



**199
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NEWSLETTER

www.mmpa.org.uk

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Welcome to the Autumn Newsletter with apologies for the delay

Volunteers wanted

As noted in the minutes, I stood down from the Committee at the AGM but I'm trying to keep the newsletter and web site alive. If you can help to fill these posts and the others listed in the minutes please contact the Chair (chair@mmpa.org.uk) or any current Committee member.



Bus Changes

Changes were made to local bus services on Sunday 31st August. For details see:

<https://www.carouselbuses.co.uk/service-changes-31st-august-2025>

<https://www.thamesvalleybuses.com/network-changes>

New service 704 Maidenhead to Heathrow T5 Monday-Saturday

Changes affecting Maidenhead and Bourne

End: 3, 3A, 4, 7, 7A, 9, 36, 37, 37B, 52, 53, 127, 227, 228, 704

37 and 37B have only minor changes to improve reliability.

There is a significant change to route 9 which drops the two school runs. All services will be via Camley Gardens on normal timings.

Did you know that buses on route 3 switch to route 9 approaching Frascati Way? Also 37 turns into 10 at Windsor Parish Church.

GWR UPDATE



Old Oak Common

An interchange is being built between HS2 and GWR services with connections to central, east, and south east London (including Heathrow airport). (*HS2 Ltd.*)

Construction will impact existing passenger and freight routes - all four tracks of the mainline need to be moved into the new station.

No mainline trains will operate to or from London Paddington on:

- Sunday 17 November
- Friday 27 to Sunday 29 December

Some trains will be diverted to London Euston with most will start and terminate at Reading or Ealing Broadway.



Class 175 in TfW livery (Alstom)

GWR has acquired 27 Class 175 diesel trains made surplus by Transport for Wales. They'll replace the 'Castle Class' HSTs on regional and local services in Devon and Cornwall. They won't be part of the fleet upgrade formerly known as Project Churchward, now Green for Growth.

Chiltern Fleet Modernisation

Chiltern Railways has secured a fleet of 13 mk.5 push-pull sets that will be powered by Class 68 locomotives running on low emission fuel.

The 5-car sets, due to enter service in phases from 2026, will operate on Chiltern's route via High Wycombe and will replace the oldest trains in its fleet (mk.3 sets), enabling significant service enhancements. The investment will allow Chiltern to operate additional services from the end of 2026, subject to timetable change approvals.



*Chiltern Mk. 5 driving trailer (unpowered).
The motive power goes on the other end.*

These modern trains (ex-TransPennine) will bring a range of benefits, including improved accessibility, upgraded seating, live information screens, quieter journeys, and dedicated luggage and cycle storage.

Chiltern has decided to run the Class 68 locos on Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) as part of Arriva's strategy to reduce emissions across its operations. HVO is a renewable energy source made up of vegetable oils and other recycled materials, which is widely recognised as a tool to significantly reduce emissions on non-electrified lines.

Chiltern was the first passenger train operator in the UK to introduce HVO when it powered its current Class 68 locomotives using the fuel from July 2023. Chiltern will continue to use HVO to fuel the newer class 68 locomotives that will be brought into passenger service from early 2026.



GWR Battery Train sets World Record

GWR's fast-charge train team set a new world record of 200.5 Miles on a single charge. Running between Reading Traincare Depot, Paddington and Oxford they only needed two out of the three battery modules fitted. The train ran at low speed (40mph) after midnight to conserve energy, but in the end they only used two of the three available battery modules.

Latest: GWR is seeking approval to run the unit in public service but it is unlikely that any more will be produced. One problem with the ex-District Line coaches is the single-leaf doors which impede access.

Down the Line

Taplow

We received this from Taplow Parish Council about the parking situation.

“Hi, we are having temporary changes made to Approach Road, outside the station, this week. They are putting in passing bays on the street to alleviate the issue of the road being permanently blocked then within the next 18 months, parking meters will be put in”. Well that’ll be popular!

Maidenhead

We're campaigning for better pick up and drop off arrangements in the station forecourt. The official drop off location is next to Halford's in the retail park, so of course no one uses it. But our main concern remains the large gap between the train and the platform, in especially near the country end of platform 3. It makes boarding and alighting unsafe, and difficult for people with reduced mobility.

To avoid congestion on the stairs, fast trains from Paddington that currently stop at platform 1 will in future timetables cross over to platform 3.

Furze Platt

We're pleased to welcome our new booking clerk, Sally.

On the negative side, after moderate rainfall we have a large puddle right across the footpath between the platform and the ticket office. The path is block paved, so should not be too difficult to fix.

Cookham

We were sad to hear of the passing of our Cookham Parish Representative, Cllr. Eileen Bune, after a battle with cancer.

We noticed a daft situation where there was a notice on the waiting room telling us to use the ticket machine, and a message on the ticket machine telling us that it was out of service.

Bourne End

We still have puddles on platform 1 right where the carriage doors open.

Track Renewals

The branch was closed in April for the replacement of jointed track over Cock Marsh and the Bourne End viaduct. This just leaves the station area and junctions to be done.

AGM Thursday 22nd May 2025

Committee Report

A very warm welcome to you all, and to our guests from GWR, Network Rail, Chiltern and Elizabeth Line.

The committee has met monthly, but we are however, still very short-handed. Cllr Eileen Bune who has been a stalwart committee member as well as a Cookham Parish Councillor has unfortunately had to resign due to ill health. A representative who regularly uses Marlow station would be particularly useful. Please make contact if you could help.

Our objectives remain: a watchful eye on the branch and stations, and to wholeheartedly support the provision of two trains per hour (2tph) without a change of trains. There is some good news; the track replacement has now finished, except the layout at Bourne End. This of course is what would need attention to provide 2tph. Coloured light indication has been installed on the major footpath crossings.

We are also excited to hear of the GWR Green Railway for Growth initiative that holds out the prospect of new rolling stock and electrification.

Supported by GWR, Community Partnership projects were invited for all the branch lines to the west, and we made one bid for some bicycle hoops at Furze Platt. We were told it couldn't go ahead as there was no CCTV - Untrue! - and a base could not be laid on NR land. Since the expense of CCTV won't be necessary, as it is already there we would like to pursue this.



CCTV mast at Furze Platt

We reinstated a nominal subscription last year, solely because we need a database of members to justify our existence. There is no need for it to increase, as our expenditure is modest.

We have been pursuing a number of long-term issues over the year, which we would like to examine in detail later in the meeting.

After the formalities that we will keep to a minimum, we look forward to hear what our guests have to say.

21/5/25 Nigel Phillips (Chair)

Minutes of the AGM

held at Bourne End Community Centre on Thursday 22nd May 2025.

Attendance: Members of the Committee: N. Phillips/ R. Latham/ J. Fowler/R. Porter/ G. Herbert

Representatives from: GWR (Eleanor Wills)/ MTR (Scott McCloud)/Alan Gough (Network Rail)/Jos van Haven (Chiltern Railways)

Members of the Association: 11 members were present.

The Association Chairman opened the Meeting at 19:46 and welcomed those present. (See above)

1) The Chairman, Nigel Phillips, opened the Meeting welcomed all participants. He noted

the need for a Marlow Station Representative and that the track work had been completed on the Branch Line. He emphasised that CCTV was operative at Furze Platt station.

2) Minutes of the 2024 AGM had been published in the newsletter. There were no matters arising from the Minutes

3) Financial Report: The Treasurer presented his reports which had been Independently Examined. The Association was financially stable (page 5). There were no questions on the Report.

4) Re-appointment of Wilkins & Co as Independent Examiners was approved.

5) The listed current officers of the Association were prepared to continue and were elected 'en bloc'

6) Members of the existing Committee as listed were prepared to stand and were elected en bloc.

7) Chairman/Chiltern Railways and Bucks CC Liaison/High Wycombe Station Rep: Nigel Philips

8) Secretary/Treasurer/Membership Secretary: Rob Latham

9) MTR Elizabeth Line Liaison: John Fowler

10) Taplow Station Representative: Geoff Herbert

11) Vacant positions noted below:

- Newsletter Editor
- Webmaster / Social Media
- Cookham Parish Council Representative
- Cookham Station Representative
- Marlow Station Representative
- Furze Platt Station Representative

12) John Marsh serves as Bourne End Station Rep. and Community Liaison – ex Committee

(Secretary's Note: Station reps do not need to join the Committee but have to be prepared to send in occasional reports on their station)

Presentations by Representatives

Alan Gough (Network Rail)

Maidenhead Station improvements were now completed. This had brought a solution to the overcrowding issue on Platforms 2/3.

- New Staircase and lift shaft
- Mid platform fencing installed between Platforms 2 and 3
- New CCTV in operation
- New Customer Information screens
- New PA system

Project Brunel was in progress following a review of progress in the Thames Valley area by the Office of Rail and Roads who demanded improvements.

There were now fewer 'delay minutes' on services.

Trackside vegetation had been cleared as otherwise could impact overhead line and signals

Track flooding leading to wet track beds had been dealt with.

Extra staff training had been put in place.

Meeting between new MP for Maidenhead, Josh Reynolds MP and Network Rail had taken place.

Possibility of new station building north side of Iwer, financed by developers.

Explanation of the continued work at Old Oak Common. The first platform has been built.

Paddington Station had now a new Reception and new Information Screens. More improvements due from August including retail on Platform 1.

Questions for Network Rail

It was noted and accepted that the PTI (Platform Train Interface) was unsatisfactory – a long-term solution is required.

Maidenhead Platform 1 – overcrowding issues would be solved by having no trains stopping at Platform 1 in future timetables.

Fast trains from London will cross over to platform 3.

Maidenhead Forecourt 'improvements' – it was noted that the changes did not constitute an improvement - lack of 'drop off' places – lack of taxi places – lack of signage. All accepted as issues.

Better signage to Railway Station within the town – meeting with RBWM to discuss this.

Continued flooding of lift shaft – work still ongoing and being chased up.

Timetable outside Cookham Station – No Progress

Cycle hoops at Furze Platt Station – No progress. CCTV is present.

Flooding at Buffer end and along platforms at Bourne End – No progress. A member suggested a practical solution for platform flooding – instruct drivers to stop all trains a short distance from Buffer Stops to avoid the flooding. Apparently too simple a solution for GWR/ Network Rail to take on board!

Vegetation along pavement in Approach Road, Taplow – problem noted – Network Rail would liaise with MTR.

Derelict area to south of Taplow Station adjacent to newly repaired car park should be upgraded to extend the car park – proposition would be passed on.

Eleanor Wills (GWR)

Some 250 diesel trains need to be replaced soon. Improvements in train stock linked to evolution in battery technology. EW spoke about the battery train test based at West Ealing. Maidenhead has overhead line equipment part way up the branch which could be used for battery charging [as would platform 5].

2 trains per hour on Branch – various designs being examined – Business Case needs to be proposed - Government involvement – probably no movement until 2032-35. Proposal for a passing loop outside the station is being considered as an option. Frustrating that here is no real immediate answer – EW thinks it will eventually happen

– there is a possibility of a solution.

Requirement for track improvements at Bourne End – linked to renewal of train stock which may require platform extension.

Eleanor Wills offered to attend a MMPA Committee Meeting (December/January) to update members.

It was noted that Eleanor Wills had reported similar ‘non findings’ to the 2024 AGM

A member raised the question as to whether the introduction of two trains per hour had been fully costed – would it bring in an increased revenue- the response was ‘yes’ – new lines in other part of the country had been very successful. – Northumberland Line/ Elizabeth Line.

Jos van Haven (Chiltern Railways)

Chiltern has the oldest fleet of trains in UK. Replacement of Mark 3 sets important.

There is a need to increase capacity.

Performance figures presented 91% of arrivals within 3 minutes of schedule.

Chiltern taking over the ‘East West’ service from Oxford – Milton Keynes. They have 45 new drivers to operate the services.

Railway 200 Exhibition Train explained

Scott McCloud (MTR Elizabeth Line)

MTR was being transferred to GTS from Sunday 25 May.

Current Punctuality 90.3%

Cancellation 2.4%

14% of Customers have experienced delays.

Improved communication during periods of disruption have been implemented

10 new Elizabeth Line sets in the pipeline [for extension of services to Old Oak Common]

Current train displays are inadequate – but cannot be changed due to short time spans between station in the London tunnels – there is insufficient time for system to re-set before next station call. Alstom [builder of the Elizabeth Line trains] is aware of the issue.

Not possible to provide a ‘clock-face’ timetable [same minutes each hour] due to influence of GWR and freight services.

Aware of the problem of ‘stepping off’ train distance both vertically and horizontally. Ealing Broadway has had the greatest number of incidents but Langley has the greatest ‘stepping off’ distance on the entire line. Action to be taken at Ealing Broadway - others will follow – but cost implications.

A member raised the question of connections between Services at Maidenhead and the Branch Line. The response – staff at Maidenhead were only allowed to ‘hold a Branch line Service for 6 minutes.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 09:50 with thanks to those attending and the contributions from guests.

Going up to town?

You can catch a train to the West End but you can't buy a ticket!

If you try to buy a ticket to, say, Tottenham Court Road on the GWR app, web site and or ticket machine you'll get “No stations found”. The same goes for other Elizabeth Line stations which aren't also served by National Rail or London Overground.

The solution is to search for “London Travelcard Zone 1”. It's cheaper than a Travelcard and you can go to and return from different Zone 1 stations.

Most other ticket retailers will find “Tottenham Court Road (Elizabeth Line)”.

Accounts for the Year Ending 31st December 2024

MARLOW-MAIDENHEAD PASSENGERS' ASSOCIATION

Receipts and payments account for the period ended 31 December 2024

	2024	2023
	£	£
1.1.24 Bank balances brought forward:	6070.43	6385.95
NatWest Deposit account	5119.34	5058.2
NatWest Current account	946.54	1232.2
Paypal	4.55	95.55
	<u>6070.43</u>	<u>6385.95</u>
Income: Subscriptions	310	0
Donations	70	265
Cash	1.72	
Bank interest	74.28	61.14
	<u>456</u>	<u>326.14</u>
Costs: Affiliation fee to BE(B)CA	30	30
Room hire	314	375
Copying of newsletters	0	0
Postage & Stationery	36.72	99.54
Meeting refreshments	163.72	51.1
Railfuture	25	25
Web site		54.27
Bank and Paypal charges	8.1	6.75
	<u>577.54</u>	<u>641.66</u>
Excess of expenditure over income for the year	-121.54	-315.52
31.12.24	<u>5948.89</u>	<u>6070.43</u>
Bank balances carried forward:		
NatWest Deposit account	5193.62	5119.34
NatWest Current account *	668.82	946.54
Paypal	86.45	4.55
	<u>5948.89</u>	<u>6070.43</u>

* includes £80.50 from FGW to finance room hire for Branch Working Group meetings

R. Latham

Hon. Treasurer

R. O'Hara

Hon. Independent Examiner

Elizabeth Line - To stop or not to stop?

Cancellation of Taplow stopping pattern during periods of disruption

with John Fowler, MMPA Elizabeth Line Liaison and Scott McCloud, Senior Customer Experience Project Manager, GTS Elizabeth Line

JF: Who makes the decision to cancel the Taplow stop and when?

SM: It will be a combination of the Control Centre in Romford (GTS) and Swindon Control (NR), dependent on the circumstances. For example, Network Rail may restrict the access to the infrastructure and implement a contingency plan that we must abide by.

This will be done in real-time, when we know we can't call at that Station.

JF: What criterion/protocol is used?

SM: Taplow is a difficult Station, without mainline platforms, so if we can't access the relief line platforms, we are physically unable to call there. There may be instances where all trains have to operate on the relief lines and we need to reduce the number of trains, I would suggest that the former is the more common scenario. If it were the latter, we normally run the services to Reading and cancel the trains to Maidenhead, meaning (apart from peaks) Taplow get the normal service.

The protocol used is industry agreed contingency plans. Although, in the instance where a small number of trains are affected, a dynamic decision may be made by the Controller.

JF: Who writes the protocol?

SM: Network Rail owns the contingency plans, to which GTS, GWR and Heathrow Express contribute and sign off.

JF: Are instances recorded and published? If so where can we find them?

SM Yes, see previously provided ORR link.

JF: Why can't the Maidenhead terminator stop at Taplow in these circumstances?

SM: When the relief lines are closed, we physically can't call there. When the mainlines are closed and all trains are operating on the relief lines, we need to consider our own and GWR's long distance trains, there simply isn't always the capacity.

JF: MMPA would like the Maidenhead stopper to serve Taplow, giving 4 trains an hour.

SM: Capacity is restricted, with GTS competing with freight traffic and the need to make the right "slot" at Heathrow Airport Junction and Portobello (entry to the Central Operating Section). Whilst all Stations would like to see an increase in stops, the network simply doesn't have the capacity to do this.

JF: MMPA believes that the 345s are more than capable of making up the time required for a Taplow stop.

SM: The timetable takes into consideration the acceleration of the 345s, so there is no "make up time" to be made.

