

TransWilts

* Most rail fares to / from Melksham rose marginally in line with inflation at the beginning of January - 10p or 20p on local journeys which still represent excellent value. The return fare on the 08:49 from Swindon to Melksham has fallen by £2.40 as off-peak tickets are now accepted for this journey - and that should be very attractive to staff coming to work at Melksham businesses and to day visitors - the first train off peak didn't previously arrive until 11:13 on Monday to Friday

* At the previous area board, Jason Salter (head of public transport at Wiltshire Council) promised no cuts to Melksham's supported bus services in the 2017/18 financial year and this was hailed as good news. We have however learned of significant cuts from 6th February - that's prior to the 2017/18 year - to routes 14 and 15. For example, the no. 15 which served Thyme Road (stop for the new Rugby and football fields at which the area board is meeting) is cut. Only 2 journeys pick up there on Saturdays now (previously 6) - and Saturday looks like the busiest day in the calendar for rugby and football.

* Melksham Rail User Group meets at 17:30 on 24th February at Melksham Town Hall. All welcome. We will be looking forward to developments and potential developments at Melksham Station in the light of area board and public support and continued massive growth in passenger numbers, which are giving rise to trains that are very full indeed. The improvements cannot come soon enough.

Chamber of Commerce

Hugely successful meeting hosted in December at Well House Manor, where the various event-running organisations got together to co-ordinate dates for 2017, and to set up a pool to share event equipment.

Concern at the removal of suitable places for customers of King's Street takeaways to pick up, and of removal of spaces at Melksham House which mean that staff working in Melksham businesses may have considerable extra expense that's very tough on low wages. Noted that this removal of spaces coincides with major cuts to the no 15 and north east section of the no. 14 bus just at the time that co-ordinated marketing could have been attracting more passengers.

Next chamber meeting at Well House Manor on evening of 7th February - secretary is Phil McMullen

Graham Ellis