

MARLOW - MAIDENHEAD PASSENGERS' ASSOCIATION

Committee Report for 2019



Maurice Oram

We regretfully announce the death during the year of our President, Maurice Oram, a founder member of MMPA.

Committee Members

Individual members who served during the year and their responsibilities are as follows:

John Marsh	Chairman, Honorary Treasurer, GWR chief contact and Bourne End station rep.
Martin Coker	Cookham station rep, Network Rail chief contact, Branch Working Group co-ordinator.
John Fowler	MTR/Crossrail chief contact.
Nick Hodder	Marlow station rep.
Rob Latham	Newsletter editor
Nigel Phillips	Bucks County Council liaison officer, High Wycombe station & CRPB rep
Richard Porter	Membership Secretary, Web master, Furze Platt station rep
Geoff Herbert	Taplow station rep
Eileen Bune	Cookham Parish Council

During the year Mike Cooper, a founder member of MMPA in 1970, High Wycombe station rep and Chiltern Railways chief contact retired from the Committee. We thank him for his valuable contributions over the years.

Membership

Our records show 119 paid up members, an increase of 12. We have 161 Facebook likes and 703 Twitter followers.

Finances

These remain healthy. After taking credit of £100 for a GWR grant to pay for Branch Working Group meetings there was a surplus of £227 versus a deficit of £118 in 2017. Subscriptions and donations increased by £66 and the cost of postage reduced by £72, chiefly reflecting the lower weight of timetables now that Chiltern's supply has largely ceased. Liquid funds at the year end amounted to £5,622.58. Copies of the accounts are being circulated and others will be available at the AGM.

Stations

Marlow At long last a ticket machine has been installed.

Bourne End The design of the trackwork to reinstate the chord from platform 2 that will enable the promised half-hourly service all day between Marlow and Maidenhead is still a work in progress.

MMPA has learned that the idea of the provision of a bus bay at Bourne End Station to improve traffic flow has been turned down on grounds of cost.

Cookham The station building reopened 9th August following a long drawn out repair of dry rot. The reactivation of the Millennium clock is still outstanding pending resolution of method of access to the clock; a ladder is considered too dangerous in 2019. A ticket machine has been installed.

Maidenhead MMPA reported the growth of bushes on the Brunel bridge, principally on the south side, to Network Rail. We are pleased to report that the growth has been removed before it could impact on the structure. It is proposed to extend the station platforms to cater for 12 coach trains.

Taplow The station is operated by Transport for London (TfL). Before and during the handover from GWR, MMPA reported frequent issues with ticketing to the relevant operator. Because the TfL ticket machine can accept cash payments it does not operate when the station is not staffed. To avoid a problem obtaining tickets for early morning services TfL now open up at 05.30 instead of 06.30 as originally arranged. MMPA has been advised that the plans for the permanent replacement footbridge now include access to platform 1 and the south car park. The new permanent footbridge is now being installed by Transport for London. A site meeting was held with TfL, MMPA and other local organisations was held during the year. We suggested opening access to Platform 4 at the London end of the station closer to the new footbridge.

High Wycombe

MMPA continue to press Network Rail to reposition the signal location on High Wycombe Platform 1 to enable easier transition between platforms 1 and 3. This has not been successful so far.

Main Line

Services on the main line are now provided by electric Class 387 Electrostar units operating between Paddington and Didcot Parkway. Following representations by MMPA the 8.02 service from Maidenhead now starts from Twyford instead of Didcot as previously.

Great Western Franchise

The GWR franchise has been extended pending its replacement and MMPA responded to the consultation by the DfT on the proposed replacement GW franchise.

Bourne End -Wycombe reopening

MMPA has noted and made representations to the WDC planning department about the conflict of a planning application with the policy to preserve the former route of the Bourne End to Wycombe trackbed. It is hoped to arrange a meeting soon with the new Rail officer at Bucks CC. The benefit/ cost ratio of Bourne End to Wycombe reinstatement, according to a recent consultants report, just exceeds the minimum value of 2.0 required for such schemes.

Branch Usage

MMPA believes Branch usage figures are under reported by the inconsistent and inadequate approach to the on board sale and checking of tickets on the Branch. MMPA continues to press GWR to ensure proper recording of passenger numbers on the Branch.

Meetings

MMPA representatives have attended various meetings over the year including: Marlow Branch Working Group, Chiltern Railways Passenger Board, GWR Stakeholder Conference and GWR Timetable consultation

MMPA had a meeting with Mark Hopwood (MD of GWR) in August to address a number of issues. In summary:

- Poor Branch Connection times at Maidenhead.
- Persistent slow running of fast services in the evening peak.
- Proposed trackwork change at Bourne End to enable half hourly service.
- Marlow station platform extension.
- Rolling Stock Fleet.
- Bourne End station platform ponding in wet weather.
- Inadequate CIS on platform 5 at Maidenhead.
- Proposed reduction in fast services from Maidenhead.
- Could Marlow be displayed on the "next service to....." boards at Reading.
- Bourne End - High Wycombe re-opening.

Railfuture users conference

MMPA representatives attended the recent Railfuture Users Conference. Topics included:

- Update on Great Western Electrification
- Western Rail Link to Heathrow
- A new way of developing southern access to Heathrow
- An Update on Crossrail/ Elizabeth Line

Williams Rail Review

MMPA contributed to the Williams Rail Review. The author recently gave a public lecture claiming the current franchise system is not fit for purpose.

Vivarail

A team from MMPA visited the Vivarail works at Long Marston at the invitation of the Vivarail Company. This project converts withdrawn District Line rolling stock into new stock that can be diesel, hybrid or battery powered. The team was given a demonstration of the battery powered version.

Crossrail

MMPA has continued to publicise the lack of toilets and seating on the new Crossrail trains. We have contacted the Mayor of London, Theresa May MP, two Paralympic athletes affected by closed train toilets and various charities such as Help the Aged, mostly without a response.

Also notable is that the new class 345 Crossrail trains are longer than an 8 car Electrostar so the issue of short platforms on the main line will continue to cause problems. 345s on training runs are often seen in Maidenhead Station.

Archives

We have handed over historical MMPA documents to the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies in Aylesbury for archiving.