

West Midlands Trains

# Business Update

December 2019



## Let's get back on track

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Community Rail Partnership launched in Worcs - page 5



West  
Midlands  
Railway



London  
Northwestern  
Railway

Operated by West Midlands Trains

# Perry Barr station in line for major revamp in time for 2022 Commonwealth Games

This image shows how the outdated Perry Barr railway station in Birmingham could be transformed in coming years.

The development of a new rail and bus interchange includes the construction of a new station building offering with a welcoming and safe environment.

It will feature new lighting and toilets, CCTV, covered waiting areas, live travel information screens, lifts to the platforms and a taxi and disabled drop-off area.

The development includes a bus interchange as part of a £500m scheme involving changes to the road network.

The work is due to be completed in time for the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham when 6,500 athletes and officials will be stationed at the Athlete's Village in Perry Barr.

The project is being led by the West Midlands Rail Executive and Transport for West Midlands. For more information visit [www.tfwm.org.uk/perrybarr](http://www.tfwm.org.uk/perrybarr)



*An artist's impression of what the new Perry Barr station could look like.*

## Staff raise thousands for Macmillan Cancer Support



*Staff at Birmingham New Street and, inset, at Birmingham Snow Hill raising funds.*

Generous staff from West Midlands Trains took inspiration from the Great British Bake Off to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Dozens of staff members took part in a series of events at sites across the business as part of the World's Biggest Coffee Morning initiative.

At Birmingham New Street alone, staff raised more than £2,000 through organising a cake sale and prize raffle.

Among the other events were a cake sale at Birmingham Snow Hill, organised by driver manager Jeff Williams.

A similar event was arranged at the WMT headquarters in Birmingham city centre, with each raising hundreds of pounds.

## Historic bridge at Worcester Shrub Hill to be refurbished

A listed former luggage bridge at Worcester Shrub Hill station has been removed for restoration.

The Georgian-style station was built in the 1850s by railway engineer Edward Wilson and received listed building status in 1971.

In recent years the disused bridge has fallen into disrepair but its railway heritage will now be saved as part of Britain's 'Railway Upgrade Plan'.

Lawrence James, project manager at Network Rail, said: "This work is essential to protect the bridge from the elements and we need to take action now before it cannot be saved.

"Passengers will benefit from the refurbishment as the station will look brighter and the structure of the bridge will be much safer."

The bridge has been lifted out by crane and is due to be reinstated - with its new look - by spring 2020.



# 'The December timetable is our first chance to address the challenges we have had since May'

By Jan Chaudhry-van der Velde  
Managing Director, West Midlands Trains

The process of changing a timetable is an important time for any rail company. For West Midlands Trains, the December change is especially vital as it will mark the beginning of improved performance on our network.

I have been clear with our customers in acknowledging that for the last six months we have not delivered the reliable service they deserve. Put simply, while the May 2019 timetable brought benefits for some passengers, it has not worked the way we had planned.

We brought in the timetable to create new journey opportunities for passengers by maximising our available rolling stock. As a result we have been able to carry an extra 150,000 passengers each week as we battle to keep up with the ever-growing demand for rail travel across our network.

However, while the timetable worked well on paper, it has not worked on the tracks. It is complicated and, for example, relies on a number of trains splitting in half or being joined together. In practice we have found that when disruption occurs, the knock-on effects on the timetable are magnified to an unacceptable degree.

This issue has been brought into focus by the significant disruption in the last six months. We have suffered too many infrastructure failures and congestion on the crowded West Coast Main Line.

We are working with Network Rail to improve matters. Some disruption has been caused by issues with train crew availability at

peak holiday times and we are looking to fix this problem quickly.

Our performance has not been helped by the delayed arrival of 40 carriages from TransPennine Express which should have been with us in time for May. The loss of platforms 17 and 18 at London Euston for preparatory HS2 works have also caused us significant difficulties. We are arguing the case to have these platforms reopened.

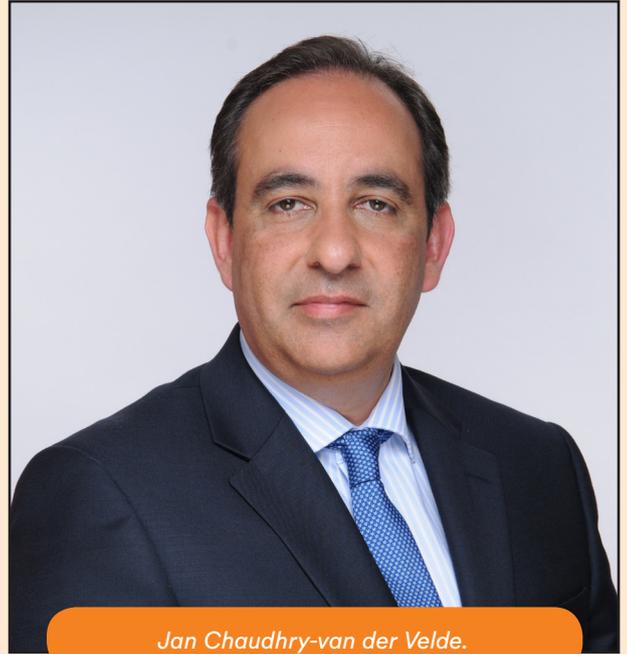
How do we improve matters? We must simplify the existing timetable and from this December we will begin making the changes which will start making a real difference to passengers.

The Chase Line between Birmingham and Rugeley has particularly suffered since May and our new timetable will see changes to some of the routes taken by its trains, ensuring a more reliable service.

We are finally starting to take delivery of the TransPennine Class 350/4s carriages and with these units we will be able to bolster capacity on our busy London commuter services. They will also help us put more carriages on trains between Hereford and Birmingham to boost capacity.

A new shuttle service between Birmingham New Street and Birmingham International will allow us to remove calling points on longer-distance trains, helping us improve reliability along the notorious 'Coventry Corridor' where so many delays originate.

We are already mapping out further improvements at the next timetable changes in May and December 2020, which will help



Jan Chaudhry-van der Velde.

us return to the level of performance we were enjoying at the start of the year.

In the meantime, I would like to thank our customers and stakeholders for your patience while we work to improve your service. I firmly believe that when we review our franchise in several years' time, the timetable changes we are making this Christmas will be seen as the turning point for the performance of our services.

I would like to wish all Business Update readers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

## Industrial action by RMT

At the time of publication West Midlands Trains remains in dispute with the RMT union, whose members have been staging industrial action.

West Midlands Trains' position is that the action by the RMT is entirely unnecessary and disproportionate.

The company has never sought to introduce driver-only operation on our services and has pledged to keep a safety-critical conductor on every passenger train.

The demands of the RMT have been met and the industrial action is only punishing passengers and businesses in the busy run-up to Christmas.

For the latest information on industrial action, visit [wmr.uk/industrialaction](http://wmr.uk/industrialaction) or [lnr.uk/industrialaction](http://lnr.uk/industrialaction)

## New timetable begins on Sunday 15 December

Passengers are being asked to check their journeys when the new West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway timetable comes into effect on Sunday 15 December.

The changes coming into effect will not be as widespread as those in May - the biggest shake-up in a decade - but there will be plenty of changes designed to improve reliability and reduce the complexity of the current timetable.

Among the most significant changes will be the introduction of a shuttle service between Birmingham New Street and Birmingham International to reduce congestion.

Additional carriages will also begin coming into service under the new timetable, boosting capacity on key routes.

For full details visit [wmr.uk/travel-information/timetables](http://wmr.uk/travel-information/timetables) and [lnr.uk/travel-information/timetables](http://lnr.uk/travel-information/timetables)

# Heroes of Community Rail recognised at WMT-sponsored awards ceremony

The successful drive by West Midlands Trains to bring Community Rail to the heart of the country was one of the features at a jam-packed awards night.

The Community Rail Awards celebrated the efforts of volunteers up and down the country who give up their time to improve the railway network.

The event at the International Centre in Telford was attended by over 400 people, including volunteers, rail industry leaders and partnership organisations.

West Midlands Trains were the sponsors of the event and managing director Jan Chaudhry-van der Velde acted as co-host for the evening.

Jan said: "The hard work and dedication shown by thousands of volunteers up and down the country, evidenced in these awards, is truly inspirational.

"It has been an honour for our two business units, West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway, to host this year's ceremony.

"We are committed to amplifying the widespread benefits community rail can bring and putting stations right

at the heart of our communities.

"More than 40 stations across our network have been formally adopted in the past year and we have added a new Community Rail Partnership right in the heart



Community Rail Awards 2019 winners.

of the West Midlands.

"In addition, the launch of our £1.7m Customer and Communities Improvement Fund allows us to financially support incredible projects in our area."

Winning projects included innovative art schemes, station restoration initiatives and even singing sessions at station platforms.

For more information on the Awards - and the wider work of the Association of Community Rail Partnerships - visit <https://communityrail.org.uk/>



West Midlands Trains managing director Jan Chaudhry-van der Velde.



# Trials for new leaf-busting technology

A pioneering method of tackling the perennial problems caused by leaves on the line throughout the autumn months has been trialled in the West Midlands.

Network Rail engineers joined with West Midlands Trains and the Rail Safety and Standards Board for the testing, which took place on the Cross City line in October.

Problems are caused when compressed leaves on the track cause train wheels to slip and skid. This is a particular problem on routes where trains have to frequently brake and accelerate, such as the Cross City line.

To mitigate the problem, West Midlands Railway runs an autumn timetable on this route to allow off-peak trains to miss out stops and make up for delays. This year's ran from October 14 to November 28.

The pioneering trial involved targeted jets of sand being sprayed directly in front of individual train wheels which then passed over rails which had been made artificially slippery.

A similar method is already in use but these trials targeted specific wheels when they slip, with sand applied as needed, to see the impact on the braking performance of the train.



Driver instructor John McDermott speaking to the BBC.



The sanding trial in action.

The results of the trials are now being analysed to see if the scheme is suitable for a national roll-out with the ultimate goal of trains running at full speed regardless of leaf fall conditions.

Neil Bamford, engineering director at West Midlands Railway, said: "It might seem like an old problem but with millions of trees in Birmingham alone, leaves falling on the line cause very real issues on our network.

"We are fully committed to improving the experience for our passengers and once perfected this innovative system could boost reliability in the autumn months."

# Community Rail Partnership launched to represent Worcestershire train users

Rail users in Worcestershire have a new voice after the launch of a dedicated Community Rail Partnership this month.

The partnership will bring together communities, businesses and tourist attractions to work with the rail industry in promoting services across the county.

West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway back community rail through our successful station adoption scheme, which offers groups support for activities at their local station.

A community rail officer will soon be appointed to focus a work programme solely on the Worcestershire CRP.

Fay Easton, head of stakeholder and community for West Midlands Railway, said: "I am certain the CRP members will make a positive and lasting impact to railway communities across the county."

Email [williamwvt@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:williamwvt@hotmail.co.uk) or [andrew.leo@wmre.org.uk](mailto:andrew.leo@wmre.org.uk) to get involved.



*Partners at the launch of the Worcestershire Community Rail Partnership.*



*Members of the BJ Concert Band play on the platform.*

## Concert band celebrate Stourbridge anniversary

Passengers using the Stourbridge branch line had a treat when a concert band took to the platform to celebrate 140 years of services on the route.

The performance, by the BJ Concert Band, also corrected an historic 'wrong' as bad weather on the opening day in 1879 meant a planned musical performance was cancelled.

Station manager Simone Carter arranged for the popular West Midlands performers to set that right, along with poetry readings, in aid of the Mary Stevens hospice.

The line, between Stourbridge Junction and Stourbridge Town stations, is believed to be the shortest branch line in Europe, with journeys taking just three minutes.

It opened to passengers on 1 August 1879 and has been in service ever since, barring closure between April 1915 and February 1919 during World War One.

## Group's rail day trip

A group of adults with support needs enjoyed a day on the rails thanks to West Midlands Railway.

The group, all users of the Minster Hall Day Centre in Lichfield, experienced travelling together on the Cross City Line to Birmingham New Street.

The event was organised with the support of the Lichfield Business Improvement District.

Corrine Till, a member of senior care staff at Minster Hall, said: "All of our service users were very excited about the train journey when they found out.

"For some it was their first outing to Birmingham and it was a very pleasant experience for us all.

"We are extremely grateful to the Lichfield BID, West Midlands Railway and also the Network Rail accessibility team at Birmingham New Street."



*Users of the Minster Hall Day Centre in Lichfield with staff and police on their rail journey.*

# Hundreds of applications received for **£1.7m** community schemes pot

Communities in the West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway networks have inundated the companies with suggestions for schemes to receive a slice of a £1.7m fund.

The Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF) has been created as part of the operators' drive to improve the wider station environment.

The application deadline for 2020 schemes closed in October but the Fund will run every year for the next six years so applicants are being advised to start planning their entries.

CCIF offers individuals, local authorities, charities and community groups the chance to apply for a share of up to £1.7million.

Following the conclusion of the judging process, cash from this year's round will be awarded to not-for-profit schemes – big or small - which will be delivered between April 2020 and March 2021.

Andy Camp, commercial director for WMR and LNR, said:

"We have demonstrated our

commitment to improving the experience of our passengers through our £1billion investment in the network.

"This Fund we will make a difference to the economic prosperity and social footprint of our communities. We have a superb breadth

**Customer & Communities Improvement Fund**

of organisations and community groups across our network and we have been very impressed with the calibre of applications received."

Bids have been judged by the West Midlands Trains Community Investment Panel which has passed recommendations to the Department for Transport to make final approvals before funding is released.

For more information of the CCIF scheme, log on to [www.wmr.uk/ccif](http://www.wmr.uk/ccif) or [www.lnr.uk/ccif](http://www.lnr.uk/ccif)



## University students enjoy a tour of Tyseley depot



*Students from the University of Birmingham called in to Tyseley depot.*

Students from the University of Birmingham toured the city's Tyseley depot during an educational visit.

The students, many of whom were from overseas, enjoyed looking around the dedicated on-site Railway Museum and the Tyseley Signal Box.

The group, including professionals from the likes of Network Rail, Bombardier and Electro Engineers, was hosted by West Midlands Trains team leaders John Loveridge and Ross Davies.

The university sees the visits as a vital part of students' understanding of the interface between trains and the wider railway infrastructure, as well as a chance to see maintenance in action.

## Stechford footbridge and lifts are on track

Good progress is being made on a scheme to install a new passenger footbridge and lifts at Stechford station in east Birmingham.

The £3.9million project has been ongoing since the spring and is now nearing completion.

As well as the accessibility work to introduce the footbridge and lifts onto the platforms, the project includes the installation of lighting and CCTV.

The scheme has been funded by the Department for Transport's 'Access for All' programme which aims to make rail travel available for everybody.



## London Northwestern TV advert hits the air



A humorous take on a train journey forms the basis of a new television advert for London Northwestern Railway.

The ad, which has also been shown in cinemas and via catch-up services, is based on the 'Pay Less, Do More' principle of rail travel.

It features all manner of unusual rail passengers, from astronauts to scuba divers, using LNR services.

To see the advert for yourself on YouTube, log on to: <http://bit.ly/paylessdomore>



## Award for Friends of Woburn Sands



*The new mural on display at Woburn Sands.*

Members of the Friends of Woburn Sands station are celebrating after picking up an award for their floral displays.

The group was named "Best Community Garden" at the 2019 edition of the Woburn Sands Garden Competition for their work creating colourful displays for passengers.

The group has also worked with the Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership and the Genesis Youth Group from St Michaels Church to create a new mural depicting life in Woburn Sands.

Genesis has members aged 11-18, including several with learning difficulties.

For the mural project, the children wanted to show off the 'best bits' of the village, so took photos of almost every tree, road and building before recreating them on four panels now on display.

## Community group calls in at Ridgmont

A group of women from the Khush Haal community organisation enjoyed a day trip on the Marston Vale line between Bedford and Bletchley.

The group was set up predominantly for Asian women in Queen's Park between MIND and Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC).

Khush Haal means "happy wellbeing" and the aim of the group is to establish a supportive community for women who might be at risk from becoming socially isolated due to caring responsibilities or issues such as anxiety.

On the visit to Marston Vale the group stopped for tea at Ridgmont station.



*Members of the Khush Haal community group at Ridgmont station.*

# Performance update

Period 6 - 18 Aug - 14 Sep

Period 7 - 15 Sep - 12 Oct

Period 8 - 13 Oct - 9 Nov

**PPM**  
83.3%

**MAA**  
84.9%

**PPM**  
74.5%

**MAA**  
84.1%

**PPM**  
69.8%

**MAA**  
83.1%

**Reliability - 95.9%**

**Reliability - 91.4%**

**Reliability - 88.6%**

- PPM (Public Performance Measure) is the % of trains arriving within five minutes of advertised times.
- MAA (Moving Annual Average) is the average PPM over the last year to date.
- Reliability is the % of trains that ran for the whole of their journey.

Our performance has suffered considerably in the past two months due to a combination of factors including train crew availability and a number of serious incidents across the network which caused significant disruption.

A serious trespass incident near Wembley Central on October 25 saw a young man sustain life-threatening injuries and caused widespread disruption at London Euston.

The effects of disruption on the network have been magnified by our current timetable, introduced in May, which uses trains and train crew intensively.

For further details about the performance challenges faced by West Midlands Trains - and how the December timetable change will help - turn to page 3.



## Engineering

### Hednesford to New Street

Mon 6 Jan - Thu 9 Jan 2020

Engineering work is taking between Walsall and Hednesford overnight, meaning late trains from New Street to Hednesford will terminate at Walsall.

### London Euston to Northampton

Sun 12 Jan 2020

Engineering work is taking place until 0735, meaning a number of early morning services will not run.

### Stourbridge Junction to Snow Hill

Sun 12 Jan 2020

Engineering work is taking place between Stourbridge Junction and Langley Green. Rail replacement buses will operate between Stourbridge and Birmingham Snow Hill.

For the latest information check  
[nationalrail.co.uk](http://nationalrail.co.uk)

## Baa-d news for Hatton commuters

Commuters in Warwickshire had a baa-d journey on October 21 when a flock of sheep invaded the tracks, delaying train services.

Railway staff were dispatched to the scene near Hatton to move between 40 and 50 animals to a safe location.

One passenger said: "At first we thought the driver was pulling the wool over our eyes but when we looked out - would yew believe it - they were everywhere."



## About us - West Midlands Trains

We operate over 1,300 train services a day over our West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway networks, manage 149 stations and provide over 75 million passenger journeys each year. We are investing £1 billion into our rail network to deliver new trains, improved routes and station upgrades. This will include 413 new train carriages across the network and space for an extra 85,000 passengers into Birmingham and London at peak times.

Central to our delivery of rail services are the communities we serve. We are looking to improve integration, sustainable travel and developer engagement as well as expanding our community rail partnerships. We also hope to increase the number of adopted stations and regenerate station environments while making the railway accessible for everyone.

If you ever have any questions or feedback on what we're doing in your area, please contact:



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