

WEST SUSSEX RAIL USERS ASSOCIATION

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Annual General Meeting

Our AGM took place on Saturday 2 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, Valerie Webb and Kevin Gordon

After the formal business our guest speaker was Angie Doll, Southern's Managing Director who covered a wide range of topics in her address. One of these was the 5 year partnership between GTR and The Prince's Trust. The Trust is a youth charity that helps young people to develop the confidence and skills they need to realise their ambitions, so they can live, learn and earn. Over the last 5 years the GTR pre-employability programmes have been delivered to nearly 200 young people struggling to find work, 77% of these have been employed across GTR with 14% of GTR London Bridge staff being recruited through the programme.

The other key subject covered by Angie was the change in the measure of train punctuality from Public Performance Measure, based on trains arriving at their destination within 5 minutes of the booked time, to the on-time train which requires the train to be on-time at every stop along its route – a much more challenging objective. GTR has risen to this challenge and in the latest period, 66.0% of GTR services were on-time (+/-59 seconds) and 83.2% of services at PPM. Southern PPM was 85.2%, and on-time 66.2%. These figures show a continuing improvement during the year.

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Angie also mentioned Southern's participation in the Brighton Pride event and then answered questions from members. Roger thanked Angie for attending our meeting and giving us so much information on GTR and Southern.

** If you would like to know more about the On Time performance, there is a GTR video on YouTube in which Steve Wright, GTR's Chief Operating Officer explains all at www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeKeQ9uFP1g.

December Timetable

The new timetable starts on Sunday 15 December and the local pocket versions can now be downloaded from the Southern website at www.southernrailway.com/travel-information/plan-your-journey/timetables. Thameslink

timetables are at www.thameslinkrailway.com/travel-information/plan-your-journey/timetables#timetables.

These timetables will shortly be available in stations. There are no significant changes in these timetables other than all the Saturday Horsham to London Bridge Thameslink services will be extended to and from Peterborough offering a similar service to the current off-peak Monday to Friday service.

Havant to Barnham improvement project

This six-week long program of new track and station refurbishment was completed successfully on 1 December. Several kilometres of track have been replaced, some level crossings improved, stations painted, toilets refurbished, some seating replaced. A huge job competently tackled by Network Rail's Orange Army and their contractors.

Industrial action by RMT guards on South Western Railway

The strike by SWR guards started on 2 December and will run until 2 January except for 12 December. It may have some impact on our services as passengers from Southampton, Fareham, Portsmouth and Havant may start using Southern services to get to London even though SWR are running at least an hourly service on their lines. We will be keeping an eye on this.

Southern services over the Christmas and New Year period

There are no wide scale engineering works affecting our services over the Christmas and New Year period although there will be one closure over the weekend before. Details of the day by day services are:

Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 December – Arun Valley line closed between Horsham and Arundel. Buses replace trains between Horsham and Barnham / Littlehampton.

Monday 23 December – Normal service.

Tuesday 24 December – From approximately 19:00, a reduced service will start to operate with no trains running after 23:00.

Christmas Day – No Service.

Thursday 26 December – The only services in our area will be special Boxing Day services between Victoria and Brighton, and Victoria and Three Bridges.

Friday 27 December – An amended Saturday service will operate.

Saturday 28 December and Sunday 29 December – Normal service.

Monday 30 December to Wednesday 1 January – An amended weekday service will be in force.

Thursday 2 January – Normal services should resume.

Gatwick station rebuilding

Gatwick Airport station will be receiving £150m in funding to widen the platforms and double the station's concourse, the Department for Transport (DfT) has announced. The renovation aims to reduce delays to services and stop platform overcrowding, and will also add five new lifts and eight escalators to the station. The number of people using Gatwick Airport station each year has grown by six million since 2010 and the current station is not designed for the high volume of daily passengers and their luggage.

The renovation will be managed by Network Rail in partnership with the DfT, Gatwick Airport and Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership. The improvement works will start in spring 2020 and will take around two years to complete. The works will be sequenced to ensure minimum disruption although we understand one line and/or platform will be taken out of use at a time. We will keep you in touch with developments on this – we do know that one of the timetable changes next May will involve a reduction in through services from Brighton to Victoria compensated to some extent by Littlehampton/Eastbourne services running separately with no joining and splitting at Haywards Heath.

Key Smartcard

Holders of a Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) 'Key Smartcard' that could previously be used only at Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern-managed stations and those inside London, can now tap in and out across the entire Southeastern network in Kent.

Membership Renewal

Most members have now paid their 2019 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. If you no longer wish to remain a member, please let me know by e-mail, post or telephone.

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

Trevor Tupper
Secretary/Treasurer