

railfuture

Sevenside Branch Newsletter No. 36 New Year 2018

Contributions to the Newsletter are welcome and should be sent to the Branch Secretary, Nigel Bray.
Email: nigel.bray2@railfuture.org.uk (note the email address include '2')

23 James Way, Hucclecote, GLOUCESTER GL3 3TE. Tel. 01452 615619.

More information about campaigns is available on the Railfuture national website.

Branch meeting at Bristol, 10 February 2018

The next Sevenside branch meeting is on **Saturday 10 February** at 2 pm in the conservatory at the Colosseum, Redcliff Hill, Bristol BS1 6SJ at 2 pm on Saturday 10 February. The venue is about 10 minutes' walk from Temple Meads station. There will be a raffle in aid of Branch funds with prizes of railway books.



If coming by train, leave the station by the main exit and walk along the right-hand pavement to the bottom of the embankment. Cross Temple Gate on the pedestrian crossing and turn right, then diagonally left, passing a disused filling station on your left. The road merges into the dual carriageway Redcliffe Way. Keep on the left-hand pavement until the first roundabout, turning left into Redcliff Hill (no second 'e' in its name) immediately after St. Mary Redcliffe Church. The Colosseum is on the opposite side of the road, just before the Bristol Mercure Hotel.

The Colosseum serves hot food but the kitchen closes at 1.45 pm on Saturdays.

Question to full meeting of Somerset County Council, 29 November 2017

Following a meeting of Somerset rail campaigners in Taunton on 22 November, Nigel Bray emailed a question for the Council's full meeting a week later:

“When will Somerset County Council fund feasibility studies for the opening of new railway stations in the county? All existing stations in Somerset have experienced very substantial

increases in usage over the past 20 years, which gives every reason to believe that additional stations at Chard Junction, Langport and Wellington would be well supported.

Most of the stations which have reopened, such as Templecombe, have exceeded expectations in terms of passenger numbers. If the outcome of feasibility studies were positive, it should be possible for the Council to apply for funding from the DfT's New Stations Fund towards the cost of construction."

The response from Councillor John Woodman, Cabinet member, Highways and Transport, was as follows:

"Somerset County Council recognises that rail has great potential as part of the wider transport mix and we are working with the rail industry and neighbouring local authorities to improve Somerset rail services where possible.

We have contributed funds towards the first stage of assessing passenger demand for a station at Wellington and have worked closely with community groups and

Members of Parliament to lobby for stations to be reopened at Wellington and Langport. We also recognise that there is local support for the reopening of Chard Junction station.

To fully understand whether reopening any of these stations could be viable would require investment of hundreds of thousands of pounds. To reinstate the stations would cost several million pounds. The Council is currently unable to commit the revenue funds necessary to undertake rail station feasibility studies. We continue to dedicate officer time to working with the rail industry and communities to help them move proposals forward."

Railfuture detects a change of tone from the less helpful responses in the recent past. In our response to Somerset's Future Transport Plan Consultation in 2011, we had suggested restoration of a train service between Yeovil Pen Mill and Junction stations. This was dismissed at the time in a one-line reply from the Council but South West Trains nevertheless introduced cross-Yeovil services, albeit only on weekday afternoons and evenings, from December 2015.

Report on DfT Great Western Franchise Consultation briefing, Worcester, 12 January

At least four Railfuture members attended the Department for Transport's briefing event at County Hall, Worcester, one of a series for anyone interested in the GW Franchise Consultation, which closes on 21 February. Railfuture is preparing a unified response from the seven Branches affected.

A major issue in the Consultation is whether the franchise should be split after 2020 into two or more franchises. The Consultation Document suggested creation of a separate franchise for train services between London, Devon and Cornwall plus existing GWR secondary services radiating from Bristol. DfT's representatives at the Worcester meeting were at pains to say that no definite decision had been made to divide the GW franchise.

Rob Niblett, rail officer for Gloucestershire County Council, expressed concern that his Council would have to deal with an additional train operator at Gloucester and Cheltenham because the proposal would put Paddington- Cheltenham in one franchise and Bristol-Gloucester- Worcester in another. He believed it would be more difficult deliver enhancements such as the planned upgrade of Cheltenham station if the resources of GWR were to be split.

David Redgewell recalled that Wessex Trains had not proved financially viable as a separate franchise, hence its absorption into the GW franchise in 2006. He suggested retaining the current franchise as one but with devolved business units to manage operations in areas such as Devon & Cornwall and the West of England.

John Stretton, Treasurer of Ashchurch, Tewkesbury & District Rail Promotion Group, said DfT was receiving underestimated station usage figures from the Office of Rail & Road because the data did not record journeys made by people unable to buy a ticket. ATDRPG's own passenger counts at Ashchurch station pointed to a footfall of 120,000 to 130,000 journeys per year, against the official figure of 94,000 (*See the attached lists for the most recent ORR Station Usage statistics- Ed.*).

Station Footfalls from 2008/09 to 2016/17 - South West Region - (N)

Based on data extracted from the ORR's Station Usage Files

Station Name	St'n Cat.	Footfall 2008/09	Footfall 2010/11	Footfall 2012/13	Footfall 2014/15	Footfall 2016/17	Annual Growth
Cam & Dursley	: F2 :	131,660	153,102	166,870	185,504	201,188	5.44 %
Kemble	: D :	309,628	340,536	356,268	356,078	367,190	2.15 %
Ashchurch	: F2 :	67,390	68,964	76,386	87,384	94,244	4.28 %
Cheltenham Spa	: C1 :	1,529,004	1,727,246	1,891,974	2,038,404	2,352,712	5.53 %
Gloucester	: C1 :	1,158,628	1,216,730	1,303,750	1,364,142	1,479,538	3.10 %
Stonehouse	: E :	108,808	129,498	146,856	148,380	152,088	4.27 %
Stroud	: D :	400,418	448,272	485,428	490,546	528,820	3.54 %
Moreton-in-Marsh	: E :	185,284	195,878	209,238	237,198	260,106	4.33 %
Lydney	: F1 :	167,938	149,860	158,702	192,032	188,840	1.48 %
Gloucestershire	: 9 :	4,058,758	4,430,086	4,795,472	5,099,668	5,624,726	4.16 %
Severn Beach	: F1 :	74,712	113,480	167,078	224,658	310,818	19.51 %
Patchway	: F1 :	45,280	59,474	82,198	92,540	88,008	8.66 %
Pilning	: F2 :	130	178	130	68	230	7.39 %
Bristol Parkway	: B :	2,084,200	2,114,876	2,255,298	2,340,506	2,499,246	2.30 %
Filton Abbey Wood	: F1 :	536,958	679,270	852,250	1,007,780	1,064,634	8.93 %
Yate	: F1 :	240,482	274,970	307,148	354,004	392,910	6.33 %
South Gloucester	: 6 :	2,981,762	3,242,248	3,664,102	4,019,556	4,355,846	4.85 %
Avonmouth	: F1 :	61,948	83,674	97,880	119,924	144,110	11.13 %
Clifton Down	: F2 :	281,876	433,088	522,010	619,766	764,192	13.28 %
Montpelier	: F2 :	84,834	111,628	126,316	130,560	111,540	3.48 %
Shirehampton	: F2 :	34,292	42,566	50,654	52,480	55,762	6.27 %
Lawrence Hill	: F2 :	67,338	93,600	124,878	150,774	170,084	12.28 %
Bristol Temple M's	: A :	7,829,628	8,409,340	9,099,368	10,099,526	11,336,806	4.74 %
Bedminster	: F1 :	58,690	70,006	80,262	87,542	93,744	6.03 %
Parson Street	: F2 :	46,670	68,840	87,932	114,458	145,608	15.28 %
Redland	: F2 :	86,234	92,966	94,984	105,610	94,454	1.14 %
Stapleton Road	: F2 :	103,576	123,084	140,390	178,114	183,780	7.43 %

Next Railfuture Severnside newsletter will be number 37 in spring 2018.

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All other (non-branch) correspondence to 14 Ghent Field Circle, Thurston, Suffolk IP31 3UP