

# South Western Railway adds extra trains with new timetable

May 5, 2022



Two direct trains per hour will once again run between Weymouth and London Waterloo, following the introduction of South Western Railway's (SWR) new timetable on Sunday 15th May.

Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic one train per hour has run on the route to reflect the reduced number of people travelling by rail, but SWR will now reintroduce a second train to strengthen service levels.

As well as offering an improved service into London and a later evening return to Dorset, the upgrade also means journey times from many stations will be reduced compared to SWR's previous timetable.

Connections with local buses will also be enhanced, with wait times significantly shorter thanks to the new service.

The timetable uplift comes as a host of improvements at Weymouth station are currently underway. These enhancements include:

- An upgrade of the station forecourt, which includes new bus stop facilities. This work is being delivered by Dorset Coastal Forum and part funded through SWR's Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF) with the remainder from Dorset Council.
- The refurbishment of the canopy on platforms 2 and 3 which is being funded and delivered by Network Rail.
- A new joint base for SWR's local Rail Community Officers and the British Transport Police, improving joint working and making Weymouth station safer and more attractive to use.
- The installation of a 'Living Wall' – a self-sufficient, vertical garden proven to combat air pollution, increase biodiversity and improve personal wellbeing.
- The establishment of an AMT café, which donates 100% of its profits to supporting people experiencing homelessness.

SWR's Performance and Planning Director, Steve Tyler said: "Despite the challenges faced by the railway in the aftermath of the pandemic, we remain wholeheartedly committed to maximising the connectivity of our region and ensuring that all corners of the SWR network are provided with a reliable train service.

"The reintroduction of two direct trains per hour between Weymouth and Waterloo, combined with a whole host of improvements at Weymouth station, represents a real boost to frequency, journey times, connectivity and customer experience."

Chris Loder, Member of Parliament for West Dorset, said: "After years of campaigning, I am delighted to see major improvements to Weymouth station, and we have finally got our two trains per hour back between Weymouth, Dorchester, and London as well! It is an important boost to our summer economy for West Dorset and I'm grateful to the railway for finally getting the station fit to welcome thousands of visitors to one of the nicest beaches in the country."

Andrew Wickham, Morebus and Damory managing director, said "We welcome this news from South Western Railway. As one of Dorset's leading bus operators, we are committed to helping ease congestion in the region, by encouraging more people to leave their cars at home and opt for sustainable transport instead.

"This latest move will make it easier than ever for commuters and visitors to do just that – by combining bus and train for their journeys to-and-from London.

"Just one of our low emissions double decker buses has the potential to take up to 75 cars off the road, so any initiative that helps our customers interchange between different modes of public transport here has to be a good thing for the people of Dorset and for our environment."

Marc Reddy, managing director of First Wessex, added: "The completion of the new station forecourt with new bus stops will mean better and more convenient links for customers to rail and bus services. Our 502, as well as our X52 and X53 Jurassic Coaster services, will stop directly outside the station's entrance. There is also a new stop opposite the station for our 1, and our Portland Coaster 501 service."

Cllr. Ray Bryan, Dorset Council's Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment said: "This is

welcome news as we head into the busy tourist season, and thousands of visitors will have an easier journey to Weymouth. Stronger public transport routes are absolutely vital to support the local economy and help promote sustainable travel, both of which are key priorities for Dorset Council.

“SWR, Dorset Coast Forum, our Highways team and many other partners are working together to transform the train forecourt into a more welcoming and user-friendly place, providing better transport links, wayfinding, and pedestrian access. I’m especially looking forward to finding out what train users think of the new design over the summer months.”