

# WEST SUSSEX RAIL USERS ASSOCIATION

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## Annual General Meeting

Our AGM took place on Saturday 3 November in the Studio of the Capitol at Horsham. Formal minutes will be circulated in due course. The Officers and Committee for the coming year are:-

Chairman – Roger Keyworth; Secretary/Treasurer - Trevor Tupper

Committee members – James Marchant, Michael Gill, Valerie Webb and Kevin Gordon

After the formal business our guest speaker was Angie Doll, Southern's Passenger Services Director who covered a wide range of topics in her address. Angie confirmed that in December there will be only minor changes to the Southern timetable introduced in May, and that performance measures on this timetable had reached the levels last achieved in 2014 under the old franchise. She also confirmed that the four missing Thameslink trains between Horsham, London Bridge and Peterborough in each direction will be in the new timetable starting on Monday 10 December. These are the services from Horsham at 11.25, 14.55, 17.25 and 20.55 and those from London Bridge to Horsham at 10.00, 13.30, 16.00 and 22.00. Angie was asked whether there was still a risk of further RMT strikes similar to those still taking place on South Western Railway and Northern. Her response was that the RMT have not yet agreed to the changes introduced earlier this year, nor have they put the relevant offers to their members. So there is still a slight risk of further action. On other matters, Southern have been investigating the reason for a fire in a toilet hand drier on a class 377 earlier in the year. We raised concerns about the continued use of the 40 year old toiletless class 313s on services between Brighton and Portsmouth especially as some 377 units displaced by Thameslink services have been transferred to SouthEastern. Angie went into detail about the immediate and future changes to services during the Brighton Mainline Improvement Project and those affecting our services are covered later in this Newsletter.

## Brief update from GTR Stakeholder Forum on 27 November.

The problems with the hand driers in the class 377 toilets have been resolved, and all the driers will be refitted over the next few weeks. The last few 377 units are now being equipped with Wi-Fi and this will be extended to the class 313 Coastway units. The class 377 units are having a mid-life refurbishment with new carpets, seats, LED lighting and power points to all seats. Southern would also like to see the end of the 313s and with a large scale cascade of surplus units elsewhere we may get some news on this but not before 2020. Work has started at Yapton crossing to replace the half-barriers and will be completed in early January with removal of the 30mph limit soon after.

## December Timetable

The new timetable starts on Monday 11 December and the local pocket versions can now be downloaded from the Southern website at [www.southernrailway.com/travel-information/plan-your-journey/timetables](http://www.southernrailway.com/travel-information/plan-your-journey/timetables). These timetables will shortly be available in stations. There are no significant changes in these timetables other than the implementation of the full Thameslink service to and from Horsham as mentioned above.

## Major route improvement work affecting Southern services over the Christmas and New Year period

Network Rail is renewing the track at Battersea Pier Junction to improve reliability around the Victoria station area. Most trains will divert to and from London Bridge. There will be no Gatwick Express service but trains to and from Gatwick Airport will run from other central London stations including Blackfriars and London Bridge. Buses will replace trains between Clapham Junction and Victoria for local journeys. All services at Clapham Junction are expected to be very busy and, if possible, try to avoid peak hours. Details of day by day services are:-

**Saturday 22 December** – A Saturday service will operate with some reduction on routes in the London Victoria area before close of service. Buses replace trains between Brighton and Littlehampton

**Sunday 23 December to Tuesday 1 January inclusive** – No trains between Victoria and Clapham Junction. Most trains will be diverted to London Bridge.

**Sunday 23 December** – An amended timetable will run on all routes. No Southern service between Clapham Junction and Milton Keynes. Buses replace trains between Brighton and Littlehampton

**Monday 24 December** – An amended timetable will operate. No Southern service between Clapham Junction and Milton Keynes. Train services will start to wind down from 20:00 onwards.

**Christmas Day** – No Service

**Wednesday 26 December** – Special Boxing Day services between London Bridge and Brighton, and London Bridge and Gatwick.

**Thursday 27 December to Monday 31 December inclusive** – No trains between Victoria and Clapham Junction. Most trains will be diverted to London Bridge. An amended timetable will operate on these days; we expect this to be similar to a Saturday service on 27, 28 and 31 December. No Southern service between Clapham Junction and Milton Keynes.

**Tuesday 1 January** – A Sunday service will be in force but there will be no trains between Victoria and Clapham Junction. Most trains will be diverted to London Bridge. No Southern service between Clapham Junction and Milton Keynes. Buses replace trains between Three Bridges and Billingshurst

**Wednesday 2 January** – Normal services should resume

### **Brighton Mainline Improvement Project**

The Brighton Main Line Improvement (BML) Project is part of a £300 million government-funded programme to tackle delay hotspots and boost the reliability of the railway in the south east. The project is an engineering programme being carried out by Network Rail (NR), with the support of its partners, Southern, Govia Thameslink and the Government. The BML is used by 300,000 people each day and the section of line targeted is responsible for more delays to Southern and Thameslink services than any other. Without this programme of activity, reliability will get worse over time and lead to even more delays. The improvement project will focus on the line between Three Bridges and Brighton. Major engineering work is planned for the Victorian-era tunnels and the railway which runs through them. The unprecedented access to this part of the rail network provided by these planned closures will allow NR engineers to renew and upgrade a part of the railway responsible for many delays. The programme of works will involve stemming leaks into the tunnels and improving drainage, upgrading or replacing the third rail power system and signalling, replacing track and sets of points, which enable trains to switch between tracks and replacing fencing and improving security to deter trespassers.

The main closure has been planned for the 9 day period from 16-24 February 2019 that includes the half-term week, when passenger numbers are lower and some people may be able to be more flexible with their travel plans or take holiday. Weekend work has already started with several Saturday closures this month and this will continue over selected weekends up to May 2019. Those of you who have travelled on recent weekends affected by the BML closures may have noticed that our Arun Valley trains have been slightly retimed with joining and splitting taking place at Barnham rather than Horsham. This has freed the “fast” paths normally used by the Southampton/Portsmouth portions for use by a half hourly service from Brighton and Worthing via Littlehampton to Victoria. The bonus from this has given Horsham 4 fast trains to Victoria rather than the normal 2. We have not yet seen the planned timetables for February, but we guess there will be a similar service as on these recent Saturdays. Passengers from intermediate stations between Brighton and Three Bridges will have replacement buses – the numbers involved will be huge and the operation will take over the Three Bridges car park. More about all of this nearer the time.

### **Membership Renewal**

Most members have now paid their 2018 subscriptions. If you have not paid, a renewal form is enclosed and we would be grateful if any outstanding amounts could be paid as soon as possible or, at the AGM if you attend. If you no longer wish to remain a member, please let me know by e-mail, post or telephone.

**Finally, we wish all members a very merry Christmas and a happy and peaceful New Year.**

Trevor Tupper  
Secretary/Treasurer