

West Midlands Branch E-newsletter November 2019

Editor's message

Many thanks to those of you who have commented positively on our new format.

We are aiming to make every newsletter a summary of recent news and work by your committee, more details on the stories are available on <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/West+Midlands+Branch>

This autumn has seen us achieve success with some of our initiatives especially the strengthening of the Birmingham -Hereford shoulder peak afternoon and morning services with additional carriages, the changes on the Chase Line and the Open Meeting in Shrewsbury attended by over 120.

Colin Major

Standing Room Only

Recognising that Shrewsbury is the major interchange station for rail services to and from South, West and North Wales, Cheshire, the West Midlands and London we invited Daniel Kawczynski - MP for Shrewsbury & Atcham, Lee Robinson – North Wales Development Director, Transport for Wales-Rail, Peter Sargent - Head of Rail Development, West Midlands Rail Executive and Ced Green - Secretary of North Cheshire Rail Users Association. To answer the question “Shropshire Rail-The forgotten County?”

Following a short presentation by each speaker our Chairman Steve Wright ran a Question session where Peter Nutting, Leader of Shropshire Council, the Transport & Economy portfolio holders of Shropshire CC , Telford & Wrekin and Powys Councils and several other county, town and parish councillors, as well as all the rail user groups covering the lines radiating from Shrewsbury together with various residents' and community groups asked challenging questions.

Your Chairman will be meeting TfW-Rail at their offices later this month to progress the commitments and promises made on the day, together with our ideas on improved services on the Marches Line.

A fuller report is available on www.railfuture.org.uk/West+Midlands+Branch

More success!

West Midland Trains May Timetable.

Our delight in the last issue at the new timetables was marred by problems on the Chase Line where delays at Euston, having lost two platforms, and Liverpool Lime Street have led to late arrivals at New Street requiring Chase Line services to terminate short at Hednesford. Following much pressure from us and the local MP on both West Midlands Trains and West Midlands Rail Executive significant changes are being made with WMT reverting to a self-contained service hopefully in December.

Unfortunately, the Cross-City Line is now suffering from delays and we are talking almost daily to WMT on this and other issues raised by the timetable changes.

Capacity Issues- Our persistence in pressing for a resolution to the reduction in carriages since May on the services to and from Hereford - New Street has paid off in that the 15.50 and 16.20 departures from New Street and the 07.09 from Hereford now have an additional carriage borrowed from East Midlands Railway. Richard Brooks, head of customer experience for West Midlands Railway, said: ““We apologise to our passengers whose journeys have not been as good as they could have been, and I am pleased that we have been able to provide these additional carriages

Moreover, he also has stated “More good news is on the way as our fleet will soon be boosted with the arrival of four electric 350/4 trains to be used on the Chase Line, allowing us to cascade the DMUs on that service onto the diesel-only Hereford and Worcester line.”

Your views wanted by Transport for West Midlands.

Perry Barr railway station and Bus interchange are being rebuilt by Spring 2022 in time for the Commonwealth Games as 6,500 athletes will be accommodated at the Games Village adjoining the station. These two facilities are the arrival point for the enlarged Alexander Stadium, which is not only the venue for the athletics but also for the official Games Opening and Closing ceremonies

Below is an image of the Railway station and TfWM are requesting consultation responses by **7th December** on www.tfwm.org.uk/perrybarr where images of both the station and bus interchange are available



Photo-TfWM

Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs)

Following on from the launch of the Heart of England CRP in October the Worcestershire CRP was launched in the Guildhall Worcester on 8th November. Sponsored by Worcestershire County Council, West Midlands Trains, GWR, Cross Country Trains, Cotswold Line Promotion Group and with the part-time officer located with their colleague from Heart of England at West Midlands Rail Executive offices in Birmingham.

West Coast Franchise

Your Officers and committee members have attended stakeholder briefings by First Trenitalia who take over the franchise from Virgin next month. Not a lot of detail so far specific service enhancements and we have pushed for extending the Shrewsbury working, rather than coming south from Chester and reversing at Gobowen. (especially as they recognised the importance of the Telford market).

Amongst the promises made in August at the announcement of them winning the franchise is that the 20 Super Voyagers will be replaced by 13 electrics and 10 bi-modes, all 5-car and that the Pendolinos will be refurbished with new seats. They promise no zero-hour contracts, the Real Living Wage for all sub-contracted employees and will provide more apprenticeships than ever before.

Date for Your Diary

We are hosting the Railfuture National AGM in Birmingham on Saturday 27th June 2020.

Your views Matter

We would like to hear from **you** about any matters you believe your Committee and Officers should be working on. So please don't hesitate to get in touch with me on colin.major@railfuture.org.uk.

Almost every week we receive information on new developments, and we post these on: -
<https://www.facebook.com/RailfutureWestMidlands>