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2 September 2016

Mr. M. Langman, Western Route Director, Network Rail, Western House, 1 Holbrook Way,
SWINDON SN1 1BD.

Dear Mr. Langman,

Pilning station

Railfuture supports the concerns raised about the imminent closure of the down (westbound) platform at Pilning station in connection with electrification work. We also recognise that it is difficult to make a case for a new footbridge because of the tiny number of passengers using the station, where the train service has been almost useless for many years.

In its response to a South Gloucestershire Council Local Plan Consultation several years ago, Railfuture suggested a basic service of three trains calling in each direction at Pilning to allow commuting to and from Bath, Bristol, Cardiff and Newport, which the station enjoyed in the 1970s. Had this service level been maintained, it is a reasonable assumption that a new footbridge to clear the overhead wires would have been authorised.

I note that a second platform and footbridge was provided at Ascott-under-Wychwood when the North Cotswold Line was redoubled in 2011, despite that station having just one train each way, five days a week. The train service there is timed to suit people working normal office hours in Oxford, whereas the service at Pilning, being Saturdays only, does not cater for normal office hours in Bristol. A new footbridge has also been provided at Gainsborough Central, which has three trains each way, Saturdays only.

Planned industrial development at Severnside and a possible new power station at Oldbury may justify an increased service at Pilning in the future. Railfuture therefore considers that nothing should be done to prevent future reinstatement of the down platform if it does close.

Yours sincerely,

Nigel Bray,
Hon. Secretary,
Railfuture Severnside.