Bristol Parkway. Services between Cardiff and Portsmouth via Westbury will only run to and from Bristol Parkway. On the 15th and 16th June and again on the 23rd trains from Swindon to Gloucester will only run as far as Stroud with buses available to continue the journey. There are also works in the Oxford area at the end of July. Full details are available on GWR.com.

Trowbridge Tidy-Up

Volunteers from Siemens descended on Trowbridge Station at the beginning of May to brighten up the platforms ready for summer.

In a busy morning they tided up the planters and replaced the spring flowers with summer bedding plants.