Introduction

This document contains all our printed newsletters (Parish News Newsletters) and emailed newsletters since we formed in 2006. There are 91 Parish News newsletters and 230 emailed newsletters. Our email list stands at approximately 700 recipients.

Parish News Newsletters

Parish News: June 2006

Getting To Heathrow or Gatwick

The recent threat to our rail service has been a wake up call that we need to make better use of our public transport services or risk them being cut. The Parish News wishes to help promote the services by a monthly article on ways that public transport can be used in the Bedwyn area. This month we'll discuss getting to and from the UK's two most popular airports.

Did you know that there is a daily coach service to Heathrow? It picks up at Marlborough, Froxfield, Hungerford and Newbury. Departing at 0835, 0850, 0855 and 0915 respectively, arriving Heathrow and 1015. In the evening it departs Heathrow at 1845. It's run by National Express and tickets can be purchased from Bath Travel in Marlborough High Street. You can use the bus to Marlborough or the train to Hungerford or Newbury to pick it up. Phone 08705 80 80 80 for further information.

The most popular way to get to Heathrow is to take the train from Bedwyn station and pick up the RailAir coach service at Reading. To reach the coach departure point head through the main ticket barrier then take a diagonal left to the far side of the station concourse. Through tickets can be purchased on the train from Bedwyn. Coaches depart every twenty minutes from Reading during Monday to Friday daytime, every thirty minutes at other times. The service runs between just after 0600 to just before midnight. There are set down points outside Terminals 1, 2 and 3. For those wishing to travel to Terminal 4 alight at Terminal 1 and take the Heathrow Express (free between terminals). When returning the coaches should be picked up at the Central Bus Station, Heathrow. See www.railair.com or phone 0118 957 9425 for further details.

For those wishing to reduce the cost of getting to Heathrow you can take the train between Bedwyn and Slough (usually involving a change at Reading) then make use of the local bus service to Heathrow. At Slough cross the internal footbridge and exit the station through the main ticket hall. The bus station is on the right of the slip road, directly ahead. Look out for service 75 or 76 departing every twenty minutes. As the service is used by local workers it's no more than a few pounds.

Gatwick Airport is better served by trains than Heathrow with direct services from Reading. Simply board at Bedwyn and buy a through ticket then change at Reading.

For train times please see www.nationalrail.co.uk or call 08457 484950

Steve Smith

Parish News: July 2006

New Timetables and Time for a Walk

This month we'll cover two topics in our regular public transport slot. Firstly the summer train timetable came into force on June 11th. The Cross Keys and The Stores have copies, including the bus times. Alternatively you can route plan on www.nationalrail.co.uk or call 08457 484950. The timetables are also posted at the station or a full copy can also be downloaded from http://www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/Documents/Custom/Timetables/Table%204B-F.pdf

As the summer is (finally) here this is a good opportunity to describe an easy walk that can be made using the trains. As the train approximately follows the path of the canal the train can be used to get to either Hungerford or Kintbury then the tow path used to walk back. From Hungerford this takes just under two hours, from Kintbury around three hours. As the walk follows the canal it is flat and easy to follow.

I'd recommend you get the train out and walk back, this way you are not worrying about arriving on time. On a Saturday convenient trains depart Bedwyn at 0957, 1057, 1159, 1257, 1355, 1455, 1557, 1654 and 1755. The Saturday timetable changes a little from September 16th and the most suitable trains depart Bedwyn at 0957, 1057, 1157, 1251, 1355, 1457, 1557 and 1647. On Sundays the best trains are at 1047, 1250, 1450 and 1650.

If you decide to go to Kintbury the canal is easily found from the station. From Hungerford walk back towards the Bedwyn direction until you reach the High Street. Turn right, cross the road then keep left at the bridge over the canal.

Steve Smith

Parish News: August 2006

Cutting the Costs of Rail Travel from Bedwyn

In this months slot we'll take a look at getting the best value on train fares from our station. But first take note that the on peak standard day return ticket from Bedwyn to Paddington is £35 whereas from Pewsey it's £71 and Swindon it's £82. So we are already a very competitive station – spread the word and keep our station supported!

Now I just mentioned the £35 peak fare from Bedwyn. This applies to the 0608, 0642, 0710 and 0758 Monday to Friday services. From the 0857 service onwards the fare drops to £19.40 (the same as the weekend price). When purchasing you can also add on the price of the tube tickets, the paper tickets issued can now be shown at the underground barriers.

Now here's a little loophole. If you are taking an early weekday train and set to pay the £35 then please take note that a peak day return to Slough is £14.30 and a peak day return from Slough to Paddington is £12.00. You don't need to be too hot on maths to work out that makes the total fare £26.30. So is this valid to do? Yes, if you catch the 0710 as it actually stops at Slough. You don't need to alight.

Further savings can be had using discount cards. For the childfree 26 to 59 age group a Network Railcard gives you a third off standard off peak fares, within the South East region. This makes a day return to London under £13. If you are travelling in a group you can get the same discount for up to three extra adults and 60% off for up to four children. The card costs £20. I recently used mine for a day return to Brighton and the ticket was just £20 (including the cross London tube fare). Note that if you are using your card on a Monday to Friday a minimum fare of £10 applies.

For those with children a Family Railcard could be a better purchase as this covers the whole of Britain, not just the South East. This allows up to four adults and four children to travel on the same card. Adults get a third off and children get 60% off. This card can have two named adults as the cardholder but a journey must be made with at least one adult and one child.

For the 60+ age group a Senior Railcard is the one to buy. Again this gives a third reduction and applies to the whole of Britain.

For the 16 to 25 year olds a Young Persons Railcard is the thing to buy and applies to the whole of Britain, again giving a third off.

From our station the earliest any of these cards can be used is the 0957 Monday to Friday. At weekends no restrictions apply.

All cards cost £20 and can be bought by picking up a leaflet at Newbury or buy one by calling 08457 000125. For those with disabilities there's a Disabled Persons Railcard, currently priced at £14. Details of all cards are on www.railcard.co.uk

Finally www.firstminutefares.co.uk can offer further ticket discounts but I've not seen any discounts offered from Bedwyn. However this site is a good way to buy any tickets online.

Steve Smith

Parish News: September 2006

Getting to the Hospital by Bus

In this months public transport slot I need to start with a whinge about hospital car parking charges. It's not the charges that bother me per se but the manner in which on arrival one has to predict the length of time a visit will take. It seems grossly unfair that such instances as a consultant running late can cause his or her patients to incur parking fines. When parking at Heathrow one pays on exit, a delayed plane might mean an extra hour on the parking charges but not a fine.

But enough of my grumbles, there's an alternative. Take the bus! From Great Bedwyn we have a direct bus service to Savernake Hospital and it's possible to get to or from the Great Western Hospital with just one change. I hope the following timetables help:

Monday to Friday:

Bedwyn	0655	0745	0809	0853	0912	0956	1038	1138	1248	1349	1438	1538	1643	1800	1849	2010
Savernake Hospital	0705	0755	0818	0903	-	1006	-	1148	-	1359	-	1548	1653	-	1859	2020
Marlborough	0710	0800	0824	0909	0939	1015	1105	1154	1315	1405	1505	1553	1658	1827	1904	2025
Marlborough	0725	0830	0830	0933	0955	-	1115	1215	1333	1415	1515	1615	1743	1855	-	2030
GW Hospital	0735	0847	0847	1018	1020	-	1140	1240	1418	1440	1540	1640	1828	1920	-	2055

GW Hospital		0637	0701		0747	0747	0952	1047	1125	1247	1325	1425	1625	1647	1730	1832
Marlborough		0705	0730		0850	0850	1012	1131	1155	1331	1355	1455	1653	1739	1800	1850
Marlborough	0640	0720	0800	0830	0850	0935	1025	1149	1225	1338	1415	1525	1700	1740	1835	1955
Savernake Hospital	0644	-	0804	0834	-	0939	-	1153	-	1342	-	-	1704	1744	-	1959
Bedwyn	0655	0745	0815	0850	0915	0952	1050	1206	1250	1355	1440	1550	1715	1755	1900	2010

Saturday:

Bedwyn	0750	0838	0916	1038	1246	1345	1438	1550	1642	1745	1855	2010
Savernake Hospital	0800	0853	0926	-	1256	1355	1448	1600	-	-	-	2020
Marlborough	0805	-	0932	1105	1302	1401	1454	1606	1709	1812	1922	2025
Marlborough GW Hospital	0830	-	0945	1115	1315	1415	1515	1615	1743	1855	2030	2030
	0847	-	1002	1140	1340	1440	1540	1640	1828	1920	2055	2055

GW Hospital	0701	0750	0847	1047	1225	1247	1425	1542	1625	1725	1832
Marlborough	0730	0820	0931	1131	1255	1331	1455	1600	1653	1755	1850
Marlborough	0735	0825	0935	1135	1320	1333	1525	1625	1730	1840	1955
Savernake Hospital	0739	0829	0939	1139	-	1337	-	1629	1734	1844	1959
Bedwyn	0750	0840	0952	1152	1345	1350	1550	1642	1745	1855	2010

Steve Smith

Parish News: October 2006

How to Obtain Bus and Train Timetables

In the letter pages of the last Parish News Alison Bennett pointed out that she managed to use her Senior Railcard on the 0857, when I'd stated the earliest possible was the 0957. I've done some research (both by enquiring of prices and re-researching my previous sources of information). What it appears is that if you are travelling wholly within the London and South East area then it's the 0957, if travelling outside that area then earlier trains are possible. What this tells me is that the ticket collectors are probably confused by this myriad of detail and it's always worth asking if you can use your card. I apologise for not having picked up on this for my earlier article.

For this months article I'd like to pass on how to get sent paper copies of the bus and timetables for the Bedwyn area. You can either call 01225 713446, email buses@wiltshire.gov.uk or write to:

Wiltshire County Council E.S.D

Trowbridge

Wiltshire

BA14 8JD

In each case ask for the bus and train timetables for the Bedwyn area. Also ask to be put on the mailing list so whenever the new timetables come out you automatically get sent copies.

Steve Smith

Parish News: November 2006

Christmas Shopping By Train

With Christmas next month it's time to think about shopping. With busy roads and car parks taking the train can certainly take some of the strain away from those shopping expeditions.

The train to Newbury takes you right near to the heart of the shopping area. Though it can still be tempting to take the car the train certainly wins if you are considering visiting the Oracle in Reading. The Oracle contains many stores such as Debenhams, Boots, House of Fraser, Disney Store, HMV. It is also near to many of Readings other shops such as John Lewis and Marks & Spencer.

With our hourly Saturday train service you can be shopping in under an hour. To get to the Oracle in Reading exit the station through the main entrance turn left, and follow the road straight ahead (Station Road leading into Queen Victoria Street). You will meet with Broad Street (opposite John Lewis). Turn left and The Oracle is on the right hand side, opposite Marks & Spencer.

Steve Smith

Parish News: December 2006

Festive Train Events

With the Christmas season upon us using the train can be an excellent way of leaving the car behind and enjoying a few after work drinks with colleagues or friends. A peak time day return from Bedwyn to Newbury is just £5.10. From December 11th the last weekday trains back are at 2125, 2230 and 2330.

But why stop there? For those that work in Newbury the train is a very cheap means of getting to work on a daily basis. The weekly, monthly and annual season ticket prices are £20.80, £79.90 and £832 respectively. The annual season ticket equates to around twelve pence a mile, cheaper and less polluting than taking the car.

If you fancy a festive day at the races Newbury Races run on Friday 29th of December. A direct train departs from Bedwyn, to Newbury Racecourse station, at 1137 arriving at 1157 in time for the first race at 1230. The last race is at 1540 with direct return train departures at 1609 and 1709.

Finally on Monday December 11th we'll get our first train west for what I've been led to believe is around forty years! It departs Bedwyn at 1814, arriving Pewsey 1822. There's a train back at 1933, arriving 1942. Just enough time to enjoy a celebratory beer at a pub in Pewsey. If anybody fancies joining me on this pilgrimage then please do.

Steve Smith

Parish News: January 2007

In November the Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group had our six monthly meeting with Richard Rowland, Regional Manager, London & Thames Valley for First Great Western. The main points of the meeting were:

We thanked Richard for:

- Resolving the poor weekday evening return service from Paddington.
- The new 0927 departure west on a Saturday and the new 1333 and 1648 arrivals from the west on a Saturday.
- The new 1330 departure west on a weekday and the 1333 arrival from the west on a weekday.
- Resolving the two hour gap on a Saturday evening.
- Including Pewsey on our timetable book. Previously Pewsey was omitted even though some of our services call there.
- Arranging that from May 19th 2008 we will get a stop on the weekday 0818 Paddington Exeter departure. This will call at Bedwyn at about 0928. Given we have weekday arrivals from the west at 1333 and 1946 this really opens up the possibility for weekday trips to places such as Pewsey, Bath, Bristol, Exeter and Portsmouth. Please consider if you can use these for commuting, business or pleasure. **Richard pointed out that he had to fight to get this for us as when it was proposed the modelling software they use predicted this as a loss maker. As it is unlikely that this service will be used for arrivals we'll lose it unless we use it for westbound trips.**
- Getting Bedwyn station back on a mini timetable booklet (this is the timetable D6).

We re-raised:

- Our request to be able to use cheap day return tickets on the 0840 departure. Richard promised to resubmit our case.
- The Marlborough bus service to appear on the timetables. This will be pressed for when the Bedwyn rail service timetable has stabilised.
- Punctuality, reliability and station screens often not working. Richard assured us that the ongoing investment will improve this.

- The business of having a convenient train arriving in Reading for a 0900 start. Richard assures us that they have tried their best to resolve this but alas it has proven impossible. For now we stressed the point that making the 0832 fast Newbury to Reading service more reliable would greatly help. We will keep this campaign open.

We raised the following new items:

- We asked if the new Saturday westbound services are permanent and were informed that they are apart from the summer holiday period where rolling stock is required elsewhere.
- We noted that a two hour gap has appeared on Saturday lunchtime timetable (arrivals at 1131, 1232 then 1432 but departures okay at 1137,1307,1333 and 1437). We asked if we could have a stop on the 1322 departure from Hungerford to fill this. Richard will put a bid in to see if this can be arranged for December 2008.
- We requested if our Sunday trains could connect with West Country connections at Newbury. Richard promised to see if some minor timetable adjustments could improve this.
- We asked if it would be possible to have an earlier Sunday service to meet the needs of some people that work in Newbury on a Sunday. Richard informed us that this will not be economic.
- Why some journey times to Paddington have increased. Richard informed us that as the Adelantes are being replaced by upgraded HST trains then the services have had to be retimed.
- We pointed out that the First Great Western website was indicating that there are now no restrictions on the return use of cheap day return tickets during the peak evening period. Richard was surprised to hear this and since the meeting the website has reverted to show cheap day return tickets are now not valid on our weekday return trains between 1633 and 1903 inclusive.
- We asked why has the 0705 has become the 0650 and an additional 0708 service (to Reading) been added? Richard said the reason was the switching to the use of the modified HST trains and timetabling it from the west.

Happy Traveling!

Steve Smith

Parish News: February 2007

Go West!

I'm sure you've heard that we now have some trains going west. It's just a small number and on weekdays only. However, it's a start and the Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group intends to see if this service can be improved over time, especially at weekends.

Of course it's always been possible to travel west from Bedwyn by changing at Newbury. In recent years a new westbound service from Hungerford means that changes can be made at Hungerford. I hope the following (contrived from a number of timetables) helps.

Monday to Friday:

Bedwyn	0837			1307			1644			1814			1915		
Hungerford	0843	0932		1313	1318		1650	1725							
Pewsey		0945			1330			1739		1824		1838	1926		
Westbury		1003	1012		1348	1412		1757	1806	1845	1851	1857	1942	1956	2012
Bath			1037			1437			1837		1919				2037
Castle Cary		1020			1405			1814				1915		2013	
Frome													1955		
Taunton		1040			1426			1835				1937		2034	
Tiverton		1052						1846				1950		2045	
Exeter		1113			1453			1905				2007		2106	

Exeter			0644				1207			1510					1948		
Tiverton							1220			1523					2002		
Taunton			0707	0715			1234			1537					2015		
Frome		0629															
Castle Cary				0736			1254			1557					2035		
Bath	0602					1234			1534			1835		2021			
Westbury	0632	0639		0755		1257	1313		1557	1616		1859	1918	2050	2053		
Pewsey		0656		0814			1332			1632			1933		2109		
Hungerford							1343	1422		1644	1717						
Newbury				0833	0841										2127	2125	2230
Bedwyn		0704			0901			1431			1725		1942			2145	2250

Saturday:

Bedwyn	0837			1137	1312				1837			1937		
Hungerford	0843	0918		1143	1318	1318								
Newbury									1854	1948		1954	2046	
Pewsey		0931				1331				2009			2106	
Westbury		0949	1012			1349	1412			2028	2032		2130	2132
Bath			1037				1437				2102			2206
Castle Cary		1006				1406				2044			2149	
Taunton		1027				1433		1448		2106			2212	
Tiverton		1038						1501		2119			2225	
Exeter		1057						1518		2138			2242	

Exeter			0641			1207			1459				1753	
Tiverton			0656			1221			1513					
Taunton			0710			1234			1528	1534			1817	
Castle Cary			0732			1259				1559			1838	
Bath	0621	0721			1234			1534				1821		
Westbury	0651	0752	0754		1257	1317		1557		1617		1850	1857	
Pewsey			0813			1334				1633				
Hungerford						1345	1421			1645	1710			
Newbury			0832	0858									1931	1953
Bedwyn				0918			1431				1731			2013

Note that journeys are also possible on Sundays (changing at Newbury) but the timetables vary every month or so. Therefore it'd be too complex to layout here. Instead call 08457 484950 for advice.

Steve Smith

Parish News: March 2007

March Transport Update

I hope last month's west bound timetable was of use. It was pointed out to me that there are many trains between Westbury and Bristol so that's a possibility as well as the Bath connections I listed.

The ticket sellers on our trains now issue cardboard tickets. These are much better than the paper ones as they allow easier access through the barriers at Reading and Paddington and access to the tube. No more queuing to swap your ticket at Paddington.

Some of the local turbo trains now have CCTV installed. It's not yet on all of the trains but it is a start. When fully deployed it'll make late night travelling that little bit safer.

Finally if you are over 60, or have certain disabilities, have you got your free bus pass yet? It allows you free travel on most buses. You can call 01380 734669 or Carole Butler on 01380 729408 to get an application form.

Happy travelling!

Steve Smith

Parish News: April 2007

Train Sporting

Our train service from Bedwyn is a great way to attend sporting events, leaving the stresses and strains of taking the car behind. Newbury Racecourse and the Madejski Stadium (where both Premiership Reading Football Club and Premiership London Irish Rugby Union play) can easily be reached from Bedwyn Station.

Newbury Racecourse can be reached either by direct services, by changing at Newbury or walking from Newbury station. Next race days are April 20th and 21st. For further information check out www.newbury-racecourse.co.uk or call 01635 40015

The Madejski Stadium can be reached by taking a train to Reading then catching a number 79 bus (call 0118 959 4000 for further information) from just outside the front of the station. Tickets for both the rugby and the football can be obtained by calling **0870 999 1871.**

Steve Smith

Parish News: May 2007

Fares Fair

As part of the Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group we sometimes get requests for information. One question that has cropped up a number of times is what the rules are for using cheap day return tickets on trains back from Paddington. I could not find out from any First Great Western literature so I sent them an email. Six weeks later came the reply:

"With both the Network Awaybreak and the Cheap Day Return tickets you may travel on the 16.18 departure from London Paddington, the ticket is then restricted until the 20.00 departure. Should you need to travel between these times then you would need to purchase a Standard Day ticket."

Please note that this restriction only applies during weekdays. And the first train out you can buy a cheap day return ticket on is the 0937, costing £20.20. We are still petitioning for an easement on the 0837. However, for the time being there is a means to reduce the fare if you wish to catch the

0837 to Paddington. The cost for a day return, on the 0837, is £38.20 and gets you into Paddington at 0953. But if you change trains at Reading onto the 0935 (arriving Paddington at 1001) the ticket fare for the Reading to Paddington stretch would be £13.00 and the Bedwyn to Reading stretch is £10.20. This makes a total of £23.20 instead of £38.20 for the sake of arriving eight minutes later. If you couple the fact that for those with appropriate rail cards, e.g. senior citizens, you can claim a third off the £13.00 stretch then the fare reduces to £18.87. Take note that if you do this you must return on or before the 1618 Paddington departure or on the 2000 or later. When you buy your ticket on the train be upfront with the ticket seller about what you are doing, there's no need to wait and buy another ticket at Reading.

From the end of March many more of the stations on our line have become penalty fare stations. Bedwyn is excluded (as we have no automatic ticket machine). But please note that if there is not a ticket seller on the outbound service, and you board your return journey from a penalty fare station, then you must buy a ticket. Between us and Reading the only stations that are not penalty fare stations are: Bedwyn, Kintbury, Newbury Racecourse, Midgham and Aldermaston. So for example if you get a free ride into Newbury then you may wish to consider sorting out your ticket on arrival.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

Parish News: August 2007

You may recall that previously I wrote that we had got confirmation from First Great Western regarding the use of cheap day returns, on Monday to Friday, back from Paddington. They stated "*With both the Network Awaybreak and the Cheap Day Return tickets you may travel on the 16.18 departure from London Paddington, the ticket is then restricted until the 20.00 departure. Should you need to travel between these times then you would need to purchase a Standard Day ticket."*

After a chance observation this has proven to be incorrect. There are certain local trains that one can catch back from Paddington, changing at Reading. The following timetable is for Monday to Friday cheap day returns back from Paddington. If you have a standard ticket then please refer to the normal timetable:

Paddington	1618	1700	1829	1951	2035	2122	2215
Reading Arrive		1755	1925	2020		2151	2248
Reading Depart		1811	1942	2044		2200	2300
Newbury Arrive					2117		
Newbury Depart					2125		
Bedwyn	1744	1907	2031	2144	2144	2249	2349

We've heard that a number of rail users are still getting caught out with penalty fare fines. From the end of March many more of the stations on our line became penalty fare stations. Bedwyn is

excluded (as we have no automatic ticket machine). But please note that if there is not a ticket seller on the outbound service, and you board your return journey from a penalty fare station, then you must buy a ticket. Between Bedwyn and Reading the only stations that are not penalty fare stations are: Bedwyn, Kintbury, Newbury Racecourse, Midgham and Aldermaston. So for example if you get a free ride into Newbury then you may wish to consider sorting out your ticket on arrival.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

Parish News: October 2007

"All Change"

After the timetable changes of December 2006 we were left with a poor connecting weekday evening service back from Paddington. If you did not catch the 1806 the earliest you'd get back to Bedwyn would be 2031.

From Monday December the 10th the 1706 and 1806 will remain direct back, arriving Bedwyn 1821 and 1923 (marginally longer journey times than before). However, here is the good news that we hope will please the London commuters: The 1733 departure from Paddington will arrive at Newbury at 1816 and a connecting service will depart Newbury at 1822, arriving Bedwyn 1841. An 1836, replacing the 1833, departure from Paddington will arrive at Hungerford at 1928 and a connecting service will depart Hungerford at 1935, arriving Bedwyn 1943. The 1945 departure from Paddington will arrive Newbury at 2026 and a connecting service will depart Newbury at 2032, arriving Bedwyn at 2051. There will also be later connecting trains departing Paddington at 2035, 2121 and 2215 arriving Bedwyn at 2142, 2250 and 2350 respectively.

This is also good news because the 1945 departure will be available to those with cheap day return tickets and railcards. Previously you would not get back until 2144 with a cheap day return, from December 10th you can make it back at 2051. Note restrictions do not apply at weekends.

This is a particularly pleasing result for the Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group. We initially formed to fight off the cuts and, having been successful in that, have campaigned on to improve the service all round. The weekday evening timetable changes were worked out by Bill Wells and presented to First Great Western at a meeting. They took on Bill's suggested workings and here we are with an improved evening service.

There is one surprise that First Great Western did not tell us about. The 0705 departure is now retimed to 0651 and will take an extra seven minutes into Paddington (though arriving earlier than is does now). We are hoping that this will not cause too much inconvenience. Please let us know if we need to campaign for a change by emailing us on bedwyntrains@yahoo.co.uk

The only way we will maintain a good level of service is if people use our station. After the changes last December we lost passengers to Hungerford and Newbury. Please spread the word that the service will improve from December. We have promised First Great Western that we'll do our best to encourage the use of our station in return for service improvements. If we don't improve the use of our station we might face further cuts.

Finally we continue to need funds to run our campaigns and promote the service. If you have benefited from these changes, or would like to donate anyhow, then any money would be gratefully received. Donations to "Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group" can be put through 3 Church Street.

Steve Smith

Parish News: November 2007

Christmas Shopping In Bath or Bristol

From Saturday December 15th our westbound timetable will improve. One of the most notable additions will be the ability to go shopping in Bath or Bristol. This will be especially convenient on a Saturday where one can catch a 0927 westbound service, change at Westbury and arrive in Bath at 1034 or Bristol at 1048. The return times are departures from Bristol at 1524 and Bath at 1537, arriving back into Bedwyn at 1646.

The Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group hopes that you will support this new service. If it's not utilised we will lose it. Perhaps put a diary note to use it on either Saturday December 15th or 22nd to do some Christmas shopping! We are hoping for a good turn out to celebrate our new service!

Here follows a more expansive timetable for our new westbound service:

Saturdays (from December 15th):

Bedwyn	0927	1307ha	**Exeter**	1154	1459tb
Pewsey	0935	1336	**Bristol+**	1149w	1524w
Westbury*	0954	1356	**Bath**	1207w	1537w
Bath	1034wa	1433wb	**Westbury**	1303	1618
Bristol+	1048wa	1447wb	**Pewsey**	1322	1637
Exeter**	1106	1519ta	**Bedwyn**	1332	1646

Monday to Fridays (from December 10th):

Bedwyn	0840hb	1330	1822	1924	**Exeter**		0639n	1154	1802w
Pewsey	0935	1338	1831	1933	**Bristol+**		0643w	1149w	1822w
Westbury*	0957	1357	1853	1952	**Bath**		0700w	1207w	1836w
Bath	1033wa	1433wb	1935wc	2035wd	**Westbury**	0621	0751n	1303	1917
Bristol+	1047wa	1447wb	1949wc	2050wd	**Pewsey**	0639	0810n	1322	1935
Exeter**	1111	1520tc	2022we	2115wf	**Bedwyn**	0648	0901n	1332	1945

Notes:

ha Change at Hungerford onto the 1322 westbound departure.

wa Change at Westbury onto the 1008 departure.

hb	Change at Hungerford onto the 0920 westbound departure.	**wb**	Change at Westbury onto the 1408 departure.
n	Change at Newbury onto the 0838 Bedwyn departure.	**wc**	Change at Westbury onto the 1909 departure.
ta	Change at Taunton onto the 1448 departure.	**wd**	Change at Westbury onto the 2008 departure.
tb	Change at Taunton onto the 1534 departure.	**we**	Change at Westbury onto the 1858 departure.
tc	Change at Taunton onto the 1450 departure.	**wf**	Change at Westbury onto the 2005 departure.
w	Change at Westbury.	******	Change for Plymouth and Penzance.
*****	Change for Portsmouth and Southampton.	**+**	Bristol refers to Bristol Temple Meads. For Bristol Parkway it's usually best to go via Reading.

Next month we hope to print the new eastbound Monday to Friday timetable.

Finally if you have any comments on the new morning commuter service (from December 17th) then please let us know by email: bedwyntrains@yahoo.co.uk. It's much the same as now except the 0705 is now the 0650 and a new 0708 service has been introduced with a change at Newbury, arriving Reading 0756 and Paddington 0832. We'd welcome your comments as input to our next meeting with First Great Western. All other comments welcome too.

Happy travelling!

Steve Smith

Parish News: December 2007

This month we are printing the new weekday eastbound timetable valid from Monday December 10th

Bedwyn	0603	0623		0650	0708		0757			0840		0937	1037	1137	1307	1333	1437	1537
Hungerford	0609	0629		0657	0714		0803			0846		0943	1043	1143	1313	1340	1443	1543
Kintbury	0620	0633		0704	0718		0807			0850		0947	1047	1147	1317		1447	1547
Newbury	0625	0640		0712	0725		0814	0830	0837	0857		0954	1054	1154	1324	1349	1454	1554

Racecourse		0642			0727				0839			*1015*	*1115*	*1215*		*1415*	*1515*	*1615*
Thatcham	0630	0647		0719	0732				0843	0902		0959	1059	1159	1329	1356	1459	1559
Theale	0638	0700		0729	0745				0857	0910		1007	1107	1207	1342	1405	1507	1607
Rdg. West	0646	0707		0738	0752				0904			*1040*	*1140*	*1240*		*1440*	*1540*	*1640*
Reading	0649	0712	0719	0741	0756	0803		0851	0908	0920	0935	1016	1117	1216	1350	1418	1516	1617
Maidenhead	0701	*0745*		*0810*	*0826*			*0918*		*0948*		*1048*	*1148*	*1248*	*1418*	*1448*	*1548*	*1648*
Slough	*0719*	*0755*		*0820*	*0838*			*0925*		*0951*		*1038*	*1155*	*1240*	*1425*	*1440*	*1540*	*1640*
Paddington	0724		0752	0809		0832		0922		0953	1003	1052	1152	1252	1422	1444	1552	1652

Bedwyn	1644			1737	1756		1903		1946	1956		2058		2154		2300	
Hungerford	1650			1743	1802		1909		1952	2002		2104		2200		2306	
Kintbury	1654			1747	1806		1913		1959	2006		2108		2204		2310	
Newbury	1701	1716		1754	1813		1920	1946	2006	2013		2115		2211		2317	
Racecourse		1718			1815		*1953*			2015		2117		2213		2319	
Thatcham		1722		1759	1819		*1957*		2013	2019		2121		2218		2323	
Theale		1736		1809	1833		*2011*		2022	2033		2135		2231		2337	
Rdg. West		1742			1840		*2018*			2040		2142		2238		2344	
Reading		1745	1752	1822	1845	1853		2007	2033	2043	2053	2146	2201	2242	2255	2349	0024
Maidenhead		*1818*		*1848*	*1918*			*2033*	*2059*	*2134*		*2218*		*2304*		*0041*	
Slough		*1825*		*1855*	*1909*			*2045*	*2109*	*2109*		*2226*		*2313*		*0041*	
Paddington			1819	1853		1924		2039	2102		2122		2230		2336		0102

Paddington	0334		0607		0718	0730		0918	1018	1118	1218	1318	1418	1518	1530		
Slough	0405		0623	*0633*	*0701*		*0737*	*0907*	*1007*	*1107*	*1207*	*1307*	*1407*	*1507*			*1537*
Maidenhead	0412			*0640*	*0709*		*0740*	*0918*	*1008*	*1108*	*1208*	*1308*	*1408*	*1508*			*1538*
Reading	0428	0521	0639	0701	0748	0757	0811	0948	1048	1148	1247	1348	1448	1548	1557	1611	
Rdg. West		0524		0704	*0721*		0814	*0914*	*1014*	*1114*	*1214*	*1314*	*1414*	*1514*		1614	
Theale		0530		0710	0757		0820	0956	1056	1156	1255	1356	1456	1556		1620	
Thatcham		0544		0724	0808		0834	1004	1104	1204	1304	1404	1504	1604		1634	
Racecourse		0548		0728	*0745*		0838	*0938*	*1038*	*1138*	*1238*	*1338*	*1438*	*1538*		1638	
Newbury		0551		0731	0814		0841	1011	1111	1211	1310	1411	1511	1611		1643	1705
Kintbury		0557		0737	0820		0848	1017	1117	1217		1417	1517	1617			1712

Hungerford		0602		0742	0825		0853	1022	1122	1222	1320	1422	1522	1622			1717
Bedwyn		0610		0751	0833		0901	1030	1130	1230	1329	1430	1530	1630			1725

Paddington	1633	1618	1706	1733		1806	1836		1945		2035		2121		2215		
Slough	1648		*1657*		*1717*	*1801*		*1820*		*1937*		*2036*		*2137*		*2218*	
Maidenhead		*1638*	*1704*		*1740*	*1810*		*1840*		*1944*		*2038*		*2138*		*2229*	
Reading	1704	1648	1737	1800		1836	1903		2011	1942	2102	2044	2153	2200	2248	2300	
Rdg. West			*1714*			*1814*				1945		2047		2203		2303	
Theale		1656	1745			1845				1951		2053		2209		2309	
Thatcham		1708	1754			1854				2005		2107		2223		2323	
Racecourse			*1739*			*1838*				2009		2111		2227		2327	
Newbury	1720	1725	1801	1818	1822	1901	1919	1924	2026	2032	2118	2123		2230		2330	
Kintbury		1731	1808		1829	1909		1930		2038		2129		2237		2337	
Hungerford	1730	1736	1814		1834	1915	1929	1935		2043		2134		2242		2342	
Bedwyn		1744	1821		1841	1923		1943		2051		2142		2250		2350	

Notes:

- Returning from Paddington of an evening is vastly improved. Please spread the word to any commuters that we lost to Hungerford or Newbury.
- The two hour lunchtime gap back to Bedwyn has been resolved by getting a stop on the 1218 Paddington to Exeter service.
- The times shown in italics are connecting services which space does not permit us to show. Some trains also call at Midgham and Aldermaston.
- First Great Western might run the 2058 departure from Bedwyn at 2106.
- The 0603 to 0840 (inclusive) Bedwyn departures are full fare trains. If travelling to Paddington, one can catch the 0840 and ask to buy a ticket for Reading and a ticket for the 0935 departure from Reading to Paddington (arriving 1003 making cheap tickets valid). This will reduce the cost of a day return from £38.20 to £23.20. A day return on the 0937 or later is £20.20. Further reductions are possible with railcards. It appears that there are now no restrictions on return tickets from Paddington from the 1018 onwards.
- When catching the last train home make sure it's the 2215 you board and not the 2214 as you'll miss your connection at Reading.
- Before the cuts of last December we had 20 weekday trains from Bedwyn and 19 back. The proposed cuts were to reduce us to 14 trains out and 14 back but the campaigning saved many trains and has now got us to 22 out and 21 back plus the additional west bound services. However the campaigning continues as we know that the timetable is still lacking in certain areas. Our main focus is now: A direct weekday service to Reading for around a 0800 departure; Concessionary fares on the 0840; A stop on the weekday 0818 Paddington/Exeter departure; Plugging the Saturday lunchtime gap; Earlier Sunday departure; Better Sunday connections at Newbury for returning from the west; Maintaining our westbound service; Promoting our station.

Steve Smith

Parish News: February 2008

Part of the Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group's objectives is to share around ideas of how the trains can be used. This month we'll print an eclectic list of ideas.

A walk along the canal

Previously we've mentioned the idea of taking the train to Hungerford and, make the two hour, walk back along the canal tow path. Now with the new Pewsey service the adventurous amongst you can take the longer, four hour walk, back along the tow path. The best service at the moment is the 0927 Saturday and when the evenings draw out a little the weekday 1329.

Heathrow Airport

Take the train from Bedwyn station and pick up the RailAir coach service at Reading. To reach the coach departure point head through the main ticket barrier then take a diagonal left to the far side of the station concourse. Through tickets can be purchased on the train from Bedwyn. Typically coaches depart every twenty minutes to thirty minutes and ties in well with our train timetable. See www.railair.com or phone 0118 957 9425 for further details.

Gatwick Airport

Gatwick Airport is better served by trains than Heathrow with direct services from Reading. Simply board at Bedwyn and buy a through ticket then change at Reading, though best to check your times first on either www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk or by calling 08457 484950

Bristol International Airport

Travel to Bristol Temple Meads and then take the Bristol Flyer direct coach service. If your flight times permit you may be able to make use of our limited westbound service. If not then change at Reading. For further details on the coach call 0871 200 2233.

Exeter International Airport

An hourly Stagecoach bus, service 56, departs Exeter St David's station for the airport. For further details on the bus call 0871 200 2233. We have a number of direct and connecting services to Exeter, please see the timetable we printed in the November Parish news or check www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk or call 08457 484950.

Vue Cinema, Reading

This is our nearest cinema that can be reached by train. For current screenings call 08712 240 240. Our regular trains to Reading can be seen in the pocket timetable, the boards at the station, www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk or by calling 08457 484950. To get to the cinema exit the station through the main entrance turn left, and follow the road straight ahead (Station Road leading into Queen Victoria Street). You will meet with Broad Street (opposite John Lewis). Turn left and The Oracle is on the right hand side, opposite Marks & Spencer. Pass through The Oracle and the cinema is directly opposite over the canal bridge.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

Parish News: March 2008

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group News

This month we'll start with some good news. We've now got concessionary fares back on the 0840 weekday departure. This means that one can now buy cheap day returns on this train. This reduces the standard return Paddington fare from £41.90 to £22, or £27 with the underground. Further reductions apply with railcards e.g. a senior railcard reduces the Paddington return fare to £14.50 or £17.80 with the underground. Please remember if you buy a cheap day return ticket you must return on or before the 1618 or on or after the 1945.

This reduction is a satisfying victory as we lost the 'cheap day return' status of this train in the December 2006 timetable changes. Previously it had arrived just after 10AM which automatically made it a 'cheap day return' train. As it now arrives just before 10AM it's taken a bit of persuading to get First Great Western to give a concession on this.

Some people have been getting confused that the weekday 1633 and 1945 Paddington departures do not connect with Bedwyn. They actually do, it's just that the way the timetable is printed means one has to look to the left to see the connection.

Please note that the Sunday timetable has deviated from the printed version. Trains are now departing up to 24 minutes earlier from Bedwyn. First Great Western have put an amended copy up at the station. Please check inbound and outbound train times before you travel. Alternatively please check www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk or call 08457 484950. It's always worth double checking weekend travel.

Finally we'd like to acknowledge David Back's letter, regarding parking problems, in last month's Parish News. It is an agenda item that we discuss and we do plan to talk with First Great Western about it. Unfortunately the only way we are going to maintain our hourly service is to appeal to travelers outside of the village and as a consequence it does mean we have some parking issues. If we were to slip to a two hourly service, as First Great Western were proposing in 2006, it'd be the thin end of the wedge for our station. In the short term can we appeal to anybody that lives within walking distance of the station to leave the car behind? We've heard of one or two cases of people taking up a parking space who live but a few streets away.

Happy Traveling

Steve Smith

Parish News: April 2008

May Timetable Changes

The forthcoming May timetable changes will bring mixed news for our train users. Firstly we are set to lose all of our Saturday westbound service from May 24th. Therefore if you've been planning a Saturday trip west best to get it in on or before May 17th. However, we will get the service back in September and, hopefully, an additional Saturday westbound lunchtime service from December.

We had been able to establish a westbound service by asking for stops on trains that already called at Theale, Thatcham and Hungerford. Those stations have for a number of years followed the pattern of losing the Saturday westbound service, as trains are rescheduled to meet the demands of holiday traffic, from May to September.

Now for the good news about the May timetable changes: Firstly the two hour Saturday lunchtime gap into Bedwyn has been rectified, so we will be back to an hourly service. Secondly we will now have a Monday to Friday 0928 westbound service (starting Monday May 19th). This is excellent news as it will make weekday westbound trips more viable. Our timetable will be westbound departures at 0928, 1330, 1824 and 1924. Arrivals from the west at 0648, 1331 and 1944. Please think how you can make use of this new service.

Also from May First Great Western are improving capacity on the Portsmouth, Westbury, Cardiff line. This is good news for us as it means the problems of overcrowding, when changing at Westbury for Bath or Bristol, should now be resolved.

Cinema at Newbury

In February's article we mentioned ways to use the train including the cinema at Reading. It's been pointed out to me that the Corn Exchange in Newbury has started to show a regular programme of films. Please visit www.cornexchangenew.com or call 01635 522733 for details. The over 60s might be interested to hear of the Silver Screen Monday matinee. The Corn Exchange is just a short walk from Newbury station.

April Engineering Works

First Great Western are reporting "From approximately 2040 on Monday 7, Tuesday 8, Wednesday 9 and Thursday 10 April 2008 until 0200 the next day services between Reading and Bedwyn will be subject to alteration, with buses replacing trains."

Happy Traveling!

Steve Smith

Parish News: June 2008

Changes at the Station

We recently met with Alison Stone, First Great Western Service Delivery Manager, to discuss the rather rundown look of the station. It was a positive meeting and the following are the main points:

1) Scruffy paintwork: We expressed our concern that we are the last station on this line to be painted. Alison took this on board and the station has now been freshly painted.

2) Condition of the wooden westbound shelter: Alison said she'd look into remedial work to stop it crumbling any further. However, money is an issue.

3) Condition and suitability of the eastbound shelter: Alison conceded that this is no longer fit for purpose. There is no money at present but she will set the wheels in motion.

4) Request for a notice board for each side of the station: These have since been erected and will allow the passenger group to display additional train information pertinent to our station.

5) The station screen and helpline appear to spend more time out of order than performing any other function: Alison informed us that this will all be replaced during 2009 with a new system. Until then we'll have to persevere with the problems as the money is best spent on the new system.

6) The grating, by the station entrance, is loose and has become a trip hazard: Alison shared our concerns and this has now been replaced.

8) Branches overhanging and obscuring the light on the bridge: Alison will chase Network Rail to have these pruned such that branches do not obscure the light when walking across the bridge.

9) Parking: Alison took on board the need for more parking but warned us of the lack of money.

We were interested to learn that there are two bodies responsible for the station, Network Rail and First Great Western. They have varying bits of responsibility causing such idiosyncrasies as Network Rail being responsible for the lampposts whereas First Great Western is responsible for the paint on them.

New Westbound Service

Please remember we now have a new Monday to Friday 0928 westbound service. Our Monday to Friday westbound timetable consists of departures at 0928, 1330, 1824 and 1924. There are arrivals from the west at 0648, 1331 and 1944. We only got the new 0928 stop because we promised to promote it locally so please think how you can make use of this new service.

June Engineering Works

First Great Western are reporting:

All Saturday's until September 6th the last train back into Bedwyn will be a bus from Newbury (departing Newbury 2346).

All Sunday's until September 7th buses will replace the trains between Bedwyn and Newbury.

From approximately 2040 on Monday 2, Tuesday 3, Wednesday 4 and Thursday 5 June 2008 until 0200 the next day services between Reading and Bedwyn will be subject to alteration, with buses replacing trains.

Between 2220 on Saturday 7 June until 0900 on Sunday 8 June 2008 buses will be replacing trains between Reading and Bedwyn.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

Parish News: July 2008

Timetables

We've recently been busy delivering the latest railway timetable to Great Bedwyn and Little Bedwyn. If we've missed any houses there are plenty available from The Post Office and The Stores.

Station Adoption

First Great Western run a scheme, called 'Station Adoption', which allows the community to get involved with their local station. The Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group has applied for and been accepted for this scheme in Bedwyn. This follows a number of meetings we've had with Alison Stone, First Great Western Service Delivery Manager, to discuss the rather rundown look of the station. The following lists the main points of these discussions and documents what has been achieved so far:

1) We expressed our concern that we were the last station on this line to be painted. Alison took this on board and the station has now been freshly painted.

2) The grating, by the station entrance, was loose and had become a trip hazard. This has been now been replaced.

3) We have been promised that the following will be rectified soon: The leaning sign on the corner of The Knapp and Brook Street will be straightened; Branches overhanging and obscuring the light on the bridge will be cut back.

4) We have raised our concerns about the condition of the westbound shelter. This is a wooden structure dating from 1919 and is crumbling through rot. We have asked to be fully involved in any decision making and have been reassured that the first option is repair not demolition. We are pushing to get the building restored.

5) First Great Western has agreed that the metal eastbound shelter is no longer fit for purpose. There is no money at present but wheels are being set in motion to have it replaced.

6) We requested a notice board for each side of the station. These have been erected and allow the passenger group to display additional train information pertinent to our station.

7) The station screen, clock and helpline appear to spend more time out of order than performing any other function. This is due to all be replaced during 2009 with a new system. Until then we'll have to persevere with the problems as the money is best spent on the new system. The new system will likely include CCTV for the station. We have been reassured that the cameras will not cover any residential properties and hope that they will stop the occasional acts of vandalism at the station. We have also requested that we have a station screen on the westbound platform.

8) We have been promised a bench for the westbound platform and that the signs for the disabled parking space will be re-instated.

We were interested to learn that there are two bodies responsible for the station, Network Rail and First Great Western. They have varying bits of responsibility causing such idiosyncrasies as Network Rail being responsible for the lampposts whereas First Great Western is responsible for the paint on them.

The 'Station Adoption' will allow us to do some basic maintenance tasks – e.g. weeding, planting, litter collection and painting out graffiti. This is all in addition to what First Great Western and Network Rail already do. If anybody is interested in getting involved then feel free to call me on 871407.

New Westbound Service

Please remember we now have a new Monday to Friday 0928 westbound service. Our Monday to Friday westbound timetable consists of departures at 0928, 1330, 1824 and 1924. There are arrivals from the west at 0648, 1331 and 1944. We only got the new 0928 stop because we promised to promote it locally so please think how you can make use of this new service – it calls at Pewsey, Westbury, Taunton and Exeter. You can change at Westbury for Bath and Bristol.

New Bus Timings

After some pressure from us, and one of the bus users, the first service, from Marlborough to Bedwyn, has been re-timetabled to meet the 0650 direct service to Paddington. Previously it arrived at 0655 neatly missing the most useful commuter service to London. This discrepancy happened after First Great Western re-timetabled the service and there was no will by the bus company to follow suit. Please spread the word to anybody who you think may be able to make use of this new timing.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

Parish News: August 2008

Oh! I do like to be beside the seaside

I'll spare you the ""Tiddely-om-pom-pom!"" but with the school summer holidays now upon us our 0928 weekday westbound makes an excellent means of a day excursion to Exmouth. Exmouth is well celebrated for its long two-miles of golden sand and fascinating rock pools.

Here is a suitable timetable (Monday to Friday only):

Bedwyn	0928	
Exeter St Davids	1112	1118
Exmouth		1146

Exmouth	1720		
Exeter St Davids	1752	1800	
Westbury		1911	1917
Bedwyn			1944

Please note:

- If buying tickets on the train be clear with the ticket seller that you are returning on the direct service from Westbury to Bedwyn; this is cheaper. Alternatively buy online at www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk or by phone on 08457 000 125. Note that discounts will apply for certain rail cards.
- If the outward train is late into Exeter the next connection to Exmouth leaves Exeter St David's at 1145.
- There's an earlier departure from Exmouth, to Exeter, at 1650.
- If for any reason the 1800 Exeter St Davids departure is late into Westbury, missing the connection to Bedwyn, remain on this train and change at Newbury back to Bedwyn. You won't suffer a surcharge but best to get the Train Manager to endorse your ticket. There's also a good chance that if the 1800 from Exeter is running just a little late the 1917 stopping service from Westbury will be held so best to check before remaining on the train to Newbury.
- The outward journey is possible on August Bank Holiday (the 25th) but there is no return service from Westbury to Bedwyn that day.

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group AGM

This will take place on Monday September 15th at 8PM. Venue: 3 Church Street. All welcome.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

Parish News: September 2008

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Great News For Off Peak Weekday Train Passengers

First Great Western have announced that the 1706 and 1806 weekday departures from Paddington, which are both direct to Bedwyn, are now available to cheap day return tickets. This is great news as it fills a three and a half hour gap when cheap day return tickets were previously not valid.

The following are the adult weekday day return prices depending on which trains you catch:

Train from Paddington: / **Train From Bedwyn:**	0918 and earlier	1018 to the 1618 inc.	1633,1703, 1733,1836, 1903	1706,1806,1945,2035, 2121,2215
0603, 0623, 0650, 0708, 0757	41.90	£41.90	£41.90	£41.90
0840 and later	N/A	£22.00	£41.90	£22.00

Notes:

- Saturday and Sunday adult day return prices are £22 all day.
- Further discounts are available to holders of railcards. Railcards cost between £18 and £24 and offer a third off certain fares (typically reducing the £22 fare to £14.50). On weekdays the 16-25 Railcard, Senior Railcard and Disabled Persons Railcard are all valid on the 0840 onwards. The Network Railcard (available to any adult not eligible for any other type of railcard) is not valid until the 1037. At weekends railcards are valid all day.
- Don't forget if you are intending travelling on the underground you can ask for a One Day Travelcard to include the tube. This increases the £22 fare to £27, the £41.90 to £47 and the £14.50 to £17.80.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

www.bedwyntrains.org.uk

info@bedwyntrains.org.uk

Parish News: October 2008

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group News

The eagle eyed amongst you will probably have noticed that the Sunday engineering works have come to an end. So we are back to Sunday trains after a summer of showers and buses!

As an added bonus we have got our Saturday westbound service back (which temporarily ceased in May) with the welcome addition of a new 1331 service to Taunton. Coupled with the Monday to Friday service we now have a fairly good timetable with the west. Here follows our westbound timetable:

Saturdays (At weekends always double check for engineering works by either calling 08457 484950 or online at www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk**):**

Bedwyn	0930	1331		**Exeter**	1154	1457tb
Pewsey	0938	1339		**Taunton**	1224	1534
Westbury*	0957	1359		**Bristol+**	1222w	1522w
Bath	1034wa	1433wb		**Bath**	1236w	1536w
Bristol+	1048wa	1447wb		**Westbury**	1305	1625
Taunton	1037	1445		**Pewsey**	1322	1642
Exeter**	1111	1522ta		**Bedwyn**	1332	1652

Monday to Fridays:

Bedwyn	0928	1330	1824	1924		**Exeter**		0638n	1154	1800w
Pewsey	0938	1338	1834	1933		**Taunton**		0708n	1224	1830w
Westbury*	0957	1356	1854	1952		**Bristol+**		0644w	1149w	1822w
Bath	1033wa	1433wb	1935wc	2035wd		**Bath**		0702w	1207w	1836w
Bristol+	1047wa	1447wb	1949wc	2050wd		**Westbury**	0621	0751n	1304	1917
Taunton	1039	1444	1940we	2044wf		**Pewsey**	0639	0809n	1322	1934
Exeter**	1112	1522tc	2022we	2116wf		**Bedwyn**	0648	0902n	1331	1944

Notes:

ta Change at Taunton onto the 1452 departure.

tb Change at Taunton onto the 1534 departure.

tc Change at Taunton onto the 1451 departure.

n Change at Newbury onto the 0839 Bedwyn departure.

***** Change for Portsmouth, Southampton and Cardiff.

****** Change for Plymouth and Penzance.

+ Bristol refers to Bristol Temple Meads. For Bristol Parkway it's usually best to go via Reading.

w Change at Westbury.

wa Change at Westbury onto the 1008 departure.

wb Change at Westbury onto the 1408 departure.

wc Change at Westbury onto the 1908 departure.

wd Change at Westbury onto the 2008 departure.

we Change at Westbury onto the 1901 departure.

wf Change at Westbury onto the 2005 departure.

Due to the small number of trains from the west you may wish to play safe and get earlier connections into Westbury before changing for Bedwyn.

Happy Travelling

Steve Smith

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Parish News: November 2008

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group News

The passenger group has been busy this last month on a number of matters. Firstly the timetable change on September 8th brought the new mini timetable book. We have delivered to most houses in the area. However, if we have missed you then there are copies available at The Post Office and The Stores.

We have been negotiating with First Great Western to get Bedwyn mentioned on the front of the mini timetable booklet and to get the Marlborough bus link back in the booklet. The latest version has our station mentioned on the front cover and from the December timetable change we will have the Marlborough bus link back in the booklet. We were quite involved with this as we had to get First Great Western and Wiltshire County Council talking as some of the connection times were less than five minutes, forcing First Great Western to show later connections. Fortunately Wiltshire County Council acted before the deadline and, with some minor bus timing adjustments, First Great Western can show the intended bus against the correct train.

We had our AGM in September. This was our first since forming in 2006 and gave us the chance to recap on our successes so far. These are listed on the 'About' page of our website www.bedwyntrains.org.uk

The AGM also gave us a chance to focus on our ongoing campaigns. Aside from the timetables, mentioned above, these include:

- Improved holding of evening trains at Newbury if the incoming London connection is delayed.
- To have a direct Reading service for a 0900 start to a working day. Our proposals to First Great Western include: (i) The 0757 weekday Bedwyn departure to be right through to Reading (ii) A stop on the 0724 Pewsey departure (iii) the 0757 Newbury to Reading departure to start at 0740 from Bedwyn.
- More direct services to Paddington before 0900.
- Promotion of our service in and around the Bedwyn and Marlborough area.
- Improved punctuality, reliability and seating capacity.
- Through ticketing to Marlborough.
- Ticket sellers on more trains.
- Proper passenger counting so we appear in our correct position in the league table of stations.
- Improved station waiting areas.
- Improved station screen, helpline and PA announcements. Plus the same to be installed on the westbound platform.

Finally a number of the over sixties in the village have approached us asking if we can influence free train travel for them. As this would be a central government decision this is not something the passenger group can become involved in. If you feel strongly about free travel than please write to our MP: The Rt. Hon. Michael Ancram Q.C., M.P. House of Commons, London.SW1A 0AA.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: December 2008

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group News

We were sorry to see the unsightly fence that Network Rail erected in The Knapp. Unfortunately we were not given adequate warning, our dealings being with First Great Western and not Network Rail, which meant by the time we could protest it was too late. The irony of the situation is that the new fence protects a piece of land that any trespasser could access by nonchalantly walking to the end of the platform.

In our September article we printed a useful table of which trains are full fare and which are off peak. The late afternoon and early evening trains, from Paddington, are a little complex, with some trains being full fare and some off peak. There's an easier way to remember this which is "between 1630 and 1930 if the Paddington departure calls at Bedwyn it's off peak, otherwise full fare."

If First Great Western follow their normal pattern we are probably due fare increases from January 1st. If you have a season ticket coming up for renewal you may wish to check the date of the increase as buying early might save you some money. Additionally if you only buy a monthly or weekly season ticket you may wish to buy a longer season ticket before the fare increase.

As it's that time of year again for Christmas shopping remember the train is a great way to get to the shops, avoiding the queues of traffic. Newbury and Reading, both having direct trains from Bedwyn, offer good shopping centres. Reading has the modern Oracle shopping centre. To get to The Oracle exit the station through the main entrance turn left, and follow the road straight ahead (Station Road leading into Queen Victoria Street). You will meet with Broad Street (opposite John Lewis). Turn left and The Oracle is on the right hand side, opposite. For those that don't mind changing trains there's our Monday to Saturday 0928 westbound departure where a change at Westbury will take you to Bath or Bristol.

On Friday December 12th Hungerford is hosting its annual Victorian Extravaganza. As parking will be limited the 1644 departure from Bedwyn would be a good train to catch. Entertainments on offer include a Big Wheel, Punch and Judy shows, stalls, roasting chestnuts, mulled wine, mince pies, vintage transport, jugglers, Father Christmas and stilt walkers.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: January 2009

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group News

Hopefully by the time you read this we will have delivered the new D6 Paddington to Frome timetable. This came into force on December 14th. The passenger group were allowed quite an input into this and we have managed to:

1) After getting Bedwyn back on the front cover in the last edition we have managed to get a Marlborough mentioned too with a dotted bus link. Additionally the Marlborough bus times form part of the timetable. We managed to get First Great Western and the bus department, at Wiltshire County Council, talking as some bus times needed minor adjustments to make the connections work.
2) Get the times that the through trains call at Castle Cary, Taunton, Tiverton Parkway and Exeter added.
3) Get the passenger group a mention on the rear of the timetable.

Perhaps you could mention the new timetable to anybody you know in Marlborough? We are trying to actively promote the use of the bus link and getting it on the timetable is only the first step.

First Great Western and National Rail have produced a handy feature where you can print your own timetable. You enter the journey details (starting station, hopefully Bedwyn, destination station and date and time range) and it prints you the perfect timetable. We've put a link to it from our website - it's the red button at the top of www.bedwyntrains.org.uk.

On a sad note we are distressed to see the amount of graffiti on the upside shelter. This has come shortly after I spent two hours painting out the last lot. I intend to paint it out again but fear that it's a futile task. We are trying to get the upside shelter replaced and First Great Western are not going to be too keen to spend £40,000 on something that will soon be ruined. We need to try and stamp this out. Therefore if you know who it is, or see an act in progress, please call the British Transport Police on 0800 40 50 40.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: February 2009

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group News

The last couple of months have been a busy time for the Passenger Group as we have been hard at work submitting our proposal to Network Rail's Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS). The RUS is a legal requirement on Network Rail (set by The Office of Rail Regulation) with an objective of:

"The effective and efficient use and development of the capacity available, consistent with funding that is, or is reasonably likely to become, available during the period of the route utilisation strategy and with the licence holder's performance of the duty".

First Great Western suggested that we should submit our proposals to Network Rail. We took all the complaints and wishes of our fellow train travellers on board and have come up with a series of three options:

1) A Monday to Saturday hourly service east, and an hourly service west, from 0600 to midnight with peak time, departing and arriving, eastbound Monday to Friday trains being half hourly. The eastbound trains would, having originated from the west, in addition to calling at Bedwyn, call at Hungerford, Kintbury, Newbury, Thatcham, Theale, Reading and Paddington. The westbound trains would originate from Paddington and call at Reading, Theale, Thatcham, Newbury, Kintbury, Hungerford, Bedwyn, Pewsey and Westbury with about half the trains running on to Exeter, calling at suitable intermediate stations on route. The Monday to Friday service would include a Bedwyn departure at around 0800 to provide the 'school run' to Newbury with an appropriately timed late afternoon train back from Newbury. Additionally services would be timed to allow a 0900 start to a working day at Newbury, Thatcham, Theale and Reading to the east with Westbury, Bath, Bristol, Taunton and Exeter to the west. The Sunday service would be similar to a Saturday service though two hourly not hourly.
2) A suggestion to mprove the westbound connectivity issue by instead of regarding Bedwyn and its turn back siding as out of place, embrace it by making Bedwyn an interchange station for off peak westbound connections for Kintbury and Hungerford. This would involve timing the semi-fast services (starting or ending their journey at Frome, Westbury, Taunton or Exeter) such that they call at Bedwyn (and not Hungerford or Kintbury) and to align them with the services starting or terminating at Bedwyn. Therefore passengers from Kintbury and Hungerford, heading west, would change at Bedwyn to pick up the semi-fast westbound service and Hungerford and Kintbury passengers, returning from the west, would change at Bedwyn onto the locally connecting service.
3) A pragmatic approach to improve the service on the Bedwyn line which is less radical and does not conflict with services running currently east of Reading and west of Westbury. This included submitting, as part of our report, a re-worked timetable, based on the current one, which solves all the complaints we've heard from Bedwyn commuters.

Options 1 and 2 border on the realms of fantasy but when First Great Western suggested we should make our proposals to Network Rail they told us not to hold back, the RUS being a very long-term strategy. We put the most emphasis on the third option as broadly remaining within the current operating constraints will give us the greater chance of success.

Our full report can be read by going to http://www.bedwyntrains.org.uk/ and click on the 'Route Utilisation' tab (this is in green on the second row below the website title). If you don't have the Internet, and wish to read a copy, please leave a message on 871407 and I'll happily print you a copy.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: March 2009

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group News

For those that have not yet tried the TrainTracker texting service it's worth having a few details to hand when looking for immediate train information. If you text "dep Bedwyn" to 84950 it'll text you back with the next few departures from Bedwyn. Likewise texting "arr Bedwyn" will text you with the arrivals. The received text gives information about delays and cancellations. For a more specific enquiry one can text such things as "dep Bedwyn Paddington"

This facility is particularly useful when our station screen is not working. On that note we've heard from Network Rail that, "With particular regard to the Computer Information System (CIS) at Bedwyn and Hungerford this system is currently the most unreliable and a lot of work is going into keeping it alive while we wait for the project team to complete procurement of a new CIS system. It is particularly difficult for us to maintain the screens and PA at unstaffed stations where reports of failures are less frequent than at staffed stations." Based on that if you see it's not working please email us on info@bedwyntrains.org.uk so we can get it reported. Network Rail went on to say that in relation to replacement CIS that "First Great western are very keen to transfer those stations in the London and Thames Valley area as quickly as possible due to the state of the current system" and "The plan is currently to have some form of CIS or help point on every FGW platform." Hopefully this latter comment means we'll have identical equipment on the westbound platform.

The passenger group has submitted a suggestion to the Parish Council to improve the parking situation at the station. As an organisation we are aware that by promoting Bedwyn Station we likely contribute to the parking issue. It's been necessary to promote the station outside of the village as the footfall from the village alone does not justify the service we have. Therefore we felt it was proper that we also took a stance on the issue of parking. Our proposal would add about ten parking spaces and prevent the situation where cars make it impossible for the bus to call at the station

without driving over the grass. The proposal tries to strike a balance between sorting out a problem and not spoiling the green/leafy feel of the area. To that end our suggestion relates to some sympathetic road widening and does not involve the removal of any trees. As ever funding will be an issue.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: April 2009

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group News

We've had sight of the summer timetable, due to commence on May 17th. The good news is that the majority of the Sunday services will now be direct with London Paddington.

The bad news takes two forms. Firstly we lose our westbound Saturday service. We were aware this would happen and it should follow the same pattern as last year with it being restored in September. Where necessary the Turbo style trains fill in so we retain an hourly service to and from the east. We retain our Monday to Friday westbound service.

The second bit of bad news is that the 0649 Monday to Friday Paddington service has been re-timetabled to depart at 0646 and the 0708 to 0707. This may appear to be a minor point but the 0649 is the main commuter service to London and since December 2006 has crept back from 0710 to now 0646. Prior to December 2006 we had four direct trains to Paddington before 0800. We now have only two and they are both before 0700. Though the passenger group has had many successes we have not been able to get First Great Western to make any changes prior to 0800 Monday to Friday. This includes the problem of it being difficult to get to Thatcham, Theale and Reading for a 0900 start.

We have again raised this with the First Great Western route director for London & Thames Valley. Unfortunately the explanation is that Bedwyn has to keep 'giving way' for the benefit of other stations. The reason for the loss of the direct trains, between 0700 and 0800, is that additional West Country services have been put on that come through Bedwyn at the wrong time to give us a slot for a direct service to Paddington. The continual time adjustments, of our main morning commuter train, are so it does not clash with other services coming into Reading from Bristol or Cheltenham.

We've again proposed that we have a stop on the 0722 from Pewsey – this would give us an excellent HST service, direct to Paddington, around 0730. So far First Great Western have refused this but have agreed to meet with us in May to discuss the issues.

We have put a request in to Wiltshire County Council to have three of the Marlborough bus times adjusted such that they still connect with the revised summer train timetable.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: May 2009

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group News

As mentioned last month we had a meeting with Richard Rowland, route director for London & Thames Valley regarding the problems with early morning trains and missed evening connections at Newbury.

On the latter point Richard felt that the issue is resolved. First Great Western have gone from being bottom of the national punctuality league table to fourth, and top for their style of operation. We'd be grateful if anybody that is still experiencing problems, with missed evening connections at Newbury, let us know. One of the problems with being a passenger group is that we tend to hear when things go wrong but not when they go right.

We put a number of proposals forward with regards to the lack of direct London commuter services between 0700 and 0800 and the problems with getting to Thatcham, Theale and Reading for a 0900 start. The most disappointing for us is that we were again turned down for a stop on the train that calls 0722 Pewsey and 0736 Hungerford. This would be an ideal solution. The only proposal that they are considering further is that the 0623 be re-timetabled to form a 0738 all stops to Reading.

However, Richard is sympathetic to our issues and informed us that they are re-planning the entire timetable for this route from December 2011. The plan would be to resolve our problems and put us

on the same timetable as Hungerford. However, in the meantime we'll keep pressing for an earlier resolution. If nothing else it means we will not be forgotten about. This re-planning exercise will likely give us a morning commuter service west.

Another proposal we made to Richard was for the 1640 Hungerford stop, on a HST from the west, to instead call at Bedwyn. We suggested this because we have a 1644 local service departure which would serve as a connecting service for Hungerford and Kintbury. They thought this to be a good idea and will looking into it further.

Another bit of good news is that Wiltshire county Council have retimed the necessary buses to fit with minor changes to the May timetable.

A question that has come up from time to time is the timings of steam trains through our station. A resident has done some research and come up with www.uksteam.info/tours/trs09.htm which gives routes and timings. We've tried to add a link from our website to just show the trains coming through Bedwyn; however it's not yet picking them all up so for a complete picture you need to browse through all the tours. If you are particularly interested in knowing when steam trains come through send us an email and we'll get a circulation list going.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: June 2009

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Whilst trying to promote the use of our station we've asked people why they commute by car when they could take the train. This is the typical feedback we've been getting:

The train is very expensive

A season ticket to Newbury works out around 15 pence a mile. This is less than running a car.

The trains are unreliable

First Great Western has vastly improved the service and it's now rare for a train to be late or cancelled.

I might change my job; I don't want to risk a season ticket purchase

You can claim a refund on the unused portion of a season ticket.

Other benefits of a season ticket are:

- You can use it anytime e.g. for leisure as well as work.
- It's environmentally friendlier than taking the car.
- If you purchase an annual season ticket you receive a gold card which allows further discounts, within our region, on both single and group travel.

The following are season ticket prices for the stations where the train competes with the car:

Hungerford:

7 Days	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	12 Months
£12.50	£48.00	£144.00	£288.00	£500.00

Newbury / Newbury Racecourse:

7 Days	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	12 Months
£25.10	£96.40	£289.20	£578.40	£1,004.00

Thatcham:

7 Days	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	12 Months
£30.00	£115.20	£345.60	£691.20	£1,200.00

Theale:

7 Days	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	12 Months
£42.60	£163.60	£490.80	£981.60	£1,704.00

Reading:

7 Days	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	12 Months
£51.70	£198.60	£595.60	£1,191.20	£2,068.00

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

Parish News: August 2009

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Parking

The keen eyed amongst you have probably noticed that the Wharf car park has returned to being free. Hopefully this will mean that visiting boaters will no longer park on the streets or use up valuable station parking spaces. Please spread the word to any train users you know that park at the station – it would be good to get the Wharf used for overspill rather than dangerous parking in Brook Street or on the village side of The Knapp.

Station Cleanup Day

We are having our annual station cleanup day on Sunday August 9th between 10AM and noon. If you wish to help please get in touch or just come along, armed with gloves and tools for weeding. Due to the nature of the work we need to make it adults only.

Airports

With the summer holidays upon us please don't forget that the train makes a convenient way of getting to Gatwick (change at Reading) and Heathrow (change at Reading on to the RailAir Coach link). Our Monday to Friday westbound service can also be used for Bristol and Exeter airports (they both have onward bus links from Bristol Temple Meads and Exeter St David's respectively).

Summer Ideas

The Bedwyn service is ideal for a day out in London, or beaches such as Brighton (change at Reading or London) and Exmouth (change at Exeter St David's) can be reached using a day return.

Further a field the Eden Project can be reached by taking the train to St Austell and then the Truronian t9 bus. This attraction would require an overnight stop. Our weekday 0930 departure would get you to St Austell for 1344 (with two changes) or 1405 (with one change). Our 1330 departure would get you to St Austell for 1728 with one

change. Return trains are at 0944 (arriving Bedwyn 1332 with one change) or at 1548 (arriving Bedwyn 1939 with one change between July 27th and August 21st or arriving 1944 at other weekday dates with two changes).

It is worth pointing out that when travelling west it is often cheaper to buy a return to Pewsey then a return from Pewsey to wherever your final destination is. This is because the old boundary, between the Southern and Western region, falls between Bedwyn and Pewsey. Ticketing is still based on this, which explains why we have much cheaper fares east than Pewsey does. If you buy on board it is perfectly valid to ask for separate tickets.

First Great Western has numerous discount deals available this summer, including 2 for 1 entry into many attractions. Further information is available at www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk

Newquay to Bedwyn Direct!

From Monday July 27th to Friday August 21st inclusive Bedwyn is going to have a stop on the 1500 weekday Newquay to Paddington service. This train also calls at Lostwithiel, Bodmin Parkway, Liskeard, Plymouth, Ivybridge Totnes, Newton Abbot, Exeter, Tiverton Parkway, Taunton, Castle Cary, Westbury and Pewsey. It will arrive at 1939 and replaces the 1944 stop on the 1917 Westbury to Paddington Service (which is suspended during the same period). This gives us all additional travel opportunities!

An interesting point to note is that Hungerford will not have a stop on this service, instead passengers for Hungerford and Kintbury will have to use Bedwyn as an interchange station!

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: September 2009

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Since forming in 2006 we have managed to stave off the proposed severe cuts in the December 2006 timetable and, amongst other things, achieve a fledgling westbound service, certain fare easements, timetable adjustments for better connections, filling some two hour gaps, mini timetables with the Marlborough bus link and station adoption.

This left our main campaigns as: A direct Paddington train departing between 0700 and 0800, a direct service for a 0900 start in Thatcham, Theale or Reading, a later evening Paddington rush hour train direct to Bedwyn and an improved westbound service to include commuter time trains.

A new rolling stock procurement, by First Great Western, for December 2011 was likely to go a long way to resolving these.

The government announcement that the Great Western line will be electrified has now thrown a rather large spanner in the works. Although electrification will improve reliability, punctuality, carbon footprint and running costs the DfT announcement that they will only be electrifying as far as Newbury has come as a worrying blow. It throws open a big question of how stations west of Newbury will be able to have trains running east of Newbury. The worst case scenario is we will end up with a diesel shuttle service to meet the trains at Newbury; the best case scenario is that our line will be serviced by hybrid trains that can run on either electric or diesel.

We have written to First Great Western and they have replied "the service pattern post the electrification is not clear at the moment and we are not aware of how Bedwyn would be affected. The electrification is due to be completed in 2018 and so would be in the next franchise so the specification for that will be important for Bedwyn."

Certain things are in our favour, such as the significance of Hungerford and that this line is used by trains from Penzance, Plymouth, Exeter and Taunton. As these stations will not be electrified there will be an immediate precedence for diesel units to run on the electrified sections. However, one thing is certain - given that less than half the local trains that serve this line currently terminate at Newbury electrification will not just be for this proportion. Therefore big changes must be planned; unfortunately ourselves and First Great Western don't know what.

We have placed a Freedom of Information Act (FOI) request with the DfT requesting all documentation that relates to the decision to only electrify as far as Newbury and how stations west of Newbury will be served.

The new rolling stock procurement for December 2011, being diesel, has been cancelled. This means that there is now no plan to resolve our current campaigns prior to 2018. We have been in touch with First Great Western who state that they are working with the DfT to manage the interim.

It's a situation of watch this space I'm afraid but we are on the case. Once we have the FOI response we'll consider our options but we'll likely be contacting our MP, Michael Ancram, for his help.

And rather ironically this time - Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: October 2009

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Hopefully you'll all have received a new copy of the timetable that runs from 7th September. If we missed you please accept our apologies. Copies are available at the Post Office or you can email info@bedwyntrains.org.uk or call me (Steve Smith) on 871407 and I'll deliver you a copy.

In last month's article we described the concerns about the proposed electrification as far as Newbury and how that impacts upon Bedwyn. We reported First Great Western's stance was "the service pattern post the electrification is not clear at the moment and we are not aware of how Bedwyn would be affected. The electrification is due to be completed in 2018 and so would be in the next franchise so the specification for that will be important for Bedwyn." Additionally we reported that we'd placed a Freedom of Information Act (FOI) request with the DfT. They have since responded with:

"I cannot give you any firm details of how destinations on the Berks and Hants line beyond Newbury will be served after electrification because service patterns will not be developed until the relevant franchise currently operated by First Great Western comes up for renewal in either 2013 or 2016. However, our working assumption is that intercity services to and from Paddington would be provided by bi-mode Intercity Express trains with local services provided by diesel multiple units."

The bi-mode reference is to trains that can operate under diesel and electric. The worry of course is whether they term us as a 'local service' in which case there is a real concern that we'd just end up being on a diesel shuttle to Newbury. So unfortunately it's not any clearer and this is likely because nobody knows.

To throw another document into the mix the long overdue Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) for the Greater Western area, which includes our train services, has now been issued in draft form. Within its 192 pages is a lot of detail on the proposed way forward during the next ten years.

With the planned electrification to Newbury the RUS appears to suggest that our services from 2016 will be provided by 'bi-mode' trains which will be running between Paddington and Exeter St. David's.

We are concerned as to the level of service to be provided during the period up to 2016. First Great Western were expecting new diesel trains to operate an extended service west from December 2011, but this diesel order has now been scrapped by the Department for Transport because of electrification. We now feel that there is even more reason to consider our short-term proposals for some modest westward extensions and fixes to eastbound peak hour issues. These can be viewed under the 'Route Utilisation' tab on our website: www.bedwyntrains.org.uk

The RUS is shown in full on the Network Rail website http://www.networkrail.co.uk/aspx/4449.aspx We will be sending in a full response on behalf of the passenger group. Anyone wishing to comment can do so through us or direct to greatwesternrus@networkrail.co.uk

We are meeting with Passenger Focus (the independent passenger watchdog) to discuss the implications of both the RUS and electrification and we will be reporting back in due course.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith & Bill Wells

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Parish News: November 2009

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

There is no further news to report regarding electrification but we'll keep you posted when we learn more.

Now we are on the winter timetable we have our Saturday westbound service restored. A summary of the westbound service is as follows:

Monday to Friday departures: 0930, 1330, 1824 and 1924

Monday to Friday arrivals: 0646, 1332 and 1944

Saturday departures: 0930, 1330

Saturday arrivals: 1333, 1653

Sunday: No service west – instead go east and change at Newbury.

Service is direct to and from Pewsey and Westbury. Certain trains are direct with Frome, Castle Cary, Taunton, Tiverton Parkway and Exeter St Davids. Further details are in the pocket timetable, available in The Bakery and The Post Office, or you can use the journey planner at www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk or call 08457 48 49 50

Change at Westbury for Bath Spa, Bristol Temple Meads, Portsmouth, Southampton and Cardiff. Also, where the service is not direct, change at Westbury for Frome, Castle Cary, Taunton, Tiverton Parkway and Exeter St Davids.

Please note that the trains serving to and from the west are the more comfortable HST variety. Even if you have no cause to travel west please consider these trains for your journeys to and from the east. Also perhaps encourage visiting friends to use the HST trains. The take up of our westbound service has not been that high so, even if we only use those trains for easterly travel, it will count in our favour.

I've been given a recent article from The Times, we'll reproduce it here as it clarifies some points:

“Alongside shameless fare dodgers, rail companies penalise many people who have been unable to buy tickets because of long queues or closed tills or machines. As with parking tickets, paying a penalty fare on demand is seen as an admission of guilt.

Instead, you are entitled to pay the full single fare — and no more — on the spot, and to give the ticket collector your contact details. You will later receive a letter demanding further payment and should reply immediately, again refusing to pay and explaining why you could not buy a ticket.

The Department for Transport’s (DFT) Penalty Fares Rules 2002 state that a penalty fare must not be charged where there were “no facilities available” for selling the appropriate ticket. The DFT says in clauses 4.2 and 4.11 of its Penalty Fares Policy that passengers must be given sufficient opportunity to buy a ticket and that queues of more than three minutes, off-peak, and five minutes in peak time breach what is “sufficient”.

Note also that season ticket holders who forget their ticket should request a “nil-fare” notice when challenged. They may be charged the full single fare, but this is refundable on production of the ticket.”

Please note that between Westbury and Paddington all stations are penalty fare apart from Bedwyn, Kintbury, Newbury Racecourse, Midgham and Aldermaston.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: December 2009

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

We have had another small success. From 19th December 2009 we have got the Saturday 2151 Reading departure re-timed to 2202 to connect with the 2117 Paddington departure. This reduces the Paddington to Bedwyn journey time from 1 hour 51 to 1 hour 33 and gives a better spaced return departure service from Paddington.

We have updated our website, www.bedwyntrains.org.uk, with additional information and given it an easier to use look and feel. The front page takes you to the live station screen. This always gives the current status of trains for the next hour or so. This will be useful for those about to set off to Bedwyn, or return to Bedwyn, to see the current train status.

Other pages include information about the passenger group, our past successes and current campaigns, the benefits of using Bedwyn station, local information, the east and westbound timetables, links to the journey planner, a list of hints and tips, airport information, compensation claim form for delays, links to First Great Western, National Rail, rail cards and custom timetables.

We hope you can make use of it and will always be pleased to hear feedback and suggestions.

Most railcards can now be purchased or renewed for three years online. This gives a saving over the one year purchased. The following table summarises the situation:

Type	Annual Cost	Three Year Cost	Discount	Area
16-25 Railcard	£26	£65	1/3	All of Britain
Family & Friends Railcard	£26	£65	1/3 on adult and 60% on child fares	All of Britain
Senior Railcard Railcard	£26	£65	1/3	All of Britain
Disabled Persons Railcard	£18	£48	1/3	All of Britain
Network Railcard	£26	N/A	1/3 for up to three adults and 60% for up to four children.	The old Network South East region

Notes:

1. For information on purchase visit our website and navigate to the Rail Cards link.
2. You can only purchase the three year versions online.
3. Depending on the individual card there is differing Monday to Friday peak time restrictions. The best way to find these is to use the First Great Western journey planner and check the fares for your given railcard. Alternatively phone 08457 48 49 50.
4. There are no restrictions at weekends and bank holidays.
5. For the 16-25 railcard you can purchase the one year one up to the day before your 26th birthday and the three year one up to the day before your 24th birthday. This effectively gives you an extra year.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: January 2010

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

For those that have not noticed a Vue Cinema has opened in Newbury close to the station. If you exit via the ticket hall, turn right and follow the road around to the left you will find it. Please use the train if you can. Film details are at www.myvue.com or by calling 08712 240240. The Corn Exchange, also in Newbury, shows films (as well as plays, gigs, comedy etc). Details are at www.cornexchangenew.com or by calling 01635 522733.

Hopefully you all will have received a new copy of the timetable. If we missed you there are copies available at the Post Office and The Bakery. We expanded our delivery this time to include all of Marlborough and the villages which Bedwyn Station supports. This made for a distribution of 6000 timetables.

It's often mentioned that our last train back from Paddington is a bit too early. This is the 2215 (Monday to Friday), 2235 Saturday and 2103 on a Sunday. We have asked First Great Western about this and the response is that the uptake is not high enough to consider later trains. Of course we always wish to promote Bedwyn station but the following tips might be of help for those that wish to travel later:

- On a Monday to Friday one can depart Paddington at 2330 and get into Newbury for 0052. This means either a taxi ride from Newbury (best to book in advance) or parking at Newbury. The same applies on a Saturday at 2333 and Sunday at 2215.
- For those interested in the London club scene one can catch the Monday to Saturday 0334 back from Paddington. Although there is a sobering wait of over an hour at Reading, it is a way of getting home. As this is travelling on a different day please ensure you buy an appropriate return, not a day return, ticket. There are also departures at 0630 (Monday to Friday), 0550 (Saturday) and 0757 on a Sunday.
- Andover station (which is a twenty mile drive from Great Bedwyn) has a last departure from London Waterloo of 2335 on all days.

Please note that the last trains to Bedwyn and Newbury, mentioned above, are connecting trains at Reading. Be sure to allow yourself time and ensure you get the correct departing train.

There are some engineering works in January:

- On Saturday and Sunday 02/01/2010 and 03/01/2010 the line will be closed all day. Replacements buses will operate between Bedwyn and Theale.
- On Monday 11/01/2010 to Thursday 14/01/2010 inclusive there will be bus replacements after 2040 between Bedwyn and Reading.

Happy Travelling and Happy New Year!

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Parish News: February 2010

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

We hope that the snow did not inconvenience your train journeys too much during January.

This month's article will be about ensuring that you are not overcharged for certain fares and some suggestions on how to legitimately be undercharged.

Firstly if you are travelling west then be sure to state that the ticket you require is not via Reading. It appears that, unlike the web booking facility, the on-train ticket sellers and ticket office machines default to selling you a ticket via Reading. This is considerably more expensive so always double check what you are being sold.

On a similar line always check that the ticket you are purchasing is correctly routed via London or not. I was recently in Edinburgh and purchased a single back to Bedwyn. They wanted approximately £20 more than the

price I'd looked up online. After a few moments of confusion it became clear I was being sold a ticket that was valid via London, which was not the route I was taking.

As mentioned in a previous article when travelling west it is often cheaper to buy a ticket to Pewsey then a ticket from Pewsey to your final destination. You can stay on the same train, just explain to the ticket seller what you are doing and enquire about the cheapest option.

The next tip is for those that travel to Theale or Reading. Peak time day returns are £10.70 and £11.80 respectively. However, a peak time day return to Winnersh is £8.70. Winnersh is one station beyond Reading on the Waterloo line. Therefore when travelling to Theale or Reading it is cheaper to buy your ticket to Winnersh. This also applies to off peaks and season ticket prices – the annual season ticket saving for Reading would be £416. The following table summarises the situation:

Ticket Type / Train From Bedwyn To	Peak	Off Peak	Monthly	Annual
Theale	£10.70	£7.50	£163.20	£1700.00
Reading	£11.80	£8.00	£197.80	£2060.00
Winnersh	£8.70	£6.00	£157.90	£1644.00

Note that it's Winnersh and not Winnersh Triangle, so be careful when purchasing.

In case you are concerned about the validity of doing this the National Rail Conditions of Carriage, Condition 16 states "You may start, or break and resume, a journey (in either direction in case of a return ticket) at any intermediate station, as long as the ticket you hold is valid for the trains you want to use. You may also end your journey (in either direction in the case of a return ticket) before the destination shown on the ticket. However, these rights may not apply to some types of tickets which a break of journey is prohibited, in which case the relevant Train Companies will make this clear in their notices and other publications." On the First Great Western website the day return ticket types (shown above) both state "You may start, break and resume, or end your journey at any intermediate station along the route of travel" and for season tickets it states "…This includes the right to start, break and resume, or end your journey, as described in condition 16."

Happy Travelling!

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Parish News: March 2010

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

To say the least February was an interesting month for the passenger group. It started with an innocuous looking email, from First Great Western's timetable production department, letting us know

the mid evening buses would need to be retimed to suit the 1928 weekday Newbury departure being retimed to 1955. On investigation the new timing would mean that we would gain a connection for the 1903 Paddington departure but we would lose the very important connection for the 1836 departure. First Great Western's thinking behind this was to give Hungerford, who actually have a stop on the 1836 Paddington departure, an extra connection.

Since December 2006, when Hungerford and Bedwyn ceased to be on identical stopping patterns, we have complained that Bedwyn is losing passengers to Hungerford because of their better service. The danger for us is that the downgrading of our service would reduce our passenger numbers, making it a self fulfilling prophecy that Bedwyn does not warrant the service that it has.

On straw polling our London commuters it became even clearer how significant the loss of this service would be. Many arrive at Paddington between 1800 and 1830, making the 1806 direct service, and the 1836 connecting service, ideal. An additional half hour wait, to the 1903, is fine if said quickly, but having to face it everyday of ones working life would be pitiful.

Having lost our main First Great Western contact, Richard Rowland, we wrote to the "Customer & Stakeholder Liaison Manager" stating the seriousness of the situation. To solve the situation we, very optimistically, asked for a stop on the 1836. Realistically the best we hoped for was a return to the status quo or a new connecting service such that both the 1836 and 1903 would be served to Bedwyn. In truth we felt we'd have a battle on our hands as we feared the new management would start to undo all that Richard had done for us over the last three years. What we did not expect was the following reply from Matthew Golton, Projects & Planning Director:

"Thanks very much for your email, representing the Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group. My colleagues and I have reflected on your suggestions over the last couple of days and I am pleased to tell you that we have been able to insert a stop into the Exeter train. The 1836 Paddington-Exeter will be retimed to leave London at 1833 from the May timetable change, leaving Reading two minutes earlier than at present. The Bedwyn call on the Exeter train will be at 1936. We will leave the retiming of the 1928 Newbury-Bedwyn as planned but we hope that the earlier, direct arrival into Bedwyn will be really welcomed."

So within a week we went from a position of facing a reduced service to a much improved one. From May 24th we will have direct trains at 1618, 1706, 1806 and 1833 with connections off the 1636, 1733, 1903 and 1945. This gives us a half hourly peak evening service from Paddington to Bedwyn; something we've wanted since we formed as a group.

Additionally the 1833 journey time will be very quick, just one hour and three minutes. This is likely the shortest ever between Paddington and Bedwyn. It also gives an extra westbound train, direct to Taunton and Exeter.

We've arranged a meeting with Matthew Golton for early March. While they are being kind to us we want to ask again for a stop on the train that departs Pewsey at 0722. This would solve our last big loss from the December 2006 timetable changes – being a Paddington service between 0700 and 0800 and a means of getting to Thatcham, Theale and Reading for the typical working day.

Happy Travelling!

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Parish News: April 2010

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

As mentioned in our last article we've now had a meeting with Matthew Golton, First Great Western Projects and Planning Director. This was the first meeting since he replaced Richard Rowland and followed on the heels of him agreeing to us having a stop on the 1836 weekday Paddington departure. We're obviously doing something right as we were joined by the Permanent Train Planning Manager and the Integration & Partnerships Manager.

The following are the key points of the topics raised:

1) Prior to December 2006 we had direct London trains at 0608, 0642, 0710, 0758 and 0857 - we now have them at 0608, 0646 and 0840 i.e. nothing at the prime commuter time of between 0700 and 0800. Additionally since December 2006 we lost a convenient train for getting to Thatcham, Theale and Reading for the start of a typical working day. To resolve this we again requested a stop on the 0546 from Exeter, giving us a service around 0730 which would be an excellent Paddington and Reading train and give an easy Newbury connection to Thatcham and Theale. Previously we'd always had this request turned down but this time they have agreed to investigate if it is possible and, if feasible, they will give it to us. The term 'feasible' refers to (i) whether the additional four minutes required to stop a service at Bedwyn would cause an insurmountable problem elsewhere and (ii) whether an additional stop would cause the service to become overcrowded.
2) We re-raised a point that there is no commuter service west on this line. The first train that comes down this line, heading west, is our 0930 departure to Exeter. The good news is that from December they are going to introduce this as a 0706 departure from Paddington. The bad news is that we are not going to get a stop on it and, the even worse news is that to run the train our 0930 will disappear (i.e. the 0818 from Paddington will no longer run). We have not exactly been singled out because Theale, Thatcham and Hungerford are also losing their stops. However, Theale and Thatcham passengers can pick it up at Newbury leaving just Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn passengers unable to use this service (unless one first took an awkward journey east and changed at Newbury). We pointed out that a stop at Bedwyn would allow Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn passengers to make use of it. They took this onboard but the problem is that, due to timings, it's proved impossible to fit additional stops on. However, they will keep it under review and, with the Reading station re-development, it is likely come May 2013 that trains will be handled through Reading more quickly giving the opportunity for additional stops. So disappointingly our hard won 0930 westbound weekday service will cease in December. However, the Saturday 0930 will remain running as per the current situation (i.e. September to May).
3) We re-raised the possibility of having timetable boards in Marlborough. First Great Western have agreed to investigate this.
4) We asked about the station information screens. These are now due for replacement in July 2010 and will be identical equipment on both platforms comprising of (i) Three line display board (as per Reading station) (ii) Clock (iii) PA (iv) Help point. It will not now contain CCTV as previously mentioned. Incidentally all the Turbo style trains are being refitted over the next three years, this will include new onboard information systems that will be real-time and use GPS to make the information relevant to where the train is. This refit is a bare metal rebuild including seating, flooring and paintwork. Additionally the problem of broken window catches, the source of much complaint, will be resolved.
5) We asked about rolling stock replacement and timetabling in view of electrification. The simple answer is nobody knows.

6) We again raised the subject of the lack of ticket sellers and the lost revenue this causes. They promised to look into this.
7) We complained about the lack of joined up thinking when things go wrong and the occasional offhand approach of staff at Newbury. We were able to submit a number of cases for them to deal with.
8) We talked about the state of the two shelters. They are aware of the condition and asked us to submit our views and digital photographs. The Passenger Groups view is that the westbound shelter is now beyond saving. However, if there is a strong voice in the village to keep it we will follow your lead. Therefore please email me your views or phone on 871407.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: May 2010

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

On Sunday May 23rd the timetable will change. This mainly affects the weekend; for example we'll lose our Saturday westbound service until September 11th. Monday May 24th will see the permanent introduction of a weekday stop on the 1833 from Paddington. Note that on a Friday this train extends as far as Plymouth. This makes a long weekend away possible e.g. board it at Bedwyn (as the 1936), arrive Plymouth at 2215 (noting that it also calls at intermediate stations) then get the 1044 on the Monday (change at Exeter onto the 1155 departure) and arrive at Bedwyn at 1332. The fare for this, as a Super Off-Peak Return, is £63.70 (be sure to state you are not travelling via Reading).

In our last article we reported that from December the 0930 weekday westbound service will cease. Instead it'll be replaced by an earlier service which will not call at Bedwyn but call at Pewsey at shortly after 0800. If one is prepared to drive to Pewsey this opens up westbound commuting for our area. Of course we will continue to campaign for a stop on this new service but feel this is worth mentioning now in case you are considering a change of job later this year.

With the summer holiday season coming remember that Heathrow, Gatwick, Bristol International, Birmingham International and Exeter International airports are accessible via train (some requiring recognised coach & bus connections).

First Great Western are currently trialling free Bristol bus travel (to and from Bristol Temple Meads or Bristol Parkway stations on First buses only) until July 1st. It requires you to have arrived by train and your original ticket price (before any railcard discount) to have been £25 or more. When you buy the train ticket please be sure to ask for 'A First SuperBus'. It appears that this may not be available when purchasing a ticket onboard the train and therefore requires advance booking on 08457 000 125 or from a station ticket office (e.g. Pewsey or Newbury).

First Great Western currently also has various special offers on their website. Please see www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk – these include 2 for 1 offers (on admission prices, restaurants and hotels) in Bath, Bristol, Oxford and London.

Happy Travelling!

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Parish News: June 2010

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Whilst recently catching the weekday 0840 I purchased a ticket to London. At first the ticket seller attempted to sell me the full fare ticket of £46.40. Please be wary of this because the 0840 is eligible for off peak tickets. After swift negotiation I paid the correct fare of £23. A reminder of the situation is:

Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays are always off peak. On weekdays the first eastbound departure where an off peak ticket can be used is the 0840. Note for return trains the 1636, 1703, 1733, 1833 and 1903 weekday Paddington departures require a full fare ticket. The 1618 and earlier, 1706, 1806, 1945 and all later trains are valid for off peak fares.

By now you should have received a copy of the new timetable. If for some reason we missed you there will be copies available from the village shops.

Please mention our new stop on the 1833 weekday Paddington departure to whoever you think might be able to make use of it.

Until September our westbound service is as follows:

Monday to Friday departures: 0930, 1330, 1824, 1924 and 1936

Monday to Friday arrivals: 0646, 1332 and 1944

Service is direct to and from Pewsey and Westbury. Certain trains are direct with Frome, Castle Cary, Taunton, Tiverton Parkway, Exeter St Davids and Plymouth. Please check timetables.

Change at Westbury for Bath Spa, Bristol Temple Meads, Portsmouth, Southampton and Cardiff. Also, where the service is not direct, change at Westbury for Frome, Castle Cary, Taunton, Tiverton Parkway, Exeter St Davids and Plymouth.

Saturday: No service west until September – instead go east and change at Newbury.

Sunday: No service west – instead go east and change at Newbury.

Remember when purchasing your ticket aboard a westbound train, that you boarded at Bedwyn, please be sure that the ticket seller does not attempt to sell you a ticket via Reading.

Happy Travelling!

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Parish News: July 2010

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Our Station Figures

The ticket sales for the financial year 2008/09 have recently been published. Below is a summary table, we've produced, comparing Bedwyn with its neighbouring stations:

	2008/09		2007/08		2006/07		2005/06	
	Total	**Season**	**Total**	**Season**	**Total**	**Season**	**Total**	**Season**
Pewsey	178992	82810	171774	78330	152934	70692	148884	71468
Bedwyn	83718	21780	83844	22850	78300	23550	75856	21954
Hungerford	274808	118246	250454	96722	221264	84078	231132	90004
Kintbury	65676	24092	61190	20768	56732	19886	58602	16692
Newbury	1501100	645398	1486976	607514	1453912	596300	1435604	591804

Notes:

1. Total is the combination of those that board and those that alight at each station. Only ticket and season ticket sales are counted.

2. Season is the combination of those that board and those that alight at each station with a season ticket.

Observations:

1. We can see that after the December 2006 timetable changes that we have started to lose out (despite Kintbury growing) on season ticket travellers while Hungerford has steadily been growing. This is likely because, during this period, Hungerford has been favoured with additional trains during peak hours. We've now won the evening case (and have a really good commuter evening service) but are still to win the morning case (where we don't have an adequate service between 0700 and 0800). This means we have been losing passengers to Hungerford during that time (both in season and non season ticket sales).
2. Compared with Kintbury we are far more popular for occasional travel. This stands to reason as anybody living outside Kintbury would likely favour boarding at Newbury.
3. Pewsey and Newbury are staffed stations. Bedwyn and Kintbury are unstaffed. Hungerford is unstaffed but has a ticket machine and is a penalty fare station. We have long been convinced that Bedwyn is being under counted by those being able to ride for free. Our random sampling of trains would put us closer to a total of 100,000. This is also indicated by Pewsey having such high figures with far fewer trains than us.

A DfT commissioned report, published in November 2009, entitled 'Better Rail Stations' categorises each station on the network into the following categories:

A – National Hub Stations. London Paddington is the only example on our line.

B – National Interchange Stations. Reading is the only example on our line.

C – Important Feeder Stations. Slough, Newbury and Exeter are examples on our line.

D – Medium Staffed Stations. Pewsey and Westbury are examples on our line.

E – Small Staffed Stations. Thatcham and Theale are examples on our line.

F – Unstaffed Stations. This is almost half the number of stations on the network and is subdivided into F1 and F2 (very small). Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury are F1. The only F2 station on our line appears to be Midgham.

Happy Travelling!

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Parish News: August 2010

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Just when we thought we had a lull in passenger group activity we have suddenly had a very busy month. Therefore this article is a little longer than normal.

On June the 25th I attended the First Great Western (FGW) Stakeholder Conference, in Bristol, on behalf of the Passenger Group. It was a very positive meeting and what struck me is that FGW and Network Rail management are very open, honest and working together to improve our railway. Gone are the BR days of always saying 'No' and gone are the hostilities between FGW and Network Rail.

Over the last few years they've faced an uphill struggle of years of BR under investment. The sums being invested in the network infrastructure are quite staggering. On the downside are the fears over the government's comprehensive spending review. Reading between the lines the mood was that electrification would be scrapped. This, in itself, is not a disaster but FGW desperately need to have the decision made so they can make decisions on rolling stock. Due to the nature of franchise agreements the majority of rolling stock is leased. Prior to the electrification announcement an order had been placed for new diesel units which would have served sections of the FGW area, including us, from December 2011. This would have resolved many of the issues we have (e.g. lack of morning train to Paddington between 0700 and 0800 and lack of trains west). However, when electrification was announced the purchase of these diesel units was cancelled by the government. If electrification is now cancelled it puts FGW back to square one with an aging HST rolling stock. It was raised that the HST fleet might be overhauled again, this would include new toilets and better door access (to comply with forthcoming disability legislation).

Another fear for FGW, r.e. the government's comprehensive spending review, is whether the major works at Reading will be stopped. This truly would put the industry back as Reading is a major bottleneck to the region, causing delays and timetabling issues. Though the work scheduled for this Christmas, to move all the signalling control from Reading to Didcot, is still to go ahead. This will effectively shut the line between Theale and Maidenhead between Christmas day and January 3rd (inclusive) with the line briefly reopening to serve New Years Eve. Therefore if you are a London bound commuter, and don't wish to use the bus replacement service, you might wish to consider taking the full Christmas week off. At present it appears that there will be shuttle buses from Theale and a bus from Newbury to Slough. Further details are available at http://www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/Content.aspx?id=4888

The other thing of interest to us, raised at the conference, is the lack of ticket collectors. This was especially significant as I travelled to Bristol and back, via Reading, without being asked to show my ticket at any point. The panel did not have any solutions other than "it's a problem". It appears that funding for revenue protection staff is not just down to FGW. On July 8th Bill Wells and I met with FGW and raised this again. What we discovered is that there is a crazy funding issue where the DfT increase the grant as revenue tails off. Therefore FGW have to get £6 back for every £1 they invest in additional ticket selling staff - otherwise they are better off with the DfT grant. The FGW managers acknowledged it's a crazy system but from a business point of view we can understand their point. However, they have agreed to try and improve the situation and talk to the DfT. One suggestion they took on board straightaway is to get the 0646 always to arrive at a Paddington platform with a ticket barrier. We also presented them with some recently collected Wiltshire Council figures, of Bedwyn station usage, which clearly shows that there are more people using the trains than tickets sold.

Other things raised, with FGW on July 8th, were:

1) We asked about progress on our request to have a stop on the 0546 weekday from Exeter. This would call here at 0729 and be direct to Paddington. It'd also connect well for Thatcham and Theale. There has been some progress. At present this service is only 80% on time at Newbury and has a 7 minute wait at Westbury. From December 2010 they will reduce this to 3 minutes at Westbury and use the additional four minutes at Pewsey, Hungerford and Newbury. If they can get this to work, and on time, they will then consider giving us a stop.
2) From May 2011 there will be a re-working of some of our trains. In short the 1706, from Paddington (calling Bedwyn at 1824), will no longer terminate at Westbury but instead go via Trowbridge, Bradford-on-Avon, Bath Spa and Bristol Temple Meads. This gives us an interesting evening service west but sadly it means that the 1917 from Westbury (calling here at 1944) will no longer run. This is an important part of our westbound service and, given the loss of the weekday 0930 west from December 2010, it is disappointing. We put a number of proposals to FGW and the two that they will consider are (i) switching the Hungerford stop, on the 1523 from Taunton, to Bedwyn (Hungerford passengers would then catch an existing connecting service from Bedwyn) and (ii) giving us a stop on the 1954 from Exeter. It was pointed out to us that westbound ticket prices from Bedwyn are the same as from Newbury, if travelling via Newbury. FGW also pointed out that it costs, in terms of fuel used, £10,000pa per additional HST stop.
3) Ticket sellers on our trains often try and sell a full fare on the 0840 and give advice that an off peak ticket is not valid, from Paddington, between 1630 and 1730. As the 0840 is an off peak train and 1706 and 1806 return services are open to off peak tickets FGW agreed that some retraining is required.
4) We raised the subject that when things go wrong people are often left stranded and without information. FGW agreed that they could do better and are investigating a recent incident (the suicide at Twyford) where they clearly failed passengers.
5) We thanked FGW for the recent station repaint and the replacing of the Perspex in the up shelter. We had previously asked for new shelters but, given the economic climate, this proved impossible.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: September 2010

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Following on from our busy June there was no let up in July. Some of you may have noticed the Wiltshire Council leaflet, entitled "Changes to bus services in the Marlborough and Hungerford areas", that appeared in The Stores and The Post Office. It made for a jaw dropping read as six of the bus/train connections had been retimed to not connect and one bus service had been removed altogether.

Some rapid emails and phone calls were exchanged between Wiltshire Council, First Great Western and ourselves. Fortunately the six missed connections were a printing error but Wiltshire Council confirmed the early bus, which connects Marlborough to our 0646 HST departure to Paddington, had

been dropped. They cited that, under the new contract where Bodman Coaches are replacing Wilts and Dorset, an extra driver would be required to make the 0646 connecting journey. They also cited the lack of their own staff as the cause for not consulting with us and First Great Western. However, we are hoping that they'll consult in the future as we had been chasing them, with regards to the proposed new timetable, for some months. Although we run the passenger group on a very polite philosophy we had to let Wiltshire Council know how disappointed we were. First Great Western have become very good at consulting with us so it came as a bit of a wakeup call how things can so rapidly change when we are not consulted.

The loss of the connecting service from Marlborough (for the 0646) means that our first bus to Marlborough is now the 0736 from the station (0737 from the square).

All was not lost for Marlborough commuters as a new 0705 bus (from Marlborough) now runs to Hungerford to connect with the 0736 HST service to Paddington – giving an overall journey time of an hour and 33 minutes; actually quicker than the hour and 43 minutes that it took when connecting with the 0646 from Bedwyn. This leaves Marlborough commuters with a workable, if asymmetric, bus/train journey with the evening return being back to Bedwyn - the 1833 from Paddington getting commuters back to Marlborough at 2008; a journey time of just an hour and 35 minutes.

So for some this will actually make the Marlborough to Paddington commute more attractive. If you get the chance to spread the word to anybody you know in Marlborough we'd be very grateful.

Following complaints from Burbage residents we have also put in a request for the 1305 Marlborough bus departure, which arrives in the village at 1332, to start earlier. This is because there is a HST 1332 service to Paddington which this bus nearly always misses. Wiltshire Council has promised to attempt to make a change in December.

Happy Travelling!

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Parish News: October 2010

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

You may have noticed that we got some coverage in the Wiltshire Gazette where we sold the new early morning bus times, mentioned in last month's Parish News, as a 'good news' story. Even though there was a downside, as well as an upside, to the changes we decided to sell it on this basis as we need to get more Marlborough commuters to use the buses, otherwise there's a risk of cuts.

We are also trying to get rail timetable boards erected in Marlborough. First Great Western have supplied us with the boards and posters (similar to those at the station which also show the bus times) and we have approached Marlborough Town Council with a request to meet with them to see if there is a possible location. However, Marlborough Town Council have not responded so we have to work out how best to achieve this.

There has been a problem with Bodman's Coaches, which took over from Wilts & Dorset, rerouting buses away from The Knapp and Castle Road. We contacted Wiltshire Council who were not aware of this. We were heartened to see that they came out immediately to monitor the situation and have corrected it back to the official route.

It is important that you plan any Christmas travel and commutes carefully. As normal there is no service on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. Due to major works at Reading all lines through the station are closed from December 27th to 30th inclusive. The latest understanding is that Bedwyn will be served by trains as far as Theale and it'll be buses from there on. It looks as if a Saturday service will run on New Years Eve, New Years Day and January 2nd. Expect disruption on Monday January 3rd (a Bank Holiday) where they plan to close the station overnight. Things should be back to normal from January 4th.

Please note that Wiltshire Council are unable to change the bus times over this period. Thus the bus timetable will remain as it currently is and not connect very well with the trains.

First Great Western are planning to change the weekday eastbound morning service from December. The changes are that the 0608 becomes a 0555 departure (arriving in Paddington eight minutes earlier than it does now) and the 0623 departure becomes a 0613 departure. This latter train (which only ever runs as far as Reading) will connect with the 0715 departure from Reading, thus getting to Paddington at 0744. Please let us now how this will affect you. Is this good news or bad news? Please email or call me on 871407.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: November 2010

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Last month we reported that from the December timetable change there will be changes to the times of the first two weekday eastbound departures. From December there will be another change. The weekday lunchtime departures will be retimed from 1136, 1312, 1332 and 1436 to 1136, 1236, 1332 and 1436. In other words the 1312 becomes the 1236. This gives us a neater spread but has a knock

on affect that we have now had to request that Wiltshire Council retime the bus, which connects with the 1312 departure, to connect with the 1236 departure.

Last month we also reported on the Reading station closures scheduled for the Christmas period. We have been asked to be a bit more precise how this will affect commuters. It can be summarised that between Christmas Day and January 3rd (which is a bank holiday) inclusive, commuters travelling beyond Theale will be subject to buses on all working days apart from the 31st (where a Saturday service will run). Therefore it is recommended you take the two non bank holiday of December 29th and 30th as leave and perhaps also consider the 31st as the chances are there will be disruption.

On the subject of disruption we have noted the recent drop in service reliability (especially the occasional cancellation of off-peak daytime trains). We have been emailing FGW but a recent change in their staff organisation (for which read job cuts) means that we are not currently getting the attention we had become used to. We will persevere. This also applies to recent communications with Wiltshire Council (r.e. the buses) where reduced staffing means that it's hard to get our voice heard. The trick appears to be never to give up.

On a more positive note Marlborough Town Council invited us to give a presentation of the timetable notice boards (with bus connections) that we hope to get displayed in the town. They were very positive and will look into finding a site for them.

A query has come up about the age at which child fares are payable on the buses. It's actually five years.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: December 2010

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

In October we reported that from the December timetable change there will be changes to the times of the first two weekday eastbound departures. From December there will be another change. The weekday lunchtime departures will be retimed from 1136, 1312, 1332 and 1436 to 1136, 1236, 1332 and 1436. In other words the 1312 becomes the 1236. This gives us a neater spread but has a knock on affect that we have now had to request that Wiltshire Council retime the bus, which connects with the 1312 departure, to connect with the 1236 departure.

Please remember that from December 13th we lose our 0930 westbound service. This is because the train forming the service has been rescheduled to form a 0706 Paddington departure and it's not been possible to timetable us a stop. It's a shame but larger stations than ours (e.g. Hungerford) also do not get a stop. This new service will call at Pewsey at 0808. If you are prepared to drive to Pewsey this does give you an earlier opportunity to get to places such as Exeter (arrive 0930), Bath (arrive 0913), Bristol Temple Meads (arrive 0935).

We have written to FGW on a number of issues including the recent drop in service reliability. Below is their response:

We are being challenged at the moment and London Thames Valley services (including Bedwyn) are not as good as they should be. The morning peak has been hit by leaf adhesion delays. It is not as bad as it has been in the past due to both Network Rail's tree felling programme and improved railhead treatment – but the first trains out are travelling more slowly and this is causing some problems.

There have also been too many infrastructure problems. We have met with NR and they have produced a remedial action plan for dealing with these. We are pressing for timescales and insisting on urgency, but I do understand that the service is not to the standard that you, or we, want and I am sorry.

This does mean that we are missing some connections. Reading is particular issue especially at peak time. If we slip even a little from the booked timetable trains start to bunch and have to wait outside the station.

Hence the £880 million remodelling project which has started. Once done it will mean more platforms so that the 1833 does not wait access. It is not a quick fix but ultimately it will mean a big difference to reliability.

In the meantime we need to work at every delay minute to keep Reading moving. The Right Time Railway group are looking at all services and identifying causes and solutions for trains that are failing PPM. This is true of the 1833 and I have asked that attention be paid to this train.

An initial look shows that the problem is most definitely at Reading, but there is no obvious regular cause. That said it is not working well and we will target it for attention.

Connections at Newbury are not straightforward. Ultimately Network Rail through their signaller make the decision about how long we can hold a service, but we can request a hold. I suspect that if Control are dealing with other incidents and station staff at Newbury don't call Control for a hold the 2122 can get missed. I have reminded Control and the Thames Valley Signalling Centre (who signal this area) to watch this train. There are no guarantees as it will be dependent on other rail traffic but it is a point well made and I think there are times when we have missed the chance to help.

We have both reliability and punctuality targets. Reliability being the number of services that run. These are set across journey groups and Bedwyn services fall into the London Thames Valley group. The target over 12 months is 98% to run, and on the last figures (12 months to 18 October 2010) we were running at 99.5%

Late platform changes are inconvenient. We give as much notice as we can, but often the change is notified to us quite late as the signaller has had to make a change not previously planned. Staff should always look to see if there are passengers en route (particularly if they are disabled). They are also however under pressure to dispatch on time, or we end up out of position at Reading and delaying following trains. That said, passengers clearing moving from one announced platform to another should be given time to do so.

It is also worth noting that Network Rail currently make the announcements/operate the boards at Paddington. We are working with them on a major review of information provision and have suggested that it might be better if we took this on ourselves.

Fares for 2011 are not yet confirmed – we will let you have them as soon as they are. You may have seen the Secretary of State's announcement about future increases. Currently regulated fares rise by RPI+1%, with the extra % going back to Govt. for rail improvement works, from 2012 that rises to RPI +3%. This has been the subject of much discussion and possibly the source of the rumours.

On a more positive note Marlborough Town Council invited us to give a presentation of the timetable notice boards (with bus connections) that we hope to get displayed in the town. They were very positive and will look into finding a site for them.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: February 2011

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

On January 17th Bill Wells and I met with First Great Western. This was to discuss ongoing requests and the recent poor performance.

We asked about having a stop on the 0546 from Exeter, calling here at around 0728. This is to try and put us back to a service level similar to pre-December 2006. There is a feasibility study continuing into this and it is still on the agenda. In December 2010 they injected the extra timing into this trains journey to make an extra stop possible. This would then require the train to be consistently three minutes early into Hungerford to allow us the stop. Since December it is, on average, three minutes late into Hungerford. However, this has been a bad period and the train is making up two minutes between Hungerford and Newbury, so there is still hope. We'll know later in the year what the position is.

From May the 1917 from Westbury will no longer run and we will, therefore, lose its Bedwyn call at 1944. We asked if we could get a call on the 1625 from Pewsey to give us a later afternoon service from the west. Initially, due to the £10,000pa fuel costs in stopping a HST, they said no. However, we have pointed out that they could drop the 1649 call at Hungerford, thus making it cost neutral, and Hungerford passengers could change at Bedwyn onto the 1644 departure. They will look into this; the stumbling block is if Hungerford passengers rely on the HST service to travel beyond Newbury.

We asked about parking at the station and, in particular, whether the station car park could be extended further east. They were interested in our thinking and were concerned that the station car park is normally full before 0700. We have since submitted a sketch plan of the idea.

We raised the question why Network Rail cards can no longer be purchased online or by phone. They were unaware of this and will look into it.

We asked if the waiting rooms at Newbury could be held open when the trains were badly delayed. Apparently there are security staff that work later than the normal station staff. The security staff will now be issued with keys. We'd be grateful for any feedback regarding this.

We asked about the new station information screens and PA. The schedule is that these will be installed imminently. We already have the new helpline for passengers to call for information. This also allows staff at Newbury to call the station and report delays to those passengers standing on the platforms at Bedwyn.

Also attending the meeting was a member of the Passenger Information During Disruption (PIDD) team. It was useful to talk through all the poor information we get fed when things go wrong. The good news is that the PIDD team exists and they are trying to do something about it. They plan to sit route information specialists next to the train controllers such that, during disruption, there is a passenger advocate sitting next to the people making the decisions on which trains are to be delayed/cancelled/re-routed. This means that there should be an improvement in the accuracy of the information we get fed.

We were also heartened to learn that a new system is being introduced that will deal with train associations. Thus they should soon be able to mark outgoing trains as delayed/cancelled when the inbound train has suffered the same fate. At present we have the crazy situation of an inbound train being marked as cancelled and the outbound service that it forms being marked as running on time.

We asked about electrification. This is still planned as far as Newbury with a final announcement due in the next four to six weeks. We raised our concerns that we would be very unhappy to end up with just a shuttle service as far as Newbury. FGW reassured us that they'd be unhappy about this too and this would be the least preferable of all options. The most preferable of all possibilities is bi-mode trains (i.e. those that can run on electric and diesel).

We pointed out that on 11th November 2012 the station will celebrate its 150th anniversary. FGW were interested to hear this and will give some thought to how this occasion might be marked.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: March 2011

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

On February 7th First Great Western did a mass ticket check at Kintbury and Hungerford. The results were:

Hungerford

8 Persons reported for prosecution
7 Penalty Fares issued
253 persons checked leaving trains
22 persons checked on trains
29 tickets sold

Kintbury

1 Persons reported for prosecution
10 Penalty Fares issued
62 persons checked leaving trains
19 persons checked on trains
14 tickets sold

Naturally we don't know when it'll be our turn. But it does underline the point to ensure you have a ticket. It's often the case that it's impossible to purchase a ticket on the outward train from Bedwyn. This means Bedwyn is not a 'Penalty Fare' station. But if you board at a 'Penalty Fare' station you must have bought a ticket (either from the ticket office or from the machine) otherwise you risk having to pay a penalty fare. This will be twice the full, single fare to the next station, or at least £20, whichever is greater. You will also have to pay the full fare for the rest of the journey.

Between Westbury and Paddington all stations are 'Penalty Fare' stations apart from: Bedwyn, Kintbury, Newbury Racecourse, Midgham and Aldermaston. Therefore if you arrive at a 'Penalty Fare' station without a ticket it's best to buy one as soon as you arrive. This is preferable to the stress involved in arriving back at the station, without a ticket, to find a queue at the ticket office and your train about to leave.

A problem that has come to light is that the Internet journey planners, and telephone enquiries, can, by default, suggest west bound travel via Reading. They do this because they (i) attempt to not leave you waiting at a station for too long (ii) give you the quickest journey. For example to travel after 1300 on a weekday to Penzance the Internet recommends catching the 1332 east which arrives at Reading at 1415. Then to catch the 1433 from Reading which arrives into Penzance at 1935. The single fare for this is £46.5. If however you specify to travel not via Reading it recommends the 1330 west which arrives into Taunton at 1439. Then to catch the 1550 from Taunton which arrives into Penzance at 1935. The single fare for this is £42.50. It's not just the £4 that you save but eighteen minute change around at Reading could be tight if there are delays or you have to queue for a ticket because no ticket seller came around between Bedwyn and Reading.

So the tip is, when enquiring about westbound travel, check what the journey would be not via Reading.

Happy Travelling!

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Parish News: April 2011

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Bucking the System

It's always a good feeling to buck the system. With the ability to look at train fares online one can play around with a journey to minimise the fare. An example is travelling to Cardiff at peak times. A return from Bedwyn costs an incredible £179 (note that it's much lower off-peak if you can travel at the weekend or on the weekday 0840 or later). Now a return from Swindon to Cardiff costs £28.40 and a return from Bedwyn to Swindon costs £73 at peak times. Thus you can save £77.60 by buying it as two separate tickets. And you will be on the very same trains. It's just a case of playing around online to see what you can come up with. When buying on board explain to the ticket seller that you want to buy it as separate tickets, they are obliged to sell them as such if you ask.

Parking at The Knapp

Along with the Parish Council and a representative of the recently formed Knapp Tenants Association, we agreed the wording of a leaflet to be placed on the cars in The Knapp. We have now had these printed and have started to distribute the leaflets which give guidance on parking. The idea being to try and eliminate the inconvenience caused to the Knapp residents. In summary the leaflet is asking rail users to adhere to the following:

- Please don't park in disabled bays unless you have a valid disabled badge
- Please don't park in the two closes
- Please don't park at the station if you are able to walk to the station
- Please don't block driveways
- Please don't park on junctions
- Please don't park with wheels on paved or grassed areas
- Please don't park across dropped kerbs
- Please allow room for the buses to get through and turn

The reason for repeating this here is twofold. Firstly to explain to Knapp residents that, as we are unable to distinguish between your cars and rail users cars, that you unfortunately will get leafleted too. Hopefully you'll see the leaflets are addressed to rail users so know to ignore them. Secondly to appeal to anybody that can walk to the station to do so instead of driving.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: June 2011

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Last month it appears our May 2008 article got reproduced in the Parish News. We can assure you that, although trains do get delayed, we are not normally that late in getting articles submitted!

Bucking the System

It's always a good feeling to buck the system. With the ability to look at train fares online one can play around with a journey to minimise the fare. An example is travelling to Cardiff at peak times. A return from Bedwyn costs an incredible £179 (note that it's much lower off-peak if you can travel at the weekend or on the weekday 0840 or later). Now a return from Swindon to Cardiff costs £28.40 and a return from Bedwyn to Swindon costs £73 at peak times. Thus you can save £77.60 by buying it as two separate tickets. And you will be on the very same trains. It's just a case of playing around online to see what you can come up with. When buying on board explain to the ticket seller that you want to buy it as separate tickets, they are obliged to sell them as such if you ask.

Engineering Notice Boards

The eagle eyed amongst you will have noticed that the engineering notice boards, at the station, have been raised from ground to eye level. We requested this of First Great Western because we were getting complaints from passengers that they were missing prior notice of bus replacement services. However, it's still all too easy to forget to check.

Parking

We expect everybody has received the letter from the Knapp residents. The parking problems are multi-factored and not just because the station has free parking. We are the cheapest station in Wiltshire for travel to London, this makes us popular. When commuters choose a station they'll price in parking, fares, distance from home and the frequency of trains.

There has been a recent increase in commuters at the station because, since January, parking charges have been introduced at Hungerford. Our guess is that Hungerford based commuters are not flocking to us but instead some of those where Bedwyn is their nearest station have returned to us. In December 2006 Hungerford was given a better service than Bedwyn which meant we lost passengers at that time.

New Bristol Service

We have a new travel opportunity. Our weekday 1824 westbound service now calls at Trowbridge (1900), Bath (1923) and Bristol Temple Meads (1941). This might be useful for night shift work and clubbers alike. The train back the following morning leaves Bristol Temple Meads, weekdays, at 0520 with a change at Westbury to the 0618 departure which stops in the village.

Happy Travelling!

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Parish News: July 2011

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Station Cleanup

On May 21st the passenger group joined in the village cleanup day. We weeded and cleaned the station, touched in damaged paintwork and did a litter sweep of the adjoining Knapp. Thanks are due to Judy Haynes who came and helped us.

We managed to add a pair of ladies underpants to the list of interesting items we have found at the station. Evidently the station is more of a happening place than we had previously given it credit for.

Refurbished Turbo Launch

On March 29th Bill Wells and Margaret Burden, representing the passenger group, attended the launch, at Paddington Station, of the refurbished turbo trains. They were able to meet Mark Hopwood, the Managing Director of First Great Western, and Theresa Villiers, Transport Minister before catching the very train on display, forming the 1118 departure to Bedwyn.

The fleet of turbo trains, which serve our station, has undergone a multi-million pound refit which includes repainting, re-flooring, reupholstering and updated onboard information systems.

At the meeting Bill and Margaret asked about the post-electrification situation and how it will affect Bedwyn (given electrification will stop at Newbury). First Great Western appeared confident that we will fit into a bi-mode (i.e. electric and diesel) semi-fast service that will travel beyond Bedwyn (e.g. to Westbury or Exeter). We will continue to monitor the situation as we wish to ensure that the service will remain at least hourly.

Franchise

You may have read in the news that First Great Western has elected to terminate their franchise in 2013, three years earlier than expected. Although this causes us some concern we are heartened by CEO Tim O'Toole's remark, "We believe we are best placed to manage these projects and capture the benefits through a longer-term franchise."

The predominant theory is that, by going early, First Great Western hope to save on the amounts of money they have to pay the government by re-negotiating a better deal from 2013. Also they will likely try and negotiate a longer franchise where they can invest and see a profitable return within the span of the franchise.

Saturday Buses

There was a rumour that our Saturday bus service with Marlborough was set to become a two hourly service instead of an hourly service. Due to their lack of funding, and subsequent lack of time they can give to us, we could not get to speak with anybody at Wiltshire Council. Thus it was with great relief that, on the issuing of the latest timetable, this proved to be just a rumour and we still have a good service. But please do use the bus if you can. The more it's used the less it'll come under threat. It can be quite pleasant to not worry about car parking and take the bus into Marlborough.

Marlborough on the 'Station Screen'

After a series of discussions and requests with First Great Western, we've managed to get them to include the Marlborough buses on the Internet station screen. We link to this from the home page of our website so take a look at www.bedwyntrains.org.uk to see. We are hoping that this will improve the use of the bus.

The McNulty Report

Bill Wells has been ploughing through the recently published three hundred page McNulty report, which looks at value for money on the railways, to see how the proposal will affect Bedwyn.

It rules out an overall increase in fares and does not propose line closures, so another Beeching looks unlikely. The report basically says "keep what we have and manage it better".

It recommends that the fare structure should be more flexible, franchises should be longer and Driver Only Operation (DOO) should be more widespread. Most of the trains serving Bedwyn already are DOO so little change would be likely.

The report suggests cuts to ticket offices in general (which is a paradox if the suggestion to reduce ticket sellers on trains is also adopted). If this were implemented Category E stations, such as Thatcham, would have their limited offices withdrawn. Category D stations, such as Pewsey, would see a reduction in opening hours. Newbury, a Category C station, might lose one of its ticket windows.

As Bedwyn station has no ticket buying facilities, we'd strongly oppose any further reduction in either on-board ticket selling or offices, particularly at Newbury.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: August 2011

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Sunday Service Disruption

Please note that from Sunday August 7th the Sunday morning trains will be buses. First actual train departure will therefore be at 1228.

Attending Industry Meetings

It's been a busy month for the passenger group and especially for myself as on June 29th I attended First Great Western's annual stakeholder meeting in Bristol and on July the 14th I attended the Network Rail driven Great Western Main Line 10-year plan at Paddington Station.

I had to 'raise my game' and approach some industry heavyweights to ask about how electrification, as far as Newbury, will impact on Bedwyn – our biggest concern being we'd become a diesel orphan

of electrification with our service relegated to a shuttle service to Newbury. I managed to spend time with Mark Hopwood, Managing Director of First Great Western, and Robbie Burns, Major Projects Director for Network Rail. They were both of the opinion that our fears are well founded but nothing has yet been decided. Robbie said it'd make more sense for electrification to come as far as Bedwyn and he'd consider it if there was money left in the budget. Mark said that the new IEP (Intercity Express Programme) trains, which can run on electrified routes with diesel motors for the other sections, might well serve Newbury, Hungerford, Pewsey and Westbury but not Kintbury or Bedwyn.

Mark advised us to lobby our MP to ensure that the current service level is reflected in the new franchise document (i.e. what First Great Western and others will bid on in 2013). We duly wrote to Claire Perry and she has lobbied Theresa Villiers, Minister of State at the Department for Transport, on our behalf. We have also followed this up with a similar letter to Richard Benyon (the MP who covers Kintbury and Hungerford) and he has promised to also lobby to ensure the current service levels are reflected in the franchise document.

I also spoke with a very defensive representative from the Department of Transport. So much so that he'd removed his name badge! He said that Bedwyn would not be on a shuttle from Newbury because of no west facing bay at Newbury. But a few of our trains are shuttles already and they don't need a west facing bay to achieve this. So it's all up in the air and has echoes of 2006 when the passenger group formed following a successful campaign to head off of a threat to cut our service.

Mark Hopwood also told me that it is by no means certain First Great Western will win the franchise. There will be a lot of bids and ultimately those organisations that pass criteria will then be assessed only on the financial side of their bid. Thus it's possible to end up with a train operating company that is not open to doing more and will instead just run the minimum service. He said Tesco are interested in bidding and will obviously be interested in the retail side of the operation more than the train operating side. One wonders what the definition of a Tesco Express or a Tesco Metro would be!

I was also able to speak with David Phillips, Senior Transport Planner at Wiltshire Council, and Wiltshire Councilor Richard Gamble; Portfolio Holder for Public Transport. They are both equally concerned about how electrification will impact Bedwyn and have already been making noises on behalf of Bedwyn station.

There was a general level of concern from other non electrification First Great Western station representatives. Like us they feel left out. I was able to speak with the Marlow-Maidenhead Passenger Association who face the exact same situation as us with their diesel service into Paddington threatened by electrification.

Other points that are relevant to us were:

- In 2010 First Great Western performance was down on 2009. This was attributed to: Trespassing, theft of copper cable, vandalism, suicides, lightening strikes, infrastructure failures, train failures and engineering works not being finished on time.
- FGW love Rail User Groups! That's what they say anyhow. A lot of improvements come from user group suggestions and gone are the days of the blame game between groups, First Great Western and Network Rail. Indeed Network Rail were very approachable which is not something we have witnessed before.

- £5 billion is being spent on the Great Western region over the next ten years. This includes electrification, IEPs. Reading station remodeling and Cross Rail. The Reading Station remodeling will cut journey times and increase capacity through the station and Cross Rail will connect Maidenhead, via new underground lines across London, to Shenfield and Abbey Wood in the east.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: October 2011

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

New Electronic Boards at the Station

Users of the station will have noticed the, long awaited, electronic signs have now been put up. For each platform they give the current time, a scrolling display of the next three services due and whether they are on time or delayed.

We are heartened that the westbound platform has been included, something that was not initially proposed until we pressed for it.

The new system is a welcome improvement on the, often broken, old system. However, there's one disadvantage that's been highlighted by the boards being independent between platforms. As most of our eastbound services are formed from incoming trains we continue to get the bizarre situation where an eastbound train is marked as on time when the incoming train is shown as being delayed. This is called 'train associations' (or lack of in our case) and is something we continue to press First Great Western on. For now it requires a well trained eye to peer across to platform 1 to see what the westbound platform's board is saying.

Other Station Issues

We've put in requests to resolve the following issues:

1. The new electronic board on platform 2 is obscured by the 'Platform 2' sign. We have asked for this sign be moved to a lamppost closer to the bridge.
2. The trees, on Network Rail land, that overhang the railings on the village side of the bridge are obscuring the lamp. Thus when one alights from the train, in the dark, and crosses the

bridge the one light is obscured by the overhanging branches. We've asked to have these trimmed back so the light is visible as one crosses the bridge towards the village.

3. The yellow line, which is used as the advisory line on platform 2 which passengers should stand behind, has become very worn to the point that in places it's almost disappeared. We have asked for this to be re-painted.

Electrification

We understand that there is some concern in the village regarding the passenger group's stance on electrification. Electrification, even if it came to Bedwyn or beyond, would not be a new high speed link creating an increase in commuter numbers using the station. If electrification came as far as Bedwyn our service would remain fairly much as it is. If it went beyond Bedwyn there would be faster services to the west but we'd never be included in a stopping pattern on such a high speed link. A high speed link on this line would only call at places such as Newbury, Westbury, Taunton, Tiverton Parkway and Exeter. Instead we'd likely be on a semi-fast hourly service between Paddington and Exeter.

If, as is now proposed, electrification came only as far as Newbury the worse case scenario for us would be to place us on a diesel shuttle to Newbury. The best we could hope for would be bi-mode trains (that run as electric to Newbury and diesel on to Bedwyn) or to be on a bi-mode semi fast hourly service to Exeter. As it stands the Department of Transport are currently talking about putting Bedwyn on a diesel service to Reading. This would mean we'd lose our direct Paddington services. Naturally we will campaign against this.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: December 2011

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Post Electrification Campaign

Thank you to all that emailed us with your support against the DfT's proposal to cease our direct Paddington service from 2016. We have also been leafleting passengers at the station, at Hungerford and Kintbury stations and on trains themselves. Support appears to be strong with many using the station to travel to Paddington (42% of all journeys according to a 2003 Wiltshire Council Survey).

It's not too late to add your support by using the email address, below. Petition results will be sent to our MP, Claire Perry.

Westbound Saturday Service is Back

Please note, as per normal, we have our Saturday westbound service back until May. Departures are at 0930 and 1329 with arrivals from the west at 1333 and 1635. A Saturday Christmas shopping trip is possible in Bath by catching the 0930 west, change at Westbury onto the 1010, arriving in Bath at 1034. To return catch the 1536 from Bath, change at Westbury onto the 1607 for Bedwyn.

Christmas Engineering Works

Between Christmas and New Year a further phase of the Reading Station re-modelling will take place. This will mean alterations to our timetable. Please check train times before travelling. We hope to get a supply of pocket timetables with the alterations. If you want a copy please email us using the address below or call 871407 – in both cases please supply your address.

Note that the works over Christmas will involve the permanent re-numbering of some of the platforms at Reading. Platform 4 will become 7, 9 will become 10, 4b will become 5 and there will be a new platform 4. Therefore please take care when dashing for a platform; it might not be where you think it is!

Hungerford Victorian Evening (Extravaganza)

This will take place on Friday December the 9th from 1700 with a Grand Parade up the High Street at 1930. As parking will be tight in Hungerford catching the train from Bedwyn makes great sense. It's a great evening for the kids and you can catch trains out at 1644, 1736, 1755 and 1903. Suitable trains back include the 2008, 2042 and 2133.

Happy Travelling!

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Parish News: January 2012

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Private Eye

The Passenger Group's electrification message appears to be spreading with Private Eye including a piece about us in their 'Signal Failures' column. The following is a snippet from the article:

Slashing smaller stations' train services is politically risky for governments, so why not get franchisees to do the dirty work? Bedwyn Trains Passengers' Group sought official reassurance about the future of trains to London from rural Wiltshire stations after the Newbury-London part of the line is electrified. Rail Minister Theresa Villiers' response was anything but reassuring, and not just because she admitted that Bedwyn could lose its London trains. The government's "flexible" franchising would devolve more decisions from Whitehall to professionals who run trains, she wrote. "We do not intend to give bidders precise instructions about how they should serve individual stations or routes. Letting the professionals decide would be fine if public service were the subsidised rail network's main purpose, but private firms' chief task is to maximise profit. To fulfil their duty to shareholders they'll need to cut services at smaller stations."

We don't know how Private Eye got a copy of the letter so we assume the source is likely to be a government employee taking a dislike to the response that we were sent. Our take is more on the lines that we have hit government incompetence rather than a conspiracy i.e. they only had enough money to electrify as far as Newbury and have not thought through how they'll serve Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn.

<u>Post Electrification Campaign</u>

Thank you to all that have signed our email petition against the cessation of direct Paddington services from the year 2016. In all there were 231 signatories and we have duly written to Claire Perry and Richard Benyon with the petition. In your responses there was clear concern about the following additional points:

- The line between Reading and Paddington is notoriously overcrowded and the recent increase in seats announcement only allows the problem to 'tread water' as year on year passenger numbers increase. If Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury users have to change trains at Reading they will find it difficult to get a seat. This would also add to people needlessly changing trains at Reading, causing unnecessary platform crowding.
- People have deliberately moved to Great Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury because of the direct services to Paddington. It would hit these people financially if they should have to move.
- Local house prices would likely fall should we lose the direct Paddington service.
- It is unfair to expect people with disabilities to change trains.

Our keynote document "A Review of Train Services on the Berks & Hants Line" (written by Bill Wells) has been receiving positive feedback from the rail industry and Wiltshire Council. This takes a detailed approach to all the possibilities from 2016 with the view to bringing some sanity to the debate. There is a copy on our website (under the Electrification page). If you'd like a hard copy please contact us using the email address, below or call 871407.

A couple of statistics we needed to establish, to back up our campaign, were (i) the proportion of station users that travel directly to Paddington and (ii) the undercounting of passengers due to (a) Bedwyn not being a penalty fare station (b) no on station ticket purchasing facility and (c) most trains not having a ticket seller.

On the evening of November 23rd we performed an exit survey at the station and established 66% of passengers travelled directly to Paddington. This was of 77 passengers (approximately 40% of total daily users). This clearly indicates that losing our direct Paddington service is not going to serve Bedwyn station well.

We have calculated that we are passenger undercounted by approximately 30%. This is based on taking the Office of Rail Regulator (ORR) figures for Bedwyn and Pewsey and extrapolating them against the Wiltshire Council (WC) figures for Bedwyn and Pewsey. As Pewsey station is staffed the ORR figures are likely to be fairly accurate. The WC figures are accurate for both stations as they are based on a head count. Thus it is possible to estimate the true figure from increasing the ORR Bedwyn figure by the relative use that WC found between the two stations.

Train Associations

One thing that we have been campaigning for has recently come to fruition. If a terminating train is marked as late arriving at the station it'll now automatically show as a delayed departure. So hopefully no more straining of eyes to the inbound platform's display to see if the train that will form the next outbound service is actually on time.

Of course this does not resolve the problem where they fail to properly update the inbound train's status, but at least the two are now associated and, for us, is a positive on which to end the year.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: March 2012

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

We continue to be busy on the fight to stop the Department for Transport's (DfT) proposal to, post electrification, put us on a diesel shuttle service to Reading and cease our direct services to Paddington.

On December 22nd 2011 the DfT published the *Great Western Franchise Replacement Consultation.* With particular interest to Bedwyn this document states: *The actual service pattern run will be decided by the franchisee within the constraints of the Train Service Requirement.*

It goes on to state: *The current (off peak) service pattern is London to Newbury fast, continuing all stations to Bedwyn, some operated as part of the West of England group – one train an hour;*

And under the "Future service pattern" it states: *1 (IEP train per hour) (most hours) semi-fast to Westbury, with some extensions to Exeter and one mid-day round trip to Paignton.*

It's interesting that the proposed diesel shuttle service to Reading has not been mentioned, that our current direct Paddington services have not been mentioned as a requirement of the franchisee and we are not mentioned in the semi-fast Westbury service.

As so much appears to be down to who wins the franchise the problem we have is that we don't have relationships, other than First Great Western (FGW), with the companies bidding for the franchise. Therefore we've only been able to contact FGW which resulted in a positive meeting with Mike Greedy who, within FGW, has responsibility for listening to all of the concerns and wishes of the stakeholders relating to the FGW franchise response. He was very helpful and noted all of our concerns.

We were also able to feed in our other wishes being (A) we regain some of the pre December 2006 morning peak services by (i) having at least one extra direct Paddington service to fill the gap between 0647 and 0841 and (ii) regaining a direct service to get commuters to Thatcham, Theale and Reading for a 0900 start and (B) an improved westbound service suitable to allow commutes to places such as Bath, Bristol and Exeter.

We also raised the ongoing problem of Bedwyn passenger counts being, on estimate, 30% down due to lack of ticket purchasing facilities and ticket checks.

Mike also gave us the name of the person in the DfT that is handling the Great Western Franchise Replacement. We contacted him and have arranged a meeting for March.

In the meantime we have met with Richard Gamble the Wiltshire Council portfolio holder for public transport. This was a very useful meeting and Wiltshire Council have the same views as us – that is when electrification is implemented as far as Newbury that the Bedwyn service will have to run at least as far as Westbury and perhaps to Bristol or Exeter. We are comfortable with that but emphasised the service must run in and out of Paddington for it to work for us. Richard informed us that Wiltshire Council feel that electrification does make Bedwyn and Pewsey vulnerable to downgrading and they, like us, feel that the way forward is for us to be on a semi-fast service out of Paddington to either Westbury, Exeter or Bristol. Wiltshire Council also feel that there is pressure on this line, as it comes through the county, because Devon and Cornwall are demanding faster access to Paddington. It would appear, therefore, that the solution, to satisfy all parties, would be a fast service from London to the West Country (calling at Reading, Westbury and Exeter) and a semi fast from London calling at Reading, Theale, Thatcham, Newbury, Kintbury, Hungerford, Pewsey and Westbury (then on to either Exeter or Bristol).

Richard informed us that the long running idea of a Devizes Parkway station, on this line between Pewsey and Westbury, is as both rail usage and Devizes grow, becoming more likely. This would tie in well as it'd give extra revenue to a train operator running this semi-fast service.

Our current guess is that electrification will free up so many HST trains that, given the high cost of new trains, the above will be implemented using these with a Turbo shuttle service to Newbury to compliment peak time and late evening services.

Happy Travelling!

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Parish News: April 2012

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Electrification

It's been another busy month regarding the issue of electrification only coming as far as Newbury. Bill Wells, on behalf of the Passenger Group, met with Martin Holt of the Department for Transport (DfT) (who is the department's Great Western franchise sponsor) then a few days latter I attended a seminar given by the DfT where they went over many of the aspects associated with awarding the franchise.

On both occasions we managed to stress the concern about how Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn will be served post electrification. The DfT's previous response was that we'd be on a diesel shuttle service to Reading. It looks as if the campaigning has been listened too as they now want all bidders for the franchise (of which there will be four) to state how they plan to serve Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn post electrification. This is a step in the right direction. The DfT have also advised us that when the four bidders are announced (in May) that we need to lobby each franchise bidder and arrange meetings to put our case across prior to the award of the franchise (December). This is a rather tiresome task but one that we feel we have to do. Although the DfT are giving the franchise winner more say in how they will run services they did say that they would be looking for 'robust' responses in how Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn will be served. Of course 'robust' could well mean a definite indication c.f. the result that we want.

Last month's article mentioned how we met with FGW and then Wiltshire Council – both these meetings have given us confidence that we are no longer a lone voice in the wilderness. Since then we have had discussions/correspondence with Hungerford Town Council, Chilton Foliat Parish Council and West Berkshire Council who all understand that Kintbury and Hungerford will be susceptible to downgrading post electrification. It's a good feeling to start finding some friends!

Crossrail

What is it?

Crossrail will deliver a high frequency, high capacity service to 37 stations linking Maidenhead and Heathrow in the west, to Shenfield and Abbey Wood in the east via 21 km of new twin-bore tunnels under central London. It will bring an additional 1.5 million people within 45 minutes commuting distance of London's key business districts.

How does it affect us?

We have been asked whether we should be campaigning for a stop on our services at Maidenhead to link in with Crossrail. We have looked into this and, given Crossrail is a metro style service, there will be no benefit for passengers from Bedwyn to pick it up at Maidenhead. Instead our connection with it should be by changing trains at Paddington. Some sample journey times, for when Crossrail is implemented, are as follows:

Maidenhead to Paddington	37 minutes
Maidenhead to Liverpool Street	46 minutes
Paddington to Tottenham Court Road	4 minutes
Paddington to Farringdon	7 minutes
Paddington to Liverpool Street	9 minutes

Happy Travelling!

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Parish News: May 2012

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Electrification

This is still rumbling on. We have now been advised of the four bidders for the Great Western Franchise. These are: First Group (the existing provider), Arriva, Stagecoach and National Express. We shall be contacting each of them to arrange meetings to discuss what they plan to put in their bids r.e. Bedwyn Station.

March 31st was the deadline for submission of responses to the DfT's Great Western Franchise Replacement Consultation. We submitted our response in December but we were pleased that Wiltshire Council, Claire Perry (our MP) and Richard Benyon (MP that covers Kintbury and Hungerford) also responded highlighting the problems that electrification will cause.

Station Usage Figures

The latest (2010-11) figures have been published. Taking into account the usual caveat that they are based on ticket sales (c.f. actual passengers) Bedwyn has seen a rise of 11,092, going from 83,492 to 94,584. Pewsey has gone up by 21,090, Hungerford by 7,626 and Kintbury by just 64.

Our Buses Under Threat

We have received the following communication, regarding possible cuts to our bus service, from Wiltshire Council:

The Bedwyn service is included in our programme of reviews for this year, from which we need to identify service reductions of around £260,000. The service currently serves two functions – meeting the needs of the villages for transport to schools, work, shops etc in Marlborough and Hungerford, and providing the Rail Link connections. Unfortunately this means that the timetable is an uneasy compromise between the two uses, and does not provide a good service for rail passengers as connections are not always good, we can't meet all of the important trains, and the bus can't wait if the train is late. It also leads to difficulties in re-planning the bus timetable every time the rail timetable changes.

The Rail Link services are (partly perhaps as a consequence of this) not well used, with rarely more than 1 or 2 passengers per journey, which is not sustainable.

We have identified that we can save an estimated £80,000 a year by running the Bedwyn bus service with 1 rather than 2 buses, but to do this we would have to reduce the number of journeys that connect with trains at Bedwyn station and reduce the length of the operating day. We are intending to consult about the bus service proposals shortly, and to implement the resulting changes in December to coincide with the annual rail timetable change.

This is sad news but, to be honest, we are not surprised. Although, since we formed in 2006, we have striven to promote the bus we have not seen any great improvement in its use. What we need to do now is to work out what should be preserved. In the first instance we have put a Freedom of Information Act request into Wiltshire Council asking for any figures they hold on individual bus usage. Secondly we need your input:

1) Which buses (i.e. timings) would cause you hardship if they were removed? Please include whether this is a weekday or a Saturday.
2) How long do you spend in Marlborough? i.e. we need to know if a two hourly service would work. Please also let us know if this applies to a weekday or a Saturday.

Please can you let us know using the email, below or by calling Karina Nicholson on 871494.

Happy Travelling!

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Parish News: June 2012

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Our Buses Under Threat

Thank you to everybody that responded to our consultation on how you use the bus. This was useful information that we have presented to Wiltshire Council (by way of a document and a face to face meeting). You told us that:

1. The fares are too high. This puts people off using the buses. If they were cheaper they would be used more.
2. A number of retired and non driving residents depend on the buses from Great Bedwyn to Marlborough. Typically they could cope with a two hourly service with the core hours being between 0930 (departure from Great Bedwyn) and 1530 (return from Marlborough).
3. There needs to be suitable buses for teenagers attending college in Swindon. This same bus would be regarded as the main bus for people that work in Marlborough and Swindon. Preferably this bus would actually go to Swindon (calling at the hospital and the colleges) as a direct bus in the morning and one direct back in the evening. If not there must be good connection times in Marlborough.
4. There needs to be a morning bus from Great Bedwyn to Hungerford and a return giving at least 70 minutes in the town.
5. Children require a bus for returning after school clubs in Marlborough.
6. Also Saturday mornings from Bedwyn to Marlborough at 0927 and returning to Bedwyn in the afternoon at 1335, 1510, 1615 and 1715 are popular with teenage children.
7. Teenage children use buses on a Saturday to visit friends in other villages.
8. The majority of bus arrivals and departures with Marlborough need to tie with buses to and from Swindon.
9. There needs to be a bus from Great Bedwyn to Marlborough for primary school children's after school activities (e.g. swimming pool).

10. To make bus/train connections palatable, there should always be a seven minute connection time. Especially when arriving into Bedwyn Station and the next bus might not be for another two hours.
11. A bus to serve the 1332 / 1330 HST trains in / out of the village. This is currently a missed opportunity by the buses. Two HSTs stop in the village (one going east, the other west) within two minutes of one another.
12. There needs to be buses that are targeted at commuter times. This would require buses (from Marlborough) to arrive at Bedwyn Station at 0640 and 0834. It would also require the following bus departure times from Bedwyn to Marlborough: 1831 and 1942.

Wiltshire Council (WC) has produced two versions of a weekday draft timetable for December 2012 onwards. The main difference between the two is that one does not include stops at Little Bedwyn. Both are based on a one driver / one bus (c.f. three drivers / two buses as is the present case). How the above consultation compares with the proposed timetables can be summarised as follows:

Point	Covered	Notes
1	No	
2	Yes	Note it'll be an approximate two hour service.
3	Partial	This is possible provided you can make the 1640 bus from Swindon to catch the proposed 1733 from Marlborough. We have asked for retention of the 1830 bus from Marlborough to serve the 1740 bus from Swindon.
4	Yes	
5	Partial	The last bus will now be 1733. Note our request to retain the 1830.
6	Yes	This will be possible on a two hourly service. WC have not yet produced a draft Saturday timetable.
7	Yes	Ditto
8	No	We have asked WC to address this.
9	No	WC claims this is hard to do with one bus because it's needed for a school run around that time.
10	No	The train connections are badly hit by the proposal. We have asked WC to target certain trains well instead of a mediocre tie in throughout the day.
11	Yes	A few tweaks are needed but WC has taken this on board.
12	No	WC cites the lack of use for these cuts.

Along with Transition Marlborough and Marlborough Town Council we met with Wiltshire Council on May 17th. We went through all aspects of this. WC stated that loss of the John O'Gaunt school run and the loss of the central government rural bus grant have caused these cuts. They wish to save £80,000 on our service on a need to cut £260,000 County wide. We pointed out that asking us to swallow 31% of the cuts was a bit tough. WC pointed out that we are the most under utilised service. WC stated that the proposed timetable is based on current needs, not perceived needs. Therefore it favours the school runs and serving the local communities.

During the meeting WC made us aware of the "Wiltshire Post-16 Student Transport Scheme". This is for fulltime college students between the ages of 16 and 19. For £400pa (£140pa for low income families) WC will provide daily transport from home to college. Please see http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/wstan/wiltshire-post16-student-transport-scheme.htm

Happy Travelling!

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Parish News: July 2012

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Our Buses under Threat

Last month, despite some printing issues, we mentioned that Wiltshire Council have produced two draft timetables to operate the Marlborough/Bedwyn link by one bus and one driver (c.f. two buses and three drivers as per the current situation).

We've been going through this again and drawn up an alternative timetable that we have presented to Wiltshire Council. We are now waiting to hear what they think. In short we worked it on the basis of one bus two drivers (to keep the early morning and mid-evening buses for commuters) while ensuring that trains that are met have a seven minute contingency window (for both arrivals and departures) to allow for delays to either the bus or the train.

Along with missed connections one of the things that become clear is that the bus link is unpopular for meeting with the trains because of cost. We have asked Wiltshire Council to look at cost again as there's always an optimum fare for maximising revenue, often not the most expensive they think they can get away with.

Given the bus starts and finishes its day in a depot in Devizes we have also asked Wiltshire Council to consider providing it as a service to allow Devizes people to connect with the rail network here. In short Devizes would get a bus connection for an early commuter service then one back in the evening (when the bus finishes its day) plus a lunchtime connection to swap drivers. This would also give Marlborough and Devizes a small direct service which has often come up as something that is lacking. So we shall see if this sparks any interest with the powers that be in Trowbridge.

We also attended the Pewsey and Marlborough Area Board meetings where the topic of the bus cuts came up - especially in the Marlborough Area Board where it was discussed at length. Transition Marlborough (an environmental campaign group) are looking at the possibility of a community bus should our worse fears (i.e. the bus cuts go through in full) occur.

On the subject of buses there's talk that the Ramsbury Flyer Community Bus might serve the villages on market day. Please see:
http://marlboroughcommunitiesmarket.wordpress.com/2012/05/25/ramsbury-flyer-community-bus-village-route/

Great Western Franchise

The buses have eaten up quite a bit of our time but we have managed to have meetings with Arriva and Stagecoach (being two of the four franchise bidders for the Great Western region, the incumbent being First Group).

In both cases we got our pre and post electrification concerns/wishes across and found both companies very easy to deal with. It's certainly made us less concerned about how our influence would be affected by a change of franchisee.

The Arriva representative actually travelled all from Crewe to meet with us in Bedwyn, so we felt quite flattered. The interesting points he made were:

1. The up shelter is not suitable
2. There needs to be better cycle parking
3. There's thinking in the industry that electrification to Bedwyn is inevitable
4. They want to sort out 'Turbo Land' ticket sales as they know so much fare dodging goes on
5. They are keen on us having a stop on the 0546 from Exeter
6. They'd like the first HST that calls Pewsey (going west) to start from Paddington earlier and include more stops such as Bedwyn

The Stagecoach meeting was at Reading station in the midst of a day of disruption. Their representative was shocked by how bad it was – for me it just felt like a typical day and was a wake up call that we've got so used to disruption that we're forgetting the art of complaining. The interesting points he made were:

1. He was stunned that we had no CCTV and no ticket machine and mainly driver only trains. His main employment is with South West Trains (which Stagecoach operates) and apparently none of their stations are in this category.
2. He was also keen on the car park extension, additional bike stands and replacing the shelters.
3. There's industry rumour that electrification will go as far as Westbury.

Happy Travelling!

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Parish News: September 2012

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Our Buses under Threat

We had a useful meeting with First Great Western and Transition Marlborough (an environmental campaign group). All three of us are keen to retain a decent bus service. First Great Western has agreed to back the passenger group's proposal (by way of writing to Wiltshire Council) of one bus and two drivers (c.f. one bus one driver that Wiltshire Council wish to impose upon us).

All three parties agreed to promote the bus service if Wiltshire Council can retain it. We have duly written to Wiltshire Council with this offer. Transition Marlborough has also put forward the passenger group's proposal to Marlborough Town Council which, in the first instance, has received a favourable response.

Station Count

In July Wiltshire Council did a passenger count at the station. It showed Monday to Friday traffic accounts for 105,000 passengers per year. Given the ticket sale figures show a per annum figure of 94,584 for Sunday through Saturday it's clear how the lack of ticket purchasing facilities plays down the true use of our station.

Electrification

The lack of article last month was because we were in the middle of talks with the Department for Transport (DfT) regarding the service levels post electrification. As you will be aware electrification coming only as far as Newbury leaves Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn out on a limb.

We were concerned that the £9bn of investment announced in July, including electrifying Reading to Basingstoke and the Henley and Marlow branch lines, made no mention of Bedwyn. On asking the DfT they confirmed that the new money did not cover electrification to Bedwyn. Furthermore we had concerns that the proposal to extend the car park had been turned down by the DfT.

Martin Holt (the DfT's franchise sponsor) then made a couple of statements to us:

What I suggest is that you engage with the 4 bidders as they develop their proposals and, of course, with us as we approach the next stage of the process to ensure an equitable result for Bedwyn.

We would expect bidders to propose how best to serve those stations, based on the minimum number of station calls which we have specified based on today's level.

Within a few days of this the DfT published their Invitation to Tender (ITT). This is the final document that Arriva, Stagecoach, National Express and the First Group bid on for the Great Western franchise. It's not good news I'm afraid. In it the DfT, in terms of arguing our case with the companies bidding, have tied our hands behind our backs by:

1) Separating the Paddington to Bedwyn service levels into Paddington to Newbury and separately Newbury to Bedwyn. In short this would allow the train operating company to run a diesel shuttle service from Bedwyn to Newbury with no direct services to Paddington.
2) Not mentioning the Paddington/Exeter semi fast services that, if all else failed, we hoped would give us our Paddington service with a diesel shuttle to Newbury filling in any gaps.
3) Listing the trains per day per station by departures. Because trains terminate at Bedwyn, whereas they depart both ways at Kintbury and Hungerford, it lists Kintbury as 40, Hungerford as 47 and Bedwyn as 26 trains per day. Should the train operating company choose to run a service as Newbury to Westbury we could end up with a two hourly service for large parts of the day (i.e. 13 train departures east and 13 train departures west) whereas Kintbury and Hungerford would be entitled to an hourly service in each direction. It may sound a bit paranoid that Bedwyn would be left out but if timetabling a Newbury to Westbury service was tight the train operating company would be entitled to skip nearly half of the calls to Bedwyn to make a timetable work.

Given 66% of Bedwyn passengers are London bound this is not good news for our station. A diesel shuttle would be unattractive and, given the configuration at Newbury, would have to use a different platform to any train it was connecting with (i.e. a long walk over the stairs for all those travelling beyond Newbury or returning to Kintbury, Hungerford or Bedwyn).

To date the passenger group has campaigned to retain our service c.f. campaigning to bring electrification to Bedwyn. Our approach is based on the aesthetics of overhead gantries and the possible need to replace the bridges with modern structures. Therefore we are a bit cautious about going down this latter route. However, counter arguments are the affect on house prices and the extension to the daily commute for those that travel beyond Newbury.

In the meantime we have written to our MP, Claire Perry, and Richard Benyon (MP that covers Kintbury and Hungerford) asking them to take up the deliberate downgrading of the service with the DfT.

If you wish to write to Claire Perry on this subject the address is:

Claire Perry MP

House of Commons

London

SW1A 0AA

or claire.perry.mp@parliament.uk

Happy Travelling (while it lasts)!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: October 2012

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Electrification

Claire Perry, and Richard Benyon (MP that covers Kintbury and Hungerford) have been trying to arrange a meeting with the transport minister to discuss the DfT's plans to downgrade Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury stations. The cabinet reshuffle has delayed things but, in the meantime, Richard Benyon has been busy contacting the four franchise bidders. As things are so bad the MPs have had to act, paradoxically this has taken a bit of pressure away from us.

Hungerford Town Council has requested a meeting with the passenger group so they can get a better understanding of how the proposals will affect Hungerford.

New Timetable

Hopefully you'll have received the new pocket timetable, valid from September 15th. If we have missed you there are copies available in The Stores, The Post Office, The Bakery and The Cutting Room. Please note that, after its summer vacation, our westbound Saturday service is back. There are arrivals at 1333 and 1635 with departures at 0930 and 1329.

150th Anniversary

On Sunday November 11th our station will celebrate its 150th anniversary. I cajoled my father (who does a lot of historical research) to see if any newspapers of the time still existed. He found a copy of The Marlborough Times from November 8th 1862. In it is printed our first ever timetable. We'll reproduce it here and write more next month on our station's history.

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.

OPENING

OF THE

BERKS AND HANTS EXTENSION LINE

BETWEEN

Hungerford and Devizes,

On TUESDAY, the 11th of NOVEMBER, 1862.

TIME TABLE.

DOWN TRAINS.

	1, 2, 3 Class. A.M.	1 & 2 Class. A.M.	1 & 2 Class. Noon.	1 & 2 Class. P.M.	1 & 2 Class P.M.
London ..... (Paddington Station)	8 20	9 15	12 0	3 30	5 15
Reading arr.	9 45	10 0	12 50	4 22	6 37
Reading dep.	10 5	10 5	1 15	4 30	6 50
Newbury	10 50	10 50	2 0	5 15	7 35
Hungerford arr.	11 10	11 10	2 20	5 35	7 55
Hungerford dep.	11 15	11 15	2 30	5 45	8 0
Bedwyn	11 20	11 20	2 45	6 0	8 15
Savernake.....	11 40	11 40	2 55	6 10	8 25
Pewsey.....	11 55	11 55	3 8	6 25	8 40
Woodborough	12 5	12 5	3 18	6 35	8 50
Devizes ...arr.	12 25	12 25	3 35	6 55	9 10

UP TRAINS.

	1 & 2 Class. A.M.	1 & 2 Class. A.M.	1 & 2 Class. A.M.	1, 2, 3 Class. P.M.	1 & 2 Class P.M.
Devizes ...dep.	7 15	8 50	...	1 15	5 25
Woodborough	7 35	...	...	1 35	5 45
Pewsey.....	7 45	9 15	...	1 45	5 55
Savernake ...	8 0	9 28	...	2 0	6 10
Bedwyn	8 10	...	...	2 10	6 20
Hungerford arr.	8 25	9 48	...	2 25	6 32
Hungerford dep.	8 35	9 50	11 45	2 40	6 35
Newbury	8 50	10 5	12 5	3 0	6 55
Reading arr.	9 35	10 50	12 50	3 50	7 40
Reading dep.	9 40	10 53	1 5	4 0	8 0
London ..... (Paddington Station)	10 30	12 30	2 15	5 30	9 0

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: November 2012

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Buses Under Threat

There has been a reprieve until spring 2013; the current timetable will continue until then. This is because Wiltshire Council have been very busy and wish to give “due consideration to the responses received to the Bedwyn consultation.”

Trains Under Threat

It’s been a very busy month with meetings with Hungerford Town Council, Kintbury Parish Council and the newly formed Pewsey Train Watch passenger group. In all cases they sought our input with regards to how the DfT’s proposals, to axe direct Reading and Paddington services, will affect their stations. Representatives of Westbury Town Council attended the Pewsey meeting and have now formed a passenger group - Westbury Train Watch.

Pewsey and Westbury are tending to take the same approach as us. That is to favour an hourly semi-fast diesel service between Paddington and Exeter on which all affected stations would have stops. Hungerford are taking the approach of campaigning to bring electrification to Bedwyn. We feel that the diversity of argument is good in that the DfT have to respond to each case.

With Kintbury, Hungerford, Pewsey and Westbury onboard we feel less like the lone voices protesting against the cuts. In our September 2009 Parish News article, where we first highlighted the problem, we stated “The worst case scenario is we will end up with a diesel shuttle service to meet the trains at Newbury.” I personally can’t believe it’s been over three years.

The MPs for Kintbury, Hungerford, Bedwyn, Pewsey and Westbury were due to meet the transport minister on October 24th. Originally the 25th was due to be the date by which the franchise bidders had to get their bids in. This caused us concern, less than one day for the minister, if he listened to the MPs, to act. However, following the well publicised problems at the DfT, the Great Western franchise bid is now on hold.

We have had a glimmer of a shift in the DfT’s position. On September 26th we received the following from the DfT: “I’m pleased to say that version 2.27 (yes 27) of the Train Service Requirement now has, reinstated, a small number of AM and PM peak through services from Kintbury, Bedwyn, Hungerford, Pewsey and Westbury to London Paddington to ensure a level of connectivity between stations on the Berks & Hants line is guaranteed.” However, it’s yet to be published and is far from what we want (i.e. the retention of all our direct services to Reading and Paddington).

We’ve been asked by many people what else the village can do. If you use the service, to Paddington or Reading, then please can you write to the minister stating how changing trains at Newbury will affect you? Even if you have written to Claire Perry before the time has come to give the minister a swollen post bag on this topic. He’s the one that can change this so the more pressure the better.

Rt Hon. Simon Burns MP

Minister of State for Transport

Department for Transport

Great Minster House

33 Horseferry Rd

LONDON SW1P 4DR

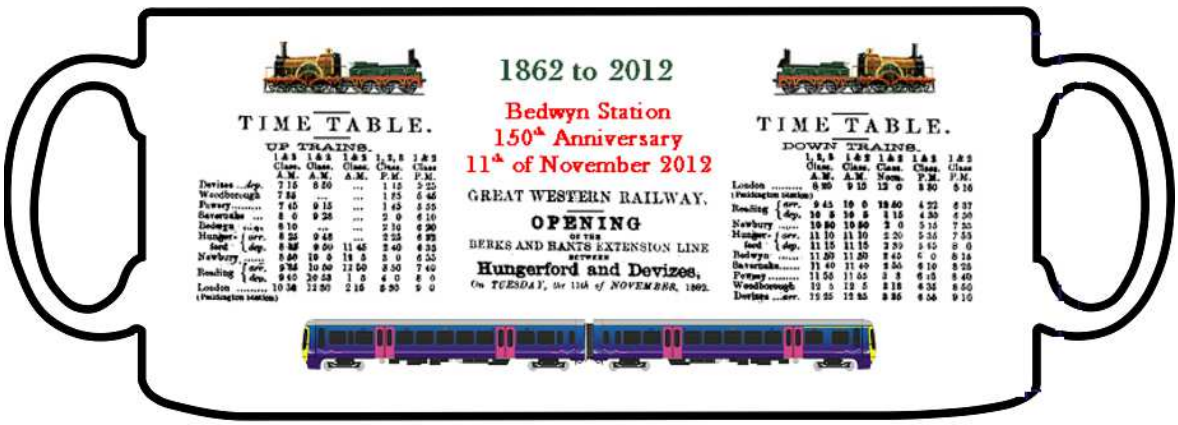
Points you may wish to include are:

1. Currently Bedwyn has 22/23 weekday calls in each direction at present giving an hourly service for most of the day, with roughly two trains an hour during the peaks. Therefore, any specification which significantly reduces calls or frequency will simply not be acceptable for station users. Of these calls, 12 trains in each direction (just over 50%) run through to and from Paddington.
2. 66% of users of Bedwyn station travel to or through Paddington.
3. People have built their lives around the direct services.
4. It will hit local economies, communities and house prices.
5. If they do this they'd better build some big car parks at Newbury and Andover and improve the road systems to handle the traffic pulses that train arrivals / departures create. People do not like changing trains and will prefer to make the first leg by car to a station that is direct to Paddington. The stations between Newbury and Westbury currently spread the load.

<u>150th Anniversary</u>

As mentioned last month Bedwyn Station celebrates its 150th anniversary on Sunday November 11th. Bill Wells has written a history of the station, this appears elsewhere in this month's Parish News.

To celebrate the station's anniversary we have produced a commemorative mug (mug shot below). They are in colour, feature the 1862 timetable, the Iron Duke locomotive of the time and a modern Turbo train. They are dishwasher proof, priced at £5 each and available from the Post Office. If the Post Office run out then please either email us, or phone Karina on 871494, to place an order.



Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: December 2012

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

It's been another busy month for the Passenger Group. What with the Station's 150th celebrations (thanks to all those that came and made it a special morning) and the continuing issue with the DfT's wish to downgrade our service.

On the latter point we have had three meetings - two with Claire Perry (thanks to all those that were able to join us at the station for the first one) and one with Richard Gamble (Wiltshire Council's Portfolio Holder for Public Transport).

At the first meeting Claire advised us that she needed as much anecdotal information as possible to throw at the DfT. Consequently we had 1000 leaflets printed which we distributed at the station and to all the houses in Great Bedwyn and surrounding villages (thanks to everybody that gave the passenger group a hand).

Claire Perry met with Simon Burns on November 13th and again with us on the 14th. Simon Burns agreed to two things:

1) That the talk of two HST peak time services to Paddington (and two back at peak times in the evening) is, post electrification, guaranteed. This is far short of the service we currently have but at least this is a start. Hopefully this will help anybody wishing to sell their house in Great Bedwyn. We have been contacted by two separate house purchasers poised to pull out as their solicitors had highlighted the problem with the trains in Great Bedwyn.
2) To do an immediate study into the benefits of electrification of the line west of Newbury. They intend to break that down into 4 stages: (i) From Newbury to Bedwyn (ii) Extending from Bedwyn to Westbury – passenger use (iii) Extending from Bedwyn to Westbury with connections for freight use (iv) The diversionary routes through Trowbridge to Bath.

As you are aware the passenger group has been in favour of HST hourly Paddington to Exeter semi-fasts to give us our direct service with Reading and Paddington. Therefore the extension of electrification was not our first choice. However, as it is inevitable that the line will eventually be electrified to the West Country we feel that a degree of pragmatism needs to be applied. However, we are conscious of issues surrounding the look of overhead wires and the replacement of bridges.

However, we have re-stated our proposal for the HST hourly Paddington to Exeter semi-fasts and have asked for the DfT to put this back in the DfT's tender documentation (that potential franchisee bidders will bid against) should they decide that further electrification is not possible at this stage. We have also asked for our existing level of service (with Reading and Paddington) to be re-instated in the tender documents.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: January 2013

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Trains Under Threat

The DfT commissioned report, on the feasibility of bringing electrification beyond Newbury is due to report in February. Therefore there's nothing new to add this month.

Cancellations

We are aware that there has been service disruption which has caused the occasional short notice cancellation. First Great Western's trick, to get a delayed train back on time, involves the termination of a Bedwyn service at Newbury such that it can depart Newbury on time.

This is very annoying and we feel the way forward is to 'over complain' when it happens. Therefore if you fall foul of this, or any other disruption, can you please complain to First Great Western? The contact details are:

Customer services team

First Great Western

Freepost SWB40576

Plymouth

PL4 6ZZ

08457 000 125

fgwfeedback@firstgroup.com

The more complaints the more they will listen.

Appeal for Funds

There's no easy way to put this, but we have run out of money with passenger group committee members funding some recent expenditure. The cost of the campaign to fight off the DfT's proposed cuts has created extraordinary expenditure which means our annual budget has been exceeded by approximately £100.

Therefore if the train is important to you, and you feel you are able to help then any donation (of any size) would be gratefully received. The address is 10 High Street, Great Bedwyn.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: March 2013

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Electrification

The DfT have now decided that the electrification review (to extend beyond Newbury) will now be wider ranging than first planned and the timeframe for completion will therefore be later than the February date originally stated.

Great Western Franchise

On January 31st, the government announced its plans for the franchise competitions which were put on hold last October. The Great Western franchise competition will be terminated. The current franchise will now run until October after the DfT exercised its contractual right to extend the current contract with First Great Western by 28 weeks. Negotiations for an additional two-year contract will commence with the operator, while longer-term proposals will be set out in the spring.

Poor Service

Our MP, Claire Perry, recently met with First Great Western. FGW apologised for the recent delays and understand the inconvenience and frustration caused. The main causes of the delays were flooding, infrastructure failures and over running rail improvement works. There have also been delays of FGW's own making and they are addressing these. A Performance Taskforce has been set up.

Hungerford Town Council e-Petition

Hungerford Town Council has set up an e-Petition. It states “We the undersigned petition the DfT to retain all the current direct services between Bedwyn, Hungerford, Kintbury to Reading and London Paddington.”

If you wish to sign it then please go to http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/45021

Appeal for Funds

Thank you so, so much for the donations received. We are back in the black with a healthy contingency for the year ahead.

Easter Disruption

Due to the Reading station remodelling a revised timetable will run from Friday 29th March until Sunday 7th April. All times are revised so do not rely on the paper timetables. A brief summary of the changes are:

Between Friday 29th March and Monday 1st April there will be buses between Reading and Paddington.

Between Tuesday 2nd April and Friday 5th April there will only be one morning train to Paddington. This will depart at 0643. There will also be only one direct train back at 1800. London commuters take note!

On Sunday 7th April trains will only run to Theale, it will then be buses to travel beyond.

Remember, even though Bedwyn will still be served by trains, all of our departure and arrival times will be different.

One thing to note is that, during this period, we will have frequent services to Pewsey and Westbury. With a change at Westbury this opens up the possibility of travel to the West Country or day trips to Bath or Bristol.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: April 2013

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Buses Under Threat

On March 1st I met with Wiltshire Council and Transition Marlborough to discuss the consultation into cutting our bus service. The proposal included the loss of evening services and a large reduction in frequency of daytime service.

The new timetable (proposed for April 20th and beyond) is much better than the cuts initially proposed and has taken in to account many of the concerns raised. The initial proposal was to save £90,000pa from this route. The new timetable saves £50,000pa.

The commuter service is retained with the 0705 departure from Marlborough High Street linking with the 0734 train departure from Hungerford. The evening return buses, from Bedwyn, are also retained. We have a year to get the 0705 and evening services used, otherwise we will lose them.

A new fare scheme is to be introduced to encourage commuters. The 0705 and 0855 bus departures from Marlborough High Street will be £1 to board for everybody. All other outbound buses will remain at the standard prices. Any return bus from Hungerford or Bedwyn will also be £1 provided a valid rail ticket (or season ticket) is produced.

We plan to leaflet parked cars at the station to advertise the new service. Please accept our advance apologies if you are a resident and we leaflet your car.

From 0722 to 1951 Great Bedwyn will continue with an hourly service to Marlborough. Buses back from Marlborough will run hourly between 0855 and 1923. Next month we will print further timetable information.

Trains Under Threat

On March 13th myself and Bill Wells represented the passenger group at a meeting in Westminster. This was chaired by Claire Perry and was to give stakeholders the chance to talk to the DfT and ARUP, the consultants appointed by the DfT to produce a study on extending electrification beyond Newbury. Also in attendance were the MPs for Newbury, Westbury and Chippenham along with representatives from Wilshire Council, Pewsey, Westbury, Marlborough and West Wilts.

We were able to put our case across as to how the DfT proposals (to reduce Kintbury, Hungerford, Bedwyn, Pewsey and Westbury to a Newbury shuttle service with just two trains a day connecting us directly with Reading and Paddington) would impact the lives of rail users.

ARUP have come up with four proposals:

1) Extension of electrification from Newbury to Bedwyn
2) Extension of electrification from Bedwyn to Westbury
3) Extension of electrification beyond Westbury to the Mendip quarries
4) Extension of electrification through Trowbridge to Bath, and Thingley Junction via Melksham

These will each be compared economically against the DfTs proposals to downgrade Kintbury, Hungerford, Bedwyn, Pewsey and Westbury. For economic viability the gains have to be twice the costs over a sixty year period.

ARUP are due to produce their final report on April 29th 2013.

It was an interesting meeting for myself and Bill. Having spent three years as lone voices in the wilderness (since the DfT announced the proposal to electrify only as far a Newbury) things have really accelerated in the last six months.

One point to note is the DfTs original rationale for only electrifying as far as Newbury is that the stretch of line between Newbury and Reading is served by two trains per hour whereas our line is just one train per hour. That was the sole basis of their original logic.

Easter

Train times from March 28th to April 7th (Easter) are completely revised due to major engineering works at Reading. This will include us having a regular westbound service for much of that period (our Turbo trains will run to Westbury so perhaps consider a day our in Bath or Bristol). Please check online for both eastbound and westbound travel – or pickup a copy of the revisions from the Post Office or Stores. London commuters please note that for the four working days of this period (April 2nd to 5th inclusive) there will only be one direct Paddington train in either direction. This departs Bedwyn at 0643 (arriving 0848) and Paddington at 1800 (arriving 1936). Hungerford gets an extra in each direction at 0640 (arriving 0826) and 1703 (arriving back in Hungerford at 1827).

May Timetable Changes

From May 20th there is to be an adjustment to two of our early weekday Paddington trains:

The 0555 from Bedwyn will now depart at 0540 (arriving 0701)

The 0647 from Bedwyn will now depart at 0645 (arriving 0809)

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: May 2013

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Trains Under Threat

Since last month's article we have participated in analysing the results of Pewsey Train Watch's online survey. The aim of the survey was to demonstrate that there is a need to retain our direct services to Reading and Paddington. In all 1906 passengers (from Westbury, Pewsey, Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury) responded and, amongst many conclusions, it was shown 94% of passengers travel beyond Newbury (making the DfT's proposal to have to change at Newbury highly inconvenient) and 82.5% indicated that a change at Newbury would force them to drive. We then calculated that this would require additional parking at Newbury for 605 cars and, as this would have to be multi-storey, the cost to construct would be in the order of £14.5 million. We also highlighted that Newbury's road infrastructure might not be able to handle the increased volumes, especially as rail traffic tends to arrive and depart in pulses.

Station Usage Figures

The 2011 to 2012 station usage figures have been published for Bedwyn. These have risen from 94,584 (for the previous year) to 106,872. A likely cause of the increase is that from January 2011 parking charges were introduced at Hungerford.

New Bus Timetables

As promised last month here follows some simplified versions of the new bus timetable to suit readers of the Parish News. Certain buses additionally call at Savernake Hospital, Froxfield, Shalbourne, Ham, Cadley, Burbage, West Grafton, East Grafton and Wilton. Please see full timetable for details – copies available in The Stores.

Monday to Friday

Departures from Great Bedwyn to Hungerford:

1019 1144 1424 1552 1654

Departures from Hungerford to Great Bedwyn:

0730 0915 1050 1210 1615 1730

Departures from Little Bedwyn to Hungerford:

1101

Departures from Great Bedwyn to Marlborough:

0722 0750 0907 0943 1108 1138* 1238 1344 1554 1639 1751 1856 1951

Departures from Marlborough to Great Bedwyn:

1005 1102* 1130 1257 1410 1535 1538 1640 1733 1838 1923

Departures from Little Bedwyn to Marlborough:

1101 1337

Departures from Marlborough to Little Bedwyn:

1005 1257

* Monday, Wednesday and Friday only

Saturday

Departures from Great Bedwyn to Hungerford:

1019 1149 1428

Departures from Hungerford to Great Bedwyn:

0920 1045 1215 1515

Departures from Hungerford to Little Bedwyn

1045

Departures from Great Bedwyn to Marlborough:

0737 0837 0943 1103 1238 1344 1539 1644 1739 1839

Departures from Marlborough to Great Bedwyn:

0705 0805 1005 1135 1257 1410 1625 1715 1815

Departures from Little Bedwyn to Marlborough:

1056 1337

Departures from Marlborough to Little Bedwyn:

1005 1257

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: August 2013

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

By now you will likely have heard plans are afoot to extend electrification from Newbury to Bedwyn. Subject to funding, and final ministerial approval, this will be done at the same time as electrification to Newbury, thus maintaining continuity of service.

The DfT commissioned the rail consultants, ARUP to do a benefits cost ratio (BCR) of bringing electrification to Bedwyn. This came up with a figure of 2.58 which means for every £1 spent on the scheme the government will benefit by £2.58 over a sixty year period. At the same time a study was done for extending to Westbury, this came out as 0.31 which means it is not economic.

We have had to answer a considerable number of questions and concerns. Rather than produce a rambling article, we will summarise these as typical questions and answers.

Did the Passenger Group campaign for electrification?

Although our campaigning contributed to the DfT being forced to think again we never campaigned for electrification. We were always conscious of the impact of overhead gantries and the need to rebuild bridges, in an AONB. Therefore when electrification was announced, in 2009, as far as Newbury we took the stance that Paddington, Reading, Newbury, Kintbury, Hungerford, Bedwyn, Pewsey and Westbury should be put on an hourly semi-fast service using bi-modes or freed up HST stock from the London to Bristol line. This is what we campaigned for to prevent the loss of our direct Reading and Paddington services. We were also hoping for this so villagers could commute to Bath and Bristol for work.

When, in 2012, Richard Benyon and Claire Perry took up the case with the Minister for Transport the only options were a diesel shuttle service to Newbury or electrification. Somehow the DfT would not entertain our proposal even though at one stage they were warm to the idea.

What was the alternative?

We would be on a diesel shuttle service to Newbury. 94% of passengers travel beyond Newbury and 82.5% of those said they would opt to drive to Newbury instead of using the station. This would likely in time have resulted in us being downgraded to a periodic service, i.e. we'd lose our hourly service. This in turn would likely result in further cuts to our bus service.

Will this cause house prices to go up or down?

Over the last twenty years the economics of our area have, for better or for worse, changed with the village, and surrounding areas, seeing a significant increase in the numbers who commute to work. Therefore house prices and the fact we have a station are linked.

Hamptons estate agents predicted a 15% drop in house prices should a change at Newbury be required. Thus the plan to electrify will have negated this. We do not know whether the overhead gantries will have a negative impact.

Why was electrification to Westbury so cost ineffective when to Bedwyn it's cost effective?

This is because the DfT instructed ARUP to do the calculations as follows:

1) To compare Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn with a diesel shuttle service to Newbury,
2) To compare Pewsey and Westbury with the current HST service they have.

Will electrification increase the parking problem at Bedwyn?

It is unlikely. *Extending electrification to Bedwyn will mean that the service pattern for Newbury, Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn will remain as it currently is. According to the DfT, Pewsey and Westbury will continue to be served mainly by fast West Country trains to at least the current level.* Thus any increase in passenger numbers will be a natural increase, not to do with electrification.

The electric trains will be a bit faster but not so significant to outpace the HST trains that Pewsey is served by. It is true that some passengers are attracted to Bedwyn who already live nearer to Pewsey, Chippenham and Swindon but this is because Bedwyn is a cheaper station. It should be noted that Chippenham and Swindon will also be electrified.

Will the government look to a house building programme in Great Bedwyn to fund electrification?

The village is always going to be under the threat of development because we have a station. We feel it is unlikely this threat will be increased by electrification. A large factor to the cost benefit of bringing electrification to Bedwyn is to serve Hungerford. The BCR (as mentioned above) is 2.58 which means that the government will get their money back over a twenty three year period without the need to actively increase passenger numbers.

If electrification did not take place it will be more costly to run a diesel shuttle service between Bedwyn and Newbury and, paradoxically, the village might be looked upon to better justify the service.

Will electrification require overhead gantries?

Yes, as far as the station's turn back siding. Gantries are spaced between 50 and 66m apart and, depending on local conditions, vary in height between 7m and 9.5m.

What will be the disturbance when installing the overhead gantries and wire?

This is done from a specialised train and advances at the rate of 1.5km per track per night shift. The gantries require piling to the depth of between 4m and 6m.

Will electrification require the road bridge over the railway to be replaced?

Possibly but we will put forward ideas to prevent this. These include (i) whether it is possible to lower the track or (ii) re-engineering the westbound platform (without encroaching upon the water meadow) such that the turn back siding adjoins the south side of the station.

If the bridge has to be replaced we will press for a red brick structure (which already appears to be the norm) with a separate pedestrian walkway.

Are there any other benefits of electrification?

Electric trains will be quieter so those living near the station and turn back siding will find it a bit more peaceful. Also electric trains don't have their engines running when idle. Electric trains have zero emissions at point of use. However, the diesel HST trains will continue to pass through the village

Will electrification result in an increase in fares?

There's no indication of this.

Will electrification result in the closure of any footpaths?

The electric cables are overhead so there's no risk of electrocution from crossing the line. Therefore we can't see this as a scenario and have not heard of this as a problem elsewhere.

Will electrification ever go beyond Bedwyn?

It looks as if the benefits costs ratio will only be feasible if it was part of a grander scheme to electrify as far as Plymouth. Pewsey and Westbury alone will not tip the balance.

Why does the government only look at the economic factors? What about the social impact?

The government is always going to back schemes that make money instead of cost money. The report the DfT have commissioned from ARUP shows that electrifying to Bedwyn will make money whereas putting us on a diesel shuttle service to Newbury will cost money (it will need two trains, two drivers and the maintenance of a diesel turbo fleet just for this section of track).

The government has to concentrate on the economic benefits to ensure that the infrastructure is there to raise tax revenue for social schemes. These of course include Doctors, Schools and social housing which enrich Great Bedwyn.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: September 2013

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

We've been asked a few more questions about electrification. So here goes:

With gantries as high as 9.5m surely the bridge will need to be replaced.

The wires are significantly lower than the gantries. It's the wires that go under the bridges, not the gantries. Thus the bridge does not have to rise up to the height of the gantry. The report the DfT commissioned only mentions that the bridges at Bone Mill lane and Dunn's Mill need to be replaced. Because it does not mention any other bridges we have been cautious and not assumed we are safe but it does point to the fact that the DfT considers that the others don't need to be replaced. But whatever happens the rumours being put about of a new bridge starting at Farm Lane and stretching across to the canal bridge are ridiculous.

Will Network Rail use The Knapp as a glorified maintenance depot during the works?

The work will be done from a special train which is self-sufficient and will "carry the requisite materials and personnel direct to each possession site, thereby avoiding complex planning of access by road and rail access points and each includes a staff mess."

Was electrification a done deal with the passenger group partaking in a conspiracy?

No. Over the years we've used the pages of the Parish News to always give the latest news on the situation. We did this so the village always knew what was going on so they could support or object as they felt fit. We have always set out to share whatever information we have had. We've never operated underhand or been influenced by an outside body (including any council, publication, government department, Network Rail or First Great Western). We find it immensely sad that some people feel our openness is a cover for some dark plot or a conspiracy. Being called "Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group" inevitably means we have a bias towards the train users and the station but we've never withheld any information. We have been accused of not consulting with the village but by reporting back regularly, letting people know that the DfT had commissioned a study on electrification we feel we have given every opportunity for people to raise their objections.

Finally…

This is an extract from Claire Perry's August newsletter:

My campaign to ensure that our local train services are at least as good as they are now continues and I took the opportunity to write again to Simon Burns the Rail Minister, following the announcement that a new high-tech engineering train will soon begin work on the electrification of the Great Western rail network, which will revolutionise the electrification engineering project.

I am keen to ensure that the benefit from 'Super Train' enables the Newbury to Bedwyn works to happen sooner and I have asked the Minister for more details about the benefit expected from the 'Super Train' and how this might be re-allocated and if this would enable the cost benefit case of electrification extension beyond Bedwyn to be revisited?

I met with Mark Hopwood, Managing Director of First Great Western who currently have the local train franchise where we discussed how to secure funding so that the Great Bedwyn electrification could begin in 2016, reviewed current service patterns for Bedwyn and Pewsey and identified infrastructure improvement needs at the stations.

The FGW team made it quite clear that they see the need to maintain good train services locally – and this is based on sound business sense given the large and growing passenger numbers from both stations. Given that their operating period is now likely to be extended, we can expect current services to broadly continue – although tweaks can always be made – for example in the meeting we asked about reducing the connection delay at Newbury for Bedwyn passengers taking the 7.56am and we were assured that this would be considered. We also discussed once again the whole issue of car parking at Bedwyn as well as the need for ticket machines, better platform access and bike parking, and I am planning to hold a forum in the Autumn with Wiltshire Council, local residents, passenger and transport groups and others to sort out an action plan.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: November 2013

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Christmas Disruption

- There will be rail replacement buses operating between Reading/Reading West and Theale from Friday 27 to Monday 30 December. On every day except Sunday, customers wishing to continue their journey to Newbury/Bedwyn will be served by a train every hour from Theale
- On Sunday 29 December, there will be an hourly rail replacement bus from Reading/Reading West to Theale. From Theale, there will be a two hourly service to Newbury (calling at all stations) with alternate trains going to Bedwyn (calling at Thatcham, Newbury then all stations to Bedwyn)
- On Tuesday 31 December and Wednesday 1 January 2014 there will be two trains per hour between Reading and Newbury. Trains continue hourly from Newbury to Bedwyn

Great Western Franchise

The franchise, which First Great Western has with the DfT, has now been extended to 20th September 2015. This gives us a bit of breathing space, when the new franchise bidders are announced we'll have to speak with each of them regarding our future services.

Changes in the Passenger Group

The passenger group was formed in 2006 out of a successful campaign, initiated and driven by Karina Nicholson and Fionna Fillipak, to fight off the proposal to cut our rail service by a third. This campaign, amongst others, included me, Bill Wells and Margaret Burden. The five of us went on to become the core of the passenger group with me now at the helm. In the last seven years we've had a lot of issues to deal with, all of which we have reported via the pages of the Parish News.

Due to the amount of work involved we are splitting my role with Bill Wells taking the day to day lead while I take a step back but remaining as a committee member. I will continue to perform a number of roles but to spread the workload out even further we wish to recruit two new people to the committee with specific portfolio. These roles will be:

1) The Station: To report station faults, to request station improvements and to arrange the annual station cleanup day. The role will involve keeping an eye on the station, liaising with the station manager at Newbury to resolve faults and campaigning for station improvements. The list of jobs currently includes: Repainting of the yellow line on the up platform, a new shelter for the up platform, replacement of confusing signage r.e. trains going west.

2) Complaints: We need somebody to take FGW to task about their poor service. To date we have passed on complaints, followed them up etc. But it really needs somebody that uses the train daily to bring new energy to this role – to arrange meetings with FGW and ask their managers to come and meet the train users and listen to how the poor service affects us.

The passengers group's motto is "polite and persistent" and we'd like to continue on that theme. However, we do need some new blood to push harder in these two roles. If you are interested in either then please email Bill Wells on info@bedwyntrains.org.uk

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

www.bedwyntrains.org.uk

Parish News: February 2014

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Do you travel to Theale, Reading West or Reading?

If so the ticket prices are as follows:

	Theale	Reading West	Reading

Day Return (Leaving before 0841)	**£12.80**	**£14.10**	**£14.10**
Day Return (Leaving on the 0841 or later)	**£8.90**	**£9.70**	**£9.70**

However, if travelling before 0841 then you can purchase your ticket to Winnersh at a cost of £10.40. If travelling on the 0841 or later then purchase it to Mortimer at a cost of £6.50. This is perfectly legitimate as you have to pass through Theale, Reading West or Reading to get to these stations.

With season tickets Winnersh is always the cheaper option.

Passenger Group Re-Structuring

In our November article we talked about the re-structuring of the passenger group to lessen my workload. It's not worked out quite as we'd hoped as we've been unable to recruit any new members to the committee. Therefore I have agreed to continue dealing with service level complaints with First Great Western. The roles within the passenger group are now:

Bill Wells: Committee member, dealing with correspondence other than service level complaints, negotiating on behalf of passengers with government bodies, councils, train operating companies etc, checking the printed timetable is accurate, bus timetable alignment, industry research.

Steve Smith: Committee member, dealing with service level complaints, maintaining station posters, maintaining the website, promoting the new £1 each way bus service, timetable delivery to parts of Great Bedwyn.

We also have two other committee members, a treasurer and a non-committee member who helps distribute timetables.

We would still like to recruit one new committee/non-committee member to deal with station issues. The role will be to report station faults, to request station improvements and to arrange the annual station cleanup day. The role will involve keeping an eye on the station, liaising with the station manager at Newbury to resolve faults and campaigning for station improvements. The list of jobs currently includes: Repainting of the yellow line on the up platform, a new shelter for the up platform, replacement of confusing signage r.e. trains going west.

If you are interested in helping then please contact Bill Wells on info@bedwyntrains.org.uk

Ticket Machine

First Great Bedwyn has agreed that we should have a ticket machine. No date set as yet.

Poor Service

We received a letter of apology from First Great Western (FGW) regarding the poor level of service. We did ask that they freeze the ticket prices until the problems get sorted. However, that was not possible so instead they have given season ticket holders some free tickets as a mark of apology.

This followed us making the point that the short notice terminations at Newbury cause Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn to have a poorer service than the rest of the region and compensation discounts, for season ticket holders, are calculated across the region not on a station by station basis.

On the 19th of December the passenger group met with First Great Western and Network Rail to discuss the poor performance. This was a meeting organised by the MPs Claire Perry and Richard Benyon. None of the passenger group committee was able to attend this meeting so a big thanks to James Dewhurst, Nic Coome and Nick Davidge for stepping up to represent us. It was put across that:

1) The recent performance was unacceptable - this they acknowledged.
2) FGW are completely ineffectual in handling information when things go wrong. FGW said they were close to installing new software that would make tracking the whereabouts of trains more accurate. Delivery date of this was unknown.
3) It was pointed out that those with cars were frequently carrying other passengers to Newbury in order for them to carry on their journey or back home in the evening.
4) The issue of evening trains and onward connection to the local service from Newbury was also raised. The point was made that the connecting service was vital and that FGW understood the need for a timely replacement solution to be provided when the connection was missed.

Network Rail Stakeholder Meeting

Also on the 19th of December was a stakeholder meeting with Network Rail. Bill Wells represented the passenger group. The thrust of the meeting was to introduce the start of the new Route Study to plan for post 2018 services and service levels. The question of when electrification is going to go ahead is still open so it was difficult to glean anything concrete about our service levels.

Network Rail detailed the various groups that will meet to study matters during the consultation. Most of them are quite 'high-powered' but there will be one that includes such bodies as LEPs and County Councils. This group will meet several times and we were advised to liaise with members of this group (Wiltshire Council in our case). We were told that we can also contact Network Rail direct if we wish. They expect to issue a draft document towards the end of 2014 followed by the final document.

The region will be divided into three areas, these being Thames Valley, Peninsula (Devon and Cornwall), and West of England. It was interesting to note that Thames Valley goes as far west as Westbury – perhaps this might lend support to the long standing view that Westbury, Pewsey, Bedwyn, Hungerford, Kintbury, Newbury, Thatcham, Theale, Reading and Paddington should be on the same service.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

www.bedwyntrains.org.uk

Parish News: July 2014

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

It's been awhile since our last article. However, we have been busy behind the scenes with a number of issues:

Electrification

On June 17th Bill Wells, on behalf of the Passenger Group, attended a meeting with the Department for Transport, First Great Western, Network Rail and representatives from Claire Perry and Richard Benyon. This is in relation to a consultation document that has come out regarding First Great Western services post electrification. In this instance post electrification refers to wiring as far as Newbury only. At present there is no money to wire further, even though the economic case for electrifying to Bedwyn has been established.

We were heartened by the outcome of the meeting where we et al made it clear that diesel shuttles to Newbury were not an option. However, as nothing has been promised we can only go on what the general discussion was between the parties involved and report that the most likely outcome will be as follows:

1. An hourly diesel service between Paddington and Westbury (or Exeter) calling at Reading, Newbury, Kintbury, Hungerford, Bedwyn and Pewsey with peak services also calling at Thatcham and Theale.
2. Some turbo services between Bedwyn and Newbury to bolster things up to give us the half hourly peak service.

The units to run point 1 would most likely be freed up HST trains but could possible be the class 180 or the voyager style of train. Ironically point 1 is very similar to the Passenger Group's opinion from the outset of the electrification issue.

Station

You'll have noticed changes at the station. We now have a ticket machine, a new eastbound shelter and a new bike rack plus an extra bench on the up platform. These are all things we have campaigned for, bar the bike rack. Unfortunately it has gobbled up three car parking spaces. We are pressing First Great Western to move the 'adverse weather equipment' cabinet so it frees up a car parking space.

The ticket machine does not take cash, it is card only. However, we are not a penalty fare station so it is okay to board without a ticket. There has been mention that one cannot use a railcard with the new machine (e.g. Senior Citizen, Network Rail Card etc). This is not so, you do get the chance to add your card prior to the step at which you pay.

December 2014 Timetable Changes

From December our weekday lunchtime HST trains (around 1330) in both directions will be replaced with the standard Turbo style train to/from Paddington. This will mean that we will lose our westbound connections. We are pressing for a stop on the afternoon service, returning from Westbury, at 1608 to compensate. This will give us three westbound evening trains and returns from the west arriving into Bedwyn at 0645 and 1635. It's not ideal and continues to erode the westbound service that we have managed to build up over the last eight years. However, if point 1 of the Electrification section of this article happens we will eventually get an hourly westbound service.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: November 2014

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

It's been awhile since our last article. However, we have been busy behind the scenes with a number of issues.

Retention of Direct Trains to Reading and Paddington

We continue to attend meetings and press on this issue. However the recent publication of Network Rail's 'Western Route Study' (October 2014) contains an ominous statement:

Following electrification to Newbury, the 2019 Industry Train Service Specification (ITSS) assumes that the current London Paddington – Bedwyn service will operate with electric rolling stock and therefore be truncated at Newbury. A diesel shuttle service is proposed between Newbury and Bedwyn. These services will operate all day.

It looks as if the DfT and Network Rail still, at least publically, have their head in the sand about the problem this will cause commuters from Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury.

So it's time for another push. If this affects you then please sign our e-Petition by following the link from the main screen of www.bedwyntrains.org.uk The petition calls upon the DfT to specify, in the

forthcoming franchise extension document, that Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury must retain their current level of direct Paddington services.

Even if you are not a regular train user please consider the impact on our local economy and how that will affect you.

Ticket Machine

Please note that the ticket machine does not offer off-peak tickets until after 0830 on a weekday. The first train you can use these on is the 0841.

December 2014 Timetable Changes

From December our weekday lunchtime HST trains (around 1330) in both directions will be replaced with the standard Turbo style trains. This will mean that we will lose our weekday connections from the west. We pressed for a stop on the afternoon service, returning from Westbury, at 1608 to compensate or similar. Unfortunately this request was declined.

First Great Western have not had to bid to renew their franchise and are set to be given a further three and a half year extension. This lack of competition is causing a noticeable lack of willingness to resolve our problems.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: January 2015

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

On December the 18th Bill Wells and I met with Andrew Dickinson, a First Great Western performance manager. We had a constructive meeting.

Reading Redevelopment

You have probably noticed all the new platforms at Reading. However, the tracks to serve them all are not yet in place. Thus they are underutilised. Currently our trains can arrive at platforms 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11. However, from Christmas to Easter we are going to be reduced to platforms 7 and 8 only while work continues. Then from Easter we will be served by 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12. We are told this will make a big difference as the new layout will open up the underutilised platform 12 and reduce congestion as the track crossovers are being redesigned, including an underpass. However, between Christmas and Easter we'll face problems with potential terminations at Reading. So things will get worse before they can get better.

Cancellations

We pointed out that short notice cancellations to allow delayed trains to depart on time from Newbury, are very frustrating.

Missed Connections at Newbury

Andrew has drawn up a plan that, with Network Rail approval, will define the holding time for each connecting service at Newbury. At present it's ad hoc with station staff at Newbury phoning control and asking for trains to be held. With this plan there will be a more rigid system in place with control and drivers knowing how long they can delay the connecting service by at Newbury. However, the additional number of minutes for the individual services is not as long as we hoped for. This is because there are many factors to consider, including clearing the line at Bedwyn for HSTs to pass and the passage of freight. The proposed timings are:

1724 off Newbury	4 minutes additional holding time
1826 off Newbury	5 minutes additional holding time
1927 off Newbury	3 minutes additional holding time
1956 off Newbury	8 minutes additional holding time
2033 off Newbury	4 minutes additional holding time
2124 off Newbury	TBA

We asked if the connecting service has left whether the delayed HST can stop at Bedwyn. Andrew promised to look into this. In reality it's going to be hard to argue for adding additional delay to an already delayed service. However, he will put our case.

Dodgy Information Boards

We raised the problem with the CIS screens and information being particularly poor, especially at times of disruption when, paradoxically, we need it the most. There are two things that Andrew has said he'll try and sort out:

1) Train associations at Bedwyn. This is where the inbound train is delayed and the outbound train is optimistically “on time”.
2) The problem at Bedwyn where we get false platform alterations. This occurs when the inbound train is delayed and by the time it arrives it is regarded as the outbound service. The computer then sees it on the inbound platform and triggers a false platform alteration announcement before it gets a chance to enter the turn-back siding.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: April 2015

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Easter 2015

Please check train times for an Easter plans you may have. The service is substantially different over the Easter weekend. On the plus note we will have a westbound service (Reading to Westbury) over the Easter weekend.

Electrification

We have has a communication from First Great Western r.e. their award of the new franchise:

As you know from our discussions there is no immediate solution to the loss of through services on the Bedwyn to Newbury corridor given electrification is not being extended. This means in May 2017 Bedwyn to London services will be replaced by Newbury to London electric trains (EMUs) and Bedwyn to Newbury diesel shuttles (DMUs).

However, within the franchise we have committed to maintain at least one through peak service in each direction. Bedwyn, Kintbury and Hungerford will not therefore lose all their direct trains.

We were also able to suggest a feasibility study into the use of Independently Powered electric trains (IPEMUs) over the route between Paddington and Bedwyn. The DfT have accepted that approach and have asked us to work up plans that would mean through services to Bedwyn, Kintbury and Hungerford could be re-established at levels similar to today by December 2018.

We cannot guarantee the outcome of the study, but we think this is a practical option and will be doing our best to make it work. I will keep you updated.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: October 2015

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

On September 20th First Great Western (FGW) was re-named Great Western Railway (GWR) to coincide with the start of the new franchise. The new franchise runs until April 2019 and will span the electrification as far as Newbury.

As previously reported the franchise agreement reads rather grimly for users of Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury stations. Notable text being:

1. Shuttle services between Newbury and Bedwyn will commence in May 2017.
2. The 0605 Frome to Paddington HST service will be replaced by a Frome to Newbury diesel service and an onward connecting electric from Newbury to Paddington.
3. The 1706 Paddington to Bristol via Newbury and 1805 Paddington to Frome HST services will be replaced by Paddington to Newbury electric services with connecting diesel services from Newbury.
4. FGW will continue to work with the Department for Transport, Network Rail and other key partners on the business case for extending electrification beyond Newbury.
5. In the meantime FGW will be evaluating the feasibility of introducing Independently Powered electric trains (i.e. ones with batteries) over the route between Paddington and Bedwyn to mitigate the absence of electrification between Newbury and Bedwyn.
6. DfT has expressed a desire to work with the rail industry to see the level of through services to Bedwyn and Kintbury (and Hungerford) to find a solution which would see through services re-established at levels similar to today.

We have met with FGW and they are keen on point 5 (which we believe is our best hope). We have also stated that we'd like (i) two direct services to Paddington (one around 0645 and another around 0840 i.e, one peak and one off-peak) (ii) the diesel shuttle to Newbury must connect with electric trains in and out of Newbury and (iii) a commuter service to the west for villagers wishing to take jobs in Bath or Bristol (iv) no changes to the timings of the first and last trains of the day.

As you may well note we are in the process of 'damage limitation'. The fight to keep our service is now out of our hands. The two MPs covering Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury have not been able to convince the DfT to have a change of heart prior to May 2017. A small voluntary group such as ourselves does not have the clout to do better than the MPs. All we can do is keep reminding the

‘powers that be’ that we are here and we want to retain/reclaim our hourly direct services to Paddington.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: December 2015

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Electrification

In October the press reported that the cost of electrifying between Cardiff and London has risen from £874m to an estimated £2.8bn. Department for Transport Permanent Secretary Philip Rutnam stated, "You're probably aware of the schedule that there was - which was 2016 to Bristol Parkway, Newbury, Oxford, 2017 to Cardiff, 2018 to Swansea," he said. "It is clearly highly likely that there will be delays against that schedule and I'm afraid I'm not in a position at the moment to give you a new schedule."

This means that the May 2017 cut off for Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn losing direct services to Paddington is now unlikely to happen. So it looks like one Great British cockup (of only electrifying to Newbury) is set to be outdone by another Great British cockup of not getting the sums right.

Of course it gives us no guarantees for the long-term but it’s probably safe to assume we’ll still have direct services to Paddington after May 2017. At least it gives us breathing space to continue to push for the battery train option. Battery trains would charge under the wires between Paddington and Newbury then run on to Bedwyn on battery power.

Our Website

We have updated and changed the layout of www.bedwyntrains.org.uk to be mobile phone and tablet friendly. We’d welcome any feedback to info@bedwyntrains.org.uk

December Timetable Changes

There’s a welcome change to the last train back, from Paddington, on weekdays. A 2222 service from Paddington will now run to Newbury (c.f. Reading) arriving at 2335 followed by a 2343 departure for

Bedwyn. As yet we are unaware if the 2343 departure from Newbury is the same train as the 2335 arrival. However, a connection at Newbury is always preferable to one at Reading.

On the topic of connections at Newbury or Reading please always let us know if a Bedwyn service is not held when it is pretty obvious it could have been. Without evidence we can't badger GWR on this issue.

Christmas Disruption

Due to engineering works the timetable from 24th December to 3rd January is altered.

Thursday December 24th: Last train back from Paddington is at 2000 (change at Reading onto the 2041 departure). Christmas Day and Boxing Day: No service. Sunday 27th and Monday 28th December: Change at Reading for trains to London Waterloo. Tuesday 29th December to Sunday 3rd January: Change at Reading for trains to London Paddington.

Please check before you travel and don't rely on any paper timetables during this period.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith

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Parish News: April 2017

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

I'm sure you are aware that the Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group have been campaigning, for the last eight years, to retain our direct services to Reading and Paddington.

The problem arose from the 2009 DfT announcement that electrification would come only as far as Newbury. This would have put Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury on a diesel shuttle service to Newbury with no direct trains to Reading and Paddington.

At last we have excellent news for rail users. After work by many parties (and very much GWR and the MPs Claire Perry and Richard Benyon) it has been agreed that our trains will be replaced with bi-modes. These will run on electricity between Paddington and Newbury then continue, seamlessly, using diesel to Bedwyn.

The one thing left to be resolved is the siding, alongside Church Field, will need to be extended to take the new, longer trains. This will mean the crossing / footpath will be re-routed. NR and GWR have been in touch with the Great Bedwyn Parish Council regarding these proposals.

The trains will be brand new and have greater capacity than our current service. Therefore we have gone from the prospect of a serious downgrade to what amounts to an improvement.

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith & Bill Wells

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Parish News: December 2019

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

December Timetable Changes

From December 15th, the biggest timetable change since the 1970s will take place in the GWR region. For the first time, BTPG and other stakeholders have been consulted during the production of the new timetable.

We had some initial concerns, in particular with regards to the proposed morning peak service. However, we are pleased that GWR have addressed almost all of these concerns. As a result, we feel that the final result represents our best ever service.

The new times will be appearing on the GWR website, and pocket timetables will be available from The Stores and the Post Office in time for the change. Meanwhile, we can give a general overview.

Eastbound departures from Bedwyn (to Paddington unless stated). 0534, 0601, 0626, 0651, 0700 (Newbury), 0729, 0750 (Reading), 0831, 0924, 1041. Then hourly until 1741, followed by a mix of through trains and some to Newbury.

Incoming trains from Paddington start from 0707, and then run hourly (as now) until 1907, with additional trains from Newbury during the evening peak period. There will be further departures from Paddington at 1737 (change at Newbury), 1837 (direct), 1936 (change at Newbury), and 2006 (direct). The final through train at 2220 is retained.

This will give an hourly service, increased to half-hourly during the morning and evening peak periods. The service on Saturdays and Sundays will show little change from the current pattern, though journey times will be reduced.

Monday to Friday journey times are reduced, in most cases and the majority will be operated by the new IETs. All in all, a very long way from the original plan of a shuttle service to and from Newbury, with just a couple of through trains to and from Paddington per day!

We will now be looking at the lack of trains running further west and poor connectivity in that direction. We are putting together various suggestions as to how that might be addressed, and we hope to work with other interested parties in that regard.

Changes to Off-Peak

Unfortunately it is not all good news. GWR have switched a lot of weekday off-peak trains to full fare. Along with others we made a number of representations to GWR and, as a result, the following is the present situation from Monday December 16th:

- The 0831, replacing the previous 0841 off-peak, is a peak service with the 0924 now forming the first off-peak service. Network Railcards and Senior Railcards are only going to continue on the 0924 on a trial basis.
- In the afternoon the last off-peak service, from Paddington, is the 1507 and the next off-peak is not until 1907. This means the 1608, 1708, 1807 and 1837 are all full fare services.

GWR have stated that advance tickets will now be made available on our IET-operated services, so this should be of some help. For example an advanced purchase single ticket on the 0831 can be had for as little at £9.50 single, returning on the 1807 also for £9.50. Advanced purchase tickets are available up to 1800 on the day before travel and prices vary depending on how many tickets have been sold for the service you are attempting to book.

For 'walk on fares' there are other ways to save money at peak times. For example one could catch the 0831, Bedwyn to Newbury, for £8.10, alight then catch the 0919 Newbury to Paddington (arriving 1000) for an additional £17.00. Similar options are available by taking the 0831 to Reading on one ticket then purchasing a second ticket for the 0942 departure from Reading to Paddington (arriving 1007).

On the way home some of the non-IET trains from Paddington to Reading, and all of the Cross Rail services, are off peak. Although this makes for longer journey times it does allow one to travel with off-peak fares at peak times.

We will continue to request that the aforementioned 0831 and 1608 services are returned to off-peak.

Christmas Travelling

As well as the big changes from 15th December, there will also be a temporary timetable in place while Network Rail work on infrastructure upgrades over Christmas and New Year.

This will affect services from 24th December to 1st January 2020 and includes the closure of Paddington station on 24th December and 27th December.

There is more information on www.GWR.com/Christmas

Happy travelling!

Steve Smith and Bill Wells

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Parish News: December 2020

There have been a couple of accidents with people slipping when boarding the new Hitachi trains at the station. This is because it is quite a step up into the carriages. Please take extra care when boarding.

On the five car units, which turn back from our siding, it is slightly easier to board via the doors in the end carriages. This is because the middle three carriages have raised floors to accommodate the motors. The end two carriages (i.e. those with the cabs) are therefore lower. Although the external metal step is in the same location, there is no second step into the carriage. Thus you only have one obstacle, not two, to board.

This is also useful to note if you are boarding with a child's buggy.

Happy Travelling

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Parish News: March 2021

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - New Railway Station for Devizes

The Department for Transport is funding a study into the potential for a new rail station to serve the Devizes Community Area and this development has potential to improve westbound services for customers in the Pewsey, Bedwyn, Hungerford and Newbury areas. It is proposed that the new station, known as Devizes Gateway will be 3.4 miles from Devizes Market Place, on the line between Pewsey and Westbury stations, and plans for a connecting bus are being developed.

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group have campaigned for a number of years for improved connections to the West (for Bath, Bristol, Salisbury and the South West etc.) and consideration is now being given to extending some services which currently stop at Bedwyn, through to Westbury, or beyond which would enable passengers to travel to Devizes, and also to connect at Westbury for destinations further West.

More information about the project can be found at www.devizes.org.uk.

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group is celebrating its fifteenth birthday. We've had many successes down the years (particularly in service retention, additional commuter trains and station facilities) but the 'tough nuts to crack' remain as (i) a later evening service back from London to allow for theatre trips (ii) a more frequent Sunday service, with an earlier start and (iii) westbound travel. If Devizes Gateway were to go ahead this has the potential to fix this latter aspiration allowing for commuting, leisure, business and student travel west from Bedwyn.

If you would like to join our email list then please contact us on info@bedwyntrains.org.uk

Happy Travelling!

Steve Smith and Bill Wells

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Parish News: April 2022

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group – Cuts to Direct Services

Coming out of Covid restrictions we were lead to believe our train service would return to the 19 direct trains per day to Paddington and 16 trains back with an additional 17 services requiring a change at Newbury.

However, on March 2nd GWR informed us of their plan to cut 80% of our direct pre-Covid services to Paddington, putting us on the worst timetable since June 1992 (when the pre-Turbo fleet was retired).

The proposed direct peak morning service will be fairly good (with stops on six through trains), but we will only have two direct trains back in the evening. Everything else will be hourly diesel shuttles between Bedwyn and Newbury only, some of which have decent connections to and from Paddington, while some have journey times between Bedwyn and Paddington of up to two hours and in one case more. Anybody using the service will know how flaky the connections are at Newbury.

This has come about because the Department for Transport (DfT), who took financial control of the railways from the start of the pandemic, have told GWR to cut costs. To do this GWR have decided to retire older diesel trains in the West Country and replace them with the three IET trains that serve Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury. You may recall these trains are something we fought hard for from the announcement, in 2009, of electrification to Newbury to their rollout some ten years later.

The diesel shuttles from Bedwyn will connect in with the Class 387 Paddington to Newbury service. These latter trains are electric only. Ironically our three IET trains (which are bi-mode, running on electric to Newbury and diesel beyond) will be redeployed to a mainly non-electrified area of the network. So that's circa £200m of rolling stock designed for electric traction unable to make use of it. Additionally the Bedwyn siding was extended, at a cost in excess of £1m, to accommodate the IETs.

GWR have acknowledged this is far from ideal and it would be their aim to get our service back. However, we did feel these were words of comfort when there is no plan for this.

So Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group has been very busy. So far we have galvanised a lot of support, had three meetings with GWR and one with our MP and the MP for Newbury. Our strategy is:

1) In the first instance to request all the changes to be scrapped.
2) Pragmatically request one of our IET trains is retained. This, along with the already proposed stops on through trains, would give us direct trains to Paddington at 0534, 0600, 0626, 0651, 0729, 0803, 0831, 1141, 1441, 1741, 2042 with return direct trains at 0707, 1007, 1307, 1608, 1808, 1907 and 2222. The diesel shuttle would then infill (e.g. 0924 and 1042 departures from Bedwyn). We feel this would be workable.

If this affects you, could you (i) join our email list so we can keep in touch info@bedwyntrains.org.uk and (ii) write to our MP danny.kruger.mp@parliament.uk saying how the changes will affect you.

Steve Smith and Bill Wells

Parish News: January 2023

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Changes to our Buses

Wiltshire Council is one of eighteen local authorities to receive funding through the Department for Transport's (DfT) Rural Mobility Fund. The fund is specifically used to pilot Digital-Demand Responsive Transport (D-DRT) services, which are flexible bus services that you can book through an app (or by phone).

The Pewsey Vale and Marlborough area was selected as the pilot area in Wiltshire, and a resident engagement survey took place in the summer. Following on from this, in spring 2023, the council will be launching the new Wiltshire Connect service, which is designed to improve rural transport in the area. Wiltshire Connect will provide the following:

- A new on-demand bus service (which operates in a similar way to Uber) will be available for Great Bedwyn and the surrounding area, providing improved transport links to Marlborough, Hungerford and Pewsey.
- You will be able to book the bus with an app and this will also include the ability to pay your fare before you board, track your bus and give feedback on your journey. Booking by phone will also be available.
- Anyone can use the new service. Concessionary bus passes will be accepted and special introductory fare promotions will be available.
- The service will operate from 6am-8pm Monday-Friday and 7am-7pm on Saturdays, and will also be available to use during school times.
- The service will use brand new Mercedes vehicles with air conditioning and other features.

- A Wiltshire Connect timetabled service will continue to operate on Mondays to Fridays to compliment the on-demand service, which will include one through journey a day to Devizes as well as buses to Marlborough and Hungerford. The timetabled service will not be as extensive as the current 20/22 timetable.

The current 20/22/X22 service will be replaced with the 120 Wiltshire Connect timetabled service and the new on-demand bus service in spring 2023. Timetables and more information will be available nearer the time.

Advanced Notice of Line Closure

From 01:00 on Saturday 18/02/2023 until 05:05 on Friday 03/03/2023 no passenger trains will run anywhere on the track between Theale and Westbury. This is for extensive engineering works and will mean bus replacements. Hopefully the advanced warning will enable you to make alternative arrangements (or even book that winter holiday!).

Train shuttles to Newbury

You may remember in our last article (Parish News: April 2022) we advised that GWR were making all of our off-peak services diesel shuttles to/from Newbury from May 2022.

Bill Wells and I managed to get a series of concessions on the initial proposed timetables, then further concessions from the recent December timetable change. Although this has improved things, this is no substitute for direct services. There are way too many missed connections at Newbury and the general reliability of the trains has been bad.

GWR and Network Rail are trying to resolve things. We have met with them and they have appointed a new route director to try and resolve things.

Other than the published timetables, please note the following:

1. If you book in advance you can get the 1636 (Paddington to Bedwyn) as an off-peak fare.
2. Some journey planners recommend changing trains at Hungerford instead of Newbury. If the train, being recommended from Hungerford, also calls at Newbury than ignore the advice and instead change at Newbury. This will give you a second option should the Hungerford train be delayed or cancelled.
3. If you arrive at your destination anything over fifteen minutes late you are entitled to compensation. Google 'GWR delay repay'. Please do claim. The more is costs the rail industry the more likely things will improve.

Bill Wells has put together a series of detailed timetable proposals to try and improve things. We continue to discuss these options with GWR. All of Bill's proposals are workable, it's just that our trains have been deployed elsewhere and we are stuck with shuttles for the foreseeable future. Because of this, I find myself talking to GWR on a daily basis with complaint after complaint about delays, cancellations and poor (or non-existent) announcements. But do keep letting us know about problems. The more we press the better.

Station usage figures

The latest station usage figures have been published. They show, post pandemic, continued healthy improvement for Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. This is a surprise given the poor service, but it is good news as we were concerned a drop in passenger numbers would lead to further cuts.

Strikes

To keep informed about the ongoing rail strikes check www.gwr.com/strike also consider joining our email list (see below).

Our email list

If you use the trains please do join our email list. We have over 600 members, spread over Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn stations. It's the best way we keep in touch, and we send group emails BCC so your privacy is protected. Please email us on info@bedwyntrains.org.uk to join.

Steve Smith

Parish News: March 2023

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Changes to our Buses

In our January article we reported that the current 20/22/X22 service will be replaced with the 120 Wiltshire Connect timetabled service and the new on-demand bus service.

Wiltshire Council report there have been delays to this project due to a number of issues, including driver availability.

They now anticipate the new on-demand Wiltshire Connect buses will be introduced in April or May and the existing 20/22 bus service will continue to run as now until at least July.

Advanced Notice of Line Closure

As previously reported, from 01:00 on Saturday 18th February until 05:05 on Friday 3rd March no passenger trains will run anywhere on the track between Theale and Westbury. This is for extensive engineering works and will mean bus replacements.

GWR now report that there will be further closures on Sunday 5th March, Saturday and Sunday 11th/12th March, Friday 7th April to Monday 10th April, and on Sunday 16th and 23rd April and 14th May.

Our email list

If you use the trains please do join our email list. We have over 600 members, spread over Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn stations. It's the best way we keep in touch, and we send group emails BCC so your privacy is protected. Please email us on info@bedwyntrains.org.uk to join.

Steve Smith

Parish News: September 2023

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group Wins Two Awards

The Railfuture AGM, held in July in London, recognised our passenger group with two awards.

Best website – Gold Award

In March 2023 the passenger group revamped www.bedwyntrains.org.uk to be a dynamic tool to assist passengers when travelling. With freight and West of England services taking priority over the services to Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn our three stations are the poor relations at times of disruption. With frequent inaccurate screens and announcements passengers find it hard to get the correct information. The new look website gives fingertip dynamic information of real time information, recent performance, how to claim refunds etc. The more traditional content (of static timetables, newsletters, hints and tips and passenger group information) is still available, but now off a sub-menu rather than being the priority.

Best campaign – Silver Award

In 2009, with electrification announced only to Newbury, Bedwyn was faced with a diesel shuttle service to Newbury. The passenger group fought hard and in December 2019, with new IET bi-modes, they achieved our best timetable ever – 27 weekday Bedwyn departures for Paddington (19 direct, average journey time 73 minutes across all services). With Covid and faulty IET trains hitting our service, passengers hoped to return to normal in May 2022. Instead GWR/DfT looted three of our IETs, relegating Bedwyn to 20 Paddington departures (6 direct, average journey time 86 minutes). The passenger group campaigned hard and put forward timetable proposals and Newbury connection holds which GWR have adopted. They now have the timetable up to 22 Paddington departures, (7 direct, an average journey time 81 minutes).

Railfuture is Britain's leading independent organisation campaigning for a bigger better railway. It is a voluntary group representing rail users, with 20,000 affiliated and individual members. Railfuture is not affiliated to or funded by train companies, political parties or trade unions.

Parish News: June 2024

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Weekday Westbound Service

You may be aware that we have the 0943 weekday westbound service, calling at Pewsey and Westbury. With no return service available, other than doubling back from Hungerford or Newbury, uptake hasn't been that great.

Therefore, Bill Wells and I asked GWR if they could give us a return service and, from Monday, June 3rd, we'll have a stop on the 1904 from Paignton, arriving Bedwyn at 2131.

So if you fancy a day out at the seaside here are the options:

Bedwyn	0943			Paignton	1904
Westbury	1010	1047		Torquay	1910
Dawlish		1208		Teignmouth	1927
Teignmouth		1213		Dawlish	1932
Torquay		1234		Westbury	2105
Paignton		1239		Bedwyn	2131

Note, this is for weekdays only and please always double check timings before travelling.

Getting around the Evening off-peak

We are often asked about the evening off-peak rules. The weekday evening peak, for trains departing Paddington, is from 1600 to 1900. This does not apply between Reading and Bedwyn, nor does it apply on the Elizabeth Line between Paddington and Reading. Therefore, if you are returning with an off-peak ticket between 1600 and 1900 there are options, it'll just be a longer journey. Here are some examples:

1. Catch the 1548 Carmarthen train from Paddington, arriving Reading at 1613. You can then catch the 1636 Reading to Newbury, arriving 1700. You can then catch the 1724 for Bedwyn, arriving 1744.
2. Catch the 1648 Elizabeth Line train from Paddington, arriving Reading at 1741. You can then catch the 1803 Reading to Newbury, arriving 1817. You can then catch the 1822 for Bedwyn, arriving 1842.
3. Catch the 1720 Elizabeth Line train from Paddington, arriving Reading at 1812. You can then catch the 1837 Reading to Bedwyn, arriving 1914.
4. Catch the 1750 Elizabeth Line train from Paddington, arriving Reading at 1842. You can then catch the 1901 Reading to Bedwyn, arriving 1930.

Our Service

Bill and I are still battling with GWR and the DfT to restore our full complement of direct trains to and from Paddington. We've put together a document proposing a partial reinstatement by swapping some of the bi-modes used between Paddington and Cardiff with the Class 387 (electric only) which run to Newbury. The bi-modes can then continue to Bedwyn. The document is available at https://tinyurl.com/ReinstatingTwoClass800bi-modes

There is also rumour that GWR will be acquiring some extra stock, freeing up some bi-modes. We're monitoring this to ensure we can press our case for these bi-modes to be returned to us.

Longer term, Network Rail are progressing a project to put us on an hourly Paddington to Westbury service. If this were to happen it'd solve all of our problems. However, there's no guarantee it'll ever happen and, even if it did, it'd be some years away.

Please Keep in Touch

You may be aware that we don't write as many Parish News articles as we used to. This is because we often need to pass on information, via email, quicker than the Parish News copy dates allow. We then include general information with those communications. So if you use the station, please consider joining our email circulation list. Just drop us an email on info@bedwyntrains.org.uk You'll be in good company, we have 680 subscribers!

Happy Travelling

Steve Smith
Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletters

Emailed Newsletter: 05/12/2006 21:09

Date: 05-Dec-06 09:09:03 PM
Subject: Meeting with Richard Rowlands
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All,

Bill Wells and myself met with Richard Rowland (the regional manager for our train operator) this evening. It was a very good meeting and we very much appreciate Richard making time to come and see us. It was good to see that we do have a voice and Richard said that the reason we survived the previously proposed massive cuts was because of the pressure that came from the Bedwyn train users. So well done!

Over the last day or so we collated the the various emails and verbal comments into a list of points to discuss with Richard. Below is the list of points with the outcome of the discussion.

1) Poor communications when things go wrong. Boards not matching timetables and not matching driver announcements. What can be done?

Due to the short franchise lengths there has been an investment gap. Richard says this has been addressed and new specifications of systems are being drawn up. This will much improve things but it'll be about two years before the changes are rolled out. There is a £200,000,000 investment underway that previously was not there.

2) Telephone on Bedwyn station often not working or not answered/engaged.

A dedicated team is being set up in Swindon to answer these calls. It is hoped that this will improve the situation.

3) Regarding the new timetable. The 08h37 arrives Paddington 09:53. The 08h57 no longer runs. Thus the 1st concession ticket will be 09h37 arriving Paddington 10h51 which is much less convenient than arriving 10h23 to attend 11h00 meetings, scheduled to meet travelers' needs.

Richard sympathised and has agreed to investigate if an easement can be

made for the 0837. He confirmed that the problem is that the 0837 arrives in Paddington before 1000.

4) Overcrowding on some services.

Unfortunately this is difficult to solve. It costs £125,000 a year to lease each carriage (and that's before any operating costs). It's not feasible to add carriages due to cost.

5) The ticket collectors start off very good inspecting everyone's tickets and selling to those without, as the journey progresses I suppose because of volume of travellers the question is "would anyone like to buy a ticket" and tickets are not checked, so the less honest on board will keep quiet and travel for free as at the end of the 6.42 journey there is not a barrier to go through. On the return journey there is hardly ever an inspector on the 5.47 and indeed not always on the 5.35 and 6.35 – on both these trains there is not a barrier to go through so fare avoiders again get away for free…

A new penalty fare system is likely to include Bedwyn station. If this happens a car park style ticket machine will be installed at Bedwyn to purchase an intent to travel ticket (i.e. you put some loose change in and get a ticket which is deducted from the ticket you eventually purchase). The tickets sold from this machine will contribute to the statistics of use of our station. This is important as currently we are marked down due to lack of ticket collectors. We stressed to Richard our concerns that we are being regarded as a smaller station than we truly are.

6) Will there be any overcrowding issues on the trains that don't start/terminate at Bedwyn (e.g. Frome/Westbury).

It's possible but hopefully passengers from those stations will be drawn to the earlier services that do not stop as often.

7) What type of train will be used for those that don't start/terminate at Bedwyn

From December these will be the Adelante. Later these will be replaced by modified HST trains. These will be minus buffet car, have extra seats and new engines to improve performance. Additionally they will have selective door locking to prevent people alighting beyond the platform end.

8) Guarantees that the evening service back from London will not be reduced anymore.

The current service is a legal contract. Of course things can change in time but things look secure for now.

9) Buffet car/trolleys on trains that don't start/terminate at Bedwyn?

Yes, but not guaranteed to be open on the Adelante trains. On the modified HST trains there may or may not be a trolley.

10) Buffet car/trolleys on other trains?

No.

11) Mini Time Table for Great Bedwyn?

Richard took this action away to see if anything can be done.

12) Marlborough buses on time tables

Richard said it was very likely he could get these added back in.

13) Stations screen broken at Hungerford

Richard will chase this up.

14) Are the new Westbound services shown in the timetable that Bedwyn is on?

Yes, times not given but they are marked as such.

15) On 11/12/2006 the 1942 departure from Bedwyn comes from the West and this is shown to be the last train from the West that day. But on 18/12/2006 there is a 2216 arrival in Bedwyn (departing Pewsey at 2146). Note this takes 30 minutes for what should be around 8 minutes.

Richard thought this to be an error on the national rail web site. There's no such train listed in his documentation.

16) Concerns whether trains from Westbury direction will actually stop (e.g. 0705)

It will.

17) The 08:08 - arrives Newbury - 08:25 to meet with the 08:35 from Plymouth, also a new stop, how reliable is this train as the Westbury/Pewsey train that goes through unstopping in Newbury at the moment is often late, will the slow 08:40 train be held up if this one is late

Delays are possible on this one. But Richard stressed that the current investment should improve reliability.

18) Also concern that local users won't be able to get tickets whilst on local train and will end up in conflict with conductors on fast trains.

This should not be a problem. Just explain that this is your first opportunity to purchase a ticket.

19) Concern returning from Reading. 16:11 from Reading and wait until 17:05 at Newbury (journey time of 1 hour 14 mins - scheduled to arrive at Bedwyn 17:25)

There's a direct service at 1548 (44 minutes). The 1703 (with one change) is fairly quick (42 minutes). Currently (i.e. today) the closest to the 16:11 is the 1605 which (with a change) takes an hour and forty seven minutes. It would appear that the new timetable is better than the old.

20) Concerns that the 1648 from Reading will be held to wait for another train causing an even later arrival in Bedwyn.

Yes, this can happen. But Richard stressed that the current investment should improve reliability.

21) What is the situation with the Adelante trains?

See point 7.

22) Why all the changes on Sunday timetables?

Richard to investigate and report back.

23) Trains West at the weekend?

Richard could see some merit in the current stopping services including Bedwyn. He'll look into this.

24) Was there an additional fare increase during 2006? If so will it happen again next year?

They are allowed up to three increases a year but regulated to an overall maximum.

25) What will be the fare increase in January for our line?

Not sure yet.

26) In our recent survey we found:

Number of journeys: 30
Number of trains: 28
No of trains with less than 10 passengers : 7 (25%)!
No of trains with no Guard : 10 (36%)
No of trains with no communications: 2 (7%)
No of late trains: 4 (14%)

This underlines the lack of ticket collectors are pulling our ranking below that of Pewsey etc. What about extrapolating passenger journeys to make true station league table.

Richard took this on-board. Hopefully the penalty fare system will mean our numbers are better recorded. It is not economically viable to put a ticket collector on each train but we stressed that we did not wish to have our usage stats reduced by this. We asked if the occasional survey of uncollected trains could be used to normalise our ticket sales against fully staffed stations.

27) The 1833 from Paddington has no connection to Bedwyn.

The 1806 is a fast service arriving in Bedwyn at 1914. However, many commuters find it hard to make it to Paddington for 1833. Bill had drawn up some possibilities for re-timetabling to solve this problem. Richard took these away for further consultation. We stressed that we did not want to lose the fact that the 1914 arrival in Bedwyn goes west. Richard has already requested that the 1833 could stop at Hungerford from May.

However this will only help us if there is a further change to the local service.

Kind Regards

Steve Smith

Emailed Newsletter: 02/02/2007 06:24

Date: 02-Feb-07 06:24:48 AM
Subject: Train Survey
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

All,

The Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group has been contacted by a Geography student, Simon Holland. He wishes as many people to complete a questionnaire, as part of his Geography degree.

The questionnaire focuses on the changes brought about by the introduction of the new railway timetable in December 2006. This research aims to identify how changes in transport provision affect our lives and our attitudes towards the places in which we live and work.

If you can fill as much of the following in as possible that'll be much appreciated. As we are interested in your feedback too please reply to me and sheila.holland@coldash

Many Thanks

Steve

Emailed Newsletter: 04/06/2007 21:38

Date: 04-Jun-07 09:38:31 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group. Meeting with Richard Rowland (regional manager for our train operator)
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

All,

Firstly please note our website at http://www.bedwyntrains.org.uk/

Secondly we (Bill Wells and myself) had our second meeting with Richard Rowland this evening. The minutes are below. But to cut to the chase there is very encouraging news about the evening return trains from Paddington (point 27) but not great news about the 0801 (point 33) being a through train to Reading (or Paddington). Please rest assured we will continue to press for change and we do appear to get results. Please read details below.

Kind Regards

Steve Smith

Minutes of Meeting with Richard Rowland 04/06/2007

Review from meeting one held on 05/12/2006

Note missing numbers are where the issue has been resolved and already reported back. Please refer to the original minutes for details.

1) Poor communications when things go wrong. Boards not matching timetables and not matching driver announcements. Punctuality and cancellations an issue. What can be done?

05/12/2006: Due to the short franchise lengths there has been an investment gap. Richard says this has been addressed and new specifications of systems are being drawn up. This will much improve things but it'll be about two years before the changes are rolled out. There is a £200,000,000 investment underway that previously was not there.

04/06/2007: The surveys have been done and currently the project is out as an invitation to tender.

2) Telephone on Bedwyn station often not working or not answered/engaged/ Stations screens

05/12/2006: A dedicated team is being set up in Swindon to answer these calls. It is hoped that this will improve the situation.

04/06/2007: This is now setup, staff are being recruited.

3) Regarding the new timetable. The 08h37 arrives Paddington 09:53. The 08h57 no longer runs. Thus the 1st concession ticket will be 09h37 arriving Paddington 10h51 which is much less convenient than arriving 10h23 to attend 11h00 meetings, scheduled to meet travelers' needs.

05/12/2006: Richard sympathised and has agreed to investigate if an easement can be made for the 0837. He confirmed that the problem is that the 0837 arrives in Paddington before 1000.

04/06/2007: Richard says he'll continue pressing our case for this.

5) Penalty Fares at Bedwyn/Footfall count etc

04/06/2007: Bedwyn station will not get a ticket machine though it may get a permit to travel machine. This would help us appear properly in the league table of stations. Additionally a means of measuring the weight of trains (based on suspension compression) is being introduced. As most trains start at Bedwyn this will give us more accurate representation as they'll know the number of people boarding.

7) Adelante or Modified HST?

04/06/2007: We will get the modified HST trains. The Adelante's will be withdrawn from this line. We also asked "What is the proposal to extend the length of our siding relating to? Will this house more cars than the platform?" Richard was unaware of this but felt perhaps it was Network Rail putting a case for all possible kinds of work to receive funding.

11) Mini Time Table for Great Bedwyn?

05/12/2006: Richard took this action away to see if anything can be done.

04/06/2007: Richard says he'll continue pressing our case for this.

12) Marlborough buses on time tables

05/12/2006: Richard said it was very likely he could get these added back in.

04/06/2007: Richard says he'll continue pressing our case for this. They now have a transport integration manager who has this on his list of jobs.

22) Why all the changes on Sunday timetables?

05/12/2006: Richard to investigate and report back.

04/06/2007: Richard reported that this was due to engineering works and that it will always be the intention to be a direct Paddington service when there are not engineering works.

23) Trains West at the weekend?

05/12/2006: Richard could see some merit in the current stopping services including Bedwyn. We pointed out the Saturday 0818 departure from Paddington and the 1753 arrival into Paddington. We also asked if the Saturday 1312 from Bedwyn could be slightly re-timetabled to meet with the 1318 west departure from Hungerford. He'll look into this.

04/06/2007: Richard reported that our proposals have been provisionally adopted. Provisionally (pending Network Rail approval) from December the Saturday 0818 West departure from Paddington will call at Bedwyn at 0926. This will give us a direct service to Exeter with the ability to change at Westbury for Bath and Bristol. Additionally the Saturday 1534 Taunton to Paddington service will call at Bedwyn at 1643, then Paddington at 1753. Also the Saturday 1312 departure from Bedwyn will now depart at 1307 to meet the 1318 Hungerford departure to Exeter.

27) The 1833 from Paddington has no connection to Bedwyn.

05/12/2006: Richard took this away to follow up.

04/06/2007: Provisionally (pending Network Rail approval) from December this will be resolved. The 1706 and 1806 will run as they do now, arriving Bedwyn 1815, 1916. The 1733 departure from Paddington will arrive at Newbury at 1816 and a connecting service will depart Newbury at 1823, arriving Bedwyn 1842. The 1833 departure from Paddington will arrive at Newbury at 1918 and a connecting service will depart Newbury at 1925, arriving Bedwyn 1944. The 1945 departure from Paddington will arrive Newbury at 2026 and a connecting service will depart Newbury at 2033, arriving Bedwyn at 2052.

This is also excellent news because the 1945 departure should be available to those with cheap day return tickets. Note previously you would not get back until 2144 with a cheap day return. Provisionally, from December, you'll return on a cheap day return at 2052.

Also the problem with the two hour gap, on a Saturday evening, has been proposed to be resolved from December.

New Agenda Items for Meeting Two (04/06/2007)

28) Bill has listed additional timetable suggestions to present.

04/06/2007: These appeared mainly to be timetable typos. Please be advised that to check Saturday services (especially the 1232 and 1640) from September as the printed timetables are felt to be inaccurate.

29) Last direct train back from Paddington is very early at 1806. The number of direct services has reduced.

04/06/2007: Point 27 now covers this.

30) We have been told by FGW:

"With both the Network Awaybreak and the Cheap Day Return tickets you may travel on the 16.18 departure from London Paddington, the ticket is then restricted until the 20.00 departure. Should you need to travel between these times then you would need to purchase a Standard Day ticket."

Firstly is this accurate? Could passengers catch the 1945 and connect? If there is this restriction why can't there be a decent service back the minute the restriction ends?

04/06/2007: Richard says it is accurate and he feels the actual time is 1630 to 1930 and therefore the 1945 will be okay for a cheap day return. Investigating the First Great Western website this train is indeed listed as a cheap day return.

31) Pewsey is not on the Westbury timetable in book D.

04/06/2007: Richard has taken this on board.

32) The last Newbury train is not mentioned on the Westbury timetable.

04/06/2007: It actually is, but as it starts after midnight it is listed at the start of the day.

33) The business of the 0801 service is a big issue. Passengers wishing to get to Thatcham or Theale for 0900 have to catch the 0705 or have a very long journey. Passengers wishing to get to Reading for 0900 have to catch the 0705! Note that the Intercity 0835 departure from Newbury is so often delayed that passengers are reporting that they cannot reply upon it.

We have emailed/written to Alison Forster and Richard a number of times on this. Typical text of our correspondence has been:

"The weekday 0808 departure from Bedwyn to Newbury has been put back to 0801. Whilst this is welcome for schools, commuters to Reading (and stations in between) are being severely inconvenienced by this additional wait. In the past we had an 0758 departure that was direct to

Reading. Now getting to stations between Newbury and Reading for a 0900 start is getting even harder. Looking at the timetable there appears to be an easy solution. If the 0801 left at 0755 and formed the 0812 departure from Newbury (currently impossible for Bedwyn commuters to catch) the problems are solved. The current train forming the 0812 departure from Newbury could instead form the 0840 departure. On the face of it this change would make a big difference to commuters from Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury whilst not upsetting passengers from Newbury."

04/06/2007: Richard's response will be disappointing to many. Bill and I stressed what a problem this was to commuters (myself included as I travel to Theale) but the problem is that the 0548 Plymouth to Paddington departure (rescheduled from 0600 last December) comes through Bedwyn at just the wrong time to start a train any earlier than 0801. The only hope is if the 0748 departure from Newbury could start from Bedwyn. Richard will take this away and investigate. We will continue to press for this. Also we asked about the punctuality of the 0835 HST departure from Newbury. This is only on time 70% of the time and 'on time' means within 10 minutes. This is part of the problem. We stressed for resolution of at least this.

34) Purchasing tickets for cycles is very hard.

04/06/2007: Richard will take this up. I will forward him correspondence.

35) Trains reported as filthy.

04/06/2007: Richard will take this up. I will forward him correspondence.

36) None of the points in the following email (09/12/2006) to Alison Forster have been addressed:

I wish to inform you of some omissions in the new timetables.

1) In timetable book B the Saturday 1218 departure from Paddington (arriving Taunton 1433) is not listed.

04/06/2007: It is now listed.

2) In timetable book B Bedwyn (and Kintbury) is not mentioned where:

(i) The 0656 departure from Pewsey calls at Bedwyn

(i) The 1933 departure from Pewsey calls at Bedwyn

(iii) The 1824 arrival at Pewsey called at Bedwyn

(iv) The 1926 arrival at Pewsey called at Bedwyn

These are Monday to Friday services.

04/06/2007: Richard will look into.

3) Likewise Frome should be listed as two of the above listed services

call at Frome.

04/06/2007: It is now listed.

4) Could the 'Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group' be mentioned under the 'Rail user groups' on page 160 of timetable D? And if Bedwyn can be added to timetable B then likewise in that booklet too. Our contact details are:

www.bedwyntrains.org.uk
infor@bedwyntrains <http://www.bedwyntrains >

04/06/2007: Richard will look into.

37) The 'Family April' promotion was not advertised.

04/06/2007: So much so Richard had not even heard of it.

38) On 09/12/2006 we emailed Richard Rowland with:

Additionally I note that on a weekday Bedwyn has two evening services west but no earlier service. Similar to the Saturday proposals would it be possible for the 0834 (now the 0835) Paddington departure to call at Bedwyn? This would make a service at either end of the day.

04/06/2006: Richard apologised for missing this and will take it forward.

Emailed Newsletter: 10/09/2007 22:18

Date: 10-Sep-07 10:18:33 PM
Subject: News
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

All,

The new timetables are on the FGW site. Here goes:

From Monday December the 10th the 1706 and 1806 will remain direct back, arriving Bedwyn 1821 and 1923 (marginally longer journey times than before). However, here is the good news that we hope will please the London commuters: The 1733 departure from Paddington will arrive at Newbury at 1816 and a connecting service will depart Newbury at 1822, arriving Bedwyn 1841. An 1836, replacing the 1833, departure from Paddington will arrive at Hungerford at 1928 and a connecting service will depart Hungerford at 1935, arriving Bedwyn 1943. The 1945 departure from Paddington will arrive Newbury at 2026 and a connecting service will depart Newbury at 2032, arriving Bedwyn at 2051. There will also be later connecting trains departing Paddington at 2035, 2121 and 2215 arriving Bedwyn at 2142, 2250 and 2350 respectively.

This is also good news because the 1945 departure will be available to those with cheap day return tickets and railcards. Previously you would not get back until 2144 with a cheap day return, from December 10th you can make it back at 2051.

There is a surprise that First Great Western did not tell us about. The

0705 departure is now retimed to 0651 and has a longer running time (1:18 c.f. 1:11). This timetabling now means that Hungerford has fast Paddington departures at 0642 and 0658 then nothing until 0803!

This morning I noticed that the existing 0646 Hungerford departure that does not call at Bedwyn is actually listed as calling at Bedwyn on the internet station screen! A true ghost train. It showed up as being due in at 0639 and due to leave at 0641. This follows Richard's slip up remark, to me and Bill, when he said we had two Adeantes up in the morning. Also before the changes last December one of the FGW sites mentioned we'd have an 0641 service.

If you want a chilling read then see paragraph 22 of http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/upload/pdf/spad-2002-04.pdf

Steve

Emailed Newsletter: 23/11/2007 07:35

Date: 23-Nov-07 07:35:39 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group Meeting With FGW
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

All,

Bill Wells and myself met with Richard Rowland (First Great Western Regional Manager, London & Thames Valley). For those interested below are the minutes of the meeting.

Steve

Minutes of Meeting with Richard Rowland 19/11/2007

Review from meeting one and two

Note missing numbers are where the issue has been resolved and already reported back. Please refer to the previous minutes for details.

3) Regarding the new timetable. The 08h37 arrives Paddington 09:53. The 08h57 no longer runs. Thus the 1st concession ticket will be 09h37 arriving Paddington 10h51 which is much less convenient than arriving 10h23 to attend 11h00 meetings, scheduled to meet travellers' needs.

05/12/2006: Richard sympathised and has agreed to investigate if an easement can be made for the 0837. He confirmed that the problem is that the 0837 arrives in Paddington before 1000.

04/06/2007: Richard says he'll continue pressing our case for this.

19/11/2007: The new timetable has this departure as the 0840 but still arriving at 0953. However, still does not carry a concession. Richard says he'll have another go for us to get this easement.

5) Penalty Fares at Bedwyn/Footfall count etc

04/06/2007: Bedwyn station will not get a ticket machine though it may get a permit to travel machine. This would help us appear properly in

the league table of stations. Additionally a means of measuring the weight of trains (based on suspension compression) is being introduced. As most trains start at Bedwyn this will give us more accurate representation as they'll know the number of people boarding.

19/11/2007: Richard stated that there are moves afoot to install a permit to travel machine at Bedwyn and make Bedwyn a penalty fare station. This is by no means certain to happen.

7) Adelante or Modified HST?

19/11/2007: When will this happen? Is the extra time on the journeys (see point 41), from December, to allow for this?

Yes, the additional journey times are to allow for HSTs forming the service. When the new timetable comes in the 0650 departure from Bedwyn will be a modified HST. All the Adelantes will be go by the end of March. The 1706 and 1806 Paddington departures will likely be HSTs from the new timetable in December.

11) Mini Time Table for Great Bedwyn?

05/12/2006: Richard took this action away to see if anything can be done.

04/06/2007: Richard says he'll continue pressing our case for this.

19/11/2007: Richard says that there will be a mini timetable for London/Westbury which will include all of Bedwyn's services. This is excellent news so we asked for 1000 copies to distribute around the village and Richard is trying to arrange this for us but we'll have to wait and see if it's possible.

12) Marlborough buses on time tables

05/12/2006: Richard said it was very likely he could get these added back in.

04/06/2007: Richard says he'll continue pressing our case for this. They now have a transport integration manager who has this on his list of jobs.

19/11/2007: Richard says that once the timetable is stable this can then be looked at. We agree with this stance and are holding off any campaigns to align bus and train times until we know that FGW have got a stable timetable to work to.

23) Trains West at the weekend?

05/12/2006: Richard could see some merit in the current stopping services including Bedwyn. We pointed out the Saturday 0818 departure from Paddington and the 1753 arrival into Paddington. We also asked if the Saturday 1312 from Bedwyn could be slightly re-timetabled to meet with the 1318 west departure from Hungerford. He'll look into this.

04/06/2007: Richard reported that our proposals have been provisionally adopted. Provisionally (pending Network Rail approval) from December the

Saturday 0818 West departure from Paddington will call at Bedwyn at 0926. This will give us a direct service to Exeter with the ability to change at Westbury for Bath and Bristol. Additionally the Saturday 1534 Taunton to Paddington service will call at Bedwyn at 1643, then Paddington at 1753. Also the Saturday 1312 departure from Bedwyn will now depart at 1307 to meet the 1318 Hungerford departure to Exeter.

19/11/2007: Thank you for the changes to the new timetable. Are these changes permanent? We note the additional inbound, from the west, arriving 1332, likewise weekday too.

Richard says that the services might be withdrawn during the summer holiday period where rolling stock is required elsewhere.

27) The 1833 from Paddington has no connection to Bedwyn.

05/12/2006: Richard took this away to follow up.

04/06/2007: Provisionally (pending Network Rail approval) from December this will be resolved. The 1706 and 1806 will run as they do now, arriving Bedwyn 1815, 1916. The 1733 departure from Paddington will arrive at Newbury at 1816 and a connecting service will depart Newbury at 1823, arriving Bedwyn 1842. The 1833 departure from Paddington will arrive at Newbury at 1918 and a connecting service will depart Newbury at 1925, arriving Bedwyn 1944. The 1945 departure from Paddington will arrive Newbury at 2026 and a connecting service will depart Newbury at 2033, arriving Bedwyn at 2052.

This is also excellent news because the 1945 departure should be available to those with cheap day return tickets. Note previously you would not get back until 2144 with a cheap day return. Provisionally, from December, you'll return on a cheap day return at 2052.

Also the problem with the two hour gap, on a Saturday evening, has been proposed to be resolved from December.

19/11/2007: As this is now confirmed a big thank you to Richard for resolving this along with the two hour Saturday evening gap closing.

31) Pewsey is not on the Westbury timetable in book D.

04/06/2007: Richard has taken this on board.

19/11/2007: Any progress?

It is now at the expense of not printing the connecting services with Ealing Broadway. This is simply due to space but as some trains listed do call at Pewsey it's best to have Pewsey listed than Ealing Broadway where trains do not call.

33) The business of the 0801 service is a big issue. Passengers wishing to get to Thatcham or Theale for 0900 have to catch the 0705 or have a very long journey. Passengers wishing to get to Reading for 0900 have to catch the 0705! Note that the Intercity 0835 departure from Newbury is so often delayed that passengers are reporting that they cannot reply upon it.

We have emailed/written to Alison Forster and Richard a number of times on this. Typical text of our correspondence has been:

"The weekday 0808 departure from Bedwyn to Newbury has been put back to 0801. Whilst this is welcome for schools, commuters to Reading (and stations in between) are being severely inconvenienced by this additional wait. In the past we had an 0758 departure that was direct to Reading. Now getting to stations between Newbury and Reading for a 0900 start is getting even harder. Looking at the timetable there appears to be an easy solution. If the 0801 left at 0755 and formed the 0812 departure from Newbury (currently impossible for Bedwyn commuters to catch) the problems are solved. The current train forming the 0812 departure from Newbury could instead form the 0840 departure. On the face of it this change would make a big difference to commuters from Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury whilst not upsetting passengers from Newbury."

04/06/2007: Richard's response will be disappointing to many. Bill and I stressed what a problem this was to commuters (myself included as I travel to Theale) but the problem is that the 0548 Plymouth to Paddington departure (rescheduled from 0600 last December) comes through Bedwyn at just the wrong time to start a train any earlier than 0801. The only hope is if the 0748 departure from Newbury could start from Bedwyn. Richard will take this away and investigate. We will continue to press for this. Also we asked about the punctuality of the 0835 HST departure from Newbury. This is only on time 70% of the time and 'on time' means within 10 minutes. This is part of the problem. We stressed for resolution of at least this.

19/11/2007: This is still a real issue. We asked if the 0757 Newbury to Reading could start at Bedwyn at 0740 but were informed that it would not be possible. Richard assures us that they have tried their best to resolve this but alas it has proven impossible. For now we stressed the point that making the 0830 fast Newbury Reading service more reliable would greatly help. We will keep this campaign open.

36) Remaining points from the email (09/12/2006) to Alison Forster:

36.2) In timetable book B Bedwyn and Kintbury are not mentioned where:

(i) The 0656 departure from Pewsey calls at Bedwyn

(ii) The 1933 departure from Pewsey calls at Bedwyn

(iii) The 1824 arrival at Pewsey called at Bedwyn

(iv) The 1926 arrival at Pewsey called at Bedwyn

These are Monday to Friday services.

04/06/2007: Richard will look into.

19/11/2007: This is proving difficult to do. Our view is that if a train calls somewhere it should be listed. But of course we are a small station fighting for page space with bigger stations.

36.4) Could the 'Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group' be mentioned under the

'Rail user groups' on page 160 of timetable D? And if Bedwyn can be added to timetable B then likewise in that booklet too. Our contact details are:

www.bedwyntrains.org.uk
infor@bedwyntrains <http://www.bedwyntrains >

04/06/2007: Richard will look into.

19/11/2007: This has been done.

38) On 09/12/2006 we emailed Richard Rowland with:

Additionally I note that on a weekday Bedwyn has two evening services west but no earlier service. Similar to the Saturday proposals would it be possible for the 0834 (now the 0818) Paddington departure to call at Bedwyn? This would make a service at either end of the day.

04/06/2006: Richard apologised for missing this and will take it forward.

19/11/2007: This will happen from May 2008. This will tie in well with what has been done on a Saturday and really start to open us up for westbound. However, Richard pointed out that he had to fight for us to get this as when it was proposed the modelling software came back and pointed this out as a loss maker for FGW. Therefore it's down to us to get this service used as it is unlikely that this service will be used for people arriving in Bedwyn around 0930 so we really have to get people to use it as a westbound service otherwise we'll lose it.

New Agenda Items for Meeting Three (19/11/2007)

39) Further westbound on a weekday

19/11/2007: We also note the 1330 departure west on a weekday and the 1332 inbound from the west on a weekday. We thanked Richard for both of these.

40) New Saturday lunchtime gap.

We note that also we have a train back from the west on a Saturday lunchtime (arriving 1332) and that on a weekday we have a 1330 departure. We also now note a two hour gap has crept into the Saturday timetable (arrivals into Bedwyn at 1232 and 1432). Can we have a stop on the 1322 departure from Hungerford to fill this? It'd make a lot of sense seeing how that fix is done on a weekday.

19/11/2007: Richard will put a bid in to see if this can be arranged for December 2008.

41) We note that the morning journey times have increased. E.g. the 0705 currently gets to Paddington at 0816 (a journey time of 1:11) whereas the new 0650 will be 1:19. Likewise the 1706 and 1806 return trains are longer journey times. Is this just because they are now timetabled for HST units? One of the saving graces of the cuts last December was that the morning journey times had come down. It's a shame this has changed.

19/11/2007: See above.

42) What is the rationale behind the 0650 and 0708 replacing the 0705? It has caused some complaints but we can see the 0708 will act as good contingency if the 0650 is cancelled or very late. The 0708 starts from Bedwyn whereas the 0650 comes from the west so is slightly more vulnerable.

We now have trains at: 0603, 0623, 0650, 0708, 0757, 0840. This leaves a long gap between the 0708 and the 0757 and, when one considers a decent Reading service, leaves a long gap between 0708 and 0840. Really we need a fix for the Reading commuters (see earlier point, 33).

19/11/2007: The HST + West Country times have caused this.

43) Reliability of connections, from Newbury, after catching the 0757 (was the 0801).

19/11/2007: We have to wait and see though we have stressed this as really important.

44) Quote from one commuter "also as regards network rail - understand from someone who works in their technical offices that our line is going to have major work done on it next year/following year? and she is talking of major disturbance to the service so much so that she may take early retirement rather than suffer using the service... not something I'm to happy to hear about ----- appears the reason we have so much work done on our line is because the stone wagons wreck havoc on the infrastructure –"

Is this true?

19/11/2007: Works are unknown at the moment.

45) There's been a request for an earlier Sunday train for those that work seven days a week. This comes out of the change in people's working patterns, needing earlier starts to work on a Sunday. The obvious would be if the 0905 departure from Newbury could start from Bedwyn. We note that this arrives in Newbury at 0836 (having departed Reading at 0814) so would need to start some ten minutes earlier from Reading.

19/11/2007: Richard stated this would be unlikely to happen because (i) cost (ii) it could compete with engineering works.

46) Returning to/from the west on a Sunday is difficult with excessive waits at Newbury. Would it be possible for the 1603 Reading departure, arriving Newbury at 1636, also serve Kintbury/Hungerford and Bedwyn? This would connect with the 1629 arrival into Newbury from the west. Given it has a 41 minute wait at Newbury the only snag would appear to be the 1648 departure for Westbury.

19/11/2007: Richard said again this would be unlikely because of cost.

47) Additionally would it be possible for the 2030 Sunday Bedwyn departure, arriving Newbury 2047, to start a little earlier so it gives a safer connection with the 2051 westbound departure from Newbury. Currently this is the only connection where going west from Bedwyn on a

Sunday is possible, but it is a little tight. All the other connections at Newbury (either for those returning to the west or returning from the west) are currently too long.

19/11/2007: Richard said this was possible but would prefer to look at the entire pattern of our Sunday service to see if it could tie in better with west country services at Newbury with no detrimental effect to those traveling to east services. If this were possible it'd be a 'win win' scenario and would also effectively cover point 46.

48) Bedwyn to Exeter ticket prices. The Saturday fare, without going via Reading is £43. Going via Reading is £55. However, Bedwyn to Pewsey day return is £4 and Pewsey to Exeter day return is £30. So should our £43 fare not be £34?

19/11/2007: Richard advised this was because we cross the old Network South East/West Country boundary. This is why we have cheaper fares heading east and Pewsey has cheaper fares heading west. Any review of this policy might increase our eastbound fares so we'll not pursue this any further.

49) We wonder what has happened to our station adoption request. Additionally we appear to be the last unpainted station on this line. There are continued complaints about the state of shelter on the eastbound platform.

19/11/2007: Richard will contact Alison Stone who deals with these matters. Richard advised us that a replacement shelter would be around £40,000.

50) Quote from one commuter: "Can I suggest that when you next meet the Great Western managers you might suggest to them that a little advertising would not come amiss. Special posters drawing attention to the new service at Bedwyn and other stations on the route would cost them little and advertisements in the local press or on local radio would probably be fairly cheap. It is also high time that the sign at Bedwyn station which says "For services to the west country change at Newbury" was replaced by something more up to date. It is already out of date by several months, having regard to existing services going on from from Bedwyn to Westbury or Frome."

19/11/2007: The sign we will deal with when we are in contact with Alison Stone. For the advertising Richard said he'd look into the possibilities of a community rail partnership to work with BWB and local council to promote use.

51) It appears that the evening restrictions on cheap day returns have been lifted. Can this be confirmed?

19/11/2007: Richard will look into this. However, on further checking they are back to full fares.

52) Our Saturday west service disappears off the timetable from 02/02/2008.

19/11/2007: This will be back on.

53) Station screens often not working.

19/11/2007: They are all due for replacement. It's just a matter of waiting for the old unreliable system to be replaced.

54) 2058 vs 2106 weekday departure.

19/11/2007: It'll be 2058.

55) Punctuality and reliability.

19/11/2007: Will get better as investment is ongoing.

Emailed Newsletter: 13/12/2007 19:26

Date: 13-Dec-07 07:26:33 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear Train Users,

We are wondering how the new timetable is working out. Please can you let us have your thoughts over the next week or so.

What we are really looking for is any patterns of failure (e.g. a particular service always being late or overcrowded).

Please don't report to us one off failings that were fine for all other days. There's not much we can do about those when we speak with First Great Western but where there's a regular failing we can go to FGW with the details.

Best wishes

Steve

Emailed Newsletter: 25/01/2008 15:04

Date: 25-Jan-08 03:04:56 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All,

We've been collating your views/complaints and today have written to Richard Rowland (First Great Western Regional Manager, London & Thames Valley) with the following:

1) Thanks again for fixing the weekday evening return trains and for the recent 0840 fare easement. That's made quite a few passengers happy.

2) The mini timetable booklet has been well received aside from one point. The way it is printed makes it look as if the following weekday Paddington departures do not connect with Bedwyn: 1633, 1945 and 2035. Of course they do, but you have to look to the left for the connecting service. It's fooled a lot of people. Any chance from May if the new timetable could have little arrows guiding the reader to the left?

3) The 0708 Bedwyn departure never has a ticket seller on it. This is inconvenient when alighting at a barriered station and must be losing FGW revenue at other stops.

4) The 0650 Bedwyn departure is causing a large volume of complaints to us. On average it's 15 minutes late into Paddington and even if it were to run on time it's rescheduled time is 8 minutes longer than the old 0705 - which normally ran on time. Our pragmatism tells us we can't return to the Adelante but we wonder what can be done to help it run on time. We have the following suggestions: (A) It is noted that when the 0650 does run on time there are excessive waits at each station. i.e. the trains is boarded and ready to depart but awaits the scheduled departure time. Could this extra contingency, per station, be rolled forward to either allow for a shorter overall journey time or as contingency for delays around Reading? (B) When the 0650 train arrives at Bedwyn the front of the platform is taken up with (i) part of the power unit (ii) part of the front first class car that has no door (iii) the rest of the first class (iv) the buffet car (v) second class. As second class is the vast majority of what is required this leaves little room to board costing time and causing people to bunch into a small number of carriages (despite the train manager's pleas to move down the train). Could the buffet car be removed (as per the original FGW proposed solution) to make the train lighter and/or could the power unit and the front first class car be parked over the front of the platform? It could either leave the front first class door on the platform or go even further.

5) The gap between the 0650 direct Paddington departure and the 0840 direct Paddington departure is now too great. Before December 2006 we had five direct Paddington trains before 0900, now we have just three with this near two hour gap. Given we still have the issue with a decent Reading commuter service would it be possible to, like Hungerford, get a stop on the 0724 departure from Pewsey?

6) We are getting numerous complaints about delays, overcrowding, cancellations coupled with the fare increases. I'm sure you are aware of all these from your own statistics.

7) We are receiving complaints that when there are delays the helpline at the station is not functioning. We can hear them but they can't hear us.

8) Were you able to put in the request for the Saturday 1218 Paddington departure to call at Bedwyn? This was to fill in the two our gap for trains arriving from the east.

9) Was there any scope in minor timetable adjustments to the Sunday service such that they connect better with trains to/from the west trains at Newbury?

We'll follow it up with a meeting with him.

Best wishes

Steve

P.S. For those particularly suffering the misery of the weekday morning commute you may be interested in the following letter from Richard Benyon, MP for Newbury:

Subject: Train Campaign update - 18th January
Date: Fri, 18 Jan 2008 15:57:06 +0000
From: DEANGELIM@parliament.uk
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All

I am writing to give you an update on my campaign to improve rail services to West Berkshire.

As you will be aware, the new train timetable came into effect on 10th December 2007. For many months before this, First Great Western has said that this new timetable and the introduction of High Speed Trains would solve many of the overcrowding and punctuality problems experienced by commuters for the last year. Unfortunately, this has not been the case and I have received many emails and letters from constituents showing how they are still having a very bad travelling experience.

On Wednesday 16th January I met with Andrew Haines, Chief Operating Officer, Mike Carroll, Customer Services Director, and Richard Rowlands, Regional Manager. to voice your concerns.

Punctuality
Whilst I acknowledge that part of the problem is caused by Network Rail, we did also get a clear acknowledgement from First Great Western that they have fallen short of expected targets and are not giving the service that they should.

I was told that they are employing a Performance Director from next week whose main task will be to get the trains running on time. They are also introducing managers at the key starting points of the morning services to ensure trains leave on time. They acknowledge that trains' running on time is the key to a good service and if one train leaves late, there is a knock-on effect throughout the timetable. I was told that FGW are putting in place systems to ensure that trains leave the start station on time. For example, the 0610 from Frome to Paddington, which is due to leave Newbury at 0712, has been a particular problem and its punctuality statistics are now down to below 66%. FGW have said they will be putting in a system where it will be monitored on a daily basis and if it looks as if it will not start from Frome on time, it will start from Westbury on that day.

Only time will tell if these systems will resolve the punctuality of the trains. We all accept that from time to time circumstances (weather, faults etc) will delay a train, but I have made it very clear to FGW that they must do everything they can to improve the things they can.

Overcrowding.
Overcrowding has been a problem since December 2006 when FGW introduced Adelante services on the key commuter trains. We had some success in 2007 in getting one of the early morning services (0629 from Frome) made into a double Adelante service, but since December 2007 this train, (now

the 0610 from Frome) has become an HST and the seating capacity on it reduced. This would not have been so much of an issue if the other commuter train (0608 from Westbury) had also been made into an HST, which would have given a net gain over the two services. However, this HST has been delayed coming into service, and I pressed FGW to bring this in as quickly as possible. I am pleased to say that the 0608 from Westbury (Newbury departure at 0651) will be an HST with added from mid February at the latest. There is some hope that this will be brought in earlier and I will continue to press for this.

Timetable
A number of constituents have contacted me concerning the retiming of the 0812 from Newbury to Reading which has left a gap of 40 minutes between 0757 and 0837 for the stations between Newbury and Reading. FGW accepted that this retiming felt very much like a "cut" for commuters who used to have a train around which arrived in Reading at 0844 and was convenient for those working in Reading. They have agreed to look at my suggestions of bringing the 0837 earlier to shorten the gap or, to assist Thatcham commuters, add a stop on the 0832 from Newbury. I am not overly confident that this will happen, because there are a number of trains running on the line during this 40 minutes which may preclude any change, but they have promised to look at it and come back to us as soon as possible. I will continue to do what I can here.

Thatcham Station
I have been concerned for some time that Thatcham Station is just "not up to the job". Thatcham is a growing town, and as such needs facilities at its station on a par with Newbury. Nothing will happen overnight, but I have asked First Great Western to look into improving facilities at this station, which they agreed to do. I will continue to press them on this and also on increasing the train services to this station.

And finally
As part of our discussions FGW have said that they would be willing to meet with commuters to discuss the above or any other issues that they have. I would be very happy to host such a meeting, but before I arrange something for later in the Spring, would need to have an indication of how many people would like to attend and what time would suit them best. We wont find a time that suits everybody, but if you wish to be involved please can you let me know what days of the week suit you best and what times (i.e. a Friday evening at say 6.00pm). I will then arrange with FGW.

Please be assured I will do all I can to help.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Richard Benyon MP
Member of Parliament for Newbury

6 Cheap Street
Newbury, RG14 5DD

Emailed Newsletter: 01/02/2008 18:35

Date: 01-Feb-08 06:35:43 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

All,

For those of you that are interested we've had a response from Richard Rowland (First Great Western Regional Manager, London & Thames Valley) regarding the email we recently sent which I copied to you all. His responses are below. We've replied saying "many thanks" and added a new request for better management of the evening connections at Newbury (regarding trains being held/re-timetabled).

So here are Richard's responses:

1) Thanks again for fixing the weekday evening return trains and for the recent 0840 fare easement. That's made quite a few passengers happy.

Thanks for the feedback, it is nice to hear some positives.

2) The mini timetable booklet has been well received aside from one point. The way it is printed makes it look as if the following weekday Paddington departures do not connect with Bedwyn: 1633, 1945 and 2035. Of course they do, but you have to look to the left for the connecting service. It's fooled a lot of people. Any chance from May if the new timetable could have little arrows guiding the reader to the left?

I will feed this back into the timetable team

3) The 0708 Bedwyn departure never has a ticket seller on it. This is inconvenient when alighting at a barriered station and must be losing FGW revenue at other stops.

I will ask Revenue Protection to add this service to it's schedule.

4) The 0650 Bedwyn departure is causing a large volume of complaints to us. On average it's 15 minutes late into Paddington and even if it were to run on time it's rescheduled time is 8 minutes longer than the old 0705 - which normally ran on time. Our pragmatism tells us we can't return to the Adelante but we wonder what can be done to help it run on time. We have the following suggestions: (A) It is noted that when the 0650 does run on time there are excessive waits at each station. i.e. the trains is boarded and ready to depart but awaits the scheduled departure time. Could this extra contingency, per station, be rolled forward to either allow for a shorter overall journey time or as contingency for delays around Reading? (B) When the 0650 train arrives at Bedwyn the front of the platform is taken up with (i) part of the power unit (ii) part of the front first class car that has no door (iii) the rest of the first class (iv) the buffet car (v) second class. As second class is the vast majority of what is required this leaves little room to board costing time and causing people to bunch into a small number of carriages (despite the train manager’s pleas to move down the train). Could the buffet car be removed (as per the original FGW proposed solution) to make the train lighter and/or could the power unit and the front first class car be parked over the front of the platform? It could either leave the front first class door on the platform or go

even further.

This train is also a concern to us although this week it has been much better. On the occasions it doesn't start at the right time from Frome it quickly picks up delays right along it's journey. We are reviewing the contingency for this service to improve its right time starts. The Westbury starter has been performing extremely well since the turn of the year. We have put the extra dwell time in at stations because of the longer boarding times needed for an HST, particularly if bikes are being loaded. We are in the process of changing the instructions for where the train stops such that there will be more standard class on the platform along with more bike storage area. A number of the buffet cars will be removed in due course, we decided to keep them for a period whilst the timetable beds in to ensure we have the catering correct when the buffets are removed.

5) The gap between the 0650 direct Paddington departure and the 0840 direct Paddington departure is now too great. Before December 2006 we had five direct Paddington trains before 0900, now we have just three with this near two hour gap. Given we still have the issue with a decent Reading commuter service would it be possible to, like Hungerford, get a stop on the 0724 departure from Pewsey?

I'll have a look at this, there has also been a request for this to stop at Thatcham. The route is a little busy at this time of the day so it may not be possible to achieve.

6) We are getting numerous complaints about delays, overcrowding, cancellations coupled with the fare increases. I'm sure you are aware of all these from your own statistics.

The second HST will be arriving imminently which will increase capacity. The decision on fares was made some months ago as we expected the new timetable to perform much better than it did and there was more capacity available. When it became clear this was not the case we announced the doubling of compensation which will reduce the effect of the rises significantly

7) We are receiving complaints that when there are delays the helpline at the station is not functioning. We can hear them but they can't hear us.

Thanks, I will forward to the team responsible

8) Were you able to put in the request for the Saturday 1218 Paddington departure to call at Bedwyn? This was to fill in the two our gap for trains arriving from the east.

We have bid for the 1218 change as requested

9) Was there any scope in minor timetable adjustments to the Sunday service such that they connect better with trains to/from the west trains at Newbury?

I'm afraid the analysis for this indicated the need for more train crew due to the interlinking of this service with other services. As such we are not progressing this at present.

Kind Regards

Steve

Emailed Newsletter: 06/02/2008 16:49

Date: 06-Feb-08 04:49:36 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group News - Sunday Timetable changes and weekday holding of trains at Newbury for connections to Bedwyn.
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hi All,

1) Please note that the Sunday timetable has deviated from the printed version. Trains are now departing up to 24 minutes earlier from Bedwyn. First Great Western have put an amended copy up at the station. Please check inbound and outbound train times before you travel. Alternatively please check http://www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/ or call 08457 484950. It's always worth double checking weekend travel.

2) This week First Great Western have brought in a new policy to hold the following weekday Newbury to Bedwyn departures for up to 10 minutes beyond booked departure time: 1725, 1822, 1924 and 2032. This will be in the event of the trains from London running late. Please let us know if First Great Western fail to hold the trains for you.

Regards

Steve

Emailed Newsletter: 28/04/2008 21:09

Date: 28-Apr-08 09:09:46 PM
Subject: Things
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hi All,

The eagle eyed may have noticed the absence of a BTPG article in the May Parish News. Apparently it got mislaid between the editor and the layout person. It was not a D-Notice on us!

I spent a jolly half-hour at the station this evening (i) clearing up 17 beer cans from the westbound shelter and (ii) cleaning graffiti off the newly painted eastbound shelter. Ho hum. I managed to get it off with white spirit and hot soapy water. However it's left a faint mark. Also somebody has scratched what they believe to be the shape of the male genital form into the eastbound shelter.

Great! I think this will be an endless and thankless battle.

Steve

Emailed Newsletter: 24/05/2008 14:48

Date: 24-May-08 02:48:05 PM

Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group Meetings With First Great Western
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

All,

We have two meetings in June with First Great Western (one station related, one service related).

Please can you send all comments to this email address and we'll collate and present.

We are particularly interested to hear about (i) reliability of the 0650 (ii) the rumours of regular mid-afternoon cancellations and (iii) whether the evening connections at Newbury are working out okay.

I've heard that a few people note down the departure and arrival, into Paddington, times of the 0650. If you could forward this on, or start recording it, that'd be great.

Many thanks

Steve

Emailed Newsletter: 20/06/2008 12:33

Date: 20-Jun-08 12:33:49 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group: Summary of meeting with Richard Rowland
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

All,

For those that are interested here are the key points of our recent meeting with Richard Rowland, First Great Western Regional Manager, London & Thames Valley:

1) 0650 reliability: They got this up to 90% reliability but it has recently dropped back to 70%. This is because the overnight engineering works are over running causing it to be delayed when it comes down to Frome to form the service. At least this looks promising in terms of a reason that should get resolved.

2) Not having a good Bedwyn to Reading service for a 0900 start in Reading: They have looked at this in great detail and can not fix it. Bill Wells and myself are not giving up and are working on a new suggestion to put to FGW. Our current proposal of a stop on the 0723 Pewsey departure has been rejected as it'll cause delays beyond Reading.

3) Missed evening connections at Newbury: If one does not catch the 1706 or 1806 direct services from Paddington to Bedwyn a change is required at Newbury. Although Richard put in place a scheme for the station staff to be able to hold the connections for up to ten minutes this has proven impossible. Therefore the current situation is that the following Newbury to Bedwyn trains can be held by station staff as follows: 1822 (8 minutes), 1924 (4 minutes), 2032 (4 minutes), 2123 (4 minutes). These short delays are because of the knock on effects and therefore require the control centre's permission to hold. Richard has taken away the following proposals from ourselves:

The 2154 departure from Bedwyn to be changed to 2200 to allow the 2123 Newbury departure to be held for longer should the need arise.
To better connect from the 1836 Paddington departure. This is because this is a popular train and, if the connection at Newbury is missed, it's over an hour wait to the next. We have suggested: (i) The 1836 actually calls at Kintbury and Bedwyn (ii) Additional shuttle to depart Newbury at c. 1954 to (a) allow for a delayed 1836 from Paddington and (b) connect with the 1903 from Paddington thus giving an additional train home.

4) Not having to buy a ticket from Bedwyn: We pointed out a series of scenarios where it's possible to avoid purchasing a ticket from Bedwyn. We are concerned that Bedwyn is being under counted and thus not appear as such a significant station than it is. Richard informed us that a ticket machine and penalty fare status is being considered for Bedwyn. We have asked for the 0708 to have a ticket seller.

5) We expressed our concern that the 0830 Newbury to Paddington (which our 0757 so say connects with) is only 70% reliable.

6) We enquired of the rationale behind having the line closed on Sunday's, and late on many evenings, when there was so much closure during 2007. Is it not possible for Network Rail to co-ordinate closures and sort an entire line out during one set of closures? Richard's response: The reason is that they are working on different parts of the track but causing the same areas to be closed off. They could not do it all in one go as they now use special track laying equipment that is a scarce resource. i.e. this line could only have it for an allocated period last year then again this year. The problem we have is that the average age of track on our line should be 20 years. It has gotten up to 32 years which requires a great deal of effort to bring it back to an average of 20 years.

7) Although some effort has been made for the 0650 to better line up with the platform there is now an issue with the doors lining up with the platform that remain locked. Richard's response: It's not technically possible to open all of the doors. What we need is a sign on the station to say not to attempt to board beyond a certain point.

8) We asked how does the recent high cost of fuel affect the train operators? Richard's response: Because of the high cost of fuelling cars FGW are gaining revenue from increased passenger numbers. It is hoped that this will keep the fuel rises cost neutral for FGW.

9) We asked if the 1312 could be timetabled earlier as the previous departure is 1137 and the next at 1332. Richard's response was no because the 1312 splits the 1137 and 1437 departures. Our 1332 departure is formed by a train from the west and we must regard that as a bonus and not a reason to retime other services. As the 1332 does not call at Kintbury the 1312 can not be altered as otherwise it'll fragment the Kintbury service.

Best wishes

Steve

Emailed Newsletter: 03/07/2008 19:17

Date: 03-Jul-08 07:17:40 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Station Clean up Day
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All,

As you may have read in the Parish News the Bedwyn Trains Transport Group has adopted the station. This gives us a conduit into FGW for resolving station issues and allows us to do basic maintenance jobs over and above what FGW do. It does not allow FGW to stop doing any tasks, anything we do is over and above.

On Sunday the 13th of July, from 0930 to noon, we are having a station tidy up session. If you are interested in getting involved please turn up with any or all of: brooms, rubbish bags, gloves and tools for clearing weeds.

Many thanks

Steve

Emailed Newsletter: 01/12/2008 21:35

Date: 01-Dec-08 09:35:11 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All,

Please note that the new fare rises will come in from 01/01/2009. They will be approximately 6%. For example this will increase an annual Bedwyn to Reading season ticket from £1952 to £2068.

If your season ticket is due for renewal on 01/01/2009 make sure you buy it a few days early. Likewise you may wish to consider renewing early (i.e. have an overlap) if that will save you money. Additionally if you only buy weekly or monthly you might consider buying a longer period to make use of the existing fares.

Please spread the word.

Many thanks

Steve Smith
Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

www.bedwyntrains.org.uk

Emailed Newsletter: 06/12/2008 16:58

Date: 06-Dec-08 04:58:12 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear Bedwyn Trains Users,

We've recently updated the passenger group website. Amongst a number of adjustments we've linked to the First Great Western/National Rail website page that allows you to print the perfect timetable for your journey. This is a useful feature and appears as the red button at the top of the website.

The 'home' page remains as the live departure and arrivals board. This is useful if you are at home/in the office and want to check the state of the service immediately prior to setting out.

You can view the website at http://www.bedwyntrains.org.uk/

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Emailed Newsletter: 14/01/2009 19:43

Date: 14-Jan-09 07:43:54 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All,

An update on a couple of things.

Firstly are there still problems with evening connections at Newbury? It was raised recently and we contacted FGW. They responded: "We do have a connectional policy that is agreed with Network Rail which all the platform team at Newbury are aware of. The holds are as follows: 17.25,19.28,20.32,21.22 all can be held for up to 4 Minutes The 18.23 can be held up to 8 minutes."

In reality is this happening? i.e. when a train is late in from London is the connecting service held by at least the figures given here?
Are there differences depending on what staff are on duty?
How frequently are the London trains delayed such that the connection is missed?

Secondly the passenger group was asked to contribute to the Route Utilisation Strategy for this line. This is an ongoing task that Network Rail undertakes to ensure that best use is made of all routes. If you wish to read our response please go to http://www.bedwyntrains.org.uk/ and click on the 'Route Utilisation' tab (this is in green on the second row below the website title).

Best wishes

Steve

Emailed Newsletter: 14/11/2009 20:03

Date: 14-Nov-09 08:03:24 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group Updated Website
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hi All,

We have updated our website, www.bedwyntrains.org.uk , with additional information and given it an easier to use look and feel. The front page takes you to the live station screen. This always gives the current status of trains for the next hour or so. This will be useful for those about to set off to Bedwyn, or return to Bedwyn, to see the current train status.

Other pages include information about the passenger group, our past successes and current campaigns, the benefits of using Bedwyn station, local information, the east and westbound timetables, links to the journey planner, a list of hints and tips, bus information, airport information, compensation claim form for delays, links to First Great Western, National Rail, rail cards and custom timetables.

We hope you can make use of it and will always be pleased to hear feedback and suggestions.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Emailed Newsletter: 15/11/2009 15:05

Date: 15-Nov-09 03:05:32 PM
Subject: Steam train due through the village
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

In case you are interested a steam train will pass through Bedwyn Station (heading west) at 1138 on Saturday 21st November.

Full details at http://www.uksteam.info/tours/t09/t1121a.htm <http://www.uksteam.info/tours/t09/t1121a.htm>

If interested it is recommended you get there at least twenty minutes early as often the trains don't run to schedule (sounds rather familiar!)

Best wishes

Steve Smith
Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 07/01/2010 20:43

Date: 07-Jan-10 08:43:38 PM
Subject: Train Times
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hi All,

Friday's amended timetable has just been published at http://www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/Content.aspx?id=4624 Live updates are available at http://www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/LiveUpdateList.aspx

In case you are wishing to travel this weekend First Great Western have

just announced that the scheduled engineering works for this weekend have been cancelled. Therefore we will have a train not a bus service this weekend. It looks as if it'll be an emergency timetable so please check http://www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/ <http://www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/> for details.

The engineering works were scheduled for each Saturday and Sunday of this month with a bus replacement service is operating between Bedwyn and Theale.

Whether the scheduled engineering works for Monday to Thursday evenings next week (from 2040 onwards) will go ahead is uncertain. A list of engineering works are listed on http://www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/Content.aspx?id=720

Best Wishes

Steve Smith
Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 16/01/2010 14:02

Date: 16-Jan-10 02:02:12 PM
Subject: Use of Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group Email List
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All,

You are receiving this email because you are on the Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group email list. This email list is comprised of addresses of those that write to us and other email addresses picked up locally (e.g. from the Parish News). It stands at 170 email addresses.

We are now getting the occasional request to use the email list for non train related items (e.g. to advertise non profit making events in the village). It feels rather churlish to always turn these down but I know it can be annoying to receive unwanted emails.

To that end I'm thinking of splitting the list in to two. One list for passenger group only, the other for the passenger group plus the occasional request to pass on a message.

If you are happy to be on both lists please do nothing. If you wish to be on neither or just the passenger group list then please reply and let me know.

Please note all emails are sent as blind carbon copies to prevent other people picking your email address up and using it.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Emailed Newsletter: 04/02/2010 12:24

Date: 04-Feb-10 12:24:12 PM

Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - FGW propose we lose the connection on the 1836 Paddington departure
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

From May 24th First Great Western are going to re-time the 1928 weekday Newbury departure to 1955. This is to connect with the 1903 Paddington departure which we currently have no connection with.

However, this means we lose the connection on the 1836 Paddington departure.

The proposal appears to be to give Hungerford commuters the ability to travel on the 1836 (which stops at Hungerford) and the 1903 (which currently has no connecting service). Of course this leaves us as 'the poor relative' of Hungerford.

We are disappointed that FGW have made this change without consulting us. However, we now need to work out what we wish to do. It could be the case that a connection from the 1903 (Paddington departure) is a good thing. However, we speculate that the loss of the 1836 (Paddington departure) connection will cause inconvenience.

The easy solution would be for us to ask for a stop on the 1836. However, we have asked this before and been told no.

Please advise how this will affect you.

Best wishes

Steve Smith
Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 07/02/2010 23:09

Date: 07-Feb-10 11:09:06 PM
Subject: Fw: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - request we don't lose the connection on the 1836 Paddington departure
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All,

Thanks to all those of you that let us know how the loss of the connection on the 1836 will affect your commuting. Please find below an email we have sent to Lesley Colman who is the "Customer & Stakeholder Liaison Manager" at FGW. We will follow this up with a phone call within the next two days. If it looks as if there is no joy we plan to go to Michael Ancram and perhaps the press.

Best wishes

Steve

Sent: Sunday, February 07, 2010 11:00 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - request we don't lose the connection on the 1836 Paddington departure

Dear Lesley,

We have learnt that from May 24th FGW plan to retime the 1928 Newbury to Bedwyn departure to 1955. This is so it forms a connection with the 1903 Paddington departure instead of the 1836 Paddington departure.

This means that Bedwyn commuters will no longer be able to use the 1836 service from Paddington. This has a serious consequence for these passengers. It would appear that, as Hungerford already has a stop on the 1836, the change benefits Hungerford commuters who therefore (i) have no cause to use the 1928 Newbury departure and (ii) will now have the extra 1903 service.

We have polled our commuters and there is a 9 to 2 ratio against this change. What we are hearing is that the people who work in London typically arrive at Paddington between 1800 and 1830. This fits well with the current 1806 and 1836 departures.

Up until December 2006 Hungerford and Bedwyn were on the same stopping pattern. Since then we note that Hungerford has been favoured with additional HST train stops. This means we already have the bizarre situation where a number of passengers, whose closest station is Bedwyn, drive to Hungerford station. This reduces revenue for FGW as the ticket price is cheaper from Hungerford than Bedwyn. This situation will now get worse with the loss of the 1836 connection and could possibly prove embarrassing for FGW. By the nature of these additional services it is fast becoming a self fulfilling prophecy that Hungerford is a more important station than Bedwyn.

The Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group was formed in 2006 to fight off the severe cuts proposed in the December 2006 timetable change. Since then we have been campaigning to rectify a number of issues. During the course of our work, we quickly got our connection back on the 1836 (which we lost in December 2006), managed to get the Marlborough bus service retimed to meet it at Bedwyn, and built a good relationship with Richard Rowland. Richard helped us with closing some two hour gaps and establishing a westbound service. He was also working with us on the other following issues:

1) Prior to December 2006 we had a service that allowed a 0900 working day start in Thatcham, Theale and Reading. We would like to see a similar service reinstated.

2) The loss of a direct Paddington service between 0700 and 0800. We would like to see a similar service reinstated.

Richard also took our wish to maintain Bedwyn as the railhead for Marlborough seriously and made sure we had timetables for distribution. At the last timetable change (December 2009) we distributed over 6000 timetables to Marlborough and the surrounding district. We also promote Bedwyn and FGW in a monthly article on train usage that is delivered to over 1000 homes.

If Richard was still with FGW he would have discussed the switching of this connecting service (from the 1836 to the 1903) with us and taken our views seriously. It now appears that FGW are forcing this upon us,

without due consultation, as a fait accompli. We must therefore protest and ask for either of the following:

1) Bedwyn is now given a stop on the 1836 Paddington departure.
2) An extra unit is provided with connections from Newbury that will serve both the 1836 and 1903 Paddington departures.
3) The proposed changes are reversed and the current 1928 Newbury departure is not retimed.

As time is short we'd appreciate you giving this attention.

Yours sincerely

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 10/02/2010 15:10

Date: 10-Feb-10 03:10:20 PM
Subject: Some really good news r.e. the 1836 Paddington departure.
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

We're rather pleased to be able to forward the following paragraph from an email, received today, from Matthew Golton, Projects & Planning Director, First Great Western.

"Thanks very much for your email, representing the Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group. My colleagues and I have reflected on your suggestions over the last couple of days and I am pleased to tell you that we have been able to insert a stop into the Exeter train. The 1836 Paddington-Exeter will be retimed to leave London at 1833 from the May timetable change, leaving Reading two minutes earlier than at present. The Bedwyn call on the Exeter train will be at 1936. We will leave the retiming of the 1928 Newbury-Bedwyn as planned but we hope that the earlier, direct arrival into Bedwyn will be really welcomed."

Thus the concerns of the last week have meant from May 24th we'll be in a better position. We will now have direct trains at 1706, 1806 and 1833 with connections off the 1636, 1733, 1903 and 1945. This gives us a half hourly peak evening service from Paddington to Bedwyn. i.e. what we've been asking for since we formed as a group.

Additionally please note that the 1833 journey time will be one hour and three minutes. Likely the shortest ever between Paddington and Bedwyn.

We have made an immediate approach to Wiltshire Council to get the bus to meet the 1936 arrival.

Please encourage any Hungerford defectors to return to using Bedwyn from May 24th.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 12/02/2010 14:59

Date: 12-Feb-10 02:59:58 PM
Subject: Steam train through the village - this Sunday (14th)
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

A steam train will pass through the station at 1209 this Sunday (14th). It's advisable to be early if you want to see it.

Details are on:

http://www.uksteam.info/tours/t10/t0214a.htm

Best wishes

Steve

Emailed Newsletter: 07/07/2010 17:01

Date: 07-Jul-10 05:01:47 PM
Subject: Christmas Planning
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Just to give commuters, and those planning their holidays, advanced warning that Reading station will be closed for much of the Christmas period.

Apparently our line will run a shuttle (train) service as far as Theale.

Further details are on
http://www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/Content.aspx?id=4888

Best wishes

Steve

Emailed Newsletter: 22/07/2010 20:01

Date: 22-Jul-10 08:01:00 PM
Subject: Marlborough bus link
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All,

There is a rumour around the village that the buses to/from Marlborough are being axed and/or not connecting with the trains. This is not so, the new timetable from August 1st is largely the same as it is now. The main differences will be that the service will now be run by Bodman Coaches and the early bus (from Marlborough) will run to Hungerford (to connect with the 0736 to Paddington). This means the first bus to Marlborough will now be the 0736 from the station (0737 from the

square).

However, having spoken to Wiltshire Council, we must be wary that they are short of funds and some of our buses might be vulnerable in the future. Therefore the more they are used the better.

Best wishes

Steve Smith
Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 16/09/2010 16:04

Date: 16-Sep-10 04:04:46 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - Two things
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All,

Firstly we have had reports of recent poor train performance. We've been in touch with FGW who have come back with the following:

I am sorry for the recent delays and cancellations on the Bedwyn line. Last month was disappointing for performance, with some incidents severely disrupting our services such as a cable theft. Network Rail has put measures in place to address this.

Also, the reliability of the infrastructure, particularly points and track circuit failures has simply not been good enough, particularly in the London Thames Valley and we are discussing this with Network Rail. I assure you that we will be working closely with them to improve things.

On 9 September, the 1536 service was cancelled due to a signal failure and I am really sorry that this was not shown on the information screens. On the internet the train was displayed as starting from Bedwyn and terminating at Reading (which is what we normally do when we have problems between Reading and Paddington) but in fact the service was cancelled throughout. Clearly there was a miscommunication somewhere along the line.

Unfortunately, during disruption as severe as what we experienced last week, we won't always get everything right. Part of the reason for this is that we are operating three Customer Information Systems which triplicates the work we have to do. Also the reliability of these systems is not as good as we would like, which is why we are underway with a complete upgrade of the entire system. This will resolve the vast majority of the problems we experience such as the one you have highlighted.

I have passed your email on to our Customer Information Manager, who was grateful for your feedback.

Secondly First Great Western are planning to change the weekday eastbound morning service from December. The changes are that the 0608 becomes a 0555 departure (arriving in Paddington eight minutes earlier than it does now) and the 0623 departure becomes a 0613 departure. This latter train (which only ever runs as far as Reading) will connect with

the 0715 departure from Reading, thus getting to Paddington at 0744. Please let us now how this will affect you.

Best wishes

Steve Smith
Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 10/11/2010 22:35

Date: 10-Nov-10 10:35:23 PM
Subject: Fw: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Please find below an email, from Matthew Golton, responding to the points recently raised.

Best wishes

Steve

Dear Steve (et al),

Again my apologies for the delayed response. Your emails were sent off for investigation by colleagues and somewhere along the line that process stalled and never restarted. This is not good enough and we will do better.

We are being challenged at the moment and London Thames Valley services (including Bedwyn) are not as good as they should be. The morning peak has been hit by adhesion delays. It is not as bad as it has been in the past due to both Network Rail's tree felling programme and improved railhead treatment – but the first trains out are travelling more slowly and this is causing some problems.

There have also been too many infrastructure problems. We have met with NR and they have produced a remedial action plan for dealing with these. We are pressing for timescales and insisting on urgency, but I do understand that the service is not to the standard that you, or we, want and I am sorry.

This does mean that we are missing some connections. Reading is particular issue especially at peak time. If we slip even a little from the booked timetable trains start to bunch and have to wait outside the station.

Hence the £880 million remodelling project which has started. Once done it will mean more platforms so that the 1833 does not wait access. It is not a quick fix but ultimately it will mean a big difference to reliability.

In the meantime we need to work at every delay minute to keep Reading moving. The Right Time Railway group are looking at all services and identifying causes and solutions for trains that are failing PPM. This is true of the 1833 and I have asked that attention be paid to this

train.

An initial look shows that the problem is most definitely at Reading, but there is no obvious regular cause. That said it is not working well and we will target it for attention.

Connections are not straightforward. Ultimately Network Rail through their signaller make the decision about how long we can hold a service, but we can request a hold. I suspect that if Control are dealing with other incidents and station staff at Newbury don't call Control for a hold the 2122 can get missed. I have reminded Control and the Thames Valley Signalling Centre (who signal this area) to watch this train. There are no guarantees as it will be dependent on other rail traffic but it is a point well made and I think there are times when we have missed the chance to help.

We have both reliability and punctuality targets. Reliability being the number of services that run. These are set across journey groups and Bedwyn services fall into the London Thames Valley group. The target over 12 months is 98% to run, and on the last figures (12 months to 18 October 2010) we were running at 99.5%

Late platform changes are inconvenient. We give as much notice as we can, but often the change is notified to us quite late as the signaller has had to make a change not previously planned. Staff should always look to see if there are passengers en route (particularly if they are disabled). They are also however under pressure to dispatch on time, or we end up out of position at Reading and delaying following trains. That said, passengers clearing moving from one announced platform to another should be given time to do so.

It is also worth noting that Network Rail currently make the announcements/operate the boards at Paddington. We are working with them on a major review of information provision and have suggested that it might be better if we took this on ourselves.

Fares for 2011 are not yet confirmed – we will let you have them as soon as they are. You may have seen the Secretary of State's announcement about future increases. Currently regulated fares rise by RPI+1%, with the extra % going back to Govt. for rail improvement works, from 2012 that rises to RPI +3%. This has been the subject of much discussion and possibly the source of the rumours.

I understand you will not be entirely happy with the timetable changes. They are needed in order that we can run a new direct service from Paddington at 0706 to Exeter - Paignton from December. This is something we have wanted to do for a long time and means that we can give an 0930 arrival into Exeter from London.

This is something the business community have pressed for and despite the problems that I accept it causes some worries for Hungerford passengers, it is an important improvement for the West of England.

Again I am sorry you did not get this reply far sooner.

Best wishes

Matthew

Emailed Newsletter: 10/11/2010 22:39

Date: 10-Nov-10 10:39:24 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Attachment GW10 RDG T03c_(1).pdf

Dear All,

Please find attached the Christmas timetable covering the closure of Reading between Christmas and the New Year.

Below is a letter from FGW regarding the recent problems on our line.

Best wishes

Steve

Dear Steve (et al),

Again my apologies for the delayed response. Your emails were sent off for investigation by colleagues and somewhere along the line that process stalled and never restarted. This is not good enough and we will do better.

We are being challenged at the moment and London Thames Valley services (including Bedwyn) are not as good as they should be. The morning peak has been hit by adhesion delays. It is not as bad as it has been in the past due to both Network Rail's tree felling programme and improved railhead treatment – but the first trains out are travelling more slowly and this is causing some problems.

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This is something the business community have pressed for and despite the problems that I accept it causes some worries for Hungerford passengers, it is an important improvement for the West of England.

Again I am sorry you did not get this reply far sooner.

Best wishes

Matthew Golton

Emailed Newsletter: 12/07/2011 22:13

Date: 12-Jul-11 10:13:27 PM
Subject: Trains and things.
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hi All,

Another worrying incident, detailed below.

Please note that there are currently engineering works on our line. The Network Rail note is:

Saturday 9 July 2011 until Friday 15 July 2011

From 2040 on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday until 0200 the following morning services between Reading and Bedwyn via Newbury will

be subject to alteration with buses replacing trains for whole or part of the journey.

Newbury Friday - An enhanced train service will be in operation to / from Newbury Racecourse

Please also note that from Sunday August 7th the Sunday morning trains will be buses. First actual train departure will therefore be at 1228.

Regards

Steve

Emailed Newsletter: 14/11/2011 19:14

Date: 14-Nov-11 07:14:48 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Station - DfT Proposed Cessation of Direct Paddington Service from 2016
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Firstly apologies to anybody that has already responded to our petition against the DfT's plans. Below is a copy of our standard campaign literature. If you feel you could support us please email back. If you have any email lists you could forward this onto we'd be very grateful.

As electrification will only come as far as Newbury we have written to both Claire Perry (MP that covers Bedwyn) and Richard Benyon (MP that covers Hungerford and Kintbury) asking them to investigate how this affects our stations. They both received the same reply from the Minister Transport, Theresa Villiers – after the year 2016 the diesel Turbo trains will not be allowed to run between Reading and Paddington. This means that Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn would be on a diesel Turbo shuttle service to Newbury or Reading.

It is proposed that through services to Exeter will be in two categories – (i) A fast service between Paddington and Exeter (first stops Reading and Taunton) using the existing HST trains and (ii) A semi-fast service, using new IEP trains (these are bi-mode trains that can run under the wire to Newbury and then diesel thereafter), between Paddington and Exeter (stopping at additional stations such as Newbury, Pewsey and

Westbury).

We are running a campaign to get our frequency of service and stops at Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn on all the semi-fast IEP Paddington to Exeter service, included in the forthcoming franchise document for the Great Western route.

If you support us please reply with your name, address and the station you use. We'll then write to the MP covering your station stating your support.

Alternatively you can write direct to your MP at "House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA" and ask them to continue to petition the DfT to include this proposal in the forthcoming franchise document for the Great Western route.

Further details are on our website: www.bedwyntrains.org.uk

Many Thanks

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 25/04/2012 13:05

From:
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group (BTPG) - Electrification Update
Date: Wed, 25 Apr 2012 13:05:05 +0100

Dear All,

You are receiving this email because you have previously emailed us your support r.e. the problems that will be caused by electrification coming only as far as Newbury.

Since your email we have corresponded with Wiltshire Council, Hungerford Town Council, Claire Perry (MP that covers Bedwyn) and Richard Benyon (MP that covers Hungerford and Kintbury). They have all been very helpful and supportive.

In addition we have had two meetings with the Department for Transport (DfT), one with Wiltshire Council and one with First Great Western (the current franchise holders). The franchise contract is up for renewal with the award being made later this year. The four bidders for this are: First Group (the existing provider), Arriva, Stagecoach and National Express. We shall be contacting each of them to arrange meetings to discuss what they plan to put in their bids r.e. the three stations

You may remember that the DfT were proposing that Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury would end up on a diesel shuttle to Reading. In turn we are proposing that the three stations are on a semi-fast IEP service to the West Country where the trains run direct to Paddington. In our last meeting with the DfT they stated that they will now be looking for a 'robust response' from the four bidders as to how the three stations

will be served. So things have taken a step in the right direction.

So that's where things are currently at. Thanks again for your support.

Regards

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 18/06/2012 18:53

Date: 18-Jun-12 06:53:27 PM
Subject: For Review
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Attachment Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group Bus Consultation Issue 3.pdf

Dear All,

You are receiving this email because you have previously participated in the review of the bus service between Marlborough and Bedwyn. You may recall that Wiltshire Council have produced two timetable options for running the service with one bus and one driver (c.f. two buses and three drivers as per the current situation).

Both Wiltshire Council options have various shortcomings and the passenger group has been busy producing an alternative. This is included in the attached document along with what we hope is all the points that have been raised.

I'd be grateful if you could review it and give me any feedback.

The plan is to submit this to Wiltshire Council before the end of June (their deadline for close of consultation).

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 27/06/2012 08:54

Date: 27-Jun-12 08:54:13 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group Bus Consultation Issue 3
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Attachment Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group Bus Consultation Issue 3.pdf

Dear All,

Please find attached our final consultation document r.e. the Bedwyn bus cuts.

In it is a proposed timetable (as an alternative to WC's Option A and B) to work with one bus and two drivers (c.f. one bus and one driver as proposed by WC). We are also suggesting that, given the bus is garaged in Devizes, that the people of Devizes could be offered a service (to

connect with the cheaper trains at Bedwyn and Hungerford) by (i) starting and ending the buses first and final journeys of the day in Devizes (ii) taking the bus back to Devizes around lunchtime to switch drivers.

Our proposed timetable includes seven minute connection times for all trains that it meets. We feel this is a big reason that the service is currently under utilised (too many missed connections put people off). We are happy to continue to work on this timetable should WC inform us of any incorrect assumptions that we have made.

We are also asking for a chance, along with Transition Marlborough, to promote the service. We have attempted to engage with WC on this point before and we'd really like the opportunity to promote a service with good connection times. We feel that the major cuts proposed (which relegates the service as useless for commuters) have been sprung on us without going through a due process of attempting to improve the service.

In summary we are asking that the cut from two buses and three drivers be limited to retaining one bus and two drivers. We feel that this is a fair compromise.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 20/08/2012 17:05

Date: 20-Aug-12 05:05:00 PM
Subject: Downgrading of Hungerford, Kintbury and Bedwyn Stations
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Attachment BTPG_Response_to_Great_Western_ITT.pdf

Dear All,

You are receiving this email because you have previously supported our campaign to resolve the issue of how Hungerford, Kintbury and Bedwyn stations will be served post electrification.

The DfT recently published the Invitation to Tender (ITT) for the Great Western Franchise. This is the document which the four potential franchisees will bid against. Around the time of its publication we were in dialogue with Martin Holt (the DfT's franchise sponsor) who made the following statements, via email:

What I suggest is that you engage with the 4 bidders as they develop their proposals and, of course, with us as we approach the next stage of the process to ensure an equitable result for Bedwyn.

We would expect bidders to propose how best to serve those stations, based on the minimum number of station calls which we have specified based on today's level.

The DfT then published the ITT. This ties our hands behind our backs (in

terms of negotiating with the four bidders) by:

1. Separating the Paddington to Bedwyn service levels into Paddington to Newbury and separately Newbury to Bedwyn. In short this would allow the train operating company to run a diesel shuttle service from Bedwyn to Newbury with no direct services to Paddington.
2. Not mentioning the Paddington to Westbury/Exeter semi fast services that, if all else fails, we hoped would give us our Paddington service with a diesel shuttle to Newbury filling in any gaps.

This is very bad news, and really a copy out by the DfT as they have given the franchise bidders an easy option.

Please find attached BTPG's detailed response to the DfT's ITT. The ITT is at
http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/rail-passenger-franchise-great-western/invitation-to-tender.pdf
<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/rail-passenger-franchise-great-western/invitation-to-tender.pdf> and
http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/rail-passenger-franchise-great-western/a-service-requirement.pdf
<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/rail-passenger-franchise-great-western/a-service-requirement.pdf>

We have been in contact with Richard Benyon (MP for Kintbury and Hungerford) and Claire Perry (MP for Bedwyn). They are being very supportive and are setting up a meeting with the secretary of state. If you would like to lend your support, by writing to Claire or Richard, the address is:

House of Commons

London

SW1A 0AA

Yours sincerely

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 27/08/2012 10:26

Date: 27-Aug-12 10:26:44 AM
Subject: RE: Downgrading of Hungerford, Kintbury and Bedwyn Stations
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All,

Further to our email of the 20th (below) I have been asked for the email addresses of Claire Perry and Richard Benyon (in case you'd like to write to them). They are:

claire.perry.mp@parliament.uk

benyonr@parliament.uk

The Newbury Weekly News's website has the follow article which neatly summarises the situation:

http://www.newburytoday.co.uk/2012/west-berkshire-commuters-fear-for-the-future-of-rail-services

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 26/09/2012 22:09

Date: 26-Sep-12 10:09:43 PM
Subject: Electrification
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All,

Thank you for your continued support.

Below is an email that we received today from the DfT. It's only a small part of what we are looking for (i.e. the retention of all direct Paddington trains). However it is a small step in the right direction.

This evening we had a useful meeting with Hungerford Town Council and a representative from Kintbury Parish Council. They both plan to lobby their MP and the DfT.

Pewsey appear to be forming a campaign group which sounds as if it might be on similar lines to the Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group. We are making tentative arrangements to meet with them to pass on our knowledge.

Previously we thought Pewsey was not going to be hit. But on closer reading of the train service requirements (for the new franchise) Pewsey has been put on a shuttle service with Newbury and Westbury has no mention of a Paddington service at all. Thus the email below is also an improvement for them (but still far from what is needed).

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Martin Holt
Sent: 26 September 2012 12:35
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: RE: Bedwyn situation

Steve

Thanks for the email.

I'm pleased to say that version 2.27 (yes 27) of the TSR now has,

reinstated, a small number of AM and PM peak through services from Kintbury, Bedwyn, Hungerford, Pewsey and Westbury to London Paddington to ensure a level of connectivity between stations on the Berks & Hants line is guaranteed.

Bedwyn still gets a minimum of 1tph to Newbury, a minimum of 12 of which must provide connections onto a London service.

I hope this will go some way to allaying your concerns.

I expect to publish the final TSR very shortly.

Kind regards

Martin

Emailed Newsletter: 07/10/2012 09:28

Date: 07-Oct-12 09:28:32 AM
Subject: FW: Pewsey Train Watch...
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Attachment image001.gif

Dear All,

If you happen to use Pewsey station, or just wish to support them in opposing the loss of their direct services to Paddington, please consider signing their petition at http://www.pewseytrainwatch.co.uk/sign_the_petition.html

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Karl Lloyd [mailto:karl.lloyd@mac]
Sent: 06 October 2012 23:52
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Re: Pewsey Train Watch...

Hello

A big thank you to everyone who turned up at Thursday's meeting. Below is information regarding the PTW website and petition…

Petition...

The PTW petition is now up and running. Please go to our website www.pewseytrainwatch.co.uk <http://pewseytrainwatch.co.uk/> for a link. Please tell everyone you know about the petition.

Downloads...

There are some new downloads on the 'download' page. These are an A4 poster, an A5 leaflet (2 on an A4) and the web address slips we had at the meeting (6 on an A4). These are in pdf form and you can download by

clicking on the icons. Feel free to download, print and distribute as you see fit.

We hope to have the prepared letters and emails up on the download page soon and we'll email when they are ready.

Wiltshire Radio...

On Friday morning following the meeting Steve Smith (who very kindly spoke at the meeting detailing Bedwyn's experience of campaigning for train services), along with Adrian Lyons and Claire Perry MP, took part in a news item that appeared on Wiltshire Radio. Our meeting and general discussion about the threat to rail services featured heavily throughout the Matthew Smith show and there is an edited version of the relevant sections on the PTW site as an audio file on the 'events' page.

The website will be a growing resource so please check back regularly. We will also email news of significant updates. Please tell everyone you know about the website and petition - we need to spread the word as far and as fast as we can.

Cheers

Karl

www.pewseytrainwatch.co.uk <http://pewseytrainwatch.co.uk/>

Emailed Newsletter: 09/10/2012 17:42

Date: 09-Oct-12 05:42:16 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Station - Please write to the minister
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All,

Since my last email I have received a few requests that we set our own petition up. BTPG feels that, for Bedwyn, we are beyond that stage and instead letter writing (by way of protest) to the Department for Transport (DfT) will have a greater impact. The problem is with the DfT as they have produced the Invitation to Tender (ITT) which tells the franchise bidders that they can relegate us to a diesel shuttle service to Newbury.

We feel giving the minister a large post bag, that he is obliged to reply to, is going to have more impact than a simple list of signatories.

The address to write to is:

Rt Hon. Simon Burns MP

Minister of State for Transport

Department for Transport

Great Minster House

33 Horseferry Rd

LONDON SW1P 4DR

Suggested things to state are:

1) We don't accept any reduction in our peak and off peak direct services to Paddington or Reading. Bedwyn has 22/23 weekday calls in each direction at present giving an hourly service for most of the day, with roughly two trains an hour during the peaks. Therefore, any specification which significantly reduces calls or frequency will simply not be acceptable for station users. Of these calls, 12 trains in each direction (just over 50%) run through to and from Paddington.

2) Bedwyn acts as a railhead for Marlborough and a wide surrounding area.

3) 66% of users of Bedwyn station travel to or through Paddington.

4) It's unacceptable to do this to Bedwyn (or station of your preference) when people have built their lives around the direct services.

5) It will hit local economies, communities and house prices.

6) If they do this they'd better build some big car parks at Newbury and Andover and improve the road systems to handle the traffic pulses that train arrivals / departures create. People do not like changing trains and will prefer to make the first leg by car to a station that is direct to Paddington. The stations between Newbury and Westbury currently spread the load.

7) It's way off any green agenda they may have.

8) Why has the DfT removed the perfect solution from the ITT? This was in their previous consultation document where the plan was to run an hourly semi-fast Paddington to Exeter diesel service. This would likely have used the HST stock freed up be electrification of the London / Bristol route. Such a service could call at Paddington, Reading, Newbury, Kintbury, Hungerford, Bedwyn, Pewsey, Westbury, Castle Cary, Taunton, Tiverton Parkway and Exeter. Note this solution is BTPG's preferred solution. If you wish you could request electrification to be continued to Bedwyn or Westbury. However, we feel the HST route is more realistic (because the implementation costs are with the train operator c.f. the DfT) and has less of an environmental impact (overhead gantries and replacement of bridges).

Please pass this on!

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 29/10/2012 18:27

Date: 29-Oct-12 06:27:27 PM
Subject: Rail Electrification and your chance to air your views with Claire Perry
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All,

Claire Perry and Richard Benyon's meeting with the transport minister, scheduled for October 24th was postponed. This is because the minister had to attend an adjournment debate. The meeting is being rescheduled for mid-November. The Ministers office has stated "the franchise process is likely to still be on hold at that time so the delay won't affect the discussion."

In the meantime Claire Perry is trying to attend a meeting that Andrew Murrison (MP for Westbury) has arranged with the Secretary of State.

Claire Perry has offered to meet with us on Friday evening at the station. I have suggested around 1920, platform 1 (westbound) to pick up the 1924 and 1935 arrivals. Will you be on either of those trains (arriving into Bedwyn)? Or could you attend the meeting? Claire is keen to meet with commuters/rail users to hear how the DfTs plan (to put us on a Newbury shuttle service). She is also keen to show she's doing all she can. So please, if you can attend I'd be very grateful.

If so please can you let me have an email address I can contact you on Friday? The reason for this is that Claire's office would like to give warning if, for some reason, Claire couldn't make it.

Best wishes

Steve

Emailed Newsletter: 31/10/2012 12:48

Date: 31-Oct-12 12:48:35 PM
Subject: Claire Perry to visit Bedwyn Station - Revised Time
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Attachment Trains 31 October.pdf

Hello All,

The timing of Claire's visit, to Bedwyn Station this Friday, has been revised to 5.30PM.

Attached is the news release from Claire's office.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: REAY, Tamara [mailto:tamara.reay@parliament.uk]
Sent: 31 October 2012 12:34
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: FW: Claire Perry MP to Meet with Local Rail Users

Dear Steve and Karl

Please find attached a press release regarding Claire dropping into Pewsey and Bedwyn Stations this Friday. Would you be good enough to forward this to your members please.

Karl – as you'll see we still have the meeting in from 9.30 at Pewsey Children's Centre

Steve – I'm sorry that the times have changed slightly for Bedwyn from that originally discussed.

Please give me a call if you have any queries.

Emailed Newsletter: 02/11/2012 18:49

Date: 02-Nov-12 06:49:11 PM
Subject: Meeting with Claire Perry
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All,

A big thank you to everybody that was able to attend the meeting at Bedwyn station this evening.

Apologies for the change of time and the platform switch. We made it clear to Claire that the lack of commuters present was due to the revised timing.

Claire was very reassuring and is actively trying to resolve the issue. She's very aware that any cuts to direct services (to Paddington or Reading) are not acceptable. Amongst other anecdotal stories we made it clear that the hourly Exeter semi-fasts, being removed from the ITT by the DfT, make no sense when it would have provided an adequate service. We asked her to press the DfT to do the decent thing and re-instate the requirement to run an hourly Exeter semi-fast. We pointed out that this would make faster journey times for Plymouth passengers, resolve all our problems and act as a suitable stop-gap until the line is fully electrified.

Claire, Richard Benyon and Andrew Murrison have a meeting with the Dft on the 13th of November. She has asked for comments, evidence and anecdotal stories in advance. I know I've asked you to write before, and recently to Simon Burns. I have to admit we are 'winging this' so now it means I have to ask for you to write again. Claire is good with email communication so no need for paper, envelopes and stamps this time. The address is claire.perry.mp@parliament.uk Even if you wrote to Simon Burns recently please can I ask you to write again.

What we need is personal evidence. How the cuts (to a diesel shuttle service to Newbury) will affect you. This can include your rail journeys, your house price fears, fears on the local economy etc. Does your business depend on the rail service etc etc? Quite simply please write to Claire on how it'll impact upon you or your business.

Also if you have access to other email lists please pass this email on.

Please do act.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 14/11/2012 20:15

Date: 14-Nov-12 08:15:43 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Update
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hi All,

Apologies for a second email but we wanted to update you on further developments today.

Richard Benyon (MP for Kintbury and Hungerford)'s office received the email (below) today. This spells out the process of the electrification investigation.

Myself, Bill Wells, Transition Marlborough and Pewsey Train Watch met with Claire Perry MP this evening. We went through a number of points, particularly:

1) The need for a plan B should they decide that it is not economically viable to extend the electrification. In particular this includes the Paddington/Exeter hourly semi-fasts as a means to replace the current service. Claire was very onboard with this and knows this needs pursuing.

2) The need to get direct services back in the Train Service Requirement (TSR). Claire got an assurance, from the DfT, that the recent promise of two trains up, and two trains back, during the peaks is now mandatory. i.e. we can now assume that the worst case scenario is a diesel shuttle to Newbury plus two morning direct peak trains to Paddington and two back in the evening peak. She is aware that we need more in the TSR (i.e. the current level of service) for rail users to feel settled.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Bob Longworth
Sent: 14 November 2012 16:05
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Berks and Hants Line Electrification Investigation

Dear Michele

I am writing to update you on our actions following yesterday's meeting with the Minister of State Simon Burns MP on the Great Western Rail

Franchise and electrification of the Berks and Hants Line west of Newbury.

We are initiating a study into the benefits of electrification of the line west of Newbury and intend to break that down into 4 stages:

1. From Newbury to Bedwyn
2. Extending from Bedwyn to Westbury – passenger use
3. Extending from Bedwyn to Westbury with connections for freight use
4. The diversionary routes through Trowbridge to Bath

We will need to appoint external resources to help us with this work, and instruct Network Rail to produce high level cost estimates for electrification work. We have started that process.

Martin Holt, Great Western Franchise Sponsor will be the lead contact with Members for this work.

As discussed, I would be grateful if you could forward this e-mail onto Claire Perry MP and Dr Andrew Murrison MP's offices.

In the meantime, if you have any further questions or queries, please call.

Kind regards

Bob

Bob Longworth

DfT Rail Franchise Policy

Emailed Newsletter: 07/01/2013 20:25

Date: 07-Jan-13 08:25:50 PM
Subject: Poor Rail Service
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All,

I had the opportunity to speak to some of you at Bedwyn station this morning. What you informed me backs up my own experiences and other emails of complaint Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group have recently received. In short the service is below standard with the following key area of concern:

* Overrunning engineering works causing delays/cancellations to morning services.
* Missed connections at Newbury during the evening peak.
* Short notice cancellations whereby FGW terminate a Bedwyn bound service at Newbury and send it off on time from Newbury. This leaves Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn passengers stranded.
* General late running of services.
* Poor information in times of disruption.

Can we ask you to take a low threshold to complaining to FGW? The more

we complain the more likely we will be listened to.

The email address to write to is: fgwfeedback@firstgroup

Further contact details are as follows:

Customer services team

First Great Western

Freepost SWB40576

Plymouth

PL4 6ZZ

08457 000 125

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 28/01/2013 17:29

Date: 28-Jan-13 05:29:31 PM
Subject: e-petition
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Hungerford Town Council has set up an e-petition stating "We the undersigned petition the DfT to retain all the current direct services between Bedwyn, Hungerford, Kintbury to Reading and London Paddington."

If you wish to sign it it's at:

http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/45021

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 08/02/2013 21:32

Date: 08-Feb-13 09:32:24 PM
Subject: FW: Bedwyn bus service changes
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Attachment Bedwynlink v2 summary.pdf
Attachment Bedwyn-new-v2.pdf

Hi All,

You are receiving this email because you kindly responded to the bus

consultation.

The email below (and the attachments) are Wiltshire Council's response to the consultation.

On the whole it's good news. Below is a summary of the 10 objectives as set out in "Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group – Bus Consultation Response". These 10 objectives were based on the feedback you gave us. As you can see only one item falls below the requirement. We'll ask if anything can be done about that. Please let me have any other thoughts ASAP.

Objective	**Description**	**Outcome**
1	To enhance the Bedwyn Rail Link such that users have a good feeling that they will meet their connection. BTPG is sure that a lot of people have been driven away from the rail link by poor connectivity and unreliability. BTPG feel that for any train met or served the bus needs to arrive 7 minutes before any train departure and depart 7 minutes after any train arrival.	Partially. Not all meet the 7 minute target
2	To accept that only one bus will be available and target a number of train connections well c.f. a lot of trains not so well.	Exceeded
3	To meet the commitments of the school runs.	Met
4	To meet the needs of rail commuters.	Met
5	To tie in with connections to and from Swindon for teenagers attending college and those working in Swindon.	Met
6	A number of retired and non driving residents depend on the buses from Great Bedwyn to Marlborough. Typically they could cope with a two hourly service with the core hours being between 0930 (Bedwyn departure) and 1530 (return).	Met
7	There needs to be a morning bus from Great Bedwyn to Hungerford and a return giving at least 70 minutes in the town.	Met
8	Children require a bus for returning after school clubs in Marlborough. They are namely the weekday service no 20 at 1620, 1730 and 1830.	Met

9	There needs to be a bus from Great Bedwyn to Marlborough for primary school children's after school activities (e.g. swimming pool).	Met
10	A bus to serve the 1332 / 1330 HST trains in / out of the village. Two HSTs stop in the village (one going east, the other west) within two minutes of one another. One bus could meet four train journey opportunities.	Met

Best wishes

Steve

From: White, Ian [mailto:ian.white@wiltshire]
Sent: 08 February 2013 17:02
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Bedwyn bus service changes

Dear Steve,

Following your detailed and helpful response to the consultation last year about changes to the Bedwyn bus service, and following the meeting we attended at the time in Marlborough Town Hall, I am writing to give you advance notice of the decision that we intend to take. I have also copied this to Sam Page of Transition Marlborough and to Andrew Saunders from First Great Western.

Over the past few months we have looked carefully at all the responses that were submitted, and at the alternative timetables suggested by yourselves and others. As a result of this, and by taking advantage of an opportunity that has arisen to link the service to another contract, we have produced a revised timetable which we hope addresses as many of the points raised by the consultation as possible within the resources available;

* The revised timetable is loosely based on consultation timetable A as this was the one which consultees indicated a slight preference for. However there have been numerous minor revisions to it to try and incorporate as many of the requests as possible. A Saturday timetable has now been included which is broadly similar to that operated on weekdays.

* Two buses will continue to be used to operate these services rather than just one as originally proposed However, one of the buses will also be used to operate journeys on other services, most of which are on a contract that Wilts & Dorset have recently decided to surrender.

* Train connections have been improved as much as possible but it has not been feasible to provide a connection with the 0938 departure from Bedwyn. However, it will be possible to connect with this train at Hungerford, albeit with a 30 minute wait.

* Early evening buses have been reinstated on a one year "use it or lose" it experimental basis.

* To avoid the need for buses to reverse at Bedwyn Station, most off-peak buses will operate on a one way loop around Great Bedwyn, running from the High Street via Browns Lane, Wansdyke Road, Farm Lane and the Knapp to the Station and back to the High Street.

* Both buses will operate journeys at approx 1535 to Marlborough to Bedwyn on weekdays, to resolve the overloading problems that sometimes occur on these journeys on schooldays

The revised arrangements will allow us to make a (reduced) saving, but hopefully with less impact. Thank you for your input which has helped us with this.

I have also noted your offer to help publicise the revised service (with help from Transition Marlborough and First Great Western), and would like to take you up on this. We would be pleased to meet and discuss how together we can help to make people aware of what is available, so that we can increase use of the service and maximise the chances of it being sustainable in the long term. If you can provide some possible dates and a venue in Marlborough we would be pleased to discuss this further.

In the meantime I will be recommending the new timetable to our cabinet member for approval – I will let you have a copy of the Decision Report (including a summary of the consultation responses) shortly. I will also be writing in the near future to others who responded to the consultation to let them know the outcome, before the intended introduction of the new service on 20 April.

Ian White

Head of Service - Passenger Transport

Wiltshire Council

Passenger Transport Unit

County Hall

Bythesea Road

Trowbridge

Wiltshire BA14 8JN

Tel: 01225 713322

Email: ian.white@wiltshire <mailto:ian.white@wiltshire >

Emailed Newsletter: 11/03/2013 18:40

Date: 11-Mar-13 06:40:14 PM
Subject: Revised Train Times from Bedwyn
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hi All,

Easter Week

Train times from March 28th to April 7th (Easter) are completely revised due to major engineering works at Reading. This will include us having a regular westbound service for much of that period (our Turbo trains will run to Westbury). Please check online for both eastbound and westbound travel – or pickup a copy of the revisions from the Post Office or Stores. London commuters please note that for the four working days of this period (April 2nd to 5th inclusive) there will only be one direct Paddington train in either direction. This departs Bedwyn at 0643 and Paddington at 1800. Hungerford gets an extra in each direction at 0640 and 1703.

Summer Timetable

From May 20th there is to be an adjustment to two of our early weekday Paddington trains:

The 0555 from Bedwyn will now depart at 0540 (arriving 0701)

The 0647 from Bedwyn will now depart at 0645 (arriving 0809)

Regards

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 19/03/2013 18:26

Date: 19-Mar-13 06:26:55 PM
Subject: Passenger Survey...
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

URGENT! Closing date 9am Sunday 24th.

GREAT WESTERN LINE ELECTRIFICATION Passenger Survey.

The Department for Transport are currently evaluating the economic case for extending planned Great Western Line electrification beyond the currently proposed cut-off point of Newbury. Options being considered take electrification to Bedwyn, as far as Pewsey or all the way to Westbury. Electrification will lead to improved rail services.

There is a small window of opportunity to contribute to the evaluation process. Pewsey Train Watch have put together a survey that attempts to quantify the value that the trains contribute to local economies served by Kintbury, Hungerford, Bedwyn, Pewsey and Westbury stations. Please take this opportunity to help ensure your county gets the rail services it deserves by completing the survey. Please tell others who are also affected by this issue about this survey.

Please complete the survey at…
http://esurv.org/online-survey.php?surveyID=OLEHMM_4d36d440&u=great_western_electrificatio_survey

Closing date for survey 9am Sunday 24th.

Note, all submissions are anonymous and Pewsey Train Watch will not store or hold any personal information related to individual respondents. Completing the survey should take no more than two minutes.

For further information please visit…
http://pewseytrainwatch.co.uk/events.html

Thank you

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 10/04/2013 16:26

Date: 10-Apr-13 04:26:15 PM
Subject: Changes to train service
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hi All,

Network Rail will be repairing bridges and relaying track between Taunton and Castle Cary from 15 April to 2 May. During this period FGW will not be able to offer rail services between these stations from Monday to Thursday.

It appears that this will cause a few minor changes to the trains running to Bedwyn and other stations between Kintbury and Pewsey. It appears that the commuter train times remain the same but it throws up some interesting things like the 1106 from Paddington will call at Bedwyn with a journey time of just 55 minutes! It also appears that we will have more of a westbound service during this period too.

Please check your train times.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 11/04/2013 13:13

Date: 11-Apr-13 01:13:40 PM
Subject: FW: Changes to train service
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hi All,

R.e. my email of yesterday. Please find below an email I have received. However, when I check online the 1945, from Paddington, is shown as running this Monday. But there again it also shows two eastbound trains departing Bedwyn at 1238 - this will be an interesting event.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Gordon Edwards (TWSW) [mailto:travelwatch.southwest@ipts]
Sent: 11 April 2013 09:02
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: RE: Changes to train service

Steve,

Greetings! There are significant changes for evening peak commuters from London Paddington and Reading to Bedwyn on Monday to Thursday from Monday 15 April 2013 to Thursday 2 May 2013 inclusive, as follows:-

i) 1636hrs London Paddington to Newbury train is withdrawn, so no connection into the 1724hrs Newbury to Bedwyn service

ii) 1903hrs London Paddington to Newbury train is withdrawn, so no connection into the 1956hrs Newbury to Bedwyn service

i) 1945hrs London Paddington to Newbury train is withdrawn, so no connection into the 2033hrs Newbury to Bedwyn service

First Great Western have agreed to a request from TravelWatch SouthWest to display posters at all railway stations between Pewsey and Reading West showing the full timetable for the twelve days of disruption.

With best wishes, Gordon.

Gordon Edwards

Director and Company Secretary

TravelWatch SouthWest CIC

West House, Freshford, Bath BA2 7WA

Telephone: 012-2572-2269

Mobile: 079-6796-6929

Email: travelwatch.southwest@ipts

Emailed Newsletter: 11/04/2013 14:00

Date: 11-Apr-13 02:00:35 PM
Subject: FW: FW: Changes to train service
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hi All,

Here hopefully is the actual picture. The 1945 will be running from Paddington. Please see the email below, from Jane Jones, and the attached.

Best wishes

Steve Smith
Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Jane.Jones@firstgroup [mailto:Jane.Jones@firstgroup]
Sent: 11 April 2013 13:31
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Re: FW: Changes to train service

Hi Steve

As per my email yesterday - the 1945 has been restored to the timetable. This was done at short notice and was not on the original plan. Attached is now the revised plan.

There is one further addition agreed this afternoon. The 1500 from Paddington will now connect with a bus service at Swindon for Pewsey.

Full details will be going up on the website, and the poster below will be at stations later today or tomorrow.

I know that Sue Evans is contacting Gordon to update him.

Best wishes

Jane

Jane Jones | External Relations Manager | First Great Western

Emailed Newsletter: 24/05/2013 19:30

Date: 24-May-13 07:30:43 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All,

On Wednesday the passenger group, and other interested parties, met with the DfT and ARUP (the consultants appointed by the DfT to investigate bringing electrification beyond Newbury). The purpose of the meeting was for ARUP to present their draft report.

ARUP (rail consultants) were appointed to look into the Benefits Cost Ratio (BCR) of four options. For an option to be feasible the BCR has to be greater than 2.0. This relates to getting double the cost of investment back over a period of 60 years.

Option 1: Continue electrification beyond Newbury to Bedwyn

BCR 2.58

Option 2: Continue electrification beyond Newbury to Westbury

BCR 0.31

Option 3: Continue electrification beyond Newbury to Westbury and the Mendip Quarries

BCR 0.23

Option 4: Continue electrification beyond Newbury to Westbury and onto Batheaston Junction

BCR 0.21

Option 2 is surprisingly low and it turns out that the DfT instructed ARUP to do the Westbury study on a comparison with the existing timetable (i.e. Westbury and Pewsey retaining stops on the long-haul diesel trains – currently the HST rolling stock). This is in contrast to option 1 which was made on the comparison of the results of electrifying only to Newbury (i.e. Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury being on a diesel shuttle service to Newbury).

In conclusion the likely scenario is that Pewsey and Westbury will stay as they are (i.e. direct diesel Reading/Paddington services) and Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn will be electrified. The timing is a worry as currently there is no spare money for electrifying to Bedwyn. Thus electrification to Bedwyn might not happen until the next period (2019 to 2024). This gives cause for concern in how Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn will be served between 2016 (when electrification comes to Newbury) and 2019 (or later). I understand that Claire Perry and Richard Benyon will be raising this.

From the Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group's point of view our campaign has always been to maintain our direct services to Reading and London Paddington. Our campaign was always based on using diesel stock to form an hourly Paddington to Westbury service calling at Reading, Theale, Thatcham, Newbury, Kintbury, Hungerford, Bedwyn, Pewsey and Westbury. We never wanted to be the ones that were seen to bring overhead gantries and replacement rail bridges through an AONB. However, electrification now appears to be the only deal on the table to save our through services.

In terms of the parking issue at Bedwyn what is being proposed will not alter the frequency of trains (and calling patterns) of the current situation. Therefore we don't envisage an increase in the Bedwyn parking issue as a result of electrification.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 19/08/2013 15:01

Date: 19-Aug-13 03:01:51 PM
Subject: Poor Service
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

We understand that the 0540 from Bedwyn is often cancelled and FGW still frequently cancel services running on to Bedwyn to allow them to depart from Newbury on time.

If this happens to you please complain to: fgwfeedback@firstgroup

The more people that complain the more likely it is that something will get done.

Many thanks

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 06/10/2013 12:37

Date: 06-Oct-13 12:37:16 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains - Christmas Disruption
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Christmas Disruption

* There will be rail replacement buses operating between Reading/Reading West and Theale from Friday 27 to Monday 30 December. On every day except Sunday, customers wishing to continue their journey to Newbury/Bedwyn will be served by a train every hour from Theale
* On Sunday 29 December, there will be an hourly rail replacement bus from Reading/Reading West to Theale. From Theale, there will be a two hourly service to Newbury (calling at all stations) with alternate trains going to Bedwyn (calling at Thatcham, Newbury then all stations to Bedwyn)
* On Tuesday 31 December and Wednesday 1 January 2014 there will be two trains per hour between Reading and Newbury. Trains continue hourly from Newbury to Bedwyn

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 21/11/2013 12:40

Date: 21-Nov-13 12:40:29 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hi All,

Changes In The Passenger Group

There's a rumour circulating that I have resigned from the passenger group. This is not so though I have reduced my duties. Bill Wells has taken over the day to day running and is now the main contact on info@bedwyntrains

I'm still involved with FGW service level complaints, maintaining the website, promoting the bus service and maintaining the notice boards at the station and pocket timetable distribution.

We are looking for some extra help. One role available is to report station faults, to request station improvements and to arrange the annual station cleanup day. The role will involve keeping an eye on the station, liaising with the station manager at Newbury to resolve faults and campaigning for station improvements. The list of jobs currently includes: Repainting of the yellow line on the up platform, a new shelter for the up platform, replacement of confusing signage r.e. trains going west. The passengers group's motto is "polite and persistent" and we'd like to continue on that theme. If you are interested then please email Bill Wells on info@bedwyntrains

Christmas Disruption

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* On Tuesday 31 December and Wednesday 1 January 2014 there will be two trains per hour between Reading and Newbury. Trains continue hourly from Newbury to Bedwyn

Great Western Franchise

The franchise, which First Great Western has with the DfT, has now been extended to 20th September 2015. This gives us a bit of breathing space, when the new franchise bidders are announced Bill Wells plans to speak with each of them regarding our future services.

Direct Services to Reading and Paddington

Whatever happens with electrification (whether it's done at the same time as Newbury or later) we will make keeping our direct Reading and Paddington services our primary aim. The MPs Claire Perry and Richard Benyon are fully onboard with regards to maintaining continuity of services.

Poor Performance

Please email me with any complaints which involve delays, cancellations and poor station screen information. The more we can feed FGW with the better.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 30/11/2013 15:59

Date: 30-Nov-13 03:59:19 PM
Subject: FW: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - Escalation
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hi All,

Below is a response we have had from FGW r.e. the recent poor performance.

Regards

Steve

From: Jason.Ness@firstgroup [mailto:Jason.Ness@firstgroup]
Sent: 29 November 2013 17:36
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Re: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - Escalation

Steve

Thank you for your recent emails and I am sorry for the delay in getting back to you. We will be responding to everyone cc'd individually as we've received contact direct, but I just wanted to get an response out to let you know we were on the case and that these are not being ignored.

We are all very aware of our recent performance on this line and agree it has been far from acceptable. The issues, in the main, have been related to the infrastructure. There have been far too many track and signalling problems along with a number of engineering work over-runs. The impact on our customers and our business has been made very clear to Network Rail. They have put together an action plan detailing the key issues and their proposals and we are keen to work with them to ensure we see a significant improvement.

I know the issue of reliable information continues to be a source of frustration as does the lack of contingencies. We do face constraints in this area as we've discussed before but I will continue to raise any issues with our Control Team and Customer Information Manager to look at how we manage when things go wrong and how we can do better.

The plan for our fares in January has yet to be finalised but we should be ready to make an announcement in the early part of December. I appreciate why many have called for a price freeze given our recent performance but we have fares and compensation apart. The arrangement we have for compensating Season Ticket holders in the form of a renewal discount still stands but given the number of problems we've seen on this line, I have requested customer details from our Season Ticket records so we can extend a tangible apology to all Bedwyn Kintbury and Hungerford customers via some additional rail travel vouchers as a gesture of goodwill.

Thank you again for your emails and for you patience.

Kind regards

Jason Ness| Customer Relations Team Manager | First Great Western
Customer Services | FREEPOST | SWB 40576 | Plymouth | PL4 6ZZ
e: jason.ness@firstgroup | m: 07718861971 : t: 0762571

This Christmas we are working with Network Rail to progress some of the key improvements projects that will be completed over the next few years. As a consequence there will be significant alterations to services during Christmas 2013, from Friday 27th December until Monday 6th January. Please check www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/contents/travel-during-christmasfor further information

First Greater Western Limited | Registered in England and Wales number 05113733
Registered office: Milford House, 1 Milford Street, Swindon SN1 1HL

Emailed Newsletter: 03/12/2013 18:26

Date: 03-Dec-13 06:26:15 PM
Subject: Christmas Train Timetable Changes
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All,

We have received a number of printed copies of the revised timetable for 24th December to 5th January inclusive.

If you have a Great Bedwyn address and would like a copy through your letter box then please reply to me (steve@meip)

Otherwise, from Thursday, we'll be putting copies in The Stores.

Regards

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 12/12/2013 20:31

Date: 12-Dec-13 08:31:29 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - Help required
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hi All,

A meeting has been arranged, by Claire Perry's office, on Thursday 19 December at 9.30am with representatives from FGW & Network Rail to discuss recent performance issues and over runs. BTPG have been invited to send a representative or two. It's not a public meeting as such, just an opportunity to discuss current issues. It is taking place in the Magistrates Room at Hungerford Town Hall.

Unfortunately neither I nor Bill Wells can attend. I have a business meeting in London that day that I can't rearrange and Bill is already representing the passenger group at a Network Rail Western Route Study

Wider Stakeholders Briefing.

So we need a representative to attend the meeting as it's going to look bad if the BTPG do not show up. Please can you help?

The brief will be:

To attend the meeting and represent the passengers using Bedwyn station with regards to the recent poor performance. In particular (i) the 0540 being often delayed or cancelled (ii) missed connections at Newbury (iii) FGW's modus operandi of terminating Bedwyn trains at Newbury so they can set back off from Newbury (towards Reading) on time. This latter point, when it occurs, reduces us to a two hour service and there's never the offer of taxis or bus replacement as passengers are left stranded (iv) poor information when problems do occur

Please reply to this email if you feel you could attend on behalf of the passenger group.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 20/12/2013 15:17

Date: 20-Dec-13 03:17:45 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - Meeting with FGW and Network Rail r.e. Poor Performance
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Many thanks to James Dewhurst, Nic Coome and Nick Davidge who represented the passenger group at Thursday's meeting with FGW and Network Rail relating to the poor performance of late.

James has reported back with:

Yesterday was useful, probably more so for FGW than for us.

The passenger representatives put their case over quietly but firmly in front of representatives from Richard Benyon and Claire Perry's offices to FGW and Network Rail staff.

The clear message that was put across to them was the recent performance was unacceptable - this they acknowledged. It was noted that we had seen an improvement in the very short term in the early morning service.

The second point made was the totally ineffectual way in which FGW handled whatever information they had about their trains. Whether it was via staff or platform information systems , it was inaccurate or totally absent, especially when things went wrong. This either did not allow for passengers to put together workable solutions or left them very little time to do so. This was the case in the morning and frequently in the evening. FGW said they were close to installing new software that would

make tracking the whereabouts of trains more accurate. Delivery date of this was unknown. It was pointed out that those with cars were frequently carrying other passengers to Newbury in order for them to carry on their journey or back home in the evening. It was made clear that where passengers were filling in for FGW's failings that they would seek compensation for fuel and parking. It was also made clear that many of these people were local tradespeople who walked to the station and were not in a position to supply their own solution. Interestingly, FGW seemed happy to accept this. This was because they admitted that they were not in a position to supply alternative transport at that time in the morning.

The issue of evening trains and onward connection to the local service from Newbury was also raised. Again, the point was made that the connecting service was vital and that FGW understood the need for a timely replacement solution was provided when the connection was missed. The same point about us not all being wealthy businessmen and able to afford taxis was made, that was if there was an available taxi anyway.

We went on to discuss the electrification issue and the importance of maintaining a through service to and from Paddington to Bedwyn. Electrification is really off the table as a debating point because of franchise uncertainty and when/if electricification goes through to Bedwyn. I honestly think that no one knows what to expect.
On the through service though, the point was made that many had no alternative but to take an early train. Some used the time for sleep others for work. Disembarking at Reading, leaving a seat, to embark on a packed 125 would be very poor development and a sign of marginalising the spur.

With Nic adding:

This is an excellent summary of the meeting.

One additional point concerned the Information Boards at stations. As James says, there is a problem with the software driving the display boards, although we were told that it is possible to override it manually. We were promised an investigation to find out why manual interventions were made so rarely.

We were also promised improved information from drivers on the local trains when disruption occurs.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 16/02/2014 18:38

Date: 16-Feb-14 06:38:11 PM
Subject: FW: FIRST GREAT WESTERN and NETWORK RAIL JOINT MEDIA RELEASE - SUNDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2014
To:

Hi All,

Please see the email, below.

Note all our Bedwyn trains tomorrow terminate at Reading. So you'll still have to change in both directions. Though the 0734 from Hungerford is direct to Paddington and can be connected with by the 0707 off Bedwyn.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Gordon Edwards (TWSW) [mailto:travelwatch.southwest@ipts]
Sent: 16 February 2014 16:03
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: FIRST GREAT WESTERN and NETWORK RAIL JOINT MEDIA RELEASE - SUNDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2014

MAJORITY OF SERVICES TO BE RESTORED FROM PADDINGTON
16 February 2014

First Great Western (FGW) and Network Rail plan to restore the majority of services into and out of London Paddington from Monday (17th February) <x-apple-data-detectors://3> .

Network Rail's engineering and maintenance teams have been working tirelessly to try and solve the problems caused by the flooding at Maidenhead that had crippled the normal signalling system reducing service to just 20% of normal. Through a series of innovative engineering solutions, from start of service on Monday, in excess of 75% of normal services will be running.

FGW is planning to run a near normal service on high speed routes into and out of London on Monday with the exception of the route closures at Dawlish, and between Bridgwater and Taunton. Buses will run on those routes that are closed.

Local services will also be running between Reading and London on Monday, although because of the flooding affecting signalling equipment near Maidenhead, there will be a small number of trains that we won't be able to run.

Mark Hopwood, First Great Western managing director, said: "This is great news for our passengers, who have faced a very difficult period of travel. We are finalising a new amended timetable, which we will publish through our online systems later today. To help customers who postponed journeys last week, ticket restrictions remain lifted until Monday <x-apple-data-detectors://2> . Customers are strongly advised to check our website before setting off in the morning."

Patrick Hallgate, Network Rail's route managing director, said: "My team have worked night and day to try and improve the situation for passengers using this route. Our signalling equipment is under several feet of floodwater but with some innovative thinking a temporary system has been put in place that should see us through the next few weeks

until the water recedes.

"We continue to work on further fixes that may further improve capacity through this section next week."
Robin Gisby, Network Rail's managing director of operations added:

"Passengers have been tremendously understanding during a period of extraordinary weather that has had a major impact on rail services in some areas.

"Services are returning to normal, but for some, especially in the far west where parts of the railway have been destroyed, it will be a number of weeks yet until we are able to offer the level and standard of service people have rightly come to expect."

Emailed Newsletter: 19/02/2014 18:26

Date: 19-Feb-14 06:26:59 PM
Subject: Train Performance
To:

Hi All,

A website has recently been launched that allows users to check the historic performance of their trains. This was created using Network Rail data feeds under licence. It allows people to check performance of their trains down to individual services over a specified time period. The tool can be found at www.recenttraintimes.co.uk <http://www.recenttraintimes.co.uk/>

The good thing is that you can save the search address and click on it later to keep an eye on performance. E.g the following shows how bad it has been recently:

http://recenttraintimes.co.uk/Home/Search?Op=Srch&Fr=Bedwyn+%28BDW%29&To=Paddington+%28PAD%29&TimTyp=A&TimDay=A&Days=Wk&TimPer=7d&dtFr=12%2F02%2F2014&dtTo=19%2F02%2F2014&ShwTim=AvO&TOC=All&ArrSta=5&MetAvg=Mea&MetSpr=RT&MxScDu=&MxSvAg=7&MnScCt=2&MxArCl=5

This will allow us to get accurate stats when we complain to FGW. Therefore if you feel a particular train is bad then please use this to gather stats and either complain directly to FGW or via the Passenger Group.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 09/04/2014 18:00

Date: 09-Apr-14 06:00:56 PM
Subject: Overcharging on the 0841 from Bedwyn
To:

Hello All,

FGW have taken on a number of new ticket sellers who are under the impression that the 0841 is a full fare train. Please stand your ground and insist that they sell you the correct, cheaper, ticket.

I have reported the problem to FGW and they agree that the ticket sellers are in the wrong. However, the ticket sellers claim that they have been trained to always sell the most expensive ticket. So until the problem is resolved please be ready to stand your ground and know the price you should be paying.

We now have a ticket machine and a new shelter (plus a new bicycle shelter for those so inclined). Please allow yourself a little more time to purchase a ticket from the machine. It only takes cards, no cash.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 29/05/2014 16:33

Date: 29-May-14 04:33:24 PM
Subject: Marlborough Railway
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Transition Marlborough have asked us to pass on the following link:
http://www.transitionmarlborough.org/Support+the+Marlborough+Rail+Link

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 11/06/2014 15:42

Date: 11-Jun-14 03:42:38 PM
Subject: FW: August work to the Great Western
To:

FYI

From: Jane.Jones@firstgroup [mailto:Jane.Jones@firstgroup] On Behalf Of Sue.Evans@FirstGroup
Sent: 04 June 2014 16:15
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: August work to the Great Western

Improvement Work to the Great Western

We promised to give you early warning if there were to be any rail improvement works that would affect rail services in your area.

On the first weekend in August (2ndand 3rd) Network Rail will be carrying out important signalling work between Swindon and Didcot. This will reduce delays caused by signal failures and will prepare the line for electrification. It is therefore essential work.

With the line closed however services between London and the South Cotswolds, London and Bristol and London and South Wales will be affected.

Trains between Paddington and Bristol Temple Meads and Paddington and South Wales will be diverted. This will mean extended journey times and fewer services.

The line closure means we cannot call trains between Didcot Parkway and Swindon, we will therefore operate a regular coach service between Reading and Swindon and Didcot Parkway and Swindon.

There will be further work at the end of August (19-24 August 2014) as Network Rail complete work to redouble the line between Swindon and Kemble. This will mean:

- 19 to 22 August the line between Swindon and Gloucester will be closed

- 23 to 24 August lines between Didcot Parkway and Swindon, Swindon and Chippenham, Swindon and Bristol Parkway will all be closed.

Direct trains will run between London Paddington/Reading and Bath, Bristol and South Wales via alternative routes with extended journey times.

A regular coach service will operate between Reading/Didcot Parkway and Swindon/Bath/Chippenham and Bristol Parkway.

For the weekend of 23-24 August an hourly train service will run between Swindon and Gloucester.

Another point to note is that due to diverted train paths, on Saturday 2 and Saturday 23 August, Kennet Valley services will be affected: Fast Paddington/Reading to Bedwyn services will not call at Thatcham and Theale, but the stations will be served by local Reading to Newbury trains.

We have a full communications plan in place to alert customers to the amended timetable. This includes information on a dedicated page on our website which is available now on www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/August2014 <http://www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/August2014> .

Please feel free to share the link, and do please contact me if you have any questions about the line closure, or the amended train plan.

These works are a vital step in electrifying the railway, allowing us to run the new electric trains starting from 2017. They will also improve day to day performance.

That said, we appreciate they will be inconvenient for our customers and we will do all we can to minimise the disruption and make sure they are fully informed well in advance of the work.

Best wishes,

Sue

Sue Evans | Director of Communications | First Great Western

Emailed Newsletter: 20/06/2014 12:57

Date: 20-Jun-14 12:57:31 PM
Subject: Important Email for users of Bedwyn Station (or Hungerford or Kintbury)
To:

Dear All,

The DfT have produced a document describing proposals for the next franchise of the Great Western Region – this is the five year period from September 2015. The document can be read on the following link: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/309926/gw-consultation-document.pdf searching for the word 'Bedwyn' can speed up your reading time! :-)

The passenger group has responded with the attached document. To save you a 'big read' the summary of the situation is:

1) At present there is no money to wire further than Newbury, even though the economic case for electrifying to Bedwyn has been established.

2) Therefore the consultation document assumes diesel beyond Newbury.

3) Our response (attached) outlines the ways of ensuring that we retain direct Paddington via diesel services.

If you are able please reply to the consultation, gwconsultation@dft.gsi , before June 26th. The most important point to respond to is point 11 from page 35:

11. After the electrification to Newbury, expected in 2016 would passengers' needs be best served by a diesel service from Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury to Newbury connecting into a fast service to London Paddington, or a diesel stopping service from Bedwyn to Reading connecting to a fast service from Reading to London Paddington, or other options? The former would give faster journey times to London but add a change at Newbury for passengers to Reading.

Please state why this is not an option!

It's not actually as gloomy as it might appear. On June 17th Bill Wells, on behalf of the Passenger Group, attended a meeting with the Department for Transport, First Great Western, Network Rail and representatives from Claire Perry and Richard Benyon. We were heartened by the outcome of the meeting where we et al made it clear that diesel shuttles to Newbury were not an option. However, as nothing has been promised we can only go on what the general discussion was between the parties involved and report that the most likely outcome will be as follows:

1. An hourly diesel service between Paddington and Westbury (or Exeter) calling at Reading, Newbury, Kintbury, Hungerford, Bedwyn and

Pewsey with peak services also calling at Thatcham and Theale.
2. Some turbo services between Bedwyn and Newbury to bolster things up to give us the half hourly peak service.

Kind Regards

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 20/07/2014 21:06

Date: 20-Jul-14 09:06:53 PM
Subject: Our MP, Claire Perry to visit Bedwyn Station
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Claire Perry will be at Bedwyn Station 6.30-7.30am on Wednesday 23rd to address any concerns.

The main one of course is retaining our direct services to Paddington.

If you normally catch the 0646 perhaps come a little earlier to ask a question or two.

Kind Regards

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 28/08/2014 20:54

Date: 28-Aug-14 08:54:05 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To:

Hello All,

Poor Performance

Our MP, Claire Perry has received the following letter from Mark Hopwood, Managing Director First Great Western, regarding recent poor performance http://www.claireperry.org.uk/downloads/mark-hopwood.pdf

Fare Rises in January

With a 3.5% increase in fares from this January we have raised with Claire Perry the irony of the above inflation increase being used to fund rail improvements that might very well disenfranchise Bedwyn Station once electrification is installed as far as Newbury. We continue to press for a clear resolution as to how Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn will be served post electrification. The passenger group's favoured solution is for the freed up HST trains (or similar) to provide an hourly Paddington to Westbury service.

Vandalism to Cars at the Station

There have been a number of incidents over the last few years with the most recent this week with a car being badly keyed. Certain residents of The Knapp (where the station is) have been anti rail users parking for a number of years. Although we cannot link the two it has been shown that cars are safe from vandalism if not (i) parked in a disabled bay (ii) parked on a white line (iii) parked in one of the two closes.

Regards

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 17/10/2014 22:18

From: Steve Smith [mailto:]
Sent: Friday, October 17, 2014 22:18
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Call to Retain Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury's Direct Hourly Trains To London

Dear All,

Network Rail's 'Western Route Study' (October 2014) has just been published. It states:

Following electrification to Newbury, the 2019 Industry Train Service Specification (ITSS) assumes that the current London Paddington – Bedwyn service will operate with electric rolling stock and therefore be truncated at Newbury. A diesel shuttle service is proposed between Newbury and Bedwyn. These services will operate all day.

It looks as if the DfT and Network Rail still, at least publically, have their head in the sand about the problem this will cause commuters from Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury.

Please sign our e-Petition at http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/70941 where we call upon the DfT to specify, in the forthcoming franchise extension document, that Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury must retain their current level of direct Paddington services.

Even if you are not a regular train user please consider the impact on our local economy and how that will affect you. Hamptons Estate Agents have calculated a 15% drop in house prices should these cuts go ahead.

Please pass this email on.

Kind Regards

Steve Smith
Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 03/11/2014 09:02

Date: 03-Nov-14 09:02:25 AM
Subject: FW: Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury Petition to Retain Direct Services to Reading and Paddington

To:

All,

Thanks to all those that signed our petition. Below is an email we have just sent to Martin Holt at the DfT. We copied in senior staff at FGW, Claire Perry, Richard Benyon, Wiltshire Council, Great Bedwyn Parish Council, Hungerford Town Council, Kintbury Parish Council, both of the consultation email addresses for the two reports referenced.

If you wish to also write then relevant email addresses are:

Claire Perry:
claire.perry.mp@parliament.uk

Richard Benyon:
richard.benyon.mp@parliament.uk

Great Western Consultation:
gwconsultation@dft.gsi

Network Rail Western Route Study Consultation:
WesternRouteStudy@networkrail

Regards

Steve

Dear Martin,

We note with concern that:

1) The Great Western Consultation 2014 states: After the electrification to Newbury, expected in 2016 would passengers' needs be best served by a diesel service from Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury to Newbury connecting into a fast service to London Paddington, or a diesel stopping service from Bedwyn to Reading connecting to a fast service from Reading to London Paddington, or other options? The former would give faster journey times to London but add a change at Newbury for passengers to Reading.

2) The Network Rail Western Route Study (Draft, October 2014) states: Following electrification to Newbury, the 2019 Industry Train Service Specification (ITSS) assumes that the current London Paddington – Bedwyn service will operate with electric rolling stock and therefore be truncated at Newbury. A diesel shuttle service is proposed between Newbury and Bedwyn. These services will operate all day.

It appears that five years into our campaign, to save our direct Reading and Paddington services, the DfT and NR are not giving us any words of comfort. We have therefore been running a petition to highlight the strength of feeling from users of Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury stations. You can read this at:
http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/70941 It currently stands at 1671 signatures, more than twice the typical daily passengers that use these three stations. We hope this shows the strength of feeling. The signatories are made up of those regular train users on our email list

and by leafleting, over five different days, at Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn stations. Thus they are genuine train users.

We'd also like to make the following points:

1. The DfT made an arbitrary decision in 2009 to electrify only as far as Newbury (based on it being 2tph c.f. Bedwyn at 1tph without doing a BCR study). They did not take into account how this would affect people's lives nor did they do any study on how many people would abandon Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn stations. In 2012 we did a survey which showed 94% of passengers would drive to Newbury. This would require approximately 600 extra parking spaces and, given it would be a multi-storey car park, the cost would be around £14.5 million.

2. We understand that there may not be the money to wire to Bedwyn at the same time as Newbury so would once again raise the option of an hourly diesel service from Paddington to Westbury (or Bristol or Taunton or Exeter). It's stopping pattern east of Westbury to be: Paddington, Reading, Theale, Thatcham, Newbury, Kintbury, Hungerford, Bedwyn, Pewsey, Westbury. This would retain the direct services of Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury while at the same time resolve a few other issues on the B&H line (e.g. number of direct Paddington trains from Westbury and Pewsey, longer haul services slowed by currently stopping at Pewsey).

3. We would also raise the option of bi-modes being utilised to retain the current Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn service.

4. It is a misnomer to think that a shuttle between Bedwyn and Newbury could be run with one unit. To connect with down an up trains on an hourly basis would require more than one unit.

5. The ARUP BCR study (championed by MPs Richard Benyon and Claire Perry) to bring electrification further west does not get mentioned in either of the two aforementioned reports despite the BCR to Bedwyn coming out at 2.58.

6. On 26th September 2012 you (i.e. Martin Holt (DfT)) wrote to us stating: "I'm pleased to say that version 2.27 (yes 27) of the TSR now has, reinstated, a small number of AM and PM peak through services from Kintbury, Bedwyn, Hungerford, Pewsey and Westbury to London Paddington to ensure a level of connectivity between stations on the Berks & Hants line is guaranteed. Bedwyn still gets a minimum of 1tph to Newbury, a minimum of 12 of which must provide connections onto a London service. I hope this will go some way to allaying your concerns." The two aforementioned reports do not even mention this late addition to the TSR.

We do need clarity on the situation; it's very unfair to create so much uncertainty for hardworking commuters and tax payers. House prices have stagnated in this area. People have built their lives around these direct services and this decision to disenfranchise Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn has been made without proper study.

We do ask for this continual 'head in the sand approach' (highlighted by the two aforementioned reports published this year) to stop and for a proper solution to be found.

Yours sincerely

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 12/11/2014 08:55

Date: 12-Nov-14 08:55:56 AM
Subject: BBC Wiltshire Radio at Bedwyn Station from 0630 Thursday 13th
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

If you wish to make your views (r.e. loss of our direct Reading and Paddington services) known, on air, tomorrow morning then please feel free.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Emailed Newsletter: 13/11/2014 16:15

Date: 13-Nov-14 04:15:43 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To:

Hello All,

Thanks to all of those that spoke on the radio at Bedwyn station this morning. Bill Wells and myself did an interview just after 0800. If you want to listen to it then it starts http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02b564v at 1:35:25.

A message from Claire Perry (verbatim):

I have campaigned for Bedwyn (and Pewsey) rail services for the last four years in my capacity as a local MP. Now as a Transport minister, I am guided by the Ministerial Code which sets out an established procedure for matters relating to these vital services to be dealt with by another member of the Transport ministerial team. I am of course able to provide information and opinions to my colleagues as any MP is entitled to do. I am, as always, so grateful for all the work done by local rail user groups who campaign so hard to improve local railway services and provide so much local information and support.

A message from Matthew Golton, First Great Western (paraphrased):

We understand and appreciate the strength of feeling and the challenge that is being faced. We recognise the importance of running a direct service. We want to see electrification extended. Nothing has yet been decided.

A message from the DfT (verbatim):

Improving our railways is a vital part of our long-term economic plan, with more than £38bn being invested in the network over the next five years. We recognise the importance of strong transport links to local communities, and we want to give Bedwyn the best possible rail services. That is why we are working closely with First Great Western and Network Rail to make this happen.

On a different note we hear that Wednesday's 1903, off Paddington, arrived at Newbury at 1958 and the 1956 connecting service (for Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn) was not held. This is an old chestnut and we have written to FGW again asking if the Bedwyn connection can be held if:

1) The incoming HST, despite being late, would catch up the connecting service before Bedwyn.

2) Holding it would not make it excessively late departing back from Bedwyn.

Please do keep us informed of missed connections at Newbury. I only use the train once a week at the moment and Bill has just retired. Thus we are not best placed to learn about missed connections. So please keep us informed so we can keep pressing.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 02/12/2014 21:11

Date: 02-Dec-14 09:11:19 PM
Subject: Road Closures Affecting Access to Bedwyn Station
To:

Dear All,

There are some road closures coming up that might require you to give a little extra journey time to get to Bedwyn station if driving from Marlborough or the Shalbourne direction. The closures are between 1900 and 0600 on the 15th to 19th of December. Please see below and attached for further information.

Regards

Steve

Skid Resistance Improvement Schemes 2014 - 2015

Notifications of closures on C74 within the Great Bedwyn Area

Dear Sir/Madam:

As consultant representative for Wiltshire Council, I write to inform you of a number of resurfacing works programmed along the C74, the effect will be that there are three sets of road closures within the

area.

The closures will be as follows;

1st Phase – North of Great Bedwyn village 15th and 16th December – see Drawing 5130518-ATK-DR-C-SS07.02.005

2nd Phase – South of Great Bedwyn village 17th December – see Drawing 5130518-ATK-DR-C-SS07.04.008

3rd Phase – Oxenwood Road 18th December – see Drawing 5130518-ATK-DR-C-SS07.04.009

These works involve the resurfacing of the existing carriageway, the installation of new road markings and the adjustment of surface ironwork.

The works will commence on Monday 15th December 2014 and weather permitting, will be completed by the morning of 19th December 2014.

The works will be undertaken between the hours of 19:00 and 06:00. Due to the nature of the works and the local environment, the works will be carried out within a temporary road closure, to ensure that adequate health & safety is maintained for the contractor & local residents.

The Contractor will endeavour to maintain vehicular access for the duration of the works; although due to the nature of the works minor disruption is inevitable. It is essential that the road remains un-trafficked until the new material has set, as early trafficking could lead to premature failure. Dedicated Traffic Management operatives at the extent of the works will monitor access and give motorists assistance.

Therefore the diversion routes will be as follows:

1st Phase – From "The three tuns" PH head north east along Brown's Lane through to A4 Bath Road and head west through to Cobham Frith and head back south east towards the closure at Forest hill. The eastbound traffic will follow the reverse of this diversion route.

2nd Phase – From the northern end of the closure the eastbound traffic will follow Brown's lane through to the A4 Bath road, at Bath road turn right (east towards Hungerford). When in Hungerford turn right onto the A338 (Salisbury road) and head south back towards Great Bedwyn. Follow the A338 south to the turning signed for Great Bedwyn (C74) and follow through to the end of the diversion.

For traffic travelling in the opposite direction, follow the reverse of the above diversion, but on the A4 Bath road follow the directions as Phase 1 closure (through to Cobham Frith.

3rd Phase – for northbound traffic , follow the A338 north through to the C74 Great Bedwyn turning and turn left to follow through to Great Bedwyn. The southbound traffic will follow the reverse of the diversion.

Signing will be in place advising that local businesses will be open as usual.

I would like to take this opportunity to apologise for any inconvenience these works will cause, but trust you will appreciate the necessity for these essential works to maintain Wiltshire's highway network.

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me on the details shown below.

Ali K

Ali Kattana
Senior Assistant Engineer, Highways and Transportation

ATKINS

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County Gate, County Way, Trowbridge, BA14 7FJ | Tel: +44 1225 730377

Emailed Newsletter: 18/12/2014 20:31

Date: 18-Dec-14 08:31:13 PM
Subject: Meeting with FGW r.e. Performance
To:

Hello All,

Myself and Bill Wells met with Andrew Dickinson, a FGW performance manager, this evening. We had a constructive meeting.

Reading Redevelopment

You have probably noticed all the new platforms at Reading. However, the tracks to serve them all are not yet in place. Thus they are underutilised. Currently our trains can arrive at platforms 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11. However, from Christmas to Easter we are going to be reduced to platforms 7 and 8 only while work continues. Then from Easter we will be served by 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12. We are told this will make a big difference as the new layout will open up the underutilised platform 12 and reduce congestion as the track crossovers are being redesigned, including an underpass. However, between Christmas and Easter we'll face problems with potential terminations at Reading. So things will get worse before they can get better.

Cancellations

We pointed out that short notice cancellations (for Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn) to allow delayed trains to depart on time from Newbury, are very frustrating.

Missed Connections at Newbury

Andrew has drawn up a plan that, with Network Rail approval, will define the holding time for each connecting service at Newbury. At present it's ad hoc with station staff at Newbury phoning control and asking for trains to be held. With this plan there will be a more rigid system in place with control and drivers knowing how long they can delay the

connecting service by at Newbury. However, the additional number of minutes for the individual services is not as long as we hoped for. This is because there are many factors to consider, including clearing the line at Bedwyn for HSTs to pass and the passage of freight. The proposed timings are:

1724 off Newbury	4 minutes additional holding time
1826 off Newbury	5 minutes additional holding time
1927 off Newbury	3 minutes additional holding time
1956 off Newbury	8 minutes additional holding time
2033 off Newbury	4 minutes additional holding time
2124 off Newbury	TBA

We asked if the connecting service has left whether the delayed HST can stop at our stations. Andrew promised to look into this. In reality it's going to be hard to argue for adding additional delay to an already delayed service. However, he will put our case.

Dodgy Information Boards

We raised the problem with the CIS screens and information being particularly poor, especially at times of disruption when, paradoxically, we need it the most. There are two things that Andrew has said he'll try and sort out:

1) Train associations at Bedwyn. This is where the inbound train is delayed and the outbound train is optimistically "on time".

2) The problem at Bedwyn where we get false platform alterations. This occurs when the inbound train is delayed and by the time it arrives it is regarded as the outbound service. The computer then sees it on the inbound platform and triggers a false platform alteration announcement before it gets a chance to enter the turn-back siding.

That's about it.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 26/01/2015 19:38

Date: 26-Jan-15 07:38:48 PM
Subject: Atn Richard Benyon Constituents
To:

Hello All,

Richard Benyon is running a commuter survey:
http://richardbenyon.com/get-involved/surveys/take_survey/4-online-commu

ter-survey

Regards

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 22/02/2015 22:43

Date: 22-Feb-15 10:43:18 PM
Subject: Service disruption
To:

There has been a bridge strike at Froxfield blocking the line between Newbury and Westbury.

Please check https://www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/travel-updates before setting out on Monday.

Regards

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 07/03/2015 16:44

Date: 07-Mar-15 04:44:14 PM
Subject: Easter Rail Changes
To:

Dear All,

Please see https://www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/contents/travel-advice/Easter-2015-works/basingstoke-and-newbury-bedwyn-pewsey-and-guildford if you plan to travel from Bedwyn over Easter.

Paradoxically we will have a westbound service over Easter so you might want to make use of that.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 23/03/2015 08:21

Date: 23-Mar-15 08:21:33 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Service - Bad News
To:

Hi All,

We have had a communication from First Great Western r.e. their award of

the new franchise:

As you know from our discussions there is no immediate solution to the loss of through services on the Bedwyn to Newbury corridor given electrification is not being extended. This means in May 2017 Bedwyn to London services will be replaced by Newbury to London electric trains (EMUs) and Bedwyn to Newbury diesel shuttles (DMUs).

However, within the franchise we have committed to maintain at least one through peak service in each direction. Bedwyn, Kintbury and Hungerford will not therefore lose all their direct trains.

We were also able to suggest a feasibility study into the use of Independently Powered electric trains (IPEMUs) over the route between Paddington and Bedwyn. The DfT have accepted that approach and have asked us to work up plans that would mean through services to Bedwyn, Kintbury and Hungerford could be re-established at levels similar to today by December 2018.

We cannot guarantee the outcome of the study, but we think this is a practical option and will be doing our best to make it work. I will keep you updated.

The chap at the Dft, who has overseen the new franchise, is Martin Holt. His email address is Martin.Holt@dft.gsi if you should wish to drop him a line.

Personally I'm bitterly disappointed; myself and Bill have been working on this for five and a half years. Our petition http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/70941 stands at over 2000 signatures but I feel we haven't really achieved much. I think the way forward is to persuade FGW to run more than one HST up and back for commuters with an additional one around 0900 for off peak visitors to London. Another alternative is to lobby the DfT to keep the diesel turbos in service until they plug the gap.

However, and with much regret, I am not the man to do this. I have campaign burnout. I will continue with BTPG doing the web site and complaints. Bill still has enthusiasm for continuing the campaign to retain our direct services to Paddington and knows the technical side of all the issues inside out.

But we need a 'big hitter' that knows the workings of government to lead on this. Claire Perry and Richard Benyon (who have both been campaigning vigorously on this issue) have been unable to crack the problem. If you are such a person then please contact Bill on info@bedwyntrains I am happy to partake in initial meetings to handover.

Regards

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 26/03/2015 13:14

Date: 26-Mar-15 01:14:53 PM

Subject: FW: Proposed Bedwyn to Newbury Shuttle Service May 2017 to December 2018
To:

All,

Please find below an email we have sent to Martin Holt at the Dft.

Regards

Steve

Dear Martin,

We understand that, following the introduction of electrification in May 2017, the best we can hope for is a restoration of our direct Paddington service from December 2018 using battery operated trains that charge under the wires and run, on battery, between Newbury and Bedwyn.

We'd like the DfT to strongly consider plugging the interim gap, between May 2017 and December 2018, by retaining the current diesel turbo service between Bedwyn and Paddington. We think this is the best solution because:

1) The Arup report clearly states that a new west-facing bay would be needed at Newbury and we believe it was priced at 2 to 3 million. If we are to get a restored through service in December 2018 it is hardly conceivable that Network Rail would spend that amount of money for something that would only be fully utilised for 18 months.

2) As things stand the number of trains starting from and terminating at Newbury will at least triple from 2 per hour to 6 per hour from May 2017. Surely Newbury will not be able to cope with this? A through train takes up a platform for a short period of time whereas a termination will eat up platform space necessitating shunting in and out of sidings. We calculate that at least two Bedwyn shuttles will be required to connect with the prescribed trains at Newbury.

3) It does not feel sensible to introduce electric stock to run Paddington to Newbury then 18 months later to have to redeploy 50% of it as the battery operated trains come into service. Couldn't that electric stock be better used elsewhere for the 18 month period?

4) Changing trains will extend journey times, impact on family life and not be good for the economy.

5) Missed connections at Newbury are frequent. Having to change there will be unreliable. The timekeeping on this line can be very poor.

6) Surveys we have done show that 84% of users of Bedwyn, Kintbury and Hungerford plan to abandon these stations and instead drive to Newbury. This will have a major impact on parking and the Newbury road network.

We respectively ask the DfT to think again.

Kind Regards

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 06/04/2015 15:22

Date: 06-Apr-15 03:22:01 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Cuts from May 2017 - can you represent BTPG at a meeting on the 14th?
To:

Hi All,

I am unable to attend the meeting, below and Bill Wells is tied up too. Any takers to represent the Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group? Really sorry about the short notice, you'll need to email Vicky to book on by the end of the 7th. It'll be first come first served as it reads there's only space for one BTPG representative.

If you do attend please remember:

1) We like to keep relations with FGW as very professional and polite. I know, with the axing of our hourly Paddington services from May 2017, feelings are running very high but we want to keep things friendly between us and FGW.

2) There's no point raising the possibility of extending electrification to solve the problem from May 2017. It's not going to happen. Instead all we can hope for is that FGW continue using our Turbo trains to Paddington until another solution is found.

3) Our petition stands at 2300 signatures against the cuts.

4) We don't see how they can actually incorporate an hourly diesel shuttle service to Newbury with the current configuration at Newbury.

Kind Regards

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Sue Evans

Sent: 02 April 2015 13:51
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Fw: We would like to talk to you about our new franchise

Dear Steve and Bill

We recently wrote to you about our new franchise, which is great news for our customers, and for the social and economic vitality of the communities we serve. Every area benefits in some way, and over the next four years we are going to be working closely with you to deliver meaningful change. The new franchise starts on 20 September 2015.

We want to begin working on the changes the new franchise will bring as soon as possible and are planning a number of events around our network to update partners and stakeholders in more detail on the benefits and

the ways in which you may be able to work with us.

I would be really pleased therefore if you would be able to join me with Matthew Golton, Bid Director, and other colleagues at the Thistle Marble Arch, Bryanston Street, London, W1H 7EH on Tuesday 14 April. Tea and coffee will be served from 1345, with the meeting starting at 1400. We expect to finish at 1600.

Can you please let Vicky Cropper know (vicky.cropper@firstgroup) by 7 April if you will be able to join us. Vicky will also be able to send you a complimentary ticket for rail travel should you need it. If you are unable to join us but would like to send a representative we would be delighted to see them. We do have limited space however, so if you want to send more than one person can you please check with Vicky.

I appreciate how busy diaries are and if you unable to make the event on 14 April, we are running some other events (albeit not as close to you), so please ask Vicky for more details and she will be happy to provide the full list of dates and venues.

I really hope you will be able to join us as there is so much to tell you about the franchise. If not, we would be happy to schedule some time for one of the team to come and see you later in the year.

Best wishes

Sue

Sue Evans | Director of Communications | First Great Western

Emailed Newsletter: 13/04/2015 19:01

Date: 13-Apr-15 07:01:44 PM
Subject: Your chance to be on the telly!
To:

Dear All,

If anybody can help with the request below please get in touch with Paul Clifton on paul.clifton@bbc

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Paul Clifton [mailto:paul.clifton@bbc]
Sent: 13 April 2015 15:17
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Help needed with a contact

Hi Steve,

I'm doing an "election transport" piece next week.

I need to follow a regular commuter from somewhere in the Thames Valley.

Definitely a non-politician, but someone who can speak eloquently about "what I want from the next government to make my commute better."

I want a Thames Valley rail commuter to compare / contrast with a person who drives to work along the A27 in two separate short reports.

Filming possibly Thursday, possibly Monday.

Can you recommend someone? The Newbury area would be ideal, and I'm afraid the big issue which concerns you re ending of direct trains could only be one of several points, and not the main focus (we can do that another time….)

Cheers,

Paul

Paul Clifton

Transport Correspondent

Emailed Newsletter: 08/07/2015 18:13

Date: 08-Jul-15 06:13:57 PM
Subject: RMT Strike Changes to Bedwyn Service
To:

Hi All,

Over the next three days strike action will alter our services. It looks like no HST trains will call at Bedwyn. So the 0645 departure is cancelled as are the 1707, 1805 and 1835 from Paddington.

The 0756 departure is shown to depart at 0750.

The 1439 departure is shown to depart at 1445.

The 2033 departure is shown to depart at 2039.

This will make the trains very crowded.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 13/08/2015 11:01

Date: 13-Aug-15 11:01:44 AM
Subject: RMT strike: Services expected to be affected on Sunday 23 and Saturday 29 August to Monday 31 August
To:

Hi All,

It doesn't look too bad for us but please double check your travel

plans.

Regards

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 18/09/2015 20:08

Date: 18-Sep-15 08:08:26 PM
Subject: This Sunday FGW new franchise begins
To:
Attachment 8417 FGW Franchise Update Brochure MK2_LR.pdf

Hello All,

Please find attached a brochure from FGW regarding the new franchise.

Pages 6 and 36 contains a repeat of the depressing news for Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury passengers.

Regards

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 29/09/2015 16:40

Date: 29-Sep-15 04:40:00 PM
Subject: New timetables at The Stores, Great Bedwyn
To:

Hello All,

Sorry we have been unable to do door to door timetable delivery in Great Bedwyn, Little Bedwyn and the surrounding area. GWR did not send us any this time. Hopefully we can rectify this for the December timetable change.

However, I picked a bunch up from Paddington today and have put them in The Stores.

Regards

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 21/10/2015 19:47

Date: 21-Oct-15 07:47:22 PM
Subject: Electrification
To:

Hi All,

If you care to read the following we can interpret it that the May 2017 cut off for Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn losing direct services to Paddington is now unlikely to happen.

Looks like one Great British cockup (of only electrifying to Newbury) is set to be outdone by another Great British cockup of not getting the sums right.

Of course it gives us no guarantees for the long-term but it's probably safe to assume we'll still have direct services to Paddington after May 2017.

Regards

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Gordon Edwards [mailto:Gordon.Edwards@ipts]
Sent: 21 October 2015 18:59
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: BBC NEWS - WEDNESDAY 21 OCTOBER 2015

Great Western rail electrification cost 'up to £2.8bn'

· 30 minutes ago

The cost of electrifying the Great Western railway line between Cardiff and London could reach £2.8bn, the boss of Network Rail has said.

Chief executive Mark Carne told MPs the estimate had been £874m in January 2013 and £1.5bn in September 2014.

Public accounts committee chair Meg Hiller called increase "staggering". A senior civil servant also revealed there was now no firm completion date for the project, originally due to be finished by 2018.

Mr Carne blamed "inadequate planning and scope definition" in the early stages and an out-of-date cost base for the price increases.

"From the very early stages of the design of a project, as you go forward there's a significant degree of uncertainty," Mr Carne told the Commons public accounts committee on Wednesday.

"I fully accept that this is extremely disappointing to everybody involved," he added.

Ms Hillier responded: "It's unbelievable and it's unacceptable that there was such poor planning." the Department for Transport had not received Network Rail's final plans

Department for Transport Permanent Secretary Philip Rutnam told MPs he was "not in a position to give you a schedule for Great Western electrification".

"You're probably aware of the schedule that there was - which was 2016

to Bristol Parkway, Newbury, Oxford, 2017 to Cardiff, 2018 to Swansea," he said.

"It is clearly highly likely that there will be delays against that schedule and I'm afraid I'm not in a position at the moment to give you a new schedule."

Emailed Newsletter: 14/11/2015 10:33

Date: 14-Nov-15 10:33:06 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To:

Hello All,

Our Website

We have updated and changed the layout of www.bedwyntrains.org.uk to be mobile phone and tablet friendly. We'd welcome any feedback.

December Timetable Changes

There's a welcome change to the last train back, from Paddington, on weekdays. A 2222 service from Paddington will now run to Newbury (c.f. Reading) arriving at 2335 followed by a 2343 departure for Bedwyn. As yet we are unaware if the 2343 departure from Newbury is the same train as the 2335 arrival. However, a connection at Newbury is always preferable to one at Reading.

On the topic of connections at Newbury or Reading please always let us know if a Bedwyn service is not held when it is pretty obvious it could have been. Without evidence we can't badger GWR on this issue.

Christmas Disruption

Due to engineering works the timetable from 24th December to 3rd January is altered.

Thursday December 24th: Last train back from Paddington is at 2000 (change at Reading onto the 2041 departure). Christmas Day and Boxing Day: No service. Sunday 27th and Monday 28th December: Change at Reading for trains to London Waterloo. Tuesday 29th December to Sunday 3rd January: Change at Reading for trains to London Paddington.

Please check before you travel and don't rely on any paper timetables during this period.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 16/01/2016 23:15

Date: 16-Jan-16 11:15:28 PM
Subject: FW: Public Transport Strategy Review

To:

Hello All,

Below is an email we have received from Wiltshire Council. It contains a questionnaire to gather feedback regarding proposals for cuts to bus services within Wiltshire.

One proposal is a reduction to 2-3 trips a day and the other is for withdrawing the subsidy completely which would mean no buses at all on the Marlborough to Bedwyn route (though one would presume that the school buses would not be affected by this).

Regards

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

-----Original Message-----
From: PassengerTransport <PassengerTransport@wiltshire
<mailto:PassengerTransport@wiltshire > >
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
<mailto:PassengerTransport@wiltshire > >
Sent: Fri, 8 Jan 2016 10:47
Subject: FW: Public Transport Strategy Review

Bus services review

Wiltshire Council is reviewing its Local Transport Plan (LTP) Public Transport Strategy and service delivery (i.e. Council supported bus services). The review is being undertaken because of continuing and growing pressures on the Council's budgets that mean that funding is no longer available to continue delivering supported bus services at the level that was envisaged when the LTP was published in 2011.

The review of the Public Transport Strategy is part of a wider review of all areas of Wiltshire Council's passenger transport remit (except rail and taxis). The wider review will include re-examining policy and spending in home-to-school and college transport, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) transport and social care client transport.

As a first stage in the review, a pre-consultation exercise was undertaken during July and August 2015 to provide key stakeholders and partners (e.g. town councils and bus operators) with an opportunity to shape the scope of the review.

We are now keen to hear the views of bus users, residents, stakeholders and other interested parties to help us shape a new Public Transport Strategy. The Council has made no decisions as yet and would like to see how far you agree or disagree with the options presented in the consultation questionnaire available from
http://consult.wiltshire.gov.uk/portal/ltp/wiltshire_local_transport_pla
n_-_public_transport_strategy_review
<http://consult.wiltshire.gov.uk/portal/ltp/wiltshire_local_transport_pl
an_-_public_transport_strategy_review>

From the above link you can also obtain further information on the review including a PDF version of the questionnaire together with other review documents (including Frequently Asked Questions).

Paper copies of the questionnaire are also available on request by telephoning 0300 456 0100. Copies of the questionnaire will also be available: on buses operating Wiltshire Council contracted services; in libraries; and in main Council offices.

Questionnaire and comments need to be submitted by 5pm on 4 April 2016.

The findings of the review and public consultation will be reported to the Council's Cabinet in the summer of 2016. It will then be necessary to develop detailed implementation proposals. The timescale for this will depend on the nature of the changes approved by Cabinet and the lead time necessary for their implementation.

Emailed Newsletter: 17/01/2016 14:16

Date: 17-Jan-16 02:16:27 PM
Subject: FW: Public Transport Strategy Review
To:
Attachment 24_7 posters2.pdf

Hi All,

I have been asked to pass on the details on http://www.option247.uk/ which you may wish to consider when completing the questionnaire. There are further details at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-wiltshire-35333299

Many thanks

Steve Smith
Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

-----Original Message-----
From: Graham Ellis [mailto:graham@wellho]
Sent: 17 January 2016 03:30
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Re: Public Transport Strategy Review

Steve, you may want to take a look at the alternative of a quality scheme, as we're advocating under "option 24/7" - see http://option247.uk - and if you agree it's worth considering forwarding it to you readers ;-) …

— Graham

P.S. see also http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-wiltshire-35333299 and one of our new posters (below) may just be relevant.

Graham Ellis - graham@wellho
Well House Consultants, 404, The Spa, Melksham, SN12 6QL Well House Manor, 48 Spa Road, Melksham, SN12 7NY http://www.wellho.net http://www.wellhousemanor.co.uk
Phone: 01225 708225 / Skype: wellhograham

Emailed Newsletter: 29/01/2016 12:45

Date: 29-Jan-16 12:45:08 PM
Subject: FW: Comments invited on proposed Ticket Office opening hours alterations and Minor Works
To:
Attachment DRAFT Minor Works 16-17 list.xlsx
Attachment GR085_GWR_TSA_Schedule 17_TWSW (1) (1).pdf

Hi All,

GWR are bidding for £300,000 in order to carry our improvements to make stations more accessible and easier to use.

If you have any comments for Bedwyn please let us have them before February 3rd (the deadline is February 4th).

If you have comments for Kintbury or Hungerford please send them directly secretary@travelwatchsouthwest (see email below).

Many thanks

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Bryony Chetwode [mailto:bchetwode@]
Sent: 29 January 2016 10:34
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Fwd: Comments invited on proposed Ticket Office opening hours alterations and Minor Works

Subject: Comments invited on proposed Ticket Office opening hours alterations and Minor Works

Here is notice of two consultations where GWR have asked for our comment and I would be very glad to two receive any comments you may have. The bulky documents relating Please send each under separate email headings:

1. Amendment to Ticket Office Opening Hours (GR085_GWR_TSA_Schedule 17)

Many of you will have spotted the "Schedule 17" posters at stations which describe proposed changes to booking office opening hours. I have attached some additional information which includes a list of key considerations. Our October meeting highlighted the importance passsengers place upon access to facilities and an on station presence of someone with responsibility, so please consider qualifying your responses so we can recognise paths to pursue.

2. Minor Works Accessibility Improvements (DRAFT Minor Works 16-17)

GWR are bidding for £300,000 in order to carry our improvements to make stations more accessible and easier to use. GWR recognises that our members have a better collective knowledge than anyone, so I am attaching the proposed list of station improvements for your comment. Please make appropriate alternative suggestions in the same vein and

submit them no later than February 4th 2016.

Kind regards

Bryony

Bryony Chetwode
Company Secretary
TravelWatch SouthWest CIC

Emailed Newsletter: 31/01/2016 16:20

Date: 31-Jan-16 04:20:20 PM
Subject: Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) bikes on trains survey
To:

Hi All,

Those of you who are cyclists may be interested in this survey about taking bikes on trains.

https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/7VW22ZW

Bike on trains info

View this email in your browser
<http://us11.campaign-archive1.com/?u=acc6c1c19ef983e9934a5f879&id=d1bf96918b&e=e6ff579015>

https://gallery.mailchimp.com/acc6c1c19ef983e9934a5f879/images/04e3ed58-4257-474e-9a22-6d988d483942.jpg

Dear All
ATOC is carrying out an online survey (with the support of the main cycling groups) which may be of interest. Feel free to forward to other groups where it would be relevant.

The number of cycle-rail users is growing each year and so it's important that the Association of Train Operating Companies, understand how best to provide you with helpful information when you're planning a rail journey with a cycle. We want to make your cycle-rail journey as simple as possible with the view to clarify information around station cycle facilities, hire schemes nearby and cycle restrictions on board trains.

Take their short survey which will take between 10-15 minutes to complete. As a thank you for your time all completed surveys will be entered into a free prize draw where four lucky winners will win £25 worth of Amazon gift vouchers each.

The survey and prize draw will close on 31st January. Details of how to enter can be found at the end of the survey.

The survey link is now live so The link is: http://bit.ly/PlusBike4 <http://swindonbug.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=acc6c1c19ef983e9934a5f879&id=6833bd90c5&e=e6ff579015> http://bit.ly/PlusBike4 <http://swindonbug.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=acc6c1c19ef983e993

4a5f879&id=d088d1c51c&e=e6ff579015>

http://cdn-images.mailchimp.com/icons/social-block-v2/color-twitter-48.p
ng
<http://swindonbug.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=acc6c1c19ef983e993
4a5f879&id=7ecd767d90&e=e6ff579015>

http://cdn-images.mailchimp.com/icons/social-block-v2/color-facebook-48.
png
<http://swindonbug.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=acc6c1c19ef983e993
4a5f879&id=5d5d44657b&e=e6ff579015>

http://cdn-images.mailchimp.com/icons/social-block-v2/color-link-48.png
<http://swindonbug.us11.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=acc6c1c19ef983e99
34a5f879&id=1fa04d6d57&e=e6ff579015>

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For people who have attended a BUG event or expressed interests in
cycling

Our mailing address is:

Bicycle Users Group (BUG)

55 Exmouth Street

SWINDON, SN1 3PU

United Kingdom

Emailed Newsletter: 02/02/2016 20:44

Date: 02-Feb-16 08:44:27 PM
Subject: Announcement on Network Railcard by GWR
To:

Hello All,

Firstly apologies if you do not want to be on the Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group's email list. If you want your email address removed please just reply and let me know. I've recently added a few email addresses of local people I have received emails from/with. We always email out Blind Carbon Copy (Bcc) and we don't share email addresses with anybody else. However, no problem if you want to be removed from the list.

GWR have announced the Network Railcard will now be valid on the 0939 weekday service from February 15th. Previously it was not valid until the 1039. The Network Railcard is targeted at the able bodied, 26 to 59 age bracket who otherwise cannot buy a discount card.

Please see www.network-railcard.co.uk and
http://www.network-railcard.co.uk/tickets-types-min-fares/

On weekdays the 16-25 Railcard, Senior Railcard and Disabled Persons Railcard are all still valid on the 0843 onwards. At weekends railcards are valid all day.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 29/02/2016 12:34

Date: 29-Feb-16 12:34:29 PM
Subject: Buses in Wiltshire
To:

Hi All,

Please see the petition, below.

Many thanks

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Change [mailto:mail@change]
Sent: Monday, February 29, 2016 11:33
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Buses in Wiltshire

The Salisbury Journal newspaper is calling for Wiltshire Council end its plans to axe dozens of bus services – which could have disastrous consequences for rural communities.
As the council threatens to pull funding from subsidised routes across the county, the Journal has launched a campaign to STOP BUS CUTS.
Six different plans are on the table to slash a £5million budget – including ending all subsidies.
Join the campaign to show decision makers in County Hall that bus subsidies must be saved in Wiltshire.

Sign the petition

Emailed Newsletter: 11/07/2016 16:31

Date: 11-Jul-16 04:31:47 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Since Bedwyn has been made a penalty fare station, meaning one has to purchase a ticket prior to boarding, we have sought clarity r.e. our credit card only ticket machine. Below is the response from GWR.

We continue to press for a solution to the post-electrification (December 2018) to Newbury. As you are aware the de facto position is that we'll be on a diesel shuttle service to Newbury.

Please do let us know of any regular problems you encounter (e.g. missed

connections at Newbury).

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Sent: Monday, July 11, 2016 15:24
Subject: Penalty Fares

Dear Bill

Thank you for your email regarding the extension of the Penalty Fare scheme. I am very sorry for the long delay in replying to you.

As you know the Penalty Fares scheme has been extended to cover the entire GWR network. The scheme will ensure that customers purchase tickets for travel. We accept there are times when buying before boarding is not possible for instance if there is a problem with the ticket purchasing facilities at a station. In these circumstances colleagues will not impose a penalty.

Similarly, if a customer only has cash as a method of payment and the TVM only takes card we agree there are no facilities for the customer to purchase their ticket and a Penalty Fare would not be issued in this instance. The customer should however ensure they purchase their ticket at the earliest opportunity.

There is an independent appeals process provided by ITAL. If a customer feels they were unfairly issued a Penalty Fare, they can appeal within 21 days of the issue date to ITAL who will review the case, and we will abide by their decision.

We have also been working closely with Transport Focus throughout the process of extending the scheme, and have worked with them to make sure customers understand the process. Announcements were in place across the network informing customers of the upcoming change for over a month to inform customers of the change in advance so they would be aware of the implications of not buying a ticket. We have also adopted the Transport Focus Treating Customers Fairly approach and staff are briefed to help customers who have made a genuine mistake, only penalising those who we feel are deliberately trying to evade paying for travel.

I hope this helps to clarify the changes. Information about the policy can be found on our website too;
https://www.gwr.com/plan-journey/tickets-railcards-and-season-tickets/revenue-protection-policy

Best wishes

Jane

Emailed Newsletter: 19/07/2016 19:05

Date: 19-Jul-16 07:05:24 PM
Subject: FW: Heat speed restrictions this afternoon

To:

Dear All,

For all those that got held up this afternoon please see the explanation below.

Since our last correspondence a number of you contacted me saying that the ticket machine at Bedwyn does not allow one to use a Senior Card on the 0843. It actually does provided you purchase your ticket after 0830.

Incidentally for all Monday to Friday travel on the 0843 purchase your ticket after 0830. Otherwise you get charged full fare.

Also remember if you are travelling to Theale or Reading before 0830 purchase your ticket for Winnersh. If you travel after 0830 (i.e. the 0843 onwards) purchase your ticket to Mortimer. These are the cheapest options.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Heat speed restrictions to slow passenger journeys home

Stay hydrated and help us keep a lookout for the vulnerable

Due to speed restrictions put in place by Network Rail between 1330 and 1900 Tuesday 19 July, GWR is warning customers that journeys are expected to take longer.

With rail track temperatures set to exceed 50 degrees in parts of London and the Thames Valley, speed restrictions have been put in place throughout the main junctions into and out of London Paddington.

While the vast majority of services are expected to operate as timetabled, journeys may take between 10-15 minutes longer. Customers are advised to check before they travel, to drink plenty of water, and are being asked to help our staff keep a lookout for the more vulnerable making journeys today.

A GWR spokesperson said:

"With temperatures in London set to exceed 30 degrees, the effect can bring the temperature of the rails to over 50 degrees, and we have been asked by Network Rail to drive more slowly as a result.

"We will continue to keep an eye on the situation, alongside Network Rail, and keep you updated throughout the day."

A spokesperson for Network Rail explained:

"Our modern rails are far more resistant to heat expansion and buckling than they used to be. However, a day this hot affects even our track, so we need to restrict speeds for safety. Full details are available on

our website at networkrail.co.uk/delays explained."

To be able to maintain the train timetable, the following services are expected to be cancelled:

· All Thames Valley branch lines to remain in branch operation but with no direct London services.

· London Paddington to Bedwyn and return services will operate between Bedwyn and Reading only

· London Paddington to Cheltenham Spa and return will operate between Swindon and Cheltenham Spa only

· London Paddington to Oxford direct (calling Slough, Reading, Didcot and Oxford) and return services are cancelled. Passengers are advised to travel to Didcot for connecting services to Oxford.

Passengers are advised to check their specific journey before they travel.

Mark Hopwood | Managing Director | Great Western Railway

Emailed Newsletter: 01/08/2016 16:53

Date: 01-Aug-16 04:53:18 PM
Subject: FW: Bakerloo line re-opening today
To:

Hello All,

Good news for all those of us that have been suffering the overcrowding on the H&C and Circle lines!

Regards

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Mark.HopwoodGWR-MD [mailto:Mark.HopwoodGWR-MD@gwr]
Sent: Monday, August 1, 2016 05:12
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Bakerloo line re-opening today

Dear Steve

We received notice at 0500 this morning that TfL have completed work on the Bakerloo line escalators at Paddington. As well as renewing the escalators, a new passenger tunnel has been constructed in preparation for the arrival of Crossrail.

Work has finished well ahead of schedule and we are delighted that the Bakerloo line is once again available for onward travel from Paddington. We will be alerting customers through traditional and social media and have posters ready for display at the station.

We will also make announcements at the station and on board our trains. Any further help that you can give to spread the message of the early re-opening would be great. We know that the absence of a Paddington stop on the Bakerloo has been very inconvenient for customers, and we want people to know as soon as possible that it is back in use.

If you would like further information on this or on any other aspect of our service, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best wishes

Mark

Emailed Newsletter: 30/08/2016 11:06

Date: 30-Aug-16 11:06:55 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group: Note of Engineering Works
To:

Hello All,

Please see the late evening changes notified below. Ironically it's for electrification which will only come as far as Newbury!

The one other piece of news is GWR are not able to fix the problem where a late arrival, into Bedwyn, is not shown as a late departure until the departure time has come. Therefore always look across to the board on the down platform to see if the service is late in before relying on the departure time on the up platform. This does not apply to the 0645 weekday departure as this is formed by a train from Pewsey. Be sure to keep behind the yellow line when looking across to the other platform.

Regards

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 13/09/2016 17:16

Date: 13-Sep-16 05:16:41 PM
Subject: Rail Changes this Sunday (18 Sept)
To:

Hi All,

Network Rail will be undertaking additional electrification works this Sunday, 18 September. The map below identifies routes where they will be using buses to replace rail services as a result. This is in addition to the changes already made to accommodate the Severn Tunnel improvement work, but replaces work planned between Reading, Newbury and Westbury.

These extra works were made with less notice than usual and it does mean that some customers have purchased tickets for journeys that will now have changed. GWR are contacting everyone who used their online facilities to let them know the changes and have also added information

to their website and we will be alerting local media. More details are on the Sunday 18 September pdf available on https://www.gwr.com/travel-updates/planned-engineering <https://www.gwr.com/travel-updates/planned-engineering>

Also, at the suggestion of a member of the BTPG emailing list, GWR will allow an easement for travel via Didcot during the current evening possession. This has been approved and staff briefed accordingly. GWR say it was a good idea and they are pleased to be able to help.

This will mean:

Holders to Tickets to/from stations Theale to Midgham

· May use services to/from Tilehurst / Pangbourne / Goring & Streatley

Holders to Tickets to/from stations Thatcham to Bedwyn

· May use services to/from Tilehurst / Pangbourne / Goring & Streatley / Cholsey / Didcot Parkway

The easement to apply to all services for the 7 week duration of the evening works. So, for example, if you have a season ticket from Bedwyn, and will be getting a later train home (thus having to use a bus replacement) you are welcome to drive to Tilehurst / Pangbourne / Goring & Streatley / Cholsey or Didcot Parkway and begin your journey from there.

Regards

Steve

Emailed Newsletter: 13/10/2016 17:47

Date: 13-Oct-16 05:47:51 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To:

Dear All,

Please see below for an update on what to expect from the trains this Christmas.

Many thanks

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Mark.HopwoodGWR-MD
Sent: Thursday, October 13, 2016 16:21
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Christmas 2016

Dear Steve

I promised to keep you up to date with improvement work to the Great Western network, and I thought you would want to have early notice of planned works over Christmas this year.

Full details are on our website https://www.gwr.com/travel-updates/christmas-2016 but the key thing to note is that London Paddington will be closed to all rail services from Saturday 24 December to Thursday 29 December.

This will mean GWR rail services starting and finishing at Ealing Broadway, where customers can make a connection to the underground, or scheduled bus services for travel into London.

In addition, no trains will call at Acton Main Line and Hanwell from 24 December to 1 January or the Greenford branch from 24 December to 2 January. Tickets will be valid on scheduled London Bus or TfL Underground services.

The Marlow line will close from 24 December to 2 January, and trains will also not call at Burnham or Taplow. We will provide replacement bus services for Burnham, Taplow and the branch line.

Anything you can do to help us spread the message about the changes would be very much appreciated. The link gives information on specific lines and if you are able to share it more widely we would be grateful.

I am also happy to provide more information should you need it on this, or indeed on any other aspect of our services.

Best wishes

Mark

Mark Hopwood | Managing Director | Great Western Railway

Emailed Newsletter: 13/12/2016 13:12

Date: 13-Dec-16 01:12:19 PM
Subject: FW: Christmas travel update 2016
To:

Hello All,

Please see the email, below.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Mark.HopwoodGWR-MD [mailto:Mark.HopwoodGWR-MD@gwr]
Sent: Tuesday, December 13, 2016 13:03
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Christmas travel update 2016

Dear Steve

I wrote to you a few weeks ago to alert you to the closure of Paddington station over Christmas this year to allow for electrification and Crossrail works. This is just a quick follow up to remind you that the six-day closure starts on Christmas Eve, Saturday December 24th through to Thursday 29 December. This will mean trains are very busy on Friday 23 December, and we are recommending customers to book ahead and travel early if they can.

Trains will start and finish at Ealing Broadway throughout the closure with customers completing their journey by London Underground. There are no lifts at the station. We are therefore strongly recommending that customers who will find using Ealing Broadway difficult, to change trains at Reading and travel to and from London Waterloo. South West Trains have agreed to accept GWR tickets to support this.

Full details are on our website on a dedicated page https://www.gwr.com/travel-updates/christmas-travel <https://www.gwr.com/travel-updates/christmas-travel> including details on travelling with bikes, our sleeper service and our Pullman dining service.

We are using every avenue we can to alert customers including posters, leaflets and announcements on trains and at stations, social and traditional media and Meet the Manager events at key stations, anything you can do to help us spread the message would be very helpful.

If you have any questions about the improvement work, or our plans during the closure, please contact me and we will do our best to help.

Best wishes

Mark

Mark Hopwood | Managing Director | Great Western Railway
Milford House | Swindon | Wiltshire | SN1 1HL

Emailed Newsletter: 26/02/2017 18:24

Date: 26-Feb-17 06:24:38 PM
Subject: Our direct services to Reading and Paddington
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All,

I'm sure you are aware that the Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group have been campaigning, for the last eight years, to retain our direct services to Reading and Paddington.

The problem arose from the 2009 DfT announcement that electrification would come only as far as Newbury. This would have put Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury on a diesel shuttle service to Newbury with no direct trains to Reading and Paddington.

At last we have excellent news for rail users. After work by many parties (and very much GWR and the MPs Claire Perry and Richard Benyon) it has been agreed that our trains will be replaced with bi-modes. These

will run on electricity between Paddington and Newbury then continue, seamlessly, using diesel to Bedwyn. You can read more about it at: https://www.gwr.com/about-us/media-centre/news/2017/february/direct-services-to-bedwyn-and-frome-to-continue-as-work-begins-on-new-fleet-of-trains

The one thing left to be resolved is the siding, at Bedwyn Station, will need to be extended to take the new, longer trains. This will mean the crossing / footpath will be re-routed. NR and GWR have been in touch with the Great Bedwyn Parish Council regarding these proposals.

If you wish to support the need to re-route the footpath / crossing then please send a note to our Parish Clerk - bedwynclerk@ Please keep any emails brief – just say what the retention of the direct services to Reading / Paddington means to you. Please don't give our clerk a big headache asking for detailed replies etc.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 23/03/2017 11:05

Date: 23-Mar-17 11:05:55 AM
Subject: FW: Improvement work between Reading and Paddington on Sunday morning
To:

Hi All,

Please see below for a short notice notification of line closure between Reading and Paddington this Sunday. Normal service will be resumed from 1300. Anybody with pre-booked tickets, before 1300, will be able to use them after 1300.

If your travel is only between Bedwyn and Reading you will not be disrupted.

Thanks

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Mark.HopwoodGWR-MD
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2017 10:40
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Improvement work between Reading and Paddington on Sunday morning

Dear Steve

You may have heard that additional improvement work will take place between Reading and Paddington this Sunday, 26 March. This will allow Network Rail to complete a key piece of work for the electrification of the Great Western mainline.

This means significant changes to London Paddington rail services throughout Sunday morning.

Services will operate normally after 1300 and we are encouraging customers to switch to later journeys. To help with that we will accept fixed train tickets on services running later in the day.

Full details of the changes are on our website www.GWR.com/26March and I have also set out below a summary of changes.

As this work was not in Network Rail's original programme, we have not been able to give customers as much notice as usual.

Anything you can do to help us publicise the changes would be very helpful. Please feel free to forward the weblink or if you prefer we have a pinned tweet on our twitter feed @gwrhelp which can be retweeted. I would reiterate that this applies only to Sunday morning services; travel after 1300 is unaffected.

Thank you again for your help, and please do contact me if there is anything more you would like to know about the work on Sunday, or indeed any other GWR matter.

Best wishes

Mark

Mark Hopwood | Managing Director | Great Western Railway

Summary of changes:

Travelling to/from South Wales

An hourly train service will run between Swansea and Reading. Passengers for London should change at Swindon for a direct connecting service to Oxford. From Oxford take a Chiltern Railways service to London Marylebone – tickets will be accepted.

Travelling to/from Bristol Temple Meads, Bath Spa or Chippenham

An hourly train service will run between Bristol Temple Meads and Oxford. Passengers for London should change at Oxford for a Chiltern Railways service to London Marylebone – tickets will be accepted. Passengers for Reading and Didcot Parkway should change at Swindon.

Travelling to/from West of England

An hourly train service will run between the West of England and Reading. Passengers for London should change at Reading for a connecting bus service to Heathrow for train services into the capital. Tickets will be accepted.

Travelling to/from North Cotswolds

An hourly train service will run between North Cotswolds and Reading. Passengers for London should change at Oxford for a Chiltern Railways

service to London Marylebone – tickets will be accepted.

Travelling to/from Cheltenham Spa, and stations to Swindon

A normal Sunday train service will run between Cheltenham Spa and Swindon. Passengers for London should change at Swindon for a connecting service to Oxford. From Oxford take a Chiltern Railways service to London Marylebone – tickets will be accepted.

Travelling to/from Bedwyn, and stations to Reading

A normal Sunday train service will run between the Bedwyn and Reading. Passengers for London should change at Reading for a connecting bus service to Heathrow for train services into the capital. Tickets will be accepted.

Travelling to/from Thames Valley

Rail replacement buses will be running between:

Reading and Hayes & Harlington

Reading and Hillingdon Underground Station

Reading and Heathrow

Twyford and High Wycombe via Marlow Branch

Slough and Hayes & Harlington

Slough and Windsor & Eton Riverside.

Passengers travelling from Reading to London should take a bus to Heathrow or Hillingdon Underground station for connecting services into central London.

Travelling to England vs Lithuania at Wembley Stadium

Fans travelling to Wembley should travel after 1300 if possible.

Alternate routes are available, with Chiltern Railways running direct trains to Wembley Stadium from Oxford after 1130.

Buses will be running from Reading to Hillingdon Underground station, connecting with the Metropolitan Line to Wembley Park.

Emailed Newsletter: 05/07/2017 16:57

Date: 05-Jul-17 04:57:19 PM
Subject: FW: Electrification work in the Reading area
To:

Hi All,

If you are planning to travel on either 16th or 17th of September (a weekend) please note there will be some changes to service.

Please see
https://www.gwr.com/travel-updates/planned-engineering/reading2017

Regards

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Mark.HopwoodGWR-MD
Sent: Monday, July 3, 2017 11:07
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Electrification work in the Reading area

Dear Steve

I promised to keep you up to date with the improvement work on the GWR network. The next stage of work for the electrification programme will be to test the overhead wires in the Reading area, which will have an impact on all Thames Valley and High Speed Services on Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 September.

Services between Penzance, Plymouth and London Paddington will operate hourly and journey times will be extended by up to 70 minutes.

We have set out full details on a dedicated web page;
https://www.gwr.com/travel-updates/planned-engineering/reading2017
<https://www.gwr.com/travel-updates/planned-engineering/reading2017>

I would be very grateful if you could help us spread the word about this upcoming work and will continue to keep you informed of planned works. I appreciate your help in keeping customers informed.

Please let me know if we can be of further help with this or any other GWR matter.

Best wishes

Mark

Emailed Newsletter: 19/08/2017 07:28

Date: 19-Aug-17 07:28:03 AM
Subject: Emergency Rail repair work on Sunday 20 August
To:

Hi All,

GWR have just agreed to a late notice request for work which will take place this Sunday 20 August. This will allow Network Rail to carry out emergency repair work to signalling equipment near Reading West station.

They anticipate the work will begin at 2150 and will therefore affect the late evening Sunday services listed below.

1731 Penzance to Paddington – this service will divert via Melksham

2044 Reading to Newbury

2138 Reading to Basingstoke

2143 Newbury to Reading

2144 Reading to Bedwyn

2208 Basingstoke to Reading

2238 Reading to Basingstoke

2244 Reading to Newbury

2235 Bedwyn to Reading

2215 Paddington to Newbury (terminates Reading)

2307 Basingstoke to Reading

2238 Reading to Basingstoke

2329 Newbury to Reading

2355 Newbury to Reading

0007 Basingstoke to Reading

Alternative road transport will be in place to cover the services, and Network Rail expected to complete the work by 0345. It will not therefore impact the start of service on Monday morning.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 04/10/2017 12:10

Date: 04-Oct-17 12:10:14 PM
Subject: Paper timetables
To:

Hi All,

Please note that the latest paper train timetables are in the Post Office and The Stores.

Apologies that we are not doing door to door deliveries this time.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 06/10/2017 12:24

Date: 06-Oct-17 12:24:48 PM
Subject: FW: Additional rail infrastructure work required on the weekend of 14/15 October
To:

Hi All,

Please see the email, below.

In short it appears that on the weekend of the 14th / 15th there will be a bus replacement service between Theale and Slough.

Regards

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Mark.HopwoodGWR-MD
Sent: Friday, October 6, 2017 12:03
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Additional rail infrastructure work required on the weekend of 14/15 October

Dear Steve

I promised to keep you up to date with changes to rail services to allow for modernisation and improvement work on our network.

Over the weekend of 14-15 October, Network Rail have informed us they need to carry out further testing of overhead wires in the Reading area. This is needed so that we can extend our new electric local trains to Didcot from January, which in turn releases diesel trains to cascade to the west.

It is therefore very important that we agree to the work. It is shorter notice than usual, and we are doing all we can to let customers know of the changes.

Unfortunately, we're unable to divert into other London stations, and journeys involving stations between Reading and London will involve a replacement bus, or changing trains at Reading to Waterloo.

Some trains may not be running and journeys will be longer.

We have put a broad outline of the services impacted, which include the sleeper, on a dedicated web page www.gwr.com/reading2017 <http://www.gwr.com/reading2017>

This does not yet include specific timetables. These are still being finalised with Network Rail and they should be available on line early next week. We wanted to get the message out as soon as possible however, hence my email today rather than wait for the detailed timetable plan.

Any help you can give in alerting others to the late change would be great. As we get more information on the services that will operate they will go on the website and in the first instance please direct people there.

If I can be of further help please don't hesitate to ask.

Best wishes

Mark

Emailed Newsletter: 18/11/2017 10:37

Date: 18-Nov-17 10:37:52 AM
Subject: News from Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To:

Continuation of through trains to Paddington

We understand that plans to facilitate the continuation of our through trains, post electrification, to and from Paddington are still very much 'on track.' These will be the new hybrid trains that will run on electric as far as Newbury then on diesel down to Bedwyn. This will require the extension of our turn back siding during 2018.

Next timetable change

The effective date for this change has been put back from Mid-December to January 2nd. The reason for this would appear to be due to extensive engineering work to be carried out over the Christmas period.

Here follows details about the new timetable for 2018:

Monday to Friday

A major change is that the standard departure time for Paddington to Bedwyn services has been moved forward from xx18 to xx06, (xx07 in the evening peak). Paddington to Plymouth/Penzance trains will move from xx06 to xx03. It would appear that this is in preparation for the main change in January 2019 when, all being well we will see the introduction of new bi-mode trains on our route. The return departures from Bedwyn are largely unchanged so this will allow more turn-round time and should improve punctuality. However, there is more variation in departure times during the off-peak period, with the earliest xx33 and latest xx41.

Specific changes include:

0518 Bristol Temple Meads – Paddington (via Westbury) to call additionally at Bedwyn (0629) and Kintbury.

0756 Bedwyn – Newbury extended to Reading. Will have extended wait in Newbury, then run all stations to Reading, so will be somewhat slow.

1645 Bedwyn – Newbury extended all stations to Reading.

1954 Bedwyn – Paddington amended to run to Reading (all stations).

2033 Bedwyn – Reading all stations replaced by 2036 Bedwyn – Paddington.

Last three eastbound services run later than at present, at 2118, 2222 and 2317.

1607 Paddington – Bedwyn, due to running earlier will replace 1708 Newbury – Bedwyn shuttle.

1649 Reading – Bedwyn takes same path as current 1618 Paddington – Bedwyn, so provides connection to fast service at Newbury.

1707 Paddington – Westbury extended to Frome.

New train 1906 Paddington – Bedwyn calling Twyford, then all stations to Bedwyn. Slightly longer journey time than the current 1903 from Paddington, but avoids the potential problem of a missed connection at Newbury.

2007 Reading – Bedwyn, new all stations train. This will provide a connection at Newbury to a new 2003 Paddington to Plymouth train, which replaces the discontinued 1945 service. Not great for Pewsey and Westbury passengers who will have a longer gap of 90 minutes after the 1833.

This will add one extra train in each direction. Also a slight increase in through trains to and from Paddington.

Saturdays

0605 Bedwyn – Paddington will now terminate at Reading.

Hourly through trains then continue until 1841.

2047 Bedwyn – Reading extended to Paddington.

Last three eastbound trains run later than at present at 2135, 2219 and 2322.

Effectively an hourly incoming service with through trains from Paddington between 0807 and 1807 inclusive. All leave Paddington at xx07 compared to xx06 on weekdays.

No change to total number of trains in each direction and general level of service.

However, a major change appears to be that, despite this being a 'winter' timetable NO trains running beyond Bedwyn will stop at Bedwyn (or Hungerford). All four of the current trains that make such stops will still be running, but will run fast between Newbury and Pewsey. This clearly underlines one of our priorities for the new franchise from 2020, assuming that everything goes according to plan with regards to through services being maintained from 2019.

Sundays

Appears to be very much a case of the continuation of the long-standing two-hourly service, in this particular timetable starting from and

terminating at Reading.

Franchise consultation

The Greater Western franchise is due to be renewed in early 2020 and as part of that process a consultation is to take place next year. We have already had a meeting with the Department for Transport (DfT) team and put forward some general aspirations for the next franchise. There will be the opportunity for individual submissions to the consultation, but in the meantime we would like to hear from any station users who have specific points that we could include in our detailed response.

Emailed Newsletter: 11/12/2017 10:51

Date: 11-Dec-17 10:51:52 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To:
Attachment Westbound From January.pdf
Attachment Eastbound From January.pdf

Hi All,

Christmas Disruption

During December please check your weekend and Christmas journeys as, due to engineering works, there are significant changes from the printed timetables. Please see https://www.gwr.com/travel-updates/planned-engineering/christmas2017 or use the journey planner on www.gwr.com

January Timetables

Please find attached the new January timetables. Paper copies will be available from The Stores and The Post Office.

Of particular note is:

1) The new 0629 weekday service direct to Paddington (this is a service from Bristol).

2) The 0756 weekday service is now direct to Reading (all stops).

3) The new 1906 return from Paddington (which is off-peak).

4) The new 2007 weekday Reading to Bedwyn service.

5) Trains that used to depart Paddington at XX18 now depart XX06.

There are other minor changes so please check.

Season Ticket Renewal

With fares set to rise in January do consider whether it's worth you renewing your season ticket early, or even for a longer period.

The Future

From December 2018 we should be on the new hybrid trains. These will run on electric between Paddington and Newbury and seamlessly switch to diesel for the Newbury to Bedwyn stretch. The last obstacle to be overcome is the extension of our turn back siding. However, we remain in close discussion with GWR and NR on this and it does all look positive at the moment. After eight years of uncertainty, and much campaigning, it does feel as if we are almost there with this one.

Undoubtedly there will be some timetable changes. It would help us if you could let us know what your ideal commuter arrival time into and out of Paddington would be. This will allow us to press the case for timetable tweaks. Please also comment if you use other stations - Paddington is the most significant simply because that covers the majority of use from Bedwyn Station. Please also pass this request onto other rail users that we might not have on our email list.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 21/12/2017 16:49

Date: 21-Dec-17 04:49:24 PM
Subject: GWR Christmas Contacts for the trains
To:

Hi All,

GWR have sent us a list of senior management contacts should things go awry with train travel, in the GWR region, between 27th of December and 2nd January.

If you have an unresolvable problem, or just need to let off a bit of steam, then please email me on steve@meip and I'll contact the person available on that day.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 05/01/2018 10:57

Date: 05-Jan-18 10:57:51 AM
Subject: Notification of engineering works at Newbury
To:

Hi All,

Just a note to advise that, throughout 2018, there will be the occasional weekday engineering works at Newbury.

At present the following periods of work are confirmed:

Monday 12 March until Thursday 15 March

Monday 23 April until Thursday 26 April

Monday 4 June until Thursday 7 June

Further details are at:

https://www.gwr.com/travel-updates/planned-engineering/newbury2018

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 14/03/2018 06:17

Date: 14-Mar-18 06:17:40 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To:

Hi All,

Below is an update from Andy McRae, the GWR manager in charge of managing the passenger impact of line closures while the electrification work, between Newbury and Reading, is completed.

You'll note that the line is scheduled to reopen on Friday at 0500.

Apologies for not sending out an email before today. Bill Wells and I have been working with GWR to reduce the impact on passengers. However, I was abroad and did not have access to our email list to keep you all updated. (To keep on the right side of the data protection laws we only keep one copy and that is locked away in my house. On that note we only keep an email list, we don't store names or other contact details and we always send emails blind carbon copy. However, if you wish your name to be removed please let us know.)

During the discussions with GWR they arranged for:

1) Ticket acceptance for Bedwyn season ticket holders from Salisbury, Grateley, Andover, Whitchurch, Overton or Basingstoke with no extra charges.

2) Secured parking at Didcot Town Football Club and season tickets can be used from there. Didcot station car park is currently significantly reduced due to the construction of a multi storey car park. The Football Club is within walking distance of the station, and we will signpost the walking route, and also run a complimentary shuttle bus every 15 minutes between the Football Club and the station

3) Also agreed car park and ticket easement at Mereoak Park & Ride on the outskirts of Reading in addition to travel on JetBlack1 and route 102 service buses.

Further line closures are planned for:

- Monday 23 to Thursday 26 April
- Monday 14 to Thursday 17 May
- Monday 4 to Thursday 7 June
- Monday 9 to Thursday 12 July
- Monday 16 July to Sunday 5 August
- Tuesday 28 to Thursday 30 August
- Monday 8 to Thursday 11 October
- Monday 19 to Thursday 22 November

Please see https://www.gwr.com/travel-updates/planned-engineering/newbury2018 for lots more information.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Andy McRae
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2018 15:53
Subject: Newbury possession update

Hi All,

Work is progressing as expected and there is currently no concern over a right time hand back on Friday morning. The line will therefore be open from around 0500 on Friday as planned.

-Customer numbers generally have been quite low so far.

-Car park at Theale filling up by 0800 (85 less spaces due to bus operation), so we're tweeting out a "Theale car park is filling up" and "Theale car park is full" each morning to help manage expectations.

-Replacement bus loading figures expected tomorrow

-The 0755 Hungerford to Newbury bus service has proved popular, so we are running a second vehicle on that service.

If you have any questions please let me know.

Regards,

Andy.

Andy McRae | Senior Communications Manager – Projects & Possessions |

Emailed Newsletter: 14/03/2018 16:16

Date: 14-Mar-18 04:16:45 PM
Subject: RE: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To:

Hi All,

One correction to my earlier email: During the line closures Bedwyn season tickets will also be valid from Swindon and Chippenham.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Steve Smith [mailto:steve@meip]
Sent: Wednesday, March 14, 2018 06:18
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Hi All,

Below is an update from Andy McRae, the GWR manager in charge of managing the passenger impact of line closures while the electrification work, between Newbury and Reading, is completed.

You'll note that the line is scheduled to reopen on Friday at 0500.

Apologies for not sending out an email before today. Bill Wells and I have been working with GWR to reduce the impact on passengers. However, I was abroad and did not have access to our email list to keep you all updated. (To keep on the right side of the data protection laws we only keep one copy and that is locked away in my house. On that note we only keep an email list, we don't store names or other contact details and we always send emails blind carbon copy. However, if you wish your name to be removed please let us know.)

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Further line closures are planned for:

- Monday 23 to Thursday 26 April
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- Monday 4 to Thursday 7 June
- Monday 9 to Thursday 12 July
- Monday 16 July to Sunday 5 August
- Tuesday 28 to Thursday 30 August
- Monday 8 to Thursday 11 October
- Monday 19 to Thursday 22 November

Please see https://www.gwr.com/travel-updates/planned-engineering/newbury2018 for lots more information.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 19/03/2018 09:14

Date: 19-Mar-18 09:14:55 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains
To:

Hi All,

Anybody trying to use the trains this weekend, and this morning, will have faced cancellations.

Myself and Bill have been in touch with GWR over the weekend to try and find out why our local services have been cancelled whereas through services (HSTs) have been running. The reason is the fear of the points freezing on our turn back siding. So Network Rail have left them open so the mainline is protected, leaving us without a service.

We have put forward a suggestion that when this happens they should use some of the HST through services to stop at Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn to maintain our service.

It's looking like lunchtime, at the earliest, today for a resumption of service.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 24/03/2018 14:51

Date: 24-Mar-18 02:51:50 PM
Subject: Temporary Closure of: Brook Street (Part), Great Bedwyn (25/04/2018 - 27/04/2018)
To:
Attachment Brook Street (Part), Great Bedwyn - Notice 2.pdf
Attachment Location Plan.PDF

Hi All,

Please note the closure in case this might affect your rail journey.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Wiltshire Council

Section 14(1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

Temporary Closure of: Brook Street (Part), Great Bedwyn (Ref: TTRO 5278)

Notice is hereby given that Wiltshire Council has made an Order to close temporarily to all

traffic:

Brook Street (Part), Great Bedwyn; for a distance if approximately 50m either side of the

railway bridge.

To enable: Balfour Beatty to undertake works to powder coat palisade fencing.

Alternative route: via Brook Street (unaffected length) – Jockey Green – Oxenwood Road –

A338 – High Street, Burbage – Savernake Road – Durley – Bedwyn Common – Forest Hill

and vice versa.

The closure and diversion route will be clearly indicated by traffic signs.

This Order will come into operation on 25 April 2018 and it is anticipated that the closure will

be required between the hours of 21.00 and 06.00 until 27 April 2018. It is anticipated that

the works will take the stated duration to complete depending upon weather conditions.

Access will be maintained for residents and businesses where possible, although delays are

likely due to the nature of the works. The Order will have a maximum duration of 18 months.

Emailed Newsletter: 18/04/2018 18:34

Date: 18-Apr-18 06:34:10 PM
Subject: Line Closures At Bedwyn
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hi All,

As you're probably aware the railway line, between Bedwyn and Reading, will be closed next week. This follows the scheduled closures for this year.

- Monday 23 – Thursday 26 April
- Monday 14 – Thursday 17 May
- Saturday 2 – Thursday 7 June
- Monday 9 – Thursday 12 July
- Monday 16 July to Sunday 5 August
- Tuesday 28 – Thursday 30 August
- Monday 8 – Thursday 11 October
- Monday 19 – Thursday 22 November

This is going to again leave Bedwyn users with a between five and six hour return journey time from Bedwyn and Paddington. We have asked for at least one non-stop peak bus from Bedwyn to Didcot (and return in the evening) to substantially reduce this time (at the same time we asked for the same for Hungerford and Kintbury users). However, this idea has not been taken up, leaving us with much the same journey times as the last closure. With the line pretty much closed for all of July it's going to be a very unhappy year for rail users.

I think it's time to protest and probably the best way forward is if you are affected, then please write to Claire Perry (or Richard Benyon for Hungerford and Kintbury) requesting we have non-stop at least one non-stop bus: claire.perry.mp@parliament.uk

During the closures season tickets, from Bedwyn, will be valid at Swindon, Chippenham, Didcot, Salisbury, Grateley, Andover, Whitchurch, Overton or Basingstoke.

Many thanks

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 19/04/2018 21:30

Date: 19-Apr-18 09:30:59 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - next week's line closure
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hi All,

Following yesterday's announcement, and our response, we have got a very positive response from GWR. There will now be an additional bus service from Bedwyn at 0625, calling at Hungerford at 0640 and then running straight through to Reading arriving at 0735. That will shave an hour off the journey time to Paddington.

GWR have asked us to monitor usage of the buses. Please can you send us feedback. This is really important – because the buses are contracted in it's not possible for GWR staff to monitor how much they are used.

GWR have also asked what the optimum bus timings will be. Jane Jones (GWR) stated:

It would help when reviewing for next time if I can give an indication of where it is most needed, with some rough numbers if you have them. I can't promise anything, and I will understand if this is too big an ask, but if it is something you can do, I will pass on the information.

So please let us have the information. If you don't feedback we can't improve things.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 01/06/2018 16:42

Date: 01-Jun-18 04:42:06 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Station Bus Replacements
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hi All,

GWR have confirmed that the fast buses, for next week (Monday to Thursday), are as follows:

0625 bus depart Bedwyn

0640 bus picks up Hungerford

0725 bus arrives Reading

0745 train departs Reading

0811 train arrives Paddington

1830 train departs Paddington

1855 train arrives Reading

1908 bus departs Reading

2003 bus arrives Hungerford

2018 bus arrives Bedwyn

Many thanks

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 18/06/2018 22:54

Date: 18-Jun-18 10:54:49 PM
Subject: Proposed new rail link to Heathrow and season ticket compensation
To:

Hi All,

GWR have asked us to pass the following request to our email list:

You may well have already responded, but I thought it would be helpful to alert you to Network Rail's current public consultation on Western rail access to Heathrow Airport.

A direct rail link to the airport from the west would reduce the journey time from Reading to Heathrow to 26 minutes.

Bringing the airport 30 minutes closer to South Wales, Bristol, the South West and the Cotswolds.

The consultation can be found on networkrail.co.uk/heathrow <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/our-railway-upgrade-plan/key-projects/heathrow-rail-link/> and is a very simple ten minute survey, open until 22 June.

It is a precursor to Network Rail submitting a Development Consent Order to the Planning Inspectorate in 2019, and it would be helpful to show the breadth and strength of the support across the GWR network.

On April 18th GWR promised to send a letter to season ticket holders who are being impacted by more than 30 minutes by the Reading to Newbury work. The letter states that they are arranging for them to have a cheque for 25% of the daily rate of their tickets for each day the line is closed. Does this concern you? Did you get a letter? If not please let us know so we can pass your email address to GWR so they can get in touch with you.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 02/07/2018 13:12

Date: 02-Jul-18 01:12:50 PM
Subject: Photo opportunity at Bedwyn station - 1820 this evening (July 2nd)
To:

Hi All,

GWR have just informed us that the 1707 from Paddington this evening (July 2nd), arriving Bedwyn shortly after 1820, will be one of the new nine car IET trains. This will be the first time that an IET has called at Bedwyn.

It's a significant milestone for Bedwyn station – in 2009 electrification as far as Newbury was announced. This would have relegated Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn to a diesel shuttle to Newbury i.e. no more direct trains to Paddington. It was a long a painful battle for us at the passenger group as we campaigned to get this decision reversed. The decision to purchase bi-mode IET trains (electric to Newbury, then seamlessly switching to diesel for the run down to Bedwyn) saved the day.

Our new service, following the description in the previous paragraph, is not set to come in until January 2019. However, there will be some phasing in of the new IET trains as the year progresses.

GWR are sending a photographer to take some photos of the new train being welcomed into our station this evening.

If you can join me there I'd be very grateful.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 07/07/2018 12:50

Date: 07-Jul-18 12:50:56 PM
Subject: Next Bedwyn line closures
To:

Hi All,

A quick reminder that the next stage of Newbury electrification work starts this Monday 9 July and runs until Thursday 12 July, the line will be open on Friday 13 July and for the weekend of 14 and 15 July.

It then closes on Monday 16 July and will not re-open until Sunday 5 August. This second line closure includes weekends and weekdays.

More details including diversionary routes, bus times and alternative car park arrangements are on GWR's dedicated Newbury upgrade web page

https://www.gwr.com/travel-updates/planned-engineering/newbury2018

Please note that from July 16th GWR are planning to re-time the 0440 Bedwyn bus departure to 0435 to connect with an 0530 bus departure from Newbury to Didcot. This will then connect with the 0614 train departure from Didcot, arriving Paddington 0706. This is still a long journey and the recommendation, for Paddington commuters, remains the 0625 bus departure from Bedwyn (picking up in Hungerford then direct to Reading) to connect with the 0745 Reading departure, arriving Paddington 0811.

The return journey is recommended as the 1830 from Paddington, arriving Reading at 1855 then the 1908 bus, arriving Hungerford 2003 and Bedwyn 2018.

We will be thinking of you all that have to battle through this.

Sincerely

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 14/07/2018 12:25

Date: 14-Jul-18 12:25:59 PM
Subject: This Sunday's trains and Monday's first bus
To:

Hi All,

Sunday

GWR is advising customers planning to travel on long distance intercity services on Sunday 15 July that a revised timetable will be in place with a significantly reduced number of trains in operation.
Long-distance services – including routes between Paddington and Bristol, South Wales, Oxford and Devon and Cornwall will be most affected, with some changes to suburban services in the West. Trains that do run will be extremely busy.

Local stopping services in the Thames Valley are expected to run as normal.

Passengers are advised to travel as early as possible, and to consider switching their travel plans to alternate days. To help with this, ticket restrictions have been removed from services on Saturday 14 and Monday 16 July, so that customers with tickets for Sunday, including Advance fixed train tickets can travel on other services. Ticket acceptance has also been agreed with CrossCountry trains.

Those who choose not to travel will be entitled to a full refund on their unused ticket (the GWR £10 administration fee is also waivered). To claim a refund please click here <https://www.gwr.com/help-and-support/refunds-and-compensation/unused-ticket-refunds> .

Monday

The 0435 bus from Bedwyn (from Monday onwards) is still showing on some systems as 0440. It is actually as follows:

Travel by	Leaving	From	Platform	To	Arriving	Platform	Duration
	04:35	**Bedwyn [BDW]**		Newbury [NBY]	**05:24**		0h 49m
	05:30	Newbury [NBY]		Didcot Parkway [DID]	**06:05**		0h 35m
	06:14	Didcot Parkway [DID]	5	**Reading [RDG]**	**06:27**	10	0h 13m

Kind Regards

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 18/07/2018 09:07

Date: 18-Jul-18 09:07:51 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains: Siding extension and parking
To:

Hi All,

In order for GWR to run new five-car bi-mode Intercity Express Trains (IETs) between Bedwyn and Paddington, there is a requirement for a short extension to the turn-back siding at Bedwyn.

As a result, the existing foot crossing will be closed and re-sited around ten metres west to a new location. The footpath will also be realigned. The work to facilitate this is scheduled to be carried out during the planned closure of the railway between Tuesday August 28th and Thursday August 30th inclusive, with most of the noisier work taking place during the daytime.

This extension will enable five-car IETs to operate Bedwyn to Paddington services from January 2019.

We are also aware that parking remains an issue at Bedwyn. Due to a proposed housing development, Hungerford is set to lose 80 car parking spaces at its railway station. This will undoubtedly push more cars our way. We are currently working with GWR to identify land, in the Great Bedwyn area, that could be used as a station car park.

Meanwhile our shop and Post Office continue to lose trade because local people find it difficult to park near the shop or Post Office. If you make use of our station, and don't already do so, please consider making use of our shop and Post Office.

Many thanks

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 25/07/2018 09:42

Date: 25-Jul-18 09:42:48 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains - SWT Strike
To:

Hi All,

In case you are not using the buses, and instead are travelling on South West Trains then please note that tomorrow (26th July) SWT staff are taking strike action. Trains will be running but subject to a revised timetable. Therefore please check your journey.

During the Newbury to Reading line closure GWR season tickets are valid on SWT from Andover, Grateley, Whitchurch and Basingstoke.

On another point the 0625 bus, from Bedwyn, should be running better now. Last week was awful with it frequently failing to turn up. However, GWR agreed to switch the operator and took on board that this is the most critical bus of the morning. Please advise us if you are still having any difficulties.

With the start of the school holidays there will be more buses available to operate the replacement service. Until this week GWR were competing with the school runs for spare buses. This involved bringing buses and drivers down from as far away as Scotland. So if you saw a Loch Ness Monster excursion coach pulling into the station you may well not have been seeing things! J

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 22/08/2018 16:11

Date: 22-Aug-18 04:11:52 PM
Subject: Parking at Bedwyn and Newbury electrification update
To:

Hi All,

You are probably aware of how tight street parking is getting at Bedwyn. This is causing difficulty for users of The Stores (opposite the old red telephone box) and The Post Office / Bakery (on Church Street) to park. In particular The Stores is now trading at a loss. If you make use of our free parking please can you support The Stores – perhaps think of it as a small parking fee?

Below is an email from Mark Hopwood (MD of GWR). Please note the revised line closure dates and the compensation arrangement for season ticket holders.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Mark.HopwoodGWR-MD

Sent: Wednesday, August 22, 2018 14:54
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Newbury electrification update

Dear Steve

A quick reminder that the next stage of Newbury electrification work is next week and runs from Tuesday 28 to Thursday 30 August. This will be followed by a four-day closure from Monday 8th to Thursday 11 October.

There was a further four-day closure planned for November. However, Network Rail have now confirmed that they can complete the programme working in the late evening and overnight and they will no longer need to close the line during the day. We will be updating all our customer information, and we are delighted that progress has been so good.

More details on next week's work including diversionary routes, bus times and alternative car park arrangements are on our dedicated Newbury web page
https://www.gwr.com/travel-updates/planned-engineering/newbury2018
<https://www.gwr.com/travel-updates/planned-engineering/newbury2018>

You may be aware that last week we sent letters to season ticket holders updating them on the remaining work and reminding them of the goodwill package that we are arranging for all season ticket holders impacted by more than an hour. This confirmed that cheque payments would be made in two tranches. The first cheque will be paid in September and the other once the work is fully complete.

Regrettably, the mailing missed several season ticket holders due to an error made by our contractors. Letters are being issued to those we missed, however, this will not arrive until after the Bank Holiday. There will be no delay in issuing the goodwill cheques however, these will be issued as one batch in September.

We are now starting to come towards the end of the Newbury electrification programme. Intercity Express Trains have started to operate in the Kennet Valley, and with work also starting next week on the new sidings for Bedwyn we are making good progress on bringing the new trains and the additional capacity our customers need.

Thank you for your continued patience and support

Mark

Mark Hopwood | Managing Director | Great Western Railway
Milford House | Swindon | Wiltshire | SN1 1HL

Emailed Newsletter: 14/09/2018 15:51

Date: 14-Sep-18 03:51:28 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains. Access for All Funding – Call for Nominations
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Attachment DSC_0334_resized.jpg
Attachment DSC_0335_resized.jpg
Attachment 14_DFG4239Rs.jpg

Hi All,

Please see an email below regarding funding to improve station access for those with disabilities. As far as I'm aware Bedwyn is fairly good (ramps and step free access). However, I'm no expert on these issues so please get back to us if you feel that there is something that could be improved via this funding.

For Hungerford, Kintbury and Pewsey users please handle your own nominations.

On Wednesday GWR tested the extended Bedwyn siding with the new five car IET trains – these are the bi-modes that will retain our direct Paddington service. Please find attached three photos. For press use please contact Andy.McRae@gwr

The eagle eyed amongst you will notice that the signal, in the siding at Bedwyn, has been repositioned. Also the 2 / 3 car stop sign has been moved. This allows the existing turbo trains to park at the end of the siding. This should help those in Manor Road that experience noise pollution.

On 6th September myself and Bill (representing BTPG), Felicity Hillman (daily passenger representative for BTPG) and representatives from Pewsey met with senior GWR and NR management, and staff from Claire Perry's office, to discuss various issues.

The things BTPG raised were:

1. Any remaining issues over the current blockades: GWR took on board the problems when the train and buses miss one another.

2. General punctuality and reliability: GWR are very aware of the problems. There's been a lot of transition this year which is causing problems.

3. Missed connections at Newbury: This is an issue stretching back many years. Once again we stressed the need to hold trains.

4. Network Rail policy of automatically putting us on buses when there is a chance that the points, on our turn back siding, freeze: They hope to stop doing this or make unscheduled stops on through services to retain service.

5. To have short notice cancellations properly announced at the station: They took this on board. We stressed a 'real person' over the PA would be good.

6. Discussions around the May 2019 timetable: These are ongoing –

we'll let you know when GWR come up with a formalised proposal. We are pushing to retain what we have (but faster due to the IETs) with an extra service around 0730.

7. More parking required at Bedwyn: With Hungerford set to permanently lose 96 spaces we stressed our concerns for Great Bedwyn. GWR can only partially fund a car park at Bedwyn because it would not be revenue earning. Therefore any solution would need to be a joint enterprise across a number of funding bodies. If station user parking is causing you a problem please write to the PC and your MP to raise your concerns. This will help keep it an active topic.

8. Westbound and Devizes parkway: We restated our wish to connect with the west country and our support for the proposal to one day have a Devizes Parkway station.

9. Commuter train west: We requested this again. It's an odd situation that all stations west of Reading (on our line) do not have a service to commute to Bath, Bristol or Exeter.

10. Marlborough bus link: We suggested that the only feasible way to improve this is if there was a dedicated bus service.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Mark.HopwoodGWR-MD

Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2018 14:11
Subject: Access for All Funding – Call for Nominations

Dear Steve

The Department for Transport (DfT) have asked Great Western Railway and Network Rail to nominate stations for Access for All funding. £300 million is available to station projects across the UK, with the improvements being delivered within Control Period 6 (2019 to 2024). Selected stations will receive an accessible route into the station and to and between each platform.

There is no limit to the number of nominations we can make, but all nominations need to be ranked against specific criteria in the Appendix below and the DfT has asked for evidence to demonstrate how the stations meet the criteria.

We are working together to prepare our nominations and we would be very grateful if you could review the criteria and let us know which station(s) you think should be nominated and why by Monday 1 October.

To help with that we have created an online survey form on the following link https://tinyurl.com/y7no3k9l <https://tinyurl.com/y7no3k9l> . Please use the document upload function at the bottom of the form to provide any evidence to support the nomination.

Please feel free to submit your own thoughts, or to send to others who you think might have suggestions. This is a nationwide bidding process and the additional detail that local knowledge can supply will be invaluable.

Schemes that have been previously been deferred do NOT need to be resubmitted. These go forward automatically, and we do not therefore need to rebid for lifts at Cheltenham Spa, Weston-super-mare or Theale.

Access for All funding is limited, it will not cover all the improvements we want to see, but with your help we believe we can submit compelling nominations that will help us deliver the more accessible railway that our customers want and deserve.

If you would like further information on the process, or on any aspect of our service, please do not hesitate to contact either of us and we will do our best to help.

Best wishes

Mark Hopwood and Mark Langman

MD GWR

MD NR Western Region

APPENDIX: Department for Transport Access for All funding

Nominated stations will be assessed primarily against similar criteria to those used in previous Control Periods.

These are:

· Footfall, using figures published by the Office of Rail and Road (we will supply these)

· Stations where there is a particularly high incidence of disability in the area, based on Census data

· A particular local circumstance such as the proximity of hospitals, a school for disabled children or a military rehabilitation centre for example, or stations with relatively high numbers of interchange passengers

· The availability of third party funding

· Stations that would help to fill "gaps" in accessibility on the network

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For more information on our range of services or to book tickets online, visit GWR.com <http://www.gwr.com>

Emailed Newsletter: 04/10/2018 08:42

Date: 04-Oct-18 08:42:41 AM
Subject: Newbury electrification work
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hi All,

Please find below an email from Mark Hopwood, MD of GWR.

Please note the dates of the line closure next week.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Mark.HopwoodGWR-MD

Subject: Newbury electrification work

Dear Steve

A quick reminder that the next stage of Newbury electrification work runs from Monday 8 to Thursday 11 October. This will be the final weekday closure. The previously planned four day closure in November has now been amended to late evening and overnight work only.

There will also be overnight and weekend work in October, most notably on Sunday 21st.

More details including diversionary routes, bus times and alternative car park arrangements are on our dedicated Newbury web page https://www.gwr.com/travel-updates/planned-engineering/newbury2018

<https://www.gwr.com/travel-updates/planned-engineering/newbury2018>

To keep you updated with the progress of goodwill payments to our customers, we will be sending out the first wave of cheques by the end of September, with the second coming once the work is fully complete.

Network Rail have made great progress with the electrification work, and I am really pleased that they have been able to reduce the number of weekday closures.

Intercity Express Trains have started to operate in the Kennet Valley and along with all electric Electrostar trains replacing older turbo trains from January 2019, we can look forward to bringing the new trains and added capacity you rightfully expect.

It has not been a pain free experience and we are grateful to you for your patience and support while work was completed.

I would also like to take this opportunity to apologise for the recent poor performance of our services. There are many reasons for this, including the final, most complex stage of the transition from one fleet to another. We know it is not good enough and we are working closely with Network Rail to return to a stable railway.

Best wishes

Mark

Mark Hopwood | Managing Director | Great Western Railway
Milford House | Swindon | Wiltshire | SN1 1HL

Emailed Newsletter: 07/12/2018 09:22

Date: 07-Dec-18 09:22:48 AM
Subject: Letter from the MD of GWR
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Attachment New Trains Update.pdf

Hi All,

Please find attached a letter relating to the delayed introduction of IET trains from January.

This does not affect the IET through services, which stop at Bedwyn, or the standard timetable. It just means that the existing Turbo service will remain in place for longer than anticipated.

If you make use of street parking in Great Bedwyn please remember to make use of our shop (opposite the old telephone box) and Post Office / Bakery on Church Street. The lack of street parking affects the trade of these businesses so if you do use up a space then please can you offer something back to the village by making use of our shops?

Best wishes and let's hope for a better 2019.

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 15/12/2018 15:13

Date: 15-Dec-18 03:13:35 PM
Subject: Improvement work on the GWR network at Christmas
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Please find below an email from the MD of GWR regarding travel over Christmas. It's important that you double check any journeys you make over the break.

Just in case this is our last email before Christmas please accept best wishes for Christmas and the New Year from Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group.

2018 has been a particularly difficult year for users of Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. We hope 2019 will improve but please be assured we'll continue to press GWR for service continuity and reliability.

Best wishes

Steve and Bill

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Mark.HopwoodGWR-MD
Sent: Friday, December 14, 2018 09:47
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Improvement work on the GWR network at Christmas

Dear Steve

I promised to keep you updated on improvement work over the Christmas period and thought it would be helpful to share the link to our dedicated web page, which details the work scheduled to take place between 23 December - 3 January 2019.

https://www.gwr.com/travel-updates/planned-engineering/christmas - there is a journey planning tool on the link that allows customers to check individual journeys.

Our advice remains to try and travel by 22 December and not wait until Christmas Eve for instance when work will have started.

It is also worth mentioning that on Sunday 16 December Network Rail will be working on the Overhead Line Equipment at Didcot Parkway, services to and from the station will be diverted or replaced with road transport.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Best wishes and season's greetings.

Mark

Emailed Newsletter: 25/04/2019 16:58

Date: 25-Apr-19 04:58:54 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group News
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

We have just heard from GWR that, following the corrections to the cameras for driver only operation, from the May timetable change they will start to operate the new IEP trains out of the siding at Bedwyn. This will replace the majority of the old Turbo trains – a few will be retained to form the half hourly connecting service.

Please note that from May 4th to May 6th (the May bank holiday weekend) Pewsey, Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn will be served by a bus replacement service. This is to allow for a bridge replacement between Kintbury and Newbury. Please check online for times. Trains will run from Newbury to Reading but on a revised timetable. Pewsey will be served by a bus to Swindon.

We (Bill Wells and I) are continuing to work with GWR regarding the December timetable change. This will be when GWR make significant timetable changes to make good use of the performance of the new IEP trains. GWR have been listening to our concerns - including a meeting with the MD of GWR where we sat in his office with copious paper copies of timetables to try and get the best result for Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. We hope that there will be good news to share once the new timetable is finalised between GWR and Network Rail.

We are disappointed that planning permission has been granted on the upper car park at Hungerford. The loss of spaces will likely cause some rail users to make use of Bedwyn. This in turn will increase our parking problem. We have been working with GWR to identify further parking areas in the village. However, without the car park being revenue generating GWR would only be able to partially fund it.

If you do park in Great Bedwyn please make use of our local services – especially the shop and post office which both suffer from the lack of spaces for people to pull up and pop in and make purchases.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 14/09/2019 09:41

Date: 14-Sep-19 09:41:56 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group (BTPG) - Latest News
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All,

Please find below the latest news from BTPG.

December 2019 Timetable

In 2009 the Department for Transport announced electrification as far as Newbury, relegating Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn to a diesel shuttle service to and from Newbury. It's been a long campaign but ten years on we've finally got there, and from December 15th 2019 we are scheduled to have a better service than ever.

Therefore we would like to take this opportunity to present an update on the new timetable. This timetable will be significant as it incorporates many changes following the full introduction of the IET fleet by GWR. The introduction of this major change has been delayed due to the well-publicised problems over timetables throughout the country during recent times.

In July 2018 GWR began a process of engagement with local stakeholders over the composition of the December 2019 timetable. This was a welcome move by GWR, as previously timetables would be introduced with little or no consultation. As a result, we have attended three stakeholder meetings and had considerable dialogue with GWR, which included a very useful discussion in the Managing Director's office!

When the draft Monday to Friday timetable was shared with us we had some specific concerns which we put forward to GWR. In particular, the provision of only two through trains before 0900 and a lengthy wait in Newbury for off-peak Bedwyn to Paddington services. But after reconsideration, we are pleased that GWR have been able to make several very positive changes to these, and some other services. We are sure that these will be of benefit to users, and we thank GWR for their efforts.

We must point out that the timetable still has to be given final approval, so at this stage we will give a general overview. We should be able to give more details in the next few weeks.

Following our concerns over the morning peak service as originally proposed, we are pleased that there will now be an evenly spaced, twice hourly service between the hours of 0530 and 0830. Furthermore, most of these trains will be IETs that will operate through to Paddington, and will have quicker journey times.

The core service to Paddington between the peak periods will generally retain the standard hourly departure time from Bedwyn, namely xx41. However, unlike the peak services, most trains will only see a modest improvement in journey time, though this is unlikely to be much of a concern to most users. There will also be some more through trains to Paddington later in the evening.

The evening peak will see a continuation of the current twice hourly service, with through trains from Paddington alternating with connecting turbo shuttles from Newbury. At present, this sequence operates between 1606 and 1906. However, partly due to a suggestion from BTPG to make use of a turbo which would otherwise have waited in Newbury, that sequence is now extended by an extra hour to 2006, when an additional through train from Paddington will run.

The core service from Paddington will continue to operate on an hourly

basis, with most departures at xx07. The journey times for these trains will show a clear improvement on current timings in most cases. We are pleased that the current intention is that the late service from Paddington (2220) will continue to run through to Bedwyn.

The timetables for Saturdays and Sundays show little change from those currently in operation. In general terms, hourly throughout the day on Saturdays, with most trains running to and from Paddington. Turbos will be deployed on later evening services. A two hourly service will continue on Sundays.

Unfortunately, there is no direct improvement for anyone wishing to travel further west. However, due to the introduction of a two hourly service to Exeter St David's, which will call at Newbury, it will be possible to travel to Newbury, then double back to the west every two hours. Connections at Newbury appear to be reasonable, so this is a welcome change. The Exeter trains will operate throughout the week, though it should be noted that as our trains only run every two hours on Sundays, opportunities then may be more limited.

We will now be giving our attention to the situation regarding travel to the west. We did make some suggestions as part of our response to the Franchise Consultation last year. Our main suggestion concerns the potential provision of an early semi-fast service down the Berks & Hants line to Westbury, at least, or preferably to Bristol Temple Meads. We have drawn up a specific proposal for such a service, along with a similar mid-evening return service. We hope to work with other interested parties to try to bring this to fruition in a subsequent timetable change.

Given the original pre-IET situation, we welcome the new timetable and thank GWR for engaging with us over its preparation. We look forward to receiving final confirmation shortly, when more details will then become available.

Station Improvements

The eagle eyed will notice that the red sign, on a pole, has been replaced at the station. This was following a request from us. We have also asked for the following improvements:

1. To double the shelter space at Bedwyn station. The existing shelter is not big enough to supply shelter for the passenger volumes.

2. To reposition the ticket machine to deal with the glare from the sun.

3. To improve the station aesthetics by replacing rusting wire fences.

4. To extend the 'nose first' parking at the station.

Keep us Posted

BTPG is run by Steve Smith and Bill Wells. We are both former commuters. As we do not now use the station on a daily basis we need you to tell us the problems you regularly encounter. We are particularly interested in

hearing about (a) regular poor performance (b) missed connections at Newbury and (c) when delays are badly handled causing the problem to become worse. However, feel free to contact us about any issue regarding the service or Bedwyn Station.

Best wishes

Steve Smith and Bill Wells

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

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Emailed Newsletter: 13/11/2019 16:57

Date: 13-Nov-19 04:57:43 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All,

December Timetable Changes

From December 15th, the biggest timetable change since the 1970s will take place in the GWR region. For the first time, BTPG and other stakeholders have been consulted during the production of the new timetable.

We had some initial concerns, in particular with regards to the proposed morning peak service. However, we are pleased that GWR have addressed almost all of these concerns. As a result, we feel that the final result represents our best ever service.

The new times will be appearing on the GWR website, and pocket timetables will be available from The Stores and the Post Office in time for the change. Meanwhile, we can give a general overview.

Eastbound departures from Bedwyn (to Paddington unless stated). 0534, 0601, 0626, 0651, 0700 (Newbury), 0729, 0750 (Reading), 0831, 0924, 1041. Then hourly until 1741, followed by a mix of through trains and some to Newbury.

Incoming trains from Paddington start from 0707, and then run hourly (as now) until 1907, with additional trains from Newbury during the evening peak period. There will be further departures from Paddington at 1936 (change at Newbury, and 2006 (direct). The final through train at 2220 is retained.

This will give an hourly service, increased to half-hourly during the morning and evening peak periods. The service on Saturdays and Sundays will show little change from the current pattern, though journey times will be reduced.

Monday to Friday journey times are reduced, in most cases and the majority will be operated by the new IETs. All in all, a very long way from the original plan of a shuttle service to and from Newbury, with

just a couple of through trains to and from Paddington per day!

We will now be looking at the lack of trains running further west and poor connectivity in that direction. We are putting together various suggestions as to how that might be addressed, and we hope to work with other interested parties in that regard.

Changes to Off-Peak

Unfortunately it is not all good news. GWR have switched a lot of weekday off-peak trains to full fare. Along with others we made a number of representations to GWR and, as a result, the following is the present situation from Monday December 16th:

· The 0831, replacing the previous 0841 off-peak, is a peak service with the 0924 now forming the first off-peak service. Network Railcards and Senior Railcards are only going to continue on the 0924 on a trial basis.

· In the afternoon the last off-peak service, from Paddington, is the 1507 and the next off-peak is not until 1907. This means the 1608, 1708, 1807 and 1837 are all full fare services.

GWR have stated that advance tickets will now be made available on our IET-operated services, so this should be of some help. For example an advanced purchase single ticket on the 0831 can be had for as little at £9.50 single, returning on the 1807 also for £9.50. Advanced purchase tickets are available up to 1800 on the day before travel and prices vary depending on how many tickets have been sold for the service you are attempting to book.

For 'walk on fares' there are other ways to save money at peak times. For example one could catch the 0831, Bedwyn to Newbury, for £8.10, alight then catch the 0919 Newbury to Paddington (arriving 1000) for an additional £17.00. Similar options are available by taking the 0831 to Reading on one ticket then purchasing a second ticket for the 0942 departure from Reading to Paddington (arriving 1007).

On the way home some of the non-IET trains from Paddington to Reading, and all of the Cross Rail services, are off peak. Although this makes for longer journey times it does allow one to travel with off-peak fares at peak times.

We will continue to request that the aforementioned 0831 and 1608 services are returned to off-peak.

Christmas Travelling

As well as the big changes from 15th December, there will also be a temporary timetable in place while Network Rail work on infrastructure upgrades over Christmas and New Year.

This will affect services from 24th December to 1st January 2020 and includes the closure of Paddington station on 24th December and 27th December.

There is more information on www.GWR.com/Christmas

Best wishes

Steve Smith and Bill Wells

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

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Emailed Newsletter: 13/11/2019 23:53

Date: 13-Nov-19 11:53:52 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

In our earlier email we weren't completely clear with the evening trains from Paddington to Bedwyn. The relevant paragraph should have read:

Incoming trains from Paddington start from 0707, and then run hourly (as now) until 1907, with additional trains from Newbury during the evening peak period. There will be further departures from Paddington at 1737 (change at Newbury), 1837 (direct), 1936 (change at Newbury), and 2006 (direct). The final through train at 2220 is retained.

Best wishes

Steve and Bill

Emailed Newsletter: 20/03/2020 14:16

Date: 20-Mar-20 02:16:55 PM
Subject: Changes to GWR Services – Response to Covid-19
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

To enable GWR to still operate, the service from Bedwyn is going to become a shuttle between Bedwyn and Newbury/Reading. The times are not yet finalised. Please keep an eye on:
https://www.gwr.com/travel-updates/live-network-updates/disruption-information

Kind Regards

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 22/04/2020 08:08

Date: 22-Apr-20 08:08:53 AM
Subject: GWR are asking
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

The Head of Public Affairs at GWR has contacted us with the following request:

You will be aware that we are currently operating a revised key worker and essential travel timetable. We are also starting to plan for recovery. This will be phased and will of course also need to fit with advice from Government as the lockdown starts to lift, but it is important that we develop plans. As part of that we would like your help in two specific areas:

1) I want to build a comprehensive list of trains used for school and college transport. I need location, journey time and ideally details of the school. We don't know when they will open but we want to be as prepared as we can be. Any information you have on this will be very helpful.

2) Are there any gaps in the current revised timetable, or tweaks that you think we should make to support a gradual return to work?

Please let us know.

Best wishes and stay safe

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 11/05/2020 16:22

Date: 11-May-20 04:22:56 PM
Subject: New Monday to Friday timetable from May 18th
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hi All,

GWR have announced a new timetable from Monday May 18th. We have listed a summary of the Monday to Friday services for Bedwyn, below. They are all on the online planners. GWR request you still double check the timings.

The government advice is you should avoid train travel unless absolutely necessary.

Bedwyn departure times:

0534 Reading

0601 Reading

0651 Paddington

0700 Reading

0729 Paddington

0831 Reading

0924 Reading

1033 Reading

1141 Reading

1237 Reading

1341 Reading

1437 Reading

1541 Reading

1636 Reading

1741 Reading

1840 Paddington

2000 Reading

2053 Reading

2137 Reading

2337 Reading

Direct trains back from Paddington:

1707

1807

Check online for the Reading to Bedwyn trains. Or email me for a full PDF copy of the timetable.

Best wishes and stay safe

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 20/05/2020 17:37

Date: 20-May-20 05:37:45 PM
Subject: New time table
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

GWR are asking for feedback on the new timetable which began on Monday May 18th.

Please let us have any feedback,

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 01/02/2021 09:57

Date: 01-Feb-21 09:57:56 AM
Subject: Opportunity for improved rail services at Kintbury, Hungerford, Bedwyn and Pewsey stations.
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

The Department for Transport is funding a study into the potential for a new rail station to serve the Devizes Community Area and this development has potential to improve services for customers in the Pewsey, Bedwyn and Hungerford areas. It is proposed that the new station, known as Devizes Gateway will be 3.4 miles from Devizes Market Place and plans for a connecting bus are being developed.

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group and Pewsey Vale Rail User Group have campaigned for a number of years for improved connections to the West (for Bath, Bristol, Salisbury and the South West etc.) and consideration is now being given to extending the services which currently stop at Bedwyn, through to Westbury, which would enable passengers to travel to Devizes, and also to connect at Westbury for destinations further West.

The Devizes Development Partnership are keen to hear the views of people living in the Hungerford, Bedwyn and Pewsey areas. Please complete the survey https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdfzUtlPkTxpwNwY4gDz3lpZw9Fbdgx7J2hz6lEsuij3cbmlw/viewform?usp=sf_link - noting that Devizes Gateway (and improvements to the Bedwyn service) is unlikely to be open before 2025 so please answer on the basis of how you would travel if COVID-19 did not exist.

More information about the project can be found at www.devizes.org.uk <https://www.google.com/url?q=http://www.devizes.org.uk&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1612176615841000&usg=AFQjCNEjBNZlr6axNy8FKD9N_2GCqZzqWg> .

Many thanks

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 12/02/2021 15:08

Date: 12-Feb-21 03:08:28 PM
Subject: Opportunity for improved rail services at Kintbury, Hungerford, Bedwyn and Pewsey stations.
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Thank you to everybody who has completed the survey for the proposed new

Devizes Gateway Station. The survey closes in one week's time. If you haven't completed it yet, and feel you would like to, the details are below.

Your voice does count.

Many thanks

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Steve Smith [mailto:steve@meip]
Sent: Monday, February 1, 2021 10:00
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Opportunity for improved rail services at Kintbury, Hungerford, Bedwyn and Pewsey stations.

Hello All,

The Department for Transport is funding a study into the potential for a new rail station to serve the Devizes Community Area and this development has potential to improve services for customers in the Pewsey, Bedwyn and Hungerford areas. It is proposed that the new station, known as Devizes Gateway will be 3.4 miles from Devizes Market Place and plans for a connecting bus are being developed.

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The Devizes Development Partnership are keen to hear the views of people living in the Hungerford, Bedwyn and Pewsey areas. Please complete the survey https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdfzUtlPkTxpwNwY4gDz3lpZw9Fbdgx7J2hz6lEsuij3cbmlw/viewform?usp=sf_link - noting that Devizes Gateway (and improvements to the Bedwyn service) is unlikely to be open before 2025 so please answer on the basis of how you would travel if COVID-19 did not exist.

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Many thanks

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 16/05/2021 08:37

Date: 16-May-21 08:37:30 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group: Please check your journey

To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

As you are aware the faults found in the IET trains are affecting the timetable.

GWR announced late on Friday that the Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury services will revert, from Monday, to a diesel shuttle service to Newbury. In the same press release it implied this was for the entire summer. We are seeking urgent clarification from GWR as losing our direct Paddington service is not something we will accept.

In the meantime the timetable for tomorrow (Monday May 16th) through to Friday is showing us as a diesel shuttle service to Newbury with the exception of the 0601, 0626, 0651 and 0729 Bedwyn departures which remain direct to Paddington. In the evening only the 1836 is showing as direct Paddington to Bedwyn with the addition of the 1636 direct to Hungerford.

From Monday 24th May the online timetables are showing us as back to normal (i.e. restoration of our direct services to Paddington).

As mentioned we are seeking urgent clarification from GWR as to the full extent of the diesel shuttle service to Newbury. In the meantime please always check your journey.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 17/05/2021 12:50

Date: 17-May-21 12:50:43 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

We've heard back from GWR senior management:

We don't yet know when we will be back to full IET strength. We cannot therefore say how long we will need to put mitigations in place. The reference to summer was to remind everyone that the new summer timetable started today. It was not intended to imply that this would be the position for the summer.

For now, the journey planner will need to be updated weekly as we assess the position with availability. I will keep in touch with you as things develop and will make sure that BTPG (through you and Bill) have the most up to date information. I appreciate that this does not give you the certainty of a date for direct services to return, but hopefully it explains the reference to "summer plan".

We've responded with:

As you probably can guess we're getting a bit of a backlash from our passengers. It's come at a significant time with the lockdown easing. It's not just the inconvenience of a longer journey, platform changes and risk of missed connections, but also the concern of having to change at Newbury with Covid in the air.

We do understand that putting us on a diesel shuttle quickly frees up IETs. However, it reinforces the view that Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury are the first to be impacted when there is disruption e.g. short notice terminations are common at Newbury when GWR need to get the trains running back on time.

Can we therefore ask that we are given some form of priority when units come back into service? E.g. just one IET back would make a big difference by giving additional direct services for passengers to work around.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 30/05/2021 07:08

Date: 30-May-21 07:08:45 AM
Subject: Bedwyn to Newbury shuttle service
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All,

We have received the following email from the MD of GWR, regarding the current situation.

It looks as if we are stuck for the foreseeable with the majority of our trains, with the exception of a few peak trains, being shuttle service between Bedwyn and Newbury.

Thank you for letting us know about the poor timings for school children returning from Newbury, poor connection times at Newbury, the short notice cancellations and the poor quality of information when things go wrong. We have taken all these points up with GWR.

For now please (i) always check your journey online and (ii) let us have any feedback.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Hi Steve

Thanks to you and Bill for your emails and for passing on the comments coming through from Bedwyn users. I've asked Jane to come back to you

separately on the customer information point you sent through below.

I asked our timetable team to go away and try and find a fix for some of the school trains back to Hungerford, Kintbury and Bedwyn. We won't be able to put them back to their original timings, but certainly move them closer, and I am hopeful we will have this resolved for services next week. We will confirm as soon as we have everything in place, and will welcome your help in spreading the news to your members.

We have also had a look at the connection times at Newbury for the Bedwyn shuttle. This is more challenging with both our services coming to/from the South West and the amount of freight on the line. In the evening peak, even with the connection at Newbury, timings are comparable to the direct services we usually run, but I understand the frustration of waiting for the shuttle and we are looking at it. We would of course prefer to bring back the direct services, something I know you want too! We will return these to the timetable as soon as possible. I am cautious however at putting a firm date on that while Hitachi continue to work through the repair plan for the IETs.

We will keep you updated on any further mitigations re the connections and will confirm the school services as soon as we can. I am really grateful to you and BTPG members for alerting us to these key services. I do understand it is frustrating that we cannot get everything back to normal more quickly. Things are better, and the loan of additional Class 387s has been a great help in plugging the missing IETs gap, but there is still a gap, and we can't yet return weekday directs.

I'm therefore very grateful for your patience and that of our customers at Bedwyn, Kintbury and Hungerford as we work to resolve this, along with Hitachi and other industry partners. As the picture gets clearer I suggest Jane sets up a meeting with you and Bill, and some members of our team, and potentially Hitachi. In the meantime, we will keep in touch and again thank you for your help in mitigating the temporary timetable.

Best wishes

Mark

Mark Hopwood CBE | Managing Director | Great Western Railway
Milford House | 1 Milford Street | Swindon | SN1 1HL

Emailed Newsletter: 13/06/2021 22:39

Date: 13-Jun-21 10:39:45 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains - Video call with GWR
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Bill and I wrote to GWR expressing our dissatisfaction with the current Bedwyn to Newbury shuttle service replacing the failed IETs. This led to a video call with GWR senior management on Friday morning. Here follows the points raised and GWR's responses.

1. From our research the three stations appear to be, by far, the

most affected of all the stations on the GWR network served by IETS. We understand, according to journey planners, that almost all other core direct services to and from Paddington, previously operated by IETs have been restored, either using cleared IETs or class 387s. As previously mentioned without a west facing bay at Newbury a connecting shuttle service is problematic and, also being at mercy of the freight paths, requires some lengthy change over times. GWR agreed that we are the worst affected stations and acknowledge the frustration and upset this has caused. They are very sorry for the situation and are listening to us.

2. The return train, for school children, from Newbury is poorly timed. GWR are trying their best to restore this train. It's proving difficult but there is hope. We have requested a bus replacement service to get the school children home in a more timely manner.

3. There is often confusion at Newbury with staff not informed of platform changes, short notice cancellations or timing changes. GWR have agreed to look into this. We have also asked for a senior member of GWR staff to be assigned to Newbury station to better manage the situation.

4. We note that some 10 car sets are still in operation. We asked if would be possible to split at least one of these. Perhaps if peak time loadings are an issue, and given we still have a partial direct peak service, a ten car unit could be split at Paddington at around 0900 and reinstated at around 1700 with the five car unit operating the Bedwyn service in the interim. GWR informed us that they've done everything they can but will continue to look at this.

5. We asked if they can get us one IET back, (which would restore one-third of our service). In that event, if one more turbo could be added to the unit currently being used as a shuttle between Bedwyn and Newbury, would it be possible to revert to most of the original timetable? This might involve the IET operating on a three-hourly basis through to Paddington, with the turbos running between Bedwyn and Reading. GWR took our suggestion on board and will look into the matter. Due to their maximum speed is unlikely that turbos will be able to operate through to Paddington. If circumstances permit, we feel that this would offer a clear improvement for users of Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury over the current temporary timetable, until the full original timetable can be restored.

6. We requested some of the trains which serve Pewsey, and don't currently stop at Kintbury, Hungerford of Bedwyn, have additional stops added. GWR have looked into this and there is no capacity in the current timings to do this.

7. We asked when will the IETs all be fixed. GWR can't commit to this as it is down to Hitachi to fix the trains.

Sorry that we haven’t been able to get this resolved yet. We are working hard on it and we are keeping GWR posted with your feedback. So please keep telling us where ‘it hurts’ – especially when the connections go wrong at Newbury.

Regards

Steve Smith

Bill Wells

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 21/06/2021 07:23

Date: 21-Jun-21 07:23:57 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Following our video conference with GWR we've had the following responses:

1. The Head of Train Service Delivery has issued a note to all the team in Control. He has asked them to be as proactive as possible when it comes to holding Newbury connections for the shuttle to Bedwyn, and to also give staff (and therefore customers) as much notice of platform changes as possible. As it is a busy corridor, with no bay platform, there is limited potential for holds and while Control will be proactive, this does not mean that we will be able to hold services, but they will try. They will also have a look at the 1127 in particular and see if there is anything that can be done to stop the regular late platform change.

2. Their Head of Customer Experience is setting up a meeting with the Newbury stations team to see how they can better support them and to make sure that we have a knowledgeable presence on the platform to help.

3. GWR have also advised that it is looking very likely they'll be able to operate the 15:07 Paddington-Bedwyn and 16:41 Bedwyn-Paddington as through trains again from the 28th June.

Please keep us posted with any connection problems you have at Newbury.

We are hoping that GWR can find some more trains to improve our service. In particular we'd like to see the Newbury shuttle become a Reading shuttle. This would require an extra Turbo train which they currently don't have available. If this situation drags on for many more weeks would you prefer it if (i) things were kept as they are or (ii) we ask GWR to run our current Turbo to Reading (forming a two hourly service) with a Newbury, Kintbury, Hungerford rail replacement bus filling in the missing hour?

Please do always check the online timetable before travel. As this is an ongoing situation the timetables are being revised weekly and this does mean that 'next week's' timetable tends to show services through to Paddington up until a few days beforehand when it gets updated to the shuttles.

TransWilts (www.transwilts.org a Community Rail Partnership who support the Swindon to Westbury service route) are keen to see a Community Rail Partnership (CRP) for the Newbury to Westbury route representing the following stations: Kintbury, Hungerford, Bedwyn, Pewsey and the

proposed Devizes Parkway. You can read more about CRPs at www.communityrail.org.uk

Bill and I, at Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group, propose that if this goes ahead nothing will change in how we represent users of Bedwyn Station. We're also happy to still represent Kintbury and Hungerford in terms of the level of train service these two stations get. One of the aims of this CRP will be two get an all stops hourly Newbury to Westbury service. Bill and I agree with this aim but have made it clear that this must not affect our direct services to Reading and Paddington.

If you wish to represent Kintbury or Hungerford in this proposed CRP then please get in touch and we'll forward your details.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 31/07/2021 23:33

Date: 31-Jul-21 11:33:56 PM
Subject: Wilts Council Bus Survey - Please complete if you can
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Trains

Firstly thanks to everybody who has emailed us at Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group regarding the current train service. We have been collating and lobbying GWR. They have reinstated the 0831, direct to Paddington and are looking at looking at making a temporary easement on the 0850 for railcards.

At present please do check the timetables online before you intend to travel.

Buses

There is money allocated to rural bus services and Wilts Council are asking the public about their use of buses. This is maybe an opportunity to request more buses again. Since buses between Great Bedwyn and Marlborough are now approx. 1.5 hours it is becoming a less viable service.

This is what Wilts say:

Earlier in the year the Government published its 'Bus Back Better' vision, which underpins a national bus strategy for England that sets out ambitious reform of how services are planned and delivered. Around £3bn has been set aside by the Government to make improvements throughout England, and Wiltshire Council is looking at how Wiltshire and our residents can benefit from this.

The Government's strategy complements the council's aim to encourage

more people to travel by bus to help support its carbon neutral objectives, and to reach and connect more people who live in rural communities. The council has already been successful in getting some money from the fund, with a successful bid of £1.2m to improve demand responsive transport in the Pewsey Vale area.

This will be in operation next year after a public consultation, which will help establish the most appropriate way for the service to be provided. Demand responsive transport is a flexible mode of transportation that adapts to the demands of its user groups.

Here is the link to the survey:
https://surveys.wiltshire.gov.uk/snapwebhost/s.asp?k=162679536235
<https://surveys.wiltshire.gov.uk/snapwebhost/s.asp?k=162679536235>

Best Wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 23/08/2021 07:38

Date: 23-Aug-21 07:38:48 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - Meeting with GWR
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Bill Wells and I have a Zoom meeting with GWR tomorrow with a broad title of, "Kennet Valley Performance and Timetable".

We will be raising the following:

1) The high number of cancellations (both to our directs and the shuttle off Newbury)

2) Timescale of getting the Hitachi Trains back and a general update on the situation.

3) When will the Network Railcard 0850 easement come into force?

4) Reduced level of cheaper advanced fares available after 0800.

5) Trains showing on the Trainline app not showing on GWR.

6) Issue of being able to purchase advanced tickets for trains that then do not run.

What else would you like us to raise? E.g. How are the connections working out at Newbury? Are there any long waits at Newbury, in the timetable, you'd like us to highlight?

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 24/08/2021 22:31

Date: 24-Aug-21 10:31:53 PM
Subject: Meeting with GWR - Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Today we had our Zoom meeting with GWR senior managers regarding performance.

Thank you to all those who sent us things to raise. You sent so many we were unable to get through them all in the allotted hour. But rest assured we have submitted them all by way of a document and GWR have promised to work through them and get back to us.

During the meeting Bill and I made it very clear that the current level of performance is unacceptable. The changes at Newbury are not reliable enough and there are too many cancellations of the direct trains to and from Paddington.

GWR explained the following:

1) Every day they speak with Hitachi to ascertain the number of trains available. GWR have 93 trains and need 75 available to run a normal service. At the moment Hitachi are only able to release 65 per day for certain and that has been the situation since the end of May. Some days they can go up to 68. The missing trains are what's causing all of the problems. GWR state if they can get back to 70 we can likely have our trains back.

2) Hitachi can't give a date for the repairs. So it sounds like they are still struggling to find a solution. Hitachi get paid on train availability. Therefore there is real incentive for them to resolve this.

3) They only have one Turbo to run the Newbury to Bedwyn shuttle. This leaves the service vulnerable if the Turbo is not available. It also means that there isn't a possibility of running Turbos from Bedwyn to Reading.

4) The current through services (e.g. to Pewsey, Westbury and the West of England) are too tightly timed to give us any further stops on these.

5) Other causes of cancellations and delays are: Freight train failures, track faults, rail temperature issues in hot weather, trespassers, signal failure, level crossing failures, line speed restrictions, lack of train crew. Also through services are prioritised over the Bedwyn service. This can lead to our Turbo being held in the Bedwyn turn back siding or missing a connection at Newbury.

6) GWR are trying to get some of the freight trains off our line to improve reliability of the passenger services.

7) The reduced numbers of advanced purchase fares available is likely due to people preferring them to purchasing season tickets. GWR haven't dropped the number available. Instead fewer season tickets are being sold and instead people are buying the advanced tickets. So, if you are not seeing so many available it's because they are selling more quickly than normal. GWR reminded us of the flexi season ticket: https://www.gwr.com/your-tickets/choosing-your-ticket/season-tickets/flexi-season-ticket

8) The easement on the 0850 (to enable the use of Network Railcards) is proving problematic. It's all been agreed but it's a case of 'The computer says no'. Instead GWR have gone back to the DfT to ask to make this service off-peak (which will automatically allow Network Railcards). Please note that if this is agreed then it'll only last as long as the current situation persists. i.e. no precedent will be set to allow an off-peak service this early.

So it's a perfect storm of a number of factors making our service very poor at the moment. Ideally we want our direct trains back to Paddington but we made it clear that if that is not possible then GWR need to be able to run a Bedwyn to Reading shuttle instead of a Bedwyn to Newbury.

Kind Regards

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 03/09/2021 17:27

Date: 03-Sep-21 05:27:51 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - 0831 weekdays temporarily off peak
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Some good news for a change!

The DfT and GWR have agreed to make the 0831 off-peak until 12th of December to alleviate the fact the our normal first off-peak service (0924) is not running at the moment.

You can therefore now travel off-peak on the 0831 and will be able to do so until 12th December which is the next timetable change. It is temporary as it is linked to the temporary timetable.

It is available now, and GWR staff have been fully briefed. Please let us know if you have any problems.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 18/09/2021 09:34

Date: 18-Sep-21 09:34:50 AM
Subject: Restoration of further direct services to Paddington
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

GWR have informed us that as from Monday the following additional direct services have been restored:

From Bedwyn:

1140

1341

2042

From Paddington:

1007

1207

1907

This makes the current set of direct services as:

From Bedwyn:

0601

0626

0651

0729

0831

1140

1341

1641

2042

From Paddington:

0707

1007

1207

1507

1808

1836

1907

It's been pointed out to us that although the 0831 is off-peak you can't buy a ticket from the machine at Bedwyn station until 0830. We have asked GWR about the legitimacy of boarding without a ticket. While awaiting for their reply our best advice is to board and seek out the ticket seller and explain the situation.

It's also been noted that the 1907 return from Paddington is full fare, with a gap until 2104 to the next train (which is off-peak). We've requested that GWR make the 1907 off-peak as a temporary measure. Remember that advanced purchase or travelling on the TfL Crossrail between Reading and Paddington (which are always off-peak) are ways of reducing the cost of travel during peak times.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 03/12/2021 17:23

Date: 03-Dec-21 05:23:49 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - update
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

We were hoping for a return to normal from the new December timetable. However, not all of the IET trains have been repaired so we still have some shuttles to and from Newbury. The new timetable initially had a very poor 0952 service (a fifteen minute wait at Newbury and a change at Reading giving a journey time to Paddington of one hour thirty-two minutes), and the retention of the long evening gap between the 1907 and 2104 departures from Paddington.

My passenger group colleague, Bill Wells, worked out a solution to both of these by tweaking the times of the turbo services between Bedwyn and Newbury. Initially GWR didn't have the resources to look at the proposal, but with a bit of pleading from us they took another look and implemented Bills solution. Well done Bill, it'll really help.

You might see some early versions of the new timetables with both these problems still showing. However, rest assured the 0952 service no longer runs and we have a 0924 with a change at Newbury, arriving Paddington at 1041. In the evening you can catch the 2004 off Paddington and change at Newbury, arriving Bedwyn 2106.

We also requested that the off-peak concession for the 0831 departure should be extended beyond December. The DfT have granted this while we are waiting for the return of our IETs.

We have some good news about the TVM. After a request by ourselves GWR have stated "We have secured a TVM shelter that we are planning to get installed at Bedwyn. Although 'Second hand', it will paint up like new and provide passengers a dry ticket and a screen without sun glare."

The usage figures for April 2020 to April 2021 have been published. Due to Covid, all of the local stations have reductions of between 80 and 84%, with Bedwyn from 129,886 to 20,398.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 12/12/2021 21:28

Date: 12-Dec-21 09:28:58 PM
Subject: FW: GWR new timetable
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Attachment T7_1212_A4_WEB_V5.pdf

Hello All,

Please find below an email from Mark Hopwood, Managing Director of GWR. It outlines the current position. Please also find attached the PDF copy of the timetable he mentions in his email.

Regarding the 0831 (Bedwyn to Paddington) being off-peak: this will likely be updated in the fares on a week by week basis. Thus you will probably see it as full-fare if you look a week ahead, then see it switch to off-peak with a few days to go. If you notice it full-fare within two days of when you check online then please email us and we'll chase it with GWR.

Also, regarding the 0831 from Bedwyn, the ticket machines do not issue off-peak fares until 0830. So if boarding at Bedwyn you'll need to buy on-board.

Please remember the 2004 off Paddington now connects with a Newbury to Bedwyn shuttle service. The 2004 arrives in Newbury at 2044 and the shuttle departs, from Newbury, at 2048. Please let us know of any connection issues.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: GWR - Mark Hopwood
Sent: Friday, December 10, 2021 16:28
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: GWR new timetable

Dear Steve

I promised to keep you updated on our timetable changes. We have a new timetable starting on Sunday (12th December), with both weekend and weekday changes. Online timetable journey planners have been updated, and you can download copies of specific timetable booklets from our website on https://www.gwr.com/plan-journey/train-times <https://www.gwr.com/plan-journey/train-times> .

As a result of having more of our Hitachi Class 800 Intercity Express Trains [IETs] available, we are able to reintroduce more of our direct services between Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury to London Paddington.

I'm grateful to the work of the Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group for helping us to find some further opportunities in the timetable, and those mitigations are introduced as of next Monday too. I've attached a PDF copy of the timetable to this email.

As and when more IETs become available, we will introduce the remaining missing direct services for Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury – I will of course keep you updated on any developments.

Since the pandemic started, we have been really grateful for your help and support, and I know our staff appreciate this too. I look forward to continuing working with you as we build a recovery for rail and for the communities we serve.

Best wishes

Mark

Mark Hopwood CBE | Managing Director | Great Western Railway
Milford House | 1 Milford Street | Swindon | SN1 1HL

Emailed Newsletter: 24/12/2021 10:18

Date: 24-Dec-21 10:18:41 AM
Subject: Christmas travel advice
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Message from Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Please see below an email from GWR.

Over this festive period please double check online your journey before travelling. As per-normal trains don't run on Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

If you are reading a copy of this email on Social Media, and wish to join our mailing list, then please contact us on info@bedwyntrains

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: GWR – Jane Jones
Sent: Wednesday, December 22, 2021 17:50
Subject: Christmas travel advice

Dear Steve

Just a very quick note from us both to check you had seen GWR's media release about travelling over Christmas, highlighting where Network Rail teams will be working hard over the festive period.

You can find a link to the release here: https://news.gwr.com/news/travelling-by-train-this-christmas-when-will-trains-be-busiest-and-where-is-engineering-work-taking-place <https://news.gwr.com/news/travelling-by-train-this-christmas-when-will-trains-be-busiest-and-where-is-engineering-work-taking-place>

Network Rail have also produced a short video, detailing the works taking place over festive period which you can watch here: https://youtu.be/xRSdvLcWIkc <https://youtu.be/xRSdvLcWIkc>

If you could share this amongst your networks we would be very grateful, and if you have any questions do let us know.

Finally, we just wanted to wish you a very happy Christmas and New Year, we really value working with you and look forward to continuing our relationship into 2022.

Best wishes

Jane Jones (Head of Public Affairs, GWR) and Toby Elliott (Head of Communications, Network Rail Western)

Emailed Newsletter: 05/01/2022 15:58

Date: 05-Jan-22 03:58:51 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Message from Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

You may have seen that a number of train operators have introduced temporary timetables as a result of increased sickness and self-isolation.

As from Saturday 8th January, GWR are introducing a temporary timetable, which will run through to Saturday 15thJanuary. GWR will review this weekly and are hopeful that this is a short-lived measure with a quick return to the published timetable.

The full list of changes is on their website www.gwr.com/timetables along with advice to customers. The changes are in the national database, so online journey planners should be accurate from today. If they make further changes beyond 15th January, these will show in journey planners from 12th January.

GWR are contacting customers who have booked onto services they are changing to offer refunds or transfer to alternative services. The Book with Confidence scheme, that allows customers to change non-refundable tickets, has been extended until March.

How does this affect Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury?

The 0510 (1K71) from Bristol Temple Meads to Paddington (calling Bedwyn at 0626) will be cancelled.

The 1808 (1J93) from Paddington to Frome (calling Bedwyn at 1917) will be cancelled.

The 2222 (1K32) from Paddington to Bedwyn (arriving 2352) will be cancelled – we will be putting in place a Reading to Bedwyn service in lieu of the 2222.

However, do check before they travel on https://www.journeycheck.com/greatwesternrailway

If you are reading a copy of this email on Social Media, and wish to join our mailing list, then please contact us on info@bedwyntrains

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 18/02/2022 15:16

Date: 18-Feb-22 03:16:47 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - Storm Eunice Update
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

GWR have informed us that all rail services are now suspended due to the storm causing too much debris on the lines.

Therefore do not travel.

GWR have informed us that tickets for today will remain valid over the weekend and on Monday.

If you get really stuck then please send me an email and I'll forward it to GWR senior management.

Over the next few days check online before you travel.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 21/02/2022 10:47

Date: 21-Feb-22 10:47:57 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - latest GWR operational status
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hi All,

GWR have informed us:

We are now on 50mph speed limits, so much reduced services, longer journeys and a request for essential travel only.

Customers can check for the latest on
https://www.journeycheck.com/greatwesternrailway/

Full refunds, and tickets from Friday/Saturday/Sunday and today, now valid for journeys up until 23 February (Wednesday) if people can change their travel plans.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 03/03/2022 09:41

Date: 03-Mar-22 09:41:46 AM
Subject: Message from Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Message from Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

On March 2nd Bill Wells and I participated in a conference call with GWR. The MD of GWR, Mark Hopwood, spoke first and delivered some very bad news. Our Paddington direct IET off-peak services are permanently being axed from May and replaced by diesel shuttle services to Newbury.

In short the DfT, who took financial control of the railways from the start of the pandemic, have told GWR to cut costs. To do this GWR have decided to retire older diesel trains in the West Country and replace them with the three IET trains that serve Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury. You may recall these trains are something we fought hard for from the announcement, in 2009, of electrification to Newbury to their rollout some ten years later. Initially, when electrification was announced, our entire service would have been a diesel shuttle service to Newbury. It was a long fight and in December 2019 we ended up with the best service we ever had. This was then hit by Covid in March 2020 and cracks in the IET fleet. We were hoping our IETs would fully return to service in May and end the additional diesel shuttles to Newbury we have been enduring. But instead we are an easy target and we are being sacrificed again. Add to that we often get sacrificed by missed connections at Newbury and it doesn't bode well.

It will leave us on the worst timetable since June 1992 (when the

pre-Turbo fleet was retired). The direct commuter peak morning service will be fairly good (with stops on through trains), but we will only have two direct trains back in the evening. Everything else will be hourly diesel shuttles between Bedwyn and Newbury only, some of which have decent connections to and from Paddington, while some have journey times between Bedwyn and Paddington of up to two hours and in one case more.

The diesel shuttles from Bedwyn will connect in with the Class 387 Paddington to Newbury service. These latter trains are electric only. Ironically our three IET trains (which are bi-mode, running on electric to Newbury and diesel beyond) will be redeployed to a non-electrified area of the network. So that'll be circa £200m of rolling stock designed for electric traction unable to make use of it. Additionally the Bedwyn siding was extended, at a cost in excess of £1m, to accommodate the IETs. The extension will now be a white elephant. You couldn't really make this up.

The MD of GWR acknowledged this was far from ideal and it would be an aim of his to get our service back. However, we did feel these were words of comfort when there is no plan for this. GWR would need to find extra rolling stock and, in the current climate, it's unlikely to be found.

During our campaign to retain our direct Paddington service, post electrification, there were three options:

1. Extend electrification to Bedwyn: This was something we didn't champion. BTPG have always been very cautious about bringing the ugly overhead wires and gantries through the Kennet Valley.

2. The bi-mode IET solution: This was the one that was implemented and we thought would be with us for many years.

3. Kitting the Class 387 trains with batteries so they could run onto Bedwyn. GWR were seriously considering this before going for option 2.

Given the Class 387s are now operating to Newbury, Bill and I feel point 3 is what we will now campaign for.

The last two years have shown us that connections at Newbury don't work. The connections are not guaranteed and the fact you even have to change trains is off-putting. We have made it very clear to GWR how unhappy we are and that connections at Newbury are not reliable enough. GWR have promised to look at better ways of getting the connections to work. But, given we have campaigned on this point since we formed sixteen years ago, we can't see any great improvement.

Beyond May Bill and I will campaign for additional stops on through services and improved connections at Newbury. We will additionally start a campaign to get batteries added to the Class 387 units so the Paddington / Newbury service can be extended to Bedwyn.

What can you do?

1. Please let us know which trains are currently essential for

school and college travel. We are awaiting the 'final' May timetable from GWR and we want to be sure this works for school and college children.

2. Write to your MP: laura.farris.mp@parliament.uk <mailto:laura.farris.mp@parliament.uk> or danny.kruger.mp@parliament.uk <mailto:danny.kruger.mp@parliament.uk>

3. We'll need more support for our campaigns so we need to expand our email list. If you know of fellow commuters/users please can you ask them to contact us and be added to our email list: info@bedwyntrains <mailto:info@bedwyntrains >

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 03/03/2022 13:53

Date: 03-Mar-22 01:53:50 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - GWR May 2022 Draft Timetable Response
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Although this email is coming from Steve's email address it was prepared by Bill.

Following our discussions yesterday (2nd), during which you explained that the off-peak through service between Bedwyn and Paddington was to be discontinued, we have studied your draft timetable for May 2022. You detailed the reasons why you were having to take this action and we responded accordingly. Naturally, we are unhappy with this decision and we are sure that users of Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury stations will take the same view.

However, the purpose of this response is to try to work with this timetable and, in particular, to ask you to address some serious flaws contained within it. We understand the constraints around fitting in with other services and the difficulties your timetable team have been forced to work with. As a result, in the context of the overall picture, we feel many of the proposed connections are reasonable, subject to their being held due to incoming trains running late. But, at this stage, there are several instances where proposed connections are poor or even non-existent. We have given our initial response below and would ask you to see if you could at least make improvements before this timetable is implemented.

Eastbound trains from Bedwyn

The morning peak service seems to be largely unaffected and we thank you for this.

The following Bedwyn to Newbury off-peak trains appear to give satisfactory connections and journey times to Paddington. 1055, 1157,

1252, 1457, 1655, 1855. The later evening trains are broadly similar to the current timetable.

The following Bedwyn to Newbury trains all have journey times to Paddington of between one hour, thirty five minutes and two hours, four minutes, which are unacceptable when compared with journey times over recent years, let alone the excellent December 2019 timetable. We suspect that they would also not adhere to the Service Level Commitment.

These are: 0849, 0948, 1344, 1550 and 1755. The 0948 (the first off-peak service) involves a wait of fifty one minutes at Newbury and the longest journey time. Surely there must be a better solution to this!

Westbound trains to Bedwyn

The evening peak service has been retained, with the exception of the former 1707 Paddington to Bedwyn which is regrettable.

The 0544, 0641 and 0740 arrivals from Newbury are unchanged. The following Newbury to Bedwyn departures give reasonable connections and journey times from Paddington: 0910, 1022 (though links to the 0937 Paddington, so leaves a ninety minute gap), 1222 (starts from Reading), 1522 (ninety minute gap from Paddington), 1724 and 2122. The 2222 Paddington to Bedwyn appears to be retained.

The following Newbury to Bedwyn trains have longer journey times, but are acceptable in the circumstances: 0820, 1412 and 1615.

The following trains have journey times from Paddington to Bedwyn of between one hour, thirty five minutes and one hour fifty eight minutes, but are late evening services: 2029, 2122 and 2224 (all from Newbury).

The following two trains are obviously unacceptable and we assume that they have been listed in error. A train is listed as leaving Newbury at 1132 running non-stop to Bedwyn. This follows a Paddington to Exeter train which calls at Hungerford. If this is implemented it will leave a two-hour gap for Kintbury and also a two-hour gap from Hungerford to Bedwyn. Likewise, a 1320 Newbury departure is shown with the same stopping pattern.

If this is not an error, it will break the hourly cycle which has been in place for many years. It would also appear to be contrary to the SLC, based on the version that we have. We would ask you to reconsider this clear anomaly as a matter of urgency.

We would again ask for consideration to be given for more calls on the services between Paddington and Exeter St. David's, for example the 1636 and 1736 from Paddington, or some of the off-peak trains. Although you have stated that it is not in your plans, such calls would help to mitigate the clear downgrading of our services.

Finally, we understand that, in the circumstances you are having to make these changes. However, it will be in the interests of all concerned if the worst effects of the changes to service are mitigated as far as possible.

Bill Wells, Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 11/03/2022 15:41

Date: 11-Mar-22 03:41:56 PM
Subject: Message from Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group regarding the loss of our off-peak direct services to Paddington
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Attachment Bedwyn to Paddington Services Dec 2019 to May 2022.pdf

Hello All,

Thank you to everybody who has written to their MP regarding the loss of our direct Paddington off-peak services from May. Thank you too to everybody who has recently joined our email list.

What's been happening:

1) Our initial email has been picked up by various press outlets, including Penny Post, Newbury Weekly News and the BBC.

2) Bill Wells and I did a TV interview for South Today. This aired on March 3rd.

3) We have a Zoom meeting with our local MP, Danny Kruger, booked for Monday afternoon.

4) We are due to meet GWR face to face w/c 21st.

5) We have been examining the proposed timetable and have put our concerns to GWR. This is aside from the fact that we don't agree with the cuts. Instead we are at least trying to get the May timetable to work for Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. At present the shuttle service (Bedwyn to Newbury) has a number of, shall we say, strange timings in it.

In preparation for our meetings with our MP and (separately) GWR we have prepared the attached timetable summary document. It shows three timetables:

1. The service we should be getting (i.e. the pre-Covid December 2019 service).

2. The service we are getting today.

3. The service proposed from May.

It indicates quite clearly how much the Bedwyn service level is being reduced with the direct services to Paddington being reduced from 19 to 6 and the return journey directs from 16 to 3. As mentioned before the connections at Newbury do not work very well, so the situation is even worse than it looks.

Although the document is prepared for Bedwyn, it's very similar for Kintbury and Hungerford.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 18/03/2022 09:53

Date: 18-Mar-22 09:53:55 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - update
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

We thought we'd update you on what's been going on.

On Monday we had a successful meeting with Danny Kruger (MP covering Bedwyn) and Laura Farris (MP covering Hungerford and Kintbury). The meeting went very well and the two MPs are fully on board to improve on what GWR are offering in the May timetable. They are meeting with the Department for Transport and GWR next week. We stressed all the points that you have raised with us. Thanks to all of you who wrote to your MP, the volume of correspondence they received highlighted the problem.

Bill Wells and I are meeting with GWR this coming Tuesday to see what can be done, both from May and going forward.

We have received reports that when there is a rail replacement bus service the buses are going through narrow lanes, often getting blocked in. We have spoken to GWR who inform us that the buses should use the A4 as the backbone of the route. If this happens again please can you feedback to us and we'll report it to GWR.

Please note that the weekday 0831 from Bedwyn is still a concessionary off-peak service. We have received reports that some ticket sellers are still selling full fare only. GWR have confirmed it is still off-peak.
If you find yourself in the impossible situation of having to buy a full-fare ticket then please let us know and we'll lobby for a refund.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 28/03/2022 15:53

Date: 28-Mar-22 03:53:54 PM
Subject: Update from Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Dear All,

Bill Wells and I met with members of the senior management team at GWR, Swindon on Tuesday March 22nd. We can summarise the meeting as follows:

1) There are too many issues with adding batteries to the 387 fleet

to enable them to serve Bedwyn. Therefore we should forget this option.

2) Our three IETs have been reassigned to replace 'Castle' (reformed HST) trains on the Cardiff to Penzance route. GWR stated they want to see them back on the Bedwyn route ASAP. Therefore, we should campaign to get these back. This will require additional funding from the DfT, to lease additional diesel trains to run the Cardiff to Penzance service.

3) We should also consider pressing for electrification to be extended to at least Bedwyn to allow the 387 fleet to serve Bedwyn. However, the 387s which currently serve Newbury are eight car sets and the siding at Bedwyn can only accommodate a four car set. Thus this solution will mean a four car set running to Paddington c.f. the desired eight car set. So it's not a perfect solution. Additionally electrification would take a number of years to fund / implement so the solution in point 2 is the better, and likely cheaper, one.

4) GWR have promised to make a serious effort to get the connections at Newbury to work (i.e. be held if there are delays to the inbound service). These include (i) amalgamating two roles at the control centre so the person monitoring the delayed inbound connections and the person deciding whether to hold a service are one and the same (ii) GWR will pay the delay minutes (i.e. the charges imposed for the Bedwyn shuttle being late, due to it being held at Newbury) so control staff won't be letting the shuttle go because of costs (iii) Newbury station staff and the drivers will be briefed to request shuttles to be held (iv) special stop orders will be brought in such that if the shuttle is unavailable then other through services will stop at Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. However, GWR have said they still can't hold trains in all circumstances. Therefore any improvement here is still not a suitable substitute for our direct Paddington services. We informed GWR that we will ask our users to report to us all occasions where the shuttle fails to connect and that we intend to take these up with them on a case by case basis. They welcomed this and said they want to work with us. So please do report all missed Newbury connections to us.

5) Having looked at the proposed timetable for May we realise that a reasonable off-peak service cannot be achieved with just one diesel shuttle between Newbury and Bedwyn. To have any sensible service we need at least one turbo and one dedicated IET. We asked GWR if one IET can be found in order to provide a three-hourly through service between Bedwyn and Paddington, to work alongside the turbo shuttle. We also identified what we felt would be the most beneficial use of such a set to local users by way of providing GWR with a proposed timetable. We also suggested how GWR could free up an IET without additional costs. GWR have not indicated that they plan to implement this suggestion.

6) In the very short term, the May timetable has a serious flaw in the evening service and we have asked GWR to try to fix this. The 1907 Paddington departure will become a '387' and require a change at Newbury. The connecting turbo for this will be out of position having served as an earlier connection. It then having to serve the 1907 causes it to be out of step with the 2007 and 2104 Paddington departures. This gives the following poor mid to late evening service:

Paddington	Bedwyn	Time	Changes
1907	2048	1:41	1
2007	2142	1:35	1
2104	2302	1:58	1
2128	2302	1:34	2
2222	2351	1:29	0

If GWR could make the 1907 an IET (perhaps by swapping a 387 with an IET on the Bristol line), which would run direct to Bedwyn, the above then becomes the much improved:

Paddington	Bedwyn	Time	Changes
1907	2012	1:05	0
2007	2119	1:03	1
2104	2210	1:06	1
2128	2302	1:34	2
2222	2351	1:29	0

7) The May timetable also has a flaw with the first off-peak morning service. Currently this is the 0831 IET which is direct to Paddington (journey time 1:03). With the proposed May timetable the 0831 is to be withdrawn, so the first off-peak would be the 0849 to Newbury, requiring two changes and a journey time to Paddington of 1:35. The current 0924 turbo is moved to 0948, also with two changes and a much extended journey time. We have asked GWR if they can operate the 0831 as an IET. If implemented, this would also enable the 0924 to be retained. At the time of writing, we have not had any indication as to whether points 6) and 7) will be implemented.

8) We also highlighted a ridiculous situation which has been created twice during the day, westbound from Newbury, again due to the removal of the IETs. Unless a solution is found, Kintbury users will be faced with two gaps of two hours, as will those wishing to travel from Hungerford to Bedwyn.

What we presented to GWR illustrates the folly of the entire concept, turning a very good service into a mish-mash of connecting (or non-connecting) trains, with the notable exception of the morning peak. We acknowledged the efforts of the GWR timetable section, but it just doesn't work. We, at BTPG have campaigned since 2009 to try to prevent this happening. We are concerned that passenger numbers could decline which may, in turn, be used as a reason not to restore the IETs. Therefore, we would urge everyone to continue to use the trains whenever they can, but to also push for the restoration of through trains as soon as possible.

We have written to Danny Kruger MP and Laura Farris MP requesting that they press the DfT to address points 6 and 7 for the May 2022 timetable change and point 5 for the December 2022 timetable change with a request for additional funding, to lease three further diesel trains for the Cardiff to Penzance route, so we can have our three IETs back for the May 2023 timetable change.

For the record we have also appeared on Wiltshire Radio and are 'manning' a stand at the climate day to be held this Saturday at Marlborough Town Hall. If you are attending this event please do drop by to say hello.

If you know of anybody else who might benefit from being on our email list then please forward them this email.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bill Wells

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 16/04/2022 11:26

Date: 16-Apr-22 11:26:56 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Thank you to everybody who has recently subscribed to our email group. And thank you to everybody who has written to their MP or the secretary of state. It does help and the weight of our voice is essential as we move forward to rectify the cuts.

We have now heard back from GWR with their considered reply to each of the points we raised regarding the May timetable. Their responses are below. In brief the only concessions we have won are the reinstatement of the 1907 direct from Paddington and a tweak to one of the long waits at Newbury in the first off-peaks.

The reinstatement of the 1907 should have sorted out the Newbury connections for the later trains. However, GWR have not done this and there's no reason why they can't. Therefore we have gone back to them asking for this to be resolved for May such that we have decent connections at Newbury for the 2003 and 2104 Paddington departures. We have also asked for the 0803 (direct from Bedwyn) to be off-peak. This is highly unlikely to be granted, but asking does drive home the point of how bad the off-peak service will be.

Here follows GWR's response to our points.

Thank you again for reviewing the timetable and for meeting with Matt and his team to see what improvements might be possible. We have listed your suggestions below with comments against each. There are some changes that we are not going to be able to make, but we have

looked closely at each suggestion and have explained why it is not possible.

There are also some changes that we will be bidding to Network Rail for approval to start in December. We will keep you updated on progress with those, and there are also some changes that we are able to make in May. The most significant being the return of the direct 1907 service from Paddington.

This did require DfT agreement and support, and we are grateful to Danny Kruger MP, Laura Farris MP, and the Rail Minister Wendy Morton MP for their help in securing that approval.

As you know we are also working on a bespoke contingency plan for Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury to reduce the potential for missed connections and we will forward details of the plan early next week. This will include a direct contact in the performance team for you to report any problems or ideas for improvement once the new timetable starts.

Can one IET be found by either (i) swapping one of the 387 trains, which serve Paddington to Newbury, with an IET serving on the mainline to Bristol or by (ii) splitting a 10 car IET, serving on the mainline to Bristol, to give us the 5 car IET that we need?

We have looked at all options for swapping alternative IET circuits over to Class 387s. We have very few routes where IETs are used that are wholly under Overhead Lines and therefore suitable for all electric traction. The line to Bristol Temple Meads is only electrified to Thingley Junction (Chippenham) and our services to Bristol Parkway extend through to South Wales, where electrification is only complete to Cardiff and all services in the AM/PM peak extend to/from Swansea. We have identified already the 07:12 from Paddington to Cardiff which has already been made a Class 387 working but further opportunities do not exist.

There are also additional issues switching between IET and Class 387 on this route as it requires 125mph running on the Paddington-Bristol Parkway section. Any reduction in speed impacts all services on the route, particularly the freight trains booked to closely follow our services from passing loops. A reduction in our speed would mean there was insufficient time for them to get to the next passing loop behind our retimed service, which would have a very significant impact on the speed and performance of passenger services on the route.

Nor can we split any 10 car services. These are carefully allocated on the basis of passenger numbers and on set balancing to be sure we have the correct number of vehicles on our busy routes/services and can return IETs back to the right depot for servicing and maintenance each day. We are running less trains now in the morning and evening peak so the capacity of remaining services is key.

The 1907 Paddington departure will require a change at Newbury .... this gives a poor mid to late evening service.

We have found a solution. This does require an additional guard turn and required the agreement of the Minister of State for Rail, which has been

secured. We can therefore return the 19:07 Paddington-Bedwyn to a direct service (also calling at Kintbury and Hungerford). The return working will also be direct, and this will start in the May 2022 timetable subject to Network Rail validation (which we expect to receive) with the changes being actioned later this week. The direct services will then appear in electronic systems – this generally takes a couple of weeks, we will get confirmation and send on.

The May timetable also has a flaw with the first off-peak in morning service. Currently this is the 0831 which is direct to Paddington (journey time 1:03). With the proposed May timetable the first off-peak would be the 0849, requiring two changes and a journey time to Paddington of 1:35 with the next service as the 0948 with one change but a journey time of 2:04. Can you operate the 0831 as an IET to give us a morning off-peak service?

We have looked at this very carefully, but we have not been able to find a solution. We are continuing to look at a couple of the morning workings to see if there is anything we can do to improve the situation for May or December, and we will keep you updated, but for now there are no changes in the morning peak.

We have however made some progress with a connection for the 09:48 Bedwyn-Newbury and have retimed the 10:06 Newbury-Reading to 10:12 to give a forward connection.

Adding a call on the 18:36 ex Padd at Kintbury

There isn't space in the timetable to make the extra call without impacting the 1904 Plymouth service which follows closely behind. We have however reduced the connection time at Newbury to 10 minutes for customers travelling to Kintbury from the 1836.

The 11:32 and 1321 weekday Newbury services do not call at Kintbury

We have not been able to amend this in May, due to other train paths. We are however re-bidding to Network Rail to add the calls in December and liaising with them about moving other services to accommodate the stops.

Weekend Calls at Hungerford

Subject to Network Rail final validation we will be able to add additional Saturday calls at Hungerford in May along with five additional calls at Hungerford on Sunday. We will also be bidding for another two Saturday calls in December and hope to add an 09:43 from Hungerford arriving Paddington at 10:29 and a 13:22 from Hungerford arriving Paddington at 14:13.

We will also bid for further Sunday calls in December, but this will require changes to other services (not GWR) so may not be possible. If they are agreed this would give Hungerford an additional 2 hourly service through the day

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 01/05/2022 11:47

Date: 01-May-22 11:47:47 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Attachment image002.png
Attachment image001.png

Hello All,

We continue to be in negotiation with GWR regarding the new May timetable. So far GWR have agreed the following changes:

1) The 1907 (Paddington to Newbury) will now also be direct to Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. Therefore this will remain the same as the current timetable.

2) The 0849 Bedwyn departure will be off-peak and should allow a Network Card to be used. We will continue to check this.

3) The 0849 Bedwyn departure will be better connected at Newbury. It will arrive at Newbury 0907 and there will be a direct Paddington departure at 0920, arriving 1009. Previously the proposal for this service required two changes with a journey time of one hour and thirty five, now it's one hour and twenty.

4) The 0948 Bedwyn departure will have a better connection for Paddington. It will require two changes but will have a journey time of one hour and thirty six. Previously the journey time was two hours and four minutes.

The reinstatement of the 1907 direct should have freed up the shuttle to give good connections off the 2003 and 2104 Paddington to Newbury trains. However, GWR have not retimed the shuttle so the next two trains (after the 1907 direct) include lengthy connections off the 2007 and 2128 off Paddington.

Dep	Arr	Chg	Dur
20:07	21:42	1	1h 35m

Dep	Arr	Chg	Dur
21:28	23:02	2	1h 34m

GWR have explained they can't retime these because the following time-ordered scenario occurred:

1. GWR gave Network Rail the proposed new timetable for May.

2. Network Rail then adjusted the late evening freight train timetables to work with this.

3. GWR reinstated the 1907, allowing the late evening shuttles to revert to their present times.

4. Network Rail say they now can't change the adjustments made in point 2, meaning we can't have the late evening shuttles at their present timings. Therefore we are stuck with the new late evening timetable.

We have checked the freight timings on two journey planners which are publicly available and take their information from Network Rail and we can find no freight conflicts. We have therefore asked GWR to look at this urgently, as it should be possible to keep to the current times:

Dep	Arr	Chg	Dur
20:04	21:06	1	1h 2m

Dep	Arr	Chg	Dur
21:04	22:10	1	1h 6m

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bill Wells

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

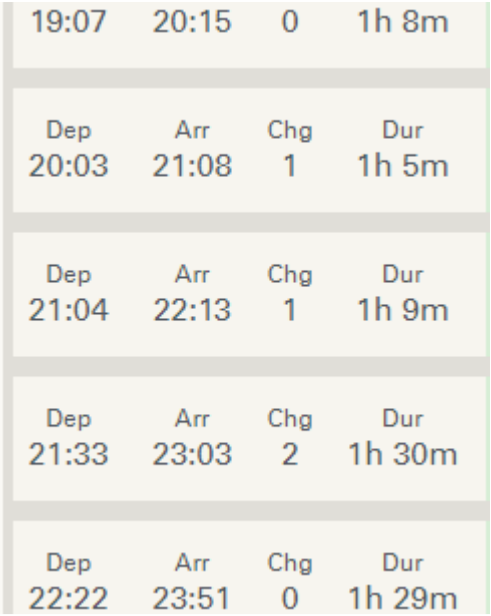
Emailed Newsletter: 10/05/2022 11:33

Date: 10-May-22 11:33:58 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Attachment image001.png

Hello All,

Mid to Late Evening Paddington to Bedwyn Service

We didn't give up on the late evening connections and after further campaigning GWR have now agreed with Network Rail to give us decent connections off the 2003 and 2104 Paddington departures. So the mid to late evening Paddington to Bedwyn weekday service is now:



Initially these might only show up in the journey planners on a week by week basis (i.e. two weeks hence it might show with the wrong timings). However, it will run as above.

Missed Train Connections at Newbury

The new timetable starts from Sunday May 15th. As there will be far more connections than there are now GWR have introduced a holding policy where some connecting trains can be held for an additional few minutes. We need to monitor this and would therefore ask that you email us with any missed connections. We can then investigate whether the holding policy was followed or not.

For any delay of 15 minutes or more you are entitled to compensation. Please see https://www.gwr.com/help-and-support/refunds-and-compensation/delay-repay This includes season tickets. Please do always claim as it will highlight to GWR where the problems are.

Missed Bus (Rail Replacement) Connections at Newbury

There have been some recent instances of missed connections at Newbury onto bus replacement services. We have spoken with GWR about this and they have advised if your delay is more than an hour then to use the help points to request a taxi. The reason for the hour window is that, currently, the taxi has to come from Reading and there'd be no advantage if the next bus was within the hour. GWR are trying to get contracts with Newbury taxis to improve the situation. Additionally the bus drivers are being re-briefed to check the arrivals board and, if possible, wait for a late train.

Help Points

GWR have requested that we ask for three volunteers to regularly test the help points at Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury. Currently these are tested once a week but they'd like us to test them daily. So if you commute daily would you be prepared to be a volunteer for your station?

If so please reply to us. The help point goes through to the Network Rail Enquiries and they are used to receiving test calls from GWR staff. So you don't have to give your name or even say you are a member of the public. All you need do is, when answered, say "Test call, thank you." and then hang up.

December Timetable

We will continue to press GWR for a full return to our service but, realistically, for December we are looking for some smaller improvements plus the reinstatement of the 0831 direct from Bedwyn (i.e. the first off-peak train to be direct to Paddington).

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bill Wells

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 25/05/2022 14:52

Date: 25-May-22 02:52:48 PM
Subject: Flexible, on-demand bus services for Great Bedwyn and Marlborough - have your say
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Wiltshire Council has been awarded £1.2m of Department for Transport (DfT) funding to launch an improved flexible, on-demand bus service in the Pewsey Vale area – and wants to hear from people on what the new service should look like.

Flexible, on-demand bus services do not run to a set timetable like usual buses.

Instead, they enable people to phone or book a bus service via an app, to take them anywhere within the service area at a time to suit them. App users will be able to book their journey, see in real-time when the vehicle will arrive and make payment. For people who cannot or do not wish to use the app, telephone booking and on bus payment will also be available.

In the case of this new service, the area it will cover takes in much of Pewsey Vale; from the eastern edge of Devizes, north to Beckhampton and Marlborough, and east to Collingbourne Ducis, Shalbourne and Froxfield, including Pewsey, Burbage, Great Bedwyn and Everleigh. This rural service would provide links to Devizes, Ludgershall and Tidworth, so people can take bus services to other towns.

The survey runs from Wednesday 25 May to Friday 15 July, and people can have their say and find out more, including a map of the service area, at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/transport-public-transport-bus

Emailed Newsletter: 31/05/2022 20:21

Date: 31-May-22 08:21:51 PM

Subject: Train changes until Friday the 3rd
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All

GWR have made some changes to this week's timetable which they've only just notified us about. These are:

* the 2222 Paddington service will terminate at Reading
* the 0510 Bristol service is cancelled throughout (0625 Bedwyn)
* the 0612 Frome service is cancelled throughout (0650 Bedwyn)
* the 1808 Paddington to Frome service is cancelled throughout (1917 Bedwyn)

There are no changes to Kennet Valley services on Saturday or on Sunday and the normal timetable resumes on Monday.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 14/06/2022 15:08

Date: 14-Jun-22 03:08:49 PM
Subject: West Berkshire Bus Service Survey 2022
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hi All,

West Berks Council have asked us to pass on the following survey regarding bus use in their region. You can also send any additional thoughts to Amanda.Povey1@westberks

https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/wbbussurvey2022-popup
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/wbbussurvey2022-popup>

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 15/06/2022 16:22

Date: 15-Jun-22 04:22:41 PM
Subject: FW: RMT strikes - impact on rail services
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Message from Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Hi All,

Please note the email from GWR, below regarding next week's strike action.

There will be no trains on our line on the strike days (21st, 23rd and 25th June) and reduced services on 22nd , 24th and 26th of June. There won't be any bus replacement services.

Please note the dates that the journey planners will be updated, published on www.gwr.com/strike

Customers who have already purchased tickets can claim a full refund or can amend their ticket; those who travel and are delayed may be entitled to delay repay compensation if they are delayed by 15 mins or more. Season ticket holders can apply for compensation through the Delay Repay scheme.

To help customers, GWR is allowing people with tickets for travel on strike days to be able to travel on the day before and up to two days after.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: GWR - Mark Hopwood
Sent: Wednesday, June 15, 2022 11:12
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: RMT strikes - impact on rail services

Dear Steve

We promised to update you further on the impact of the RMT strike action, and you may well have seen the national update at 1030 this morning by Network Rail and the Rail Delivery Group.

Network Rail has been working hard to cover signal boxes to keep as many routes open as possible on the strike days (Tuesday 21 June, Thursday 23 June and Saturday 25 June).

This is not possible in all areas and there are some routes where rail services will not operate, in other areas a limited service will run, but will start later and finish much earlier. There will also be a reduced service on the days between and after the strike, Wednesday 22 June, Friday 24 June and Sunday 26 June.

Our dedicated web page www.gwr.com/strike <http://www.gwr.com/strike> now has an overview of the timetable for each region and clear maps showing where services are operational. This is a dedicated web page which we will keep updated throughout the week. In addition, Network Rail are now entering timetable changes into the national timetable database, and detailed changes to weekday services will be available in online journey planners from Friday 17 June, and for weekend services from Saturday 18 June.

We are recommending that even where services are possible customers should only travel if absolutely necessary, services will be busy, and there will not be any replacement road transport. It is also important to note that there could be further changes, even on the day,

particularly if cover cannot be maintained for signal boxes, where routes will need to stop operating.

We understand the impact that these changes will have on customer journeys, and we know it will mean making alternative plans for many. We will therefore be doing all we can to alert customers to the changes, so they have time to plan. Any help you can give us with that would be very gratefully received.

Please signpost anyone to the webpage for more information - www.gwr.com/strike <http://www.gwr.com/strike> - and do email us if you need any clarification, have any questions or any queries.

This is going to be a very difficult week for our customers, we will do all we can to help, but the impact will be significant.

Best wishes

Mark Hopwood CBE
Managing Director, GWR

Mike Gallop
Route Director, Network Rail Western

Emailed Newsletter: 24/06/2022 07:21

Date: 24-Jun-22 07:21:16 AM
Subject: Rail Strike Update
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Message from Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Hello All,

Please see below the latest email from GWR r.e. the strikes.

We have enquired about compensation and the situation is as follows: Customers with monthly or longer season tickets who do not travel can claim 100% compensation through Delay Repay for 21, 23 and 25 June. This does not however apply to Flexi Seasons.

On the latter point we asked if Flexi seasons could automatically be extended. The DfT have said no, but GWR have promised to press this point for future occasions.

We have also asked about compensation for season ticket holders on non-strike days where there is no peak time service. We are awaiting a response.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Jane Jones
Sent: Thursday, June 23, 2022 16:23

To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Rail Strike Update

Dear Steve

We promised to keep you informed on the rail strike.

You will have seen from media reports that in the main customers have been making alternative arrangements, and for the most part we have been able to deliver the services set out in our strike plans.

It has however been a very difficult week for customers and this weekend will also be affected. Saturday (25 June) is a strike day and there will be implications for travel on Saturday and on Sunday. It will be really important to check timetables before travel, for both outward and return journey legs. There will also be fewer staff on hand at stations than normal and no replacement road transport.

GWR have just issued an updated media release <https://news.gwr.com/news/severe-disruption-to-continue-into-the-weekend-with-final-strike-day-and-knock-on-impact-on-sunday> and we expect national media reminders too. Anything you can do to remind people to keep checking their timetables through the weekend will be very helpful.

There is more information on www.gwr.com/strike or www.crosscountrytrains.co.uk/disruption.

Thank you again for all your help, and please do let us know if there is anything specific we can help with.

Best wishes

Jane, Toby and Richard

Jane Jones

Head of Public Affairs

Great Western Railway

Toby Elliott

Head of Communications

Network Rail Western

Richard Gibson

Stakeholder Manager West & Wales

CrossCountry

Emailed Newsletter: 22/07/2022 12:02

Date: 22-Jul-22 12:02:59 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - Strike Days
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Message from Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Hello All,

Please find below an email from GWR regarding the forthcoming strike days.

It's very disappointing coming on the back of recent poor performance and the reduction of service we suffered in the May timetable change. Bill and I battle on and continue to press GWR on poor performance and the restoration of our direct off-peak service.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: GWR - Mark Hopwood
Sent: Friday, July 22, 2022 11:05
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Update ahead of RMT & ASLEF rail strikes next week

Dear Steve

We promised to keep you updated ahead of industrial action being taken by RMT members on Wednesday 27th July, and ASLEF members (train drivers) on Saturday 30th July.

Services on strike days will be extremely limited, and on Saturday 30th July there will be no GWR services on most of the network. Where trains are able to run we are expecting them to be very busy, and the last services will be much earlier than normal. There will also be disruption on Thursday 28th July and Sunday 31st July.

Our latest information regarding the strikes including when journey planners will be updated, advice to customers, and guidance on refunds and compensation is available at www.gwr.com/strike <http://www.gwr.com/strike> . Planned services in your area are also shown on the webpage.

We will have a clearer idea of the impact on services on Saturday 30th July and Sunday 31st July next week, and we will be back in touch to update you.

There will be no rail replacement services in operation, and there is potential for further changes even on the day.

Anything you can do to alert your networks, constituents, members, staff and customers about the impact of the strike and the need to check before travelling would be very helpful. If there is anything else we can provide for you to help get the message out please do let us know.

As always if there is anything else we can help with either before or during the strikes, we are here and will do our best to help.

Best wishes

Jane Jones
Head of Public Affairs, GWR

Toby Elliott
Head of Communications, Network Rail Western

Emailed Newsletter: 10/08/2022 15:01

Date: 10-Aug-22 03:01:46 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - strike and other news
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Please find below an announcement from GWR regarding the strike planned for Saturday the 13th. This will likely also lead to disruption on Sunday. There's also planned strike action for August 18th and 20th.

Please do keep letting us know when things go wrong (especially missed connections at Newbury). We complain to GWR about all incidents reported to us. Without these we can't keep badgering GWR to improve (and restore) our service.

There are some planned engineering works by Network Rail between 01st – 11th October where the route between Castle Cary and Taunton is closed. This means the West of England High Speed services are diverted via Bristol. Notably in the mornings the 0651 and 0803 (from Bedwyn) will not run and, in the evening, the 1836 from Paddington won't be coming via Newbury, and therefore it will not call at Kintbury, Hungerford or Bedwyn.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: GWR - Mark Hopwood
Sent: Tuesday, August 9, 2022 10:31
Subject: ASLEF strike this Sat 13th - no service on majority of GWR network

Dear Steve

We promised to keep you updated ahead of this Saturday's (13th August) strike by the ASLEF trade union (train drivers) when there will be no service on the majority of the GWR network.

We will run a very limited service on the routes listed on our dedicated strike webpage here: www.gwr.com/strike <http://www.gwr.com/strike> . These services will be very busy and will start later and finish much earlier than normal. Disruption will continue into Sunday 14th August, and our advice to customers is to check before travel and only travel if absolutely necessary.

Journey planners are being updated and where we can we are contacting customers directly to make them aware of the changes. Any help you can give to share this message amongst your networks will be gratefully received, we want to ensure that anyone who is thinking of travelling by train this weekend is aware of the severe disruption. We will be in touch again next week with detail on the RMT and TSSA action planned for Thursday 18th and Saturday 20th August. One of the three separate negotiations between the TSSA and Network Rail was approved by members last week, and we continue to work to resolve all outstanding disputes.

You may also have seen that hot weather is forecast for later this week, with the potential to disrupt rail services through temporary speed restrictions and short-notice cancellations. Our teams will be watching this carefully, and customers should check before they travel through National Rail Enquiries or on www.gwr.com <http://www.gwr.com> .

As ever, if there is anything we can do to assist please do get in touch.

Best wishes

Jane Jones

Head of Public Affairs, GWR

Toby Elliott

Head of Communications, Network Rail Western

Emailed Newsletter: 08/09/2022 16:07

Date: 08-Sep-22 04:07:52 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group: Rail strikes announced for 15th and 17th September
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Attachment Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group Proposed December 2022 Timetable - 20220908.pdf

Hello All,

Please find below two strike related emails from GWR.

The strikes are frustrating for all concerned. Especially as we'd like more time from the GWR train planners to discuss the December timetable change. However, their train planners are getting tied up producing temporary timetables for the strike days. This means our proposals for December might not get time to be considered.

However, from December, Bill Wells and I are asking for the reinstatement of one dedicated off-peak IET. This would give additional direct Bedwyn to Paddington departures at 0831, 1141, 1441 and 1741 with additional direct Paddington to Bedwyn departures at 0707, 1007, 1307 and 1607.

Please find full details attached. We have put this proposal to GWR and have a meeting scheduled for the 23rd where we have asked for this to be an agenda item. We will also pass it on to the two MPs covering

Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

EMAIL 1:

From: Jane Jones
Sent: Monday, September 5, 2022 11:35
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Subject: Rail strikes announced for 15th and 17th September

Dear Steve

You may have seen that further strike dates have been announced in the coming weeks. On Thursday 15th September, ASLEF (train drivers), Unite (Train Care Depot staff) and the RMT (on board and station staff, and Network Rail signallers) will be on strike. TSSA (managers and office staff) will also be taking action short of strike on the 15th.

The RMT and Unite will also be striking on Saturday 17th September, and TSSA will be on strike for 24 hours across Monday 25th and Tuesday 26th September.

Our teams are working as quickly as possible to confirm the train plan for all four strike days. Our advice will be not to travel unless absolutely necessary, and there will be no rail replacement bus services in operation. We recognise the severe impact this has on our customers, especially now that schools and colleges have returned, and there will also need to be timetable changes on the days before and after the strikes. We will be in touch with further details of the train plan. Our dedicated industrial action webpage at www.gwr.com/strike <http://www.gwr.com/strike> will also be updated with the latest news.

We thought it might also be helpful to share the comments made by Steve Montgomery chair of the Rail Delivery Group which represents train operators and Network Rail following the RMT's announcement:

"These strikes are cynically timed to cause maximum disruption to the very passengers the industry depends on for its recovery. From those left out of pocket because they can't get to work, to people missing vital appointments and thousands of children and young people who depend on the train to get to school, the union leadership's actions have very real consequences.

"We absolutely want to give our people a pay rise and we know they are facing a squeeze – but the RMT must recognise that with revenue consistently at 20% below pre-covid levels, the only solution lies in long-overdue reforms that will put the industry on a sustainable footing and improve services for passengers.

"Everybody wants to see the industry and its people thrive - we ask the RMT to do the right thing, call off these damaging strikes and work with

us to make that happen."

Best wishes

Jane Jones

Head of Public Affairs, GWR

Toby Elliott

Head of Communications, Network Rail Western

EMAIL 2:

From: Jane Jones
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 15:30
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Update on rail strikes taking place 15th and 17th September

Dear Steve

We were in touch earlier this week about the rail strikes taking place next week, on Thursday (15 September) and Saturday (17 September). There will also be a strike by TSSA (office staff and managers) for 24 hours from midday on Monday 26th September to midday on Tuesday 27th September.

The strike on Thursday 15th September involves ASLEF (train drivers), RMT (on board and station staff, and Network Rail signallers) and Unite (depot teams) and on Saturday 17th September, RMT, Unite, & some TSSA members of Network Rail will be on strike. On both days, there will be no service on the majority of our network. We will run a very limited service on the routes listed on our dedicated strike webpage here: www.gwr.com/strike.

Our advice to customers is to check before travel and only travel if absolutely necessary. Disruption is also expected on Friday 16th September, and there will also be some changes to services on Sunday 18th September, including potentially some short-notice cancellations. Trains that do travel across the strike period will be very busy. To help with this tickets for travel from 15th-18th September will also be valid on 19th and 20th September.

Journey planners are being updated as soon as possible and where we can we are contacting customers directly to make them aware of the changes. Any help you can give to share this message amongst your networks will be gratefully received, we want to ensure that anyone who is thinking of travelling by train next week is aware of the severe disruption.

As ever, if there is anything we can do to help, please just get in touch.

Best wishes

Jane Jones
Head of Public Affairs, GWR

Toby Elliott
Head of Communications, Network Rail Western

Emailed Newsletter: 12/09/2022 09:43

Date: 12-Sep-22 09:43:49 AM
Subject: Rail strikes and connections at Newbury
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hi All,

You have probably heard but the strikes planned for Thursday 15 September, Saturday 17 September, Monday 26 September and Tuesday 27 September have been called off.

Please do keep us posted with information about missed connections at Newbury (or Reading on a Sunday). Please also let us know if you made connections but there was lack of information causing stress and the desire to run to meet the train.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 13/09/2022 15:20

Date: 13-Sep-22 03:20:00 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group: Rail strikes et al
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Attachment Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group Proposed December 2022 Timetable - 20220908.pdf

Hello All,

I'm resending this email to a small list of recipients whose email server bounced the previous email. The reason for the bounce was that your providers spam filter thinks passenger group emails are spam. By sending to a smaller list I hope this gets through. I'd be grateful if you could reply to say whether you have received this email.

You have probably heard but the strikes planned for Thursday 15 September, Saturday 17 September, Monday 26 September and Tuesday 27 September have been called off.

Please do keep us posted with information about missed connections at Newbury (or Reading on a Sunday). Please also let us know if you made connections but there was lack of information causing stress and the desire to run to meet the train.

From December, Bill Wells and I are asking for the reinstatement of one dedicated off-peak IET. This would give additional direct Bedwyn to Paddington departures at 0831, 1141, 1441 and 1741 with additional direct Paddington to Bedwyn departures at 0707, 1007, 1307 and 1607.

Please find full details attached. We have put this proposal to GWR and have a meeting scheduled for the 23rd where we have asked for this to be an agenda item. We will also pass it on to the two MPs covering Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 23/09/2022 20:53

Date: 23-Sep-22 08:53:53 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group: Meeting with GWR train planners
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Attachment GWRProposedDec2022BedwynTimetableSummary.pdf

Hello All,

Bill Wells and I met with the GWR train planners today to discuss our proposal to reinstate one off-peak IET, giving the following benefits:

Our three hour off-peak proposal. Points to note (i) This would give additional direct Bedwyn departures at 0831, 1141, 1441 and 1741 with additional direct Paddington departures at 0707, 1007, 1307 and 1607. (ii) It will change the first off-peak Bedwyn to Paddington departure from 0849 (one change, 1:20 duration) to 0831 (direct, 1:03 duration) and the last afternoon off-peak from Paddington to Bedwyn from 1507 (one change, 1:29 duration) to 1607 (direct, 1:16 duration). (iii) The off-peak time in London will increase from 6:58 (six hours fifty-eight minutes) to 8:33 (eight hours and thirty three minutes). (iv) It will resolve the problem of the 1132 and 1321 Newbury to Bedwyn services not calling at Kintbury or Hungerford. (v) Most of the trains shown in this suggested timetable have either already operated in the December 2019 version or are operating currently. Thus we are looking at something that is workable.

GWR stated that our solution is well thought out and does work. However, they have no spare IETs to do it. The problem is that they need 80 IETs a day to run the existing services and Hitachi (due to maintenance issues with cracks) typically supply only 75 per day from a stock of 93 sets. So the cracks have to be resolved before we can get to this point. And there is no guarantee they'll allocate the 81st available set to us, though we feel this should be pushed for given we have had three IETs taken away from us.

We asked about three other options:

1. Can more IET sets could be produced by splitting the ten car IET sets (which comprise of two five car units coupled together) and adding four additional coaches (which would need to be purchased) to make a nine car set and five car set? GWR said, if the new coaches were purchased, this would be possible and as a nine car set has roughly the same seating capacity as two five car sets joined together then this would not be detrimental to existing ten car services.

2. If electrification came to Bedwyn then would a four car 387 (all electric) suffice or do we need a siding extension to accommodate an eight car? GWR were comfortable that a four car set could run into Paddington, or be joined to another four car set at Newbury or Reading. However, electrification to Bedwyn is way in the future.

3. When electrification reaches Bristol Temple Meads could they swap 387s from the Newbury service to the Bristol service, freeing up IETs to serve Newbury and Bedwyn. The answer to this is they can't see why not, but there isn't yet a date set for electrification to Bristol Temple Meads.

The GWR train planners have made amendments for the December 2022 timetable with better connections at Newbury and additional stops on some West of England services at Hungerford (please see attached). Although this will improve the situation the problems with missed connections at Newbury (due to no west facing bay, lack of alternate services should a connection be missed and everything (including freight) being given priority) will persist.

Given our proposal for December isn't going to be implemented this time around, we have asked if the 1636 Paddington departure could be made off-peak for Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. The reason being is the last off-peak of the afternoon is currently the 1507, leaving a rather short day in London. GWR have promised to look into this.

We plan to have another meeting with GWR management to discuss the high number of cancellations, delays and missed connections.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 28/09/2022 09:02

Date: Wed, 28 Sep 2022 09:02:03 +0100
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group: Meeting with GWR train planners

Hello All,

Bill Wells and I met with the GWR train planners on Friday to discuss our proposal to reinstate one off-peak IET, giving the following benefits:

Our three hour off-peak proposal. Points to note (i) This would give additional direct Bedwyn departures at 0831, 1141, 1441 and 1741 with additional direct Paddington departures at 0707, 1007, 1307 and 1607. (ii) It will change the first off-peak Bedwyn to Paddington departure from 0849 (one change, 1:20 duration) to 0831 (direct, 1:03 duration) and the last afternoon off-peak from Paddington to Bedwyn from 1507 (one change, 1:29 duration) to 1607 (direct, 1:16 duration). (iii) The off-peak time in London will increase from 6:58 (six hours fifty-eight minutes) to 8:33 (eight hours and thirty three minutes). (iv) It will resolve the problem of the 1132 and 1321 Newbury to Bedwyn services not calling at Kintbury or Hungerford. (v) Most of the trains shown in this suggested timetable have either already operated in the December 2019 version or are operating currently. Thus we are looking at something that is workable.

GWR stated that our solution is well thought out and does work. However, they have no spare IETs to do it. The problem is that they need 80 IETs a day to run the existing services and Hitachi (due to maintenance issues with cracks) typically supply only 75 per day from a stock of 93 sets. So the cracks have to be resolved before we can get to this point. And there is no guarantee they'll allocate the 81st available set to us, though we feel this should be pushed for given we have had three IETs taken away from us.

We asked about three other options:

* Can more IET sets could be produced by splitting the ten car IET sets (which comprise of two five car units coupled together) and adding four additional coaches (which would need to be purchased) to make a nine car set and five car set? GWR said, if the new coaches were purchased, this would be possible and as a nine car set has roughly the same seating capacity as two five car sets joined together then this would not be detrimental to existing ten car services.
* If electrification came to Bedwyn then would a four car 387 (all electric) suffice or do we need a siding extension to accommodate an eight car? GWR were comfortable that a four car set could run into Paddington, or be joined to another four car set at Newbury or Reading. However, electrification to Bedwyn is way in the future.
* When electrification reaches Bristol Temple Meads could they swap 387s from the Newbury service to the Bristol service, freeing up IETs to serve Newbury and Bedwyn. The answer to this is they can't see why not, but there isn't yet a date set for electrification to Bristol Temple Meads.

The GWR train planners have made amendments for the December 2022 timetable with better connections at Newbury and additional stops on some West of England services at Hungerford. Although this will improve the situation the problems with missed connections at Newbury (due to no west facing bay, lack of alternate services should a connection be missed and everything (including freight) being given priority) will persist.

Given our proposal for December isn't going to be implemented this time around, we have asked if the 1636 Paddington departure could be made off-peak for Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. The reason being is the last off-peak of the afternoon is currently the 1507, leaving a rather short day in London. GWR have promised to look into this.

We plan to have another meeting with GWR management to discuss the high number of cancellations, delays and missed connections.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 28/09/2022 11:02

Date: 28-Sep-22 11:02:02 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

On September 27th Bill and I met with Laura Farris MP and Danny Kruger MP to discuss the downgrade to our off-peak service from last May.

It was a good meeting and Laura and Danny were very helpful. They have promised to write to the DfT asking (i) what are the plans for Hitachi fixing the faults so more IETs are in service. (ii) When more are in service can we be reserved the first 'spare' to give us the three-hourly off-peak service we have proposed to GWR and (iii) for the 1636, from Paddington, to be off-peak for Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn.

GWR have written to us with the following strike information:

You may have seen that further strike dates have been announced in the coming weeks. On Saturday 1st October, ASLEF (train drivers), Unite (Train Care Depot staff) and the RMT (on board and station staff, and Network Rail signallers) will be on strike.

This will be followed by strikes on Wednesday 5th October (ASLEF only), Thursday 6th October and Friday 7th October (TSSA managers and office staff only) and on Saturday 8th October (RMT only).

As train drivers will strike on both Saturday 1st and Wednesday 5th, there will be no service on the vast majority of our network on these dates. We will run a very limited service on the routes listed on our dedicated strike webpage here: www.gwr.com/strike.

Our teams are working as quickly as possible to confirm the train plan for the 6th, 7th and 8th October, and we will be in touch again next week once we have this detail. There will also be some knock on impact to days following the strikes and it is likely that late evening services the day before strikes will be affected.

Our advice to customers will be not to travel on strike dates unless absolutely necessary. There will be no rail replacement services in operation. Revised timetables will be entered into journey planners as quickly as possible and we will keep our dedicated strike page updated.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 29/09/2022 10:25

Date: 29-Sep-22 10:25:59 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Some of you will have already received some of the details in this email. However, a large number of emails were bounced as I over stepped a sending limit. Even if you received the original email please note the

updated strike information.

Meeting with Laura Farris MP and Danny Kruger MP

On September 27th Bill and I met with Laura Farris MP and Danny Kruger MP to discuss the downgrade to our off-peak service from last May.

It was a good meeting and Laura and Danny were very helpful. They have promised to write to the DfT asking (i) what are the plans for Hitachi fixing the faults so more IETs are in service (ii) when more are in service can we be reserved the first 'spare' to give us the three-hourly off-peak service we have proposed to GWR and (iii) for the 1636, from Paddington, to be off-peak for Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn.

Strikes

The following have been confirmed as strike days: October 1st, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th. There will be no service on the vast majority of the network on these dates. The strikes will also impact the start of service on Sunday 2nd October and Sunday 9th October and no rail replacement services will run throughout. Please see www.gwr.com/strike

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 11/10/2022 16:02

Date: 11-Oct-22 04:02:05 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - letter from MPs to GWR
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Attachment Laura Farris & Danny Kruger to GWR Oct 22.pdf

Hi All,

Please find attached a letter, written by our MPs, to GWR, regarding what we are currently pressing for. We are also working on various alternatives, should the proposal in the attached document not be implemented in May 2023.

We continue to press GWR on reliability and delays.

Best wishes

Steve Smith
Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Dear Mark,

Ahead of the December timetable change we met with the Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group (BTPG) to hear about their concerns, and to understand their proposals for improving the timetable for services to Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. Their proposals include two specific requests, which together would help mitigate the issues passengers have encountered since May.

The BTPG ask whether it would be possible to add an extra IET to the line, which would allow for direct trains between Paddington and Bedwyn every three hours during off-peak times. We understand that GWR are already aware of this proposal and believe is a workable solution but cannot currently be implemented due to a lack of IET stock. As such, we would be grateful if you could consider this proposal should an additional IET become available.

Secondly, the BTPG also request an off-peak extension to the 16:36 London Paddington departure for Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. This would lengthen the off-peak period, thereby increasing flexibility for day-time travel.

We are grateful that you previously stepped in to reinstate the 19.07 from London Paddington to Bedwyn alongside other improvements and, as such, hope that you will look upon the above requests in a similarly favourable way.

Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you. Yours ever,

Laura Farris MP Danny Kruger MP

Emailed Newsletter: 13/10/2022 11:33

Date: 13-Oct-22 11:33:55 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group: Good News
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Attachment image001.png

Hello All,

Given the last afternoon off-peak from Paddington is the 1507 (before May it was the now withdrawn 1607) we asked if the 1636 could be made off-peak for Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. We were initially told no because otherwise Newbury passengers would buy tickets to Kintbury to get the off-peak fares. Undeterred, we requested that the 1636 be made off-peak for advanced purchase. GWR have agreed to this, please see their email below to us.

So, some good news for a change. This considerably lengthens the off-peak time in London before the evening peak.

Please let us know how you get on with this.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Jane Jones
Sent: Thursday, October 13, 2022 09:55
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Good News

Morning

I have just heard from our Head of Revenue. As we cannot make the 1636 Off Peak because of the Newbury abstraction, he has agreed to add a new Advance Purchase single ticket to the 1636, for Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. It is set at the Off Peak rate.

As you know Advance fares are quota controlled tickets and these can therefore run out. They have however carefully considered loadings for Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn in setting the initial allocation, and as this is dynamic we do have the capacity to vary in future. The revenue team will be keeping a close eye on things. That said, these are Advance tickets and we cannot guarantee that everyone will be able to buy one. It is however a step forward and we are very grateful to you for the suggestion.

They have acted very quickly to put them on sale, and if you have a look they may even be showing now ☺

Thank you again for the suggestion! I hope that it is some help.

Best wishes

Jane

Jane Jones MBE | Head of Public Affairs | Great Western Railway

Emailed Newsletter: 26/10/2022 12:10

Date: 26-Oct-22 12:10:11 PM
Subject: FW: Rail strike dates announced for November
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Please find, below, details of the next set of strikes.

We continue to push for restoration of our direct services to Paddington. We are still working on it. However, in the meantime, please let us know about missed connections at Newbury. We are disappointed that GWR are still allowing connections to leave when the inbound services has already arrived and passengers are making their way towards the connecting train. This is very frustrating and causes passengers to run.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Jane Jones
Sent: Monday, October 24, 2022 11:45
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Rail strike dates announced for November

Dear Steve

You may have seen that further strike dates have been announced by the RMT in the coming weeks. On Thursday 3rd and Saturday 5th November, RMT members at both train operators (on board and station staff) and Network Rail (signallers) will be on strike; Network Rail staff will also strike on Monday 7th November. Some TSSA grades at Network Rail will also be on strike on 3rd, 5th and 7th November.

Many parts of our network will have no service at all on these dates. Where we are able to run services these will start later and finish earlier than usual, and expected to be very busy. We will keep our dedicate strike page updated at www.gwr.com/strike <http://www.gwr.com/strike> which will include the routes we can run on once confirmed.

Our teams are working as quickly as possible to confirm the train plan for both the strike days and the days in between. We will be in touch again next week once we have this detail. There will also be some knock-on impact to days following the strikes and it is likely that late evening services the day before strikes will be affected.

Our advice to customers will be not to travel on strike dates unless absolutely necessary. This includes travel to Cardiff for the Welsh rugby international on Saturday 5th November, where there will be no GWR services from Cardiff after the match and no rail replacement services in operation. Revised timetables will be entered into journey planners as quickly as possible.

There will also be some impact to services on dates between the strike days, Friday 4th November and Sunday 6th November, with services starting later than usual and potentially finishing earlier.

Refunds will be available without fee, and tickets can be used on alternatives dates. All information about the strikes is on our dedicated webpage www.gwr.com/strike <http://www.gwr.com/strike> which will update as soon as we have further timetable information.

Best wishes

Jane Jones

Head of Public Affairs, GWR

Toby Elliott

Head of Communications, Network Rail Western

Emailed Newsletter: 26/10/2022 20:36

Date: 26-Oct-22 08:36:18 PM
Subject: FW: Update - change to rail strike date
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Thanks to all of you who, since my earlier email today, let us know that

the strike days have changed. GWR have since emailed with the updated details. Please see the email below. Also keep an eye on www.gwr.com/strike

Thanks to all of you who have also pointed out that the promised cheaper advanced fares on the 1636 are not showing up. We have chased GWR a couple of times on this and will continue to do so.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Jane Jones
Sent: Wednesday, October 26, 2022 17:32
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Update - change to rail strike date

Dear Steve

You may have seen the news that the RMT, Unite and TSSA unions have postponed the strike action scheduled for Thursday 3rd November as it clashes with the day that the Royal British Legion's traditional Poppy Day collection at rail stations.

Strike action instead has been called for Wednesday 9th November.

This means that strikes will now take place on Saturday 5th, Monday 7th, and Wednesday 9th November, and services will operate normally on Thursday 3 November.

We will be in touch early next week with more detail on the impact of the strikes but as before we will not be able to run any services on most of our network.

Best wishes

Jane

Jane Jones MBE | Head of Public Affairs | Great Western Railway

Emailed Newsletter: 15/11/2022 10:18

Date: 15-Nov-22 10:18:59 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - news update
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Strikes

Please see an email below from GWR regarding rail strikes on 19th, 21st and 26th November.

Parking at Bedwyn

If you use Bedwyn station please try and park in the station car park before street parking near the Post Office or the Londis Shop. These two businesses are important to Great Bedwyn and they need parking spaces nearby for customers.

Also, if you are able to use the Post Office or Londis Shop that would be much appreciated. The Post Office (apart from all your postal and cash withdrawal needs) also sells fresh bread and the Londis Shop (apart from general food and grocery) now has a takeaway Costa Coffee machine.

1636

We are aware that the cheap fares, promised for the 1636 from Paddington, are not always showing as available. We have chased GWR a number of times on this matter and they are looking into it.

Performance

Bill and I are attending a performance meeting with GWR next week. Please let us know of any further complaints. Predominantly the discussion will be about the connections at Newbury. We've drawn up the following which shows key Paddington to Newbury departures connecting to the Bedwyn shuttle, over the last 12 weeks, with the % arriving within five minutes of the scheduled arrival time:

1233	73%
1307	88%
1436	82%
1507	90%
1636	79%
1736	70%
2003	62%
2104	73%

It does not read well and will be the subject of discussion with GWR. We have also sent a more detailed report to Danny Kruger and Laura Farris so they remain aware of the problems.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Jane Jones [mailto:jane.jones@gwr]
Sent: Monday, November 14, 2022 18:03
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Rail strikes on 19th, 21st and 26th November

Dear Steve

We said we would keep you updated with planned industrial action that will affect train services. Unfortunately, we have two sets of dates to make you aware of.

On both Saturday 19th and Monday 21st November, RMT members at Network Rail's signalling centre near Didcot Parkway will be on strike. This is regarding a local disciplinary matter and unrelated to the other strikes that have taken place this year.

As this is a crucial part of the network controlling all signalling between London Paddington, the Cotswolds, south Wales, west and south west of England, we will only be able to run a reduced number of services and those in the affected area will start much later and finish much earlier than usual. The train schedule is currently being confirmed and will be in online systems later this week. As with previous strikes, there will be a knock-on impact for the days after strikes, on Sunday 20th and Tuesday 22nd November. For further information please see www.gwr.com/strike <http://www.gwr.com/strike> .

As this isn't a national strike the level of awareness isn't high, and will affect many passengers including heading to the rugby at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff and Twickenham Stadium in London. We'd be grateful if you could share this information through your networks.

We have also received notice that the ASLEF union (train drivers) will be on strike on Saturday 26th November. As with previous ASLEF action, this will severely limit train services and we expect to only be able to operate a very limited service between Bristol and London, Reading and Oxford, and Reading and Basingstoke. Exact details of the train schedule will be confirmed next week.

We will write to you again later this week when the train schedule for Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday as well as Saturday 26th has been confirmed.

Many thanks,

Toby and Jane

Toby Elliott, Head of Communications, Network Rail Western

Jane Jones, Head of Public Affairs, Great Western Railway

Emailed Newsletter: 24/11/2022 09:30

Date: 24-Nov-22 09:30:51 AM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - more strike misery
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Please find below details of strikes over the coming weekend.

You'll probably have noticed the RMT have announced further strike dates on 13, 14, 16 and 17 December and on January 3,4,6 and 7.

We are still tackling GWR over the dreadful performance at the moment. For example the 1808 off Paddington is only getting to Bedwyn on time 11% of the time. And the backup, the 1836, 44% of the time. Don't forget to claim delay repay.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Jane Jones
Sent: Wednesday, November 23, 2022 16:06
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Subject: Reminder - rail strike this Saturday and further dates announced

Dear Steve

We promised to update you this week ahead of strike action being taken by ASLEF (train drivers) at GWR and 11 other train operators this Saturday 26th November.

The vast majority of our network will have no service whatsoever. We will be able to run a very limited service only between London Paddington and Bristol Temple Meads, Reading and Basingstoke, and Reading and Oxford. These will start later and finish much earlier than normal, and we expect them to be extremely busy, and so we advise customers to only travel on these services if absolutely necessary. No other GWR services will operate. We also expect disruption will continue into Sunday 27th November. Journey planners for both Saturday and Sunday have now been updated.

We have made customers aware through traditional and social media, direct contact through email, journey planner warnings, and at station and on board announcements. We also have our dedicated strike page www.gwr.com/strike <http://www.gwr.com/strike> with full information on refunds and ticket acceptance in the days following the strike.

There are several large events due to take place across our network this Saturday; the strike means that no trains will serve Bath Spa for the first day of its Christmas market. There will also be no GWR trains to or from Cardiff for the rugby international against Australia, or at Newbury for the Coral Gold Cup Day, and we are also advising customers heading to Twickenham for the rugby international against South Africa to seek alternative ways to travel. We are in close contact with the event organisers to ensure the message is shared with those planning on attending.

We are very grateful for your help in spreading the message about the impact of the strike, and any assistance you can give on this occasion would be very much appreciated, particularly if you can share our social media messaging from www.twitter.com/gwrhelp <http://www.twitter.com/gwrhelp> which will be updated throughout the week and on Saturday & Sunday, including last train times.

You may also have seen that the RMT has announced new strike dates at both Network Rail and train operators including GWR over the coming months – 13th & 14th and 16th & 17th December, and 3rd & 4th and 6th & 7th January. As before these strikes will have a major impact on our services, with most of our network likely to have no trains running whatsoever. We will be in touch with more information as soon as we can. The RMT has also instructed its members not to do any overtime or rest day working from 18th December to 2nd January and that this also applies to Network Rail signallers and GWR on-board and station staff.

Best wishes

Jane

Jane Jones MBE | Head of Public Affairs | Great Western Railway

Emailed Newsletter: 01/12/2022 23:17

Date: 01-Dec-22 11:17:11 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Advanced Notice of Line Closure

From 01:00 on Saturday 18/02/2023 until 05:05 on Friday 03/03/2023 no passenger trains will run anywhere on the track between Theale and Westbury. This is for extensive engineering works and will mean bus replacements. We'll keep you posted with the finer detail nearer the time. However, hopefully the advanced warning will enable you to make alternative arrangements (or even book that winter holiday!).

December Timetable Change

As part of our work with GWR, to improve the connections at Newbury, there are a series of changes from December 11th. So please be aware of the new connection timings at Newbury. There are some longer gaps at Newbury (to improve the connectivity) and all connections (to Paddington) are now only one change (some currently require at change at Newbury and Reading). This is all part of the programme to try and make the connections work.

RMT Overtime and Rest Day Working Ban

In addition to strikes on 13, 14, 16 and 17 December and on January 3,4,6 and 7 the RMT will also ban all overtime and rest day working from 18th December to 2nd January. As the railways rely on staff working overtime (including on rest days) we can expect more disruption.

Usage Figures

The latest station usage figures have been published. They show, post pandemic, continued healthy improvement for Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. This is good news as our fear was the shuttles would deter people.

Performance Meeting with GWR

On November 29th Bill Wells and I met with GWR in Swindon to discuss the current situation. GWR respected us and we sat down with five senior managers to go through all the concerns. Here follows a summary:

1. The service reliability has been very poor of late. E.g. the 1808 is only on time 18% of the time, the 1836 24% and the 1907 62%. Additionally all services between Paddington and Newbury are showing very poor timings. GWR responded (i) they agree it's been very poor (ii) one of the problems is that (following a fatality in Wales of a track worker) Network Rail no longer do maintenance when the lines are in use. It now has to wait for closure. This means that some maintenance is not getting done, causing failures. The forthcoming line closure (18/02/2023 to 03/03/2023) will resolve a number of these issues and remove a series of temporary speed restrictions that are currently in place. (iii) As the 1808 is often cancelled GWR will now bring in a policy that if the 1808 is cancelled the 1836 will then make an additional call at Kintbury – please keep us posted if this is actually happening (iv) They've brought in a new route director, who has a good track record elsewhere on the network, to take charge of the problems (v) they plan to share the burden of cancellations and delays – such that if say trains to Newbury are hit one day they'll try and protect them on the next disruption (vi) Network Rail are doing more to protect trespass and suicides (which cause trains to be delayed).

2. Trains are not being held at Newbury. There is an agreed length of time each connecting service can be held at Newbury in the event of the arriving service being late. By and large this is working. However, the problem is when the delay is greater than the length of time the service can be held for. This is why we get missed connections. GWR hope the remedies (listed above) will improve this.

3. Information at Newbury is poor with passengers not being informed when trains are being held (or not). This causes passengers anxiety and causes them to run. We really stressed that GWR need to improve this. We have asked for more use of the PA and if the CIS screens can say 'Held'. We also asked for more on-board announcements advising passengers of what to do. Please do keep us posted with examples where you were not given the proper information.

4. Compensation for flexi tickets on strike days. If your ticket has been activated you can claim full compensation. If it has not been activated you can claim a refund, less a £10 admin fee. Please let us know of your experiences.

5. Our request for our IET trains (or at least one off-peak one) back. GWR reiterated that they want to give us our direct service to Paddington back. They acknowledge that the shuttle service is not a good solution. However, all our IETs have been redeployed to replace the expensive Castle Class trains. Therefore it won't be any time soon. The Treasury/DfT is now pulling the strings. GWR is effectively only a management team now.

6. The promised 1636 discounted advanced purchase fares are not what we hoped for. This is probably an expectation issue. All GWR were allowed to do was offer Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn passengers the

'walk on' off-peak fare. It does not give us the advanced fare discounts.

7. Who bought the land at Hungerford station? It was not GWR or NR, instead it was a private sale. This was disappointing to hear as we felt that this land should have been retained for car parking. However, GWR did thank us for highlighting the fact it was for sale. However, another body bought it before they could get a bid in place.

8. When the ticket machines are down how can you collect your pre-paid ticket? You can collect from any TVM so, if you are about to board, and the TVM is not working (and you can't collect your ticket) then board anyhow and explain the situation to the on-board ticket seller or at the barriers when you alight. If you are forced to repurchase you will be entitled to a full refund.

Bill and I continue to work on solutions to bring IETs back.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
Emailed Newsletter: 07/12/2022 20:05

Date: 07-Dec-22 08:05:23 PM
Subject: Rail strikes
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Please find below an email from GWR regarding the forthcoming strikes and Christmas services.

Please keep letting us know about poor performance, missed connections, poor customer information etc.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Jane Jones
Sent: Wednesday, December 7, 2022 17:15
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Subject: Rail strikes

Dear Steve

We promised to keep you updated about the strikes announced by the RMT impacting both GWR and Network Rail.

48 hour strikes will be going ahead on Tuesday 13 and Wednesday 14 December, Friday 16 and Saturday 17 December, Tuesday 3 and Wednesday 4 January and Friday 6 and Saturday 7 January. On these dates an

extremely reduced service will operate on a limited number of routes. Most parts of the GWR network will have no service at all. Services will start later and finish much earlier than usual, and we expect trains that are able to run to be extremely busy. We will not be able to run rail replacement services instead of the train service.

In addition, services on dates between the strike dates, Thursday 15 December and Thursday 5 January will start later than normal, and on the days after the strikes (Sunday 18 December and Sunday 8 January) trains will start later and there could be short-notice cancellations and alterations.

The RMT have announced that they have lifted their overtime ban from Network Rail staff which was due to start on 18 December, but new strike dates of Saturday 24 December and Tuesday 27 December have been announced for Network Rail. This will mean services on the 24th will finish much earlier than usual. We do not operate services on Christmas Day or Boxing Day.

From Monday 19 December to Friday 23 December we will operate our full timetable.

We are asking customers to only travel on affected dates if absolutely necessary. Those trains that do run will be very busy and it is highly recommended that a seat reservation is made. We are contacting customers who have already purchased tickets online (where we have contact details) to let them know about the changes and we are offering full refunds, or opportunities to amend travel dates/times.

Full details of where we are able to run trains, information on refunds, and when journey planners will be updated is available on our dedicated strike page at www.gwr.com/strike <http://www.gwr.com/strike> .

If you can share these messages amongst your networks – including our latest updates from our Twitter feed at www.gwr.com/GWRHelp <http://www.gwr.com/GWRHelp> - that would be very much appreciated.

We know that this is going to be very difficult for customers travelling home for Christmas and if there's anything else you think we can do to help, please do get in touch.

We also wanted to alert you to the fact that railway timetables across the country will be changing this Sunday (11th) December. This is one of the regular twice yearly changes. Changes to times on our network are minimal, but customers should check before they travel at www.gwr.com/check <http://www.gwr.com/check> in case of any minor timing changes.

Best wishes

Jane & Toby

Jane Jones
Head of Public Affairs, GWR

Toby Elliott
Head of Communications, Network Rail Western

Emailed Newsletter: 19/12/2022 17:10

Date: 19-Dec-22 05:10:48 PM
Subject: FW: Christmas & New Year travel
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hi All,

Below is the latest strike news from GWR. Please take note if you are planning to travel by train over Christmas.

You may have noticed in the press that the old HSTs, currently working in the West of England, are being withdrawn. This means our IET trains, originally purchased for Bedwyn, will be in use there. Also GWR are abandoning the 769 trains (electric and diesel) which would have been an option to give us a direct service to Reading (perhaps even Paddington) as an alternative to our IETs. Both of these announcements mean we are stuck with off-peaks turbos to Newbury for the foreseeable. However, Bill Wells and I will keep pressing for service improvements in 2023 – especially in the area of the first and last off-peaks of the morning and afternoon. We will also keep asking if a 10 car IET can be split into 2x5 car IETS, making a set available for us. Likewise we'll continue to ask if a 387 (electric only) on the Newbury route can be swapped for a IET (electric and diesel) on the Cardiff route.

Best wishes from Bill and I. We know how hard it is on this line and we thank you for continuing to use the stations.

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Jane Jones [mailto:jane.jones@gwr]
Sent: Monday, December 19, 2022 15:28
To: <Undisclosed recipients>
Subject: Christmas & New Year travel

Dear Steve

We promised to update you on travel over Christmas and New Year. The Rail Maritime Transport union (RMT) are on strike from Christmas Eve through to Tuesday 27th December. We do not run trains on Christmas Day or Boxing Day, but this means that trains will finish much earlier than usual on Christmas Eve. We are asking customers to complete their journeys by lunchtime, and services will start up again after midday on Tuesday 27 December.

A reduced level of service will then operate through to 2nd January with further strikes on Tuesday 3rd and Wednesday 4th January and Friday 6th and Saturday 7th January. Services on Thursday 5th and Sunday 8th will be impacted with later starts to services than usual.

The RMT are also taking industrial action, short of a strike throughout this week (Monday 19 December to Friday 23 December). We are expecting to run a full timetable, however, given this continuing action services could be subject to short-notice alterations and cancellations.

Customers should therefore check again before they travel using www.gwr.com/check <http://www.gwr.com/check>

All the latest on industrial action including a journey checker for looking at specific journeys and advice on refunds is on our dedicated webpage www.gwr.com/strike <http://www.gwr.com/strike> - any help you can give us in highlighting this page, and in reminding people to check their journeys and travel earlier if they can will be very helpful.

We also need to let you know about another strike that is impacting our services. Servest, who clean our trains and our stations, have let us know that their staff are also on strike on Thursday 22nd, Friday 23rd and Saturday 31st December. We will do our best through our own staff and volunteers, but there will be a knock-on effect on the cleanliness of our trains and stations during this period.

For anyone who is looking for some light reading over the festive period, we have just published our Customer & Stakeholder Report Mid Year Report, which can be downloaded as a PDF from our webpage here: https://www.gwr.com/about-gwr/our-business/partners-and-stakeholders <https://www.gwr.com/about-gwr/our-business/partners-and-stakeholders> And finally, our very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year, and grateful thanks for all your help and support in 2022.

We will be available right through Christmas, so do let us know if you need anything, and again, thank you for your help.

Best wishes

Jane & Toby

Jane Jones
Head of Public Affairs, GWR

Toby Elliott
Head of Communication, Network Rail Western

Emailed Newsletter: 23/01/2023 10:00

Date: 23-Jan-23 10:00:30 AM
Subject: Updates from Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Please find a series of updates, below.

Strikes

You may have seen in the media, that ASLEF (train drivers) will be taking strike action on Wednesday 1st February and Friday 3rd February. RMT train drivers will also strike on the same days. This will mean no service for Bedwyn, Hungerford or Kintbury on those days, with a likely disrupted service on February 2nd and 4th. Please keep an eye on GWR's strike page at www.gwr.com/strike <http://www.gwr.com/strike>

February and March Blockade

Network Rail will be carrying out track renewals in the Kennet Valley in February and March. Work will start on Saturday 18th February and the first stage of work will run through to Thursday 2nd March. During this period the line will be closed from Pewsey, through Bedwyn and Newbury as far as Theale.

There will be further closures on Sunday 5th March, Saturday and Sunday 11th / 12th March, Friday 7th April to Monday 10th April, and on Sunday 16th and 23rd April and 14th May.

Rail replacement bus services will operate from Bedwyn, Hungerford, Newbury and Thatcham through to Theale, where local rail services will operate to Reading and London Paddington. These will be hourly bus services, calling at each station. After 20:00 on weekdays and on Sundays the bus service will operate to Reading. We are currently pressing GWR for some more direct peak bus services e.g. Bedwyn / Hungerford then direct to Theale. GWR state they are finding it difficult to source buses. However, we will keep pressing this point.

A minibus service will operate from Kintbury - as the renewal work includes the level crossing at Kintbury station, there will also be a road closure. GWR will not therefore be able to operate full bus services for Kintbury. They will have a minibus (16 seater) that will operate from the car park of the Dundas Arms to Hungerford and Newbury only. This will allow for connections to the rail replacement bus service to Theale for onward connections. GWR are not able to operate a larger bus service given the narrow route into the village. Capacity for Kintbury is therefore very limited, and tickets valid to/from Kintbury can be used from Hungerford or Newbury.

Disruption to our service April 30th to May 3rd

Engineering work is taking place between Westbury to Taunton on April 30th to May 3rd. This means that through services will not be running down our line. In short this means the following Bedwyn departures will not run: 0651, 0729 and 0803 and the following Paddington to Bedwyn services will not run: 1808 and 1836.

Passengers, who rely on the additional West of England services, calling at Hungerford, will also be affected.

We are pressing GWR for fill-in shuttles.

Poor Service

Please keep reporting delays and cancellations to us. We keep pressing GWR for improvements.

However, it does appear our requests for additional stops, on through services, when our trains are cancelled, is starting to have some affect. Thank you to those of you who have fed back to us incidents where GWR have put additional stops on.

Meeting with GWR Managing Director

Bill Wells and I attended a meeting with GWR's MD, Mark Hopwood. Mark

openly stated that the service was very poor at the moment and they, along with Network Rail, are addressing it. As there were 250 other people in the meeting, GWR didn't have time for our question. Therefore we have re-submitted it via email and our awaiting the response. The question is:

With the announcement that GWR are planning to extend IET services to Carmarthen, how many extra IET trains will be required? Although it's an extension of the Swansea service, the additional timing will require more units. Given Bedwyn's three off-peak IET have been taken away, Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group are concerned GWR are committing further units before restoring Bedwyn's. We have been repeatedly told that no IETs are available to restore our service so we would be very frustrated if GWR are able to find IETs for new services c.f. restore the service that passengers in the Kennet Valley have bought into.

We are also going to write to our MPs asking them to speak to GWR on this topic. We need to ensure GWR know we are monitoring their use of rolling stock.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 23/01/2023 10:10

Date: 23-Jan-23 10:10:32 AM
Subject: Updates from Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

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We are also going to write to our MPs asking them to speak to GWR on this topic. We need to ensure GWR know we are monitoring their use of rolling stock.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 23/01/2023 10:20

Date: 23-Jan-23 10:20:47 AM
Subject: Updates from Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

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We are also going to write to our MPs asking them to speak to GWR on this topic. We need to ensure GWR know we are monitoring their use of rolling stock.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 27/01/2023 12:11

Date: 27-Jan-23 12:11:28 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Please find a series of updates, below.

February and March Blockade

GWR have agreed that during the Pewsey to Theale line closure (18th February to March 2nd) season tickets from Bedwyn, Hungerford or Kintbury, of one month or longer in duration, will be valid from Swindon. This gives an alternative to the bus.

The replacement bus timetables are now in the journey planners. Please see the following example:
https://www.gwr.com/tickets/#/3070/3087/2023-02-20/D03:00/N/N/1/0/0/1/1/N/N/N

In summary it will take two hours ten minutes Bedwyn to Paddington with one change at Theale (from bus to rail). The Bedwyn to Theale bus leg is one hour eighteen minutes. We are still pressing for some direct buses from Bedwyn and Hungerford to Theale. Unfortunately Kintbury, due to a road closure, can only have a minibus to Newbury.

On-board Announcements

We are hearing reports that announcements are being made on trains coming in to Newbury regarding which platform you need to be on to catch the shuttle. This is something we have been requesting since May last year. Please keep us posted when announcements are not being made.

Poor Service

In our last email we stated "it does appear our requests for additional stops, on through services, when our trains are cancelled, is starting to have some affect." However, last night the complete opposite occurred when GWR took off all stops on the 1836 Paddington departure before Pewsey! This is another example, in a long list, of recent poor service. The problems are lack of staff, trains and infrastructure failures – predominantly as a result of cost cuts.

Please keep reporting delays and cancellations to us. We keep pressing GWR for improvements.

Delay Repay

If you reach your destination station fifteen minutes or more late you can claim a refund. Please see
https://www.gwr.com/help-and-support/refunds-and-compensation/delay-repa

y

Please always claim. The more it costs the rail industry the more likely we will get a fix.

Disruption to our service April 30th to May 3rd

Just a reminder that engineering work is taking place between Westbury to Taunton on April 30th to May 3rd. This means that through services will not be running down our line. In short this means the following Bedwyn departures will not run: 0651, 0729 and 0803 and the following Paddington to Bedwyn services will not run: 1808 and 1836.

Passengers, who rely on the additional West of England services, calling at Hungerford, will also be affected.

We are pressing GWR for fill-in shuttles.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 10/02/2023 14:10

Date: 10-Feb-23 02:10:21 PM
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group
To: <Undisclosed recipients>

Hello All,

Please find a couple of updates, below.

February and March Blockade 18th February to March 2nd

After a request from us, GWR have approached SWT and we are pleased to be able to tell you that, during the forthcoming line closure, season tickets from Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury will be valid from Whitchurch, Andover, Overton, Greatly and Basingstoke. This is in addition to Didcot and Swindon (GWR stations). Though in the latter case the season ticket must be at least a monthly.

We have asked for additional buses direct to Theale. Unfortunately GWR have been unable to source them. But they have stressed they did try and it was an availability, and not a cost, issue.

The replacement bus timetables are now in the journey planners. Please see the following example:
https://www.gwr.com/tickets/#/3070/3087/2023-02-20/D03:00/N/N/1/0/0/1/1/N/N/N
<https://www.gwr.com/tickets/#/3070/3087/2023-02-20/D03:00/N/N/1/0/0/1/1/N/N/N>

In summary it will take two hours ten minutes Bedwyn to Paddington with one change at Theale (from bus to rail). Unfortunately Kintbury, due to a road closure, can only have a minibus to Newbury throughout the

blockade (irrespective if the road is open at certain times).

During previous blockades, there have been occasions when buses have not turned up, been late or driven by drivers who did not know the route. Please have a low threshold to complain. If you complain via us we can get straight on to it with GWR senior management.

If you want to surrender unused tickets please visit:
https://www.gwr.com/help-and-support/refunds-and-compensation/unused-ticket-refunds
<https://www.gwr.com/help-and-support/refunds-and-compensation/unused-ticket-refunds>

Better Service

We note the trains have been more reliable and punctual this week. We notice this because the inbox has been quiet from you all – we don't actually need to check :) However, please keep letting us know about cancellations or unacceptable delays. It helps our case to be able forward your stories to GWR. And don't forget, if you reach your destination station fifteen minutes or more late you can claim a refund. Please see
https://www.gwr.com/help-and-support/refunds-and-compensation/delay-repay

Please always claim. The more it costs the rail industry the more likely we will get a fix.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 01/03/2023 16:51

From: Steve Smith [mailto:]
Sent: Wednesday, March 1, 2023 16:51
To: 'info@bedwyntrains.org.uk' <info@bedwyntrains.org.uk>
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Hi All,

Please see updates below.

Blockade

The bus replacements come to an end on Friday. Thus from Friday the 3rd we should be back to trains. However, there are further line closures on Sunday 5th March, Saturday and Sunday 11th/12th March, Friday 7th April to Monday 10th April, and on Sunday 16th and 23rd April and 14th May.

We have heard various stories of buses not turning up, missed connections at Theale etc. Thanks for sending them to us. It really does help when we can forward evidence to GWR. The only positive we got was GWR changed the 0730 bus, from Bedwyn, to be direct from Newbury to Theale. This gave it a better chance of meeting the connection at Theale.

Strikes

The RMT trades union has announced four 24-hour strikes on 16th and 18th March, and 30th March and 1st April. Please keep an eye on https://www.gwr.com/strike for amended timetable information. Inevitably this will cause disruption on 17th, 19th, 31st March and 2nd April.

Meeting with Laura Farris MP and Danny Kruger MP

Bill Wells and I are concerned that GWR are making commitments that will require further IETs. This would be before giving back the three they took from us (which ran our off-peak service). To that end we have a meeting with our MPs on Monday so we can keep the pressure up

General Performance

GWR have got back to us r.e. the poor performance during January and February. They say strikes, work to rule and poor weather conspired to give the very bad service that we endured. They have also done some reviews with Network Rail to learn lessons where they could have got things up and running sooner.

Disruption to our service April 30th to May 3rd

Aside from the closures on our stretch of line, GWR have listened to our complaints that, due to engineering taking place between Westbury and Taunton on April 30th to May 3rd, we will be denied our scheduled stops on through trains that are now being diverted via Bristol. At first this meant the following Bedwyn departures will not run: 0651, 0729 and 0803 and the following Paddington to Bedwyn services will not run: 1808 and 1836. However, GWR have put in some replacements for us and we will now have:

Monday 01st May – Bedwyn departures

05.34 (arrives Paddington at 06.38)
06.00 (arrives Paddington at 07.09)
07:29 (arrives Paddington at 08:35)
08:26 (arrives Paddington at 09:24) – replaces 08:03 departure.

Tuesday 02nd and Wednesday 03rd May

05.34 (arrives Paddington at 06.38)
06.00 (arrives Paddington at 07.09)
06:26 (arrives Paddington at 07:36)
06:51 (arrives Paddington at 08:01)
07:29 (arrives Paddington at 08:35)
08:26 (arrives Paddington at 09:24) – replaces 08:03 departure.

And arrivals into Bedwyn from London Paddington in the evening:

Monday 01st May

19:32 (18:36 off Paddington)
20.15 (19.07 off Paddington)

Tuesday 02nd and Wednesday 03rd May

19:16 (18:08 off Paddington)

19:32 (18:36 off Paddington)
20.15 (19.07 off Paddington)

Best wishes

Steve Smith
Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 13/03/2023 10:51

From: Steve Smith [mailto:]
Sent: Monday, March 13, 2023 10:51
To: 'info@bedwyntrains.org.uk' <info@bedwyntrains.org.uk>
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Hello All,

Please find below a series of updates.

Strikes

The next set of strikes are on Thursday 16 March, Saturday 18 March, Thursday 30 March and Saturday 1 April. Services on Friday 17 and Sunday 20 will also be impacted with services starting later than normal, and anyone travelling on those dates should check their journey before travel. Please see details in the email, from GWR, at the foot of this message.

Newbury Connections

GWR following our protests are making a better job of the holding services at Newbury. However, do let us know of any instances where a train could have been held and wasn't.

Meeting with MPs

Our meeting with Danny Kruger and Laura Farris went really well. They will now write to the DfT on the matters concerning us: (i) GWR committing IETs elsewhere before returning the ones taken away from our off-peak service (ii) other diesel stock being retired, due to new electrification routes, by other train operating companies which could be used further west on the GWR network (where there is no electrification), returning our IETs (iii) moves by the DfT to do away with the per station minimum service level agreements.

Our Website

We've updated www.bedwyntrains.org.uk to be more useful when you are travelling. The home page now has the departure boards for Bedwyn and Newbury plus the arrivals board for Bedwyn. So when you go to www.bedwyntrains.org.uk you'll get a snapshot of the current situation. The home page also has links to the GWR journey planner and GWR's phone number.

Also from the home page you can use the menus to navigate to:

1) 'Realtime Info' – This allows you to bring up the live departure / arrivals board (updated in real time) for Bedwyn, Kintbury, Hungerford, Newbury, Thatcham, Theale, Reading or Paddington. It also tells you where the train actually is, aiding your decision making. The idea is that when waiting at the station you bring this up for the latest updates.
2) 'Recent Performance' – Currently this is set up for weekday only and gives you the last week of actual arrival times for services from Bedwyn. For other stations, or weekends, select any one of the menu options, scroll down and change the search parameters. The idea of this is for evidence when putting in a claim. A link to the Refunds page is also included on this menu.
3) 'Timetables' – This allows you to select the printed timetable you'd see at the station for either Bedwyn, Kintbury, Hungerford, Newbury, Thatcham, Theale, Reading or Paddington.
4) 'More…' – This gives lots more information including: these newsletters, hints & tips, Marlborough bus information, local information and more information about the passenger group.

We are really hoping this becomes a portal to aid you when travelling. It is designed to be a single point where you can branch to the other information you need. We welcome feedback. You can put a link to it on your mobile device so it appears like an App. E.g. on the Chrome browser on Android, select the three vertical dots and then the 'Add to Home Screen' option. If you do this you'll then be one click away from lots of useful information to aid your journey.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

From: Jane Jones
Sent: Friday, March 10, 2023 16:11
To: Steve Smith <>
Subject: RMT rail strike Thursday 16 & Saturday 18 March

Dear Steve

You may have seen reports that the RMT have suspended strike action at Network Rail ahead of a referendum on a new deal.

Members of the TSSA union (management and control staff) have also accepted the proposed pay rise and deal at train operators. **While this is welcome news, the RMT strike action at train operators continues and RMT (station and on board staff) will be on strike next Thursday 16 March, Saturday 18 March, Thursday 30 March and Saturday 1 April.**

Many parts of our network will have no service whatsoever on the affected strike days, and where we can run services they will start later and finish much earlier than normal. They will be much busier than usual and subject to short-notice changes and alterations. We are advising customers to find alternative methods of travel or to vary the date of their journey if they can. More information can be found on our dedicated strike page at www.gwr.com/strike including when detailed timetables will be available and how to claim refunds.

Services on Friday 17 and Sunday 20 will also be impacted with services starting later than normal, and anyone travelling on those dates should check their journey before travel.

If you are able to share our updates from our Twitter account at www.twitter.com/gwrhelp or update your own networks in whatever way possible so that as many people as possible know that the strikes have not been called off that would be greatly appreciated.

Thursday 16 March is day three of the Cheltenham Festival. We are working with other train operators (Crosscountry and Transport for Wales), Network Rail and British Transport Police, as well as the Jockey Club on plans for the day, and we will issue an updated note to local stakeholders on Monday when we have a clear plan. If you would like to be included in this update please let Tom know on thomas.lydon@gwr.com.

It is possible that there will be a limited service for Cheltenham, but this is likely to finish early and our advice for Cheltenham Festival goers is to look for alternative travel. We will also update our website on Monday with specific information.

If there is anything we can do to help, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Best wishes

Jane

Jane Jones MBE | Head of Public Affairs | Great Western Railway

GWR | 8th Floor, The Point | 37 North Wharf Road | London | W2 1AF

Emailed Newsletter: 24/03/2023 15:10

Hello All,

Please find below a series of updates.

Strikes

You may have seen media reports that the RMT has called off the rail strikes planned for Thursday 30 March, and Saturday 1 April. GWR will therefore now operate their normal planned timetable on those days. This includes the changes planned for Friday 31 March and Sunday 2 April.

Overcrowding on the 1836 this week

GWR have been running the 1836, off Paddington, as a five car unit this week. It normally runs as a ten car unit. This is causing overcrowding. We are seeking confirmation from GWR whether this is a temporary or permanent measure.

May Timetable Changes

The new timetable starts on Monday May 22nd For Bedwyn the notable changes are: 1) We lose our 0803 direct to Paddington, but gain a new service at 0823 direct to Paddington. What was the 0803 can still be caught by taking the 0749 from Bedwyn and catching the 0819 from Newbury. 2) Bedwyn will have a new westbound service, departing Bedwyn at 0943, calling at Pewsey then Westbury. This is the 0838 from Paddington and will also call at Kintbury and Hungerford. There are no later direct return trains from Westbury, but you can catch the 1452, 1555 and 1646 from Westbury and change at Hungerford. Later trains can be caught from Westbury, involving a change at Newbury. Therefore, for example, you can consider trips to Bath.

Our Website

Thanks to everybody who has visited our new-look website. Its focus is to give you the information, at your fingertips, you need whilst travelling. If you've not already taken a look then please do so at www.bedwyntrains.org.uk The following screenshot is the home screen, with a snapshot of the departure and arrival boards. The 'Realtime Info' menu allows you to bring up the live departure / arrivals board (updated in real time) for the most relevant stations to Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. It also tells you where the train actually is, aiding your decision making. The 'Recent Performance' menu gives you the last week of actual arrival times for services. The 'Timetables' menu allows you to select the printed timetable for the most relevant stations to Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. The 'More…' menu gives lots more information including: these newsletters, hints & tips, Marlborough bus information, local information and more information about the passenger group.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 31/03/2023

Engineering Works

Please see an email from GWR, below. In short there will be replacement buses to Reading Station (not Theale as before) over Easter (Friday 7 April to Monday 10 April) and on Sundays 16, 23 April & 14 May.

Devizes Gateway

Bill and I attended a meeting this morning where the case for the Devizes Gateway station was presented. In short, it's only going to work if there is an hourly Paddington to Westbury IET service. This would then be our principal service. Network Rail and GWR were both quoted, at the event, as saying they do want our direct trains reinstated. This is all heartening of course and we continue to press for a restoration of our service (irrespective of extending it to Westbury).

After the meeting Bill and I got a few minutes with Danny Kruger MP. This allowed us a chance to go through where we are with our campaign to restore our direct trains. Danny confirmed that he and Laura Farris MP have, at our request, written a joint letter to the DfT regarding our concerns: (i) GWR committing IETs elsewhere before returning the ones taken away from our off-peak service (ii) other diesel stock being retired, due to new electrification routes, by other train operating companies which could be used further west on the GWR network (where there is no electrification), returning our IETs (iii) moves by the DfT to do away with the per station minimum service level agreements.

From: Thomas Lydon
Sent: Thursday, March 30, 2023 14:30
To: Steve Smith <>
Subject: Reminder - rail improvement works over Easter

Dear Steve

We just wanted to remind you of Network Rail improvement works taking place over Easter (Friday 7 April to Monday 10 April) and on Sundays 16, 23 April & 14 May. This work is vital to ensure the railway remains safe and reliable for operation.

On the dates affected, no trains will run between Reading and Westbury, or Reading and Basingstoke. Buses will replace trains and journey times may be different to normal, with journeys also taking longer than usual.

Our long distance services between Devon & Cornwall will also be diverted and journey times will be extended by around 30 minutes.

Journey planners have been updated and we will also be making customers aware through traditional and social media, station posters, as well as station and on-board announcements.

Customers should check before they travel on www.gwr.com/check and more information about the works, including where replacement buses will stop, is available at https://www.gwr.com/travel-information/travel-updates/planned-engineering/easter.

If you can share this with you networks that would be greatly appreciated, or if there's anything else you need please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Best wishes

Tom & Toby

Thomas Lydon | Public Affairs Manager | Great Western Railway

Toby Elliott, Head of Communications, Network Rail Western

Emailed Newsletter: 19/04/2023 11:51

From: Steve Smith [mailto:]
Sent: Wednesday, April 19, 2023 11:51
To: 'info@bedwyntrains.org.uk' <info@bedwyntrains.org.uk>
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group Updates

Hello All,

Please find some updates below.

Engineering Works

If you are travelling between Sunday 30th April to Wednesday 3rd May some of our stops, on through services, will be altered / not running due to engineering works between Frome, Westbury and Taunton. Therefore, please check journey planners if you plan to travel.

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group at Great Bedwyn's COGS Event

Bill Wells and I are staffing a table at the Clubs, Organisations, Groups and Societies event being held at the Village Hall, Frog Lane SN8 3PB between 1300 and 1630 on Saturday April 22nd. So, if you'd like to come and meet us for a chat, feel free to do so. The full list of COGS attending are: Bedwyn Cinema, Bedwyn Coronation Celebrations, Bedwyn Golfing Society, Bedwyn History Society, Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group, Bell Ringers, Bruce's Trust, Church (Parochial Church Council), Cricket Club, Crofton Pumping Station, Footpaths Group, Friends of Great Bedwyn Church Trust, Friendship & Mobility, Great Bedwyn School (Governors), Great Green Bedwyn, Link Scheme, Memorial Hall & Playing Fields Charity, Millennium Choir, Music Society, North Wessex Downs Landscape Trust, Pantomime Society, Parish Council & Allotments, Parish News, Pewsey Community Area Partnership, Pewsey Vale Tourism Partnership, Royal Observer Corps Heritage Group, Stay and Play (toddler group), Surgery Patient Participation Group, Tennis Club, Thursday Club, Wilton Windmill, Wiltshire Health Walks, Women's Institute.

Boxing Day Travel

We have received the following from Jane Jones at GWR:

As you will know we do not currently operate any rail services on Christmas Day or Boxing Day.

We are having a look to see if we should be trying to offer some Boxing Day services. We know that December 27th is a much heavier travel day for people returning home after visiting friends and family, or even for travel to shops and for entertainment but we want to test views on Boxing Day services. I am therefore contacting a number of local groups including business and rail users to see what you think.

I have put together a short survey via Tractivity, which you can access here - but please feel to add more comments. We would need DfT support to be able to offer the services, so there is no guarantee that we could make the change, but your views will help to inform how we go forward.

GWR Customer & Community Improvement Fund open for bids

Jane Jones has also emailed us with:

Just before Easter we emailed to let you know that our Customer and Community Improvement Fund would soon be opening so that you could start to consider bids. I am therefore delighted to confirm that the fund is now open and we are very much looking forward to receiving applications. You have until the end of the day on Thursday 25 May to enter a bid.

Applications must be made online – the application form and more guidance are on our website here https://www.gwr.com/about-gwr/what-you-can-expect/community/community-investment

We are particularly interested in bids that show a tangible benefit to the community with an emphasis on inclusion and diversity, engagement and education, environmental benefit and increasing rail travel.

It would be great if the fund could help close the gap on projects where some existing funding has been secured or could be available from other sources. However, each proposal will be treated on its own merits and consideration of the benefit it would bring to the community, and we will happily fund projects without any match funding.

There are no hard and fast rules; we want to encourage bids of all shapes and sizes, though to be fair, as the funding needs to cover our whole network we are particularly keen on ***small and medium projects****. This could include phased projects, for instance a bid for a feasibility study or some research, to support a larger project. There must be a link to the railway in every project.*

For more information and to discuss any ideas you have please use our dedicated email address Community.Fund@GWR.com. We are keen to encourage as many bids as possible and look forward to hearing from you.

If you have any suggestions then for Hungerford email: claire.barnes@hungerford-tc.gov.uk

For Bedwyn you can email us info@bedwyntrains.org.uk or clerk@greatbedwyn-pc.gov.uk

For Kintbury clerk@kintburyparishcouncil.org

Best Wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 28/04/2023 16:56

From: Steve Smith [mailto:]
Sent: Friday, April 28, 2023 16:56
To: 'info@bedwyntrains.org.uk' <info@bedwyntrains.org.uk>
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group Updates

Hello All,

Please note the following updates:

Strikes

Dates have been announced for full strikes on Friday 12 May, Wednesday 31 May and Saturday 3 June. There will also be action short of a strike on Saturday 13 May, Monday 15 May through to Saturday 20 May and Thursday 1 June. Please keep an eye on www.gwr.com/strike

Please Complain

Please do always let us know of missed connections at Newbury. The more we complain, the more likely we are to get our direct service restored. Also, please always claim compensation for any delay of fifteen minutes or more. The more it costs the rail industry, the more likely we are to get our direct service restored. Please see https://www.gwr.com/help-and-support/refunds-and-compensation/delay-repay

Progress on Restoring our Direct Rail Service

GWR have been making certain commitments to IET trains which have caused us concern with regards to returning our three IETs for our off-peak direct services to Paddington. We wrote to GWR three times regarding this and failed to get a response. We therefore had a meeting with Laura Farris MP and Danny Kruger MP to share our concerns. They wrote to the MD of GWR, stating:

BTPG would like clarification on the following:

1. Will the proposed Swansea to Carmarthen extension require the use of more IETs and, if so, are GWR prioritising this extension over the reinstatement of IET services on the Bedwyn route?
2. Have GWR considered the BTPG's proposal to switch bi-mode IETs from the Paddington to Cardiff route with the electric-only Class 387s on the Newbury route? These IETs could then come to Bedwyn, replacing the shuttle service.

3. Is GWR planning to use IETs on the Bristol to Salisbury route, and other routes in the evolving MetroWest area?
4. Finally is GWR considering bidding for other rolling stock that might become available (namely Avanti West Coast's Class 221s and East Midlands Railway's Class 222s), which might free up IETs for the Bedwyn service?

Here follows Mark Hopwood's (MD of GWR) response to Laura and Danny:

Thank you for your letter of 13 March (attached for ease) and for your kind comments about the improvements we have been able to make for Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn to help with connections. Generally the timetable does now seem to be working well. There are still some occasional incidents, a number of which have been associated recently with rail replacement buses, and there has been some missed connections linked to disruption, rather than scheduling. The Bedwyn Train Passenger Group (BTPG) are very helpful in keeping us informed and we investigate each incident that they report. We also meet them regularly to discuss the timetable and performance.

We will be introducing more Intercity Express Trains (IET) on our Cardiff to Penzance route in May. This will mean we can continue to remove Castle Class high use diesel services from our fleet. This will reduce costs, helping us to meet the financial challenge of reducing public subsidy, as well as helping us to support Net Zero carbon emissions.

You will remember that it was the need to make financial savings that led to the initial change to services for Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury. We needed to make better use of our all electric fleet Class 387 fleet. This also released IETs to begin the process of removing the Castle Class trains. We would have been happy to run the 387s through to Bedwyn, retaining the direct London services, but we cannot call beyond Newbury without further electrification of the line.

Further electrification would allow for the return of direct services and indeed would further reduce diesel emissions in Wiltshire and West Berkshire.

In order to take more Castle Class trains out of service on our Cardiff to Penzance route we are reducing a number of our ten carriage IET services to five carriages. This will impact services on routes across our network. It also means that we are making changes to where the IETs are stabled and maintained. This includes moving some IETs from North Pole depot (outside London Paddington) to Stoke Gifford (outside Bristol). As a result, we now have capacity to be able to meet a long promised extension of our Swansea services to Carmarthen. These are not new services but are existing services that will now run through to Carmarthen, giving West Wales a two hourly service to London. As the trains are no longer stabled at North Pole they could not be used in the Kennet Valley. I understand the frustration, and of course it is difficult to see improvements elsewhere in the timetable when there is a continuing ask to restore services here, but I have taken the view that if

we can make improvements within budget, especially in this case, where we are making better use of the fleet overall, then we should do so.

This does not mean that we are not committed to the Kennet Valley, we are, and we do want to see the return of direct services. We are not yet able to do so, but we will continue to look for opportunities and we will keep working with BTPG to offer the best connecting services that we can until we can restore more direct services.

This will not however include bidding for additional rolling stock. You will know that we are now in a National Rail Contract with the Department for Transport. This means we need to submit an annual business plan that meets the budget set by the Treasury. Quite rightly, the amount of taxpayer subsidy is being reduced and we have been set a very challenging budget for 2023/24. Revenue is also not yet fully restored, and this does mean we need to reduce costs. In order to protect existing services, we are therefore making savings by reducing rolling stock costs. This comes both from the removal of our Castle Class fleet and from cancelling our plans to introduce a fleet of Class 769 trains. The savings we are making from reducing the size of our fleet have allowed us to protect more of our timetable and there isn't any scope for additional leasing at present.

We have looked at using Class 387s on the London Paddington to Cardiff route, which is fully electrified and we do have one service a day currently operated by a 387. This ensures we keep crews competent for special events at the Principality Stadium where we use Class 387s to move larger volumes of customers in up to twelve car formations. These trains do not have First Class or catering on board and they are not therefore suitable to fully replace IETs on this long distance route. This would lead to a reduction in revenue, increasing the savings we would need to make elsewhere. I know it may sound harsh, but the number of customers using these services far outweighs the number of customers on our Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury services. This is something that we do have to consider when making decisions about the deployment of our fleet. In addition, our peak time Cardiff services operate to Swansea, which is also off the electrified route where Class 387s cannot operate.

I should note that we are not using IETs on the route from Bristol to Salisbury. The new Metrowest services (funded by the West of England Combined Authority) will be operated by turbo services and our Cardiff to Portsmouth services will be operated in the main by Class 158 diesel services.

Our campaign continues!

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 09/05/2023 08:46

From: Steve Smith [mailto:]
Sent: Tuesday, May 9, 2023 08:46
To: 'info@bedwyntrains.org.uk' <info@bedwyntrains.org.uk>
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group updates

Hello All,

Please note the following updates:

Strikes

The RMT have added a strike day of Saturday May 13th to the strike days we recently emailed you about. Please see the full email from GWR at the end of this email.

Reminder of the May Timetable Changes

The new timetable starts on Monday May 22nd For Bedwyn the notable changes are: 1) We lose our 0803 direct to Paddington, but gain a new service at 0823 direct to Paddington. What was the 0803 can still be caught by taking the 0749 from Bedwyn and catching the 0819 from Newbury. 2) Bedwyn will have a new westbound service, departing Bedwyn at 0943, calling at Pewsey then Westbury. This is the 0838 from Paddington and will also call at Kintbury and Hungerford. There are no later direct return trains from Westbury, but you can catch the 1452, 1555 and 1646 from Westbury and change at Hungerford. Later trains can be caught from Westbury, involving a change at Newbury. Therefore, for example, you can consider trips to Bath.

Bus and Trains Journey Planner

For those of you who travel by train and bus the Wiltshire Council journey planner https://www.connectingwiltshire.co.uk/ allows you to work out combined journeys. It also covers outside Wiltshire. For example I typed Bedwyn to Storey Arms (a place in the Brecon Beacons) and it worked out the trains and bus for me.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

PS The email from r.e. strikes:

From: Thomas Lydon
Sent: Friday, May 5, 2023 11:32
To: Steve Smith <>
Subject: Update ahead of next week's rail strikes

Dear Steve

We promised to keep you updated ahead of next week's rail strikes.

As well as ASLEF (train drivers) strike action on Friday 12 May, the RMT (station and on board staff) has also announced strike action on Saturday 13 May.

On both days we will only be able to operate a very limited service, which will start later and finish much earlier than normal. **Many parts of our network will have no service whatsoever.** Services that do run will be much busier than usual and subject to short-notice alteration and cancellations. We are advising customers to find alternative methods of travel or to vary the date of their journey if they can. More information can be found on our dedicated strike page at www.gwr.com/strike including when detailed timetables will be available and how to claim refunds.

Services on Thursday 11 May and Sunday 14 May will also be impacted with some services finishing earlier and starting later than usual, and customers travelling on those dates should check their journey before travel using www.gwr.com/check.

ASLEF has also announced action short of a strike from Monday 15 to Saturday 20 May, and on Thursday 1 June – we plan on running a full timetable during this time, but this action is likely to cause some short-notice changes and cancellations – again customers should check before travelling at www.gwr.com/check.

Further ASLEF strikes are due to take place on Wednesday 31 May and Saturday 3 June, we will be in touch again closer to the time but the impact on our services will be very similar to next week's strikes.

Any help you can give to make your networks aware including sharing updates from our Twitter team at www.twitter.com/gwrhelp would be much appreciated. If there is anything we can do to help please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Best wishes

Tom

Thomas Lydon | Public Affairs Manager | Great Western Railway
Milford House | 1 Milford Street | Swindon | SN1 1HL

Emailed Newsletter: 21/05/2023 13:01

From: Steve Smith [mailto:]
Sent: Sunday, May 21, 2023 13:01
To: 'info@bedwyntrains.org.uk' <info@bedwyntrains.org.uk>
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group Updates

Hello All,

Please find below some updates.

Poor Performance

Anybody commuting over the last week will know how bad the service has been. Our evening direct trains have run at only 40%. We have been in contact with GWR over this and it was caused by a variety of industrial action, points failures and a fatality. GWR know how unhappy we are.

Meeting with Laura Farris's (MP) Office

Bill Wells and I recently met with Laura Farris's staff. Laura is planning to raise the loss of many of our direct trains in the House. We discussed GWR's reluctance to switch 387s (all electric) from the Newbury route to the Cardiff route, freeing up IETs (which can run beyond Newbury). We countered GWR's claims, that as the 387s do not have buffet cars or first class they will lose revenue, with the costs they must be incurring to run a shuttle between Newbury and Bedwyn. We also raised our concern that we really need late night staffing at Newbury to manage the changes of train now required for Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn passengers. Also we pointed out that Newbury Station is a lonely old place late and night and we have safety concerns. We also raised the point that people have moved here since a full direct service was introduced in 1992.

Hopefully Laura will get a chance to raise this.

Timetable Change

The new timetable comes in on Monday May 22nd. There are three things to note for Bedwyn commuters. The 0803 no longer calls at Bedwyn, instead you can catch it at Newbury by getting the 0749 shuttle from Bedwyn. On the upside we now have a new 0823 service, direct to Paddington.

The 0729 Bedwyn departure has been downgraded from 2 x five car units to a single five car unit. On occasion, this has already happened for operational reasons and has led to standing room only from Hungerford. GWR have done this to free up an IET to use elsewhere. We have protested to GWR - our line has been looted of enough IETs already.

Please report to us all occurrences of not being able to get a seat on the 0729. We will then petition GWR with this. We do have a concern that the rail industry has a 'trick' to reduce overcrowding by removing stops. We know how important the 0729 is – Bill and I pressed for it since we formed in 2006, right up until we finally got it in December 2019.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 26/05/2023 23:01

From: Steve Smith [mailto:]
Sent: Friday, May 26, 2023 23:01
To: 'info@bedwyntrains.org.uk' <info@bedwyntrains.org.uk>
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Hello All,

Strikes

To add to the recent misery, there with be either no trains or a revised timetable between Wednesday May 30th and Sunday June 4th. Therefore please check your journey. More information can be found on GWR's dedicated strike page at www.gwr.com/strike including when online journey

planners will be updated and how to claim refunds. You can check your journey before travel using www.gwr.com/check

0729 From Bedwyn

In our last email we advised that the 0729 from Bedwyn (which also calls at Hungerford) has been reduced from ten to five carriages. Given this train starts its journey from Plymouth, we were concerned about overcrowding. Thanks to all of you who have advised us that it's been standing room only from Bedwyn. We have been talking to GWR who have said they are looking in to resolving this.

We will keep the pressure up.

Refunds

If you are delayed by more than fifteen minutes you are entitled to claim a refund. Please see https://www.gwr.com/help-and-support/refunds-and-compensation/delay-repay

Please always claim! The more it costs the industry the more likely we will get improvements.

Our Website

We've had quite a few people join our email list this week. We are now 648 strong. If you are new, then please take a look at our website www.bedwyntrains.org.uk It is designed to help you when travelling with easy to access station screens, access to recent performance stats, journey planners and timetables.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 18/06/2023 15:31

From: Steve Smith [mailto:]
Sent: Sunday, June 18, 2023 15:31
To: 'info@bedwyntrains.org.uk' <info@bedwyntrains.org.uk>
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - updates

Hello All,

Please find some updates, below.

Glastonbury - minor changes to services: Weds 21 June/Thurs 22 June/Fri 23 June

1) The 0703 Paddington-Paignton will not call at Newbury.
2) The 1035 & 1235 Paddington-Exeter St Davids will not call at Hungerford

Let's Keep the Pressure Up

For any delay, over fifteen minutes, you are entitled to compensation. Please do always claim. The more refunds the rail industry has to pay out, the more likely we will get our service back.

If you are being inconvenienced by poor service, or having to change at Newbury, please can you write to your MP saying how it impacts on your life (e.g. childcare arrangements, missing meetings etc)? For Bedwyn it's danny.kruger.mp@parliament.uk and Hungerford / Kintbury it's laura.farris.mp@parliament.uk We need to keep our problems in the minds of our MPs.

There are still occasions when connections are not held at Newbury when they should have been. We always complain to GWR when this happens. Please do always let us know about missed Newbury connections. The more we complain to GWR the better.

1906 Last Week

Other than Friday, the 1906 from Paddington did not run beyond Newbury last week. We didn't find out until Wednesday when a passenger emailed us. We contacted GWR straightaway and they apologised for not informing us. It was taken off due to engineering works. Had we known we would have asked for a bus replacement to serve Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. Bill and I are both retired commuters so we are dependent on information from GWR or passengers. So, if you see something in the timetabling that looks a bit odd then please do let us know.

On Thursday GWR ran the 1808 as a five car instead of a nine car set. Given, with the 1906 chopped, this was the last direct service that day it was very overcrowded. We protested to GWR. It feels like one thing after another as the lack of investment bites.

Getting Our Direct Paddington Trains Back

This is still ongoing. Like us, others are questioning GWRs decision to start to run IETs on to Carmarthen from Swansea. This is going to put pressure on IET availability at the same time as we are calling for the return of our IETs.

We are also concerned about terminology that GWR would 'have to find three additional IETs' to restore our direct service. We point out, each time, that we had three IETs taken from us and the use of the word 'additional' makes it look as if we are asking for something new.

Bill and I met with Railfuture last week. They offered some advice, including (i) contacting all candidates standing in the local seats at the next election (ii) researching the lost revenue in running shuttles instead of directs.

So, it all continues on!

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 27/06/2023 21:51

From: Steve Smith [mailto:]
Sent: Tuesday, June 27, 2023 21:51
To: 'info@bedwyntrains.org.uk' <info@bedwyntrains.org.uk>
Subject: Cracked crossing at Theale - impact for Bedwyn services June 28th

Hello All,

Cracked crossing at Theale - impact for Bedwyn services

Due to a track defect near Theale, Network Rail need to take an emergency possession this evening. This means the 0534 and 0600 services tomorrow morning (28 June) are cancelled. The first train east from Bedwyn will be the 0626, the first train east from Newbury will be at 0631.

Strikes

The RMT (on board and station staff) will strike on Thursday 20, Saturday 22 and Saturday 29 July. On these dates GWR will only be able to run a limited service, starting later and finishing much earlier than usual – and most of the network will have no service whatsoever. Trains that are planned to run will be subject to short notice changes and cancellations. GWR are also expecting there to be an impact on the days before and after strikes too, in particular Friday 21 July.

GWR's teams are working to get journey planners updated as well as their dedicated webpage at www.gwr.com/strike as soon as possible.

ASLEF (train drivers) has also announced a ban on overtime working from Mon 3 July to Sat 8 July. While GWR do not anticipate that this will have a major impact on their services, customers should check before they travel using www.gwr.com/check . As a result, the Night Riviera Sleeper service will not run from Sunday 2 July to Friday 7 July, restarting on Sun 9 July.

Short Formations

We note that a number of our nine/ten carriage IETs are being substituted for five carriages. We are complaining regularly to GWR about this. We suspect that extending IETs to Carmarthen means the IET fleet is under so much pressure we are now getting looted. We are pushing for clarification.

The train manager does have the option to declassify first class. So if your train is running with only five carriages with standing room only, then feel free to remind the train manager of this option. Obviously there has to be room in first class for this decision to be made. Also, if you are travelling in first class and they declassify it, you are due a refund.

Bus Service to Marlborough

On June 20th we had a meeting with Wiltshire Council regarding the bus service. The new Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) bus service is now scheduled to come in to operation on 30th October. Therefore the current bus service will remain until at least the end of October.

The new service will have a route number 110 and be a mix of a fixed timetable and a bookable service. The fixed timetable has not yet been finalised.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 07/07/2023 19:55

From: Steve Smith [mailto:]
Sent: Friday, July 7, 2023 19:55
To: 'info@bedwyntrains.org.uk' <info@bedwyntrains.org.uk>
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group - News

Hello All,

Please find some updates below.

Travelling this Weekend?

GWR are advising customers using their services from London Paddington this weekend to check before they travel.

There are several large music concerts taking place in the capital over the weekend, as well as the ongoing overtime ban in place by the ASLEF (train drivers) union.

Please check before you travel using www.gwr.com/check as services are subject to short-notice cancellations and alterations. Tickets will be valid on earlier services.

Further Disruption

The RMT (on board and station staff) will strike on Thursday 20, Saturday 22 and Saturday 29 July. On these dates GWR will only be able to run a limited service, starting later and finishing much earlier than usual – and most of the network will have no service whatsoever. Trains that are planned to run will be subject to short notice changes and cancellations. GWR are also expecting

there to be an impact on the days before and after strikes too, in particular Friday 21 July. Please keep an eye on www.gwr.com/strike

Between Monday 17 to Saturday 22 July there will be industrial action, short of a strike, by the Aslef union. This will lead to disruption and short notice cancellations. Please use www.gwr.com/check

Short Formations and Cancelations

GWR have got back to us with an explanation:

Currently we are seeing too many short notice short forms (e.g. five car IETs instead of ten cars). We have a train plan that allows for 13 IET sets to be out at any one time for maintenance, repair and regular required examinations. At the moment there are 19 sets out. This is a combination of higher than expected sets needing repair due to damage and vandalism and too many sets being out for heavy maintenance at the same time. We have spoken to Hitachi about this and the need for better planning.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 04/08/2023 10:21

From: Steve Smith [mailto:]
Sent: Friday, August 4, 2023 10:21
To: 'info@bedwyntrains.org.uk' <info@bedwyntrains.org.uk>
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Hello All,

Please find some updates, below.

Do you return from Paddington, weekday after 1900?

Please could you get in touch, GWR want to consult with us regarding these services.

Meeting with Network Rail

On Wednesday July 26th Bill Wells and I attended a meeting with Network Rail on the 'Wiltshire Strategic Study'. This is to "consider the various stakeholder aspirations in the Wiltshire area and possible timetable and infrastructure interventions required to inform an incremental, integrated development programme."

As you can imagine, we reiterated our case of restoring our direct Paddington services. Interesting for us is that Network Rail wish to see an hourly Paddington to Westbury service with a stopping pattern of Reading, Newbury, Kintbury, Hungerford, Bedwyn, Pewsey then possibly Devizes Gateway before turning around at Westbury.

This would solve all our problems (and give us the westbound service we have always campaigned for). However, it'd be a minimum of six years away, would require IETs or further electrification, a new platform at Westbury and double heading (i.e. two locos) the stone trains so they move faster. Therefore, we are still campaigning for the restoration of our pre-Covid service.

Hungerford and Kintbury

It's been mentioned to us a couple of times that there is a feeling that the non-stop 1321 from Newbury to Bedwyn (not calling at Kintbury or Hungerford) is a concession to us in the passenger group. This is not so. When the timetable changed in May 2022 there were two trains that were non-stop Newbury to Bedwyn. We protested on behalf of Kintbury and Hungerford and GWR managed to sort one of them out and add a Hungerford stop on the 1316 Newbury to Exeter departure.

The 1321 from Newbury remains as not calling at Kintbury and Hungerford. It has to provide a connection from the above Exeter departure and then 'belt its way down to Bedwyn' to not get in the way of a freight train. GWR are very aware that this is still a problem, but it can only really be solved by the reintroduction of a direct train from Paddington, which would run ahead of the Exeter service.

The passenger group is for Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. The only things we don't campaign for, regarding Kintbury and Hungerford, are on-station facilities – though we are always happy to pass comments on to GWR.

Please Claim and Spread the Word

If you get delayed by more than 15 minutes please always claim compensation. https://www.gwr.com/help-and-support/refunds-and-compensation/delay-repay It's important that the poor service we get costs the rail industry. If we rest on a laurels things won't change.

Please also ask others to do the same and, if possible, join our email list. The more protesting we do the better.

Buses to Marlborough

Wiltshire Council are now saying that changes which affect Great Bedwyn are now scheduled for September 4th (Marlborough and Great Bedwyn) then October 30th (Marlborough, Great Bedwyn and Hungerford). We do have some leaflets, if you'd like one then please let me have your address.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 21/08/2023 15:01

From: Steve Smith [mailto:]
Sent: Monday, August 21, 2023 15:01
To: 'info@bedwyntrains.org.uk' <info@bedwyntrains.org.uk>
Subject: Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Hi All,

Please find some updates, below.

Strikes

You may have seen that the RMT union (on board and station staff) have announced two further strike dates for Saturday 26th August and Saturday 2nd September at train operators across England, including GWR.

As on previous strike days, this will have a major impact on services, with many parts of the network having no service whatsoever. Trains that are planned to run will be subject to short notice changes and cancellations. GWR are also expecting there to be an impact on the days before and after strikes too.

GWR are working to get journey planners updated as well as on their dedicated webpage at www.gwr.com/strike

There are further RMT strike dates affecting Cross Country services only on Saturday 9th September. For further information on this please visit https://www.crosscountrytrains.co.uk/travel-updates-information/changes-to-train-times/industrial-action

A Note About Peak Time Travel

During the evening peak, you can use the Elizabeth Line with an off-peak ticket from Paddington to Reading and then catch anything, including West Country bound trains originating from Paddington, on to Newbury, Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn.

Trainline and Refunds

It's been pointed out to us that if you claim Delay/Repay via Trainline you will be charged a fee – up to £10. However, you can claim directly off GWR and avoid this fee.

Awards

The Passenger Group picked up two awards at Railfuture's annual awards. A gold award for our new look website and a silver award for the campaign we've mounted to reinstate our direct services to Paddington. To read more, please search for Bedwyn in the following
PDF https://www.railfuture.org.uk/dl3396?highlight=awards

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 24/09/2023 09:30

Hello All,

Please find some updates, below.

Strikes

Unfortunately more strikes have been announced. This comes on top of very poor performance and is bitter blow.

The ASLEF union (train drivers) have announced two further strike dates for Saturday 30 September & Wednesday 4 October at train operators across England, including GWR.

As on previous strike days, this will have a major impact on services, with many parts of the network having no service whatsoever. Trains that are planned to run will be subject to short notice changes and cancellations, and will start later and finish much earlier than usual. GWR are also expecting there to be an impact on the days before and after strikes too.

GWR's teams are working to get journey planners updated as well as their dedicated webpage at www.gwr.com/strike as soon as possible. GWR will also be making customers aware through station and on board announcements, station posters, and traditional and social media.

ASLEF has also announced a ban on overtime working from Friday 29 September, and from Monday 2 to Friday 6 October. While GWR do not anticipate that this will have a major impact on their scheduled services, customers should check before they travel using www.gwr.com/check . There is also the potential for delays and cancellations due to short notice driver absence. The Night Riviera Sleeper service will not run throughout the period of the industrial action.

There are also a series of Tube strikes planned. RMT plan strikes on October 4th and 6th https://www.rmt.org.uk/news/london-underground-station-staff-to-take-strike-action-in/

GWR Stakeholder Conference

Bill Wells and I attended the stakeholder conference in Swindon on September 13th. The Secretary of State for Transport was due to attend, but instead addressed by a pre-recorded video. This was met with a few comments that perhaps he did not wish to answer questions.

Andrew Haines, Chief Executive of Network Rail, spoke very well. He's really on the side of the passengers and described the DfT's micro managing the industry as 'evil'. Strong words which showed his passion and concerns about how damaging the cuts are.

The MD of GWR, took questions at the end. This was our big chance to raise the removal of the IETs. Not only the three for Bedwyn but also another three have been taken away from Paddington services, causing cancellations and short formations to our directs and connections at Newbury. He tried to deflect my concerns so I kept going, asking if he was bidding with the DfT for more funds to get the six IETs back. Again I was deflected and I was then told to hand the microphone back. After the conference we again wrote to him with all of the issues and concerns. Unfortunately, like previous correspondence, we've not had a reply. We find now our correspondence with the MD has to be done via the MPs Laura Farris and Danny Kruger.

Meeting with GWR

We are having a meeting with the GWR senior managers next week. We intend to raise the following:

1. Poor Performance
2. Getting our IETs back
3. Wrong information given the passengers
4. Poor CIS information
5. A series of complaints from passengers which are currently unanswered
6. Reduction in availability of the £12 pre-booked fares
7. Inconsistencies in the use of the Network Rail card.
8. Request for an electronic train information board at the foot of the bridge on the Newbury downside platform
9. Request to have Newbury station staffed until the last connection is made (including bus replacements)
10. The occasional issue with change of platform announcements at Bedwyn.
11. Inability to book seats via the GWR APP
12. Can passengers with bookings on cancelled services be automatically notified by email / text?
13. Can those with season tickets be notified about bus replacements?
14. The poor quality of the rail replacement (buses) service.
15. The issue where staff with manual ticket machines sometimes cannot sell tickets which work the London Underground barriers for cross London transport.

If you can think of anything else we can raise then please let us know.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 06/10/2023 09:30

Hello All,

Weekday Travel After 1900

Thank you to all those who contacted us, following our request in our August 4th newsletter. You gave us great feedback on your use of the post 1900 Paddington trains. Based on this, GWR have decided not to make any alterations as they appreciate our need for the direct 1906 off-peak.

Penalty Fares

We are following up an issue with GWR where a passenger was fined £91 at Paddington when:

1) The ticket machine at Bedwyn was broken.
2) There were cancellations and short formations making his short formed direct Paddington train packed, thus unable to purchase a ticket on-board.

The GWR rules are clear: “Where a station isn’t staffed, or the ticket machines aren’t working, you must pay for your journey at your earliest opportunity; either on-board or at the first available station.” The passenger in question had followed this to the letter, including trying to pay online (rejected because the train had already departed).

Our advice is (i) if the ticket machine is broken, photograph it (ii) if the train is packed photograph that too (iii) if you do get fined we’ll take it up on your behalf.

Fortunately such incidents are very rare, but very unsettling.

Meeting with GWR

On September 27th, Bill Wells and I met with senior GWR managers. Here follows the main topics, and outcomes, of discussion:

1. Poor Performance: We discussed this at great length. There are some particularly poor performing trains (both directs and connections). Factors causing this are strikes, working to rule, infrastructure failures, trains failing, human error and lack of available IET trains. Lack of staff is not a significant issue, they do have reserve staff on standby (apart from on work to rule days), but sometimes, due to knock on effects of disruption staff, are in the wrong places. The IETs are 'cut to the bone' with Hitachi (who maintain them over night) not releasing enough on a day by day basis. GWR are improving their working practises with Hitachi so they are aware of what trains are needed where and when of a morning. Human error is a factor – e.g. releasing the shuttle from Newbury before the Paddington train arrives. Bill and I were shown around the Control Centre. It's an impressive setup with staff clearly dedicated to their jobs. But the systems are prone to human error. E.g. when Control request the shuttle to be held they have to (i) contact platform staff to tell the driver to hold and (ii) contact the signaller to keep the shuttle held on red. There's no automated method for Control to force a hold. It must be stressed that the signalling system is more robust, so when we say 'human error' we are

not referring to safety issues. One of the major problems with IETs (especially when in service) is door failures. Hitachi are working on this and installing upgrades.

2. Wrong information given the passengers. Like point 1, the staff in the Control Centre know what's happening. However, getting it to the ground is an issue. For example, they can contact Paddington to put a message out, but it's then down to the staff at the station to implement that. This again is prone to human error. Personally, I was rather surprised at how unintegrated the systems are. The bodies of people and IT are: Drivers, signallers, platform staff, Customer Information System (CIS), Control Centre and train staff. These are all loosely coupled so it does explain a lot of the problems we see.
3. Poor CIS information. The CIS is automated, working out messages to display based on electronic information. Control Centre staff have limited opportunities to override this. They don't have access to station PA systems, instead all they can do is instigate pre-recorded messages or put short text messages on the CIS screens. Also they don't have access to the PA systems on trains, instead they can only contact the train manager. For driver only, they can only contact the driver if the train is stationary and, even then, it's just a message to ask the driver to contact Control (this is to not distract the driver).
4. Getting our three IETs back. This is the tough one. GWRs relationship with the DfT is very good. However, behind the DfT sits the Treasury pulling the strings. The Treasury keep pressing for more cost savings. So, even though our three IETs have been taken away, the Treasury are pressing for even more cost savings. This means we are way down the pecking order. GWR described the situation as 'A nationalised industry with shareholders'. GWR were more responsive to the possibility of getting one IET back to give us a three hourly direct off-peak Paddington service (supplemented on the other hours by the shuttle). GWR also said that we, as a passenger group, have had quite a few 'wins' in the past year. Aware of that as we are, this has come on the back of our off-peak direct trains (and some of our evening peak direct trains) being taken away. It is clear, however, that we do have quite an impact and GWR clearly do read and act upon all the customer complaints that we send in – so keep them coming. We also asked again whether we could have some of the IETs used on the Paddington/Cardiff route in exchange for class 387s used on the Paddington/Newbury route. This would mean the IETs could come to Bedwyn, removing the need for the off-peak shuttle. GWR have promised to look at this again.
5. A series of complaints from passengers which are currently unanswered. We went through these and have emailed the passengers individually.
6. Reduction in availability of the £12 pre-booked fares. The number of discounted tickets and their price is based on a dynamic flow algorithm. There has been no deliberate reduction in the price and availability. Instead the services are being used more so the algorithm will not offer so many at the low fares you have previously been used to. i.e. a less frequented service will have more discounted fares than a not so popular one.
7. The 0954 off Bedwyn does not allow the use of a Network Railcard. GWR have now resolved this.
8. Request for an electronic train information board at the foot of the bridge on the Newbury downside platform. GWR have asked for this to be done.
9. Request to have Newbury station staffed until the last connection is made (including bus replacements). There's no money to do this. We protested, saying that the shuttle has caused passengers to be left stranded late at night. We asked if more could be done, lighting, police patrols, CCTV etc. GWR have pointed out that Newbury has Secure Station Status. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-the-secure-stations-scheme/secure-stations-scheme-guidance-notes
10. The poor quality of the rail replacement (buses) service. We discussed this at great length with the manager in charge of rail replacements (i.e. buses). It was explained to

us that the rail replacements are expected to work. GWR contract to First Transport who then get independent bus operators to bid. Unfortunately, given it is late at night, only one operator ever bids for Newbury. And they aren't very good. A big factor is the lack of money to fund it, thus you pay for what you get. We stressed all the complaints you have sent us (some of which are almost beyond belief). The drivers are poorly briefed, sometimes don't turn up, don't wait for connections, don't know where they are going and the customer helpline isn't able to actively resolve issues. We said it needs somebody on the ground from First Transport to make it work and to be a point of contact for passengers on the ground. After a very lengthy conversation GWR have agreed to get a co-ordinator for the next rail replacement, but subsequently have said only where there are a large number of buses involved. We have said a co-ordinator is needed to all rail replacements, but we would accept having a telephone number of a First Group duty manager made available to passengers. GWR said having co-ordinators might set a precedent for other rail replacements on the network. One of the reasons we are getting priority is that we complain so much. So it shows the passenger group (Bill, me and all of you who complain via us) is effective.

11. We asked for the hold times of the shuttles. GWR supplied us with the following. The left hand column is the normal train departure time, the right hand column the number of minutes the departure time can be delayed by. We hope it helps you to have it.

Newbury to Bedwyn	
06:24:00	00:06:00
07:22:00	00:04:00
08:20:00	00:04:00
09:10:00	00:03:00
10:22:00	00:04:00
11:29:00	00:04:00
12:22:00	00:04:00
13:21:00	00:04:00
14:12:00	00:10:00
15:22:00	00:04:00
16:16:00	00:04:00
17:24:00	00:06:00
18:24:00	00:04:00
19:24:00	00:04:00
20:49:00	00:04:00
21:53:00	00:10:00
22:45:00	00:10:00

Newbury to Reading	
07:24:00	00:05:00
08:14:00	00:00:00
09:20:00	00:04:00
10:26:00	00:04:00
11:23:00	00:00:00
12:21:00	00:04:00
13:32:00	00:00:00
14:20:00	00:04:00
15:32:00	00:00:00
16:34:00	00:00:00
17:25:00	00:00:00
18:47:00	00:00:00
19:38:00	00:00:00
20:17:00	00:04:00
21:41:00	00:00:00
22:47:00	00:06:00

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 31/10/2023 20:50

Hello All,

Please find some updates below.

Storm Ciaran - GWR travel update

Storm Ciaran is due to hit the UK tomorrow (Weds 1 Nov) evening and is likely to cause disruption to rail services.

GWR are encouraging all passengers to check before they travel at www.gwr.com/check or with their operator as alterations and cancellations are expected Wednesday (1 Nov) evening and throughout Thursday (2 Nov) due to high winds, heavy rain and high tides.

Customers are advised to travel earlier in the day tomorrow (Wednesday 1 Nov) and delay their journeys on Thursday 2 Nov. Delay Repay compensation will apply for delays over 15 minutes, and customers who choose not travel can claim a refund – more information is available at www.gwr.com/delayrepay. Passengers with tickets for travel on GWR services tomorrow (Weds 1 Nov) evening will be able to use their ticket earlier in the day, and tickets for travel on Thursday 2 Nov will be valid tomorrow and Friday 3 November.

People who live or work near the railway are asked to be aware of items that could find their way onto the tracks at any time, but particularly during high winds, when trampolines, gazebos and tarpaulin can be blown away.

Ticket Office Closures

You've probably already seen the news today that ticket office closures have been cancelled.

Our Working Relationship with Network Rail

GWR are now including us in discussions with Network Rail where infrastructure failures have caused disruption to services. It's always good to expand our contacts and we are now also able to talk and engage with Network Rail directly on these issues. Regarding the poor service, Network Rail have written saying:

There is no hiding from the fact that train performance has not been good enough recently, and passengers deserve better.

Last week, we discovered an issue with our signalling system and our teams conducted extensive testing and implemented precautionary measures. Since last Wednesday, the signalling system has been functioning normally but we are continuing to monitor the situation.

More generally, we have had a maintenance backlog as a result of the industrial action last year. We have been working to improve this backlog now the industrial dispute has been resolved from a Network Rail perspective. By working closely with GWR and other train operators we are seeing some positive improvements, even with the fact we're now running 19% more trains than we did in 2019. Some examples of this work include:

- *Points, where trains change tracks, have caused delays to passengers. We focused on the top 25 most critical points in the Thames Valley where trains can be delayed when there*
- *are issues. As a consequence, we've managed to reduced delay minutes by 81% with 61% fewer incidents.*
- *We're installing track monitoring equipment that tells us when tracks are giving off more vibrations, which is a good early indication that it is wearing out, at 25 critical locations in the Thames Valley. This means we catch more incidents before they take place. So far this has led to a 63% reduction in delay minutes and 50% fewer incidents.*
- *We've been recruiting and employing more signallers – increasing from 75 to 106 at our signalling centre in the last year – which has seen a 40% reduction in delay minutes and 19% fewer incidents.*

These are just some of the improvements that we have implemented, but we know there is still much more to do to improve our services for passengers.

Hitachi (IET Train) Door Issues

In our meeting with GWR on September 27th GWR reported that quite a few delays / cancellations have been due to faulty doors on the IET fleet. We've since asked what action Hitachi have been taking and GWR have reported back with:

Most of the problems are a result of passenger interactions or rubbish stuck in the door runners but these are decreasing. The incident at Twyford last week was a result of a sensitive door close switch. There is a programme underway to recalibrate these as the view is that are too sensitive. Those that have been recalibrated have shown an improvement. Once all doors have been recalibrated we should see a further decrease in door issues.

Getting our IET Trains back

We still working on this. Today we put a more detailed proposal to GWR to swap 387s (electric only) from the Paddington to Newbury with the IET bi-modes running on the wholly electrified Paddington to Cardiff route. The IETs can then run to Bedwyn without the need to change trains at Newbury.

What we've found is that a 387 takes only two minutes longer to get to Cardiff than an IET. So the real stumbling blocks appear to be:

1) Lack of first class on the 387s.
2) Lack of buffet facilities on the 387s.
3) Seating capacity.

If GWR are can confirm the switch is technically possible then it'll be an issue of politics. As Cardiff get a half hourly service from Paddington, what we are asking for will only affect half their trains.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 23/11/2023 13:00

Hi All,

Please find updates below.

Survey

My passenger group colleague, Bill Wells is putting together a report, collating alternative timetables for the return of some or all of our IETs. This is aimed to keep the pressure up regarding the return of our IET trains. We'd like to add in a section about the impact on rail users caused by the shuttles replacing the direct Reading/Paddington services. Therefore, please can you email me with how the shuttles are affecting you. Please keep in mind the following:

- We have over 660 people on our email list, so I won't have time to do editing – it'll be a copy and paste job.
- As succinct as possible please.
- Please only comment on the impact of the shuttles. We won't be able to include other issues. If you have other issues please email separately and we can feedback to GWR.
- As tempting as things may feel, please only send words that we can print! It's okay to sound annoyed, but please keep it professional.
- We'll use your name and your words, but won't print any contact details.

No services to London Paddington this Sunday 26th Nov or 24th-27th December

As part of HS2's ongoing construction of a new station at Old Oak Common, just to the west of London Paddington, there are some days when there will be no train services into or out of London Paddington. The dates are: this Sunday 26th November, Sunday 24th and Wednesday 27th December.

On these days, long-distance and most local GWR services will start/terminate at Reading instead of London Paddington. Limited GWR services and Elizabeth line services will run between Reading and Ealing Broadway. Customers can transfer at Ealing Broadway between national rail and London Underground services (Central and District lines) to/from central London.

On Sunday 26th November only, engineering work will also close the lines between Ealing Broadway and Slough until 1240. A limited replacement bus service will be in operation between these stations during this time.

Also, as usual, there will be no services across the GWR network on Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

More information is available at www.GWR.com/HS2 and www.HS2.org.uk

Strikes

You'll have probably seen in the press that, while members decide on the latest proposals, there are no further RMT (on-board and station staff) strikes in the pipeline.

However, ASLEF (train drivers) have announced a strike at on Thursday 7th December. On this day many parts of the network will have no service whatsoever, and where GWR are able to run services, these will start late and finish much earlier than usual. Any customers that do travel should check before doing so at www.gwr.com/check . There may also be alterations to services on the evening of Wednesday 6th December and the morning of Friday 8th December.

Anybody who has already bought a ticket for travel on the 7th December will be able to claim a full refund. For full information please visit www.gwr.com/strike .

ASLEF have also announced action short of a strike effective from Friday 1st to Saturday 9th December. While GWR plan to run as full a service as possible (7th December excepted), there may be short notice alterations and cancellations, This is because this industrial action will mean GWR will only have a very limited number of spare drivers.

You may have noticed that the government have recently published the consultation outcome for the minimum service levels for passenger rail. This will dictate how far a strike can go and what services must run. Details are at: https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/minimum-service-levels-for-passenger-rail-during-strike-action/outcome/minimum-service-levels-for-passenger-rail-government-response-and-policy-approach

Unfortunately services between Westbury and Reading have been completely omitted. We have written to the MPs (Laura Farris and Danny Kruger) regarding this. We have suggested that, during strikes, an all stops Westbury to Reading, via Newbury, then on to Paddington, peak morning train and a similar leaving Paddington around 1800.

Recent Lack of IETs

You may have noticed problems recently with lack of IETs (cancellations, some replaced by class 387s or Turbos). This is due to damage sustained to IETs during recent floods and storms. This is particularly annoying as even on a good day there is a shortage of IETs.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 01/12/2023 16:00

Hello All,

Please find updates below.

Travelling This Sunday?

We wrote to you last week about ASLEF (train drivers union) industrial action starting today and running until Sunday 10th December, with a strike at GWR on Thursday 7th December and action short of a strike (i.e. a work to rule) for the other affected days.

GWR have informed us they can only run a very limited service this Sunday 3rd December, as they have fewer drivers available. As such, some parts of the GWR network will have no service at all,

including all long distance trains out of London Paddington to Bristol, South Wales, and the South West. There will be no replacement bus services in operation either.

GWR are advising you travel before the weekend or after Sunday. Where they can run services (and they expect to this include most of their local services), only a limited number of trains will run, and they will be much busier than usual, and services will be subject to short notice alteration or cancellations.

Customers with tickets to travel from Saturday 2nd December to Friday 8th December can use these the day before they are valid or up to and including Tuesday 12th December.

For full information please visit GWR's dedicated strike page www.gwr.com/strike and be sure to check the journey planners prior to travelling.

December Timetable Change

The new timetable starts on December 10th. Please check any trains you regularly rely on for timing changes. The holding trains policy at Newbury has been updated. Please find a copy attached. It's probably worth keeping a printed copy with you when travelling. Something to show GWR staff should the need arise.

We are the only service on the GWR network which has a holds policy. At one level we could congratulate ourselves on attaining such a concession, but reality tells us that the need is indicative of the problems with shuttles running back and forth to Newbury. Bill and I won't rest until we get our service restored.

Restoring our Service

We've mentioned before our request to GWR to consider switching some IETs on the Paddington to Cardiff route with 387s on the Newbury route. As the IETs can run to Bedwyn this would restore our direct services to Paddington. One issue, against this suggestion, has always been that the 387s have a max speed of 110mph, whereas the IETs can do 125mph. This, we have been told, would mean the timings to Cardiff will not have been met.

Recently, due to lack of IETs, GWR have been forced to temporarily replace some IETs from the Paddington to Cardiff route with 387s. Bill and I noted that the 387s from Paddington to Cardiff got there in the same times as the IETs. The only difference being that the IETs can do Paddington to Reading one minute quicker. We have written to GWR pointing this out and also raised it with GWR's MD (Mark Hopwood) at a recent Q&A session.

Minimum Service During a Strike

At the same Q&A session, mentioned above, we raised: "We note that in the legislation for minimum service during strikes, there is no mention of Westbury to Reading. Can this be addressed?" Mark Hopwood informed us that the government are requesting that 40% of services run on strike days and that "40% is 40%". We have subsequently written to Mark asking that all we'd need on strike days is one all stops Westbury to Reading before 0900 and one back after 1800.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 17/01/2024 16:00

Hello All,

Please find updates below.

More Strikes (and more misery)

ASLEF members (train drivers) will be on strike at GWR (as well CrossCountry and Chiltern Railways) on Monday 5th February. On this day many parts of the network will have no service whatsoever and, where GWR are able to run, services will start late and finish much earlier than usual. Any customers that do travel should check before doing so at www.gwr.com/check There may also be alterations to GWR services on the evening of Sunday 4th February and the morning of Tuesday 6th February.

Anybody who has already bought a ticket for travel on Monday 5th February will be able to claim a full refund. For full information please visit www.gwr.com/strike

ASLEF have also announced action short of a strike effective from Monday 29th January to Tuesday 6th February. While GWR plan to run as full a service as possible (Monday 5th February excepted), there will be short notice alterations due to a very limited number of spare drivers.

Recent Poor Service

You're sure to be aware of the continued poor service. The usual problems have been made worse by the recent bad weather. We have been in frequent touch with GWR. Please do keep sending us your experiences, we send them all on to GWR. The more we complain the better.

Evening Bus Replacements

During the recent bus replacements (to allow for later evening and overnight engineering works), at our request, GWR put in a co-ordinator at Newbury. This certainly helped, with the co-ordinator ensuring the buses and passengers were all on the correct side of Newbury station. The co-ordinator reported back instances of buses/passengers being on the wrong sides – proving our continued pressing that a co-ordinator is required. GWR have reported back, "in the short to medium term we are definitely tightening things up and hope that there'll be a drastic reduction in the amount of feedback we receive about these evening rail replacement jobs."

New Evening Return Service from the West

With the new westbound morning weekday departure (departing Kintbury 0932, Hungerford 0937, Bedwyn 0943) we asked for a return evening service, allowing one to have a trip out in the west country. We are pleased to report that GWR have agreed to this and, from June, we will get a stop on the 1904 from Paignton to Paddington (calling at Bedwyn around 2130). The Hungerford stop will be removed but the shuttle from Bedwyn will be retimed from a departure of 2116 to approximately 2136. Therefore passengers for Hungerford and Kintbury can, without having to change platforms, make a connection at Bedwyn. This will mean that instead of only Hungerford being served by the 1904 from Paignton, Bedwyn and Kintbury will now also be served. So, please have a think how you might use this for day trips or returning from holidays.

Respecting GWR Staff

GWR have asked us to pass on that passengers must respect GWR staff. There was a particular incident at Newbury on December 14th where two members of the dispatch team were verbally abused with one person filming a female member of staff as she was trying to reverse out of the car park. A male stood in front of the car as she pulled forward, to make it look like she was driving towards him. If you happened to witness this please get in touch.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 18/02/2024 17:00

Hello All,

Please find some updates, below.

300th Newsletter

This is our 300th newsletter. The first was in June 2006. The last eighteen years have been quite a journey. We formed to fight off cuts to our off-peak services. Having won that battle we then, after electrification was announced only as far as Newbury, had a ten year battle to retain our direct Paddington services. This we achieved with the introduction of three dedicated IETs to serve us plus stops on some peak-time through services. With the post pandemic financial crisis we lost these three IETs. We continue to fight to get them back. If you want to learn more about our eighteen year history then please see the various sub-menus under 'More…' at http://www.bedwyntrains.org.uk/

Engineering Works on Weekend of 24th and 25th

All weekend, long-distance services between London Paddington / Reading and the West of England will be diverted and will not call at Newbury or Pewsey. Some trains will also not call at Westbury or Castle Cary. Most trains from London Paddington and Reading will depart earlier than usual. Trains between London Paddington, Reading and Newbury / Bedwyn will be replaced by buses between Reading and Newbury. Trains between Newbury and Bedwyn will be retimed. Pewsey will be served by replacement buses to / from Swindon. Please check before travelling.

Turbos Replacing IETs

You may have noticed that there are some short notice replacements of IETs with Turbos. Although far from ideal, this is preferable to cancellations. GWR have informed us that they have a larger than normal number of IETs out of action. This is due to damage (e.g. from flooding or hitting things on the line). Hitachi (who maintain the IETs under contract) have put a dedicated team in place to try and get damaged IETs back in service as quickly as possible. Additionally, there are three sets out at any one time for repairs to cracks. On top of that there are always sets unavailable due to routine maintenance.

Getting Savvy

Please remember that there is a local stopping service between Reading and Newbury. When things are going wrong at Paddington, do consider getting on the first fast train to Reading then look for something to get you to Newbury. When I commuted I lived by the adage of 'keep moving down the line'. For example, if the 1906 is cancelled, or you arrive at Paddington before 1930, don't wait for the 2003 with the change at Newbury. Instead get the next fast to Reading then get the 2010 off Reading for Newbury. Although this will meet the same connection as the 2003 from Paddington (being the 2049 Newbury shuttle to Bedwyn) it gives you a better chance - the 2003 might be cancelled or delayed and miss the connection.

Holds at Newbury

You're probably aware that, after campaigning by us, GWR now have a holds policy for connecting services at Newbury. This, for each service, specifies the maximum number of minutes each connecting service can be held for. The limiting factors are (i) not to make the connection so late it then delays the next service it forms (ii) not getting in the way of through trains. We note that some of the holds are restricted by passing freight trains. As freight trains don't always run (i.e. the operator may not have a load to send), we have asked for this to be taken into account with alternative hold times.

Exploring the Area

The Visit Hungerford website have added an interesting page https://www.visithungerford.com/things-to-do/explore-the-railway/ describing a walk you can do to take in some of the sights and history of the line between Hungerford and a few miles west of Bedwyn.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 11/03/2024 11:00

Hello All,

Please find some updates, below:

Thames Valley Route Meeting with GWR

On March 7th Bill Wells and I attended an online meeting with GWR focusing on the Thames Valley route. The points of interest to us were:

1) The state of the line between Reading and Paddington. Network Rail acknowledged this is now the UK's most critical section of track requiring improvement. Since electrification, and

the introduction of the Elizabeth Line, there are: 17% more trains running, 14% additional station stops and a 38% increase in weight. This is contributing to the infrastructure failures we have been experiencing. This has not been helped by industrial action causing delays in repairs. Also, as mainline trains, due to the introduction of the Elizabeth Line, are now unable to run on the relief lines, we experience more cancellations. Network Rail have now committed to a three phase improvement programme. The first six months will be stabilisation, the following year will be improvement and from then on the project will enter a sustainability phase. We shall have to wait and see how this pans out. Over the past decade we were promised that the Reading Station redevelopment and the electrification will improve services. It's been anything but.

2) The 1204 Paddington to Penzance is being retimed to 1202 and will be non-stop to Exeter. The 1204 will now be a Paddington to Plymouth calling additionally at Reading, Taunton, Exeter, Newton Abbot. Given we've consistently been told there aren't the IETs available to give us our direct Paddington off-peak service back, this begs the question of how they've sourced the additional 9-car IET to operate this. In the Q&A session our written question on this point was overlooked. Fortunately we got a chance to take the 'microphone' and asked it. The answer was that during the off-peak there are spare IETs. They also conceded that there are spare IETs on a Saturday. Needless to say, we will be taking this further. And of course this will add to the weight and capacity issues raised in point 1.
3) To help with demand, on the Paddington to Cardiff trains, there will be two additional 8-car Class 387 services (at 1612 and 1912) added between Paddington and Bristol Parkway. We have previously asked for some of the Class 387s (all electric) running Paddington to Newbury to be reassigned to Paddington to Cardiff to allow the IETs (bi-modes) running Paddington to Cardiff to run between Paddington and Bedwyn. We have been told that the Class 387s aren't suitable for the Bristol mainline. But here is another instance of GWR using Class 387s for the Bristol mainline. Needless to say, we will be taking this further. And of course this will add to the weight and capacity issues raised in point 1.

In the Media

Thanks to all of you who contacted us after my 'moment of fame' in the media. This was in relation to interviews with the BBC and Rail Magazine following the announcement by Network Rail of the three phased plan (as mentioned in point 1, above) to improve the infrastructure between Paddington and Reading. If you want to see it, please see the links below:

BBC South Today TV 27/02/2024: https://youtu.be/bJ1326JWkbM

BBC Online 27/02/2024: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-berkshire-68402089

Rail Magazine 06/03/2024:
https://static.wixstatic.com/media/f53900_f99cb5d4872c43ddbf53cbadd33c92a9~mv2.jpg

Recent Incidents

We are always grateful when you send us your experiences of poor service. We talk to GWR senior managers about each issue. The aim being to give the passenger a proper explanation and to try and prevent things from happening again. Given the state of the service, we get quite a few. It's a crucial part of the work of the passenger group, without it we'd not know what needs improving. So, please do let us know when things go wrong.

We don't normally use a newsletter to pass these on to our circulation list. However, we feel it's worth doing now and again. So, here follows a selection of recent incidents and their outcomes:

1) 0651 off Bedwyn cancelled on the 26/02. This was due to the train being stabled at Bristol Temple Meads instead of the Stoke Gifford Depot. It was then found not to be fit for service. GWR added, "This has been reviewed internally and revised arrangements put in place for future occasions."
2) On the 27/02 the 1808 and 1906 off Paddington were both cancelled. GWR responded: "The 1906 was cancelled (late) due to the failure of a class 802 on its way up to London and had to be taken out of service and sent to North Pole leaving us short of sets. The 1808 was also cancelled due to a lack of available sets. I can only apologise. On the day failures do leave us vulnerable to providing sufficient sets for service out of Paddington in the evening."
3) The 1906 off Paddington has been being substituted for a 3-car Turbo. GWR responded: "Apologies for the lack of capacity on the 1906 and for the cancellations. Our Control team do what they can to provide a replacement when we have insufficient IETs available – the North Downs block meant that we had some spare Turbos at Reading we could use. Appreciate that 3 carriages are not enough (compared to a 5 car IET) but it was a pro-active measure to run the train."
4) On 29/02 the 1906 off Paddington was cancelled and used to form the 1953 to Hereford. GWR responded: "This was a very late change due to set failures resulting in a shortage of IETs. The Bedwyn set was commandeered to work 1W05 to Hereford. This was to provide a set for an evening train up the North Cots through to Hereford and to have a set in place to return on the following morning. I've checked the log and there were no other options available to the team. I do apologise and appreciate the 1906 has been cancelled far more often than we would wish. IET availability has improved of late but I will review options with TSD colleagues to see if we can reduce the cancellations but also have a more robust contingency plan in place." We responded with the additional point: " I guess an option would have been to run the 1906 to Bedwyn, then after it had returned to Paddington, ran it empty rolling stock to position it for the following day. That would have felt fairer. We've already been heavily sacrificed by having our three dedicated IETs removed, to then be disfavoured in these situations does feel a hard pill to swallow."
5) Complaint about poor quality of service when things go wrong. This includes the helpline and passengers being left stranded, with no GWR staff, late in the evening at Newbury. GWR responded: "Bringing in replacement coaches (and taxis) at short notice remains a challenge due to a shortage of available vehicles and drivers. Extending staff hours at short notice has many (safety) implications and requires agreement with Unions. We do manage to bring in on-call and other willing managers on occasions but it does depend on availability, incident type, etc. I am happy to review with our Newbury Stations Team to see what is viable. I will also review with our comms team how we can improve quality and timeliness of information." This is something we regularly protest to GWR about. Passenger 'abandonment' is all too frequent.
6) On 06/03 the 2104 Paddington to Newbury arrived 17 minutes late at 2200. This missed the replacement bus service which left at 2153. We complained about the lack of co-ordinator (or any staff for that matter) at Newbury to request the bus to wait. GWR responded with: "I've now spoken to all parties involved and it seems there were some assumptions made about GWR staff coverage this week but the shift wasn't actually able to be fulfilled. Assuming station staff had it covered meant we didn't order a co-ordinator, so we were left with no staff again. The driver departed right time in the absence of anyone available to tell him any different. Having now established that providing our own staff isn't always going to be possible I'll make sure my team order a co-ordinator every time we have this type of operation. Please accept my apologies for the failure again this week. By taking the above step this will hopefully be the last time."

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 28/03/2024 17:00

Hello All,

Please find some updates, below.

More Strikes (more misery)

ASLEF members will strike on Saturday 6th April. On this day many parts of the GWR network will have no service whatsoever. Where GWR can run services these will start late and finish much earlier than usual. For Bedwyn, Hungerford and Bedwyn this will probably mean no service.

Any customers intending to travel should check before doing so at www.gwr.com/check. There may also be alterations to services on the evening of Friday 5th April and on Sunday 7th April.

GWR are working on getting journey planners updated as soon as possible. Anybody who has already bought a ticket for travel on Saturday 6th April will be able to claim a full refund. For full information please visit www.gwr.com/strike.

ASLEF has also announced action short of a strike for Thursday 4th, Friday 5th, Monday 8th and Tuesday 9th of April. While GWR plans to run as full a service as possible, there will be short-notice alterations and cancellations due to a very limited number of spare drivers.

Getting around the Evening off-peak

We are often asked about the evening off-peak rules. The weekday evening peak, for trains departing Paddington, is from 1600 to 1900. This does not apply between Reading and Bedwyn, nor does it apply on the Elizabeth Line between Paddington and Reading. Therefore, if you are returning with an off-peak ticket between 1600 and 1900 there are options, it'll just be a longer journey. Here are some examples:

5. Catch the 1548 Carmarthen train from Paddington, arriving Reading at 1611. You can then catch the 1636 Reading to Newbury, arriving 1700. You can then catch the 1724 for Bedwyn, arriving 1744.
6. Catch the 1648 Elizabeth Line train from Paddington, arriving Reading at 1741. You can then catch the 1803 Reading to Newbury, arriving 1817. You can then catch the 1826 for Bedwyn, arriving 1846.

A more detailed evening off-peak timetable (with peak trains omitted) is as follows:

Paddington	1548C						1648E		
Reading	1611	1636	1701		1710	1735	1741	1803	
Newbury		1700	1716	1724	1737	1756		1817	1826
Kintbury				1731					1833
Hungerford			1725	1736					1838
Bedwyn				1744					1846

Paddington			1720E		1745E	1750E				1906
Reading	1806	1829	1812	1837	1834	1842	1901		1910	1937
Newbury	1835	1843		1858			1916	1924	1936	1959
Kintbury				1904				1931		2004
Hungerford				1908			1924	1936		2008
Bedwyn				1914			1930	1944		2015

Key:
The green, brown, purple and blue represent connecting off-peak routes.
Black represents other off-peak trains that may be of use.
C - Train is for Carmarthen (though sometimes it is shown to Swansea on the departure boards)
E - Train is for Reading on the Elizabeth line

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 17/04/2024 12:00

Hello All,

As previously advised, since May 2022 we have (by suggesting switching the all-electric Class 387 EMUs serving Paddington to Newbury with Class 800 bi-modes (diesel and electric) serving Paddington to Cardiff) put forward a series of proposals to reinstate our three Class 800 bi-modes. As the Class 800 bi-modes can run to Bedwyn this would end the need for the shuttle and restore direct services to Paddington.

On each occasion, despite requiring no additional trains or staff, the ideas have been rejected by GWR and the DfT. Undeterred, Bill and I have produced a new document, "Reinstating Two Class 800 bi-modes on the off-peak Paddington to Bedwyn Service".

This report shows how a modified proposal can be implemented by replacing just the following Cardiff / Paddington services with Class 387 EMUs:

- The 0818 and 1315 Paddington to Cardiff departures
- The 1041 and 1554 Cardiff to Paddington departures

This represents only 6.25% of the Paddington to Cardiff service and will free up two 5-car Class 800 bi-mode trains which can run, off-peak, between Paddington and Bedwyn on a two out of every three-hour cycle. The third hour will be catered for by the existing shuttle, with some extension to Reading. In total, this proposal will return ten direct services between Paddington and Bedwyn.

We have sent printed copies to GWR's senior management team and MPs Laura Farris and Danny Kruger. To have any hope of success it will require the MPs putting pressure on the DfT. We have therefore requested a meeting with the MPs.

The document is available at https://tinyurl.com/ReinstatingTwoClass800bi-modes If you'd like a printed version please email me with your address.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 02/05/2024 12:00

Hello All,

Please find some updates, below.

More Strikes

ASLEF members will be on strike at GWR on Wednesday 8th May. This will likely mean no service for Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn.

Any customers that do travel should check before doing so at www.gwr.com/check . There may also be alterations to services on the evening of Tuesday 7th May and the morning of Thursday 9th May.

Anybody who has already bought a ticket for travel on Wednesday 8th May will be able to claim a full refund. For full information please visit www.gwr.com/strike .

ASLEF has also announced action short of a strike (work to rule) effective from Monday 6th May to Saturday 11th May. There may be short-notice alterations and cancellations because this industrial action will mean GWR only has a very limited number of spare drivers.

Our Campaigns

Many thanks to all of you who responded positively to our proposal (by switching one IET diagram to Cardiff with Class 387s running to Newbury) to reinstate two of the three off-peak IETs taken away from us. The document is available at https://tinyurl.com/ReinstatingTwoClass800bi-modes

Some of you asked how you can help. There are two ways:

1) Write in support of us to your MP. laura.farris.mp@parliament.uk or danny.kruger.mp@parliament.uk
2) Always claim Delay / Repay for any delays over fifteen minutes. Please see https://www.gwr.com/help-and-support/refunds-and-compensation/delay-repay We won't get anywhere unless we punish the rail industry in the pocket.

Getting around the Evening off-peak from June

The new timetable starts at the beginning of June. This means the timings of the evening off-peak workarounds will vary slightly.

To recap, the weekday evening peak, for trains departing Paddington, is from 1600 to 1900. This does not apply between Reading and Bedwyn, nor does it apply on the Elizabeth Line between Paddington and Reading. Therefore, if you are returning with an off-peak ticket between 1600 and 1900 there are options, it'll just be a longer journey. Here are some updated examples:

1. Catch the 1548 Carmarthen train from Paddington, arriving Reading at 1613. You can then catch the 1636 Reading to Newbury, arriving 1700. You can then catch the 1724 for Bedwyn, arriving 1744.
2. Catch the 1648 Elizabeth Line train from Paddington, arriving Reading at 1741. You can then catch the 1803 Reading to Newbury, arriving 1817. You can then catch the 1822 for Bedwyn, arriving 1842.
3. Catch the 1720 Elizabeth Line train from Paddington, arriving Reading at 1812. You can then catch the 1837 Reading to Bedwyn, arriving 1914.
4. Catch the 1750 Elizabeth Line train from Paddington, arriving Reading at 1842. You can then catch the 1901 Reading to Bedwyn, arriving 1930.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 09/08/2024 17:00

Hello All,

Sorry, I haven't written a newsletter for some time. As you'll see from the updates below, it doesn't mean we've been resting on our laurels.

Forthcoming Bus Replacements

Network Rail is planning the following engineering works:

- Replacement of track in the Newbury area.
- Flood alleviation work at Newbury station.
- Level crossing improvements at Kintbury, Thatcham and Midgham.

This will affect train services between Reading and Westbury in three separate blockades:

Tuesday 17 to Thursday 19 September and Tuesday 10 to Thursday 12 December

No train services between Newbury and Westbury. Trains between London Paddington and Devon or Cornwall will be diverted between Reading and Taunton via Swindon – some will continue via Bristol Temple Meads and some via Melksham Trains between London Paddington and Bedwyn terminated at Newbury. Reduced trains between Swindon and Westbury due to diverted services.

Replacement buses planned:

- Newbury – Bedwyn via Hungerford
- Newbury – Hungerford via Kintbury
- Pewsey – Swindon

Monday 11 to Thursday 14 November

No train services between Theale and Westbury. Trains between London Paddington and Devon or Cornwall diverted between Reading and Taunton via Swindon – some will continue via Bristol Temple Meads and some via Melksham. Trains between London Paddington and Bedwyn terminated at Theale. Reduced trains between Swindon and Westbury due to diverted services.

Replacement buses planned:

- Theale – Bedwyn stopping at all stations except Kintbury
- Newbury – Hungerford via Kintbury
- Pewsey – Swindon

Following complaints from us, GWR are putting more bus coordinators in place. If, during these bus replacements, you find confusion at Theale or Newbury, with no coordinator to speak to, please let us know.

New Service from Paignton

With the summer upon us, please don't forget about the new 2131 stop at Bedwyn on the weekday 1904 from Paignton. This is something we requested of GWR. Hungerford and Kintbury passengers can make use of this by changing at Bedwyn onto the 2137 shuttle.

Changes to Advanced Fare Tickets

A decision has been taken to withdraw the very cheapest Advance Purchase tickets from the 0729 and 0824 services from Bedwyn, and the 1736 off Paddington. Advanced Purchase tickets on the 0729 and 0824 will now start, from Bedwyn, at £38.00 and on the 1736 at £26.50.

This is to help address crowding/capacity on these services, as well as to minimise split ticketing. The 0600, 0626 and 0651 services to Paddington will continue to have the £12.50 fare available for up to 9 weeks before date of departure. Similarly, the 1635 and 1808 from Paddington will continue to have the £12.50 fares available too.

Change at Hungerford or Newbury

Bedwyn passengers will note that, when booking a Paddington ticket, the train planning applications sometimes recommend a change at Hungerford. This has caused issues with passengers alighting at Hungerford only to find the connecting service cancelled. It's always best to stay on the shuttle to Newbury and change there.

Elizabeth Line Ticket Validity

Following our recent recommendation on how to travel back with an off-peak ticket, during the evening peak, we have been asked if GWR tickets are valid on the Elizabeth Line. The answer is, yes they are. The only exception is if your ticket states specifically that it's for a specific GWR service.

Cancellations, Delays, Missed Connections and Overcrowding

Recently, complaints from passengers to us have dropped back. However, we note that there are still some cancellations. Please do let us know if your journey is disrupted. It always helps our case if we can cite actual passenger complaints to GWR.

We note, following our protests, that GWR are more prepared, where possible, to put in substitute trains than to cancel a service (e.g. replacing an IET with a Turbo or a nine or ten-car IET with a five-car IET). However, this does lead to overcrowding and we have made GWR aware of this. GWR have been pressing Hitachi (who maintain the IET fleet) to improve the number available on a daily basis. Additionally, GWR has appointed a new member of its Executive team who is tasked with getting Hitachi to deliver the right number of trains every day

We are also pleased, again following our complaints, GWR have amended the driver's diagram to make the 1822 shuttle departure for Bedwyn more reliable. This connects with the 1736 off Paddington and, with driver shift changeover, was vulnerable to cancellation.

We have also asked if the 1906 is shown as cancelled, and if you are early enough to catch the 1836, whether your off-peak ticket will be valid. GWR replied saying passengers should ask GWR staff on a case by case basis. We have requested a more robust policy.

Visit to Thames Valley Signalling Centre at Didcot

On June 18th Bill Wells and I visited the Thames Valley Signalling Centre at Didcot. This is run by Network Rail staff.

Because it controls a strategic part of the rail network, we were struck by the level of security, including multiple layers of security fencing.

It was interesting to understand the complexities of a signaller's job and the challenges they face. We were particularly interested in the desk used to control the signalling at Newbury and how much jigging around they have to do to operate our shuttle while allowing the through trains to have access to the platforms.

We also learned that the Network Rail signallers do not implement the holds of our shuttle at Newbury. Instead, a hold is requested by the Swindon based GWR Control Centre or Newbury platform staff. This is somewhat disappointing as it means a hold (whether requested by the GWR Control Centre or platform staff) request is made to the Didcot signallers who then hold the signals and/or contact the driver. It would be easier if the signallers operated the holds policy but the nature of the industry is that the request has to be manually made by GWR staff for the signallers to then consider.

We also learnt that recent issues with failure to couple five-car IETs together, to form a ten-car set, have been hampered by i) five-car sets not being on the same software revision level and refusing to recognise one another and ii) dips in the track at Paddington's Platform 10, causing the couplings to not align.

Getting Our Direct Trains Back

Following our request, thanks to all of you who wrote to councils and the MPs backing our campaign to get our direct Paddington services reinstated. We were due to meet with Danny Kruger and Laura Farris, but then the election was called. However, quite a few councils wrote on our behalf.

We noted that the winning MPs did not make the reinstatement of our trains a campaigning issue and neither has been in touch since the election.

Therefore Bill Wells and I are continuing the campaign with GWR. A glimmer of hope is that GWR look to be taking on twenty-seven class 175 trains (capable of replacing the displaced IETs, returning them to work out of Paddington). We have requested GWR take this opportunity to reinstate our full IET hourly timetable.

Bill spotted an online document detailing The Secretary of State's Business Plan Commitments (2023 – 2024) for GWR. In it GWR are requested to set out the proposed reintroduction of through trains between London and Bedwyn. This is positive and we put in a Freedom of Information Request to ask how GWR responded. Unfortunately, our request was declined due to it being commercially in confidence.

With 95.4% of passenger journeys going beyond Newbury, it’s imperative we get our direct trains back.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 27/08/2024 15:00

Hello All,

Please find some updates below.

Engineering Works

0532 from Bedwyn

Monday to Friday this week - The 0532 Bedwyn to London Paddington is not running this week. This is the 0538 from Hungerford and the 0543 from Kintbury.

It will also not run Tuesday September 10th to Friday September 13th inclusive.

Travelling Early This Saturday 31st August?

Saturday until approximately 0700 - Trains between Reading, Newbury and Bedwyn will be revised, with buses replacing trains for some journeys. Please check the journey planners.

Travelling Late on Monday 16th September?

From approximately 2145 until end of service - Buses will replace trains between Newbury and Bedwyn.

Tuesday 17 to Thursday 19 September – Full Blockade

No train services at all between Newbury and Westbury. Trains between London Paddington and Devon or Cornwall will be diverted between Reading and Taunton via Swindon – some will continue via Bristol Temple Meads and some via Melksham Trains between London Paddington and Bedwyn terminated at Newbury. Reduced trains between Swindon and Westbury due to diverted services.

Replacement buses planned (please see journey planners):

- Newbury – Bedwyn via Hungerford
- Newbury – Hungerford via Kintbury
- Pewsey – Swindon

GWR have agreed that monthly or longer season ticket holders can use Swindon or Didcot – and of course Newbury. Unfortunately, you'll have to pay for your parking. Refunds can be claimed on season tickets for anyone not travelling subject to the usual terms and conditions (and where applicable, admin fees). Refunds are not available by way of compensation during these works, as GWR put mitigations in place (ticket acceptance from other stations, replacement buses etc).

We have asked if season tickets can also be used from Andover or Whitchurch. We are waiting for a response from GWR.

Since the pandemic, travel patterns have changed and Saturdays and Fridays are now the busiest and second busiest days respectively. This is why the blockade is Tuesday to Thursday.

Further Blockades

Just a reminder, there are further full blockades Monday 11th to Thursday 14th November and Tuesday 10th to Thursday 12th December.

Marlborough Buses

Wiltshire Council have made changes to the fixed bus timetable between Bedwyn and Marlborough. From 2nd September – The 12.00 110 will provide an additional timetabled service from Hungerford to Great Bedwyn at lunchtime by going around the loop in the opposite way to now. The 15.35 120 will now be extended from Hungerford to Marlborough offering an additional timetabled journey from Great Bedwyn to Hungerford and Marlborough and the 16.20 110 departure from Marlborough will run 10 minutes later and will return from Great Bedwyn Railway Station at 16.50, offering a better connection with the 16.36 arrival from Newbury.

We received printed timetables from Wiltshire Council. These are now in the Post Office and the telephone box (opposite The Stores). A PDF version is attached.

Customer Information Screen (CIS) at Bedwyn

The CIS link between trains arriving and departing has stopped working again. This means a train marked as arriving late on Platform 1 will not be reflected with a delay to the service it then forms from Platform 2. Those blessed with good eyesight are advised to look across to the board on Platform 1 to see if the inbound train is delayed – though do keep behind the yellow line. This issue does not apply to through trains.

GWR are looking for a solution.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 14/09/2024 09:30

Hello All,

Please find some updates below. Do note the line blockade from 2145 on Monday through to Thursday inclusive.

Our Website

For anybody new to these group emails, www.bedwyntrains.org.uk is designed to be a one-stop portal for those travelling to/from Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. Its emphasis is on real-time data with the Home page displaying the departure boards for Newbury, Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. Additionally, there are menus and links to other real-time data, along with static and historic information.

Recent Missed Connections at Newbury

There's been a spate of missed connections at Newbury. This is where the Bedwyn shuttle has not been held. We have protested to GWR and they are reminding staff to be watchful and instigate a hold. Do let us know if you miss a connection at Newbury.

Engineering Works

Travelling Late on Monday 16th September?

From approximately 2145 until end of service - Buses will replace trains between Newbury and Bedwyn.

Tuesday 17 to Thursday 19 September – Full Blockade

No train services at all between Newbury and Westbury. Trains between London Paddington and Devon or Cornwall will be diverted between Reading and Taunton via Swindon – some will continue via Bristol Temple Meads and some via Melksham Trains between London Paddington and Bedwyn terminated at Newbury. Reduced trains between Swindon and Westbury due to diverted services.

Replacement buses planned (please see journey planners):

- Newbury – Bedwyn via Hungerford
- Newbury – Hungerford via Kintbury
- Pewsey – Swindon

Please note the departure times of the buses are not the same as the regular train times. We have managed to get a concession for the 0810 bus, from Bedwyn, to be off-peak.

GWR have agreed that monthly or longer season ticket holders can use Swindon or Didcot – and of course Newbury. **At our request GWR has got South West Trains to accept tickets from/to stations Basingstoke – Grateley, via Woking to London, or via Basingstoke towards Paddington.** Unfortunately, you'll have to pay for your parking. Overton and Whitchurch have limited capacity so suggest using alternative stations. Refunds can be claimed on season tickets for anyone not travelling subject to the usual terms and conditions (and where applicable, admin fees). Refunds are not available by way of compensation during these works, as GWR put mitigations in place (ticket acceptance from other stations, replacement buses etc).

Further Full Blockades

Just a reminder, there are further full blockades Monday 11th to Thursday 14th November (between Theale and Bedwyn) and Tuesday 10th to Thursday 12th December (between Newbury and Bedwyn).

For the blockade between Theale and Bedwyn, GWR, have at our request, made some of the bus replacements not call at Newbury Racecourse, Midgham and Aldermaston. This is to speed up the journey. The bus timetable is as follows.

Monday 11 to Thursday 14 November 2024

THEALE – THATCHAM – NEWBURY – BEDWYN

No. of Vehicles.	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**
Coach No.										
Days Run	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**
Theale	05 35	06 35	06 55	07 54	07 54	08 57	08 57	10 00	10 00	11 00
Aldermaston	05 42	06 42	07 02	. . . .	08 01	. . . .	09 04	. . . .	10 07	. . . .
Midgham	05 47	06 47	07 07	. .	08 06	. .	09 09	. .	10 12	. .
Thatcham	05 54	06 54	07 14	08 11	08 13	09 14	09 16	10 17	10 19	11 17
Newbury Racecourse	06 04	07 04	07 24	. .	08 23	. .	09 26	. .	10 29	. .
Newbury	06 09	07 09	07 29	08 29	08 31	09 32	09 34	10 35	10 37	11 35

Kintbury**	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .
Hungerford	06 34	. .	07 54	08 54	. .	09 57	. .	11 00	. .	12 00
Bedwyn	06 49	. . . .	08 09	09 09	. . . .	10 12	. . . .	11 15	. . . .	12 15

** Kintbury Level Crossing is closed to Road Traffic

No. of Vehicles.	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**
Coach No.										
Days Run	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**
Theale	11 00	12 00	12 00	13 00	13 00	14 00	14 00	15 00	15 00	16 00
Aldermaston	11 07	. . . .	12 07	. . . .	13 07	. . . .	14 07	. . . .	15 07	. . . .
Midgham	11 12	. .	12 12	. .	13 12	. .	14 12	. .	15 12	. .
Thatcham	11 19	12 17	12 19	13 17	13 19	14 17	14 19	15 17	15 19	16 17
Newbury Racecourse	11 29	. .	12 29	. .	13 29	. .	14 29	. .	15 29	. .
Newbury	11 37	12 35	12 37	13 35	13 37	14 35	14 37	15 35	15 37	16 35
Kintbury**	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .
Hungerford	. .	13 00	. .	14 00	. .	15 00	. .	16 00	. .	17 00
Bedwyn	. . . .	13 15	. . . .	14 15	. . . .	15 15	. . . .	16 15	. . . .	17 15

No. of Vehicles.	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**
Coach No.										
Days Run	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**
Theale	16 00	17 00	17 00	17 55	17 55	19 00	19 00	20 00	20 00	21 00
Aldermaston	16 07	. . . .	17 07	. . . .	18 02	. . . .	19 07	. . . .	20 07	21 07
Midgham	16 12	. .	17 12	. .	18 07	. .	19 12	. .	20 12	21 12
Thatcham	16 19	17 17	17 19	18 12	18 14	19 17	19 19	20 17	20 19	21 19
Newbury Racecourse	16 29	. .	17 29	. .	18 24	. .	19 29	. .	20 29	21 29
Newbury	16 37	17 35	17 37	18 30	18 32	19 35	19 37	20 35	20 37	21 37
Kintbury**	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .
Hungerford	. .	18 00	. .	18 55	. .	20 00	. .	21 00	. .	22 02
Bedwyn	. . . .	18 15	. . . .	19 10	. . . .	20 15	. . . .	21 15	. . . .	22 17

No. of Vehicles.	**1**	**1**	**1**
Coach No.			
Days Run	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Tue-Fri**
Reading N Interchange	. .	23 13	00 17
Reading West	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .
Theale	22 00	23 31	00s35
Aldermaston	22 07	23 38	00s42
Midgham	22 12	23 43	00s47
Thatcham	22 19	23 50	00s54
Newbury Racecourse	22 29	23 59	01s04
Newbury	22 34	00 05	01 09
Kintbury**	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .
Hungerford	22 59	00 30	. .
Bedwyn	23 14	00 45	. . . .

Monday 11 to Thursday 14 November 2024

NEWBURY – KINTBURY – HUNGERFORD

No. of vehicles.	1M	1M	1M	1M	1M	1M	1M	1M
Coach No.								
Days Run	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu
Newbury	06 46	07 37	08 39	09 42	10 43	11 45	12 45	13 45
Kintbury	07 06	07 57	08 59	10 02	11 03	12 05	13 05	14 05
Hungerford	07 21	08 12	09 14	10 17	11 18	12 20	13 20	14 20

No. of vehicles.	1M	1M	1M	1M	1M	1M	1M	1M
Coach No.								
Days Run	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu
Newbury	15 45	16 45	17 45	18 10	19 44	21 51	22 13	00 10
Kintbury	16 05	17 05	18 05	18 30	20 04	22 11	22 33	00 30
Hungerford	16 20	17 20	18 20	18 45	20 19	22 26	22 48	00 45

M = MINI BUS

Monday 11 to Thursday 14 November 2024

BEDWYN – NEWBURY – THATCHAM – THEALE – READING

No. of Vehicles.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Coach No.										
Days Run	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu
Bedwyn	. .	05 05	05 35	. .	06 25	. .	07 25	. .	08 25	. .
Hungerford	. . . .	05 20	05 50	. . . .	06 40	. . . .	07 40	. . . .	08 40	. . . .
Kintbury**	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .
Newbury	04 40	05 45	06 15	06 15	07 05	07 05	08 05	08 05	09 05	09 05
Newbury Racecourse	04 45	05 50	. . . .	06 20	. . . .	07 10	. . . .	08 10	. . . .	09 10
Thatcham	04 55	06 00	06 30	06 30	07 20	07 20	08 20	08 20	09 20	09 20
Midgham	05 02	06 07	. . . .	06 37	. . . .	07 27	. . . .	08 27	. . . .	09 27
Aldermaston	05 07	06 12	. .	06 42	. .	07 32	. .	08 32	. .	09 32
Theale	05 15	06 20	06 53	06 55	07 43	07 45	08 43	08 45	09 43	09 45

No. of Vehicles.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Coach No.										
Days Run	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu	Mon-Thu
Bedwyn	09 25	. .	10 35	. .	11 30	. .	12 35	. .	13 30	. .
Hungerford	09 40	. . . .	10 50	. . . .	11 45	. . . .	12 50	. . . .	13 45	. . . .
Kintbury**	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .
Newbury	10 05	10 05	11 15	11 15	12 10	12 10	13 15	13 15	14 10	14 10
Newbury Racecourse	. . . .	10 10	. . . .	11 20	. . . .	12 15	. . . .	13 20	. . . .	14 15

Thatcham	10 20	10 20	11 30	11 30	12 25	12 25	13 30	13 30	14 25	14 25
Midgham	. . . .	10 27	. . . .	11 37	. . . .	12 32	. . . .	13 37	. . . .	14 32
Aldermaston	. .	10 32	. .	11 42	. .	12 37	. .	13 42	. .	14 37
Theale	10 43	10 45	11 53	11 55	12 48	12 50	13 53	13 55	14 48	14 50

No. of Vehicles.	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**
Coach No.										
Days Run	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**
Bedwyn	14 35	. .	15 25	. .	16 40	. .	17 25	. .	18 25	. .
Hungerford	14 50	. . . .	15 40	. . . .	16 55	. . . .	17 40	. . . .	18 40	. . . .
Kintbury**	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .
Newbury	15 15	15 15	16 05	16 05	17 20	17 20	18 05	18 05	19 05	19 05
Newbury Racecourse	. . . .	15 20	. . . .	16 10	. . . .	17 25	. . . .	18 10	. . . .	19 10
Thatcham	15 30	15 30	16 20	16 20	17 35	17 35	18 20	18 20	19 20	19 20
Midgham	. . . .	15 37	. . . .	16 27	. . . .	17 42	. . . .	18 27	. . . .	19 27
Aldermaston	. .	15 42	. .	16 32	. .	17 47	. .	18 32	. .	19 32
Theale	15 53	15 55	16 43	16 45	17 58	18 00	18 43	18 45	19 43	19 45

No. of Vehicles.	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**
Coach No.						
Days Run	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**
Bedwyn	19 35	. .	20 35	. .	22 25	23 20
Hungerford	19 50	. . . .	20 50	. . . .	22 40	23 35
Kintbury**	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .
Newbury	20 15	20 15	21 15	22 10	23 05	23 59
Newbury Racecourse	. . . .	20 20	21 20	22 15	23 10	00 05
Thatcham	20 30	20 30	21 30	22 25	23 20	00 15
Midgham	. . . .	20 37	21 37	22 32	23 27	00 22
Aldermaston	. .	20 42	21 42	22 37	23 32	00 27
Theale	20 53	20 55	21 55	22 45	23 40	00 35
Reading West	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .
Reading N Interchange	. . . .	. . . .	. . . .	23 08	00 03	00 58

Monday 11 to Thursday 14 November 2024

HUNGERFORD – KINTBURY – NEWBURY

No. of vehicles.	**1M**	**1M**	**1M**	**1M**	**1M**	**1M**	**1M**	**1M**	**1M**
Coach No.									
Days Run	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**	**Mon-Thu**
Hungerford	04 57	05 30	06 20	07 20	08 20	09 20	10 30	11 27	12 30
Kintbury	05 12	05 45	06 35	07 35	08 35	09 35	10 45	11 42	12 45
Newbury	05 32	06 05	06 55	07 55	08 55	09 55	11 05	12 02	13 05

No. of vehicles.	**1M**	**1M**	**1M**	**1M**	**1M**	**1M**	**1M**	**1M**	**1M**
Coach No.									

Days Run	Mon-	Mon-	Mon-	Mon-	Mon-	Mon-	Mon-	Mon-	Mon-
Hungerford	13 25	14 30	15 20	16 35	17 20	18 21	20 30	21 25	23 12
Kintbury	13 40	14 45	15 35	16 50	17 35	18 36	20 45	21 40	23 27
Newbury	14 00	15 05	15 55	17 10	17 55	18 56	21 05	22 00	23 47

M = MINI BUS

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 14/10/2024 12:00

Hello All,

Please find some updates below.

Great Bedwyn Road Closure

The road between The Three Tuns and Marlborough will be partially closed between October 17th and 21st. For those coming to the station from Marlborough, please see https://one.network/?tmi=GB33068290 for further details.

Using WhatsApp to Get a Connection Held

We always welcome any tips you discover. A passenger contacted GWR on WhatsApp asking for a connection hold at Newbury. The WhatsApp team contacted GWR Control and got the connection held. GWR's WhatsApp number is: 07890 608043. They are open until 2300 each evening. So, please use this if you are on a delayed train heading towards Newbury.

Wiltshire Rail Strategic Study

Along with other organisations, Bill Wells and I have collaborated with Network Rail on their "Wiltshire Rail Strategic Study". The final report has been published. If you would like a PDF copy then please email me.

Significantly, Network Rail wishes to run an hourly service between Paddington and Westbury, including calls at Kintbury, Hungerford, Bedwyn and Pewsey. As this would require an additional platform at Westbury, this will not happen in the short term. This is something we've always wanted to happen. However, if implemented, we will campaign, for the peak time half-hourly infills and the late evening trains to be retained. In the meantime, the restoration of our direct off-peak service to Paddington remains our priority.

Forthcoming Engineering Works

Tuesday October 22nd to Friday October 25th October

The 0532 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run.

Monday October 28th to Thursday 31st October

The 2157 and 2247 Newbury to Bedwyn will be replaced with a bus service. The 2230 London Paddington (Wednesday starting Reading) to Bedwyn will end its journey at Newbury. A replacement bus will run from Newbury to Bedwyn. The 2225 Bedwyn to Newbury will be replaced with a bus departing earlier from Bedwyn. The 2317 Bedwyn to Reading will start from Newbury with an earlier bus connection from Bedwyn. An additional 2338 Bedwyn to Reading replacement bus will also run. The 0532 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run on Tuesday to Friday.

Monday 11th to Thursday 14th November

There will be a full line closure between Theale and Bedwyn. Bus replacements will operate. Please see the journey planners. GWR, at our request, has timetabled some of the bus replacements to not call at Newbury Racecourse, Midgham and Aldermaston. This is to speed up the journey. GWR has agreed that monthly or longer season ticket holders can use Swindon or Didcot. At our request South West Trains have agreed to accept tickets from/to stations Basingstoke – Grateley, via Woking to London, or via Basingstoke towards Paddington. Unfortunately, you'll have to pay for your parking. Overton and Whitchurch have limited parking. Refunds can be claimed on season tickets for anyone not travelling subject to the usual terms and conditions (and where applicable, admin fees). Refunds are not available by way of compensation during these works, as GWR put mitigations in place (ticket acceptance from other stations, replacement buses etc).

Tuesday 10th to Thursday 12th December

There will be a full line closure between Newbury and Bedwyn. Bus replacements will operate. Please see the journey planners. Please also note, that Newbury station's car park will fill quickly on these days. You can also use alternative stations described above in the "Monday 11th to Thursday 14th November" closure. A tip from another passenger is to use the Sainsbury's car park. A day pass can be purchased at https://www.justpark.com/uk/parking/newbury/s/hectors-way-newbury-rg14-5ab/

Sunday 17th November

All lines between Ealing Broadway and London Paddington will be closed. If you wish to travel to Paddington, catch an Elizabeth Line service at Reading then change onto the Underground at Ealing Broadway.

25th and 26th December

The entire GWR network will be closed.

27th to 29th December

All lines between Ealing Broadway and London Paddington will be closed. If you wish to travel to Paddington, catch an Elizabeth Line service at Reading then change onto the Underground at Ealing Broadway.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 25/10/2024 20:20

Hello All,

Please find some updates below.

Travelling this Sunday (October 27th)

For Sunday staffing, GWR relies on volunteer overtime from drivers and other on-board crew. However, things appear to have come to a head with not enough staff prepared to work Sundays. This means that GWR cannot guarantee this Sunday's timetable will operate as published. Please check your journey. This situation is likely to continue, therefore please double-check all Sunday travel.

Meeting with Danny Kruger MP

Bill and I met with Danny Kruger MP today to discuss the reinstatement of our direct Paddington trains. There is an industry-wide rumour that GWR is getting additional stock, suitable for the Cardiff to Penzance route. This may free up the three IETs taken away from us in May 2022 (causing us to end up on a shuttle service to Newbury). We have asked Danny to write to GWR and the DfT reminding them of our expectations.

Forthcoming Engineering Works

Monday, October 28th to Thursday 31st October

The 2157 and 2247 Newbury to Bedwyn will be replaced with a bus service. The 2230 London Paddington (Wednesday starting Reading) to Bedwyn will end its journey at Newbury. A replacement bus will run from Newbury to Bedwyn. The 2225 Bedwyn to Newbury will be replaced with a bus departing earlier from Bedwyn. The 2317 Bedwyn to Reading will start from Newbury with an earlier bus connection from Bedwyn. An additional 2338 Bedwyn to Reading replacement bus will also run. The 0532 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run on Tuesday to Friday.

November and December

Our last newsletter (October 14th) listed the engineering works in November and December.

January 2025

Due to extensive work at Westbury station, all train services running via Westbury will be affected from Friday 27 December to Thursday 23 January 2025. GWR's long-distance services between London Paddington/Reading and the West of England will call at Frome instead of Westbury. So, if you are heading west during this period, check your trains.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 09/11/2024 22:00

Hello All,

Please find some updates below.

Forthcoming Engineering Works

Monday 11th to Thursday 14th November

There will be a full line closure between Theale and Bedwyn. Bus replacements will operate. Please see the journey planners. GWR, at our request, has timetabled some of the bus replacements to not call at Newbury Racecourse, Midgham and Aldermaston. This is to speed up the journey. GWR has agreed that monthly or longer season ticket holders can use Swindon or Didcot. At our request South West Trains have agreed to accept tickets from/to stations Basingstoke – Grateley, via Woking to London, or via Basingstoke towards Paddington. Unfortunately, you'll have to pay for your parking. Overton and Whitchurch have limited parking. Refunds can be claimed on season tickets for anyone not travelling subject to the usual terms and conditions (and where applicable, admin fees). Refunds are not available by way of compensation during these works, as GWR put mitigations in place (ticket acceptance from other stations, replacement buses etc). The 0725 bus from Bedwyn (0740 Hungerford) and the 0735 bus from Kintbury are the first off-Peak services during the work.

Friday 15th November

The 0532 Bedwyn (0538 Hungerford and 0543 Kintbury) to London Paddington will not run.

Saturday 16th November

Train services to and from London Paddington will run to an amended timetable. Some trains will not run and some services will not run for all of their normal journey. Many services will also depart earlier than usual. Please check your train times before you travel if your train is due to run to/from London Paddington.

Sunday 17th November

All lines between Ealing Broadway and London Paddington will be closed. If you wish to travel to Paddington, catch an Elizabeth Line service at Reading then change onto the Underground at Ealing Broadway.

Tuesday 19th to Thursday 21st November

The 0532 Bedwyn (0538 Hungerford and 0543 Kintbury) to London Paddington will not run.

Saturday 23rd November

0508 Reading to Bedwyn will be replaced with an earlier bus from Reading as far as Newbury. 0539 Reading to Bedwyn will depart at 0555 and will run non-stop to Newbury then Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. For stations between Reading and Newbury please use alternative services. 0608 Bedwyn to Reading will start from Newbury. A bus will run from Bedwyn at 0530 to connect with the train at Newbury. 0635 Bedwyn to Newbury and 0658 Newbury to London Paddington will depart slightly later than usual train times.

Sunday 24th November

The 2323 Newbury to Reading will be replaced with a bus service

Travelling off-peak after 0830

On weekdays, The 0846 from Bedwyn is the first off-peak. However, the ticket machine at Bedwyn isn't selling off-peak tickets prior to 0846. We've reported this to GWR.

Using WhatsApp to Get a Connection Held at Newbury

In our newsletter of October 14th we reported that a passenger used WhatsApp to ask for a connection hold at Newbury. The WhatsApp team contacted GWR Control and got the connection held. GWR's WhatsApp number is: 07890 608043. Thanks to those of you who have reported similar success. So keep using it! The WhatsApp team is open until 2300 each evening.

Getting around the Evening off-peak

We've described this tip in previous newsletter. However, as it is proving so useful, and people continuously join our email list, we'll describe it again.

To recap, the weekday evening peak, for trains departing Paddington, is from 1600 to 1900. This does not apply between Reading and Bedwyn, nor does it apply on the Elizabeth Line between Paddington and Reading. Therefore, if you are returning with an off-peak ticket between 1600 and 1900 there are options, it'll just be a longer journey. Here are some updated examples:

1. Catch the 1548 Swansea train from Paddington, arriving Reading at 1613. You can then catch the 1636 Reading to Newbury, arriving 1700. You can then catch the 1724 for Bedwyn, arriving 1744.
2. Catch the 1648 Elizabeth Line train from Paddington, arriving Reading at 1741. You can then catch the 1803 Reading to Newbury, arriving 1817. You can then catch the 1822 for Bedwyn, arriving 1842.
3. Catch the 1720 Elizabeth Line train from Paddington, arriving Reading at 1812. You can then catch the 1837 Reading to Bedwyn, arriving 1914.
4. Catch the 1750 Elizabeth Line train from Paddington, arriving Reading at 1842. You can then catch the 1901 Reading to Bedwyn, arriving 1930.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 25/11/2024 09:50

Hello All,

Please find some updates below.

Message from GWR - Storm Bert

You will have seen that rail services across the GWR network are severely affected by the impacts of Storm Bert. We're very sorry for the inconvenience and disruption to journeys.

As of this morning multiple lines are still closed due to flooding, fallen trees and other blockages, so **our advice to customers is do not travel**, with disruption expected to last until at least the end of today (Monday 25 Nov).

Network Rail and GWR teams are working hard across the network to inspect lines as the morning light improves, and will look to reopen lines as quickly as possible. Customers with tickets for yesterday (Sun 24) and today (Mon 25) will be able to use them on Tues 26 and Weds 27 at no extra charge, including on peak-time services, or claim a full refund.

The latest travel information is available at www.gwr.com/check and you can also find updates on our social media channels at www.x.com/gwrhelp and www.x.com/networkrailwest. If there is

anything we can do to help, please do not hesitate to get in touch, and we will provide further updates as our teams' work to reopen the railway continues.

Forthcoming Disruption & Engineering Works

All Sundays

GWR train crew are not contracted to work on Sundays. Instead, Sunday is a voluntary overtime day. Recently GWR have been struggling to fully staff the Sunday timetable. Therefore, always check before you travel.

Sunday 1st December

0806 Reading to Newbury will not run. A replacement bus will run from Reading at 0755 calling all stations to Newbury except for Newbury Racecourse. The 0834 Reading to Bedwyn will start from Newbury. Customers should travel on the 0755 Reading to Newbury bus to connect. 0751 (departing 0747 London Paddington to Penzance will not call at Newbury or Pewsey. The 0851 (departing 0845) London Paddington to Penzance will call additionally at Newbury and Pewsey.

Tuesday 3rd to Friday 6th of December - 0532 Bedwyn to London Paddington will start from Newbury at 0550. Customers travelling from Bedwyn, Hungerford or Kintbury should travel on the next train service.

Tuesday 10th to Thursday 12th December

There will be a full line closure between Newbury and Bedwyn. Bus replacements will operate. Please see the journey planners. Please also note, that Newbury station's car park will fill quickly on these days.

GWR has agreed that monthly or longer season ticket holders can use Swindon or Didcot. South West Trains have agreed to accept tickets from/to stations Basingstoke – Grateley, via Woking to London, or via Basingstoke towards Paddington. Unfortunately, you'll have to pay for your parking. Overton and Whitchurch have limited parking. Refunds can be claimed on season tickets for anyone not travelling subject to the usual terms and conditions (and where applicable, admin fees). Refunds are not available by way of compensation during these works, as GWR put mitigations in place (ticket acceptance from other stations, replacement buses etc).

A tip from another passenger is to use the Sainsbury's car park at Newbury. A day pass can be purchased at https://www.justpark.com/uk/parking/newbury/s/hectors-way-newbury-rg14-5ab/

25th and 26th December

The entire GWR network will be closed.

27th to 29th December

All lines between Ealing Broadway and London Paddington will be closed. If you wish to travel to Paddington, catch an Elizabeth Line service at Reading then change onto the Underground at Ealing Broadway.

January 2025

Due to extensive work at Westbury station, all train services running via Westbury will be affected from Friday 27 December to Thursday 23 January 2025. GWR's long-distance services between

London Paddington/Reading and the West of England will call at Frome instead of Westbury. So, if you are heading west during this period, check your trains.

Station Usage Figures

Bill Wells has examined the recently released station usage figures for April 2023 to March 2024. The following table shows pre and post-pandemic figures:

	2018/2019	2019/2020	2023/2024
Pewsey	221,712	269,352	187,072
Bedwyn	109,320	129,886	93,570
Hungerford	321,464	359,776	288,322
Kintbury	82,290	95,850	70,722
Newbury	1,665,096	1,819,730	1,380,182

These figures show that the rail industry is still suffering post-pandemic. However, the year-on-year change between 2022/23 and 2023/24 is more positive:

Pewsey	3.30%
Bedwyn	14.80%
Hungerford	25.5%
Kintbury	8.50%
Newbury	14.30%

This will help the case to re-establish our off-peak direct services to Paddington.

Tips

We always welcome tips you pick up. Here are two recent ones we have received:

Seat Reservation Guarantee Claim

If you cannot occupy your reserved seat you may be able to claim up to a 50% refund. Please see:

https://www.railhelp.co.uk/gwr/make-a-complaint/on-train/seating-capacity

Advanced Tickets for Regular Commuting

If you travel regularly (e.g., for work) and know up to three months in advance the services you will use, then look at the advanced purchase options. A single peak ticket, from Bedwyn to Paddington, can be purchased for as little as £17.50. However, you do need to plan ahead. The closer you book to the date of travel, the higher the price will be.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 07/12/2024 09:00

Hello All,

Please find some updates below.

Storm Darragh

I hope I can get this information out between power cuts, the lights flicking are dramatically as I type, and a Microsoft Windows update is making things take ten times longer than they need to. Anyhow, following Red and Amber weather warnings, in relation to Storm Darragh on parts of GWR's network, GWR advises customers to change their travel plans if possible this weekend (Sat 7 and Sun 8 December).

Although GWR still expects to be able to run services, strong winds mean Network Rail will impose speed restrictions to ensure the safe running of trains, increasing journey times. Fallen trees and other debris may also impact services.

Customers with tickets for this weekend can use them on Monday, December 9, and if they no longer wish to travel at all, they can claim a refund. The latest journey information is available at www.gwr.com/check, and it will remain updated as usual throughout the weekend. GWR will also provide updates through their social media channels.

Sunday Travel

On Sunday 8 December, train crew availability means a significantly reduced service will run on GWR's long-distance routes. Online journey planners will be updated overnight on Saturday. This is a problem which, for the foreseeable future, will apply to all Sundays.

Engineering Works

Monday 9th December

From 2155 Monday until 0200 Thursday - Trains will run to an amended timetable between London Paddington, Reading and Newbury. Replacement buses will run between Newbury and Bedwyn.

Tuesday 10th to Thursday 12th December

There will be a full line closure between Newbury, Bedwyn and Westbury. Bus replacements will operate. Please see the journey planners. Please also note, that Newbury station's car park will fill quickly on these days.

The first off-peak buses will be:

Bedwyn 0810

Hungerford 0825

Kintbury 0835

GWR has agreed that monthly or longer season ticket holders can use Swindon or Didcot. South West Trains have agreed to accept tickets from/to stations Basingstoke – Grateley, via Woking to London, or via Basingstoke towards Paddington. Unfortunately, you'll have to pay for your parking. Overton and Whitchurch have limited parking. Refunds can be claimed on season tickets for anyone not travelling subject to the usual terms and conditions (and where applicable, admin fees). Refunds are not available by way of compensation during these works, as GWR put mitigations in place (ticket acceptance from other stations, replacement buses etc).

A tip from another passenger is to use the Sainsbury's car park at Newbury. A day pass can be purchased at https://www.justpark.com/uk/parking/newbury/s/hectors-way-newbury-rg14-5ab/

Friday 13th December

The 0532 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Please use alternative services.

Sunday 15th December

The 0806 Reading to Newbury will be replaced with a bus departing at 0755 from Reading and calling all stations to Newbury (except Newbury Racecourse). The 0833 Reading to Bedwyn will start from Newbury connecting with the 0755 Reading to Newbury bus

Saturday 21st December

0508 Reading to Bedwyn will be replaced with a bus running earlier than usual train times as far as Newbury. This will connect at Newbury with the 0539 (departing Reading) at 0555 and running fast to Newbury, Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. Customers travelling from Reading West to Newbury Racecourse should travel on earlier or later services. 0608 Bedwyn to Reading will start from Newbury. A replacement bus will run earlier than usual train times from Bedwyn to Newbury to connect with the train. 0635 Bedwyn to Newbury and 0658 Newbury to London Paddington services will depart slightly later than usual train times.

Sunday 22nd December

0806 Reading to Newbury will be replaced with a bus running earlier at 0755 and calling all stations to Thatcham then Newbury where the bus journey will end. 0833 Reading to Bedwyn will start from Newbury connecting with the 0755 Reading to Newbury bus. Also the 0751 (departing 0747) London Paddington to Penzance will be diverted and will not call at Newbury or Pewsey. The 0850 (departing 0842) London Paddington to Penzance will call additionally at Newbury and Pewsey. 2323 Newbury to Reading will be replaced with a bus service.

25th and 26th December

The entire GWR network will be closed.

Friday 27th to Sunday 29th December

All lines between Ealing Broadway and London Paddington will be closed. If you wish to travel to Paddington, catch an Elizabeth Line service at Reading then change onto the Underground at Ealing Broadway.

Saturday 28 December 2024 to Friday 3 January 2025 - General

An amended level of train service will run across the GWR network over the Christmas and New Year holiday period.

January 2025

Due to extensive work at Westbury station, all train services running via Westbury will be affected from Friday 27 December to Thursday 23 January 2025. GWR's long-distance services between London Paddington/Reading and the West of England will call at Frome instead of Westbury. So, if you are heading west during this period, check your trains.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 15/01/2025 11:30

Hello All,

Please find some updates below.

Getting Our Direct Off-Peak Services Back

On 16th December Bill and I attended a Zoom call hosted by GWR. Mark Hopwood, the MD of GWR, spoke outlining the challenges faced by the rail industry. Notably, improvements are slow due to a lack of funds and demands being made by the unions regarding working Sundays and resistance to driver-only operations.

In the question and answer session, we asked what the delay was in GWR obtaining the Class 175s, freed up from Wales. These would be ideal for working in Devon and Cornwall, returning IETs to London operations (including the three that used to operate our off-peak Paddington service). Mark explained the delays are over funding (it has to be authorised by the DfT) and the maintenance required to bring them back into service.

Of concern is that Mark went on to say, in relation to the introduction of the Class 175 fleet:

1) The priority is to get rid of the remaining HST trains (dating from the mid-1970s).

2) The second priority is to use the IET trains returned to London operations to bolster resilience.

3) There will not be enough IETs freed up to satisfy everybody on this Zoom call.

Point three is of real concern to us. This could mean that the three five-car IETs taken away from us are returned to working out of Paddington, but not reassigned to us. We contacted Danny Kruger MP, who raised it for us in a Westminster Hall debate on rail services in the South West on 14th January 2025. You can watch the clip here: https://www.dannykruger.org.uk/news/westminster-hall-debate-rail-services-south-west-14-january-2025

For those of you in Berkshire, could you please write to your MP, Lee Dillon lee.dillon.mp@parliament.uk, with something along the lines of "Please can you support Bedwyn Trains Passenger Groups and Danny Kruger MP to ensure that any five-car IETs which, as a result of the introduction of the Class 175s on the GWR network, are returned to working out of Paddington are prioritised to reinstating the direct Paddington off-peak service for Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury."

Also, if we get to the situation of having to negotiate for one or two IETs to be returned, please could you also let us know which off-peak trains are the most important to you.

GWR WhatsApp

Due to staff sickness the GWR WhatsApp service is only available until 1900. However, whatever the time, please do use it to request holds at Newbury. There might be somebody listening and 'missed messages' will be a reminder that the full WhatsApp service needs to be reinstated.

The reduced hours were a particular problem last week when a fatality occurred on the line between Reading and Newbury. Passengers on a bus replacement service messaged GWR's WhatsApp to ask

for the Bedwyn shuttle to be held so the bus could meet it. As nobody was staffing the WhatsApp, the connection was missed for the sake of five minutes.

Sunday Travel

Train crew availability can mean a significantly reduced service on GWR's long-distance routes. Please check before you travel.

Engineering Works

January 2025

Due to extensive work at Westbury station, all train services running via Westbury will be affected from Friday 27 December to Thursday 23 January 2025. GWR's long-distance services between London Paddington/Reading and the West of England will call at Frome instead of Westbury. So, if you are heading west during this period, check your trains.

Sunday 19th January

0806 Reading to Newbury will depart at 0824 and will run later through to Newbury

Sunday 26th January

0806 Reading to Newbury will be replaced with a bus service departing Reading at 0755. 0833 Reading to Bedwyn will start from Newbury. Customers should travel on the earlier replacement bus from Reading to connect with the train. 0751 (departing 0747) London Paddington to Penzance will be diverted and will not call at Newbury or Pewsey. The 0850 (departing 0844) London Paddington to Penzance will call additionally at Pewsey.

Sunday 2nd February

0806 Reading to Newbury will depart at 0824 and will run later through to Newbury.

Monday 3rd to Thursday 6th February

From 2130 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday until 0200 the next day - services between Reading, Newbury and Bedwyn will be amended with buses replacing trains for all or part of the journey.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 30/01/2025 09:40

Hello All,

Please find some updates below.

Bedwyn Station Car Park

All, or at least part, of the station car park will be closed from 00.01 this Saturday to 06:00 on Monday 3 Feb. Notices state that failure to comply may result in a £100 fine.

Connecting Buses at Bedwyn Station

Great Bedwyn Parish Council has asked for feedback on the requirement for fixed timetable buses meeting trains at Bedwyn Station. Therefore, do you travel to Bedwyn Station by bus? If so which existing rail services do you catch? Are there any other rail services, not currently serviced by a bus, you would like to see included in a fixed bus timetable? Please state where you catch the bus from (e.g. Marlborough High Street).

Stops on Race Days at Newbury Racecourse

We've been asked why our Bedwyn to Newbury shuttles do not stop at Newbury Racecourse on race days. GWR have responded that when we had through trains it was easy to put an extra stop in. However, with the shuttles terminating at Newbury it's hard to schedule the extra stop.

Sunday Travel

With staffing issues on GWR's long-distance routes, please check before you travel.

Engineering Works

Sunday 2nd February

The 0806 Reading to Newbury will be replaced with a bus service departing Reading at 0755. The 0833 Reading to Bedwyn will start from Newbury. Customers should travel on the earlier replacement bus from Reading to connect with the train. The 0751 (departing 0747) London Paddington to Penzance will be diverted and will not call at Newbury

Monday 3rd to Thursday 6th February

From 2130 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday until 0200 the next day - services between Reading, Newbury and Bedwyn will be amended with buses replacing trains for all or part of the journey.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 17/02/2025 14:20

Hello All,

Please find some updates below.

Connecting South West England: In Place of A303/A358 Road Widening

Following the decision not to proceed with the A303 tunnel and widening scheme past Stonehenge, and the withdrawal of the A358 link road from the A303 to the M5 motorway that would have cost over £2.5bn, Transport Action Network commissioned Greengauge21 to examine what should be done in their place. Full details can be found on The Stonehenge Alliance's blog page: https://stonehengealliance.org.uk/scrapped-stonehenge-road-could-fund-south-wests-sustainable-travel-revolution This includes a link to the report, https://transportactionnetwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Connecting-South-West-England-Report-Web.pdf, which discusses enhancements

to our railway line, including putting Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn on an hourly Paddington to Westbury service. This option was first published in Network Rail's "Wiltshire Rail Strategic Study", something Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group contributed to: https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/14237/Wiltshire-Rail-Strategic-Study/pdf/Wiltshire_Rail_Strategic_Study.pdf

A Tip for Kintbury Passengers on either the 1035, 1235, 1635 or 1836 off Paddington

These four services call at Newbury and Hungerford, but not Kintbury. If the train is late into Newbury, and the connecting shuttle has not been held, then consider staying on the train, alighting at Hungerford and catching the shuttle back to Kintbury. Depending on delays and timings this may be a quicker option than waiting at Newbury for the next shuttle.

Engineering Works

Sunday 23rd February

0806 Reading to Newbury will be replaced with a bus running earlier from Reading at 0755 and calling all stations to Newbury except for Newbury Racecourse. 0833 Reading to Bedwyn service will start from Newbury. Customers travelling from Reading should travel on the 0755 Reading to Newbury replacement bus to connect with the train.

Tuesday 25th to Friday 28th February

The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Customers should travel on the next service.

Thursday March 6th

0600 Bedwyn to London Paddington will end its journey at Reading. Change at Reading for an alternative train to London Paddington.

Monday 17th March to Thursday 20th March

From 2135 until 0200 the following morning - Services between Reading and Newbury/Bedwyn will be amended with buses replacing trains for all or part of the journey.

Tuesday March 18th to Friday 21st March

The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Customers should please use the next train service

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 19/03/2025 06:30

Hello All,

Please find some updates below.

GWR WhatsApp

Due to staff shortages GWR's WhatsApp team currently has core hours of 0700-1900. Messages sent outside this time are not acknowledged. The team are migrating to a new system in the coming months which means they will have the ability to let customers know if the service is unavailable.

Thames Valley Meeting

On March 3rd Bill Wells and I attended GWR's online London Thames Valley & North Downs Local Transport Forum. Points to note that affect us:

- There are ongoing discussions with unions regarding Sunday working. In the short term, there are some Sunday timetable reduction to help out. Nothing directly affecting us.
- There are some improvements to the North Downs Line, improving the Reading to Gatwick service.
- GWR continue to improve rail replacements. This is something we've pushed for. They appear to be rolling out our suggestions elsewhere e.g. signage, co-ordinators on the ground, tracking linked to CIS, better information to bus drivers (including route videos to accompany notes).

Meeting with MPs and GWR

On February 28th Bill Wells and I had a productive meeting with Tom Lydon (GWR's head of public affairs), Lee Dillon MP, Danny Kruger MP and members of their office staff. The main point of discussion was the return of IET trains to reinstate the direct off-peak Bedwyn to Paddington service.

Tom explained that the newly leased Class 175 trains are delayed in being put into service due to driver training and setting up maintenance depots. Once in service, these Class 175s will allow our three IETs, redeployed post-Covid, to be returned to Paddington. We raised the concern that GWR may use these IETs to bolster the fleet, instead of returning them to operating the direct Bedwyn to Paddington off-peak service. Tom confirmed that, although GWR's ambition is to return our direct services, this is a possibility. We therefore asked Lee and Danny to take this up with the DfT – who ultimately make the decision.

Tom also explained that alternative options, such as Network Rail's proposal to extend the Bedwyn service to Westbury (involving additional rolling stock), further electrification or battery-operated trains, are not short-term options. Tom acknowledged how our line is operated is not ideal but there isn't the money to sort it out. At present GWR is constrained by tight governance from the DfT, all fare revenue goes directly to the treasury. It is also likely that GWR will be nationalised next year.

We also raised the issue that when the crossing at Kintbury fails passengers can be left stranded, unable to reach their cars. Tom explained that safety is always the main concern. As any solution would require a change to infrastructure, Lee Dillon agreed to take this up with Network Rail.

We also discussed our request to have Westbury to Reading (including Pewsey, Bedwyn, Hungerford, Kintbury and Newbury) included in the 'Minimum service levels for passenger rail' during strikes. Tom explained that the Labour government has repealed this legislation, therefore there is now no minimum service level during strike action.

Engineering Works

Wednesday 19th March to Thursday 20th March

From 2135 until 0200 the following morning - Services between Reading and Newbury/Bedwyn will be amended with buses replacing trains for all or part of the journey.

Thursday March 20th to Friday 21st March

The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Customers should please use the next train

Saturday March 22nd

All day, due to engineering work taking place elsewhere on the network, most direct trains between London Paddington and Newbury will not run. Passengers should change trains at Reading.

Tuesday March 25th to Friday 28st March

Tuesday to Friday - The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Passengers should use an alternative earlier or later service.

Saturday March 29th

All day, due to engineering work taking place elsewhere on the network, most direct trains between London Paddington and Newbury will not run. Passengers should change trains at Reading.

Saturday April 5th

Until approximately 0700 - Trains between Reading, Newbury and Bedwyn will be revised. Buses will replace trains for some journeys, running EARLIER than usual.

Sunday April 6th

The 2333 Newbury to Reading will be replaced by a bus.

Tuesday April 8th to Friday April 11th

The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Passengers should travel on an alternative earlier or later service.

Monday 14th to Thursday 17th

From approximately 2145 until end of service - Buses will replace trains between Newbury and Bedwyn.

Friday 18th April

A number of trains servicing Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury will not run on this day. Please check online.

Sunday 20th April

The 0806 Reading to Newbury will not run. The 0833 Reading to Bedwyn will call additionally at Reading West, Aldermaston and Midgham and run slightly later to Bedwyn.

Friday 25th April

A number of trains servicing Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury will not run on this day. Please check online.

Monday 28th April to Thursday May 1st

From approximately 2130 until end of service - Trains between Reading, Newbury and Bedwyn will be revised. A few trains will run EARLIER than usual or will not run at all. Replacement buses will run between Reading, Newbury and Bedwyn.

Tuesday April 29th to Friday May 2nd

The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Passengers should travel on an alternative earlier or later service.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 01/05/2025 12:00

Hello All,

Please find some updates below.

Wiltshire Rail Investment Programme

Andrew Robinson, Network Rail's Senior Strategic Planner – Western region, has given us an update on Network Rail's long-term plans for Wiltshire – this includes putting Kintbury, Hungerford, Bedwyn and Pewsey on an hourly Paddington to Westbury service. This project requires the creation of Platform 0 at Westbury. Andrew states:

Since we completed the strategic study last autumn, our internal design team have carried out work to review and refine the preferred track and signalling layout for Platform 0 at Westbury, giving us a good understanding of how this could look. Western Gateway have proposed to fund a follow-on piece of work looking at the building and civils work associated with bringing the platform back into use, and we are in the process of agreeing the contract for that, with the intention to start work imminently. We are hoping to secure some funding for a further phase of timetabling work as well; with that in mind, we are engaging with train and freight operating colleagues to agree the scope of this work, building upon which was done for the strategic study. This will include testing options for retaining semi-fast calls at Pewsey in peak hours, as discussed previously.

Once these above pieces of work are complete, we will require an economic appraisal (for which funding is needed) to develop a full Strategic Outline Business Case for the package of investment we are proposing. Developing a sound understanding through this work now should put us in a strong position as and when funding becomes available at a local level through local government devolution. We'll keep you informed of outcomes as this work progresses. It remains the case that a strong and united voice will be needed to encourage the necessary investment in Wiltshire and we hope you will lend your support to that.

Although the passenger group supports this proposal, realistically, it will not happen this decade. In the meantime, we continue to campaign for the full reinstatement of our hourly direct services to Paddington.

Parking at Bedwyn Station

Users of Bedwyn station will note that we have lost a net of five car parking spaces to form a bus stop. Wiltshire Council initiated this project without consultation with the passenger group or the Parish Council. Ironically, the bus still has to park on the road. The lost five car parking spaces are for bus passengers to wait and queue.

A Freedom of Information Act request to Wiltshire Council shows that only three rail passengers use the bus per day. We have worked with the Parish Council, and they have submitted a letter of complaint to Wiltshire Council asking for five new car parking spaces.

In the past, the passenger group has worked hard with Wiltshire Council and GWR to encourage rail users to use the bus. However, we are too affluent an area for a modal shift from the car to the bus. Therefore, despite our past efforts, bus usage to the station has remained minimal. To have this project thrust upon us, without consultation, is disappointing.

Getting to Heathrow

Using the train, either 1) Travel to Paddington and catch the Heathrow Express, 2) Travel to Reading and catch the RailAir coach link, or 3) Change at Reading for Slough and catch the local bus to Heathrow. As many people from Slough work at the airport, the buses are frequent.

Getting to Gatwick

Travel to Reading and catch the direct train to Gatwick.

Engineering Works

Friday May 2nd

The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Passengers should travel on an alternative earlier or later service.

Saturday May 3rd to Friday 9th May 2025

From approximately 2300 Saturday until 1000 Sunday - Buses will replace trains between Reading and Newbury. The 0751 & 0850 (departing 0831) London Paddington to Penzance will be diverted via an alternative route between Reading and Westbury.

Tuesday to Friday The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Passengers should travel on an alternative earlier or later service.

Saturday 10th May to Friday 16th May 2025

Saturday until approximately 0700 - Trains between Reading, Newbury and Bedwyn will be revised. Some trains will be replaced by buses for all or part of their journey, departing EARLIER than usual.

Sunday - The 2333 Newbury to Reading will be replaced by a bus.

Saturday 17th May to Friday 23rd May 2025

Sunday - The 0806 Reading to Newbury will be replaced by a bus (departing EARLIER) and the 0833 Reading to Bedwyn will start from Newbury. The 0804 (departing 0753) London Paddington to Penzance will not call at Newbury or Pewsey. The 0844 (departing 0834) London Paddington to Penzance will call additionally at Pewsey.

Tuesday to Friday - The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Passengers should travel on an alternative earlier or later service

Saturday 24th May to Friday 30th May 2025

From approximately 2145 until end of service Monday to Thursday - Buses will replace trains between Newbury and Bedwyn.

Thursday - The 0600 Bedwyn to London Paddington will run slightly later from Newbury onwards and will finish its journey at Reading. An alternative rail connection will be available from Reading to London Paddington.

Saturday 7th June to Friday 13th June 2025

Sunday - The 2323 Newbury to Reading will not run and will be replaced by a bus.

Monday to Thursday from approximately 2130 until end of service - Buses will replace trains between Reading, Newbury and Bedwyn. A few other trains will either not run, or will be retimed, in some cases, EARLIER than usual.

Monday to Friday - Due to engineering work taking place elsewhere on the network, some trains from London Paddington to Newbury will run slightly later than usual.

Tuesday to Friday - The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Passengers should travel on an alternative earlier or later service.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 06/06/2025 14:00

Hello All,

Please find some updates below.

Discounted Advanced Fares

We know that a number of you rely on advanced fares to keep the cost of your commute down. Recently, some of these reductions have been removed. We checked in with GWR, their response was:

These fares are not intended for everyday business or commuter travel but are designed to support the leisure market, encouraging customers to use less busy trains in order to reduce loadings on busy, peak time services. We do regularly review and reduce/increase quotas or remove/add Advance tickets to different routes and services.

This dynamic pricing allows us to manage loadings and helps us to protect revenue. This last is important as the rail industry has yet to fully recovery from Covid and we are still therefore receiving significant subsidy from Government.

All revenue we receive from rail fares therefore goes to the Department for Transport. This helps to reduce the cost of rail to taxpayers and it is important therefore that we are careful when offering discounted fares. We will of course continue to monitor the situation, and we are very aware of the need for balance. That said, Advance tickets are not a guaranteed fare and quotas can be reduced or removed at any time.

Steam Train

We are sometimes asked whether we know when steam trains are scheduled to come through Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. Unfortunately, there's no easy way of keeping tabs on them. However, we are aware of one making the following calls on Saturday, 23rd August:

Newbury	0845	
Hungerford	0900	
Pewsey	0920	2020
Hungerford		2040
Newbury		2110

Please note that timings are subject to change. It is also advisable to be twenty minutes early.

Getting to Heathrow

In the last newsletter, we described various options for getting to airports. It's been pointed out to us there is another option for Heathrow, which we've added as option 4, below.

1) Travel to Paddington and catch the Heathrow Express, 2) Travel to Reading and catch the RailAir coach link, 3) Change at Reading for Slough and catch the local bus to Heathrow. As many people from Slough work at the airport, the buses are frequent, or 4) Travel to Reading, take the Elizabeth Line to Hayes and Harlington then change onto the Elizabeth Line service to Heathrow.

Engineering Works

Saturday 7th June to Friday 13th June 2025

Sunday 8th - The 2323 Newbury to Reading will not run and will be replaced by a bus.

Monday 9th to Thursday 12th from approximately 2130 until end of service each evening - Buses will replace trains between Reading, Newbury and Bedwyn. A few other trains will either not run, or will be retimed, in some cases, EARLIER than usual.

Monday 9th to Friday 13th - Due to engineering work taking place elsewhere on the network, some trains from London Paddington to Newbury will run slightly later than usual.

Tuesday 10th to Friday 13th - The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Passengers should travel on a later service.

Saturday 14 to Friday 20 June 2025

Sunday 15th - The 0806 Reading to Newbury will not run and the 0833 Reading to Bedwyn will start from Newbury. A replacement bus will run from Reading to Newbury. The 0804 (departing at 0800) London Paddington to Penzance will not call at Newbury or Pewsey. The 0844 (departing at 0835) London Paddington to Penzance will call additionally at Newbury and Pewsey.

Monday 16th to Friday 20th - Due to engineering work taking place elsewhere on the network, some trains from London Paddington to Newbury will run slightly later than usual.

Tuesday 17th to Friday 20th - The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Passengers should travel on a later service.

Saturday 21 to Friday 27 June 2025

Nothing affecting Newbury, Kintbury, Hungerford or Bedwyn.

Saturday 28 June to Friday 4 July 2025

Saturday 28th until approximately 0700 - Trains between Reading, Newbury and Bedwyn will be revised. Some trains will be replaced by buses for all or part of their journey, departing EARLIER than usual.

Sunday 29th - 2333 Newbury to Reading will be replaced by a bus.

Tuesday 1st to Friday 4th - 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Passengers should travel on a later service.

Saturday 5 to Friday 11 July 2025

Monday 7th to Thursday 10th from approximately 2145 until end of service each evening - Buses will replace trains between Newbury and Bedwyn.

Saturday 12 to Friday 18 July 2025

Sunday 13th- The 0806 Reading to Newbury will not run and the 0833 Reading to Bedwyn will start from Newbury. A replacement bus will run from Reading to Newbury. The 0804 (departing at 0747) London Paddington to Penzance will not call at Newbury or Pewsey. The 0844 (departing at 0833 London Paddington to Penzance will call additionally at Newbury and Pewsey.

Saturday 19 to Friday 25 July 2025

Monday 21st to Thursday 24th from approximately 2130 until end of service each evening - Buses will replace trains between Reading, Newbury and Bedwyn. A few other trains will either not run, or will be retimed, in some cases, EARLIER than usual.

Tuesday 22nd to Friday 25th - The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Passengers should travel on a later service.

Saturday 26 July to Friday 1 August 2025

Tuesday 29th to Friday 1st - The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Passengers should travel on a later service.

Saturday 2 to Friday 8 August 2025

Nothing affecting Newbury, Kintbury, Hungerford or Bedwyn.

Saturday 9 to Friday 15 August 2025

Saturday 9th until approximately 0700 - Trains between Reading, Newbury and Bedwyn will be revised. Some trains will be replaced by buses for all or part of their journey, departing EARLIER than usual.

Sunday 10th - The 0806 Reading to Newbury will not run and the 0833 Reading to Bedwyn will start from Newbury. A replacement bus will run from Reading to Newbury. The 0804 (departing at 0747) London Paddington to Penzance will not call at Newbury or Pewsey. The 0844 (departing at 0833 London Paddington to Penzance will call additionally at Newbury and Pewsey. The 2333 Newbury to Reading will be replaced by a bus.

Tuesday 12th to Friday 15th- The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Passengers should travel on a later service.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 11/08/2025 14:20

Hello All,

Please find some updates below.

Managing Missed Connections

On occasion, passengers have been able to request that the Newbury to Bedwyn shuttle be held, to meet a late-arriving connecting train, by messaging GWR on WhatsApp at 07890 608043. This also applies to Sunday connections at Reading.

However, one doesn't always get a positive response – and sometimes no response at all. Recently, on a Sunday, I was on a delayed service from Paddington to Reading, missing the connection for Bedwyn. Faced with a two-hour wait, I asked the gate line staff, who advised me to speak to the Duty Station Manager. This proved to be good advice as he arranged a taxi for me. It appears that if you are at Reading, and the delay is going to be well over an hour or indeterminate, the thing to do is to ask to speak to the Duty Station Manager.

If stranded at Newbury, speak to the platform staff. If the station is unstaffed, then use the Help Points located on Platforms 1 and 2.

Recently, we have been in touch with GWR regarding two incidents where the Newbury to Bedwyn shuttle departed with passengers either on the overbridge or about to board. GWR have reminded all staff and drivers not to allow this to happen. If this happens to you, or you miss a connection at Newbury due to a train not being held, then please do let us know.

Given the two-hourly service on a Sunday, we have also asked GWR to introduce a holds policy at Reading on a Sunday. GWR, at our request, introduced one for weekdays, but not for weekends. So, we are asking for clarity so the GWR Control staff know which Reading to Bedwyn trains need to be held for delayed inbound connections from Paddington.

We have also asked GWR to try and arrange a contract with a Newbury-based taxi firm. At present taxis have to be sent down from Reading.

Restoring our off-peak Direct Trains to and from Paddington

We still haven't had a response from GWR, or our local MPs, regarding how the introduction of the Class 175 trains will affect our service. Once in service, these Class 175s will allow our three IETs, redeployed post-Covid, to be returned to Paddington. We are concerned that DfT and the GWR will, instead of giving us our direct services back, use the returned IETs to bolster the Paddington fleet.

The next timetable change, December 2025, isn't showing any changes, making the next possibility for the return of our direct off-peak Paddington services May 2026.

We have chased the MPs and GWR. We are grateful to Wiltshire Councillor Tamara Reay who has Dan Okey, GWR's Head of Regional and Welsh Development.

Not a Steam Train

In the last newsletter, we stated that a steam train would pass through Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn on Saturday, 23rd August. We have been advised that this is running as a historic diesel. Therefore, not so exciting!

Engineering Works

Saturday 9 to Friday 15 August 2025

Tuesday 12th to Friday 15th- The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Passengers should travel on a later service.

Saturday 16 to Friday 22 August 2025

Monday to Thursday from approximately 2145 until end of service each evening - Buses will replace trains between Newbury and Bedwyn. In addition, on Monday to Wednesday, the 2230 London Paddington to Bedwyn will only run from Reading to Newbury. Passengers travelling from London Paddington should change at Reading.

Tuesday to Friday - The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will be slightly retimed and will finish its journey at Reading. A connecting rail service will be available from Reading to London Paddington.

Saturday 23 to Friday 29 August 2025

No service alterations that affect Bedwyn, Hungerford or Kintbury.

Saturday 30 August to Friday 5 September 2025

Monday to Thursday from approximately 2130 until end of service - Buses will replace trains between Reading, Newbury and Bedwyn. A few other trains will either not run, or will be retimed, in some cases, EARLIER than usual.

Tuesday to Friday - 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Passengers should travel on a later service

Saturday 6 to Friday 12 September 2025

Tuesday to Friday - The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Passengers should travel on an alternative earlier or later service.

Saturday 13 to Friday 19 September 2025

Sunday - Trains between London Paddington and the West of England will be revised. Trains will be diverted, not calling at Newbury, Hungerford, Pewsey, Westbury or Castle Cary, but will call additionally at Bristol Temple Meads and some will also call additionally at Swindon. Most trains will depart EARLIER from London Paddington and Reading. Some trains will not run, including all direct trains between London Paddington and Paignton. Passengers travelling to / from intermediate stations between Reading and Taunton should use alternative rail connections, changing where necessary to complete their journey. Pewsey will be served by replacement buses running to / from Swindon only. Replacement buses will also run between Westbury, Castle Cary and Taunton.

Saturday 20 to Friday 26 September 2025

Saturday until approximately 0700 - Trains between Reading, Newbury and Bedwyn will be revised. Some trains will be replaced by buses for all or part of their journey, departing EARLIER than usual.

Sunday - The 0806 Reading to Newbury will not run and the 0833 Reading to Bedwyn will start from Newbury. A replacement bus will run from Reading to Newbury. The 2333 Newbury to Reading will be replaced by a bus.

Sunday - Trains between London Paddington and the West of England will be revised. Trains will be diverted, not calling at Newbury, Hungerford, Pewsey, Westbury or Castle Cary, but will call additionally at Bristol Temple Meads and some will also call additionally at Swindon. Most trains will depart EARLIER from London Paddington and Reading. Some trains will not run, including all direct trains between London Paddington and Paignton. Passengers travelling to / from intermediate stations between Reading and Taunton should use alternative rail connections, changing where necessary to complete their journey. Pewsey will be served by replacement buses running to / from Swindon only. Replacement buses will also run between Westbury, Castle Cary and Taunton. Passengers are strongly advised to check their journeys before travelling.

Tuesday to Friday - The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Passengers should travel on a later service.

Saturday 27 September to Friday 3 October 2025

Monday to Thursday from approximately 2145 until end of service each evening - Buses will replace trains between Newbury and Bedwyn.

Tuesday to Friday - The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Passengers should travel on a later service.

Best wishes

Steve Smith

Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Emailed Newsletter: 02/10/2025 09:15

Hello All,

Please find some updates below.

<u>Restoring our off-peak Direct Trains to and from Paddington</u>

We previously mentioned that we were due an update from the DfT, GWR, and our local MPs regarding how the introduction of the Class 175 trains will affect our service. Once in service, these Class 175s will allow our three IETs, redeployed post-Covid, to be returned to Paddington. We are concerned that the DfT and the GWR will, instead of restoring our direct services, use the returned IETs to bolster the Paddington fleet.

Having chased the MPs, we received the following responses:

The DfT responded with:

GWR and the Department recognise the timetable reductions made post-pandemic at Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn when the industry faced significant revenue challenges. They are working together to develop the appropriate business case submission for approval of direct off-peak services

for Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn. This will mean that the requisite rolling stock will be in place against a background of competing demands.

GWR responded with:

There isn't a concrete update on the IETs at the moment. The Class 175 trains we're adding to our fleet in Devon & Cornwall will allow us over time to free up some trains and look at opportunities. It will take around 18 months for the Class 175s to be rolled out fully across the network.

Taking the DfT response first, it is a real concern that the rhetoric has shifted, and we now require a 'business case' to restore a service that was only temporarily taken away from us. Therefore, we have responded to Lee Dillon MP:

We shouldn't be in a position of having to go through a 'business case' to reinstate a service that in 2022 was only temporarily taken away. Mark Hopwood MD of GWR has always stated it is the intention to reinstate the direct services to Bedwyn. This is a case of 'when' not 'if'. To now hear a business case is required is very concerning. We'd be very grateful if you could raise this point with the DfT.

GWRs use of the word 'opportunities' is concerning. Mark Hopwood (Managing Director of GWR) was interviewed for an article in the September issue of 'Modern Railways' magazine. This gives further details of how the 175s will be rolled out:

1. The 175s will be deployed between Exeter and Penzance, replacing the IET leg of this journey.
2. The IETs will still run between Cardiff and Exeter.
3. The 175s will also be deployed on some other services.

When Mark Hopwood informed us of the need to redeploy our three 5-car IETs to the Cardiff to Penzance route, he made it clear that for them to return, GWR would need to source alternative traction on the Cardiff to Penzance route. We now note that the 175s will not cover Cardiff – Exeter and will also be used on some other services (e.g. Okehampton and Barnstaple). We have therefore written to Mark asking him the following:

1. Upon complete roll-out of the 175s, how many 5-car IETs are expected to remain on Cardiff - Exeter duties?
2. How many IETs will be released for other duties?
3. Are there any more IET sets on other non-Paddington-based services?
4. Mention has previously been made of such released sets being used on Paddington based services. As Paddington - Bedwyn clearly falls into that category, should we not be a priority for three of those sets, particularly as the DfT mentioned in their Fleet Plan, reintroduction of Paddington - Bedwyn as just such a priority?'

To date, we haven't received a reply from the DfT or GWR. We have asked the MPs to pursue this.

Delays and connections not held at Newbury

Please inform us of any delays and connections not held at Newbury. We forward these on to GWR and keep 'banging the drum'.

Engineering Works

Thursday 2 September to Friday 3 October 2025

Monday to Thursday from approximately 2145 until end of service each evening - Buses will replace trains between Newbury and Bedwyn.

Friday - The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will not run. Passengers should travel on a later service.

Saturday 11 to Friday 17 October 2025

Monday to Thursday from approximately 2130 until end of service - Buses will replace trains between Reading, Newbury and Bedwyn. A few other trains will either not run, or will be retimed, in some cases, EARLIER than usual.

Tuesday to Friday - The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will be slightly retimed and will finish its journey at Reading. An alternative rail connection will be available from Reading to London Paddington.

Saturday 18 to Friday 24 October 2025

Sunday - The 0804 (departing 0753) London Paddington to Penzance will not call at Newbury or Pewsey. The 0844 (departing 0828) London Paddington to Penzance will call additionally at Newbury and Pewsey. The 0806 Reading to Newbury will not run and the 0833 Reading to Bedwyn will start from Newbury and run slightly later throughout. A replacement bus will run EARLIER from Reading to Newbury.

Tuesday and Wednesday - The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will be slightly retimed and will finish its journey at Reading. An alternative rail connection will be available from Reading to London Paddington.

Saturday 25 to Friday 31 October 2025

Monday to Thursday - The 0838 London Paddington to Westbury will not run. Passengers should travel on alternative earlier or later services. The 0934 London Paddington to Paignton will call additionally at Pewsey. The 2230 London Paddington to Bedwyn will start from Reading. An alternative rail connection will be available from London Paddington (departing at 2230) to Reading.

Monday to Friday - The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will be slightly retimed and will finish its journey at Reading. An alternative rail connection will be available from Reading to London Paddington.

Saturday 1 to Friday 7 November 2025

Saturday until approximately 0700 - Trains between Reading, Newbury and Bedwyn will be revised. Some trains will be replaced by buses for all or part of their journey, departing EARLIER than usual.

Sunday - The 2333 Newbury to Reading will be replaced by a bus

Saturday 8 to Friday 14 November 2025

Monday to Thursday from approximately 2145 until end of service each evening - Buses will replace trains between Newbury and Bedwyn.

Tuesday to Friday - The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will be slightly retimed and will finish its journey at Reading. An alternative rail connection will be available from Reading to London Paddington

Saturday 15 to Friday 21 November 2025

Sunday - The 0804 (departing 0757) London Paddington to Penzance will not call at Newbury or Pewsey. The 0844 (departing 0831) London Paddington to Penzance will call additionally at Newbury and Pewsey. The 0806 Reading to Newbury will not run and the 0833 Reading to Bedwyn will start from Newbury and run slightly later throughout. A replacement bus will run EARLIER from Reading to Newbury, to connect into the train.

Saturday 22 to Friday 28 November 2025

Monday to Thursday from approximately 2130 until end of service - Buses will replace trains between Reading, Newbury and Bedwyn. A few other trains will either not run, or will be retimed, in some cases, EARLIER than usual.

Tuesday to Friday - The 0531 Bedwyn to London Paddington will be slightly retimed and will finish its journey at Reading. An alternative rail connection will be available from Reading to London Paddington.

Best wishes

Steve Smith
Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group