

GWSR opens Cheltenham Racecourse and Broadway stations

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The Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway (GWSR) has expanded its services from today (18th May), reflecting the latest relaxation of COVID lockdown restrictions. This follows the successful resumption of train services on its 14-mile railway through the Cotswolds, on 13th April.

Services since then have comprised a round trip starting and finishing at Toddington station.

But now, the railway is offering trips from its Cheltenham Racecourse and Broadway stations. This allows for example, travellers to join trains at Cheltenham for travel to Broadway and return by a later train or book a round trip from Broadway (Winchcombe station remains closed to travellers although the Coffee Pot café has reopened for table service). Train tickets should be booked at www.gwsr.com.

Social distancing is still required and the trains mostly comprise compartment coaches, bookable for between two and six passengers in a 'social bubble'. Open coaches are also included with limited seating available, for individuals and couples.

At the same time, the railway's cafés at Broadway (for passengers and non-train visitors) and Winchcombe

(for non-train visitors only) have reopened for table service while the Flag & Whistle tea rooms at Toddington resume table service for light lunches.

Richard Johnson, the voluntary Chairman of GWSR Plc commented: "As government guidance changes so we are able to adjust the service we offer.

"We are now running two steam trains on each operating day (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday) and with two additional travel packages, from Broadway and Cheltenham Racecourse.

"It's another positive and exciting step on the journey to full, unrestricted train services which we expect to happen in July, subject of course to continuing success in vaccinations with the corresponding fall in the number of COVID-19 cases."

The pre-bookable services offered are: · Round trips from Toddington station (as at present) with departures at 10.00; 11.40; 13.20 and 14.40 · Round trips from Broadway station departing at 12.09 and 13.49 · Return trips from Cheltenham Racecourse to Broadway departing 11.00 (arrive 11.49), return departure at 13.49 (single tickets also available on this service)

There is limited availability for these new services and advance booking is encouraged at www.gwsr.com. Subject to space being available, turn-up-and-go tickets (payable by credit or debit card) will also be offered from ticket offices but, if trains are already fully booked it won't be possible to travel: "So it's best to book ahead online which can be done up to the day before travel," adds Richard Johnson.

Photo credit: Ian Crowder/GWSR