

## TransWilts CIC / Report for Melksham Area Board

June to August 2018

*updated 29<sup>th</sup> August 2018 for 5<sup>th</sup> September*



1. It is with sadness I record the passing of John Money, Treasurer of the Melksham Railway Development Group (now the Melksham Rail User Group) on 13th August, at his home in Churchill Drive, of an embolism of the lungs. John had supported MRDG since he moved to Melksham in 1991, at time being one of a tiny group who kept the station's candle burning and without whom there would have been no train to "Save the Trains" and no TransWilts today. John, we will miss your friendly face, your encyclopedic knowledge of Melksham's railway, and your stories of the Weather, working for BT in London, and of the Seaton Tramway. John's funeral will take place at the Semington Crematorium on 6th September at 09:30. There will also be a celebration of his life on 28th April 2019 - a trip to the Seaton Tramway from Melksham. Details from Graham Ellis.

2. On the evening of 14th June, Great Western Railway hosted their annual Community Rail Conference dinner, and with it a celebration of the TransWilts as their fasts growing Community Rail Line. TransWilts and the Melksham groups were represented by Peter Blackburn, John Hamley, Paul Johnson, Lee Fletcher, Bob Morrison, Erin Valko, Horace Prickett and Reuben Paget.

3. Train services in the last three months have been severely curtailed because of engineering works - down from 18 to 7 trains per day, but never the less passenger numbers have held up and Great Western are trying to work out why. They have concluded that now that we have a longer train (the last single carriage service ran in June), there is once again capacity to grow. The platform extension at Melksham - from one to three carriages - has been in use since early summer, with finishing touches being applied at present. GWR and TransWilts are planning an official opening in the autumn.

4. TransWilts has been shortlisted for two ACoRP national awards - Paul Johnson in the individual category, and the TransWilts App in the Marketing category, and will be represented at the awards in Glasgow in early October by Paul, Peter Blackburn, Horace Prickett and Bob Morrison. Huge congratulations to Paul and his team for making the shortlist in these - the two most heavily contested categories. TransWilts is now very much a respected Community Rail Partnership, and this allows the team to progress further development.

5. With TransWilts' growth, the requirements of their Community Rail Officer have changed. This autumn, a new "CRO" will be recruited, with professional training, and with marketing, delegation, administration and organisational skills to work to the chair and board's direction and replace the existing CRO. TransWilts are looking to make the transfer of duties to this new person seamless, with the help of the outgoing CRO who will still be available as a volunteer.

6. Although the TransWilts growth has outstripped all other rail growth in the regions, analysis suggests that there is more growth to come. And that is rather confirmed by the way passenger numbers have started growing again with the longer trains. But the facilities at Melksham Station - apart from (now) the platform itself - remain very limited, uninviting, unable to cope with more than a few more passengers. The Master Plan for Melksham Station, funded by GWR CCIF, Area board and council grants, progresses well - with the window of opportunity to provide a "Melksham Hub" building element and more over the next year. The hub will meet nine out of the ten top aspirations of passengers using Melksham Station in the latest TransWilts passenger survey, and will provide facilities to see us though the next three decades with a further tripling of passenger numbers.

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