

## APTU Meeting on 11 September 2018

### Q & A

Disruption on 23/8/19: I had to get off at Radlett. I was told to get a 601 or 602 bus, but I have a problem: I have a Key smart card. This means I cannot prove I have a valid ticket to the bus driver so the ticket is not accepted. Please ask GTR what I should do. **Just show your Key smart card to the bus driver – bus operators have been briefed.**

More trains: I'm pleased to see the 08:22 is coming back on 17/9/18. But in the evenings still a 35 min gap in the service from Hendon back to St Albans (17:14, then 17:49). When do I get my every 15 mins service worth the extra 3.2% please? **No additional service is planned between the two above trains.**

Tickets: As noted above I have the Key. But the Key does not know I have a Network Card, so any off peak journeys I have to remember not to use my Key or I over pay. Oyster can be coded with railcards. Why not the Key? **Is this in reference to keyGo? On the TL route, single/return tickets are not available to load directly. The development is underway to be able to load a railcard discount to keyGo, but won't be ready until the end of the year. However we cannot go live with it until we have replaced our station Ticket Issuing System equipment, which is now scheduled for early next year. On the South where people can buy singles and returns (in addition to keyGo), On Track and TVMs allow people to add a railcard discount manually. (Liam Ludlow)**

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I have some questions not related to the current or future timetables!

My station is Legrave.

1 When will lifts be installed at Legrave station (and Luton station)? **Luton station was awarded Access for All funding by the DfT for step-free access to be implemented during the five year Control Period 5, which ends on 31 March 2019. The total national budget was £100 million. Luton Borough Council was unable to reach agreement with Network Rail on the location of a new footbridge with lifts to all platforms. (Network Rail is responsible for delivering Access for All projects.) Luton Borough Council was also keen to see the station redeveloped at the same time but this was unfunded. The DfT have confirmed that the funding for step-free access will be rolled over to Control Period 6, which runs for five years commencing on 1 April 2019. Luton Borough Council is working on a Masterplan combining step-free access with the redevelopment of the station. It is hoped that a new footbridge with step-free access to all platforms could be installed in the early part of Control Period 6, with the station redevelopment following on a phased basis.**

The DfT has announced a £300 million national fund for Access for All schemes for the five-year Control Period 6 and has invited bids. GTR has asked our stakeholders for their recommendations which must be supported by the Local Authority within which the station is located. With Legrave and Luton being so close together and both within Luton Borough Council's area, it is likely that Luton station will be prioritised, not least because of its higher passenger footfall and greater range of destinations thanks to it being served by East Midlands Trains.

2 When will the PA system be updated at Legrave station so that passengers can hear the announcements? I have raised this over several years.....) **Whenever we attempted to increase the**

volume of the PA system, the result was complaints by nearby residents. We believe we currently have the right balance, with virtually no complaints by either station users or local residents.

3 When will you have enough drivers to be able to fully run your timetable without relying on overtime worked? There are sufficient Thameslink drivers to crew all services. The problems that followed the introduction of the May timetable were due to late signing off by Network Rail. The first iteration of drivers' diagrams, using an industry computer system, is always highly inefficient. There is normally time for up to three further iterations before the timetable goes 'live', each improving on the previous version through computerised and manual refinement. Network Rail's sign-off was so late that there was only time for the first iteration, which was so inefficient that it required some 50 more drivers than had been forecast. Since then further iterations have been carried out and by 9 December, we will be able to introduce and run the full May 2018 timetable.

4 I would like to record my thanks and respect for all the station staff at Leagrave station, and particularly ticket office staff. Regular and occasional passengers in vast numbers rely on their knowledge of the network, ticketing options and help in purchasing appropriate tickets. We passengers do not support the closure of ticket offices or potential subsequent change of terms and conditions for ticket staff. **Noted.**

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My main query, if I was able to come, would be about (lack of) emergency changes to stopping patterns. My experience has been that extra stops are very seldom added to fast trains when stopping trains are cancelled, much to the annoyance of passengers to/from stations between Kentish Town and Radlett, who are treated to the sight of half empty carriages racing past while they have unplanned extra waits of 30 minutes or more. I know such changes have knock-on consequences, but you can understand these passengers' feelings and their belief that at times of significant disruption all trains should be automatically converted to all stations in order to equalise the misery. **Your comments have been passed to the team in our Three Bridges Rail Operating Centre.**

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Thank you. I hope to be present on 11 September. I'd still like to ask my question about ticket barriers in Central London, where the barriers appear programmed to reject Off Peak and Super Off Peak Travelcards much of the time. The machines and the staff who operate them seem quite unaware that any Travelcard can be used at any time on weekdays after 09.30 anywhere within the Travelcard zones, and that includes (for example) Blackfriars to Elstree on a Thameslink train at 17.00. **Briefs are frequently sent out to remind our staff of the validity of these tickets.**

Continuing to steer clear of the big issue, may I ask what is the name of the principal railway station in St Albans? Is it St Albans or St Albans City? One hears different appellations for the same train. And when one tries to use a website, one is constantly corrected, whichever appellation one uses, or one is directed to St Albans Abbey. **The Thameslink station is St Albans City, code SAC. The code for St Albans Abbey station is SAA.**

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Why has the local Credit Union, SDCU an alternative to Wonga, found it so, so, difficult to make meaningful contact with JC Decaux, ironically a French company who handle station commercial access.

Credit unions do not need to explain themselves in France, they are not charities but not conventional banks either JC Decaux do not seem to understand the difference. Should SDCU they contact their HQ in Paris? Or the local MP or the local press. If franchising has a purpose, has this franchise failed!

The exchange of information between Govia and SDCU is poor and hardly professional.

One would surely have thought that Govia through the offices of their franchise operator would like some good publicity?

PS all SDCU want to do without the hassle they experienced last time when they were threatened even under the litter act, is to distribute leaflets, even paying a fee if this was indeed necessary. Quite a few fees have been missed in the period since SDCU first raised the matter.

**Under our contractual agreement with JC Decaux, only registered charities can be allowed to promote their aims within the station lease areas. I am happy to take this 'off line' with Lesley Freitag.**

Separate Question and related to the PS above, If litter is a real issue then one wonders why at Brighton Station staff literally sweep their own on the track bed! Pictures available. **Saw the letter in Rail magazine, by when action had already been taken.**

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In terms of questions at the meeting, I would like focus on:

1. When will Stuart Cheshire make good his promise to add Harpenden to the Express trains as promised at the Public Meeting hosted by Bim?
2. When will gaps in the timetable be addressed, particularly the "no train zone" between 18.31 and 19.01 from Farringdon to Harpenden?
3. What is the criteria applied to make operational decisions to skip Harpenden? If it is to avoid being counted as a late running train, then GTR need to be challenged heavily on putting statistics ahead of customer service. This should be a franchise losing issue.
4. When will weekend services be restored, particularly on Saturday?
5. What is being done to address the inability of people to commute effectively to and from West Hampstead?

**I suggest that we cover these off with Phil Hutchinson at our meeting on Tuesday 9 October and a;so the questions on buses below.**

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When are the buses that cover a lot of the night services through Luton going to cease?

I do use the night services. So far I have managed to avoid a bus but only by rigging travel to avoid them. Lucky so far since my need has been, to date, within half hour before/after first/last bus and train travel half hour before or after is much preferable to a bus.

I think these buses have largely been forgotten about in the recent timetable chaos.

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I got caught on both Monday 20/08/18 and Thursday 23/08/18 both persons hit by train.

Both times conflicting ambiguous advice at West Hampstead Thameslink.

Both occasions suggested take alternate routes.

Both occasions took longer than had I remained.

I have made Delay Repay claims for +2 hours delay as the delay to me was 2 h 35 m and 2 h 39 m respectively.

On Monday 20/08/18 I was travelling from Blackfriars to Luton. I boarded the 19:12 at Blackfriars that should have got me to Luton at 19:52. I actually arrived at Luton at 22:27. The 19:12 train was delayed at StPancras where the driver then announced it would terminate at West Hampstead. I know from much previous experience being at West Hampstead during disruption useless (when core is open) because they cut stops there and cancel too many other trains So I got off this train and waited, and, as instructed by announcement, for the next one that was right behind, this being the 19:17 from Blackfriars. Boarded this, then approaching West Hampstead announced this train would also be terminating. There were probably already 1000 people on West Hampstead station at this time. After some time there without any information, I found station staff [at the ticket barrier] were advising people not travel and to take alternate routes. Because of the delay through lack of information at West Hampstead leading me to remain there longer than necessary, the first available train from Watford Junction by the time I got there was 21:33 to StAlbans Abbey and by the time I walked to St Albans City it was 22:10 and got the first available to Luton arriving 22:27.

On Thursday 23/08/18 I was travelling from West Hampstead to Luton. I arrived at West Hampstead intending the 16:22 that should have got me to Luton at 17:05. I actually arrived at Luton at 19:44. This time we were told there would be no trains anywhere for some time and that the incident "between Bedford and StPancras" would last at least until 19:00 and to take alternative routes. The problem here is exactly that wording "between Bedford and StPancras" that did not state precisely where the problem was. I repeated the travel via Watford Junction. I managed to catch the 17:21 from there to Abbey. During this travel I received updates that some lines had re-opened and trains running but did NOT state StAlbans City station as closed and would remain closed for the rest of the service. It was also alleged replacement buses were running. I walked to City, found the station closed with 100s of people outside, but in 30 minutes at StAlbans City station there was not one single replacement bus to anywhere. Nor any staff visible. Myself and a dozen other passengers, with myself leading the way as the others did not know, into StAlbans town centre to find the 321 bus stop. The first available bus got us to Luton interchange at 19:44.

I have made Delay Repay claims on both for the delay only, neither incurred additional fares, the 321 bus accepted my rail season without question.

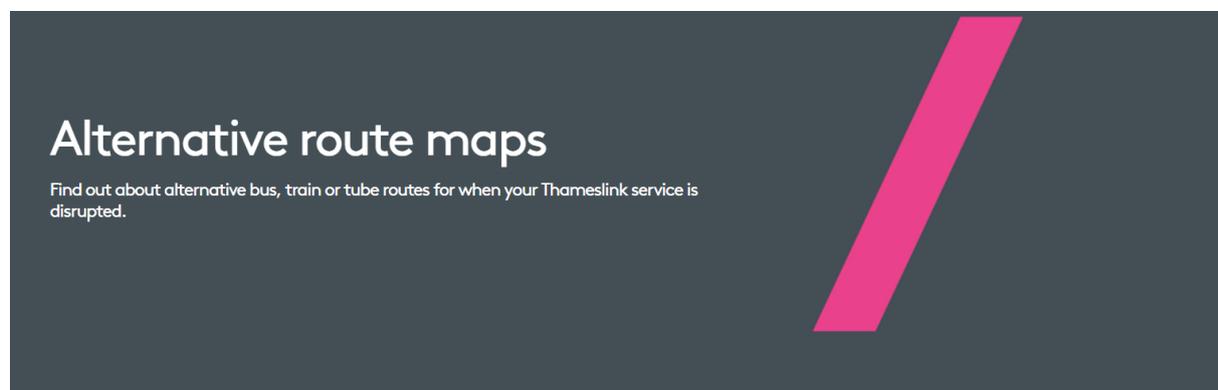
It will be interesting to see the responses as in both cases the delay could have been 1 and a bit hours rather than 2 and a half hours had I remained where I was. Although I know from experience West Hampstead can be useless in disruption, it happened, these times, to have been ok.

**We know from bitter experience that there is no 'off the hook' response to a person being hit by a train. Agreements are in place for ticket acceptance on trains on other routes at times of disruption**

to services and the same applies for many bus local operators including Arriva, Metroline and Uno. We make strenuous efforts to mobilise rail replacement buses but this is dependent on bus or coach operators being able to get hold of drivers with no advance notice.

In the case of the person hit by a train at St Albans City Station on Thursday 23 August, the circumstances were particularly difficult. As with all incidents where a person is hit by a train, the initial requirement is that no trains can pass on any line as the site is treated as a potential crime scene. Once the police and coroner agree that there was no third party involvement, we then have to wait for the funeral directors to arrive and remove the body. No trains can pass if a body is visible. In some cases it can take a long time to retrieve the remains.

Our website details the train and bus services on which ticket acceptance has been agreed and has 'alternative route maps' showing, station by station, suggested travel options at times of disruption to our services: <https://www.thameslinkrailway.com/travel-information/travel-help/alternative-route-maps>



## Has your train been cancelled or delayed?

We've prepared PDF documents showing a number of alternative ways of getting from your station to your destination.

## Explore Travel help

Assisted travel [→](#)

On the above date, once trains were able to start running through St Albans City again (although not stopping), we had a number of rail replacement buses running between Hatfield and St Albans City and between Radlett, St Albans City and Harpenden. Unfortunately it was impossible to get hold of sufficient buses to meet demand and the frequency of those that we had was reduced by the extremely heavy traffic between Radlett and St Albans. This understandably resulted from rail passengers who left the train at Radlett and who had arranged to be picked up there, putting many more vehicles than normally applies onto the roads.

We apologise for the inevitable disruption to our passengers' journeys that occurred as a result of tragic circumstances on both 20 and 23 August.