

TransWilts Community Interest Company

Report for Melksham Area Board, 5th November 2017

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1. What's been happening?
2. What's coming up?
3. What can the Area Board do to help?

What's been happening?

1. Survey of passengers departing Melksham Station, 19, 21 and 22 October. 17 volunteers helped; high return rate on forms. Allows us to help tune developments to aspirations, also to get users to think about future.
2. 13,000 timetables distributed– to all homes in the Melksham area
3. Inputs to the Department for Transport concerning our business and community case for train services in the next franchise.
4. Work with Wiltshire Council on updating specification for Melksham Town bus to provide better services. Now out to tender. As per discussions / consultation earlier in 2017
5. Peter Blackburn – Chair of Melksham Rail User Group – shortlisted at ACoRP national awards for outstanding volunteer contribution right across the UK
6. Melksham Station Master plan work continues. TransWilts sponsored
7. Capacity planning to allow more trains to run on line (and to be more robust) commissioned by Wiltshire Council / GWR.
8. Cancellations and train capacity continue to be issues. Working with GWR to help minimise problems. Station help point only working about half the time.
9. Melksham Rail User Group won the national RailFuture award for 2016 marketing campaign on 4th November (awards at their conference in Leicester)

What's coming up?

1. Melksham Rail User Group meets **29th November**, Whitley Methodist Church Hall, 19:30. All welcome
2. 2016 / 2017 station usage statistics published by Office of Rail and Road, **6th December**. Previous year was 60,000 and that should rise significantly, but not as much as previous years because there's been no more room.
3. Sunday morning train extended to Swindon from **10th December**. Allows a

two hour earlier arrival into Swindon that at the same date last year, and an hour earlier than at present. Significant for people working in Swindon.

4. Santa on train **17th December**, 14:50 to Swindon, tickets at TIC
5. **Before the end of 2017**, the help point at Melksham Station should be updated from 2G to 4G technology making it far more reliable.
6. Two carriage trains replace single car services from **2nd January 2018**. As 4 services a day (07:49, 10:04, 15:39 and 18:03 at Melksham) are full and standing, this will allow us to grow again.
7. 15:39 Westbury train becomes 15:44 from **2nd January**. Makes a far more robust connection from Bristol (15:00) and Bath Spa (15:12) to Melksham
8. New Town bus contracts start operating (?) **Late January**, If Council officers elect a bid for the community option, that will mean that all key trains have connections from modified existing buses; buses on route 15 will operate additionally via Bowerhill Industrial Area.
9. From **February 2018**, all Melksham services will have free WiFi available.
10. **Spring 2018**, Melksham Station Platform will be extended.
11. **June 2018** – GWR and TransWilts are hosting the Community Rail Conference for the region at Swindon.

What can the Area Board do to help?

Please encourage the cabinet member responsible for Public Transport (Bridget Wayman), and the Portfolio holder (Horace Prickett), and the council officer responsible (Phil Grocock) to select the community option for the buses. It gives us a big opportunity to bring more paying traffic to the town bus to help safeguard it for the future, AND many new journey opportunities.

Melksham residents have shown they will use public transport with the spectacular growth of train use – 3,000 to 60,000 journeys in my time, with figures for December release perhaps showing 67,000. Our surveys indicate the current passenger number (as opposed to ticket sales) are around 85,000.

Both Horace and Phil have been enormously helpful in getting us to this stage, so you should be pushing on an open door – confirming a decision.

Seed funding of £5k + £10k match (DCRDF) is available for promoting an integrated solution, and volunteers are on hand to support.

Big, big thank you for your support – without it, we wouldn't have made the progress we have, nor be able to offer you the further improvements.