

Dear Member

Firstly, an apology for a long period of “radio silence”, caused mainly by a heavy workload where I work.

In this mini-newsletter, I wanted to let you know about four matters:



ANNUAL MEETING WITH FCC – THURSDAY 31 MAY

TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF HARPENDEN STATION EAST SIDE (MAIN) CAR PARK

CHANGES AT BLACKFRIARS

YESTERDAY’S DISRUPTIONS

I plan to write on more topics soon, but wanted to update you on Harpenden & Blackfriars now.

Annual meeting with FCC – Thursday 31 May

This will be on Thursday 31 May from 7:30pm. As last year, we will be at the Trinity URC church which is very near to St Albans Station. More details to follow.

Temporary closure of Harpenden station east side (main) car park

Harpenden station car park will close temporarily for resurfacing between 2 & 13 April. During this period Harpenden Car Park tickets will be valid at Luton, Luton Airport Parkway and St Albans - as will rail season tickets [only FCC services from Luton & Luton Airport Parkway].

FCC are currently engaged in a publicity campaign, including leafletting all cars; their poster comments as follows:

During the Easter school holidays, from 2-13 April, this east side car park will be resurfaced and relined. The lighting will also be improved. Regrettably, this means the car park will be closed from 2-13 April.

The date for this work has been chosen to minimise disruption. To further help customers, all Harpenden car park season tickets will be valid at Luton, Luton Airport Parkway and all St Albans car parks. Rail season tickets from Harpenden will be valid on First Capital Connect services from Luton and Luton Airport Parkway. We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

For more information, visit firstcapitalconnect.co.uk/carparking or call 0845 026 4700

I suspect that it will be somewhat chaotic on Monday, so do allow considerable extra time if driving. APTU has asked FCC to see if the north end of the car park can be completed early in the programme and then turned into a pick up / drop off zone only.

Changes at Blackfriars

There are a number of changes imminent on the northside entrance for Blackfriars:

1. The northside ticket office closes temporarily this Friday (30 March) and will not reopen in its current location.
2. The new ticket office, which will be at ground level, opens in mid May. In the interim there will be the existing ticket machines (at ground level) and there will also normally be a revenue inspector available.
 - a. Don't forget there is now a ticket office at the South Bank entrance (and at City Thameslink).

3. The Mermaid link entrance (the “old” entrance) closes temporarily from the end of service on Thursday 5 April and is due to re-open mid July.

Yesterday’s disruptions

FCC are carrying out a mini-survey on this using Survey Monkey (a well known online survey service). The link for this can be found at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/N5WVT3R>

We’ve also received this from FCC:

I would like to update you about the service disruption this morning on the Thameslink route during which there were widespread cancellations and severe delays.

A fault with a main power supply cable into the signal supply point at Flitwick caused a total loss of signalling for six hours from 02.15 between Bedford and Legrave. This affected the entire Thameslink route because we were unable to move trains into their correct position overnight for the morning peak.

During the morning peak we were restricted to just two trains an hour in each direction between Bedford and Luton because the only safe way to operate along a 15 mile stretch of track was using a basic system called temporary block working in which only one train is allowed in the section at any one time. We were turning trains at Luton and St Albans as well as Kentish Town. At Brighton and around the Wimbledon/Sutton Loop our service was reduced to just one train per hour.

This gave our customers an extremely difficult journey into work for which, with Network Rail (which operates the signalling infrastructure), we have sincerely apologised.

Automatic ticket acceptance is granted in these circumstances with all major transport operators, and customers north of London were encouraged to use the Great Northern route wherever possible on which Thameslink route tickets were valid. Car park tickets for Thameslink route stations have also been valid at stations on the Great Northern route. A bus service was also put into place between Bedford and Sandy, which is again on the Great Northern route.

Network Rail restored full signalling at 08.18 and a normal service is due to be restored at 14.00.

Our customers can claim compensation for delays of over 30 minutes and we are recommending they either pick up a leaflet at their station or visit our website: www.firstcapitalconnect.co.uk/customer-care/delay-repay

Regards

Neil

Neil Middleton
28 March 2012