

The wisdom of electrification to a non- terminus

Bedwyn Trains Passenger
Group's campaign to retain
their direct Reading and
Paddington Services.

Where is Bedwyn?



Bedwyn Trains Passenger Group

Formed 2006 to fight cuts

Notable Successes

- Fought off the 2006 cuts
- Aligned Marlborough bus with trains
- Got ourselves back on the mini timetable booklets and got buses added
- Closed the odd two hour gap in the Monday to Saturday timetable
- Got a stop on the 1833 to Exeter Service
- Got the station repaired/repainted
- Got various concessionary fares
- Formed a good relationship with FGW

All was ticking along
nicely

Then...

2009

- The DfT announce electrification of the Great Western Main Line
- Also Oxford
- And Newbury

Key Issues

- Newbury is not a natural terminus
- Only one third of trains terminate at Newbury
- Half of the local services to Newbury come on to Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn
- How will Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn be served?
- How will the useful diversionary route operate post electrification?

Freedom of Information Act Request Shows...

- No plans on how to serve Kintbury, Hungerford and Bedwyn
- No reason given why Newbury was chosen

Worst Fears

- We get put on a diesel shuttle service to Newbury
- No west facing bay
- Platform change which involves use of the lengthy footbridge
- Passengers drift away and we lose the hourly service
- Passenger undercounting counts against us

We start to lobby

- DfT
- MPs
- Local Councils
- Anybody we can think of
- It's a lot of work!

We develop a strategy

- We assume that it's too expensive to electrify further
- We propose an hourly Paddington/Exeter semi-fast using the HST stock or bi-modes

We lobby for three years

We get lots of support from
the MPs but remain lone
voices in the wilderness...

2012

- The new franchise is due
- We meet with the DfT
- They say they want to hear 'robust' proposals, from the bidding TOCs, as to how Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury will be served post electrification
- We talk to / meet with three of the TOCs

25/07/2012 and the DfT tell us

We expect to issue the ITT very soon. What I suggest is that you engage with the 4 bidders as they develop their proposals and, of course, with us as we approach the next stage of the process to ensure an equitable result for Bedwyn.

27/07/2012 and the DfT
publish the ITT

We read it eagerly and search
for the word 'Bedwyn'...

We blow it up four fold

Weekdays: Provide connections for minimum of 12tpd from [Bedwyn](#).

And scroll to the left...

NEWBURY - LONDON PADDINGTON

And search for Bedwyn again...

Reading Radials

BASINGSTOKE - READING

REDHILL - READING

NEWBURY-BEDWYN

So the DfT have

- Told the TOCs that it's okay to run us on a Newbury shuttle
- Removed our direct Reading and Paddington services from the service level requirement
- And told us to negotiate with the TOCs

Not only are Kintbury,
Hungerford and Bedwyn
affected but...

Pewsey and Westbury also
lose their direct services

Suddenly...

- BTPG is in demand
- We help Pewsey and Westbury form RUGs
- We help Hungerford Town Council
- We help Kintbury Parish Council
- We do numerous Radio, Newspaper and TV interviews
- We get approached by a number of house purchasers set to pull out
- Hamptons Estate Agents calculate it'll cause a 15% reduction in house prices

The three MPs...

- Are very unhappy
- Take the DfT to task
- The DfT agrees to do an investigation into bringing electrification further
- ARUP are appointed
- The DfT are persuaded that if electrification does not go ahead there will be two HSTs at peak times, retained for direct services. Still a far cry from what we have

Representatives from all affected stations meet with ARUP

- Told if the BCR is > 2.0 we'll get electrification
- We check that they will compare it with the Newbury shuttle proposal and not what we have now
- We point out that they should really look at the BCR from Reading to Westbury as a whole and not just Newbury to Westbury

Representatives from all affected stations meet with ARUP

- The DfT come clean that no BCR was done originally and Newbury was chosen because it has two trains/hour not one train/hour
- ARUP welcome our involvement – we point out that Bedwyn and Kintbury are undercounted stations and they should rely on passenger counts not ticket sales

Along with Pewsey Train Watch we do a survey

- 1900 respondents. 96% from Kintbury, Hungerford, Bedwyn, Pewsey and Westbury
- 94% travel beyond Newbury – erm a Newbury shuttle is not going to be popular!
- The survey indicates most people will drive to Newbury. An estimated 605 extra parking spaces, cost £14.5 million.
- Newbury's road network will be hit.

The DfT never did this
research!

22/05/2013 and ARUP Report Back

- BCR to Bedwyn is 2.58
- BCR to Westbury is 0.31
- BCR to Mendip Quarries is 0.23
- BCR to Batheaston Junction is 0.21

Strangely...

- The BCR for Bedwyn was based on the 'Do Minimum' of a diesel shuttle service to Newbury
- The BCR for Westbury was based on Pewsey and Westbury retaining their present HST direct service to Paddington. Not what the ITT said
- Neither BCR included the possibility of Paddington to Westbury electric service
- Bedwyn still regarded as a terminus
- Therefore BCR figures do not include the possibility of westbound commuting from stations west of Reading to stations beyond Bedwyn

May 2014

Great Western Specification
Consultation is Published

Still Nothing Definite

After the electrification to Newbury, expected in 2016 would passengers' needs be best served by a diesel service from Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury to Newbury connecting into a fast service to London Paddington, or a diesel stopping service from Bedwyn to Reading connecting to a fast service from Reading to London Paddington, or other options? The former would give faster journey times to London but add a change at Newbury for passengers to Reading