

## Update on recent train delays & cancellations from Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways



New Class 166 trains (or “Turbos”) were introduced to the Severn Beach Line in July 2017 as an upgrade from the previous trains, as they have far more seats per carriage, are more comfortable and with more space for bikes.

However, the new Turbos have been much more difficult to operate on the Severn Beach Line than on other lines. The doors on the new trains can only be operated from the very front and very back, so that for the curved platforms on the line it takes longer for the guard to check the train before closing the doors. The trains are wider so have had different speed limits, been restricted to different platforms, and are geared differently with a different braking system.

This means that when an issue arises elsewhere in the network, or an earlier train is delayed, there is a much smaller margin of error and the train service lacks the resilience to recover. There is a higher risk that trains will run progressively later, and so for a decision to be made to turn the trains back at Avonmouth or even Clifton Down to make up for lost time.

Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways (FOSBR) have met with the train operator, GWR, three times over this issue. From mid-December 2017 GWR will install controls elsewhere in the trains to make it easier and quicker for guards to open the doors. In January 2018 there will be more rolling stock available for use across the network and it will become easier to swap in trains from other lines when there is a delay.

FOSBR are continuing to monitor the number of cancellations and turnbacks and will be meeting again with GWR at the beginning of February 2018 to review the situation. Please keep us informed of any issues and concerns, and if you have specific suggestions and requests for us to raise with GWR.

### **What to do if you are unhappy with the current service**

FOSBR suggest you contact some or all of the following to tell them how the current problems are affecting you and why the train service is important:

- GWR complaints: [gwrfeedback@gwr.com](mailto:gwrfeedback@gwr.com)
- Twitter: [@GWRHelp](https://twitter.com/GWRHelp)
- Councillor Mhairi Threlfall, Bristol City Council cabinet member for Transport: [cllr.mhairi.threlfall@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.mhairi.threlfall@bristol.gov.uk)
- Metro Mayor Tim Bowles: [mayor@westofengland-ca.gov.uk](mailto:mayor@westofengland-ca.gov.uk)
- Mayor of Bristol, Marvin Rees: [mayor@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:mayor@bristol.gov.uk)
- Your MP: you can find their contact details by entering your postcode at: [www.theyworkforyou.com/mps/](http://www.theyworkforyou.com/mps/)
- Copy to us on [campaigns@fosbr.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@fosbr.org.uk)
- Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways, [www.fosbr.org.uk](http://www.fosbr.org.uk) and on Facebook and Twitter ([@FOSBR](https://twitter.com/FOSBR)) to tell us about your experiences

### **What to do if your service is turned back at Clifton Down**

GWR have arranged for train tickets to be accepted on the no. 3 bus or any other relevant buses; if the bus driver does not accept the ticket please retain the bus ticket and GWR will reimburse the cost of the ticket. We have also requested a text update service to alert passengers when a train is being cancelled or turned back. Please check the GWR website for updates.

### **What to do if your service is turned back at Avonmouth**

We have asked GWR to prioritise the Severn Beach trains to run through to Severn Beach without being turned back, so you may well find that the Severn Beach trains are more reliable than the Avonmouth trains, at least until January when we are being assured that the train service will be improved. GWR have said they will pay for taxis when the Severn Beach train is turned back at Avonmouth. Please use the information point at Severn Beach Station to advise GWR of the number of passengers waiting.

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