

WEST SUSSEX RAIL USERS ASSOCIATION

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New Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern Franchise

The process for awarding the contract for the new franchise is nearing the conclusion of the bidding stage as the 5 bidders have to get their bids into Department for Transport (DfT) by Christmas Eve. We have met all the bidders and they know what we would like to see in the bids. Some of the bidders impressed us, others did not. We have given our views on the bidders to the DfT in confidence. We will now have to sit and wait for the DfT to announce the winner. This announcement is expected in April 2014. We are grateful to all the work Michael Cover has put in on this task over the last six months.

Arun Valley resignalling

Work on the Arun Valley line resignalling between Christ's Hospital and Amberley has evidently run into problems and is now expected to be completed in the Spring of 2014.

New Timetable

The new timetable started on Sunday 8 December with no significant changes to Arun Valley services other than the 7 minute earlier departure of the last train to Horsham, now 23.40 rather than 23.47. But in the far west three more Saturday Brighton to Southampton trains now travel via Eastleigh and Southampton Airport giving a service to that Airport every 2 hours. Also there are 3 Sunday trains from Southampton Airport at 08.36, 19.28 and 20.38. An hourly service to and from Southampton Airport from the West Coastway is one of our aspirations for the new franchise and this slightly increased service is a step in the right direction.

Update on Christmas & New Year Train Services - Tuesday 24 Dec to Wednesday 1 January

Southern is operating a revised service over Christmas and New Year. As mentioned in our last Newsletter, engineering work is taking place in three locations. The main work is to the junctions south of Purley. These are being completely renewed and as a result all the rail lines between Redhill and Purley are closed from Christmas Day until 0400 on Thursday 2 January 2014. The second location is Gatwick where major civil engineering work to complete a new Platform 7 will take place, together with associated changes to track and signalling in the area. Platform 7 will be used for services from February 2014, at which point platforms 5 and 6 will become dedicated Gatwick Express platforms. Finally, Victoria mainline railway station is closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day to allow the replacement of all the signalling power supply and control systems operating between Victoria and Battersea. There will not be any Gatwick Express trains in this period. For Southern services the day by day service summary is:

Christmas Eve 24 December – The 17.50 from London Bridge to Bognor will not run, also not running are 17.42 and 18.13 London Bridge to Littlehampton. There will be an early close down of services by 2200.

Christmas Day 25 December – No services

Boxing Day 26 December – No services on the Arun Valley and Coastway lines. There will be a half-hourly service from London Bridge departing 06.30 to 19.30 to East Grinstead arriving 07.12 to 20.12 calling only at East Croydon with connecting buses at East Grinstead for Gatwick and Three Bridges (arriving 08.25 to 21.25). In the reverse direction the service is also every 30 minutes from Three Bridges departing 07.28 to 21.28 and arriving London Bridge at 08.42 to 22.42. There will be an hourly train service from Three Bridges (dep 08.00 to 21.00) to Brighton calling only at Haywards Heath

Friday 27 December and Saturday 28 December - Four trains each hour from Victoria to East Grinstead calling at East Croydon with connecting buses for Gatwick and Three Bridges (Journey time from Victoria to Three Bridges 93 minutes). A better alternative is the through half-hourly service from Victoria (departing 05.44 to 21.44 then 22.17, 22.47, 23.17 and 23.47 to Gatwick calling at Clapham Junction, Sutton, Dorking, Horsham (journey time 70 minutes) and Three Bridges (journey time 85 minutes). In the reverse direction, trains from Three Bridges at 06.05 and every 30 minutes to 23.35 with a journey time from Three Bridges to Victoria of 84 minutes and Horsham to Victoria of 68 minutes. Half-hourly service from Gatwick and Three Bridges (depart

06.20 and every 30 minutes until 23.50) to Brighton calling at all stations. There will also be four trains an hour from London Bridge to Coulsdon Town with connecting non-stop buses to both Three Bridges and Gatwick. There will be two trains an hour from Three Bridges (depart 06.16 and every 30 minutes until 23.16) to Littlehampton calling at all Arun Valley stations including Faygate in the peak.. These will divide at Littlehampton with a portion to Brighton calling at all stations except East Worthing, Southwick, Fishersgate and Aldrington. One portion an hour will be for Southampton Central calling at Ford, Barnham, Chichester, Southbourne, Emsworth, Havant, Cosham, Portchester, Fareham and Swanwick. One portion an hour will be for Portsmouth Harbour calling at Ford, Barnham, Chichester, Havant, Fratton, Portsmouth & Southsea. Passengers from the Arun Valley stations will need to change at Horsham into the trains to and from Gatwick. Journey times from Victoria (Platform 7 for most trains) will be 93 minutes to Billingshurst, 100 minutes to Pulborough, 118 minutes to Littlehampton and 140 minutes to Chichester and Bognor

There will be almost normal weekday services along the West Coastway between Brighton, Littlehampton, Portsmouth and Southampton, the main variation is that there will be no through services to Bognor, instead there will be four trains each hour from Barnham to Bognor.

Sunday 29 December - Two trains each hour from Victoria to East Grinstead with connecting buses for Gatwick and Three Bridges. Half-hourly service from Victoria to Gatwick calling at Clapham Junction, Sutton, Dorking, Horsham and Three Bridges. Half-hourly service from Three Bridges to Brighton calling at all stations. There will also be four trains an hour from London Bridge to Coulsdon Town with connecting non-stop buses to both Three Bridges and Gatwick.

There will be two trains an hour from Three Bridges to Littlehampton calling at all Arun Valley stations These will divide at Littlehampton with a portion to Brighton calling at Angmering Goring, Durrington, W Worthing, Worthing, Shoreham and Hove. One portion an hour will be for Bognor calling at Ford and Barnham. One portion an hour will be for will be for Portsmouth Harbour calling at Ford, Barnham, Chichester, Southbourne, Emsworth, Havant, Fratton, Portsmouth & Southsea. There will be normal Sunday services along the West Coastway except that the Portsmouth Victoria service will run via Littlehampton and Horsham to Three Bridges only with connections for Victoria at Horsham.

Monday 30 & Tuesday 31 December – As shown above for 27 and 28 December except that the two trains an hour from Three Bridges to Brighton via Littlehampton and splitting there for either Portsmouth or Southampton will start and terminate at Redhill giving a through service from Gatwick to Arun Valley and West Coastway stations.

Wednesday 1 January – As shown above for Sunday 29 December except that the two trains an hour from Three Bridges to Brighton via Littlehampton and splitting there for either Portsmouth or Bognor will start and terminate at Redhill giving a through service from Gatwick to Arun Valley and West Coastway stations.

Thursday 2 January 2013 – normal service returns.

I hope all this makes sense. Southern has produced a leaflet of changes for the Christmas period but no actual times are shown. The times given here have been extracted from the Southern website (and the Deutsche Bahn train planner!) and I suggest you consult the website to confirm timings before you travel.

Fares increases January 2014

These are being capped at the July inflation figure of 3.1% rather than RPI plus 1 or 2 percent. But still unwelcome news in the current climate. We do not yet have any information on how the increase will be implemented but we assume that season tickets issued after 5 January will carry the full increase.

Membership Renewal

Our membership year runs from 1 March and a few subscriptions for 2013-14 are now overdue. If you have not paid, a renewal form is enclosed. The subscription remains at £2 and can be paid by cheque through the post, by direct bank credit or by standing order, the renewal form gives details of all these options. A few did not pay their subscriptions for last year and rather than deleting them as members, we are asking them to pay for 2 years and for those members the payment slip shows £4.

And, finally - We wish all our members a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year

Trevor Tupper
Membership Secretary