



Editorial

Apologies to one and all for the late delivery of this newsletter. If you're on my email list you'll know that we've been busy keeping up with all the bulletins from GWR and TfL (not so much from Chiltern).

The RMT Union has accepted an interim pay offer with negotiations on productivity put off until next year. That means they won't be on strike before the Spring. ASLEF, the drivers' union, is a different story. We're in a week of one-day strikes and action short of a strike, and there could be more to come.

December Timetable

The new timetable comes into force on Sunday 10th December. The Marlow branch times are unchanged, but there are numerous changes to connecting times. There will be two trains an hour to Gatwick Airport.

There will be no trains on Christmas Day and Boxing Day as, and the line from Ealing Broadway to Paddington will be closed from 24th to 27th December for HS2 works at Old Oak Common. The tracks will need to be slewed to make space for new platforms.

There'll be more weekend closures during 2024 so check before you travel.



Rail break at Iver (Network Rail)

ORR Investigates Network Rail

After a week which saw three broken rails, the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) has launched an investigation into poor train punctuality and reliability in the Network Rail Wales & Western region.

Train performance in the region has continued to deteriorate while the wider network across Great Britain has seen performance stabilising.

While ORR's investigation will focus on Network Rail, the regulator recognises that delivery of reliable, punctual trains requires cross-industry collaboration. As part of its investigation the regulator will convene a roundtable of parties who directly contribute to delivering train performance in the region. Bringing together Network Rail, train operating companies, freight operators, and other bodies, ORR will work to ensure a joined-up approach to identifying the measures required to improve performance for passengers and freight in the Wales & Western region.

ORR's investigation will assess whether Network Rail is complying with its licence obligations in the Wales & Western region, and whether it is doing everything reasonably practicable to deliver train service performance. This will include the regulator reviewing the effectiveness of the region's performance improvement plan, whether assets are being managed appropriately and the impact of changes to the rail network on train performance.

Based on its investigation, ORR will determine whether or not there is more that Network Rail could be doing and may decide on appropriate measures.

U-Turn on Ticket Offices

Transport Focus and London Travelwatch received around 750,000 submissions to their consultation on closing all or nearly all ticket offices across the network. The result was - you'd never have guessed - overwhelmingly against the proposal.

The response was the largest ever seen for a government consultation. The two watchdogs took the brave decision to reject all of the operators' proposals en masse, causing the government to execute a screeching U-turn.

Customers and staff saw through the plan to "close all ticket windows and move booking office staff outside to be closer to their customers" as the Trojan horse that it was.

We were particularly concerned about passengers who don't have smartphones or internet access, or who have disabilities which prevent them using the machines.

We are pleased that the proposal has been withdrawn but concerned that the government could find other ways to cut costs which might further affect services.

Day Travelcard Reprieved

Big relief! London Mayor, Sadiq Khan, struck a deal with the operators for the Day Travelcard to remain. This is welcome news for those of us outside the GLA area. There'll be a one-off increase of 3% on top of the expected 9% increase on regulated fares next March.

Down the Line

Maidenhead

Work is underway to replace the lift to platforms 2 and 3, and to build a second staircase. Passengers requiring step-free access will need to stay on the train and double back.

Furze Platt

Road works in Gardner Road and Queensway with 4-way traffic control have been causing chaos.

Cookham

We are pleased to see that the cycle hoops have been relocated. We campaigned to have them installed, but not on the platform.

The closure of Cookham Bridge to motor vehicles has left Cookham without a bus service until 22 March. The train service isn't affected.

Marlow

We are still in need of a volunteer to maintain the notice board at the station and liaise with local groups.

High Wycombe

Chiltern Railways has imposed peak fares on all services departing between 16:00 and 19:00, Mondays to Fridays.

The operator will be extending contactless pay-as-you-go ticketing from London out to High Wycombe. It is also introducing single leg fares and doing away with returns. Oyster won't be valid beyond West Ruislip.

The inadequate 'kiss and ride' drop off arrangements have been reported to Chiltern Railways. The station clock has stopped.

Greenford - West Ealing

The battery train is expected to start running in the Spring.

Taplow

We are aware of the car parking problems in surrounding roads including Marsh Lane.

The Slough and Windsor Railway Society has embarked on a project to build an exhibition model railway layout of Taplow Station circa 1947-1955. They are looking for diagrams of the Station Buildings, Signal Box, Goods Shed and, most importantly, the 1884 footbridge.

If you have information which might help them please contact Frank at

info@swrs.co.uk FAO Frank Taylor.

Best wishes for the festive period!