

South Western Railway  
Friars Bridge Court  
41-45 Blackfriars Road  
London SE1 8NZ

**please reply to:**  
Mr David Brace  
48 Hatch Lane  
Old Basing  
Basingstoke  
RG24 7EB

For the attention of Mr Christopher Wallace  
11<sup>th</sup> April 2018

david.brace@railfuture.org.uk

Dear Christopher,

### **Feasibility of Running a Train Service on Boxing Day**

Please find attached the Railfuture response to the questions you posed through your letter in March. We have collated the views of all our branches that your routes serve.

Yours sincerely

**David Brace**

Mr David Brace  
Railfuture  
Wessex Branch

**South Western Railway****Feasibility of Running a Boxing Day Service**

You have requested answers to the following questions:

**1. Do we think there is demand for a train service on Boxing Day on the South Western Railway network?**

Boxing Day services are needed in major urban centres. The retail, sporting and entertainment industries are a significant marketing opportunity. Many people in these industries would use the trains.

Railfuture has long been aware amongst its members of a widespread frustration about the lack of a train service, generally throughout the country, over the Christmas period. Boxing Day, in particular, has developed into a major day for entertainment including shopping, attending sport activities and for attending pantomimes, ballet and theatre. The opportunity for visiting family or friends some distance away has had to rely on road transport such that the road network is as busy as a normal weekday. Some people have a need to travel to airports for a post-Christmas holiday abroad. The Rail-Air link from Woking is particularly significant.

For many years now, Network Rail has taken the opportunity to carry out major infrastructure projects over the Christmas Period with all lines closed on some routes. This limits the capacity for Boxing Day services but less so on the routes served by South Western Railway.

There may be constraints to overcome where SWR services run under the signalling control of adjoining routes which may not be open and so, initially, the extent of any services might be limited but every endeavour should be made to overcome these problems.

It will be important to establish which other public transport services will be provided, both rail and bus.

We also think that take up of Boxing Day services will take a year or two to bed in as there have been no such services for many years.

**2. If so, on what routes do you think there is a demand for a Boxing Day service?**

Our first choice would be Bournemouth to Waterloo as this links many of the towns and cities for theatres and sports facilities as well as family visits. The main centres include Bournemouth,

Southampton, Winchester, Basingstoke, Woking, Clapham Junction and London.

The second choice would be Portsmouth to Waterloo via Guildford. The main centres include Portsmouth, Guildford, Woking, Clapham Junction and London. As there are catamaran services to the Isle of Wight and local bus services operating on the Island on Boxing Day, this would help people visiting the Island from the mainland.

The third choice would be the West of England line from Exeter to Waterloo. The main centres include Exeter, Salisbury, Basingstoke, Woking, Clapham Junction and London.

An important non-London route to be included is the Portsmouth to Southampton line via Fareham, both for major shopping centres and for football games at both ends of the route.

Finally, some suburban routes should be included, with destinations such as Hampton Court, Chessington and Richmond.

Clapham Junction is important for all routes, particularly if operators such as Southern and London Overground are also running Boxing Day services. Westfield shopping complex at Shepherd's Bush would be an important destination. Clapham Junction would also provide means of reaching sporting facilities such as Kempton Park, Twickenham and London based Premier League football grounds.

Obviously, London Waterloo would be a major attraction for a comprehensive range of events in London

### **3. Do we have any information or data that we might be able to share with you to support our answers above?**

We do not have any specific information or data. Our views are based on widespread contacts within our local branches and at national level.

### **4. How could we support South Western Railway in promoting such a service, if the decision is made to operate on Boxing Day?**

Again, through our branches, our headquarters and our web site we would keep members and others informed of the services offered. We already show on our web site which services run on Boxing Day. We would add SWR's proposals as a proof of concept



We have many contacts with local rail user groups and with Community Rail Partnerships and we would endeavour to support South Western Railway to ensure that the venture is a success.