



**189
March
2022**

NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to the Spring Newsletter.

We have lots to pass on this time following GWR's Thames Valley and North Downs Local Transport Forum.

Like all operators, GWR has suffered a reduction in patronage, and has now recovered to around 70% of pre-pandemic numbers. Peak commuter services are well down while leisure travel, particularly to the South-West is doing well.

GWR has announced that it will not be running its tri-mode Class 769 *Flex* trains on the North Downs route this May due to continuing reliability issues. This means we probably won't be getting them on the Bourne End shuttle just yet either.

The 769s were formerly Class 319 Thames-Link electric trains that have had diesel engines slung underneath for operation away from the overhead line or third rail.



Class 769 tri-mode train (Nigel Gould)

You might well ask why, as we approach “net-zero carbon” deadlines, we are sticking diesel engines onto electric trains instead of electrifying the lines. The underpass at Reading and two short stretches on the North Downs line are all that's needed.

Richard Porter, editor@mmpa.org.uk

“The Wycombe Railway”

The Talk by John Gurney at the Bourne End Community Centre has been rescheduled for 14th April 2022 at the speaker's request.

You can attend in person (only a few places left) or on Zoom. Please see bourneendcommunitycentre.org.uk for booking details or call at the office in Wakeman Road SL8 5SX.

The Community Association is charging £7 entrance for the talk but any MMPA member who produces evidence of payment to a committee member will be re-imbursed by our Hon Treasurer if he or she wishes.

Membership Renewals

Your membership subscription for 2022 becomes due on April 1st except for PayPal subscriptions. We hope you wish to remain a member. Please submit your subscription, £5 for personal membership or £10 for companies and organisations, by one of the following methods:

- By cheque payable to 'MMPA' to:
MMPA Membership, 1 West Barn, Altwood Road, Maidenhead SL6 1PF
- By internet or telephone banking to:
Sort code: 60-14-12, account: 72778745
Reference: your membership number or name
- By Paypal - subscriptions renew on their anniversaries unless cancelled.

You do not need to send a form if renewing on line but please inform me of any changes to your details.

Thank you for your support over the last year.

Rob Latham, Membership Secretary
membership@mmpa.org.uk

May Timetable Preview

Weekdays

- No change to Thames Valley branches
- No change to fast services to Paddington
- Most 12-car Class 387 Didcot - London electric services reduced to 8-cars
- Three Oxford - Didcot/Reading morning peak services deleted
- Didcot/Reading - Paddington relief line timings adjusted (GWR and TFL-RAIL).

Weekends

- No changes for Thames Valley branches.

There will be other changes around the network, most notably:

- Class 387 electrics to Newbury with a diesel shuttle from there to Bedwyn.
- Class 802 Intercity Express Trains which now serve Bedwyn replace *Castle* Class shortened High Speed Trains in the West.

The HSTs are the most polluting trains on GWR so this cascade saves CO₂ emissions.

CPay and Ticket Machines

CPay is Transport for London's contactless fare system which currently operates between Reading and London. It allows touch in - touch out travel with no physical ticket, and weekly capping.

The Department for Transport has agreed to fund the extension of CPay to the Henley, Marlow and Windsor branches.

The plan is to do Henley and Windsor & Eton Central first, with a launch date of 28th March. Marlow will follow on in April.

Railcards and child fares are not yet supported but TfL is working on them.

At the same time a cashless ticket vending machine (TVM) will be installed at Furze Platt and additional ones at Bourne End.

Enabling works are under way and Platform Validators are being installed.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Bourne End Community Centre at 7.45pm, 24 September 2021.

Welcome

The Chairman, John Marsh, welcomed some forty members and guests as well as representatives from GWR, NetworkRail, MTR Elizabeth Line and Chiltern Railways.

1. Apologies had been received from Tony Gammond, Mike Cooper and Mark Jamieson.
2. 2020 AGM.

The chairman reminded the meeting that this had had to be cancelled at short notice as a result of the coronavirus epidemic. However, nineteen members had given their approval electronically to the resolutions to accept the 2019 annual financial account and the election of the committee members as proposed.

3. Committee Report

This had been circulated to members ahead of the meeting. See Newsletter 187.

4. Financial Report

The Receipts and Payments Account had been circulated prior to the meeting; it was approved nem con.

5. Election of committee members

These were all approved as set out below.

John Marsh, Chairman and Honorary Treasurer, Bourne End station rep., GWR liaison

Richard Porter*, Webmaster, Newsletter Editor and Furze Platt station rep.

Martin Coker, Cookham station rep., NetworkRail liaison.

Rob Latham*, Membership secretary and Maidenhead station rep.

John Fowler, MTR Elizabeth Line liaison.

Geoff Herbert, Taplow station rep.

Nigel Phillips, Buckinghamshire Council liaison officer, Chiltern Railways liaison, High Wycombe station rep. 🐼

AGM 2021 Minutes (continued)

Eileen Bune, Cookham Parish Council rep.

- * Richard Porter and Rob Latham are exchanging responsibilities for membership and newsletter.

6 - 10. Presentations and Other Matters

Presentations were given by Mark Hopwood CBE, MD, Great Western Railway, Jo Grew, Network Rail Industry Programme Director, Mike Bagshaw, MTR Elizabeth Line Performance and Planning Director and Martin Howard from Chiltern Railways. See Newsletter 188.

There being no further business the chairman closed the meeting at 9.15pm.

Annual General Meeting 2022

The Committee has decided that this year's AGM will be on Friday 24th June at 19:45. This will even out the AGMs and with luck the weather and COVID situation will be more favourable.

**Down The Line****Taplow**

Good News! After months of negotiation by MTR Elizabeth Line, the first weekday off-peak service towards London is now the 09:19. This applies to both paper tickets and contactless fares but in the latter case you must touch in after 09:10.

Bourne End

There have been four signalling incidents recently, three of which were related to the token system. These may have been due to inexperienced guards rushing the procedure.

Cookham

A planning application for land adjacent to the railway has been put on hold.

Maidenhead

The bus pull-in at the revised forecourt layout is now operational. First Berks & Thames Valley route 4 to Heathrow now terminates under the railway bridge and picks up at the station (above), although it's not listed on the bus stop.

From 27th February there are additional early morning and late evening journeys to and from Heathrow.

Marlow - Bourne End

Network Rail has informed us that three more level crossings on the Bourne End to Marlow stretch will be equipped with miniature warning lights similar to those at Spade Oak (left).



Miniature warning lights at Spade Oak



Trains Going Green

HybridFLEX has been launched by Chiltern Railways – a train designed to cut emissions, fuel use, air and sound pollution. The vehicle is the result of a four-year collaboration between Chiltern Railways, Porterbrook (the train owner) and Rolls-Royce.

The companies came together to convert a diesel train into one that now runs on both diesel and battery power. The concept train is the first 100mph capable battery-diesel hybrid train to operate on the UK's national rail network. (*Rail Insider*)

Customer Service Numbers

Great Western Railway	0345 700 0125
Passenger Assist	0800 197 1329
Chiltern Railways	0345 600 5165
National Rail Enquiries	0345 748 4950
Arriva Buses	0344 800 4411
Carousel Buses	0149 445 0151
First Berks & TV Buses	0345 646 0707
Thames Valley Buses	0118 973 3486

Meanwhile on GWR...

Great Western Railway has signed a deal with Vivarail for a battery-only Class 230 train with rapid charging facilities to try out on the Greenford branch. The charging equipment will be installed at West Ealing.

If successful, these trains could be introduced on the Thames Valley branches including Maidenhead to Marlow.

Looks familiar? The Class 230 is based on withdrawn London Underground "D78" stock which ran on the District Line until 2014.



Vivarail Class 230 on the Forth Bridge during COP26