

SUDBURY STATIONS CAMPAIGN UPDATE

December 2014

A PROMISING START

Quite a few people responded to our recent leafleting exercises to publicise the September 2015 timetable consultation and test support for setting up a User Group for Chiltern's two Sudbury stations. Many thanks everybody! These are still early days, but we've got the beginnings of a mailing list and we'll try and build on that in the New Year.

NEW TIMETABLE....BUT NO CHANGE

Chiltern's winter timetable starts on 14 December, but train times at the Sudbury stations will remain the same as they are now. Even a modest request for a late-evening train from Marylebone has gone unheeded. This was included on the list of "Points Raised" at the last Meet the Managers session; interestingly, Chiltern's reply says that the level of service at the Sudbury stations has been agreed with London Travelwatch (the watchdog body who look after the interests of London's transport users), which looks rather like an attempt to shift the blame. This is ironic, as it was London Travelwatch's predecessor body which finally got all-day Monday-Friday offpeak services restored at Sudbury Hill Harrow ten years ago this month, after much pressure and negotiation with an unenthusiastic Chiltern management!

A different timetable WILL apply, however, over the period between Christmas Eve and New Year inclusive. This can be viewed on the Chiltern website, though you have to know where to find it (click on the small "Changes To Train Times" box on the left hand side of the Home page). In previous years, Chiltern have not produced special timetable posters for this period, so we've had to do our own for the Sudburys, but it seems that this year Chiltern have acknowledged the need for these and will be producing their own. Only a small step, but an important one - not everyone has internet access, and if the timetable's being changed it should be displayed properly at all stations.

SEPTEMBER 2015 TIMETABLE CONSULTATION

Many thanks to everyone who sent in comments and suggestions to Chiltern on their draft September 2015 timetable. This consultation exercise was not at all well publicised, and we only found out about it a couple of weeks before the deadline date, so it was a last-minute scramble to leaflet the stations, letting people know and urging them to write in. We shall now await the outcome and see what Version Two comes up with. The first draft was deeply disappointing, with no significant improvements for the Sudbury stations. Indeed, Sudbury & Harrow Road stands to lose its solitary offpeak morning train to London at 10 41, which was only put on a couple of years ago. The really bizarre feature, however, is at Sudbury Hill Harrow – here, the draft gives it several additional trains to Marylebone in the evenings (with a better frequency than it gets all day), but still no late-night train from Marylebone to get people home again!

STATION ISSUES

We recently met up with our local station manager, Andrew Chesson, to discuss the state of the stations and ways in which they might be improved. Several new poster boards are on order and should be going up in the next week or two, replacing existing damaged ones. Both stations' Permit to Travel machines have been out of order for some weeks; there are now very few of these still in use so sourcing parts is an increasing problem. A major long-running problem is the leaky and unpleasant shelters at Sudbury Hill Harrow, but this is in the hands of Network Rail who are

notoriously slow in dealing with such issues. Ideally both need knocking down and replacing with modern shelters, but in the meantime the roofs could be easily fixed by putting temporary sloping roof panels on top to stop the water from pooling and dripping onto the seats. No doubt this problem would have been fixed years ago if we were talking about one of Chiltern's stockbroker-belt stations further out!

LOOKING FORWARD

We shall continue issuing periodic news updates like this one to keep people informed, and will also do further leafleting exercises at the stations to spread the word and encourage others to join us (please do spread the word yourself of course, among your fellow passengers, friends & neighbours, work colleagues etc). If we get sufficient interest we might be able to arrange a meeting, set up a proper Committee etc, and put the Group on a more formal footing – there's no doubt that such groups get taken more seriously by rail management and others, so hopefully that's the way we can go. For now, though, thank you for your support, keep in touch, and a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to one & all!

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