



# COOKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

COUNCIL OFFICES, HIGH ROAD, COOKHAM RISE, BERKS SL6 9JF

Tel/Fax: (01628) 522003 E-mail: [cookhamparishcouncil@outlook.com](mailto:cookhamparishcouncil@outlook.com)

Clerk to the Council: Mrs Anne Osborne

4<sup>th</sup> December 2015

OPEN LETTER TO THERESA MAY MP

Dear Theresa,

Cookham Parish Council has asked me to write an open letter to you, as our MP, to express our disappointment at the disadvantages being imposed on our community by Crossrail. Although it is being presented to us as a great step forward in rail transport for Maidenhead, Cookham is being disadvantaged by a series of neglectful decisions.

Under Crossrail's plan, Cookham passengers will lose the fast train to Paddington and direct services from Cookham (and Furze Platt) to Paddington. Many residents, in particular those who commute daily from Cookham, value a straight through service to London (no change at Maidenhead) or the shortest journey time to Paddington.

The direct trains at 730am and 830am offer Cookham passengers the convenience and comfort of not having to change onto crowded trains at Maidenhead and the guarantee of a seat all the way into London. This is a stopping service taking up to about 50 minutes. Popular return services straight-through from Paddington to Cookham (and Furze Platt) are offered in the evening. The current plan is to stop these direct services in May 2017.

Many others choose the shortest journey time between Cookham and Paddington: the regular eight-minute branch-line service to Maidenhead and then a short wait for the fastest train between Maidenhead and London Paddington which currently takes 20 minutes. Under Crossrail plans the journey between Maidenhead and Paddington will increase to 37 minutes, and transfer times at Maidenhead may be longer. For regular commuters in particular, every minute counts and these extra minutes every day would add up to a substantial loss from their week.

I have written to you before on the subject of the delay to electrification of the Maidenhead-Marlow branch line. I have been advised that responsibility for this part of the electrification programme has been transferred from Crossrail to Network Rail's Intercity Express Programme (IEP) but remains delayed to an unspecified date. Leaving us with noisy, polluting diesel, with the mainline and all others branch lines electrified, degrades our service and limits the options for maintaining through train services between Cookham and Paddington. Crossrail has made the choice to limit the use of the through line to its services, and stop the direct services between Cookham and Paddington in May 2017. But I understand from the Crossrail presentation at Maidenhead station on 1st December that this is a timetable management decision, and there is no reason that the proposed infrastructure cannot continue to provide direct services between Cookham and Paddington.

It is not even that disadvantaging Cookham (and Furze Platt) in these ways creates benefits for others. We are just being left out of key decisions despite having an active community of season ticket holders and frequent train users.

I acknowledge that there will be passengers from Cookham (and Furze Platt) for Bond Street, Tottenham Court Road, Liverpool Street and Canary Wharf who benefit from shorter journeys under the Crossrail timetable in 2019. But most of our existing passengers are for Paddington, and will suffer a degraded (slower or in-direct) service.

All mainline passengers will suffer from the lack of toilets on the new trains. We find this unacceptable for those of us to the west of the Crossrail area making the longest journeys into London, and an unreasonable lack of support for our disabled and vulnerable passengers.

I ask you to use your good offices to ensure that Crossrail's decisions are reviewed to include the needs of passengers from Cookham, and that electrification of the Maidenhead-Marlow branch line takes place at the same time as the main line and its other branch lines.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'F' followed by a series of loops and a horizontal stroke.

Fiona Hewer  
Chairman – Cookham Parish Council