

CHILTERN RAILWAYS PASSENGER BOARD: 2019-20 ANNUAL REPORT



Introduction

This is the 18th Annual Report of the Chiltern Railways Passenger Board (CRPB) and summarises the main issues that have been reviewed and considered at Board meetings during the past year together with contributions made by Board members at each of the meetings and in correspondence.

The CRPB plays an important role in providing the opportunity for Chiltern Railways' (CR) senior management to present their proposals and future plans and to be held accountable for any adverse performance issues. The Board also acts as a useful information source enabling CR senior managers to understand, at first hand, the issues and concerns that directly affect passengers using their services.

I would like to express my thanks to all Board members for their support and respect during the year.

Background

The Chiltern Railways Passenger Board was first established in April 2002 and facilitating the Board is a requirement of the Chiltern Franchise agreement (schedule 13 – clause 11.7).

The Board comprises representatives of Passenger User Groups and Local Authorities from along the routes served by CR's train services. The Board monitors the regular operational performance of CR and reviews infrastructure upgrades, passengers' facilities, timetable changes, fares' proposals and passenger satisfaction surveys.

Normally, four quarterly Board meetings are held every year with the venue alternating between Birmingham Moor Street and London Marylebone stations. Additional meetings covering specific

issues can be convened as and when required. For reasons that I shall cover later in this report, this year had only three quarterly meetings.

Detailed minutes are produced after each meeting summarising the matters discussed that record Board members' views on performance data, ideas for consideration and the responses from CR management representatives to queries raised by Board members. These minutes are not published to avoid any possible breaches of confidentiality and/or commercial sensitivity.

The following pages contain a summary of the major topics and issues covered at each Board meeting during the previous twelve months. References to Chiltern Railways are abbreviated to CR and similarly Network Rail is NR.

JULY 2019 MEETING

This meeting was held at Marylebone with fifteen people present including three from CR.

Election of Chairman for 2019-20

There was a single nomination for Chairman. Chris Bates was elected unopposed as Chairman for the year to July 2020. There were no nominations for Vice-Chairman, however Nigel Phillips agreed to take on the role which was agreed by affirmation of those present.

Passenger Board Member Station Allocations

There had been duplicity in Member coverage of several stations and it was agreed that going forward, each station across the Chiltern routes was to be served by a single member and after amicable discussions, the stations were allocated amongst the Members.

Alan Riley, Customer Services Director

Alan Riley updated the board in respect of a number of ongoing projects which form part of the company's Transformation Plan;

- Outlined the current fleet problems which were also causing short formation of trains. Alan confirmed that there was current dissatisfaction with train service performance.
- Station transformation and refreshes. An update was provided of major changes being made to Aylesbury, Leamington Spa and Warwick Parkway.
- Customer disquiet at recent increases in car park season ticket prices. It was explained that car parks are operated on a commercial and economic basis.
- National Rail Passenger Satisfaction (NRPS) Survey – Spring 2019 results – Chiltern scored 90%, which was a drop of 2% since the previous survey, no change though year-on-year and was joint 3rd nationally. The worst segmented NRPS was on the Metropolitan Line – this was likely to be driven the aforementioned short formations and Chiltern's approach to managing Wembley events by reducing services on that line for the duration of these events.

Phil Andrews, Interim Engineering Director

Phil Andrews updated the board on the current fleet difficulties and high number of short-formed services. He explained that the background to these was two depot (one in each of Aylesbury & Wembley) derailments in February 2019, both causing damage to the units involved. Also there had been an unusual high level of differential wheel wear. There were also two Class 172 units out of service – one with an electrical fault and another with a serious engine problem.

Future Passenger Board Meeting Times

The Board reviewed the programme of existing meeting dates, times and venues, and after discussion, agreed to continue with a programme of quarterly meetings starting in the early afternoon, with venues rotating between the South of the route (London) and the North (Birmingham).

OCTOBER 2019 MEETING

This meeting was held in Birmingham with twelve people participating including two from CR.

CR provided updates on –

- The ongoing fleet problems: The improvements expected were being further hampered by a Class 168 being out with long-term repairs and the class 68 carriage fleet was being rotated one set at a time for PRM (persons of Reduced Mobility) modifications and position should improve in December.
- The recent Stakeholder Conference.
- Smartcards
- Performance
- Mobile Meet the Manager sessions on board peak-time trains
- Station upgrades
- Environmental Update – Rubbish segregation at various sites and coffee cup recycling at Marylebone

CR also updated the board on the upcoming Network Rail embankment work between Haddenham and Bicester.

JANUARY 2020 MEETING

This meeting was held at Marylebone with thirteen people participating including three from CR.

Mary Hewitt, CR Interim Managing Director, attended the first half of the meeting

Mary Hewitt, Interim Managing Director

Ms Hewitt advised the Board that she had joined Arriva in 2017 from the energy sector, leading on Strategy Development, Transformation & Policy and most recently on the Arriva submission into the Williams Review. Has been a Director of CR since October 2017. Focus will be on preparing for developing a winning proposal for contract extension in 2021.

It was confirmed that Dave Penney had moved on to become Central Route Director at Network Rail, responsible for the Chiltern routes among many other things). His knowledge of these lines should prove beneficial for both sides of the partnership between Network Rail and CR.

Mary Hewitt then kindly answered questions from the board.

Alan Riley – Customer Services Director

Alan Riley briefed the board on ongoing station projects, including Dorridge waiting room on platform 2 refurbishment and the Revenue Protection Scheme.

APRIL 2020 MEETING

This meeting had been scheduled to take place in Birmingham but was understandably cancelled as it fell soon after the first lockdown for the Covid-19 pandemic without sufficient time to organise an online virtual meeting.

Chairman's Comments:

Finally, on behalf of the CRPB, I should like to express the Board's thanks to the Directors, Managers and Staff of Chiltern Railways for giving their time to the Board during meetings, consultation processes and correspondence throughout the past year.

Chris Bates

Chairman

Chiltern Railways Passenger Board 2019-20