

Dear Member



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Reminder: Our Annual Meeting will be Tuesday 31st March in St Albans

This year's annual meeting will be on **Tuesday 31st March** at **7:30pm** at the Friend's Meeting House in St Albans.

We will be joined by Stuart Cheshire, the newly appointed Passenger Service Director for the Thameslink route, by Dyan Crowther, the Chief Operating Officer (subject to confirmation), Larry Heyman (all from Govia Thameslink Railway ('GTR') and a senior Network Rail Manager.

The main focus for the meeting will be

1. Current performance / improvement plans
2. Passenger information / improvement plans
3. December 2015 timetable

Getting to the Friend's Meeting House

We've been to the Friend's Meeting House before - it is at 7 Upper Lattimore Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 3UD; from the station, head down Victoria Street[™] towards the centre of St Albans and turn right at the second set of traffic lights (where there is a Cotswold Outdoor Sports shop) and the Friends Meeting house is on the approximately 4th on the left - see <http://www.quaker.org.uk/st-albans>. The hall is accessible by the disabled and has an accessible toilet.

↳ Victoria Street is straight ahead from platform 4; from platform 1, turn right and cross the bridge over the railway.

Travel on the night

GTR are unable to offer us free travel on the night as did FCC. This is because of the different type of contract they have with the Department for Transport, whereby all revenue flows to the Government.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions for 2015/16 will be due for payment from 1 April. Please send a cheque for £3.00 (single membership) or £5.00 (joint membership) as soon as possible. I will of course accept payment at the meeting on 31 March.

Thank you

Malcolm Howe

Treasurer

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Changes to Thameslink Services from 16 March

We have been advised of changes to Thameslink services; these are inter-linked with the 'opposite' change to Southern services and are part of steps to improve London Bridge reliability.

These are as follows:

1606 Brighton to Bedford retimed to depart 1554 calling at Preston Park 1558, Hassocks 1605, Burgess Hill 1609, Wivelsfield 1611, Haywards Heath arrive 1616 and depart 1622, Balcombe 1627, Three Bridges 1633, Gatwick Airport 1638 and from then on as now. Passengers from Preston Park, Hassocks, Burgess Hill and Wivelsfield can change at Haywards Heath for London Bridge.

1636 Brighton to Bedford retimed to depart 1624 calling at Preston Park 1628, Hassocks 1635, Burgess Hill 1639, Wivelsfield 1641, Haywards Heath arrive 1646 and depart 1652, Balcombe 1657, Three Bridges 1703, Gatwick Airport 1708 and from then on as now. Passengers from Preston Park, Hassocks, Burgess Hill and Wivelsfield can change at Haywards Heath for London Bridge.

1708 Brighton to Bedford retimed to depart 1654 calling at Preston Park 1658, Hassocks 1705, Burgess Hill 1709, Wivelsfield 1711, Haywards Heath arrive 1716 and depart 1722, Balcombe 1727, Three Bridges 1733, Gatwick Airport 1738 and from then on as now. Passengers from Preston Park, Hassocks, Burgess Hill and Wivelsfield can change at Haywards Heath for London Bridge.

Additional stops for Hassocks and Redhill

- 1508 Brighton to Bedford calls additionally at Hassocks at 1514
- 1738 Brighton to Bedford calls additionally at Hassocks at 1744
- 1808 Brighton to Bedford calls additionally at Hassocks at 1814
- 1720 Bedford to Three Bridges calls additionally at Redhill 19.16, Gatwick 19.27 (was 19.18) and Three Bridges 19.33 (was 19.23)
- 1810 Bedford to Three Bridges calls additionally at Redhill at 20.04 arriving Three Bridges as now (20.21)

By way of background, the current timetable for London Bridge is particularly sensitive to delays in contra-peak services and therefore steps are constantly being taken to improve the likelihood of trains arriving on-time to the approaches to London Bridge.

Thameslink Ticket Office at St Pancras closing 13 – 19 April

The Thameslink Ticket Office at St Pancras is closing 13 - 19 April for improvement works (accessibility & intercom). During the works there will be extra staff to hand; the East Midlands Trains ticket office remains open.

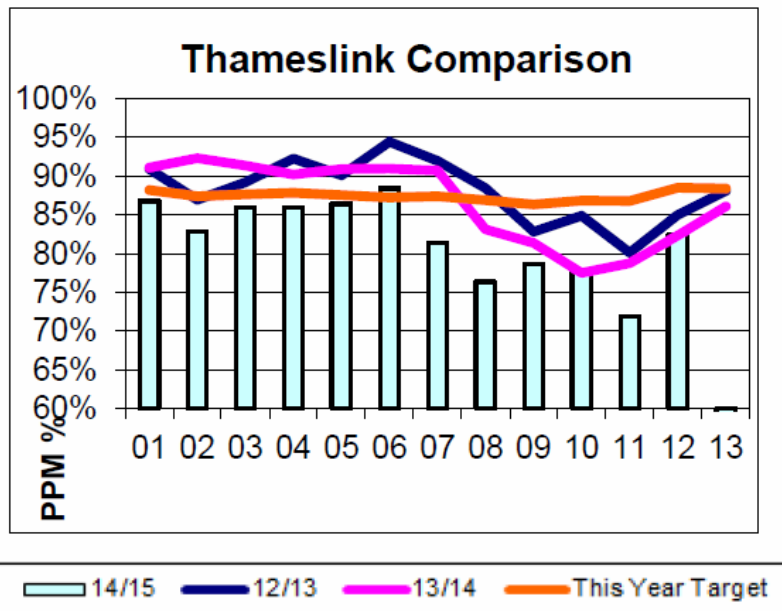
Updated Performance Improvement plan

GTR, Network Rail and Southern have issued an update to their performance improvement plan and this can be read here: thameslinkrailway.com/about-us/performance. I have asked for an update at the AGM.

GTR performance

There has been an increase in performance over the last railway accounting period (basically February) following the flooding problems at the end of January. Specific comments from GTR are:

- The Thameslink Public Performance Measure (PPM) for Period 12 was 82.46% against a target of 88.49%.
- Shortly after 15:40 on 2 February we received reports of a trespasser on the line outside of Mill Hill Broadway station. All lines were blocked whilst emergency services attended the scene. Slow lines were reopened at 16:00, passengers experienced delays throughout the evening peak as the service recovered due to congestion.
- On 26 February at approximately 13:20 we received reports of a defect with an EMT service in the Belsize Tunnel between West Hampstead Thameslink and Kentish Town. Slow lines were reopened at 13:50. Delays were experienced in both directions due to reduced capacity and congestion in the area.



Is your train busier?

The Office for Rail Regulation has issued its latest briefing on statistics. It notes an 8% growth year on year (last quarter of the calendar year) for London and the South East.

- The franchised London and South East sector recorded 299.9 million passenger journeys in 2014-15 Q3, an 8.0% increase on Q3 last year and the highest total recorded since the beginning of the time series. With shorter commuter distances and stops at a greater number of stations, trains operating in this sector recorded the highest share of the total franchised passenger journeys in Great Britain. As seen in passenger kilometres for this sector, the franchised passenger journeys on Ordinary tickets have seen an increase, driven by the increase in Ordinary Advance and Off-Peak ticket journeys. This sector also has the highest proportion of franchised passenger journeys made on Season tickets, with journeys made on Season tickets this quarter in the London and South East sector reaching 48.2%.
- Revenue for franchised operators within the London and South East sector exceeded £1.1 billion during 2014-15 Q3, an increase of 9.6% when compared to the same quarter last year and the highest revenue generated since the time series began. Revenue from Ordinary Off-Peak ticket sales forms the majority of the total revenue in this sector, again as a direct result of the number of passenger journeys in this sector made on Ordinary Off-Peak tickets.

More at http://orr.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0013/17302/passenger-rail-usage-2014-15-q3.pdf. I must admit the two paragraphs seem to contradict one another - the first says most of the highest portion travel on season tickets, the second that most revenue comes from off-peak fares - but I would have thought the average price per journey for a season ticket is more than the off-peak fare.

Compensation survey

Thanks to those who completed this - I will have news on this in the next newsletter and at the AGM.

Kids travel for £2 is returning

GTR have advised that this offer will return as part of their Spring marketing campaign.

Penalty fares

There is a consultation underway regarding the rail Penalty Fares regime. More can be read at gov.uk/government/consultations/rail-penalty-fares-changes-to-appeals-process; I would be interested in any comments & thoughts you might have. I am working to two deadlines on this:

1. 31 March, when I need to send any comments to Railfuture to help them assemble a combined response
2. 24 April, when I will prepare a submission over that weekend for submission by the deadline.

You may, of course, wish to comment directly. The focus of the consultation is about the process and the standards, so it is not a good way to progress individual complaints - however your complaints and problems could be good examples to support suggested changes.

Regards

Neil

Neil Middleton
27 March 2015