

Melksham Area Buses:

A proposal for implementation Spring 2020

This proposal is based on Option 24/7 and other work done in 2018 and 2019, and held back pending completion of road works at Countrywide Roundabout, Melksham and pending major train timetable change. Both of these changes were completed late in 2019; further significant changes in these elements are not anticipated for a number of years.

Management Overview

Melksham changed during the past decade. The town has grown in size, and continues to grow, with existing neighbourhoods and people's travel habits changing too. During this time the bus network has somewhat followed, but it's been reactive rather than forward-looking or proactive locally, with elements of the network now looking long in the tooth and unfit for the next decade.

A restructuring of the supported route network will bring extra journey opportunities that will be of significant benefit, whilst at the same time maintaining the connectivity for existing users and, in many cases, offering them shorter journey times. A resulting increase in passenger numbers will bring an increase in fare-box income. It will help to both reduce the support costs per passenger and reduce the overall carbon footprint, as it allows journeys to move onto the public transport network.

Our View of Melksham's Public Transportation

For this decade, we envisage Melksham's main public transport to comprise of:

1. Interurban, commercial bus services based on the current Bath-to-Devizes and Chippenham-to-Trowbridge corridors which intersect in Melksham.
2. Regional train services, initially between Swindon and Westbury, with a single calling point (hub, station) in Melksham, and with connections to east, west, north and south.



3. Bus services broadly local to the Melksham Community Area, supported by the local transport authority (Wiltshire Council) but optimised to provide maximum continuing benefit at sustainable cost.
4. Community Bus services with occasional runs providing less regular travel for specific organised groups and events.
5. Taxi services and Link, perhaps shared, to meet the requirements of those who need to be provided with transportation but are not appropriate to the earlier listed elements.

This paper covers element (3) – the supported local bus service – but looks at it in association with train and interurban bus services to provide optimal total journey solutions heading out of the community area as well as excellent and well used services within the community area.

This is draft version 0.93 – 2020.01.13 / GE, LE

Proposal for Melksham-supported bus network

- Services to be based on hourly clock-face patterns
- Three vehicles (Monday to Friday daytime) rather than the current four on contracts
- Each vehicle to run an “hourglass” pattern, sharing the common Town Centre/Sainsbury’s/Asda/Melksham Railway Station route
- Buses call at Melksham Station before and after trains to connect both ways, with a shorter section nearest the station served while the train is calling
- Routes to be designated “clockwise” or “anticlockwise” and switched between a.m. and p.m. to give the shortest journey for widest flows
- The outer route to service Bowerhill (businesses) giving them direct station and town links
- No served point currently more than once an hour to become less than once an hour
- One vehicle to start early to provide commuter links
- Option for one vehicle to run late to provide a Bath-to-Devizes service
- Does not compete with commercial interurban services through Bowerhill, Atworth, Beanacre or Semington (Those which pass close to Melksham Station could add calls at the station)

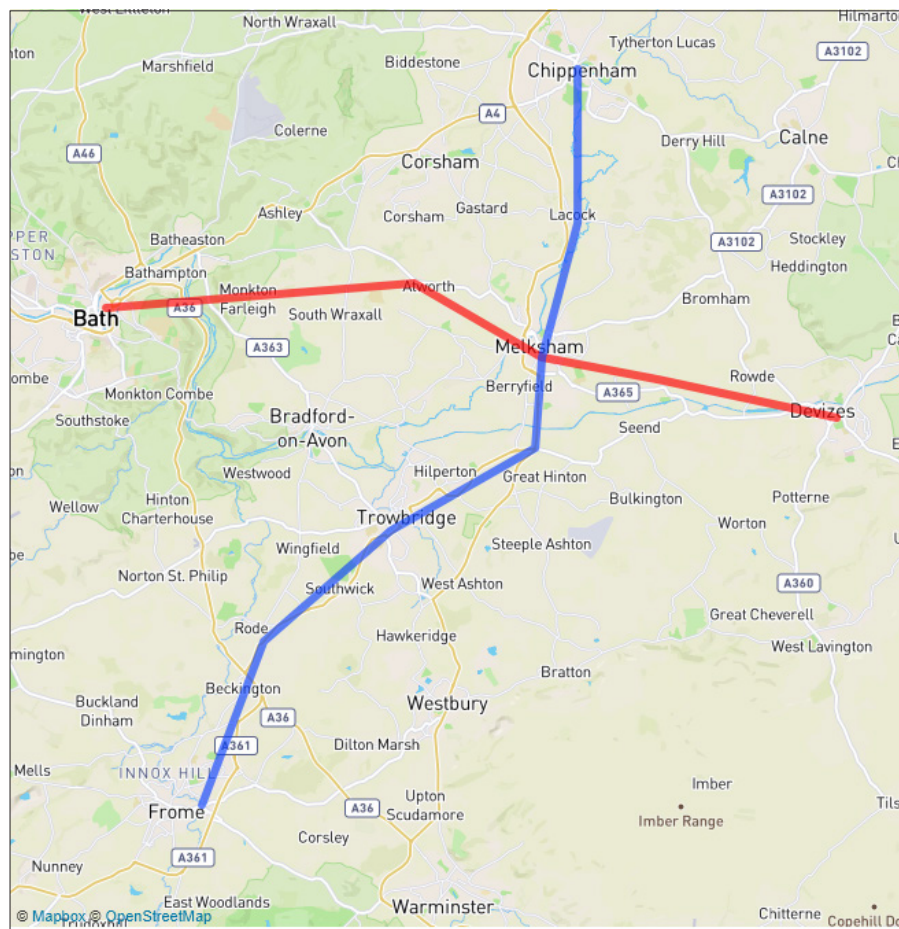
Current contracts to be updated or replaced

ROUTE	NUMBER	REGISTRATION	COMPANY
Zigzag	68/69	PH0004798/49	Faresaver
Melksham Town	14/15	PH2011826/5	Fromebus
Evening Bath to Devizes	D3	PH0000132/15	First

In 2015, Council support was £81k on Zigzag, £138k on Melksham Town and £53k on Bath to Devizes evening, totalling £272k. (There may be additional support from Section 106/CIL agreements.)

— Based on data at http://option247.uk/subsidised_summer_2015.pdf

There is further support in Melksham – £53k on the Marlborough-to-Bath daily bus (was ADRains now Swindon’s Bus Company) and part of £35k on the Sunday Bath-to-Devizes route, which was in a joint contract with the Sunday Bath-to-Chippenham, the latter of which is run commercially by Faresaver as from 5 January, 2020. No changes are proposed for these services, although the route, start- and end-times of the Sunday Bath-to-Devizes service through Melksham may be worth a review.



Interurban Commercial Bus Map

Red Bath via Melksham-to-Devizes

Monday to Saturday, all day and evening

Sunday, daytime only

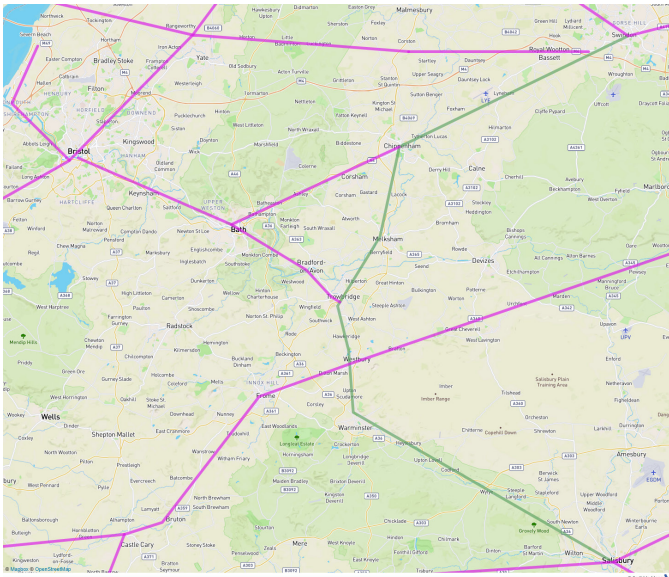
Blue Chippenham via Melksham-to-Trowbridge and Frome

Monday to Saturday, daytime only

No Sunday service

Sunday and evening Bath-to-Devizes services are supported and may be within the scope of these proposals.

Daytime (Monday to Saturday) are commercial and outside scope. They provide a different flow coverage into Melksham.



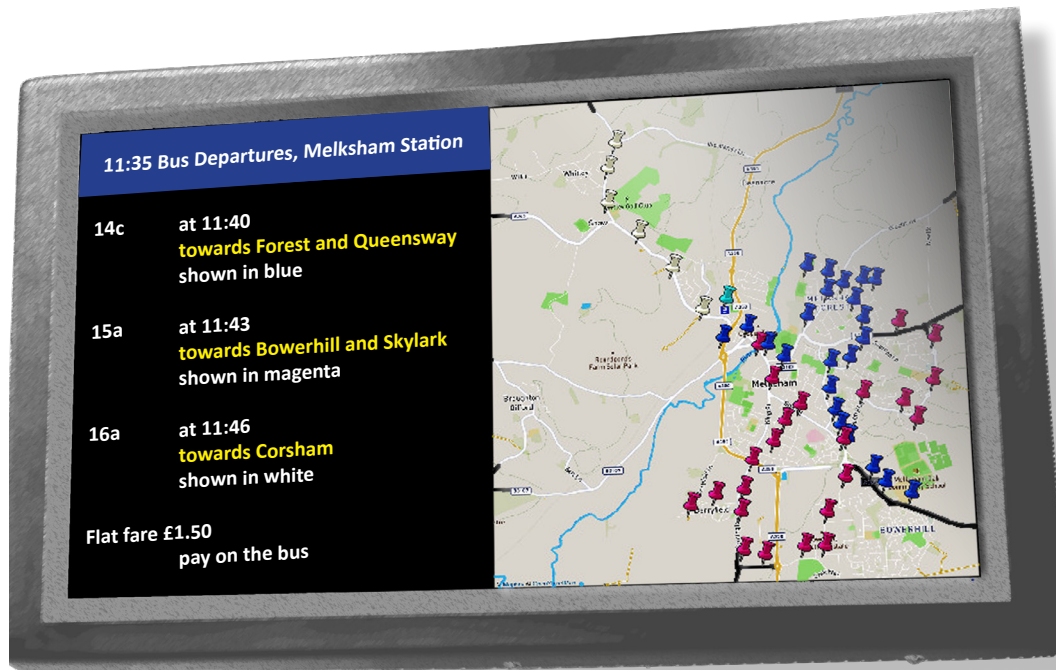
Rail Map

green direct trains through Melksham
purple connecting trains

Improvements are planned for Melksham Railway Station this year. Coming soon are maps, a cafe, plus:

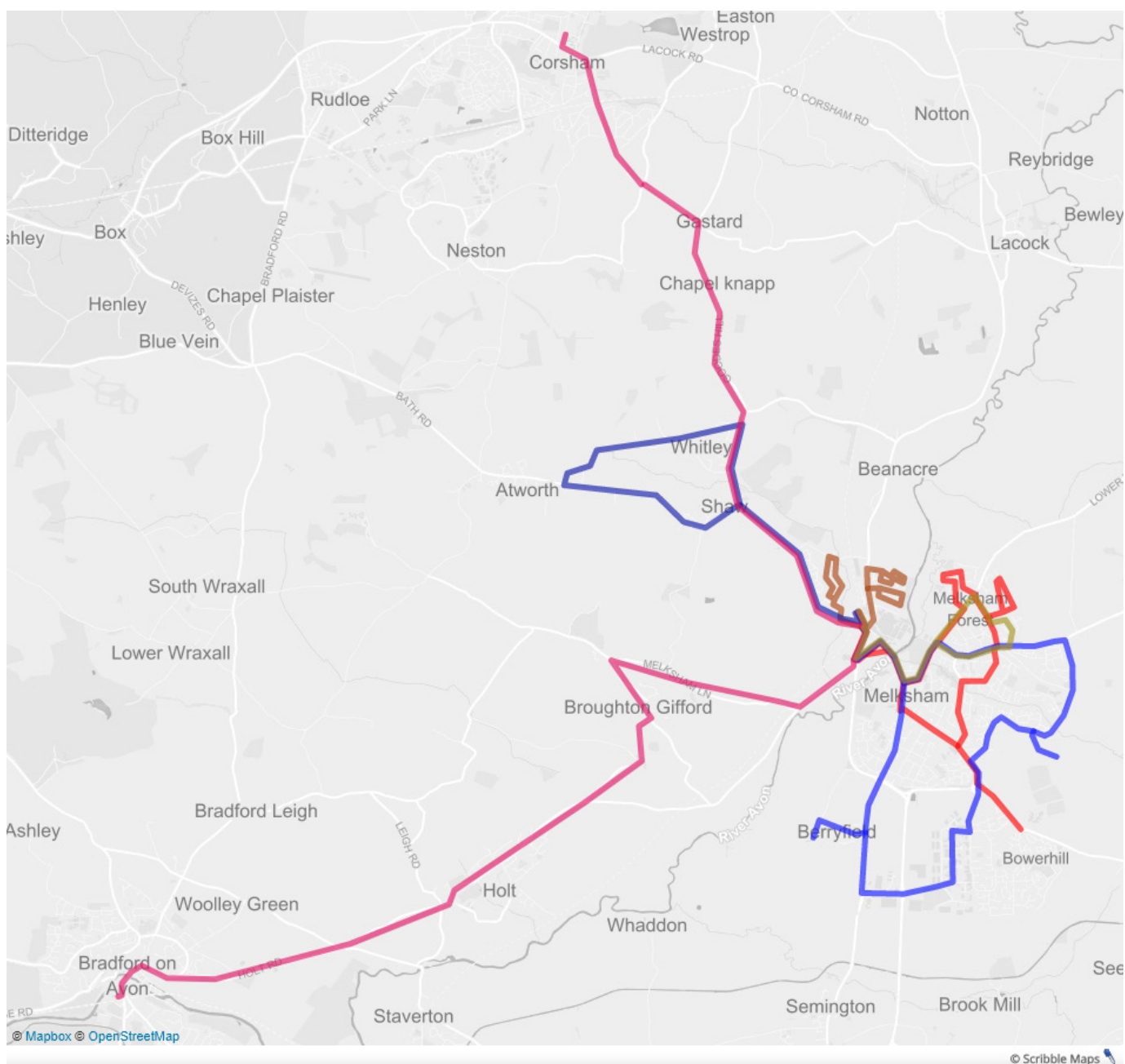
- A departure board listing the daily schedule for trains and buses
- A display of next departures co-ordinated to on-board tracking devices on buses and trains

Note: Car parking charges are also being implemented very soon. Taking the bus becomes a good deal!



Sample station real time display

The display can be anything that can be displayed on a computer monitor.



Proposed local bus network

Route 14	Route 15	Route 16	Route 17	Route 18
Hourly	Hourly	Every 2 hours	Every 2 hours	Evenings only, every 2 hours
Melksham Station	Melksham Station	Melksham Station	Melksham Station	Bath Bus Station
Melksham Town	Melksham Town	Melksham Town	Melksham Town	Bath Abbey
Methuen Avenue	Foresters	Melksham Forest	Melksham Forest	fast to Ashley
Melksham Forest	Water Meadow	Foresters	Foresters	(Northey Arms)
Sherwood Avenue	Rugby Ground	Melksham Town	Melksham Town	Atworth
Foresters	The Spa	Melksham Station	Melksham Station	Whitley
Queensway	Westinghouse Way	Shaw	Broughton Gifford	Melksham Station
The Spa	Semington Road	Gastard	Holt	Melksham Town
Melksham Oak	Berryfield	Corsham	Bradford-on-Avon	Foresters
Spa Road	Melksham Town	Gastard	Station	Water Meadow
Melksham Town	Melksham Station	Shaw	Holt	Rugby Corner
Melksham Station	Shaw	Melksham Station	Broughton Gifford	The Spa
Addison Road	Atworth		Melksham Station	Mitchell Drive
or Avon Road	Whitley			Melksham Oak
(alternating)	Melksham Station			Sells Green
Melksham Station				Devizes Market Place

Notes on bus service proposals

Monday to Friday service and route logic

All routes serve Melksham Station (for rail connections) and Bath and Broughton roads (to connect with all Interurban bus services). Services into town from residential areas are linked to services on to Corsham and Bradford-on-Avon to reduce overcapacity between Market Place and Asda.

Combined 14, 16, and 17 giving 30-minute service in Melksham Forest with alternating directions.

Routes 14 and/or 15 to serve Sainsbury's.

All daytime routes to serve Asda in outbound direction, some inbound too.

Route 14 – calls at The Spa for Snowberry Lane surgery and at Melksham Hospital and Giffords. Route 15 also calls at Snowberry Lane surgery.

Services subject to variation at school and peak ENCTS pass time to cover peak; lack of a northbound train from 07:52 to 10:01 provides a convenient drop in requirements for rail transfers at time service is otherwise a bus; likewise southbound train gap from 15:39 to 18:01.

Route 14 to run clockwise in the morning and anticlockwise in the afternoon.

Route 15 to run anticlockwise in the morning and clockwise in the afternoon.

Route 16 to run anticlockwise in the morning and clockwise in the afternoon.

Route 17 to run anticlockwise in the morning and clockwise in the afternoon.

Route element options which would benefit from further work:

- Which services on route 15 call at Holbrook Vale?
- Do routes 16 and 17 run Churchill, or direct to Church Lane?
- Does route 15 run Semington Road or via Kenilworth Gardens and Longford Road
- Route 14 – removed Daisy Close; added Mallory Place, Wellington Drive and Melksham Oak

These proposals assume that Bowerhill, Atworth, Beanacre and Semington will continue to be served by interurban commercial services.

Fares and financial

Flat fare on all daytime routes £1.50 (Children £1). Calendar monthly card £35 – transferrable.

ENCTS card holders just £1 before 09:30.

Evening service 18 £5 fare for journeys from Bath or Devizes (£1.50 Sells Green to Atworth).

Alternative to “drive to station” encouraged by car parking charges which start there soon.

Bus fare will be below parking cost.

Fare box income will grow marginally on current income with modest passenger volume increase.

Evening and weekend services and wider issues

Route 18 to run express between Bath Abbey and Northey Arms to ensure robust schedule.

Saturday and Sunday to be worked out (Sunday route probably the same as the evening route 18).

Out of Melksham Community area, be aware

- Evening proposal loses late Urchfont bus
- Zigzag no longer all the way to Trowbridge (Bradford-on-Avon to Trowbridge runs double up First's D1) / extend 68 journeys Staverton to Holt?

National Express Coach to London is a useful commercial service which should still be encouraged but as a single service each day is not seen as a key part of the mass transit elements of this plan.

Operator and Council notes

Monday to Friday – 3-vehicle service (1 less than present), but extended day for 2 vehicles.

Saturday – 2-vehicle service (reduced from 3).

Sunday – 2-vehicle service on route 18 (or up to 3 if Urchfont to be served).

End date / date for next change – 12th December 2020 to co-ordinate with train changes.

Links to train – Melksham journeys up from 3,000 to 75,000 per annum in last decade.

Box junction now added for safety and easier turn at top of Station Approach.

Melksham Hub Cafe at Station is due to open in May; possible driver rest point. Perhaps to be staffed daily, with help for public transport users.

Bus Timetables Including Connections at Melksham Station

Northbound (trains from Westbury to Swindon)	Southbound (trains from Swindon to Westbury)
Westbound (outward buses)	Eastbound (inward buses)

Train	at 05:33	from	Westbury	towards	Swindon	(northbound)
Train	at 06:36	from	Swindon	towards	Southampton Central	(southbound)
15a	at 06:40		starts	towards	Bowerhill and Skylark	(inbound)
15a	at 07:13	from	Bowerhill and Skylark	towards	Whitley	(outbound)
Train	at 07:19	from	Westbury	towards	Cheltenham Spa	(northbound)
15a	at 07:33	from	Whitley	towards	Bowerhill and Skylark	(inbound)
14c	at 07:45	from	Forest and Queensway	towards	Addison Road	(outbound)
Train	at 07:52	from	Westbury	towards	Swindon	(northbound)
14c	at 08:00	from	Addison Road	towards	School	(inbound)
14c	at 08:50	from	Forest and Queensway	towards	Addison Road	(outbound)
15a	at 08:53	from	Bowerhill and Skylark	towards	Whitley	(outbound)
17a	at 08:56	from	Bradford-on-Avon	towards	Forest	(inbound)
Train	at 09:09	from	Swindon	towards	Westbury	(southbound)
14c	at 09:10	from	Addison Road	towards	Forest and Queensway	(inbound)
15a	at 09:13	from	Whitley	towards	Bowerhill and Skylark	(inbound)
16a	at 09:16	from	Forest	towards	Corsham	(outbound)
14c	at 09:50	from	Forest and Queensway	towards	Granville Road	(outbound)
15a	at 09:53	from	Bowerhill and Skylark	towards	Whitley	(outbound)
16a	at 09:56	from	Corsham	towards	Forest	(inbound)
Train	at 10:01	from	Westbury	towards	Swindon	(northbound)
14c	at 10:10	from	Granville Road	towards	Forest and Queensway	(inbound)
15a	at 10:13	from	Whitley	towards	Bowerhill and Skylark	(inbound)
17a	at 10:16	from	Forest	towards	Bradford-on-Avon	(outbound)
14c	at 11:20	from	Forest and Queensway	towards	Addison Road	(outbound)
15a	at 11:23	from	Bowerhill and Skylark	towards	Whitley	(outbound)
17a	at 11:26	from	Bradford-on-Avon	towards	Forest	(inbound)
Train	at 11:30	from	Swindon	towards	Westbury	(southbound)
14c	at 11:40	from	Addison Road	towards	Forest and Queensway	(inbound)
15a	at 11:43	from	Whitley	towards	Bowerhill and Skylark	(inbound)
16a	at 11:46	from	Forest	towards	Corsham	(outbound)
14c	at 12:20	from	Forest and Queensway	towards	Granville Road	(outbound)
15a	at 12:23	from	Bowerhill and Skylark	towards	Whitley	(outbound)
16a	at 12:26	from	Corsham	towards	Forest	(inbound)
Train	at 12:32	from	Westbury	towards	Swindon	(northbound)
14c	at 12:40	from	Granville Road	towards	Forest and Queensway	(inbound)
15a	at 12:43	from	Whitley	towards	Bowerhill and Skylark	(inbound)
17a	at 12:46	from	Forest	towards	Bradford-on-Avon	(outbound)
14c	at 13:20	from	Forest and Queensway	towards	Addison Road	(outbound)
15a	at 13:23	from	Bowerhill and Skylark	towards	Whitley	(outbound)
17c	at 13:26	from	Bradford-on-Avon	towards	Forest	(inbound)
Train	at 13:39	from	Swindon	towards	Westbury	(southbound)
14a	at 13:40	from	Addison Road	towards	Forest and Queensway	(inbound)

15c	at	13:43	from	Whitley	towards	Bowerhill and Skylark	(inbound)
16a	at	13:46	from	Forest	towards	Corsham	(outbound)
14a	at	14:20	from	Forest and Queensway	towards	Granville Road	(outbound)
15c	at	14:23	from	Bowerhill and Skylark	towards	Whitley	(outbound)
16c	at	14:26	from	Corsham	towards	Forest	(inbound)
Train	at	14:32	from	Westbury	towards	Swindon	(northbound)
14a	at	14:40	from	Granville Road	towards	Forest and Queensway	(inbound)
15c	at	14:43	from	Whitley	towards	Bowerhill and Skylark	(inbound)
17c	at	14:46	from	Forest	towards	Bradford-on-Avon	(outbound)
14a	at	15:20	from	Forest and Queensway	towards	Addison Road	(outbound)
15c	at	15:23	from	Bowerhill and Skylark	towards	Whitley	(outbound)
17c	at	15:26	from	Bradford-on-Avon	towards	Forest	(inbound)
Train	at	15:39	from	Swindon	towards	Westbury	(southbound)
14a	at	15:40	from	Addison Road	towards	Forest and Queensway	(inbound)
15c	at	15:43	from	Whitley	towards	Bowerhill and Skylark	(inbound)
16c	at	15:46	from	Forest	towards	Corsham	(outbound)
14a	at	16:20	from	Forest and Queensway	towards	Granville Road	(outbound)
15c	at	16:23	from	Bowerhill and Skylark	towards	Whitley	(outbound)
16c	at	16:26	from	Corsham	towards	Forest	(inbound)
Train	at	16:41	from	Westbury	towards	Swindon	(northbound)
14a	at	16:42	from	Granville Road	towards	Forest and Queensway	(inbound)
15c	at	16:43	from	Whitley	towards	Bowerhill and Skylark	(inbound)
17c	at	16:46	from	Forest	towards	Bradford-on-Avon	(outbound)
14a	at	17:50	from	Forest and Queensway	towards	Addison Road	(outbound)
15c	at	17:53	from	Bowerhill and Skylark	towards	Whitley	(outbound)
17c	at	17:56	from	Bradford-on-Avon	towards	Town Centre	(inbound)
Train	at	18:01	from	Swindon	towards	Westbury	(southbound)
16c	at	18:05	from	Town Centre	towards	Bath via Corsham	(outbound)
14a	at	18:10	from	Addison Road	towards	Forest and Queensway	(inbound)
15c	at	18:13	from	Whitley	towards	Bowerhill and Skylark	(inbound)
15c	at	18:50	arrival at station; completing its run				
Train	at	18:55	from	Westbury	towards	Swindon	(northbound)
Train	at	19:15	from	Swindon	towards	Southampton Central	(southbound)
18	at	19:20	from	Bath	towards	Devizes	(inbound)
18	at	20:15	from	Devizes	towards	Bath	(outbound)
Train	at	20:22	from	Westbury	towards	Cheltenham Spa	(northbound)
Train	at	21:10	from	Swindon	towards	Westbury	(southbound)
18	at	21:20	from	Bath	towards	Devizes	(inbound)
18	at	22:40	from	Devizes	towards	Bath	(outbound)
Train	at	22:50	from	Westbury (*)	towards	Swindon	(northbound)
Train	at	23:40	from	Swindon (*)	towards	Westbury	(southbound)
18	at	23:50	from	Bath	towards	Devizes	(inbound)

Trains shown are actual (exception marked () is an aspiration).*

All buses shown are proposals to replace current timetable as from Spring 2020.

The next steps

This report is an initial update on Option 24/7 and subsequent ideas for the Melksham network which have been on hold with a view to implementation once the train timetable changes came in, and roadworks were completed.

Data needs to be checked, and passengers and stakeholders sounded out, to ensure that we have an excellent solution before implementation. Limited initial exposure has included updating our MP who is on board to support the renewed initiative.

The proposed kickoff is at the Melksham Rail User Group meeting on 22nd January, with a meeting on 30th or 31st with Wiltshire Council technical team. At that point, web sites and publicity points will be updated.

We would hope to present a final draft at the Melksham Area Board meeting on 4th March 2020 with a view to launching on 13th May. That day is the 35th anniversary of Melksham Station re-opening. The service change may actually start two days earlier.

Significant Community support will be needed in the lead up to the launch, and certain elements, such as the fare structure, may be interim. A “free bus week” or program of free single days, walk in the carnival with a bus, etc. The MRUG and option 24/7 team can help make this a permanent success in the same way we have helped the train be a permanent success.

Initial responses – please contact the undersigned. Further names and contact points will be added prior to the end of January.

Preparation co-ordinated by:

Graham Ellis
Board Member, TravelWatch SouthWest
Board Member, Railfuture
Vice Chair, Melksham Rail User Group

Approved by:

Peter Blackburn
Chair, Melksham Rail User Group
President, TransWilts Community Rail Partnership

Initial Contact:

Graham Ellis
07974 925928 – graham@wellho.net

Inbound (from the railway station)

- Services via Melksham Forest

Services arrive from Addison Road or Avon Road
route 14c 08:00, 09:10, 10:10, *short¹*, 11:40, 12:40
route 14a 13:40, 14:40, 15:40, 16:42, 18:10

Services arrive from Corsham or Bradford-on-Avon
routes 16a and **17a** 08:56, 09:56, *short¹*, 11:26, 12:26
routes 16c and **17c** 13:36, 14:26, 15:26, 16:26, 17:56

- Services via Bowerhill business and Eastern Way

Services arrive from Whitley
route 15a 06:40, 07:33, 09:13, 10:13, 11:43, 12:43
route 15c 13:43, 14:43, 15:43, 16:43, 18:13

Outbound (from the railway station)

Services arrive from Melksham Forest and Queensway
route 14 to Addison Road 07:45, 08:50, 11:20, 13:20, 15:20, 17:50
route 14 to Granville Road 09:50, 12:20, 14:20, 16:20

- Services to Shaw and Whitley

Services arrive from Bowerhill and Eastern Way
route 15 07:13, *short¹*, 08:53, 09:53, 11:23, 12:23, 13:23, 14:23, 15:23, 16:23, 17:53

- Services to Corsham

Services arrive from Melksham Forest
route 16 09:16, 11:46, 13:46 15:46, 18:05

- Services to Bradford-on-Avon

Services arrive from Melksham Forest
route 17 10:16, 12:46 14:46, 16:46

¹ *short* – extra short journeys (between journeys that serve the station)

Route 18 (evenings)

From Bath at 18:50, 20:50 and 23:20 to Devizes
From Devizes at 19:50 and 22:10 to Bath