

WEST SUSSEX RAIL USERS ASSOCIATION

64, Brampton Court, Stockbridge Road, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8PD

Tel: 01243 788028. E-mail: contact@wsrua.org.uk :

Website : www.wsrua.org.uk twitter.com/wsrua

NEWSLETTER No 2 : APRIL 2019

Membership Renewal

Our membership year runs from 1 March and subscriptions for 2019-20 are now due. Many members have already paid their subscription either directly or by standing order. 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 subscription 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.

Brighton Mainline Improvement Project

The main tasks of this Project which included large scale work in Balcombe and Clayton tunnels and the Ouse Valley Viaduct were completed successfully and on time over the 9 day closure from 16-24 February. The remaining work will continue over selected weekends up to May 2019 and the Saturday services for those weekends will be similar to the off-peak services shown in the timetable enclosed with our February Newsletter.

May 2019 timetable

There are no changes to the current (December 2018) timetable to Southern services in the new timetable starting on 19 May. On Thameslink, the current hourly service from Brighton to Cambridge will become half-hourly. These Cambridge trains have a good connection from Arun Valley services at Three Bridges.

Easter 2019 timetable alterations

Details of Easter services are not yet available on the Southern website, but taking information from the National Rail Enquiries site, it looks as though a Saturday service will operate on Good Friday 19 April, Saturday 20 April and Easter Monday 22 April.

On Good Friday and Saturday, London trains will terminate and start from London Bridge rather than Victoria.

On Easter Sunday there will be a normal Sunday service and, on that day and Easter Monday, London trains will terminate at and start from Victoria.

Access for all

The Department for Transport has announced funding under its Access for All scheme for Network Rail to upgrade the following Southern stations by 2024: Crowborough, Leatherhead, Battersea Park and Streatham.

Work is already under way on step-free schemes at Crawley, Coulsdon South, Selhurst and Carshalton.

Performance

The following is extracted from a recent GTR communication about new measures for improving and reporting their performance. We thought members would like to see the detail especially as GTR has now turned the corner and is no longer hovering near the foot of the Train Operators punctuality league table.

Last month, the Rail Delivery Group announced that the rail sector is changing the way train operating companies (TOCs) report train punctuality and performance. GTR has now given details of what it means for passengers, how they report data and how they are performing.

From this month, GTR, along with all other TOCs England and Wales, will publish a new primary performance metric, called 'On Time'. For a train service to be counted as 'On Time', it must call at every single station scheduled on its route and its final destination within 59 seconds of the time stated on the timetable. By contrast, for a service to count under the older measure, the Public Performance Measure (PPM), it must call at every single scheduled station and arrive at its final destination within five minutes of the timetable.

GTR say that 'On Time' is undoubtedly a tough measure, especially for some of their services. 59 seconds is not a lot of spare time for a service such as the Thameslink services connecting the 109 miles between Brighton, Central London and Cambridge across the busiest tracks in the UK, but this measure will provide clarity to passengers.

As of March 2019, 72.5% of GTR's 3,600+ daily services are operating exactly on-time and 87.3% are at PPM. In 'On Time' terms, this makes GTR the sixth best performing of the twenty-three franchises in the UK, and they carry twice as many passengers as the top five combined.

GTR say that it is testament to the sustained improvement in punctuality and reliability across their services in recent months, and it also shows the very positive role of some of the changes in the timetable in supporting the railway to run more efficiently for passengers. Yet, they admit, there is also clear room for improvement. From an operational perspective, 'On Time' will help to drive a focus across the sector that every single second counts. It will support them to pinpoint the tiny delays that add up over an individual train service that starts and stops tens of times on long journeys of several hours. And, it will reinforce their efforts to get better information into the hands of passengers. This includes upgrades to station screens, issuing station staff with new smartphones loaded with real-time service information, and volunteer teams from across the business to help passengers during disruption.

Trevor Tupper
Secretary/Treasurer