



Coming together is a beginning;

keeping together is progress;

working together is success.

– Henry Ford

December 2013 to December 2016, Passenger journeys have risen from around 18,000 per annum in 2012 to 235,000 in 2015 and (projected) over quarter of a million in 2016.

A special thanks to those who have made it possible:-

- Passengers
- Operational Staff
- Volunteers
- Great Western Railway management
- Department for Transport
- Wiltshire Council and its members and officers
- Town and Parish Councils
- Members of Parliament and candidates, present and past
- Advocates
- Press and publicity - broadcast, printed and online
- Campaign and Partnership groups
- Association of Community Rail Partnerships and TravelWatch SouthWest
- Network Rail

and thanks:-

- to there being natural passenger flows that need and want to make the journey
- to TransWilts being an all year, double ended, commuter and leisure line
- to an extra carriage running up to six more round trips a day

The trial service has worked well because each and every one of the groups and opportunities above have provided their support; in most cases over, above and beyond any call of duty.

Seed funding for this build up and trial has been provided as part of a Local Sustainable Transport Fund grant from the Department for Transport to Wiltshire Council. Community support has been channelled through the TransWilts Community Rail Partnership; a part of the TransWilts Community Interest Company, working with local groups such as the Melksham Rail Development Group and members of the West Wilts Rail Users Group.



<http://www.transwilts.org>

0845 459 0153

for further information, please contact:

Graham Ellis, Community Rail Officer

grahamellis@transwilts.org

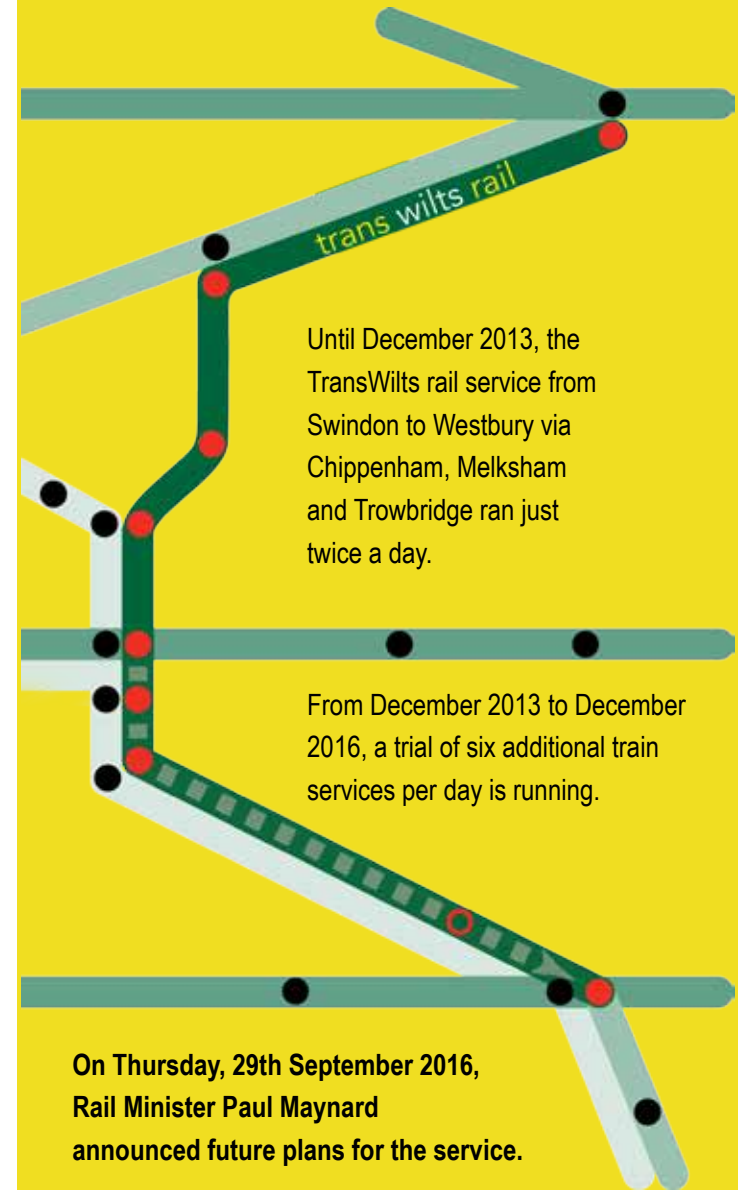
TransWilts Community Rail Partnership

48, Spa Road, Melksham, Wilts, SN12 7NY

A division of the TransWilts Community Interest Company (CIC)



Looking Forward



Until December 2013, the TransWilts rail service from Swindon to Westbury via Chippenham, Melksham and Trowbridge ran just twice a day.

From December 2013 to December 2016, a trial of six additional train services per day is running.

On Thursday, 29th September 2016, Rail Minister Paul Maynard announced future plans for the service.

**As from Thursday,
29th September 2016,
the TransWilts
service is to become
a Designated Rail
Service.**

**And what had been
a trial service will
become an integral
part of the Great
Western franchise
from December 2016.**

What is a Designated Rail Service?

The Department for Transport designates routes as 'Community Railways'. Designations are intended to clarify expectations and aspirations for the line. Designation can be either 'Line' or 'Service'; the latter is generally used where there is heavy freight use, and that applies to the TransWilts.

Service designation changes the approach to franchise management, with more freedom given to the train operator working with the local community rail partnership. Service designation includes relevant stations too. In this case, Chippenham and Melksham are designated stations.

The Department for Transport, Network Rail and the Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) have established a fund to help to support initiatives on designated community rail routes and services. The fund is administered by ACoRP and applications are made by Community Rail Partnership officers responsible for officially Designated Community Rail routes.

What happens to the TransWilts service beyond December 10th, 2016?

The service becomes a contracted part of the Great Western Franchise, with the Department for Transport taking up options that are offered within the current agreement between the First Group and the Department. TransWilts joins well established Heart of Wessex, Severnside, and Devon and Cornwall services as community rail services within the franchise. All of these services have been well supported by the Department for Transport, their local transport authorities, the communities they serve, and by Great Western Railway and its predecessors leading to passenger volume and service growth far in excess of national averages.

From 11th December 2016, the train service continues to operate as it does at present, although the financial and administrative background are significantly altered. The current GWR franchise (under which it will operate) runs until April 2019.

As part of the ongoing modernisation of the Great Western, Thames Valley and main lines, newer and longer trains are scheduled for transfer to the TransWilts line during the franchise period. Some extra services are planned to operate in order to uncouple the TransWilts line from the Stroud Valley line, which will be moving to an hourly pattern of through trains from London to Cheltenham Spa.

The TransWilts service remains a strategic element in Wiltshire Council's Local Transport Plan though to 2026.

Designation gives further opportunities, including a more formal ability to tune fares and other connecting public transport services at designated stations.

Part of the current Southwest franchise bid (covering the south of the county) requires the successful bidder to make recommendations for the chaining together of local services Swindon - Westbury - Salisbury - Southampton (Central and Airport). This move is strongly supported by both the TransWilts CRP and the Three Rivers CRP, who look after the Service south of Salisbury. There is already noticeable passenger traffic from Melksham and north thereof to the Southampton area, and this joining up (with the provision of hourly service on all parts of the route) is a logical future direction. One option for the Swindon-to-Westbury section is for all hourly trains to carry on to Southampton. An alternative proposal is for alternate trains to carry on via Frome to Taunton, and (from 2019) to be extended from Swindon to Oxford and north thereof (Banbury, Leamington Spa, Coventry and Nuneaton).

As part of Network Rail's plans for the modernisation and handling of cascaded rolling stock, a number of platforms, including that at Melksham, are scheduled to be lengthened. Plans are being examined for enhanced capacity and robustness. Options available include intermediate signals and loop(s) and reopening of platforms at Chippenham and Westbury, but these are very much more in the future than the Melksham platform extension.

Under Great Western's CCIF grant scheme, and with match funding from Wiltshire Council's area board and town and parish councils, significant improvements are planned to the access to Melksham Station and the ability of the station forecourt to safely handle the further strong growth which is anticipated.

