

Sevenside Community Rail
Partnership



Progress Report, Winter 2008



*Working to achieve
quality local rail services
matched to community needs*

Sevenside Community Rail Partnership Progress Report - Winter 2008

Community Rail Partnerships are a means by which stakeholders can play an active role in the development of their local rail service. They bring together train operators, local authorities, employers, community groups and other locally based organisations.

The Sevenside Community Rail Partnership was formed in summer 2004. Its main aim is to identify and implement measures to encourage the use of local train services on routes radiating from Bristol; to ensure that access to local stations is easy and that stations provide a safe and welcoming environment. The emphasis is on working with partners and local communities to deliver quick wins and small-scale initiatives that make local rail services more attractive and bring benefits to passengers. The Partnership is constituted as a not-for-profit Company limited by guarantee.

The Partnership covers the network of routes radiating from Bristol, bounded by Gloucester, Bath/Freshford, Weston-super-Mare, Taunton, and the Severn Estuary; this includes the branch line to Severn Beach.

The Partnership's principal sponsors are Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset, Somerset County, and South Gloucestershire Councils, Business West, First Great Western, and the West of England Partnership, who together form the Management Committee for the Partnership. The Principal Sponsors also have the option of being nominated as Directors of the Partnership, who are legally responsible for the conduct of the Partnership, in accordance with the Companies Acts. The Principal Sponsors fund the running costs, including the post of part-time Partnership Officer, our one employee. Projects are funded largely through specific grants, assisted by local and community voluntary work.

Improving Local Stations

The main emphasis over the last year has been on improving local unstaffed stations. Much has been delivered and many stations are now in a far better condition than for many years. Our aim in this work is to involve the local community and in particular local schools - experience has shown that local involvement encourages more pride and less vandalism at local stations. We have been greatly supported by the Probation Service (much of the work has been done as part of Community Service Orders) and by Bristol Clean and Green; and by local councils, First Great Western and Network Rail. We are extremely grateful for their support.

We have delivered

- a complete makeover at Avonmouth, with much support from Axa Life Insurance under their Hearts in Action campaign. The station now features silhouettes of 130 pupils at Avonmouth Primary School painted on the 40 metre long shelter
- considerable improvement at Montpellier including a new garden and a new graffiti mural, with involvement of Fairfield High School
- a mosaic mural and station adoption by Henbury School at Sea Mills. And mosaic benches should also be installed shortly
- a major clean up at Clifton Down, including removal of graffiti, clearing the car park and replanting the flower beds. We are working with the local residents group, and we hope a local school can provide artwork
- a clearance of overgrown foliage from the platform and car park at Keynsham, repainting the station, and provision of a community notice board. We hope that artwork can be provided by a local school in a similar way to the Avonmouth scheme



- assistance to the community group at Oldfield Park, including grants for plants, and the provision of a community notice board. We are also enlisting the support of Oldfield Park Infant School to create artwork for parts of the station
- the formation of a local working group which has "adopted" Patchway station; we negotiated with Rolls Royce for their CCTV system to cover the station. So Patchway station is now a safer place
- a working group at Yatton station, which has helped secure funding for the station friends group for equipment and fencing. We are also working with the Rural Station Group of the National Trust and the friends to provide further facilities



We are working on

- a community garden centre at Stapleton Road. Stapleton Road is one of the more challenging stations and, after much discussion, Network Rail has agreed to a local community group, Eastside Roots, leasing the disused track bed. This will introduce a presence at the station for the best part of the day, which should help make the station a safer place. During the growing season, what currently appears a derelict waste ground will be transformed into an attractive market garden
- formation of station support groups at Redland, Clifton Down and Shirehampton
- environmental improvements at Severn Beach
- improvements to the car park and access road at Yate
- improved information for passengers at local stations. There is much evidence that passengers cannot understand standard railway timetables. Simplified departure timetable posters are being displayed at a number of stations including all those on the Severn Beach line. We hope these posters will shortly be displayed at all unstaffed stations.



Improving the Local Train Services

Early in 2007 it became very clear that there were a number of major problems with the December 2006 train timetable, and that these would only be resolved by a fundamental re-structuring of the pattern and times of local services. The Partnership co-ordinated stakeholder liaison on this with First Great Western, who have taken on board the vast majority of our suggestions. The new pattern of local services came into operation on 9 December, and features train services which now operate at regular intervals at the same times each hour (clock-face timings), with a more even spread of departures to avoid "bunching".

Unfortunately, throughout the year, FGW has experienced problems with its train fleet, which meant that all too frequently trains have been cancelled or formed of a reduced number of carriages. This has resulted in severe overcrowding with passengers being left behind. It is vital that FGW has sufficient trains both to carry the existing passengers, and to cater for growth - now approaching 9% a year on the local services around Bristol. Shortages of train crew have also compounded the problems, leading to even more cancellations.

The rail routes into Bristol could play a much greater part in helping address the current road congestion problems in the West of England at peak periods. There is some spare capacity on the local rail network and it is very frustrating to the Partnership that restrictions on the number of carriages available to the First Greater Western Franchise mean that it often cannot adequately carry present peak period loadings, let alone provide for growth in the number of passengers. This lack of rolling stock (and also the current shortage of train crew) needs to be tackled urgently and strenuously.

One of the objectives of Partnership is to promote transport integration. This is proving quite a challenge. At Temple Meads we were disappointed by the decision to withdraw one of the bus services to the station; and there are still no maps displayed showing bus routes. The introduction of a revised pricing structure for the popular Bristol Buslink ticket will make this combined rail and bus ticket less attractive.

Throughout the year the Partnership has provided briefing for local authorities and other stakeholders on local rail service issues. We have also facilitated a number of meetings with the rail industry and key stakeholders looking at proposals for longer term improvements to the local train services.

Attracting More Passengers to the Trains

One of the aims of the Partnership is to attract more passengers to the local trains.

We have

- promoted greater awareness of off-peak services, including a range of leaflets aimed at families, together with leaflets focusing on services from specific stations
- organised local special promotions including Santa and Easter trains to Severn Beach, which are very popular and help improve awareness of the local rail services
- won a Department for Transport Community Rail Marketing award with our proposals for attracting more passengers - particularly students - to use Redland and Clifton Down stations
- bought together Network Rail, local authorities and operators to look at a package of route enhancements for the cross-Bristol service between Yate and Weston-super-Mare

We are

- with Somerset County Council, producing a comprehensive leaflet aimed at encouraging more passengers to use Highbridge station. This is being circulated to all households in the Highbridge, Burnham, Berrow area and we will be closely monitoring its effectiveness. If this is a success we hope that similar leaflets can be produced and distributed for Bridgwater and other stations



Severn Beach Line Development Plan

The Severn Beach line is often quoted as Bristol's most overlooked transport asset. Over the years it has seen relatively little investment, nor has there been much promotion of the train services. Yet for many people it is an essential means of daily transport - to school, to university, to work, and for leisure. Over much of its route there are no parallel bus services, or straight-forward road links. And there is no doubt that with some care and attention it could provide a much greater contribution both to meeting Bristol's transport needs and to helping the social and economic regeneration of the area served by the line, which includes some of the most socially deprived areas in Bristol. So the Severnside Community Rail Partnership and First Great Western set up a working group bringing together the local authorities and representatives of the line users, local communities and local interests to see what could be done to improve the line. The emphasis was very much on working together, and in particular with local communities, to achieve quick wins and deliver small scale practical initiatives that will make the service more attractive to passengers, and help the regeneration of the area - and most importantly are affordable, realistic and can - and will - be delivered within a three year timescale.

Following extensive consultation, the Line Development Plan was agreed in March 2007. The main aims of the plan are to

- identify agreed actions and responsibilities for improvements to the line

- raise the profile, appeal and passenger satisfaction of the line, and remove actual and perceived barriers to usage
- raise passenger numbers from 375,000 in 2005-06 to 575,000 in 2009-10, thus significantly improving financial performance, as well as directly contributing to the economic regeneration of the area served



The Line Development Plan shows very clearly what is needed to transform the line, and to improve the contribution it makes to the local communities. The Plan provides the firm basis for action; it demonstrates to local communities and interests that we are serious about improvement and commitment to delivery, and that the line has both a secure future and real potential for development. And in turn this opens up new sources of support and funding. In the 6 months since Line Development Plan was published the Community Rail Partnership has been working hard with the local community at 8 of the 10 stations. Only Lawrence Hill and St Andrews Road have not yet received our attention, and at Lawrence Hill much work has been done by Bristol City Council linking the station to the new showcase bus routes.

We are also

- issuing scholar season tickets for use on the line (and on some other routes in the Bristol area), and have
- with assistance from the Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways undertaken a passenger count at all stations on the Severn Beach line

First Great Western has delivered

- a new simplified zonal ticket scheme
- simplified timetables at every station
- new pocket timetable mini-guide

Bristol City Council has

- put in a bid, via the West of England Partnership, to the Department for Transport for funding under the Access for All scheme - better lighting, signs, non-slip surfaces, seats, etc. In addition the Council and First Great Western are working towards the installation of passenger information points and CCTV at stations
- allocated funding for improved services, to be delivered from May 2008



The Department for Transport will be

- designating the route as a community rail service which give greater freedom and flexibility to provide a service which best meets the needs of current and potential passengers

The Severn Beach Line Development Plan is available on the Partnership website.

A Year of Progress

All the action described above does not just happen - it requires a considerable amount of organisation, time and effort - not to mention some money, and goodwill. So despite our real concerns over the continuing unreliability of the local train service, there has been more progress and more improvements delivered, particularly at stations in the last twelve months than in the previous dozen years!

Keith Walton Chairman - *January 2008*

Sevenside Community Rail Partnership Area – Local Station Usage

Passenger Movements (Boarding & Alighting)

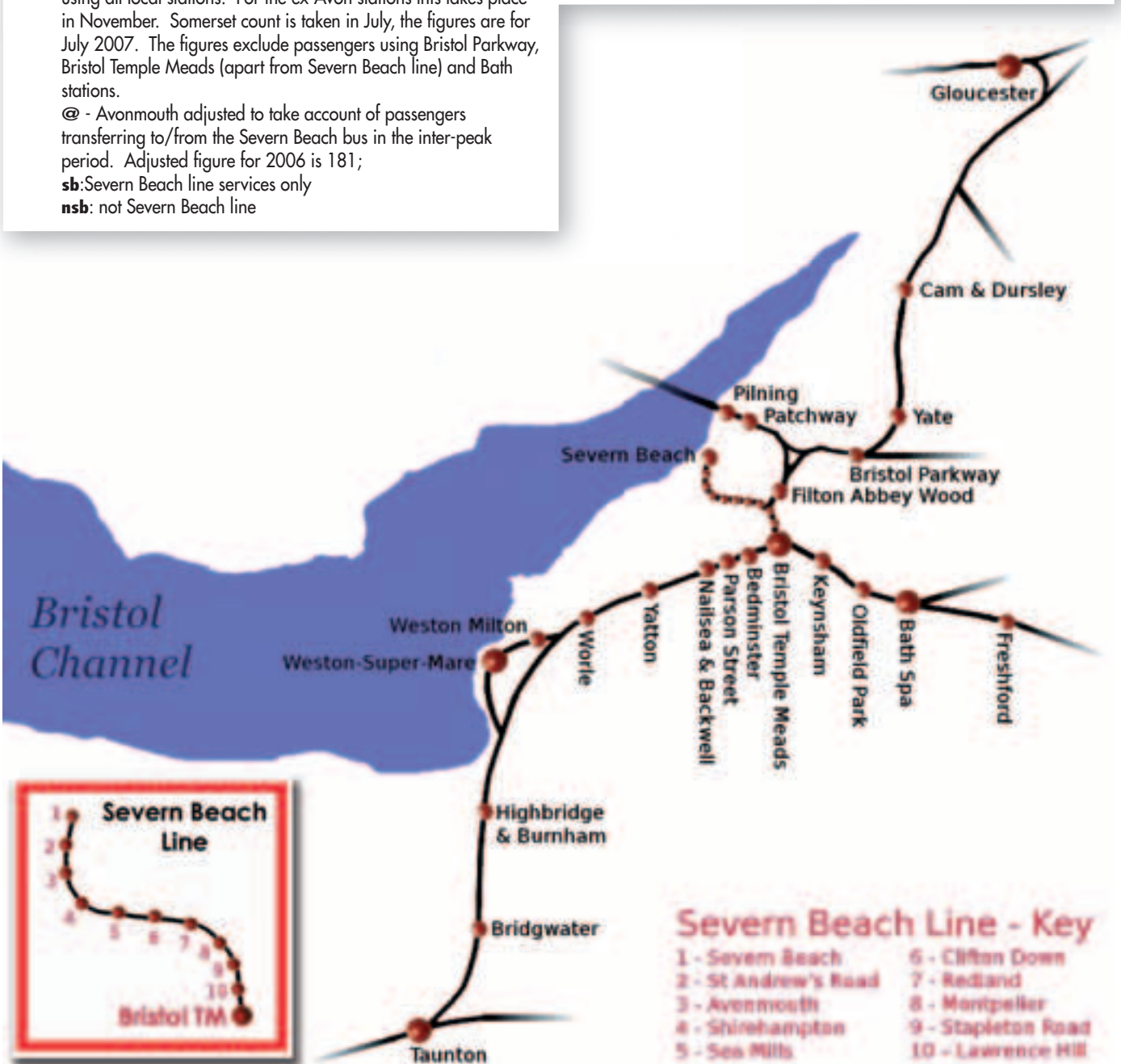
Station	1996	2001	2005	2006	2005-6 % incr
Yate	333	437	738	765	2.7%
Pilning	0	0	0	0	0
Patchway	26	67	178	199	11.8%
Filton Abbey Wood	1417	1351	1901	1666	-12.4%
Bedminster	53	98	213	222	4.2%
Parson St	10	20	72	73	1.4%
Nailsea & Backwell	531	752	1051	1221	16.2%
Yatton	570	818	930	1121	20.5%
Worle	225	491	642	781	21.7%
Weston Milton	137	194	213	235	10.3%
Weston-s-Mare	1184	1570	2091	2297	9.9%
Keynsham	341	578	739	799	8.1%
Oldfield Park	411	804	741	837	13.0%
Freshford	46	64	66	95	43.9%
Ex-Avon local Stations Total	6964	11667	12530	14207	13.5%

Station	1996	2001	2005	2006	2005-6 % incr
Severn Beach	89	92	91	111	22.0%
St Andrew's Rd	30	12	20	12	-40.0%
Avonmouth @	117	227	255	254	-0.4%
Shirehampton	95	140	87	132	51.7%
Sea Mills	81	116	116	156	34.5%
Clifton Down	237	418	461	629	36.4%
Redland	172	200	290	329	13.4%
Montpelier	192	349	348	497	42.8%
Stapleton Rd nsb	51	49	49	66	34.7%
Stapleton Rd sb	194	335	324	428	32.1%
Lawrence Hill nsb	38	50	35	59	68.6%
Lawrence Hill sb	139	189	179	296	65.9%
Bristol Temple Meads sb	334	490	700	926	32.3%
Severn Beach Line Total	1680	2568	2871	3771	31.3%

Notes The source of the figures is local authority counts. Each year local authorities do a snap shot one-day count of passengers using all local stations. For the ex-Avon stations this takes place in November. Somerset count is taken in July, the figures are for July 2007. The figures exclude passengers using Bristol Parkway, Bristol Temple Meads (apart from Severn Beach line) and Bath stations.

@ - Avonmouth adjusted to take account of passengers transferring to/from the Severn Beach bus in the inter-peak period. Adjusted figure for 2006 is 181;
sb: Severn Beach line services only
nsb: not Severn Beach line

Somerset Stations – Count July 07 excl mid/late evening	
Highbridge	408
Bridgwater	474



Local authorities provide a main source of funding for the running costs of the Partnership. In return the local authorities gain considerable benefits

Active help in delivering Local Transport Plan Targets

Targets to attract increased use of local rail services will not be achieved without considerable work; the Partnership's active role in this is

- working with train operators to achieve more frequent off-peak local train services - already largely delivered
- working with train operators to resolve problems of capacity constraints in the peak capacity
- making rail travel easier for local passengers
 - simplified timetable posters - now displayed at many unstaffed stations
 - better, and better targeted, local publicity through
 - leaflets
 - special promotions
 - reducing barriers to travel
 - improving station safety and security
 - better station access - the Partnership has shown that it is able to sponsor and attract match funding for small schemes
 - promoting integration - particularly combined bus-rail tickets.



Augmenting Councils' influence on the rail industry

The Partnership provides an opportunity for local authorities to have regular and easy access to senior rail management; and for local authorities to come together with other Partnership members and the train operators to make representations, for instance to the Department for Transport. The Partnership "club membership" provides a mechanism for consultation, input and influence on rail issues varying from significant policy development to more practical issues such as local timetables, which would not otherwise be so readily available.

Information for local authority members and transport officers

The Partnership provides a source of independent expertise and briefing for local authorities on rail issues, for example on timetable changes, rolling stock and performance. The briefings help local authority members and officers, and reduce the need for each local authority separately to devote time and effort to researching rail issues.

Support for the local economy by encouraging rail tourism

The Partnership works closely with tourism agencies, and has produced a range of attractive leaflets promoting days out by train in the West of England.

Access to funding, which is not available to local authorities

As a Company limited by guarantee, the Partnership is able to attract grants and match funding not available to public sector bodies. This has already been used to help deliver local station improvements.

Involving local communities constructively in supporting public transport

The Partnership provides a mechanism for involving local communities constructively in supporting public transport - for example art displays and gardens on stations not only help to make the stations more friendly places, but local "ownership" helps reduce vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

Contact Details

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Partnership Officer Sarah Collins Tel: 07795 562311 **Chairman** Keith Walton Tel: 07740 047812

SEVERN-SIDE COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP - YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2007

BALANCE SHEET

	£ 2006-7	£ 2006-7	£ 2005-6
Fixed Assets			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash at Bank	8385		10365
Debtors	20		0
	8405		10365
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(250)		(5997)
Net current assets		8155	4368
Net assets		8716	5209
FUNDS			
Restricted	-		910
Unrestricted	8716		429
		8716	5209

The directors are satisfied that the Company is entitled to exemption from the provisions of the Companies Act 1985 (the Act) relating to the audit of the accounts for the year by virtue of section 249A(1), and that no member or members have requested an audit pursuant to section 249B(2) of the Act. The directors have acknowledged their responsibilities for ensuring that the company keeps accounting records which comply with Section 221 of the Companies Act 1985. The directors have acknowledged their responsibilities for preparing accounts which give a true and fair view of the company and its profits for the year then ended in accordance with the requirements of Section 226 of the Companies Act and which otherwise comply with the requirements of this act relating to accounts, so far as applicable to this company.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

	2006-7	2005-6
INCOME	42208	52073
Administrative Expenses	(38701)	(61393)
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	3507	(9320)
Interest Receivable	-	-
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) ON ORDINARY ACTIVITIES BEFORE TAXATION	3507	(9320)
CORPORATION TAX	0	0
	3507	(9320)
ACCUMULATED RESERVES BROUGHT FORWARD	5209	14529
BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD	8716	5209

The Company has no recognised gains or losses other than the surplus/deficit for the above financial period. None of the Company's activities were acquired or discontinued during the above financial period.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE DETAIL

	2006-7 Restricted	2006-7 Unrestricted	2006-7 Total	2005-6 Total
INCOME				
Contributions from Partners		39228	39228	51683
Miscellaneous				390
Santa Train		1048	1048	-
Easter Bunny Train		932	932	-
Acorp Prize	1000		1000	-
	1000	41208	42208	52073
EXPENDITURE				
Insurance		372	372	371
Travel & Subsistence		1673	1673	1641
Stationery/postage		218	218	22
Payroll fees		150	150	220
Fees & Memberships		25	25	481
Salaries		15737	15737	20968
HM Revenue & Customs		5553	5553	10248
Refunds				140
Miscellaneous		730	730	369
Depreciation		280	280	280
Telephone / IT		6102	6102	1909
Conferences/Seminars		958	958	294
Severn Beach Timetables		529	529	
Meetings / Events		330	330	375
Temple Meads Art Project				5350
Return of funds (Art Project)				3650
Sunday Flyer Project				7080
Easter Bunny Train		432	432	
Santa Train		496	496	
Other Projects		85	85	6328
Printing / Publicity	910	3871	4781	1507
Accountancy/Audit		250	250	160
	910	37791	38701	61393
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	90	3417	3507	(9320)
Balance at 01/04/2006	910	4299	5209	14529
Balance Carried Forward	1000	7716	8716	5209

Contributions in Kind - Travel passes provided by train operators £1500. These contributions have not been included in the above income and expenditure.