

# MARLOW - MAIDENHEAD PASSENGER ASSOCIATION

Newsletter Number 164

December 2014



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MMPA covers transport aspects in Maidenhead - Marlow, Taplow, High Wycombe and Twyford

## December Timetables

Included with this newsletter are the appropriate December timetables for your area. Also included is a flyer giving details of Christmas/ New Year services for both FGW and Chiltern.

## Membership

As reported in the previous newsletter it won't come as a surprise that increasing postage and room hire charges have caught up with us and it is necessary to raise the membership fees for the first time since 2004. The new simplified rates will be £5.00 for personal membership including couples and £10.00 for organisations and groups. The new rates will apply from 1st January 2015 (renewals are due on 1st April).

Richard Porter (Webmaster and Membership Secretary)

## MMPA needs YOU

Are you reading this newsletter and use public transport in the Maidenhead/ Marlow area (including Bourne End and Taplow) or do you know of someone who does? Are you a member of the Association?

The more members the Association has the greater pressure can be exerted on train and bus operators and local authorities in the area to improve services and rectify problems. So if not a member already please consider joining and help to encourage continuing improvements to the area's public transport.

The Association also needs more people to join the Committee and take the opportunity to help us influence operators with whom the MMPA maintain a regular dialogue. The commitment need not be onerous; we meet in Bourne End once a month in the evening.

There are major rail projects under way in the area which will have a significant impact on travel. Crossrail, western route electrification including the Intercity Express programme, electrification of the Branches and even HS2 which will have an interchange at Old Oak Common will certainly change peoples travel patterns. Support of the membership is more important than ever so that MMPA can monitor what's happening and advocate for our passengers when necessary and have a stronger voice when speaking up for local interests. Typical of the issues we anticipate:

- When Crossrail arrives in 2019 will there be sufficient car parking space for the expected increase in rail usage?
- Can the local buses be reorganised to form an effective transport hub at Maidenhead Station which integrates bus and rail services?
- Possible establishment of Station Adoption Groups leading to Community Rail Partnership(s) in the Thames Valley to provide coordinated liaison with Train Operating Companies and Network Rail.

What can you do? See if you can recruit a new member or two.

Coverage of the Henley Branch is being taken over by the Henley Branch User Group: they can be contacted at [henleybranchusergroup@gmail.com](mailto:henleybranchusergroup@gmail.com).

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## Crossrail

As passengers using Maidenhead Station may be aware the temporary canopies did not appear as expected. The original installation plan for Maidenhead's platform canopies did have to be revised.

Once the old canopies were removed, Network Rail's contractors discovered ground conditions would not support the new canopy foundations being constructed in their planned configuration. This meant they couldn't be installed as planned and the temporary platform cover could not go up before the new designs had been revised.

Following intensive overnight work, new foundations for the permanent canopies have now been built and once the temporary canopy design is approved, installation will start.

FGW are working with Network Rail's contractors to make sure that they are installed in a phased manner that maintains the maximum amount of platform coverage possible, and the temporary covering will be replaced with the permanent canopy, from the end of the year.

FGW have apologised for the inconvenience that this is causing customers and are displaying a poster at stations by way of explanation.

The plan for Maidenhead Station development are still being designed. The latest plan we have is dated 2009 and shows the old scheme with a new platform (6) for Branch trains which is not going to be implemented.

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## Revenue Protection on the Branch

If you experience any problem with purchasing a ticket on Branch services please let us know and give us as much detail as possible of the journey.

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## Exhibition in Cookham Station

An exhibition is going to be arranged in the Waiting Room at Cookham Station to mark the centenary of the First World War. The organisers are appealing for the loan of photographs of the era for display.

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## Unwanted building developments

MMPA, through its members, keeps a watching brief on planning applications that could have serious implications for the Marlow Branch. MMPA has submitted objections to several application based on the impact of the development on the loss of a transport corridor and made sure that the train operators and Network Rail are aware of proposals that could affect them.

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## Taplow Station

MMPA has been made aware of problems with ticket and travel permit machines at Taplow.access and the South car park, ticket machines and permit to travel

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## Area Transport update

At the risk of some duplication the text below is an extract from the recent MMPA report to the Marlow Society: "The current Great Western rail franchise agreement expires September 2015, but Department for Transport (DfT) announced in October that First Great Western (FGW) will be awarded an extension until March 2019, with an option to extend another year depending on progress with Crossrail. Thankfully we have immediately noticed increased willingness by FGW to plan for the future and invest in the Branch. There are several proposals in the works, some of which could benefit Marlow specifically.

For example, FGW is proposing to spend £2.25 million in service and station improvements for the Marlow Branch and is preparing a bid for £1.55 million in funding from the Local Growth Fund (LGF) of the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to support the project. A key component of the plan would be track work at Bourne End to allow for half hourly service on the Branch all the way to Marlow without changing trains. Initially, more frequent service would be planned for peak times only, but that could later be extended to all day and weekends if demand merits it. Local LEPs are supporting a number of similar projects in the area to improve access to Crossrail. Network Rail is helping evaluate the proposal, and FGW admits that signalling implications will be important because the Branch currently operates using a Victorian era token system to ensure only one train is on the single track at a time. If new signalling can be accomplished at reasonable cost, the project could be hugely beneficial to Branch users. We should know something about the likelihood of approval by early next year.

Another potentially beneficial initiative is Wycombe District Council's proposal to create a Business Improvement District (BID) for Globe Park, Globeside Business Park and the surrounding areas adjacent to the station. The BID must be voted for by at least 50% of the businesses in the area and would result in a small levy added to their business rates in order to fund projects and services that improve their trading environment. This includes a focus on sustainable transport initiatives, image enhancements, or anything BID members believe can help make for a better, safer, greener, more secure and attractive trading environment. Up to £750,000 in private sector led investment could be generated to support improvements, and FGW has said they would gladly participate to support the BID where possible. As a gateway to Marlow, the station, station approach, and surrounding area are badly in need of attention and improvement. A local BID could provide the needed springboard for that effort.

Given congested roads in our area, MMPA is always investigating ways to encourage more people to access stations by bus, cycle or on foot. Several programmes are available to support that. DfT recent announced availability of £15 million in capital funding for infrastructure projects that support cycle-rail integration. Grants will be available for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016. Any franchise train operator can apply and we have proposed several possible projects to FGW, most related to improving cycle storage and security at all Branch stations. Successful

schemes will be announced in early March. Bucks County Council has already announced it was successful in securing funding for Marlow under a program which is part of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) called Living Streets – "Walk to." The project involves working in partnership with Living Streets, a pedestrian charity, to involve schools, workplaces, and communities in targeted areas of high congestion to reach people who don't walk but could walk, or who currently walk but could walk more. A full time Living Streets Officer with work with Bucks to deliver this work. A "Walk to School" project for 40 schools in Buckinghamshire is already underway and is hoping to recruit all the schools in Marlow so they are already on-board for the kick-off of the broader "Walk to" effort commencing for Marlow in April 2015. MMPA, FGW and the Marlow Branch Working Group will look for ways to support the Marlow "Walk to" effort.

Chiltern Railways is running a consultation on a revised timetable in preparation for their new Oxford service beginning in spring 2016. MMPA found no issues in the proposals as High Wycombe train frequency and patterns are slated to remain the same or to improve. After a successful trial last year, Chiltern Railways have also decided to again run their service on Boxing Day 2014. In midst of all the good news there has been some bad, however. In October, a series of catastrophic signalling failures occurred on the Great Western Main Line, resulting in huge disruption over several days between Paddington and Reading. The issues relate to the postponed switch out of the 50 year old Slough signal panel which had been scheduled for 2012 but was put back until Easter of 2015. Network Rail have suspended electrification work in the area until they fully understand the causes of the recent failures. At the MMPA AGM on 27 March 2015 we hope to have representatives on hand from FGW, Network Rail, Crossrail and Chiltern Railways to provide updates on all the news, hopefully more good than bad! "

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## TRAVEL INFORMATION

BBC Radio Berkshire:	95.4, 104.1 FM, DAB, or 311333
National Rail enquiries:	08457 - 484950 (24 hrs) or www.nationalrail.co.uk or text
First Great Western	08457-000125 (0700–2200 daily)
Chiltern Railways:	08456 - 005165 (08.30 – 17.30)
Arriva Bus:	0844 8004411 (0900 - 1700 Mon - Fri)
First Berks Buses:	01753 524144
Carousel Buses:	01494 533436
Traveline:	0871 2002233 (0700 - 2200 ) 10p/min on BT landline
RBWM helpline	01628 796666

Also see our web site [www.mmpa.org.uk](http://www.mmpa.org.uk) for links.

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## Contact MMPA

If you have any issues or comments regarding public transport in the area that you would like to raise please use the *Contact Us* links on the MMPA website [www.mmpa.org.uk](http://www.mmpa.org.uk).

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*The MMPA Committee wishes you all a Peaceful Christmas and a healthy and disruption free New Year*