

railfuture

Sevenside Branch Newsletter

No. 31 Autumn 2016

Contributions to the Newsletter are welcome and should be sent to the Branch Secretary, Nigel Bray.
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More information about campaigns is available on the Railfuture national website.

Railfuture Sevenside Branch Meeting at Bath, 19 November 2016

The next meeting will be at Manvers Street Baptist Church, Bath at 2 pm on Saturday 19 November. The venue is a few minutes' walk from Bath Spa station and has a cafe. Our guest speaker is Paul Johnson, Chairman of TransWilts Community Interest Company. We look forward to hearing about the recent designation of Swindon- Westbury as a Community Rail service and other proposals from the Company for the improvement of train services through Wiltshire.

If coming by train, leave the station by the main exit and walk past the taxi rank into Manvers Street, passing a hotel on your right. The Church is on the right side of the road, just before the Police Station.

There is an NCP carpark nearby, but please note that there is no parking on the Church premises except for Church members.

Future Railfuture Sevenside Branch Meetings

25 February 2017 at 2 pm in S. Aldhelm's Centre, Edgeware Road, Swindon

- Guest speaker Paul Jenkins, Managing Director of Thamesdown Transport, talking about bus / rail integration in the Swindon area.

The Branch AGM in April 2017 is likely to be in Gloucester.

The Branch is working on a 12-month programme of meetings to give members as much notice as possible. Any suggestions for speakers and venues will be welcome.

Report of Friends of Bridgwater Station public meeting: Somerset Back on the Rails, 22 Sept 2016

This report is based on notes made by FOBS member Lee Robbins. The three speakers at the meeting were Keith Walton, Chairman of Sevenside Community Rail Partnership; Phil Edge, a leading member of Langport Transport Group; and Tony Lloyd, Treasurer of both Railfuture Sevenside and Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways.

Keith Walton explained that Severnside Community Rail Partnership (SCRP) worked with local communities between Gloucester and Taunton to improve stations, services and rolling stock. He said its work was funded by GWR and local authorities. It works with volunteers to help look after stations, including two volunteer gardeners at Bridgwater.

On the theme of The Way forward for Bridgwater station, Keith said SCRП was exploring the possibility of renovating disused accommodation. It was hoped that EDF, the company building the new Hinkley Point power station, would fund improvements to the station. He asked the audience, “What do you want for the station?”

He did not anticipate much change in train services at Bridgwater before 2018, when rolling stock cascaded from the Thames Valley would offer longer trains on local stopping services. There would, however, be a net loss of seats on its InterCity trains when five-car IEPs replaced HSTs because of short platforms.

Phil Edge said that, before the Beeching cuts, Langport used to have two stations. Langport Transport Group (LTG) aimed to reopen a station on the main line between Taunton and Castle Cary, which at 27 miles was the longest stretch of railway in the South West without a station. So far, three sites had been considered.

LTG had received support from Langport Town Council, Huish Episcopi Parish Council and David Warburton MP. Phil said that the main line could cope with additional trains because Cross Country had diverted its services through Langport when the line between Bridgwater and Taunton had been flooded in 2014. LTG was due to meet GWR and Network Rail on 14 October.

Tony Lloyd outlined the history and aims of Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways (FOSBR), which now had 250 members and produced newsletters and leaflets. One of its successful campaigns was to get Summer Sunday trains reinstated on the Severn Beach line. Increasing passenger numbers on the line had resulted in three-car trains being provided during the week.

Despite the funding of MetroWest by the Bristol City Deal and the start of work to restore four tracks on Filton Bank, there were three problem areas for Bristol’s rail network. Metro West Phase 2 would not include a Henbury loop service, which had been rejected by consultants CM2Hill. The same consultants had concluded that a station at Ashton Gate would attract only 213 journeys per day by 2013, insufficient for a favourable Benefit / Cost Ratio but had forgotten to include passengers from the new football stadium and conference hall. The third problem was Pilning station, which would be served in one direction only when its footbridge was removed for electrification work.

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