

WEST SUSSEX RAIL USERS ASSOCIATION

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Annual General Meeting

The AGM took place on 4th November. The minutes of the meeting will be posted on the website in due course. Our co-opted Chairman, James Marchant, who stepped down gave a brief report on his tenure and informed the meeting that there was one nomination for Chairman, Tony Cash, currently representing Christ's Hospital. Tony was duly elected Chairman. Trevor Tupper reported that there had been no nomination for Secretary and that he was prepared to combine the roles of Secretary and Treasurer until the next AGM which should take place in May or June 2016. On that basis, Trevor was elected. Those members of the committee who were willing to stand were elected en bloc and they are:- Paul Brady (Amberley), Valerie Webb (Pulborough), Moira Tracey (Crawley), Michael Cover (Bosham), Roger Keyworth (Chichester and Barnham), Michael Gill (Arundel), James Marchant (Billingshurst), Anthony Fletcher (Horsham) and Kevin Gordon (Website). Trevor Tupper will represent West Coastway stations *other than* Chichester, Bosham and Bognor). Several of our stations are unrepresented and we are seeking asking members to represent Littlehaven, Ifield and Three Bridges. Nigel Denton is our representative on Rail Future.

David Scorey, Passenger Services Director, Southern Mainline and Coast addressed the meeting giving details of the rationale underlying the extensive off-peak timetable changes this December. (Details of these changes follow later in the Newsletter). He also gave details of the new stock on order for Gatwick Express being delivered in 2016 and the build-up of the new Siemens built 700 stock for Thameslink. He answered several questions from members on current performance, on-train announcements and uncomfortable 2+3 seating in some of our trains. On the last mentioned, he confirmed that all new stock on order would be 2+2 seating.

The Chairman thanked David Scorey and Eddie Toase, the Group Station Manager for attending.

Membership Renewal

Our membership year runs from 1 March and subscriptions for 2014-15 are now overdue. If you have not paid, a renewal form is enclosed. The subscription remains at £2 and can be paid by cheque, direct bank credit or by standing order, the renewal form gives details of all these options. A few have not paid 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. If, for any reason, you do not wish to remain a member of the Association, please let me know.

December 2015 off-peak timetable changes

There will be significant changes to our off-peak services from 13th December but no further changes to peak services. The off-peak services include the services throughout the day on Saturdays. There are no changes to our dismal Sunday services despite pressure from your Association.

The main change to the off-peak services is the removal of Horley and Redhill stops from those daytime off-peak trains running to and from Victoria to Bognor Regis, Portsmouth Harbour and Southampton Central. There will be a reduction in journey time of around 5 minutes in each direction together with removal of frequent overcrowding north of Redhill. In the down direction, the current 02 and 32 minutes past each hour from Victoria from 0902 to 16.32 will become 06 and 36 with no change to current arrival times south of Gatwick. There will be no loss of fast services to and from Redhill as the existing services from Tonbridge and Reigate to London Bridge will be diverted to Victoria running fast to East Croydon from Redhill. Horley and Redhill passengers will have two Thameslink services an hour on the trains currently running from Three Bridges to Bedford. Peak-hour and later evening departures from Victoria are unchanged with those leaving at 19.02 and later continuing to stop at Horley and Redhill. Although peak-hour services are unchanged, there will be other changes that should improve reliability of our trains. For example, the 17.32 from Victoria is frequently late because of conflicts with other services out of Victoria around the same time. These conflicts are being removed and this should improve the performance of the 17.32.

In the up direction, the off-peak services will generally depart a minute earlier from most Arun Valley stations and arrive East Croydon, Clapham Junction and Victoria 6 minutes earlier than currently. There will also be a slightly faster service to Worthing and stations on to Littlehampton with the removal of some intermediate stops between Haywards Heath and Worthing. Timetable booklets showing the revised schedules should be available at stations and on-line shortly.

Christmas and New Year Services

There will be a blockade of all lines at Purley from 23.00 on 24th December to 04.00 on Monday 4th January and no trains will run between East Croydon and Redhill over this period. As usual, there will be no trains on the Arun Valley and Coastway lines on Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

On Boxing Day, there will be a very limited service from Brighton to Gatwick Airport calling at Three Bridges. There will be replacement bus services from Gatwick and Three Bridges to East Grinstead connecting with a half hourly service to Victoria via Oxted.

On Sundays 27th December and 3rd January there will be a normal Sunday service on the Coastway. On the Arun Valley line there will be two trains an hour from Brighton to Redhill via Littlehampton, Horsham and Gatwick. One of these trains each hour will have a portion from Portsmouth and Chichester and the other a portion from Bognor. Both trains will call at all stations from Littlehampton to Horsham. At Horsham the trains will connect into a half-hourly service running from Gatwick to Victoria via Horsham, Dorking and Sutton. Overall journey times will be 20-30 minutes longer than usual. In the reverse direction, the Gatwick via Horsham trains leave Victoria at 18 and 48 minutes past each hour, connecting at Horsham with the trains from Redhill to Brighton, Portsmouth (48 minutes past from Victoria) or Bognor (18 minutes past from Victoria) via Littlehampton.

On Bank Holiday Monday 28th December and Saturday 2nd January there will be a Saturday service on the Coastway. On the Arun Valley line there will be two trains an hour from Brighton to Redhill via Littlehampton, Horsham and Gatwick. One of these trains each hour will have a portion from Portsmouth and Chichester and the other a portion Southampton and Chichester. Both trains will have a connection at Barnham from Bognor and both trains will call at all stations from Littlehampton to Horsham. At Horsham the trains will connect into a service running from Gatwick to Victoria leaving Horsham at 07.24 and then half-hourly via Dorking and Sutton. Overall journey times will be 20-30 minutes longer than usual. In the reverse direction, the Gatwick via Horsham trains leave Victoria at 17 and 47 minutes past each hour, connecting at Horsham with the trains from Redhill to Brighton, Portsmouth (17 minutes past from Victoria) or Southampton (47 minutes past from Victoria) via Littlehampton.

On Tuesday 29th December to Thursday 31st December there will be a Saturday service on the Coastway. On the Arun Valley line there will be two trains an hour from Brighton to Redhill via Littlehampton, Horsham and Gatwick. One of these trains each hour will have a portion from Portsmouth and Chichester and the other a portion from Southampton and Chichester. Both trains will have a connection at Barnham from Bognor and both trains will call at all stations from Littlehampton to Horsham. At Horsham the trains will connect into a service running from Gatwick to Victoria leaving Horsham at 07.24 and then half-hourly via Dorking and Sutton. Overall journey times will be 20-30 minutes longer than usual. In the reverse direction, the Gatwick via Horsham trains leave Victoria at 17 and 47 minutes past each hour, connecting at Horsham with the trains from Redhill to Brighton, Portsmouth (17 minutes past from Victoria) or Southampton (47 minutes past from Victoria) via Littlehampton. There will be no through trains to London Bridge from Arun Valley stations including Horsham. Passengers for London Bridge will need to join the Victoria services and change at Sutton and Tulse Hill. Alternatively, they can travel by train via Crawley to Three Bridges for a bus to East Grinstead and then a train to London Bridge.

I hope this is helpful. I have extracted all the times above from the National Rail website and I recommend that you look at www.nationalrail.co.uk if you need more specific information. Hopefully, our stations will display full details of their trains as Christmas approaches.

We hope you all have an enjoyable Christmas and a very happy New Year!

Trevor Tupper
Secretary