

Dear Member

General

Firstly, an apology for a period of “radio silence”; this has been caused by a combination of work pressures and holidays.



There is still a backlog of items, so there will another newsletter after the FCC Stakeholder meeting on 10 November.

Topics

GENERAL.....	1
TOPICS.....	1
TREASURER'S NOTE.....	1
BLACKFRIARS CLOSURE	1
<i>What is happening during the closure?</i>	2
CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR SERVICE	2
JANUARY FARE RISES	2
LATEST ON THE THAMESLINK PROGRAMME.....	3
FCC WEBSITE	3
DELAY REPAY AND THE NEW WEB SITE	4
BARBICAN & MOORGATE THROUGH SEASON TICKETS	4
<i>Bike Rack at City Thameslink</i>	4
DECEMBER 2010 TIMETABLE CHANGE	4
WEEKEND CENTRAL LONDON THROUGH SERVICE BEFORE CHRISTMAS.....	5
TICKET GATES AT HARPENDEN & LEAGRAVE	5

Treasurer's Note

Some 25 members still owe their subscription for 2010/11. If this includes you I would appreciate payment of £3.00 (or £5.00 for joint membership) as soon as possible.

Thank you

Malcolm Howe
APTU Treasurer

There are 3 options for payment:

1. By cheque to Malcolm Howe (149 Crabtree Lane, Harpenden, AL5 5RD).
2. By Standing Order - please contact Malcolm (malcolm.howe@aptu.org.uk) for more information.
3. Via PayPal at <http://www.aptu.org.uk/membership.html> (you do not need a PayPal account).

Blackfriars Closure

As you have probably heard by now, Blackfriars will be closed between Saturday 20 November 2010 and Sunday 16 January 2011 (inclusive). During this period:

1. Trains will run through Monday to Friday, except for 27 to 30 December (see below).
2. City Thameslink will be open whenever there are through trains.

After the station re-opens the only access point will be through the old concourse - the temporary river-side entrance will be closed as there will be a building site between it and the new platforms.

What is happening during the closure?

During this closure, the through lines will be shifted from their current upstream location to the downstream (east / Millennium Bridge side) - this is the permanent location for the through platforms. Over the summer, Adrian Slimmon and I were taken on a tour of the works in-progress to review progress and have the details of this work explained to us.

One of the key reasons for the length of the closure is that there is a considerable amount of work to be completed at the north end of the station. Whilst much work can be completed in advance, there is a set of works that can only commence once the tracks are removed from their current location. As explained to us, particularly critical works include:

- The re-routing of power cables
- Construction works at the tracks north of the current platforms 4 & 5

Undoubtedly, there will be some contingency time in the works timetable - they cannot afford for there to be slippage from the first phase (20 November through to 24 December) as this could either mean closure of the route during the normal business week or deferral to Easter 2011.

Christmas & New Year Service

We understand that the FCC service pattern over the Christmas & New Year period will be as follows for north of the river services:

- 24 December: Usual early closure.
- 25 & 26 December: No service.
- 27 & 28 December [both Bank Holidays]: Standard weekend service, except that fast and slow services will both terminate at St Pancras.
- 29 & 30 December: Augmented weekend service; all services terminate at St Pancras - rush hour service 4 fast and 4 slow.
- 31 December: Augmented weekend service with through running - rush hour service 4 fast and 4 slow.
- 1 to 3 January: Weekend service with through running. This means 4 trains per hour on the all stations service.

If you are planning a long distance journey that normally involves travelling through Reading, then be aware that there are major engineering works there - more details on the First Great Western website (<http://www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/Content.aspx?id=4888>).

January Fare Rises

Under the current regime, FCC are entitled to raise average regulated fares by July RPI + 1%; this equates to 5.8% - and to raise specific fares by a further 5% (with corresponding lower fare increases elsewhere).

Specifically:

1. My informal soundings with FCC suggest that the average regulated fare increase will be exactly 5.8%. Whilst FCC have the option to raise them by less than this, I cannot see this happening - the Department for Transport clearly expects fare income to be maximised

and I very much doubt that a sufficiently robust business case can be created that demonstrates higher passenger numbers at a lower fare increase = more income.

2. I have suggested that every regulated fare increase be around 5.8% and that it was unfair to penalise some travellers with high increases and 'reward' others with low increases - this view was met with sympathy.

Latest on the Thameslink Programme

The short answer is "nothing to report". The latest in the Media is that announcements are expected imminently. It is worth noting that the major decisions on the Thameslink programme are also linked to other railway investment plans, because a key part of other electrification programmes (most notably the Great Western Main line and in the North West) involved refurbishing and transferring the class 319s.

Of note are five questions asked by Gavin Shuker (the new MP for Luton South) and the somewhat brief response:

Gavin Shuker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) by what date he expects 24 trains an hour to be running on the Thameslink route between Kings Cross and Blackfriars; [19996]

(2) to which phases of the Thameslink programme his Department has not committed funding; [19997]

(3) by what date he expects the Thameslink infrastructure and rolling stock programme to have been completed; [19998]

(4) by what date he expects delivery of the last unit of 12-carriage Thameslink rolling stock to have been completed; [19999]

(5) what capital expenditure he plans to allocate to new Thameslink rolling stock from its proposed budgets under the 2010 Spending Review. [20000]

Mrs Villiers: As set out in the spending review on 20 October, the Government are still finalising their position regarding a number of rail projects-including Thameslink. An announcement is expected to be made shortly.

(From Hansard: <http://tinyurl.com/2uwe4lu>).

FCC website

FCC have re-launched their website this evening. The website seems to be a lot faster and the prime focus of the home page is imminent and future journeys.

FCC sent us an email announcing the launch. They commented as follows:

The initial improvements include:

- Prioritisation of customer travel information - including live departure information and line updates
- Easy to navigate - a logical, structured approach to ordering site content to make it easier to find information
- Personalisation - easier to tailor the site and the information to your regular journey/needs. For example, you can select you own station for live departure information.
- Increased accessibility - to make it easier for people with disabilities
- Refreshed and updated content
- Better performance - to support higher levels of traffic during periods of increased demand
- Enhanced security

There will be further improvements in the coming months including:

- The ability to create your own profile and manage your contact preferences
- A mobile-friendly version of the homepage
- A tool to create your own timetable
- Enhanced journey planning
- An improved ticket buying section

Please note, that as we work to improve the Delay Repay section there will be some changes. Our online customer database will not be operational for a short period of time. This means customer records such as previously uploaded season ticket information and addresses will not be stored. During this time, customers submitting Delay Repay claims will need to enter their details manually. However customers will be able to submit multiple claims per visit which is a significant improvement on the old site. Once this part of the website is fully upgraded, when you create a profile in this section it will be pre-populated every time you submit a claim, making it much quicker and simpler to submit a Delay Repay claim.

Delay repay and the new web site

The new website means that submitting claims will be more of a chore in the short term (due to non availability of the previous customer database), but is stated to be much improved in the medium term.

We will watch to make sure “short term” is just that!

Barbican & Moorgate through season tickets

FCC are only selling these with an end date of 22 March 2011 or before. When the Moorgate through services stopped in March 2009, a subsidy was provided by the Department for Transport for two years. In the current climate, an extension of this subsidy is not realistic. More information on the subject of costs, subsidies etc is set out in a letter FCC have sent to MPs on the route - [a copy is available on our website](#).

FCC season tickets to Barbican and Moorgate are the same price as Farringdon, City Thameslink and Blackfriars, so if you are impacted by this, I'm afraid the only choice is walk or pay more.

There are various bus routes from both entrances of City Thameslink as an alternative to taking the Underground. Do note that these are likely to be delayed until January 2011 as Cheapside eastbound is closed for road works.

Bike Rack at City Thameslink

If you (want to) ride a bike from Farringdon / City Thameslink / Blackfriars, a reminder that there is a bike rack for general use in Pilgrim Street (<http://tinyurl.com/33s38yn>).

The nearest ‘Boris’ docking stations are:

- St Pancras: Pancras Road and Belgrove Street
- Farringdon: Hatton Garden
- City Thameslink: Stonecutter Street
- Blackfriars: Godliman Street

More detail at <https://web.barclayscyclehire.tfl.gov.uk/maps>.

December 2010 timetable change

I understand that the timetable changes in December will be minimal - with one important exception:-

This relates to the Sunday all stations service, which will normally terminate at Kentish Town when there is no through service. This is because the Thameslink Programme central core works

area will be extended on Sundays to include St Pancras International Low Level and northwards towards Kentish Town. For more background, please refer to our [23 May 2010 newsletter](#).

As regards the weekend all stations service, FCC have recently commented that it is still the intention that once the core is normally open at weekends it will return to 4 train per hour operation. In the interim, it is 4 trains per hour any weekend day the core is open.

Weekend central London through service before Christmas

In addition to the through services over Christmas / New Year [see above], the core is currently open on Saturday 6 November (buses replace trains south of Haywards Heath) and Sunday 7 November (buses replace trains Bedford to/from Flitwick and south of Haywards Heath).

Ticket gates at Harpenden & Legrave

FCC have written to us to advise that both Harpenden and Legrave will be gated by next Spring. They have said:

At **Harpenden**, two new ticket gate lines are to be constructed from Sunday, 21 November: one on platform 4 next to the booking hall (where the flower beds are) and the other on platform 1, approximately 30-40 metres south of the footbridge.

Some parking spaces will have to be taken over for the work site compound and for the gates themselves. The number is being kept to an absolute minimum. The gates will take up about 10 spaces of the main car park. This should be set against the capacity which is approximately 540 vehicles. A further 6 spaces are needed temporarily for a site compound (to be set up this Sunday, 24 November) and this will be positioned furthest away from the entrance (where the recent site compound was for the Thameslink Programme platform extension works).

Seven spaces will be added to the main car park at Harpenden in mid February as a result of work next to the existing entrance to platform 1. FCC and Network Rail are also investigating resurfacing and marking out spaces in the main car park at a later date. This would win back the three spaces lost in total and add still more.

At **Legrave**, ticket gates will be installed in the station booking hall on platform 4. This will require alterations to the building to open up the window arches into entrances and the removal of a cash machine. A new ticket gate line will also be built next to platform 1. Work on both of these will begin on Sunday, 31 October. Some parking spaces will be needed for site compounds on both sides and approximately 10 spaces for the gates on platform 1. However, the car park is not full and has capacity to accommodate this without affecting customers.

As regards Harpenden, we have written asking that the platform 1 gates be moved northwards (so as to make it closer to the car park exit) and await a reply.

Regards

Neil

Neil Middleton
31 October 2010