

South Western trains strike

I met with Andy Mellors, the MD of SW Trains to ask him about the RMT planned strike on 8 and 9 November. Other local MPs were also present.

Mr Mellors said the company had contingency plans should the strike go ahead. They aimed to run most services, with a few being covered by a replacement bus service. Travellers should go on to their website before travel on the strike days to see the latest position.

The RMT strike threat has arisen over the introduction of new trains to the network. These trains have the capability for driver operated doors. The Company wishes the drivers to carry out this function, but has guaranteed they will roster a guard for every train and each guard will continue to have safety training. The Guard's role will be to work for and with the passengers more than at present. The Company will be recruiting more staff and will not be making guards redundant.

The new trains are crucial to increasing capacity and improving passenger comfort. They are air conditioned and more spacious.

I stressed the need for the Company and the Union to put passenger needs first, and to seek an answer to their dispute.