



Bradford on Avon Town Council

Kingston House Office, Kingston Road, Bradford on Avon BA15 1ES

September 1st 2023

Dear GWR,

Thank you for extending the consultation on your plans for station ticket offices, including the one in Bradford on Avon.

Since Cllr Tim Trimble (Chair, Sustainable Travel Committee) and I wrote to you on July 26th with the initial results of our petition, concern at the plans has mounted further. We now, at the time of writing, have 3,365 signatures objecting to the proposed closure of our town station ticket office.

These are in hard copy (scan attached) and online here <https://www.change.org/p/bradford-on-avon-train-station-ticket-office-under-threat>

As you can see from the comments on the online version, residents, visitors and commuters signing see the ticket office as a 'vital service', 'needed by so many elderly and vulnerable people', as 'at the heart of the community', important for jobs and they 'value the in-person expertise in helping me with all my train destinations and train schedules.' Many users do not have confidence in the ticket machine which is often out of service.

To reiterate some of the points in our previous letter, the Town Council objects to the proposed closure, which is highly valued by our community. It is a place for advice and information, not simply ticket sales. In our view:

- Closure of the ticket office will discriminate against those without a smart phone or internet access.
- The lack of a ticket office will make travel by rail harder for visually impaired passengers and some with special needs.
- The result of the changes may result in a less inclusive service with many choosing no longer to travel by rail at all.
- This cost-cutting seems a retrograde step and could lead to a reduction in passenger numbers, which won't help profitability and at a time when we want to encourage increased use of low carbon forms of transport.

Transport Minister, Huw Merriman, has said, "No currently staffed station will be unstaffed as a result of industry changes and train operators will ensure staff are well located to meet passenger needs in future". Members of the public, understandably, have limited confidence that any such staffing arrangement will endure. If a member of staff is to be available at the station, why not situate them in a functioning ticket office?

Our local station, including the ticket office, is very well used. As a town that benefits from tourism and many day visitors, a full functioning service at the station is vitally important for our local economy as well as for our residents. We urge you to keep our ticket office open.

Yours sincerely

Cllr Katie Vigar, Mayor of Bradford on Avon

Cc Michelle Donelan MP