



**197
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NEWSLETTER

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Membership

The committee was rather disappointed at the support we got from members at the recent AGM. In addition to the full committee only seven members turned up.

We go to some lengths to arrange speakers from the important players for the survival of the line: GWR and Network Rail as well as representatives from the Elizabeth Line and Chiltern Rail. It is primarily through these meetings we can feed back issues.

Covid and a Rail Strike have savaged previous AGMs, but to properly represent the interests of the branch we must be able to demonstrate a strong member base, hence the reason for re-instating the membership fee.

We welcome feedback from members at all times.

Nigel Phillips (Chair@mmpa.org.uk)

Minutes of the AGM 2024

Held at Bourne End Community Centre,
31.05.2024 at 19:45,

Present: All Members of the Committee,

7 Society Members

Representatives from GWR, Network Rail,
MTR Elizabeth Line and Chiltern Railways.

5 Apologies for absence recorded.

Agenda

- 1) The Chairman, Nigel Phillips, opened the Meeting welcomed all participants.
- 2) The Minutes of the previous AGM had been published in the recent Newsletter and were accepted by the Meeting
- 3) The Chairman outlined the main points of the Committee Annual Report

4) The Treasurer introduced the Annual Accounts and pointed out that it has been difficult to accurately assess the total number of members due to the offer of 'free' membership for the year 2022-23. The Receipt and Payments Account ending 31 December 2023 was accepted by the Meeting.

5) The Independent Examiners were re-appointed.

6) The members of the existing Committee were prepared to stand and were elected en bloc.

Chairman/Chiltern Railways and Bucks CC
Liaison/High Wycombe Station Rep: Nigel Phillips

Secretary/Treasurer/Membership Secretary:
Rob Latham

Newsletter Editor/Webmaster/Furze Platt
Station Representative Richard Porter

Cookham Parish Council Representative:
Eileen Bune

Cookham Station Representative: Laura Tull

MTR Elizabeth Line Liaison: John Fowler

Taplow Station Representative: Geoff Herbert

Update from Eleanor Wills, Great Western Railway

The trial of battery operated trains on Greenford Branch had been successful

Hopefully this would lead to battery trains being used on other GWR Branch Lines in due course.

70 ex-Vivarail units are with GWR. [See note on page 3 -Ed]

Issue of re-charging of batteries at terminal stations still to be resolved but is under trial.

GWR is aiming for – Improved reliability of services – improved capacity of trains – Improved performance - improved ‘Customer Experience’ – Environmental improvements leading to ‘zero emissions’.

A new Pullman Menu is now available.

Questions to GWR

Missed connections at Maidenhead when main line services are delayed. No real answer. The questioner suggested it should be possible to extend the waiting time of Branch Line services at Maidenhead. Ian McKenzie from Network Work was happy to look further into connection times at Maidenhead. [The problem is that, during the half-hourly service, if the branch train waits then it would miss its connections on returning to Maidenhead -Ed]

A member raised the point that if there a half hourly service on the Branch Line it would save in ‘delay Repay’ payments as if a connection was missed the repayment generally reached 60 minutes. The normal response was given that there was no funding for the implementation of a half hourly service. The GWR representative further responded that improvements at Bourne End were a priority but failed to provide a suitable answer when asked how high such improvements were on the overall list of GWR priorities.

A member raised the issue of 4 coach trains rather than eight during busy periods. It was suggested that there may be a shortage of coaches. There was no real answer to this point EW to check.

In response to a question on Wi-Fi it was stated that it was not the intention of GWR to remove the Wi-Fi provision from trains.

Following a statement from GWR re the ‘refreshing’ of Maidenhead Station a member raised the danger of exiting Platform 1 at busy periods. It was hoped to include some changes in the refreshment plans to reduce the danger element. GWR to look at H&S aspect.

Update from Network Rail – Ian McKenzie

£140m allocated to improve points on Reading – Paddington line. It should take 12 months to deliver improvements.

Notes that problems with overhead wires were worse between Heathrow Airport Junction and Paddington due to age.

Delays on the main line had a knock effect on the Branch as drivers heading to work on the Branch held up on delayed trains.

Blockade next Easter to complete track relaying to Bourne End

No discussion with DfT regarding signalling on the Branch

Questions to Network Rail

The issue of ‘Platform Height’ at Maidenhead Station. Ian McKenzie took the point on board and agreed to look at the issue.

Presentation from MTR Elizabeth Line – Scott McCloud

40% increase in passengers on Elizabeth Line: June 2022 – October 2023.

Most recent Customer Satisfaction: 81.4%

Branch Line announcements are now set up on Elizabeth Line services

Most recent Punctuality figures – 87.4%.
Cancellations 4.3%

Following the problems in December MTR is working towards a maximum evacuation time from trains of 90 min. during serious delays.

A new computer system on TfL trains is being bedded in. Once fully operational it would greatly improve the Customer Experience.

Questions to MTR-EL

A member raised the questions of lack of information both for passengers and staff during periods of delay. Maidenhead staff would appear to get no positive information from TfL. Scott McCloud responded that contingency plans were in place and were constantly reviewed.

He commented on the new train announcement regarding rubbish on trains blocking door closure and therefore creating delays. It was noted that TfL would not allow rubbish bins on its trains despite an acceptance that there is space available.

The question of signage at TfL stations was noted. Farringdon was specifically mentioned. Scott responded that new signs were to be erected within the next two weeks at Paddington Main Line and TfL stations. He would look into the situation at Farringdon.

Update from Chiltern Railways – Happiness Agbo, Area Manager, South Bucks

Noted that the Community Developments Fund available to be 'tapped'

There were now 'Ticket Vending Machines' on all Chiltern Stations

The project to 'Touch in and out' is to be up and running by Summer 2024. The system will offer the latest ticket option available

The new Timetable is due to start Sunday 2 June – there are no major changes.

The café at High Wycombe is closed as the previous owners went into administration. Chiltern are trying to find an organisation to take over the running of the café.

Questions to Chiltern Railways

The question was raised as to the linking of railcards to the 'touch and go process' There followed a lengthy discussion. No one knew if it were possible and if it were how long it would take to put into operation. It was impossible to compare with the 'Oyster Card' system as that was a 'closed system' specifically for TfL. Scott McCloud commented that he believed a solution would be found eventually.

GH/ RL

Note

The "70 ex-Vivarail units" are withdrawn London Underground D78-Stock carriages that have not been repurposed. Vivarail kept only the driving motor coaches and non-

driving trailers i.e. not complete units. In addition GWR has the prototype battery conversion, 230001, and three units that were briefly in service on the Marston Vale line (Bletchly - Bedford). The latter are diesel-electric units but can be converted to battery-electric relatively easily.

Currently 230001 is ghosting the service train on the Greenford branch on Tuesdays to Fridays. We don't expect it to be in passenger service until December.

Marlow

We are aware of some debris at the station which could be a trip hazard. We hope this will be cleared by the time you read this.

We have also found two hanging baskets on the shelter, hung in a manner that both obscure and obstruct the poster frames making them difficult to open. Neither ourselves nor GWR nor Marlow Society know who has put them up.

Whilst we appreciate efforts to brighten up our stations, they must be done with the knowledge and approval of the train operator.

Unfortunately we don't have a representative for Marlow Station which is why the notice board can get a little out-of-date. I go over when I can but obviously a volunteer on the spot would be appreciated.

Carousel Buses Take Over

With Arriva withdrawing from High Wycombe its routes in the town, including 7 to Maidenhead, will be taken over by Carousel. The timetable will be unchanged for the time being. The main difference users will notice is a change of colour from blue to red.

Taplow Parking

We have supported the measures mainly aimed at Bucks County Council to mitigate the parking issues at Taplow caused by the success of the Elizabeth Line. Railfuture is also collating parking issues to which we have contributed.