

Stakeholder Annual Report

2020



Stakeholder Annual Report

2020

Contents

4	Foreword: Mark Hopwood
6	NR Foreword: Mark Killick
7	Our Values
8	Covid Response
10	Performance
14	Network Rail
18	Isle of Wight
20	Our Customers
32	Our Partners
40	Our Community
48	Our People
52	Contacts

Welcome to our third stakeholder report. What a year it's been. We've been tested on many fronts but our business has risen to those challenges and we are now looking forward to the opportunities to come.



Mark Hopwood
Managing Director

When I arrived from GWR to temporarily take over as Managing Director of South Western Railway in January this year, I knew I was facing many challenges, but I never imagined that three months later we would be facing a country placed into lockdown, with near empty trains and our stations deserted.

This was a very different challenge to the one I had originally anticipated, and which is doubtless familiar to many who regularly commute into London: a challenge of probably too many trains crammed onto a congested network, to carry ever growing passenger numbers into the capital and home again.

With relatively little London Underground in South West London, SWR had been trying for many years to provide a frequent, urban Metro in London, and provide more and more commuter trains to match house building in Berkshire, Hampshire and beyond. We did this against a backdrop of increasing numbers of speed restrictions and the unreliability of ageing infrastructure.

Before I arrived, eminent railwayman Sir Michael Holden conducted a review into the historic decline in performance on the network since 2011. He made a number of recommendations and we have continued working with Network Rail through our Joint Performance Improvement Centre to implement his recommendations and identify, analyse and mitigate the major causes of delay. While NR set to work reducing the number of delay causing speed restrictions, we invested in improving the reliability of our trains.

These initiatives, coupled with an increased focus on performance, saw punctuality and reliability begin to stabilise and we had just started to see the first tentative signs that we were moving in the right direction – when COVID-19 struck. In the space of a few days, we went from carrying hundreds of thousands of passengers every day to running near empty trains, through deserted stations as we, and the rest of the country, went into lockdown.

In a bizarre about face we found ourselves using our communication channels to support the government message to avoid all but essential travel – and to actually deter passengers.

Indeed, at the peak of the pandemic in April, 4-5,000 key workers were passing through Waterloo each morning compared to 125,000 in normal circumstances.

Thanks to the commitment of our fantastic colleagues across South Western Railway, we did continue to run trains for the few who

really needed them. The Government also stepped in and put in place Emergency Measure Agreements (EMAs) with Train Operators to protect the service and so keep Britain moving.

Whilst this has been an extremely difficult time for the team at SWR to navigate, we now need to be “fleet of foot” and begin to look at the next set of challenges we face as people begin to use our services – and potentially in different ways and at different times.

In September, as the schools and colleges return, we will add further services into the plan to move closer to our pre-Covid-19 timetable. December will see a further uplift to provide more capacity, while still allowing for some operational resilience in the timetable.

The next few months will be a period of significant change for the industry as the current Emergency Measures Agreements are reviewed and we look to understand and prepare for what may be a permanent change in travel patterns.

While the discovery of Zoom and Teams during lockdown may mean some never return to a full 5 day a week commute; we could see more longer distance commuting as people choose to live further afield and only spend one or two days a week in London; or an increase in demand for travel to more regional centres such as Southampton, Portsmouth and Exeter. The signs are that leisure travel within the UK could also increase with more staycations and day trips.

To meet this change we recognise there is a need to develop even more flexible ticket options and pricing that still offers good value for money and, along with other operators, we have recently submitted some initial proposals to Government.

But not everyone can work from home and we are already seeing growing passenger numbers returning to the railway. Already Waterloo is seeing around 25% of normal passenger numbers and we are preparing for this to rise as schools reopen and more people return to work this autumn.

While for many the world may have seemed on pause for the last few months, at SWR we have been continuing with the work and investment needed to deliver a better railway for our customers. Working with Network Rail we have made dramatic performance improvements. Several major engineering work projects have allowed a number of damaging speed restrictions to be removed, which, coupled with a more resilient timetable, has resulted in us regularly delivering punctuality of over 90%.

We have also seen the arrival of the first of our new Arterio suburban trains for testing. Once introduced into service, this 90-strong fleet will transform the travelling experience on some of our busiest routes in and out of London, with air-conditioning, at seat charging points, Wi-Fi, and fully accessible toilets.

Transformation has also started on the Isle of Wight, with our Island Line team carrying out vital infrastructure work to allow the new Vivarail trains to start testing when they arrive later this year. These trains, part of a £26m investment in the island's railway, will see the current 80-year-old trains replaced with trains offering modern facilities, including: Wi-Fi, passenger information systems and dedicated wheelchair spaces; alongside investment in improved infrastructure to offer a smoother ride and more evenly spaced half-hourly service.

At SWR we are very aware that we need to make the whole journey from home to final destination as easy and attractive as possible. Along with Government, Network Rail and other operators we will have to consider what future timetables might need to look like. We have learnt some valuable lessons about the trade-off between capacity of the network and performance during the lockdown and these will need to be fed into future thinking.

More than ever it will need to be a partnership approach with Network Rail and you, our stakeholders. This work will range from short-term joint marketing activities for destinations and events to investing in station facilities, first and last mile access, integrated ticketing, planning long term improvements to the rail network and making sure developments in Local Plans really do encourage and enable travel by public transport.

We will have to work together to secure Government and other funding. This won't just be about physical infrastructure though – the intelligence, data and local knowledge that you bring as partners, will be essential to making sure we hit the right targets in the short and long term. We can't promise to be able to meet everyone's many aspirations, but we can ensure that we have an open and honest discussion about the opportunities that lie ahead.

While my immediate priority is to run the railway we have today, I am also keen to work with government and the Department for Transport to develop future opportunities to expand the network: including the capacity of the railway into Waterloo, better access to Heathrow Airport, or potentially the reopening of disused lines such as the Fawley branch. You can read more about our recent exploration of the last of these on [page 33](#) of this report.

Yours sincerely

Mark Hopwood
Managing Director



Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris with Mark Hopwood (SWR MD),
staff and guests during the fact finding trip on the Fawley branch on 28th July 2020

A word from our partners, Network Rail



Network Rail's Wessex route covers around 1,300 miles of railway on some of the busiest lines in the country and makes up the majority of SWR's network. The route connects key cities on the South Coast including Bournemouth, Southampton and Portsmouth to London, passing through a number of major urban centres such as Woking, Winchester and Reading, as well as through more rural areas in West Dorset and Hampshire. Our London terminal at Waterloo is the busiest railway station in the country and sees, on average, 230 million passenger journeys each year.

Working closely with Mark Hopwood and the rest of the team at SWR, our priority is to continually improve the performance of the railway to deliver a service that meets our passengers' needs and expectations.

I absolutely recognise that the level of train service punctuality over the last year has fallen short of what our passengers rightly expect. We continue to work in partnership with SWR through our Joint Performance Improvement Centre using data and complex analytical tools to identify and reduce the causes of train delays. For example, a significant rise in external incidents last year resulted in the introduction of Welfare Officers at key stations across Wessex to proactively identify and help vulnerable people in a bid to reduce suicides and trespass. Since the pilot began in 2019, we have seen a 44% decline in incidents thanks to the interventions of these key team members.

I am also committed to improving the Wessex railway infrastructure and will be investing over £2bn from 2019 to 2024. This funding – which is 20% more than the previous funding period – will support the operations, maintenance and renewals of our existing infrastructure such as stations, tracks, bridges and signalling equipment. All of these investment projects are designed to improve the reliability of the railway and the service we are providing to passengers. In the past few months alone, we have completed some of the biggest improvements to the railway in the Guildford area in over 40 years, replaced over a mile of track near Eastleigh station and undertaken essential maintenance in West Dorset between Salisbury and Exeter; all contributing to improved performance.

We have also changed how we communicate to our passengers with detailed information being provided across social media channels so passengers are provided with useful information which will help them make informed decisions around their journeys.

This year, the Coronavirus outbreak has been an additional challenge for the whole rail industry, and I'm pleased to say that we supported the delivery of a safe, reliable and punctual service for essential workers and freight during lockdown. Working within government guidelines we have also been able to push ahead with our planned works and investment priorities for this year as well as taking advantage of reduced passenger demand to undertake some additional work on the network to further improve reliability.

The Wessex route has a 1,200 strong team based in locations right across the network; working together around the clock to deliver a safe and reliable railway for our passengers and freight partners, while also ensuring we are a 'good neighbour' in our local communities and among residents who live alongside the network. As we move forward into a new normal, bringing together our best practice and lessons learnt throughout COVID-19, we look forward to a continued close partnership with SWR and welcoming our passengers back to the railway this summer on safe and reliable journeys.

Yours sincerely

Mark Killick

Network Rail – Wessex route director

SWR vision and values

Our vision is:

We will be truly customer focused, placing the customer at the heart of everything we do.

We will be commercially successful, allowing us to invest in our railway where it matters most to our customers and colleagues.

We will be proud of our performance, safely getting our customers where they need to be, constantly striving for on time every time.

We will be South Western Railway - where great people deliver great journeys.

Our values are:



Committed to our customers



Supportive of each other



Accountable for performance



Dedicated to safety



Setting the highest standards

SWR objectives

To deliver our vision for the franchise we have set five objectives for South Western Railway, each one supported by detailed plans. Everything we do will contribute to the delivery of one or more of these objectives.

1

Provide a great customer experience at every stage of the journey

2

Deliver a consistent, reliable and improving service

3

Grow our railway and deliver for our stakeholders

4

Make SWR a great company to work for

5

Ensure we have a safe, secure and sustainable railway



Track renewals in the Botley area

“

Parvis Khansari, Director for Highways and Environment at Wiltshire Council

“Following the Novichok incident in Salisbury in 2018, South Western Railway has been a key partner in developing the economic recovery for the city; it has supported events and promoted the city as a destination, and also supported longer-term strategic initiatives”

Covid - 19

The Coronavirus pandemic has significantly changed our railway. With Government guidance asking the public to work from home and the subsequent lockdown, passenger numbers dropped overnight.

We, like most of the industry, have also seen temporary changes to the franchising system, with Emergency Measures Agreements transferring the cost and revenue risk of the railway to the Department for Transport for an initial period of 6 months.

Our priority throughout the pandemic has been to keep our customers and colleagues safe when travelling with us, and to run a reliable service to help keep the country running.

Steps we have taken to keep our passengers safe have included enhanced cleaning, paying particular attention to commonly touched surfaces, supplying hand sanitisers at stations, as well as introducing a virucidal chemical spray for our trains which kills 99.9% of viruses. We've also worked to ensure we communicate clear guidance to our customers, in line with Government advice, to help everyone travel safely. This has included over 50,000 posters, vinyls and stickers on board our trains and at our stations to promote social distancing, and the wearing of face coverings.

We also took a more creative approach in communicating these messages with a short animation video for social media and station information screens, with our Top Ten Tips for travelling with us, including planning ahead, buying tickets online and using card over cash.



Supporting the country as it comes out of lockdown

As we move out of lockdown, we are continuing to work to support the economy both nationally and locally. In the initial stages of the pandemic, we made changes to our services following feedback from key workers to ensure they could get to work to keep everyone safe and well looked after.

More recently in July, as further lockdown restrictions were lifted, we increased the number of services that we are running to approximately 85% of our usual timetable. In advance of schools returning in September, we will provide a further uplift in our timetable and are working with schools to prepare pupils for their return to the railway. This timetable change will see increased peak capacity at Waterloo, increases to services on our West of England line and direct services from Waterloo to Weymouth once every hour.

As the economy reopens, and people return to offices, we know that travel patterns may be wholly different than before the pandemic, and our customers will be looking for more flexible ticketing options. We are looking at how we can address this and are working with the Department for Transport and the wider industry to develop ways in which we can meet the changing needs of the post Covid-19 railway.

Locally we have been supporting businesses across our network. Whilst we have been lucky to continue to operate throughout this challenging time, we know that many small, local businesses have been some of the hardest hit by this pandemic.

Our local business campaign has recently seen our customers nominate their favourite local business. Winners were selected from across our network and were: French Horn, in Alton; Suttons Coffee Shop and Channel View Guest House, both in Weymouth; The Cross Keys, in Sherborne; and Swan Inn, in Bedhampton.

As well as taking people to work and school, our railways play a vital role in supporting the leisure and tourism industries. Through our regional development managers we are working with local authorities and businesses to help those areas of the economy as they rebuild post lockdown. If they thrive we all thrive.

Supporting Key Workers

As one of Britain's busiest train operators, we know many key workers rely on us to get them to work and keep the nation healthy, cared for and fed. As key workers themselves, our staff were keen to show their appreciation for others, and they did so through regularly taking part in the 'Clap for Carers' events. At stations in close proximity to local hospitals, we also placed banners thanking NHS staff for their hard work throughout the pandemic.

Refunding our customers

Following Government advice for the public to work from home, we saw a significant increase for requests for season ticket refunds.

We knew how important this money was for families whose personal circumstances had dramatically changed and so, despite initially closing our Customer Services Centre in line with government recommendations, once it did reopen we worked flat out to refund our customers as quickly as possible. By working 7 days a week, including bank holidays, by the end of June, we had processed all outstanding refund requests, a total of 36,269 within 12 weeks – around 47 per cent more than we would normally process in a year.

Changing how we work

Like every business, the COVID-19 pandemic has required us to change how we work. With our office staff moving to home working and Guards operating from the cab. We've also had to adapt how we train new colleagues joining the business, so we can continue to operate the railway through the pandemic. To find out more turn to [page 51](#)

Food on the move

During this period we were conscious of continuing to support the Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) on our network. This included helping them change their plans, for example with the Isle of Wight and Lymington to Brockenhurst CRPs reallocating our project funding for a music programme to create 'Food on the Move', which delivered meals to the most vulnerable. We continue to work with CRPs, and their partners, to look ahead to how we jointly can support local business and attractions in each area.

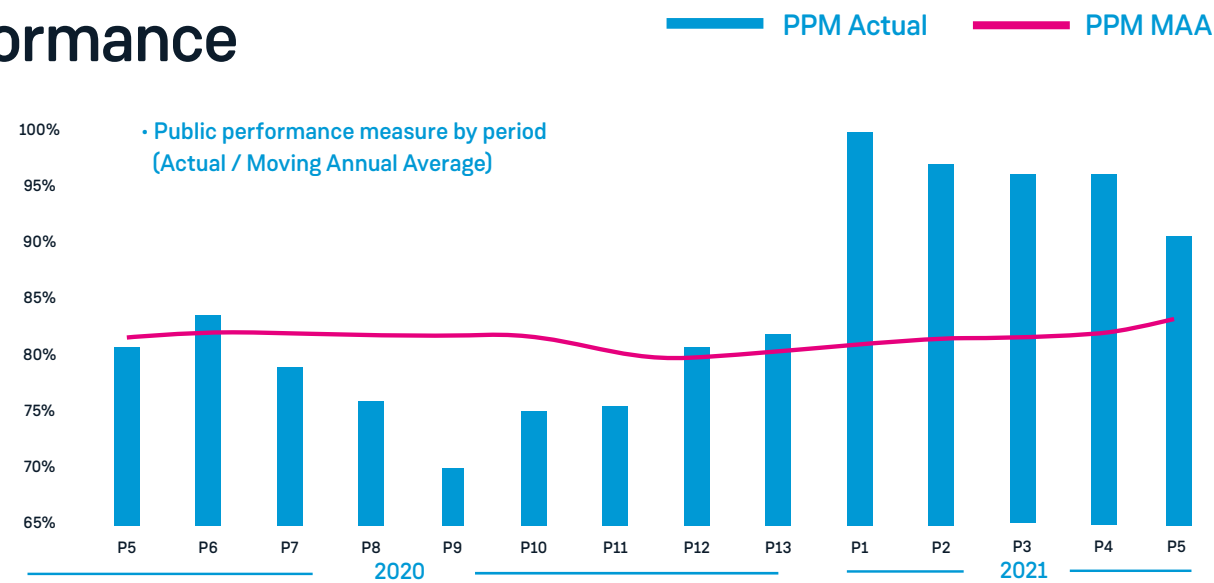
We also kept in regular contact with our station adopters during lockdown sharing examples of what groups were doing, such as the Friends of Honiton producing its first ever newsletters, which went on to inspire others. We also made more funding available than ever before to help replant displays once work could resume.



Isle of Wight and Lymington to Brockenhurst Community Rail Partnership's 'Food on the Move' project during the COVID-19 lockdown period



Performance



Mike Houghton,
Chief Operating Officer

Working in collaboration with our Network Rail partners, we have developed a joint vision to provide “a high performing railway, delivered together” for all of our customers. Only by working together, will we achieve the targets we have set ourselves.

Across the Wessex Route and SWR we operate over 1800 trains between 200+ stations to deliver c.600,000 passenger journeys on the Wessex Route every weekday. It is a highly complex operation that requires seamless integration of many interdependent processes.

Recognising that operational performance is the outcome of a complex series of interdependencies, improvement requires ownership and accountability across both our organisations. We have created a common set of goals, a transparent performance management process and a whole-system approach for problem solving to empower collaborative working across the route to better serve our customers.

Our approach tackles the issue of complexity by looking at performance improvements from four simple perspectives: **start on time, stay on time, recover well from disruption and continuously improve.**

Together we are implementing in excess of 50 joint performance improvement initiatives to transform the way we manage performance, the systems, technology and data we rely on, the processes and procedures we use to manage incidents and to recover from them.

But the key to sustained performance improvement is people and together we are engaging our front-line teams and encouraging them to strive for operational excellence. From the top down we want everyone to understand and be accountable for the role they play in delivering great performance. To help deliver this message we have commissioned a series of animated films featuring on roles throughout our businesses and how they fit into the complex matrix which determines whether your train arrives on time.

The Joint Performance Improvement Centre (JPIC)

During the pandemic, the work of the Joint Performance Improvement Centre has continued, with Network Rail using the opportunity of fewer passengers to carry out several major infrastructure projects to improve performance on our network. This work has allowed a number of delay causing speed restrictions to be removed.

This coupled with greater resilience in our timetable due to running a reduced lockdown timetable has allowed us to deliver vastly improved performance with our Public Performance Measure (PPM) running at consistently over 90%. As lockdown has eased and we have increased the number of services, we have worked hard to maintain this improvement, and although we are now running around 85% of our normal timetable we are still delivering performance in the 90s.

What Covid has proved is the trade off between capacity and performance - the more trains you run, the harder it is to recover when something goes wrong. With many people predicting their working patterns will change following Covid, perhaps this is an opportunity to rebalance the capacity v performance scales.

But it would be wrong to think that our performance improvement is purely down to fewer trains. The JPIC has been working hard analysing the root causes of poor performance, identifying the problem stations and trains and using a new digital tool called Quartz to help station colleagues to flag issues and identify how they might be resolved.

Improving Command and Control: Phase 1 benefits

Phase 1 of the control centre improvements, has already delivered some significant performance benefits that can be directly attributed to the improved incident response and service recovery solutions (as at the end of January 2020)

We have seen a 14% reduction in reactionary delay versus the same time last year

We have also made changes to our control room to improve communication and have appointed 28 SWR Train Service Managers and 7 Duty Control Managers working with NR colleagues to ensure passenger interests are foremost in decision making. A new service recovery tool allows managers to search by service and time of day to identify service recovery options within seconds. This should help ensure that controversial recovery tools such as “skip stopping” are only used when it is the most appropriate solution.

We are also improving how we respond to incidents, with airwave radio technology rolled out in the NR operations response teams to enable much quicker communication and ensure the right people respond to incidents in the fastest possible time. This improvement follows the introduction last year of Welfare Officers to try and reduce the number of trespass and fatalities across the network.

Network Rail has also introduced a new infrastructure Assets Out of Use (AOoU) prioritisation process which ensures that performance impacting infrastructure issues are resolved more quickly. There have also been new AOoU processes developed for lifts and platform CCTV cameras to improve the response and fix times from maintenance functions.

The next few months will see tablets rolled out to station management and supervisory staff to allow access to performance systems and real time information apps, and we have plans to open additional sidings to allow us to get trains out of way in the event of disruption and so recover the service quicker.

We will also be looking to further reduce the delays caused by trespass by working with BTP to provide real time access to our trains’ forward facing CCTV cameras to enable quicker recovery from these highly disruptive incidents.

Speed Restrictions

Speed restrictions have always had a significant impact on the punctuality of SWR services. Since a peak of 65 temporary or emergency speed restrictions on the Wessex network in 2018, we have continued to scrutinise and constructively challenge our colleagues in Network Rail to address these speeds with a view to prioritise and remove them.

During this period of reduced services, Network Rail has made significant gains in this area with over a 50% reduction since the beginning of the pandemic to now. The removal of these speed restrictions is having a significant positive impact on the punctuality of our services.

Holden Recommendations

In August 2018, Sir Michael Holden made 28 recommendations for performance improvement on the Wessex route. These were divided into short, medium and long term recommendations based on their complexity. During FY19/20, through detailed reviews with Sir Michael, 17 recommendations were closed. The reviews have continued during the pandemic and a further recommendation was closed in May leaving only 10 of the 28. Further reviews are planned in the Autumn when we aim to close a further 3 recommendations.



Barry Lemm, one of our new Duty Control Managers at the Wessex Integrated Control Centre at Basingstoke

Investing in improved journeys

With more investment than ever before taking place across the Wessex route, Network Rail has successfully completed some major projects in the first half of 2020.

The Heart of Wessex line was closed in January to undertake a major bridge renewal at Yetminster, track works between Chetnole and Weymouth and line refurbishment and tunnel strengthening works between Dorchester West and Maiden Newton.

In April the Guildford line was closed for 10 days to replace track circuits, points, a mile of track and over a mile of conductor rail. This was a particular challenge as the project took place at

the beginning of the pandemic and therefore extra safety measures were required to ensure this project was not put at risk.

In May the Eastleigh/Fareham upgrade was successfully completed with over a mile of new track laid, improving the line for the next sixty years. The team also took advantage of the closure by carrying out some general maintenance work to the points and rails.

Finally, in June, Network Rail stabilised the cutting at Templecombe by inserting a number of four metre steel nails reinforced by cement to stop any further movement.



Embankment stabilisation work during the Templecombe blockade June 2020

Track works during the Guildford blockade April 2020

Crime and trespass

Trespassing on the railway is dangerous and illegal, and Network Rail works closely with the Train Operators and the British Transport Police (BTP) to reduce incidents of trespass on the network. Many trespassers are children and teenagers, so we are running a number of social media campaigns in partnership with the BTP and local schools to reinforce the message of staying off the tracks and staying safe. At the end of last year, in partnership with SWR, Network Rail launched a new initiative on the Wessex route aimed at reducing trespass – the introduction of Trespass and Welfare Officers at stations. They have proved very successful in not only reducing the number of tragic

fatalities on our network, but also in reducing the delays caused by trespass and vandalism.

Speed restrictions

We are pleased that Network Rail's programme of work for this year has allowed us to remove speed restrictions across our network, improving the performance of our services and delivering for our passengers. Compared to Summer 2018, there are now over 75% fewer speed restrictions on the Wessex route, meaning that in many more cases, trains are able to run at full line speed.

Autumn

Disruption and delays from the seasonal problems of Autumn are an annual challenge for train operating companies. The falling autumn leaves can contaminate the railheads, leading to a dangerous situation where train wheels aren't able to grip the rails.

Our top priority is always the safety of our passengers and colleagues, and we're working flat-out, in conjunction with Network Rail, to ensure we are ready for the challenges posed by the changing seasons.

We are currently in the process of providing additional training to our drivers in how to cope with these conditions – especially those who have been involved in autumnal incidents in the past or have only recently joined us. Our drivers will constantly be kept abreast of which stretches of track are likely to suffer from poor adhesion, with our control centre and Network Rail regularly producing real-time updates.

Meanwhile, our fleet team are paying particular attention to maintaining wheelsets to ensure that fleet availability remains high throughout the season. We are also currently testing a new app, which will help us to monitor the sanding units on trains more effectively and so minimise the number of trains running out of sand and so being taken out of service.

All this work comes on top of the preparation undertaken by Network Rail, who will be deploying a number of Multi-Purpose-Vehicles across our network. These have the capability to waterjet the rails to remove leaves and so lessening the possibility of a lack of grip.

Network Rail's use of enhanced science and technology will also play a key role in preventing disruption across our network during the autumn months. They have invested in a high-definition adhesion forecasting service provided by the Met Office, which will enable us to have a more precise idea of where and when a lack of grip could be a problem. In addition, the applicators which dispense grip increasing traction gel in known problem locations, have been upgraded which should also help to further reduce disruption and delays from the seasonal problem of "slippery rails".



Embankment stabilisation works during the Guildford blockade April 2020

A 40 metre gabion wall was built at the bottom of the cutting – which is made of buckets of stone – adding further protection. These measures will prevent landslips and ensure improved performance. While the line was closed, the opportunity was also taken to replace 400 metres of track in the Gillingham area to stabilise the land that sits below the track. Network Rail also replaced part of the roof at Sherborne station as well as improving the appearance of both Sherborne and Templecombe stations by removing vegetation, replacing fencing and repainting the buildings in partnership with SWR.



Repairs to Sherborne station roof during the Templecombe blockade June 2020

Network Rail update - from Mark Killick

COVID-19

At the height of the pandemic, the railway was designated a key service to remain open to ensure those who could not work from home were able to reach their places of work. Freight services were also prioritised, allowing key medical supplies to reach hospitals, and making sure food made it to supermarket shelves around the country. In line with the Government message at the time to 'stay at home', footfall through our managed stations in London fell dramatically. London Waterloo saw the biggest decrease in passenger numbers with a 95% reduction compared to the 94.2 million annual journeys, or around 125,000 journeys that are made through the station on an average weekday.

As more passengers have returned to the railway with easements to the lockdown restrictions, our priority has been to ensure the continued safety of the railway network. This means providing a safe environment for our colleagues to carry out their important and necessary work and for passengers to make their journeys. As non-essential retailers began to re-open, along with pubs, restaurants and leisure facilities, passenger numbers started to gradually climb and by the middle of June were between 15 and 20% of an average weekday. In our stations, we have been taking a number of steps to keep passengers safe, including:

- **One way systems in stations to facilitate social distancing and to reduce congestion**
- **Hand sanitiser stations**
- **Floor vinyl signage to help passengers navigate through the station**

We are continuing to work closely with the government and the Train Operating Companies, including SWR, to make sure we're doing the right thing for everybody's health.

CMSP

Looking to the longer term Network Rail's Long-Term Planning Process is called Continuous Modular Strategic Planning or CMSP. This has replaced the Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) and Route Study processes that preceded it. The CMSP process has been developed following a series of reviews of Network Rail, including the Hendy, Bowe and Shaw reviews. These reviews proposed some recommendations for improved planning to support the devolved route businesses, focus explicitly on the needs of customers and move towards a more continuous enhancements pipeline.



With these recommendations in mind, the CMSP process has moved away from the traditional large Route Studies, aligned to Control Periods, towards an ongoing process of continuous planning that addresses more focussed "modules". These modules mean that we can examine the transport needs of smaller geographical areas or address specific strategic questions through closer engagement with stakeholders including Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships and Passenger/User Groups. In 2019/20 the Wessex Route System Operator team took forward two modules, focussed on two specific areas – the West of England line, and Solent.

The WoE study looked at ways of increasing capacity to meet demand, improving journey times, enabling the line to be used as a diversionary route for services from the Great Western Main Line and improving the performance and resilience of the line. A number of infrastructure interventions were identified and we are now working with DfT, SWR, GWR and our stakeholders to obtain funding to progress some of the recommendations.

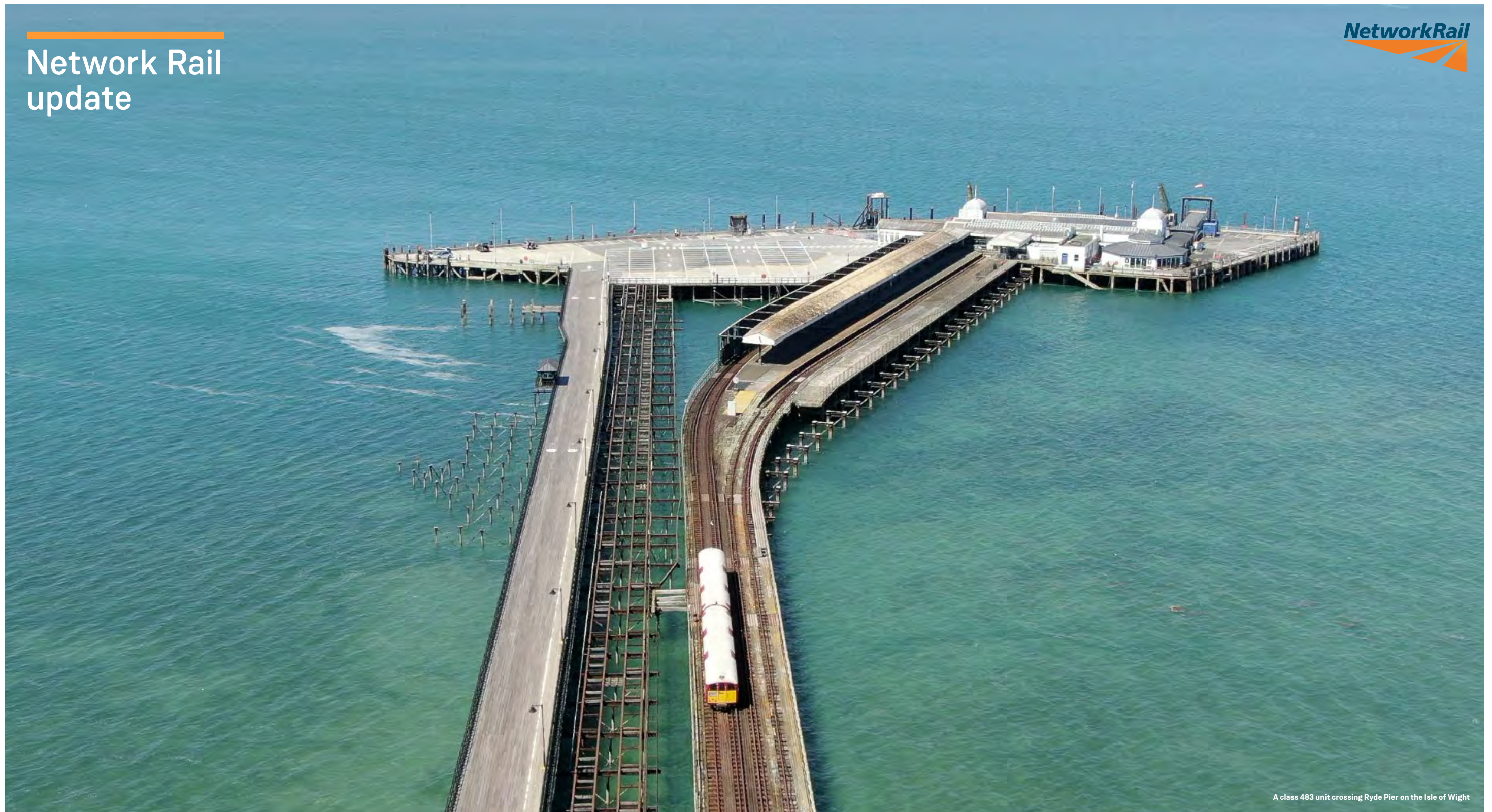
The Solent study looked at ways to enable modal shift away from car and on to rail across the Solent area, improve performance and improve journey times between major Solent locations. We are working with DfT, SWR and our stakeholders to obtain funding to progress some of the recommendations. This study was produced in conjunction with Solent Transport (a team funded by Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth councils).

In the 2020/21 programme of CMSP modules we are looking at a number of issues including our mainline capacity strategy, Solent to the Midlands Freight (in conjunction with Highways England) and Dorset Connectivity – this latter study to look at encouraging modal shift from road to rail and improving connectivity between regional hubs.

Feltham re-signalling

Work continues on the Feltham re-signalling project to re-signal over 80 miles of some of the most congested tracks on our Wessex route, an investment of over £300 million. The current signalling systems date back to 1974 and are now life-expired and can cause performance problems on this part of the network. The new systems are state of the art and will improve performance of train services and reduce the time it takes to restore services when there is disruption. The technology we are using also paves the way for future digital-based signalling and will enable us to future-proof our signalling operations on the network. The work is being delivered in 6 stages – the first stage (Shepperton branch) was commissioned last year, and the remaining stages will be completed between 2021 and 2024. The next phases are in the Twickenham/Strawberry Hill and Virginia Water/Ascot areas. The new signalling will be controlled from the recently built Basingstoke ROC. As part of the work, we are also improving and upgrading a number of level crossings to improve the reliability and resilience of services, and to assure the safety of local residents using the crossings.

Network Rail update



A class 483 unit crossing Ryde Pier on the Isle of Wight

Future plans

With £2bn in funding for investment on the Wessex route until 2024, we are working closely with SWR and our other train operating partners to deliver significant improvements to large parts of the network.

In Southampton, we are pleased to be supporting the city's move towards a 'greener Southampton' with our Southampton Freight Train Lengthening Scheme. The area around the city, with its ports and freight terminals, is a vital part of Britain's freight network, allowing goods to be transported from the South Coast up towards the Midlands and beyond. Over the Autumn and into the new year, a series of track renewals and the commissioning of a new signalling system in the area will

allow longer freight trains to run (up to 775 metres in length) to and from Southampton, increasing the capacity for rail freight transportation and reducing the number of goods vehicles using the road network which can cause traffic congestion and carbon emissions.

Nearby, on the Isle of Wight, we have started a project to renew the superstructure of Ryde Pier. Ryde Pier is the among the longest seaside piers in England, hails from the early 19th century and is an important element of the local landscape. The structure is nearing the end of its operational life, and by investing in the pier at this stage we will be able to continue running services to Ryde Pier station. The track-supporting

structure will be renewed, and a full refurbishment of the station canopy and drainage will be carried out. This significant investment will provide better, more reliable journeys on the Isle of Wight, both for local residents and for tourists coming to and from the mainland. The work will also include the renewal of the historic structure and preserve the heritage of this important pier for the Isle of Wight. At present (July 2020) we are preparing for surveys to take place on the pier and are entering into the option selection stage of the project having already completed a feasibility study. We are working closely with our colleagues at SWR to minimise service disruption to Island Line passengers during this important project. We are engaging with Isle of Wight Council to explore other

opportunities to make further improvements to the public environment at Ryde.

A big focus for us later this year will be significant railway improvement work at Nine Elms Junction between Clapham Junction and London Waterloo – one of the busiest sections of railway in the whole of Europe. These works over the Christmas and New Year period will allow us to provide a more reliable service into London, in an area which is highly congested, particularly in the morning peak. Our teams are working closely with colleagues at SWR to ensure passengers are kept updated on this project ahead of the line closure and to minimise service disruption on the route.

Isle of Wight

Plans to revitalise Island Line with a £26 million investment in new trains and improved infrastructure are moving on apace.

Despite the effect of the COVID-19 crisis, our Major Projects team have continued with the preparations for the major infrastructure works early next year. They have also carried out work at stations along the 8.5 mile route to allow new trains to undertake testing when they arrive later this year. This has included lowering the track bed under railway bridges and other lineside infrastructure changes, to accommodate the new trains before the more large scale infrastructure work is carried out during a three-month blockade of the line from 4 January to 31 March 2021. Alongside improvements to the ride quality of the track, one major element of the infrastructure work will be to install a new passing loop at Brading to allow a more standardised half-hourly service.

The blockade will also see the upgrading of platforms to allow for level access to the replacement trains and work to enhance the power supply. Network Rail will also use the blockade as an opportunity to carry out improvement works to Ryde Pier, including to the supports and cross beams which support the railway line down the pier to Ryde Esplanade. In all Network Rail is undertaking a multi-million refurbishment of the pier structure.

Once the work is complete the current 1938 trains will no longer be able to run as they will no

longer be compatible with the infrastructure, and work has already started to try and find new homes for them. These former London Underground trains have spent the last 80 years carrying first commuters, and then Islanders and holidaymakers, so they deserve a well earned rest. We hope that some of those retirement homes will be on the Island, and the neighbouring Isle of Wight Steam Railway has already expressed an interest.

The first of the replacement trains (Class 484's) will arrive on the Isle of Wight in late September. It is expected that the second and third units will arrive before the end of 2020 with the last two units arriving in the early part of the new year. When these trains come into full service, passengers will ride on these 'as new' trains with modern on-board facilities such as passenger information systems and Wi-Fi. They will also have interconnecting gangways to allow staff to move through the train, providing greater visibility and assistance to passengers.

The five new Class 484s will each be formed of two carriages, but during busy seasonal peaks will be able to be joined together to provide additional capacity to meet demand.

The £26 million improvement programme for Island Line has been funded through the Department for Transport, with £1 million of third-party funding provided by Solent Local Enterprise Partnership and Isle of Wight Council.



One of the new Isle of Wight Class 484 units under construction at the Viva Rail factory at Long Marston



An Isle of Wight service north of Brading

The journey begins for our Arterio trains

The Arterio trains, also known as Class 701s, are a massive project for our network, colleagues and passengers. Our £1bn investment in this new fleet aims to transform daily journeys for millions of passengers to and from one of the busiest stations in Europe - Waterloo.

The summer period has been crucial in our journey to rolling out the fleet. Despite the impact of coronavirus we welcomed the arrival of two trains to kickstart the crucial train testing and crew training programmes.

Following the arrival of the first train at Eastleigh in June, work is now well underway to obtain certification from the Office for Rail and Road to begin testing on our Mainline by the end of the summer. Once approval is granted, we'll put the fleet through its paces to ensure the Arterios are ready for passenger service.

Wimbledon depot will eventually become the new maintenance home for the entire Class 701 fleet, so the arrival of the first train there, in July, was a major milestone, and allowed training on the new trains to start. In all we are investing in training 1,300 train crew, maintenance crews and other depot colleagues, ahead of the fleet's introduction.

Along with our investment in colleagues, we're also investing to improve stations, depots and other infrastructure to deliver a step-change in performance for our passengers.

For example, we've invested £60m to build a new flagship depot on Feltham's old marshalling yard in South West London. As well as eventually stabling the new fleet and providing an additional location to clean the Arterios, the depot will help manage performance on our network by providing additional stabling in the event of disruption, allowing us to recover the service more quickly. Once fully operational in 2021, ten 10-car trains will be stabled at Feltham.

The full fleet of 90 new (60x10-car and 30x5-car) Class 701 trains will be introduced over an 18 month to 2-year period once the first train enters passenger service on the Reading line in late 2020.

Our close working relationship with Bombardier, the train's manufacturer, has been invaluable in ensuring the programme continued throughout the pandemic so we could achieve these important project milestones. However, introducing a fleet of this size is a complicated process - even more so during a crisis - and there's much more to be done.

Over the coming months, our programme will continue to gather pace and we'll be working hard behind the scenes to deliver the trains that will represent a step change in both customer service and performance for our passengers.

Alex Foulds

SWR's Major Projects Director

"The programme is gathering pace and we're entering an important phase of the projects as we begin real-world testing on our network ahead of the trains entering passenger service later this year."

"We've been working hard with Bombardier to ensure that these trains are fit and ready to transform journeys for suburban passengers."



Artist impression of 701 Arterio train at Waterloo Station



The depot team at Wimbledon with one of the first 701 units



The interior of a class 701 unit



A class 701 unit at Eastleigh for testing

Laying out of track at Feltham depot July 2020

Feltham depot – transformation already underway

FirstGroup (SWR's owners along with MTR), in partnership with Network Rail and VolkerFitzpatrick, one of the UK's leading civil engineering companies, began construction work at the old Feltham marshalling yard in late 2019 to bring a third of the vast 11 acre site back into use following its closure in the late-1960s.

Mainline work has continued over the summer period in readiness for the new trains later this year with other aspects of the project due to make big strides over the coming months too. August has seen the arrival and construction of modular office accommodation to provide drivers and guards, as well as the train presentation teams who will clean and maintain each train every night, with modern facilities. Specialist servicing and train washing

equipment will also be installed on site over the coming months to help keep trains looking good. The end of the summer will also see the installation of the third rail, an important step in helping prepare the depot ahead of the arrival of the first Class 701 train.

The depot will also see the installation of new technology which automates shunting. Funded by the Department for Transport (DfT), this technology will provide a safer working environment and help to minimise disruption for passengers.

Once fully operational in 2021, ten 10-car Class 701 trains will be stabled at the depot.



Feltham depot construction team

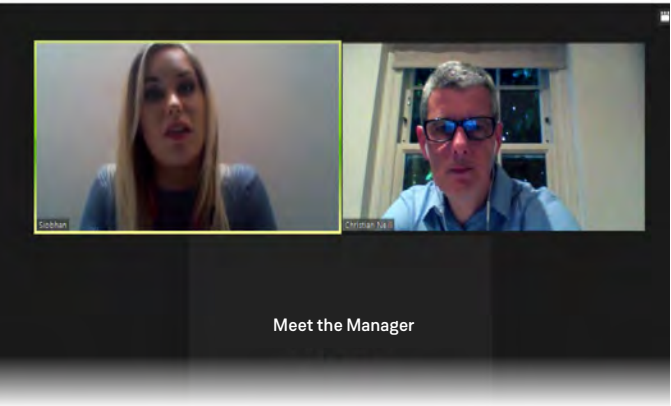


Meet the Manager

Last year we trialled a new way of engaging with our customers through a one-on-one Meet the Manager session, where customers were able to book 15 minute personal appointments with a senior manager, typically a Head of or Director, to discuss areas of concern. The sessions, facilitated by Transport Focus and held at Waterloo Station, were hugely successful.

Meeting over a coffee allowed for a more in depth and personal conversation and we were keen to make this a regular feature in our customer communications programme. When Covid struck we realised that meeting in person was not going to be possible, so we decided to hold an industry first – a digital Meet the Manager session, utilising Zoom.

We replicated the one-on-one format and our first session saw 10 customers discuss a range of topics – many around season ticket refunds. This was a great success, and so we’ve decided to hold another event on 29th September.



Screenshot of one of the meetings at our virtual Meet the Manager event May 2020

New waiting shelters across the South Western Railway network

We are investing over £2 million in new waiting shelters at 39 stations over the next 9 months. The shelters will be a combination of standard, cantilever and gull wing design, depending on the specific sites and platform widths. Several locations for the new shelters have been chosen following customer and stakeholder feedback.

As well as protecting our customers from inclement weather, the shelters will encourage passengers to use the full length of the platform, which reduces the time trains are at the station and in turn reduces delays.

Where feasible, we also plan to include photovoltaic solar panels and battery storage to power the shelter lights each night

The first two shelters to be installed this summer will be at Teddington and Hampton with other stations including Raynes Park, Surbiton, Worcester Park, Basingstoke, Eastleigh, Andover and Havant.

NRPS

Results from Transport Focus’ Spring 2020 wave of the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) were released in early July 2020, revealing a satisfaction score of 75%.

Whilst we are disappointed with the results, we are not surprised. Punctuality and reliability are the biggest drivers of satisfaction and this research was carried out during a particularly challenging time for our customers:

- a month-long strike by the RMT in December,
- two months dominated by severe weather, and
- a major freight train derailment which affected the network for several days

Overall Satisfaction

Spring 2020	Spring 2019
75	74

You can find a breakdown of scores against our franchise

Targets below			
Targets for 2020/2021	Metro	Long Distance	Outer Suburban & Island Line
Stations	70%	78%	73%
Trains	73%	73%	73%
Customer Service	65%	76%	73%

Scores vs Targets	Metro	Long Distance	Outer Suburban & Island Line
Stations	-10.4%	-11.4%	-6.7%
Trains	-11.7%	-0.9%	-13.8%
Customer Service	-7.3%	-8.9%	10.0%

Scores for Spring 2020	Metro	Long Distance	Outer Suburban & Island Line
Stations	59.6%	66.6%	66.2%
Trains	61.3%	72.1%	59.2%
Customer Service	57.7%	67.1%	63.0%

Despite the devastating impact of COVID-19 across the globe, we are working hard behind the scenes to make headway in improving services.

We are continuing to work with Network Rail to improve performance and have already seen signs of improvement, and we’ve recently welcomed the first of our new £1 billion suburban trains for testing this summer. As well as providing a step-change in customer experience, these new trains offer a significant opportunity to improve performance by using modern technology to reduce station dwell times on some of our busiest routes.

Besides improving our NRPS results we are working on a whole suite of activity to enhance customer experience across our network. COVID-19 has been a challenging time for the industry, and we have been working to keep our customers and colleagues safe.

Beyond COVID- 19, we are working to strengthen the service we provide. This year we have revamped our Customer Council to develop greater working relationships between representatives and senior leaders. Following a successful recruitment process, we have appointed six members to work with the business to help improve our customer experience. The representatives will help to develop new ideas, challenge existing ones, and put customers at the heart of everything we do.

Seven specific areas have been identified to focus on, that our customers have fed back are not as good as they expect them to be. Lost property and booking travel assistance are two examples of the areas we are focusing on. For each area we have identified a workstream to understand and implement changes and improvements to provide our customers with the service they expect.

Transport Focus/ London TravelWatch



Anthony Smith, Chief Executive of Transport Focus and London TravelWatch

This has been quite a year for passengers.

Both Transport Focus and London TravelWatch continued to work with, and push, SWR on performance. There were hopeful signs of improvements just after Christmas but the coronavirus struck before these came to fruition. However, performance during and since lockdown has been good – with punctuality being around 95 per cent. It will be important to maintain this as passenger numbers begin to rise again.

SWR worked extremely hard to run a reduced service during the periods of industrial action and we worked with them on communications about the 'strike timetable'. We also argued for compensation for passengers and were pleased when a package was announced in February.

In addition to the above we continued to work with SWR on its Customer Experience Forum. This has proved an effective way of train companies across Great Britain sharing ideas, experience and best practice – one subject being Delay Repay and how to get more passengers to claim when they are delayed.

We also worked with SWR on revamping its 'meet the manager' session at Waterloo station. Offering appointments with timeslots seemed to work well and gave passengers an opportunity for a more detailed discussion.

And then came coronavirus... We would like to put on record our thanks for all the hard work that went into keeping services running for keyworkers and other essential travel. We recognise and applaud the effort, and the bravery, required to do this.

One of the immediate consequences of lockdown was a flood of requests for refunds, especially from season ticket holders who were no longer travelling. This created a huge backlog and in some cases passengers had to wait a long time for their refund. We worked with SWR on plans to address this and, especially, on improving the information and advice being provided to passengers online. We're pleased that, at the time of writing, SWR has cleared this backlog and has also completed the first phase of the 'strike' compensation payments as well.

Recovering from the coronavirus remains the big challenge for the rest of 2020 and probably into 2021 as well. Balancing capacity with the need to maintain social distancing will be a tricky task, as will be maintaining high levels of punctuality as service levels increase. But perhaps the main challenge will be in drawing people back onto trains.

Many commuters have embraced working from home and there is every likelihood of this continuing in some form with people combining 2-3 days at home with the rest in the office. Traditional season tickets will not be suitable for this – people will resent buying a weekly ticket if they are only going to use it for a couple of days a week. We believe that there is a real need for carnet/flexible tickets that cater for this new way of working, and for other discounts/fares designed to encourage people to travel again.

Both London TravelWatch and Transport Focus will ensure that passengers' views are at the heart of decisions being made in these challenging times.

Anthony Smith, Chief Executive

TravelWatch Southwest



TravelWatch SouthWest is a community interest company that links the scores of voluntary and professional organisations with an interest in promoting the interests of public transport users in the South West. We have built considerable experience in working cooperatively and proactively with policy leads in local and national government, and with the transport operators.

We were therefore delighted when Mark Hopwood from GWR, a long-time partner for TravelWatch SouthWest, stepped across to South Western Railway at the beginning of the year. We know him for his focus on delivering timetables that work, for his interest in the views of the passengers that he serves, and for his ability to get people to work together in solving problems, whoever their employer. We have already seen the benefits of this approach.

A unique collaborative project has been underway in the South West over the last year. SWR, Network Rail – the owner and infrastructure manager of most of the railway network – and local government representatives teamed up with users' representatives to identify and assess potential investments designed to improve performance, accommodate growth and improve journey times on the West of England line to Yeovil and Exeter. The findings are openly available – see <https://cdn.networkrail.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/West-of-England-Study-Continuous-Modular-Strategic-Planning.pdf>. A similar group involving users' representatives is now working on plans for improving Dorset's rail connectivity. The collaborative approach has brought benefits for all.

TravelWatch SouthWest's stakeholders have also benefitted from the time given by SWR's Regional Development Manager to participate – as a listener as well as a mentor – in a series of weekly webinars focussed on identifying what might be the 'new normal' in the post-pandemic transport system. Close engagement helps reinforce mutual understanding and cooperation between the railway and its users' representatives. Passengers can be amongst the useful eyes and ears of the everyday railway.

One of the topics that we have continued to press is the need to adapt peak-hour service provision for people who work, study, shop or have appointments in Exeter. SWR is well-placed to take some of the burden off the road network from East Devon where there has been much new housing whilst also having to cope with the effects of increasing centralisation on the county city of education (not sure what this means) and other services. We look forward to having something positive to say on this in next year's report.

Chris Irwin, Chair

Meet the Customer Council

This year we have revamped our independent Customer Council. It now consists of six members – the Chair, four regional representatives and a digital representative.

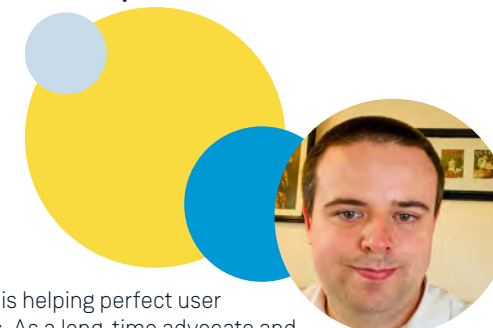
The Council had its inaugural meeting in July, and they were welcomed to the business by Christian Neill, SWR's Deputy Customer Experience Director. The session was an excellent opportunity for the Council to understand the business in more depth and start to become involved in up and coming projects. We look forward to a successful year working with South Western Railway.

Geoffrey Bignell – Chair of the Customer Council



As a regular commuter from Hampshire into London, as well as leisure travel I have first-hand experience of using SWR. I applied to join the Customer Council to bring this experience and to help to give a voice to my fellow travellers and to help improve the customer experience for all.

David Mayl - Central Representative



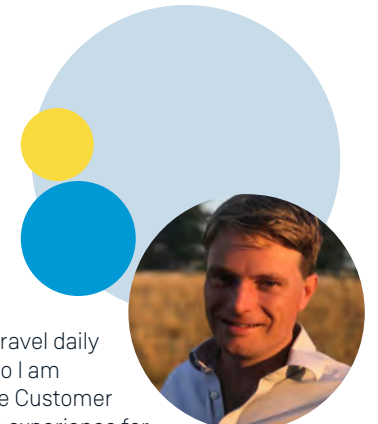
My passion is helping perfect user experiences. As a long-time advocate and user of the railway, I can't wait to help take SWR's digital offerings to the next level and to be an ambassador for fellow passengers.

Simon Bangs - Digital Representative



Having spent the last 14 years travelling on the network and experiencing the positive and negatives from a customer point of view I really wanted to be able to input and have a positive impact on the important work you all do at SWR. For me providing positive solutions and ideas to things that I spend a large proportion of my life doing is incredibly important and I look forward to working with you all in the weeks and months ahead.

Emma Jane Hendry - Metro Representative



I live in rural Wiltshire and travel daily into London on SWR, and so I am keen to be involved with the Customer Council to help improve the experience for passengers using the West of England Mainline.

Tim Burr - West Representative



With a background in the operations and supply chain industry I have considerable experience in leading complex programmes and commercial initiatives and understanding the importance of customer needs. As a regular commuter into London, I am delighted to represent the South Region and help represent our customers' needs in Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, and surrounding areas.

Richard Pickard - South Representative

Station Improvements

Painting

We have begun the process of repainting our stations to improve their appearance and make them more welcoming gateways for local communities. Pokesdown (Bournemouth) has already been completed alongside Wimbledon. A further 24 will be complete by the end of 2020 with another 20 planned by the end of March 2021.

Station Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi is now available at all our managed stations on the network except Millbrook (due shortly), ensuring customers can stay connected across their entire journey with us.

At the beginning of the SWR franchise just 5 stations had customer Wi-Fi and now all 186 stations across the mainland network as well as the Isle of Wight will have this facility. The service has been specified based on passenger volumes to ensure all customers can benefit, even when stations are busy.

Car Park Technology

We have installed Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) at 61 stations across the network, covering over 80% of all parking spaces. ANPR will improve the overall parking experience for our customers by allowing them to park and pay for their parking without needing to display a season ticket/permit or return to their car to display a daily or weekly ticket. We have also installed bay sensors which monitor usage of blue badge and other special parking provision in the larger station car parks.

This new car park technology will also allow us to monitor car park occupancy and display this information in real time via our app and website. It will also give us better information about which of our car parks are busiest, helping us to plan car park improvements and potential future expansion projects.

Improving our car parks

Network Rail is investing in improvements to car parks at fourteen stations on our network this year. The work includes resurfacing, repainting lines, marking out safe walking routes, removing trip hazards and improvements to drainage.

Since February improvements have already been completed at Fleet, Sunningdale, Effingham Junction, Horsley, Claygate, Weybridge, Botley, Honiton, Salisbury, New Milton, Hinton Admiral and Overton.

The next phase of works includes Worcester Park, Witley and Farnborough.

Shining a new light on energy efficiency

Our programme to replace all the lighting on our stations with new LED lighting is progressing well. So far, 73 stations have had their old, inefficient lamps replaced with LEDs, reducing energy consumption by 17% and offering greater visibility at night for our passengers and staff. With over 17,000 lamps to replace, the project is being delivered in phases, with the final phase being completed by the end of this year.

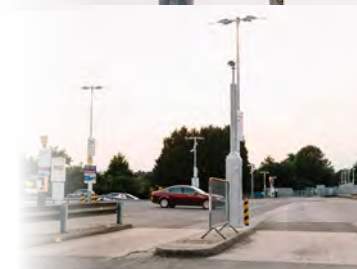
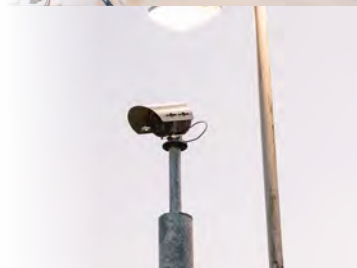
Paramedic Rooms

We have funded the installation of paramedic rooms at Woking, Wimbledon and Vauxhall stations. The project delivered a dedicated space for paramedics to triage patients and deal with medical situations at the station. The repurposed and refurbished rooms had to be secure, have an electrical supply, heating and adequate lighting to allow paramedics to deal with a wide range of medical incidents. An additional benefit is the ability to take customers off the train for treatment, leading to a reduction in delays caused by persons taken ill on a train.'

Pete Boustred, Head of Green City & Infrastructure

Southampton City Council

"Southampton City Council has a long history of working in partnership with the train operator to improve stations in the Southampton area. Under South Western Railway, this has been further enhanced with the positive approach by both parties to take forward opportunities to develop the ambitious Transforming Cities Fund project for central station, and look at improvements at other stations, whilst working together on how rail can assist with the recovery of the City centre following the COVID-19 crisis."



December Industrial Action Compensation Scheme

Earlier this year we launched our compensation scheme for customers affected by last December's industrial action.

Given the duration and intensity of the month-long strike, we wanted to offer compensation over and above the normal delay repay arrangements in recognition of the exceptional disruption customers faced.

To date, the scheme has seen around £2.8m of compensation paid to over 35,000 customers. Of those customers, more than 90% were able to process their claims automatically by simply clicking an online link we sent them.

The scheme is open until the end of September and we are determined to compensate as many eligible customers as we can. As well as publicity and announcements on stations, we have also launched a campaign on social media and in digital media to promote the scheme and encourage customers to check their eligibility and apply for compensation on our website.

This summer also saw us offer additional compensation to customers who had been most seriously affected by the Eastleigh freight train derailment which closed the mainline at Southampton for several days in January.

Accessibility

We continue to work to make our railway as accessible as possible, and throughout Covid have continued to provide assistance to those that need it.

We have also been working to address some of the key issues raised by customers. One such issue is the desire to be able to travel spontaneously without the need to pre-book assistance.

To address this desire we have developed our innovative Assisted Boarding Points trial. Short-listed in this year's National Rail Awards, this scheme will allow customers to simply turn up and travel.

The idea is that each station will have a dedicated place for the customer to wait on the platform. They can then call the advertised number, push the help-point or whatsapp us with their location and assistance requirements. We'll then contact the guard who will know where the customer is waiting on the platform and be ready to provide assistance.

Earlier this summer we launched Sunflower Lanyards on our network. These lanyards, which indicate that someone may have a non-visible disability, will make it easier for our staff to recognise those customers who may need a little extra help or understanding.

The lanyards and a similar Sunflower card are available from selected stations and through our contact centre, although they have proved so popular we are currently awaiting fresh supplies.

One of our trial boarding points at Strawberry Hill station



£70m modernisation of our Class 450 fleet

Earlier this year we completed the £70 million refurbishment programme to modernise the onboard experience for all our long-distance services between London Waterloo, Weymouth, Poole and Portsmouth.

Following our investment, every Class 444 and 450 train now boasts better interiors with state-of-the-art features, including improved Wi-Fi and access to SWR|Stream, new inductive charging tables and power sockets to help customers stay connected.

The completion of this refurbishment programme in January this year marked the end of a two-year programme, which has added 5,000 additional Standard Class seats for customers.

Helping passengers breathe more easily

In partnership with Porterbrook and emissions specialist, Eminox, we have completed a revolutionary trial of new technology which delivered immediate, real-world reductions in pollution from mid-life diesel trains by over 90%.

Eminox's emissions reduction system was fitted to the exhaust of a Class 159 train in full passenger usage between Waterloo and Exeter. This is the first successful transfer of proven emissions reduction technology in a rail environment as it was able to reduce pollution of nitrous oxides (NOx) by over 80% and hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and particulate matter (PM) by more than 90%.

The significant reduction in these harmful pollutants shows that this technology can enable mid-life diesel trains to closely match strict modern emissions standards for non-road machinery.

DC/AC: Class 442 trains to get high voltage

Revitalising our long-distance fleet of trains has been an important part of our promise to deliver better performance and improve the overall journey experience for our passengers.

Our £50 million investment in the Class 442s has seen passengers benefit from a full interior refurbishment, but now the programme enters the next phase: unlocking the performance potential of the entire fleet by installing new traction equipment systems.

Replacing every traction system in the entire 18-strong fleet from lower D/C (direct current) to higher A/C (alternating current) voltage equipment delivers a whole host of performance and reliability benefits. Modern traction systems allow smoother, quicker acceleration and better

braking; helping to reduce delays and improve service punctuality by reducing journey times between stations. Longer maintenance intervals will increase the number of trains available at any one time as the new systems are less prone to failure and the units can cover greater distances between services.

Modernising the entire Class 442 fleet also brings the added benefit of regenerative braking, helping the trains to become more sustainable by generating energy savings of around 20%.

The re-tractioning work and the testing programme is currently being undertaken at Gemini Rail Group's facility in Wolverton, while our Bournemouth Depot will recommission the fleet before the Class 442 trains re-enter passenger service in early 2021.

Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris said:

"The success of this Eminox trial in reducing harmful emissions underlines the importance of the 'First of a Kind' competition, which funds pioneering projects to support better, more environmentally friendly rail journeys.

"Reducing the railway's environmental impact and supporting decarbonisation is a priority for this Government. Harnessing innovation like this will be crucial in making our railways greener and cleaner in the future."

The trial, funded by the Department for Transport through InnovateUK's first-of-a-kind funding ('FoaK2'), was completed in March this year following six months of testing.

A class 159 unit near Corfe Castle on the Swanage Railway line

Keeping our customers connected

We are living in an increasingly digitally interconnected world, and we know that our customers need to be able to rely on a fast and reliable Wi-Fi connection when travelling with us.

We have been working with BT for over 18 months to improve connectivity across the network and BT has recently completed the upgrade of 104 4G cell masts increasing on train Wi-Fi throughput speeds to an average of 160 Mbps, an increase of

around 22.5% from that available at the beginning of the franchise. Over the next 18 months BT will be building an additional 31 mobile phone masts – all on sites identified as being crucial to improving passenger Wi-Fi on-board our trains – by filling in "not spots" in coverage. This three-year programme is set to further significantly improve connectivity and download speeds for customers using our services.



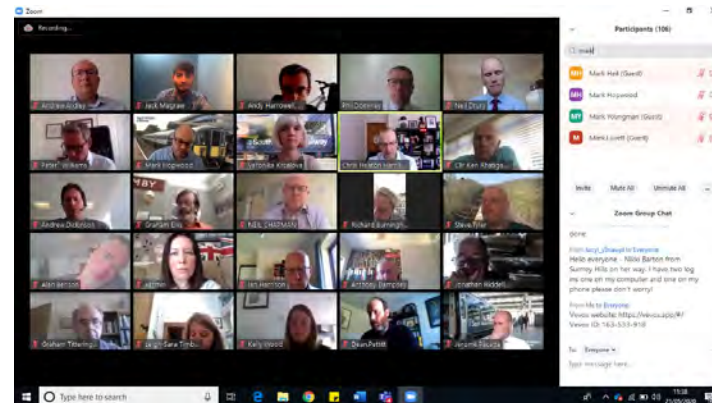
Innovation – Rail 5G

Over on the Isle of Wight, we are also participating in an exciting technology trial. It is not without irony that cutting-edge Rail-5G technology has been trialled on some of our oldest trains. As part of FirstGroup's roll-out of Rail-5G using trackside technology, the 80-year-old trains on the Isle of Wight were fitted with antennas and used to trial the new technology. Following this trial, we anticipate that Rail-5G will be rolled-out on part of the SWR network, creating the world's first ever publicly available gigabit railway.

Zooming in on our stakeholders

Although COVID 19 prevented us from holding the planned stakeholder conference in Southampton, we wanted to honour the original May 2020 date by holding one of the first virtual railway stakeholder conferences. This decision was well received with over 100 attendees coming on to the call. The conference was opened by the Rail Minister Chris Heaton Harris, a business update was given by our Managing Director and presentations given by other SWR senior representatives.

A positive discussion took place on how to work together to promote local recovery post COVID led by our Commercial Director, Peter Williams. This interactive session showed how important the railway will be in restoring the local economies with the key being to work with each other on information gathering and identifying the right time to promote public transport. We received positive feedback from our stakeholders for holding the virtual conference during the COVID 19 restrictions.



A screenshot of our virtual stakeholder conference in May 2020

Paul Millin, Group Manager, Strategic Transport Group, Surrey County Council

“Surrey County Council and South Western Railway, enjoy a positive relationship by working collaboratively together using regular communication, for the benefit of rail passengers, Surrey residents and local communities”

Pokesdown

Pokesdown station in Bournemouth is the focus of a great deal of partnership activity, bringing together several projects to address a number of societal problems, as well as encourage more people to use the station.

In recent years the station and surrounding area has been the focus of numerous incidences of vandalism, trespass and, sadly, fatalities. This has been distressing not just for the families involved, but for the community as a whole, and people have been discouraged from using the station.

We have been working closely with Network Rail, Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council, AFC Bournemouth football club, the NHS, police and local community groups to jointly plan both physical improvements and other programmes and interventions to make long lasting improvements.

In the short-term we, together with Network Rail, have employed Trespass and Welfare Officers to be at the station and offer support to vulnerable people and other rail users during train operating hours. Network Rail has supported this with investment in improved security fencing at the station and on adjacent bridges; and has removed lineside litter and graffiti. We have supported this with a repaint of the passenger areas of the station, a deep clean and the installation of free WiFi.

In addition, a new brighter mural has replaced the old mural on platform 2.

The local community has been very active in promoting improvements to the station, and the provision of passenger lifts in the old goods lift shafts was included in the South Western Railway franchise agreement. Progressing this scheme has proved



The new mural on platform 2 at Pokesdown station

to be technically very challenging and taken far longer than we would have liked. A report on the options regarding delivering this scheme has been presented to the Department for Transport.

We are also in discussion with BCP Council on opportunities to build on the project through the proposed Towns Fund bid for Boscombe and include further enhancements to the station building; and with AFC Bournemouth who plan to invest in wayfinding signage from the station to their ground.

The Council has already secured funding for a community led project at this and other stations in the BCP area through our Customer and Communities Improvement Fund. The aim is to secure greater community involvement in promoting and looking after the stations, including physical investment in community art and projects such as explaining the history of the railway and station, alongside the creation of a station adoption group. This will support a programme of activities to engage the community in reducing the level of trespass.

Fawley

Off the beaten track.

On the 28th July a South Western Railway Class 159 went off piste and took a trip down the former Fawley line. Joining Managing Director Mark Hopwood onboard were Rail Minister Chris Heaton Harris, Network Rail Chairman Sir Peter Hendy and other invited stakeholders from Hampshire County Council, Southampton City Council and the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership.

The purpose of the trip, organised jointly by us and Network Rail, was to fact-find following Hampshire's success in securing funding for a feasibility study into the reopening of the line, from the Department for Transport's Restoring Your Railway Fund.

The line, which has not seen a regular passenger service since 1966, and which now only sees the occasional military train to Marchwood sidings, links Southampton through Marchwood and Hythe to the oil refinery gates at Fawley and serves several sites ear-marked for development.

Thanks to everyone who made the trip possible, not least NR's track team who made sure it was safe for us to run, and to all those who turned out at the many level crossings to see the train pass.

The Isle of Wight Council has also received funding to develop a business case to establish whether there is a possibility of restoring passenger services on closed lines to Newport Harbour and Ventnor.

Nick Farthing, Chair – The Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership

“The pinnacle of our excellent working relationship, has been the running of the “Fawley Special” a train carrying high-level dignitaries on a fact-finding trip along the Fawley Branch in southern Hampshire”



The Fawley fact finding trip train leaving the closed Marchwood station for Southampton on 28th July 2020

Hampshire joint working

Our commitment to working in partnership extends to many areas. Below are just some of the different areas that we are working on within Hampshire.

Cycle schemes – In partnership with the Department for Transport, Hampshire County Council and Hart District Council a number of cycle schemes are being progressed. These include new cycle hubs at Basingstoke and Fleet and a new community cycle centre in the old signal box at Winchester.

Accessibility – We are working with Hampshire County Council and the local councillor to improve access at Totton station. Currently this station only has level access to the Southampton bound platform, the Bournemouth bound platform is completely inaccessible due to several steps. The proposal is to create a new level access from the platform using a disused railway line.

Restoring you Railway – As explained elsewhere, in July 2020, South Western Railway ran a train along the Fawley Waterside route as a fact-finding opportunity for stakeholders.

COVID-19 – South Western Railway is working with Hampshire and Southampton Transport recovery groups to assist with information gathering and establishing the next steps to assist with the transport requirements as restrictions start to be relaxed.

Southampton Central – In partnership with the Department for Transport and Southampton City Council a Transforming Cities Fund proposal to significantly improve multi-modal integration with buses, cycling and walking on the south side of the station, is now taking shape.

Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF) – Across the county, there are a wide range of community projects being developed as part of our overall £5.3m investment. Connecting people and communities has been the focus for the CCIF whether through addressing an area of social need or delivering a community benefit. In Hampshire this includes infrastructure schemes to improve safety for students attending schools/colleges in Winchester, Basingstoke or Liphook, to cycle/walking improvements at Alton, Basingstoke and Fleet stations, whilst these are complemented by community hub schemes at Shawford and Petersfield station, identifying a potential future opportunity at Winchfield.

CCIF is also about giving confidence to those groups who feel nervous in a railway environment. Approved schemes such as Think Safe for Schools, Travel Trainers for the over 65 year-olds and a planned series of outdoor activities to encourage walking and build up confidence to use trains in rural areas such as the New Forest, Hart, Rushmoor and Eastleigh, will help with this.

Cllr Rob Humby, , Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment at Hampshire County Council

“Good transport infrastructure is vital to Hampshire’s economic prosperity and quality of life, and we recognise the importance of working collaboratively with transport providers, promoting viable and sustainable alternatives to car travel, particularly as we work towards reducing carbon emissions as set out in our Climate Change Strategy. I’d also like to take this opportunity to thank South Western Railway for the service it has provided for key workers during the COVID crisis.”



Cllr Andrea Davis, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Development and Waste, Devon County Council and Vice Chair of Peninsula Sub National Transport Body

“Our most recent work with SWR has focused on educational access. The West of England Line is a key regional rail link and our partnership with SWR includes collaboration with Devon County Council (DCC) to provide transport for students in Exeter. Given the challenges the rail industry has faced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, our work with SWR has focused on ensuring the rail network can help students get back to their studies as schools prepare to return in September.”

The main entrance to Basingstoke station

Partnership with Surrey County Council

With 46 stations located in 8 of the 11 Districts, Surrey County Council is one of the largest and most influential stakeholders on our network. To provide a framework for station and railways investment, Surrey has an developed a rail strategy to help guide railway investment alongside housing, regeneration and sustainable growth. This will help ensure that funds are invested in key stations to support transport to and from gateway towns.

We work very closely with the County Council and other partners to develop this strategy and provide strategic improvements where needed, for example at Woking and Guildford stations we are involved in developing and delivering station enhancement capacity schemes to provide greater passenger capacity throughout. We are also engaged in plans for town centre regeneration, for example in Camberley, we are working to integrate the station into long term investment plans for the town centre.

We are actively working with the Council to improve the overall accessibility of stations and have been key in developing plans and attracting major investment through the Department for Transport’s Access for All programme to provide new bridges and lifts at Walton-on-Thames and Stoneleigh.

In line with the Councils’ rail strategy we are providing direct investment into station access improvements via our Customer

and Communities Infrastructure Fund including improved pedestrian access to Godalming station, and providing better public transport integration with provision of real time bus information screens at Weybridge, Ash Vale, Cobham, Frimley and Bookham.

Partnership working includes station improvements at Longcross. Longcross station, located on the line to Reading, until recently has had a very limited service pattern with only a handful of trains stopping in the morning and afternoon peaks. This meant there were long periods throughout the day with no services stopping at the station at all, discouraging people from travelling by train. One of the goals of our timetable change in December 2019 was to address this. We now provide a half-hourly service at the station from Monday to Saturday and an hourly service on a Sunday funded by developer contributions through Surrey County Council. The improved train service supports the construction of a new garden village being developed by Crest Nicholson.

There are plans in place to create up to 2,000 new homes on the former military site and redevelop the current film studios into a high-tech business park. It was important to provide a reliable and sustainable service from the start of construction to ensure the success of the garden village and business park projects. We hope this will encourage new residents and employees to make low carbon travel choices.

Partnership Working in Devon

Our West of England route through East Devon to Exeter performs many different roles from local commuting, leisure and education trips into Exeter itself, to other journeys towards Waterloo and stations in between.

In the short term we have been working with the County Council and Exeter College to support the return of hundreds of students to the college’s campuses around the city in September in the context of social distancing restrictions, while in the longer term building on a significant growth in student numbers travelling on our trains and enabling Exeter College to continue to grow and serve large parts of the region.

Increasing the accessibility of the railway has also been key. We have secured DfT funding to expand the Exeter e-bike network to Cranbrook and Honiton stations, providing much improved access to local employers and residential developments in an area which continues to grow rapidly. The bid would not have been successful without match funding from local stakeholders including businesses.

This investment is being further enhanced by Devon County Council’s successful bid to our Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF) for interchange improvements at Pinhoe, including e-bikes, a car club electric car and bus link to key local employment and education sites including Exeter College’s Monkerton campus, Amazon, Lidl’s regional distribution depot and Exeter airport. These accessibility improvements are complemented by our investment at many stations along the route including repainting, free WiFi, LED lighting and improvements to car parks such as live car park capacity information and Network Rail’s refurbishment programme, for example at Honiton.



Honiton station, Peter Slater (RailshotsUK)

Enhancements to physical infrastructure are supported by the excellent work of the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership and station adoption groups such as at Honiton, helping to make stations attractive and promoting rail travel to locals and visitors.

Strategic planning for the future is also key. Local stakeholders have worked with us, GWR and Network Rail to produce the West of England Continuous Modular Strategic Plan (CMSP) between Exeter and Basingstoke to make the case for infrastructure improvements to enhance capacity, frequencies and improve punctuality. Critically for Devon this would enable a half hourly frequency between Exeter and Axminster, forming part of the Devon Metro network including potential cross city links towards Crediton and Barnstaple. This investment, if approved, would support the continued housing and employment growth of the area which is being considered through our involvement in the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan (GESP). We are also working closely with the Peninsula Sub National Transport Body, Peninsula Rail Task Force and Great South West Partnership to support plans for further investment.

Dorset joint working

Railways are a key asset for Dorset, particularly given the limitations of the road network. The shorter-term focus has been on improving the quality and accessibility of stations, with longer term ambitions to support further housing growth and improve rail services.

Many Dorset stations have or will benefit from our wider programme of improvements including: WiFi, repainting and car park capacity monitoring. In addition the Dorset Coastal Forum has secured funding through our Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF) to improve the station forecourt at Weymouth as a gateway to the town and nearby beach, supporting longer term ambitions for further improvements to the station building itself. The forecourt improvements are expected to enable a number of key bus services to serve the station for the first time and will complement the new cycle parking facility being funded by the DfT with a contribution from Dorset Council.

There is also good news for Dorchester South station, as we have secured £750,000 of DfT Mid-Tier Accessibility funding as part of a package of improvements worth around £1.6m to the station building and waiting facilities in partnership with Dorset Council and Brewery Square. This will be further enhanced by additional cycle parking through the same DfT programme as Weymouth.

Wool Parish Council also secured funding through our CCIF fund for the conversion of the old parcels building at Wool station into a community facility. Alongside a café and toilets, the building will boast a shared bike hire facility to link the station to the nearby Dorset Innovation Park and Dorset Police HQ.

Swanage Railway is one of our key partners and we have been working closely with them to enable their services to connect with SWR at Wareham at certain points in the year. While this project has been put on hold due to COVID-19, we look forward to this coming to fruition and wish them luck with their bid to the Government's Restoring Your Railway Fund. Dorset Council has also supported us in securing DfT funding for additional cycle parking here, meaning passengers will no longer need to cross the railway from the north to park a bike. A similar scheme has also secured funding at Gillingham, and Dorset Council has won CCIF funding for cycle parking at Sherborne.

The Three Community Rail Partnership plays a key role in promoting travel in the area alongside several station adoption groups.

Looking further ahead Dorset Council and other stakeholders have been instrumental in progressing the Continuous Modular Strategic Plan (CMSP) for the West of England line and are now actively engaged in the development of a similar plan for rail routes throughout the rest of Dorset. Both plans will complement our work with the Western Gateway Sub National Transport Body on a long term rail plan for the area. Alongside this we are working closely with Dorset Council on its emerging Local Plan looking at the best locations for growth and the infrastructure required to support greater use of railways.

“

Neil Chapman, Managing Director, Hovertravel

“The recent and ongoing COVID crisis has shown the importance of transport providers working together in the interest of keeping cross Solent transport infrastructure open. Hovertravel has greatly appreciated the support and assistance of South Western Railway in ensuring that passengers have been kept informed of the travel option during the Essential Life Line Timetable, where a number of amendments to the normal timetable were implemented and more recently as we see the return of normal operations. The immediate, prompt and professional way this has and continues to be handled by those at SWR is very much appreciated.”

Cross Solent Partnership (Portsmouth)

As a result of the COVID 19 crisis passenger numbers across the Solent via Portsmouth dropped significantly. There remained a need to keep this key corridor open to provide a link between Ryde and Portsmouth. In partnership with the Isle of Wight Transport Infrastructure Board, Isle of Wight Council, Wightlink and Hovertravel, a key corridor link was set up to keep key workers moving. Passengers wishing to travel to the Island using rail services to Portsmouth were advised on train and at stations to use Hovertravel connections to and from Ryde Esplanade with a similar arrangement on the Island for passengers travelling to Portsmouth. Wightlink services have now resumed operations.



The rail bridge on the Heart of Wessex line at Yetminster in Dorset being replaced in January 2020

South Western Transport Partnership (SWTP)

The SWTP was set up as a forum for transport leaders from across our network to discuss strategic issues and opportunities. Key stakeholders, including fellow operators, passenger interest groups and strategic planners make up the partnership, which held its latest meeting in February 2020.

Relationships built through the partnership have helped identify £1 million of third-party funding to help secure a £26 million investment in the Isle of Wight's 8.5 mile long Island Line. We worked with the DfT, SWTP, Solent LEP, Isle of Wight Council, Solent Transport, Wightlink and Hovertravel to put forward successful proposals to fund the installation of the

Brading loop. A great example of multi-agency co-operation.

A theme raised at the SWTP meetings has been the issue of bringing young people into the transport workplace especially in the engineering sector. The SWTP is looking to establish whether there is an opportunity to work together to bring young people into the transport sector. Although the COVID 19 crisis has delayed the opportunity to explore this further, SWR and the SWTP will continue to discuss the partnership approach to identify future apprentices.

St Margarets

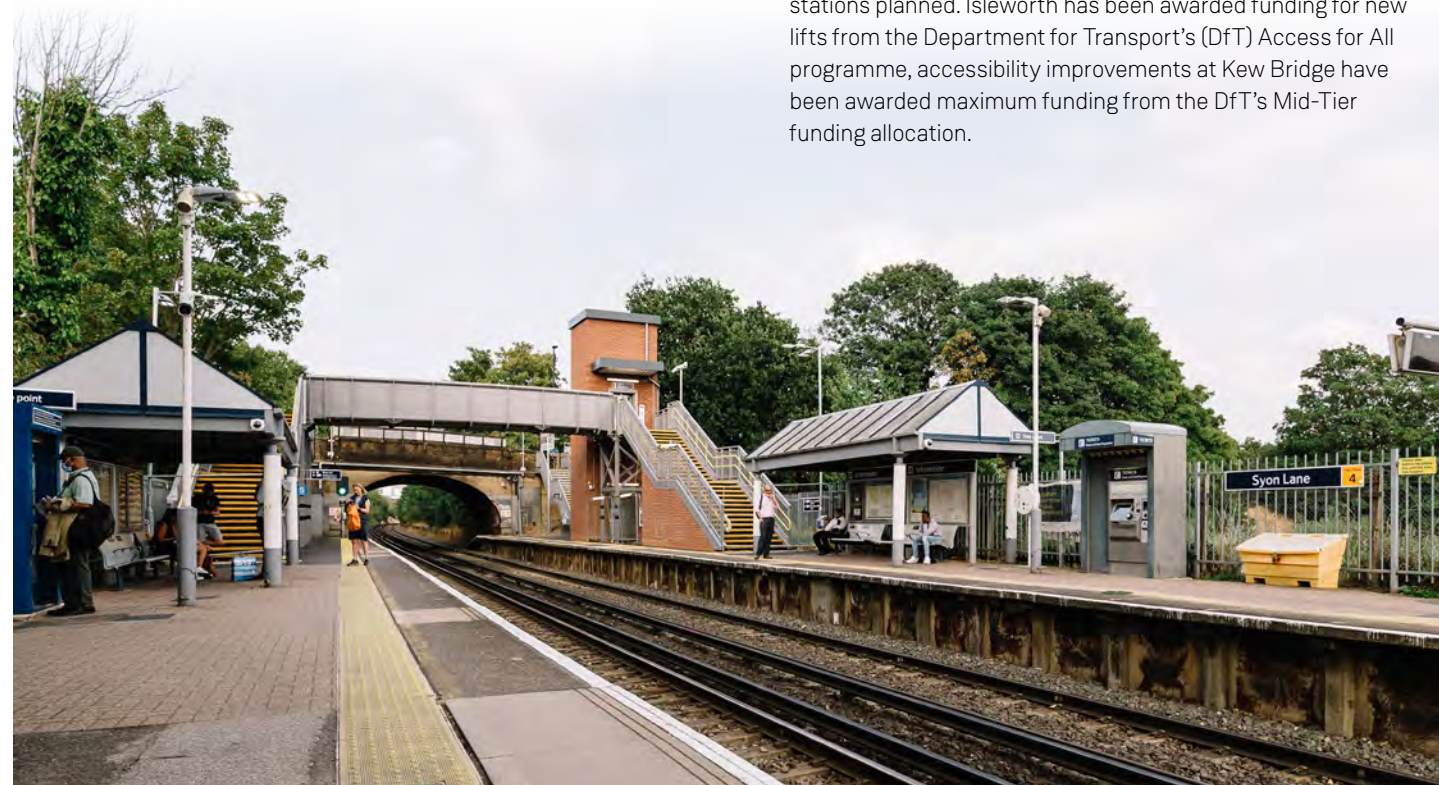
We have completed work at St Margarets station to provide level access to the Twickenham bound platform via a new gate on Amyand Park Road. The scope of the work included creating level access from Amyand Park Road and required a gate wide enough to accommodate mobility scooters and pushchairs.

Although this work improves accessibility, it doesn't make the station fully accessible, with passengers still needing to travel to Twickenham to change for services towards London.

The technology we have used at the station is innovative and bespoke for this location as it involves a new sliding gate that can be monitored by station staff remotely. Staff can now control the gate from the station building by video link and at the control centre at Basingstoke during hours when the station is not staffed. The technology used ensures that the safety of the station is maintained, and that revenue is still protected in the long term.



The newly installed gate at St Margarets station



The new lift and bridge at Syon Lane station

Syon Lane

Accessibility work at Syon Lane station is nearing completion. Once fully open the new bridge and lift will make the station fully accessible. This scheme is vital to support the increased numbers of people travelling through the station to get to the new Sky campus. The campus has recently been developed to accommodate upwards of 5,000 employees.

The accessibility works at Syon Lane have been largely funded through developer contributions including the expansion of the Sky campus. The London Borough of Hounslow has used funds collected through the planning system to invest £2.4m in the station to create a new accessible bridge across the railway.

The new structure is connected to the platform via a lift on the Hounslow bound platform and directly to the road via the new bridge. Access to the London bound platform has been made possible by installing a new ramp and connecting it to an existing walkway to the station via Rothbury Gardens. The new bridge and lift have increased the capacity of the platforms, making the station safer. Meanwhile the new stairways towards the bridge and road have created new exits off the platform which has helped alleviate passenger congestion and improved safety by reducing crowding at exit points. The additional platform capacity also has the added benefit of reducing train dwell times at the platform and is another step in enhancing performance alongside other improvements such as the new Class 701 trains due to be introduced later this year.

The London Borough of Hounslow has a long-term ambition to make all stations within the Borough accessible and the completion of the project at Syon Lane will complement the accessibility works that are ongoing at Feltham station. There is a planned programme of accessibility works at stations in Hounslow, with improvements at Isleworth and Kew Bridge stations planned. Isleworth has been awarded funding for new lifts from the Department for Transport's (DfT) Access for All programme, accessibility improvements at Kew Bridge have been awarded maximum funding from the DfT's Mid-Tier funding allocation.



Suttons Coffee Shop Weymouth with their Gold award certificate

Boosting local business

Small businesses are the heart and soul of our region and when we asked our customers and SWR colleagues to tell us about their favourites, they did not disappoint.

Our competition was run in partnership with Global Radio, home to Heart and Smooth, the prize included a feature on both Heart and Smooth as well as £12,000 worth of local SWR station advertising and business equipment.

With over 2,000 nominations made, choosing five businesses to each receive a recovery package worth £12,000 was challenging but after much deliberation our

judging panel selected five winners - Sutton's Coffee Shop, Weymouth, The French Horn - Alton, (both gold winners) The Cross Keys - Sherbourne, Channel View Guest House - Weymouth and The Swan Inn - Bedhampton

We announced Weymouth-based coffee shop, Suttons, as one of two gold winners of our local small business competition, designed to hero and recognise local businesses on our network, for their community efforts during the recent lockdown.

Suttons was established in 1878 and has been serving coffee to locals and holidaymakers since 1969. It is a family-owned business, run by the Mitchell family, and while trade has been slow, their efforts and enthusiasm to reopen in line with official guidance has not gone unnoticed, with locals welcoming their return.

Working with Transport for London

Managing demand through COVID-19 has required close partnership working with other operators, particularly Transport for London, where we share close connections at Waterloo, but also at Wimbledon and Clapham. Throughout lockdown our station teams were liaising closely with their counterparts at London Underground, Arriva Rail London and Tramlink to help maintain social distancing and keep passengers safe. This close working relationship was good for everyone with teams sharing information from eyes on the ground, enabling control rooms to match capacity with demand.

As well as working closely on the frontline, our senior teams also meet regularly to exchange information and liaise on projects affecting both our organisations such as changes to late night services, major engineering works and emerging travel patterns. Most recently we have been looking at how we approach the return of schools in September and the communications around ensuring that happens safely.

With a little help from our friends

In less than two years, SWR has increased its registered station adopters by 750%.

Adopters are volunteers who work with the railway to help stations reflect the communities they serve, adding plants, art displays or bookswaps.

In November 2018, we had just seven registered groups and we set our sights on having 50 by the end of June 2020. We produced a plan for how we could encourage these groups, including offering funding and support, and were amazed with the response.

Across the network, at stations including Upwey, Honiton, Lake, Sway, Woking, and even to inner London's Brentford, SWR now has seen a wealth of additional improvements produced by local people. We even achieved an industry first, extending the programme to agree a joint adoption of the Network Rail managed Guildford.

Thanks to the efforts of our teams and these volunteers we met our target in March 2020, 15 weeks earlier than planned. And we haven't stopped. By July we were up to 55 groups, with more in the pipeline.

The Friends of Brockenhurst Station is one of the busiest groups on the network and has collaborated with SWR to add a variety of planters on the station, as well as a history project for the refurbished waiting room. Its Chair, David Bennett, said: **“Our stations should be at the heart of our communities, but too often they’re under appreciated. Working with SWR to make our station more attractive, celebrate its heritage, and engage with passengers is all part of making sure local people and users realise what a gem of a station we have.”**



Arrival of a lifeboat themed planter at Lake station, Isle of Wight

More people than ever before Try the Train with us

Our Try the Train programme has gone from strength to strength, delivering twice the planned number of trips in the last year. These specifically tailored events are aimed at those who lack confidence in the railway, including those with accessibility needs.

Throughout the period, our Community Ambassadors, staff who volunteer on top of their day job, helped almost 600 adults and children take their first ride on one of our services. From year 6 pupils preparing to take the train to secondary school, to youngsters with learning disabilities and youth groups, through to new mothers, dementia friendly groups and wheelchair users, the team supported a wide variety of people.

During the period the team's hard work was recognised with a shortlisting for the 'Involving Diverse Groups' category of the Community Rail awards and was Highly Commended in the 'Rail Team of the Year' section of the Rail Staff Awards.

“My mum has been living with dementia for four years and it has stopped her being able to do a lot of things, so being able to do something so seemingly normal with her was a joy. She absolutely loved the experience and can still remember the journey. She regularly asks if we can go again soon.” Daughter of a lady with dementia

“It was such an excellent day. Before the journey the Ambassador even sent us pictures of what the train looked like so we knew in advance. It has given us all confidence to use trains in the future.” Session Leader for charity Turning Tides



Bohunt School (Liphook) students on a Try the Train trip

Fresh life breathed into redundant spaces

At the start of the franchise SWR drew up a list of spaces it could offer to local communities to make use of. It took some time to work out the best process for this, however we were delighted to finally announce that Three Rivers CRP had a peppercorn rent for two disused rooms at Swaythling station at the start of 2020.

Although the work to refurbish the space was slowed by COVID-19, the CRP has now completed much of this, stripping out joists, laying new floor tiles, adding electric sockets, wall heaters and a sink, as well as uncovering the vintage fireplace.

Three Rivers has also taken a lease for three rooms at Netley and

continues to discuss other opportunities with us, including the old building at Shawford. We have also had interest in redundant spaces at Parkstone, Petersfield and Whitchurch.

Dan Wright, Community Rail Support Officer for the Community Rail Network, who works with us on the project, said: “Community Rail is all about connecting communities with their railway, as Three Rivers CRP is doing at Swaythling, and we are excited to be working with SWR to find community uses for their redundant spaces at stations. By opening up these spaces and making them available on leases community groups can afford, SWR is showing the way.”



The Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership receiving the keys to disused rooms at Swaythling station

Supporting more, and freshly accredited, CRPs

Throughout the year, we've continued to work closely with Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) across the network. These not for profit organisations collaborate with a variety of partners to promote healthy and sustainable travel, involve diverse groups in the railway as well as support social and economic development.

Since the start of the franchise we've provided funds to eight CRPs to employ a part-time line officer and deliver projects. During 2020, we have not only maintained this, but have extended our work to include three other CRPs which cover some of our stations. As a result of SWR's support and funding, two of these groups created new job roles, with the North Downs CRP (Guildford to Reading) appointing a dedicated individual to work with communities around the SWR stations on the line and Surrey Hills to South Downs (Haslemere to Farncombe) recruiting its first ever line officer.

We have also supported four of the CRPs through the accreditation process – the national standards set by the Department for Transport. As a result, Devon and Cornwall (Axminster to Exeter), North Downs, Purbeck (Holton Heath to Moreton) and Surrey Hills to South Downs have been recognised as being excellent examples of how to deliver community rail projects, and can apply for additional national funding.

It has been great to see these groups achieve this level – especially Surrey Hills to South Downs, who completed the work only 12 months after being setup – and we hope to work with the other groups to achieve the same in the coming year.

East Hampshire CRPs' Lucy Lomax receiving the Town Mayor's medal for Free Shop at Petersfield station



Petersfield Free Food Friday

During the last year, we have been amazed with the creation and growth of East Hants CRP's Free Shop at Petersfield station. This unique project sources surplus food that would otherwise be thrown away, and makes it available to anyone who needs it. The volunteer-run initiative is based in the station's old post building which SWR provides to the CRP for free, and takes donations from supermarkets, allotment holders and even people going on holiday, passing these on to anyone who can make use of them.

Already Free Shop has saved over 4,000 kg of waste, and has had a number of unexpected benefits, including helping an agoraphobic volunteer gain the confidence to find a job for the first time, and supporting one visitor, who burst into tears when she was told she could help herself to anything she liked, no questions asked. The initiative has been recognised locally with the driving force behind it, the CRP's Lucy Lomax, receiving the prestigious town mayor's medal.

“

Daniel Wright, Community Rail Support Officer, Community Rail Network

“It has been a real pleasure to work with SWR on community rail activities over the last year. The company has supported its Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) adapt to life during a national lockdown and help deliver their work in new ways. It was one of the first train operators to find a way of getting station adopters back onto stations at the lockdown”

£5.3m Customer and Communities Fund (CCIF)

We're entering our third year of supporting community led projects through our Customer and Communities Fund (CCIF). Over £5m is being made available to support a range of projects suggested by communities across the SWR network.

In the last year, we saw the conclusion of our first round of CCIF projects on the Isle of Wight. These included better waiting facilities for bus passengers at Shanklin, installation of drinking water fountains at Ryde Esplanade, Ryde St John and Sandown, and two projects not directly at our stations but supporting the transport history of the island, with funding that supported refurbishment of the old signal box at Brading, and Isle of Wight Bus and Coach Museum at Ryde.

Bids were invited last summer from communities up and down the SWR network for the second round of Isle of Wight CCIF funding and the first round on the mainland network. Ideas were submitted online and then assessed on how they benefited communities, their deliverability and availability of match funding.

At the start of the year, we selected 61 schemes on the mainland, and a further 6 on the Isle of Wight, to support between 2020 and 2022 and, although some schemes have been delayed because of the inevitable and well-documented challenges brought about by Covid, more projects are now restarting. The £5.3 million in CCIF funding was also matched by a similar amount of match funding secured by our partners, thus ensuring our resources went even further.

Amongst the schemes we are supporting are projects to improve sustainable access to and from many of our stations, with improved walking and cycling routes to Weymouth, Salisbury, Godalming, Basingstoke, Alton and Teddington.

Away from the railway, we are supporting projects that address social isolation amongst groups in Hampshire, Dorset and Wimbledon, and mentoring young people in Portsmouth, Southampton and Hounslow. We are also looking at improving some of our stations' disused buildings to provide new community facilities in Witley, Petersfield and Shawford.

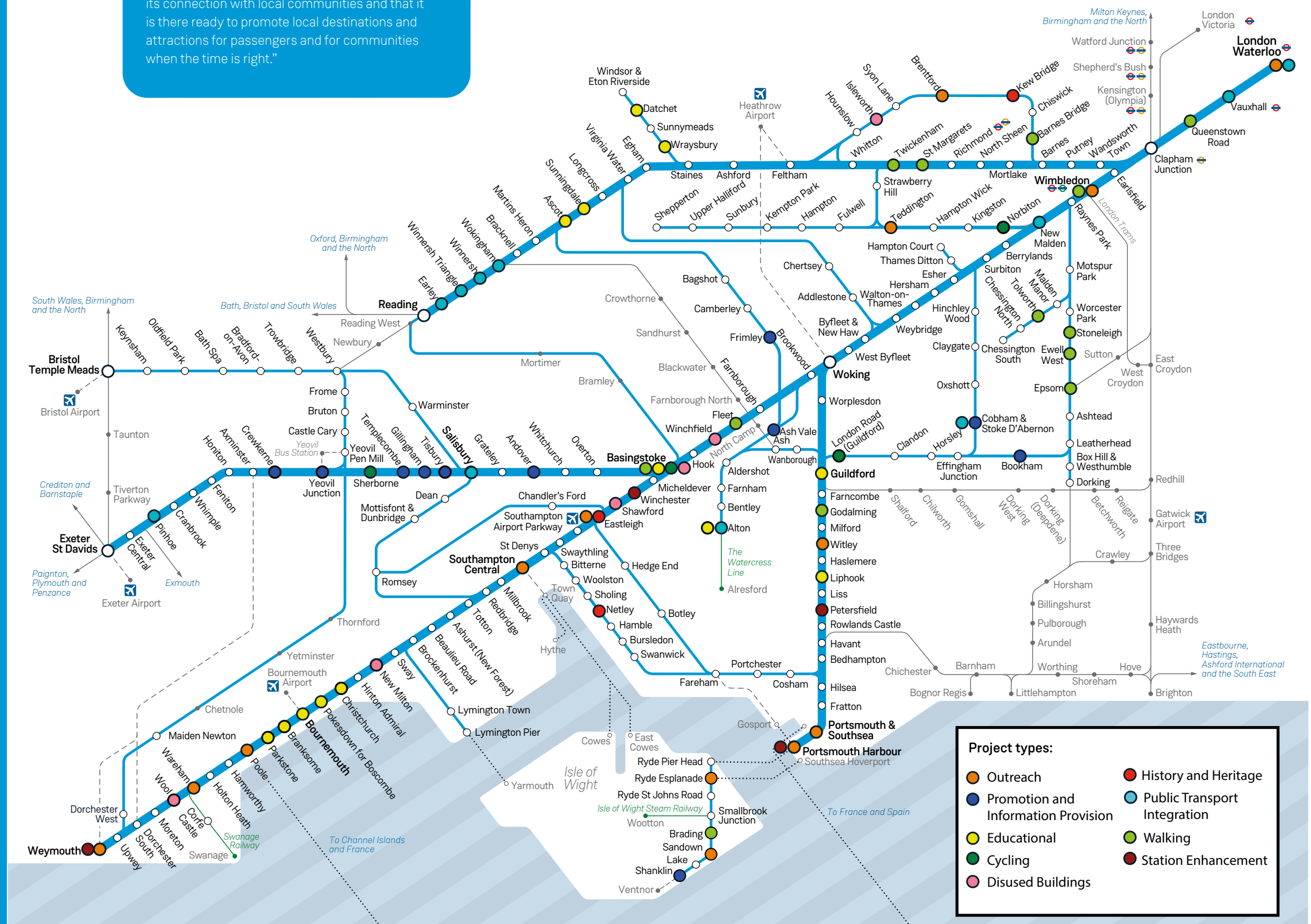
On the Isle of Wight, the projects include the installation of a Changing Places facility at the Hovertravel terminal near Ryde Esplanade station, projects which look at the history of the Isle of Wight during the Second World War, and a project to encourage cycling to and from Shanklin station.

“

Paul Webster - Community Rail Network - Support and Development Manager

“2020 has been a difficult year, but community rail on SWR has really demonstrated the value of its connection with local communities and that it is there ready to promote local destinations and attractions for passengers and for communities when the time is right.”

Supporting our communities



Feltham Depot Community Activities

Coinciding with the beginning of works at Feltham depot, VolkerFitzpatrick has launched its first app to provide those living and working around Feltham with a digital platform for real-time information on the project's development.

As Paul Lilley, VolkerFitzpatrick Operations Director, commented: "The app provides the local community with an insight into our project. Not only is it a new innovation for our team at Feltham depot, but also for VolkerFitzpatrick."

The app also features blogs from the project team, offering a personal glimpse into the lives of VolkerFitzpatrick's workforce, including any local charity work the team is involved with. Another key feature is the feedback section, which helps the team to better understand and address the requirements or concerns of local residents.

This outreach also extends to inviting schools and universities, including civil engineering students from the University College London – prior to the outbreak to coronavirus – to visit and learn more about the project, especially the commitment to high environmental standards.

We recognise our responsibility to deliver a sustainable railway for the future. This means minimising the impact of activities on the environment, maximising the energy and resource efficiency, and reducing carbon emissions across business operations to help tackle climate change.

This is why, in collaboration with VolkerFitzpatrick, the depot is designed to meet BREEAM's 'Excellent' standard – an industry-wide benchmark recognising projects which reduce energy usage, material waste and help protect the natural environment during construction.

Feltham Depot collaboration day



Feltham history group visit to the local library to meet historians and learn about the history of the site



George from the Community Wood recycling scheme



History Group site visit

National Rail Community Awards

We are very pleased to announce that 17 projects across our network have been shortlisted for the National Community Rail Awards. They include projects undertaken by SWR staff, Community Rail Partnerships funded by SWR and Station Adopters. The winners will be announced on 9th December 2020 – good luck to them all!



Liz Collins from The Art Society Guildford showcasing the first display having signed up as Woking station adopters



Children from St Bartholomew's Church of England school celebrating one year anniversary of 'Try the Train'

Crime Reduction

Crime levels on our network in 2019/20 reduced by 10% compared to the previous year. We delivered crime, anti-social and security improvements at 75 stations and 141 car parks through the DfT and BTP secure accreditation schemes during the same year.

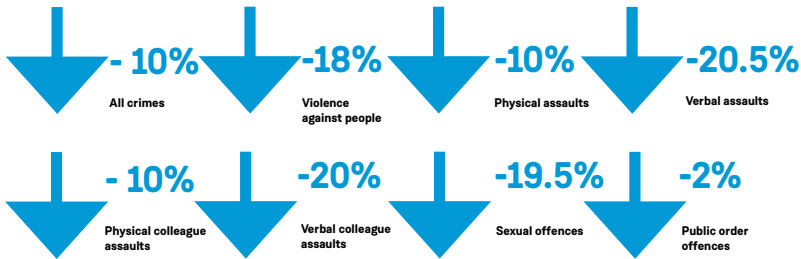
Supporting Charities

We support charities in a variety of ways including facilitating hundreds of station collections each year, direct fundraising by our staff, donating travel tickets to charities and other good causes and employee payroll giving. The total value of our support to charities for the 2019/20 financial year was estimated to be over £200,000.

We have partnered with two new charities, nominated and selected by our employees - Daisy Chains and Surrey Search and Rescue. Daisy Chains is an Isle of Wight charity which helps children and their families when a child is diagnosed with a life limiting illness, long term health issue or disability. The charity offers financial help to families that have children requiring treatment at mainland hospitals as well as help pay for any support or equipment a family needs.



Greeting Christmas commuters with Friends of Brockenhurst 'Carols under the Canopy' event



Surrey Search and Rescue is a specialist organisation which works with emergency services, including British Transport Police (BTP), to help find or rescue missing people. The charity has 85 volunteer responders specialising in using foot, and dog teams to locate individuals often over large areas of wilderness.

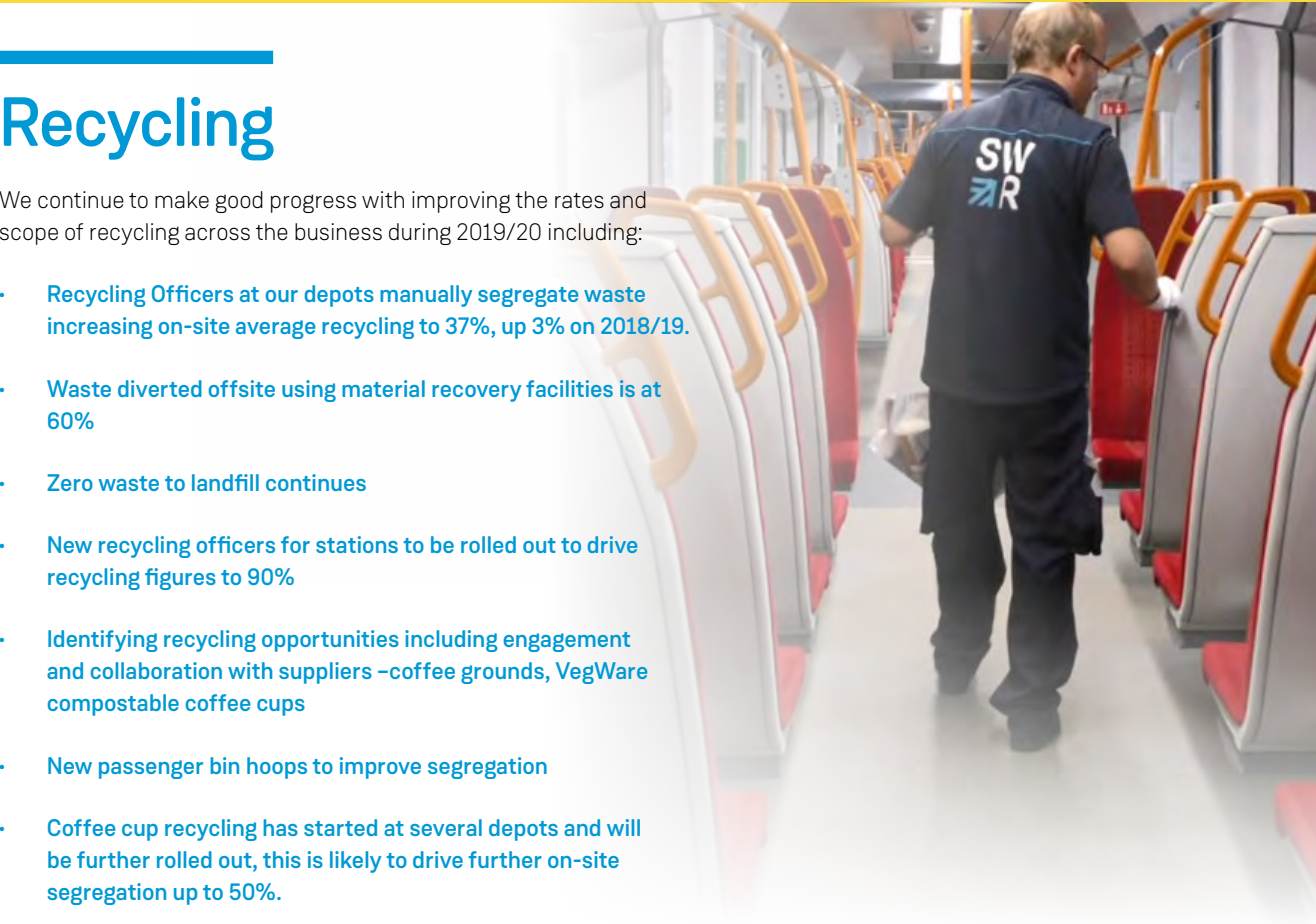
We also support First Group's corporate charity partner Action for Children.

Action for Children supports young people on their journey to better mental health. With one in eight children suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue, early intervention is essential, and our fundraising has enabled the charity to fund a mental health practitioner working directly with families at Action for Children's services.

Recycling

We continue to make good progress with improving the rates and scope of recycling across the business during 2019/20 including:

- Recycling Officers at our depots manually segregate waste increasing on-site average recycling to 37%, up 3% on 2018/19.
- Waste diverted offsite using material recovery facilities is at 60%
- Zero waste to landfill continues
- New recycling officers for stations to be rolled out to drive recycling figures to 90%
- Identifying recycling opportunities including engagement and collaboration with suppliers –coffee grounds, VegWare compostable coffee cups
- New passenger bin hoops to improve segregation
- Coffee cup recycling has started at several depots and will be further rolled out, this is likely to drive further on-site segregation up to 50%.
- New agreed service for metal recycling to promote lifecycle thinking



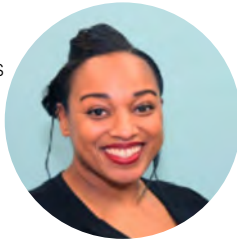
Some of the recycled material from our trains and stations at our partner's reclamation facility

Looking to the future: welcoming new recruits in difficult times

The travel industry has been hit particularly hard during the coronavirus pandemic. Sectors like air, rail and bus are coping with rapid change in travel patterns due to social distancing, more customers opting to work from home, as well as the general economic downturn. As a result many employees in the transport industry have either faced being furloughed or made redundant in recent months.

We know many of those who have lost their jobs share our values, especially their dedication to passengers. As we look to the future, we've been welcoming some of these into new roles with South Western Railway.

Nicole Russell joins us after being made redundant by Arriva Bus and has over 13 years transport experience. She will put her skills to the test as she becomes a Guards Manager at Waterloo – one of Europe's busiest railway stations.



Nicole said: "I have a sense of pride knowing that I can still obtain a job in an increasingly difficult employment climate. I am pleased SWR has seen my potential and cannot wait to get stuck into my new role."

Matthew Bambury joins us as a Platform Assistant at Aldershot station following 6 years working at Virgin Atlantic as part of its cabin crew. Matthew said: "I hope to bring the skills and experiences I learnt in my previous position of differing cultures, supporting customers with different needs to that of my own, and taking each day as a new and exciting opportunity to meet new people, to my new role."



Kyle Evans also joins as a Route Revenue Manager from the aviation industry following redundancy from British Airways. He adds: "Working for SWR will enable me to help millions of passengers receive a quality service, and give me the opportunity to enhance services even further."



We're always on the lookout for great people to help us deliver great journeys, so more information on open positions can be found here: <https://uk.firstgroupcareers.com/company/southwesternrailway/home/>

We wish our colleagues the best of luck in their new positions.



Socially distanced class room based training at our Basingstoke facility



Training and assessment of on-board staff continues with protective equipment

Training through COVID

As a business with over 5000 employees, recruitment and training are an essential part of everyday life.

When COVID-19 struck we had to quickly adapt and develop new ways of working to ensure we could still keep the operational areas of our business supplied with the people essential to delivering the train service.

At the start of lockdown, with the Operations Training Centre closed, we had to turn to Zoom and Teams to deliver training remotely, but there were limitations on what could be achieved in this way and we were keen to get the centre up and running.

In May we were able to bring Guards Rules training back to the centre so that guards, who had undergone training on Zoom, were able to have their final assessments carried in person at the centre. Six courses have now been completed in this way and, despite most of the training being online, all passed successfully.

During lockdown we have also been able to complete practical dispatch training for newly recruited station colleagues, and some shunter courses for our fleet depots. Clearly everyone has had to follow very strict guidelines to ensure these were completed safely, but it was vital to the business that these colleagues became operational.

In July we were finally able to start practical on-train working training again for guards. To respect social distancing we had to work with reduced ratios of 1 instructor to 2 recruits, rather than the normal 1 to 4. With 75 trainee guards it will take several weeks to complete this element of the training.

If guards training was difficult, then driver training was an even bigger challenge, with social distancing making two people in a train cab seemingly impossible. However in August practical traction training for drivers started again, with us setting up training bubbles between a trainee driver and their driver instructor. Both are tested for COVID-19 and, once they get a negative result, they can work together in the cab allowing the trainee to accumulate the vital driving hours to complete their training.

From October we plan to return to a more business as usual approach with five guards and three driver training courses planned. The course numbers will be smaller than normal though to allow us to continue to manage and maintain social distancing.

It has been a challenging time for both trainers and trainees, many of whom were recruited before COVID-19; however both have risen to challenge and, by adapting and adopting new ways of working, have ensured the business continues to have the people it needs to keep the trains running.

Ryde Depot NRA nomination

We are immensely proud of our team at the Ryde depot on the Isle of Wight, who have been shortlisted for 'Fleet Excellence' the 'rail industry's Oscars'.

The team have been shortlisted for the 'Fleet Excellence' category as part of the National Rail Awards 2020.

The judges were impressed by the entry, which highlighted how the team at Ryde had gone above and beyond to keep the trains which serve the Island Line running. The trains, which are over 80 years old, are due to retire this year and be replaced by a new fleet.

The challenges surrounding the maintenance of the old trains has meant that the depot team has had to innovate and improvise. This has been doubly important due to the geographical constraints of being based on an island; the trains cannot go anywhere else to be fixed.

Members of the team have learnt new skills such as carpentry, welding and painting. These skills have proven invaluable when the trains require new parts which are no longer being made or when the sea salt inevitably corrodes the steel body of the trains.

We wish the team at Ryde the very best of luck.



Some of the team maintaining the trains at Ryde depot on the Isle of Wight

Supporting young people into work

We have been working closely with The Prince's Trust to support vulnerable young people as they start their careers and enter the world of work. With a competitive job market, getting that important first job or experience of work is a challenge for most people, but for those from a disadvantaged background, it can be even harder.

The charity's 'Get Into' programme, sees recruits embark on a four-week programme of work experience, and at South Western Railway we have been supporting this programme by offering placements.

The participants spend two weeks in Customer Experience training before spending a further two weeks with colleagues across South Western Railway at some of our busiest stations. This sees them help customers with enquiries, check tickets and assist customers boarding trains. This experience helps them build their skills and confidence in communication, customer service and teamwork.

We have so far delivered four programmes with the charity, with 33 young people taking part. Having demonstrated their hard work and commitment to the programme, 6 former participants are now working for South Western Railway.

In recognition of her commitment to supporting this initiative, Susan Fishwick, a Customer Experience Trainer, who leads the programme for SWR has been shortlisted for a National Rail Award for Outstanding Personal Contribution.

Recognising a lifetime on the railway

Last year, we shared the news that Jeffery Fry, a Meet and Greet Host at Waterloo, had been nominated for a National Rail Award for Outstanding Personal Contribution following his 58 years of service at London Waterloo.

However, recognising his commitment to the railway following his many years of service, he instead picked up a special Lifetime Achievement Award much to the delight of his customers and colleagues.



Jeffery Fry receiving the Lifetime Achievement award, National Rail Awards, Sept 2019



Harrison Jones, a ticket inspector, and Te-Jay Lawrence, a dispatcher, who joined us through the Princes Trust programme

Employer of Choice

We aim to be an employer that our people enjoy and value working for. Part of achieving this is ensuring people have an opportunity to develop. To this end we have delivered a number of training and engagement opportunities throughout 2019/2020:

- Making apprenticeships a core part of our workforce development – 110 apprenticeships
- 33 young people have completed the Princes Trust programme with 6 gaining employment
- Delivering professional development courses, women's development programme, mentoring and work experience
- Launching our SWR wide customer experience training programme 'Momentum'
- Achieving Training Mark accreditation from the Institute of Customer Service for our customer experience training
- Supporting diversity and inclusion events
- Running several health and wellbeing events –mental health awareness week, mental health first aiders, health stations, wellbeing days, fruit deliveries for staff
- Our annual employee engagement survey –'Your Voice'
- Running our largest ever sustainability week - 10,000 reusable coffee cup giveaway to our passengers, charity fundraising activities, launched an Elior (on-train catering) and Water Unite initiative to reduce plastic pollution
- Partnering with IEMA (Institute of Environment Management and Assessment) to embed sustainability into our business and support our training programmes
- Delivering our widest ever sustainability training programme covering sustainability leadership in collaboration with University of Cambridge sustainability business school, sustainability skills in the workplace training in collaboration with IEMA, sustainable procurement and ecology risks in rail

“

Ian Harrison, Transport Advisor, Heart of South West Local Enterprise Partnership

“Working with South Western Railway, through their Regional Development Managers, and also with Network Rail and other rail industry colleagues, we can make the case for service developments and infrastructure enhancements which will benefit both the travelling public and the rail industry.”

“

Cllr Andrea Davis, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Development and Waste, Devon County Council and Vice Chair of Peninsula Sub National Transport Body

“Our valued and established relationship with SWR means that strategic planning work is a collective effort. Working together we identify any issues, upcoming blockades, and plan for those effectively”

“Looking forward, our relationship with SWR is essential to the success of the South West region. A revitalised and resilient rail network is vital to the South West and its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic; creating a reliable link that connects communities, boosts business productivity and provides an overall great passenger experience.”

Get in touch with the team here:

Jane Lee

Head of Stakeholder & Communications
jane.lee@swrailway.com

Phil Dominey

Senior Regional Development Manager
phil.dominey@swrailway.com

Andrew Ardley

Regional Development Manager
andrew.ardley@swrailway.com

David Wilby

Regional Development Manager
david.wilby@swrailway.com

Andrew Harrowell

Community Rail Manager
andrew.harrowell@swrailway.com

Mark Youngman

CCIF Manager
mark.youngman@swrailway.com



