

= Stapleton Road railway station =

Stapleton Road railway station is on the Severn Beach Line and Cross Country Route , serving the inner @-@ city district of Easton in Bristol , England . It is 1 @.@ 6 miles (2 @.@ 6 km) from Bristol Temple Meads . Its three letter station code is SRD . As of 2015 , the station has two platforms , two running lines and minimal facilities . It is managed by Great Western Railway , the seventh company to be responsible for the station , and the third franchise since privatisation in 1997 . They provide all train services at the station , the standard service being a train every 40 minutes along the Severn Beach Line , an hourly service to Bristol Parkway , and another hourly service to Westbury .

The station was opened in 1863 by the Bristol and South Wales Union Railway , with a single track and platform . The line was doubled in 1874 when the Clifton Extension Railway opened , then expanded to four tracks and platforms in 1888 . There were buildings on all platforms and a goods yard to the north . Stapleton Road became one of Bristol 's busiest stations , but service levels reduced significantly in the 1960s when reversing trains at Bristol Temple Meads became common . The goods facilities were closed in 1965 , staff were withdrawn in 1967 and the line was reduced to two tracks in 1984 .

The line is due to be electrified as part of the 21st @-@ century modernisation of the Great Western Main Line , which will also see the addition of two new running lines to increase capacity , although no platforms will be built for these lines . Service frequency will however be improved as part of the Greater Bristol Metro scheme .

= = Description = =

Stapleton Road railway station is located in the Easton area of Bristol . The surrounding area is primarily residential , with the M32 motorway to the north of the station , and an industrial and commercial area north of that . The station is named after the A432 Stapleton Road just north of the station . The station can be accessed by Belmont Street to the west , an unnamed access road to the east , or by a set of steps from Stapleton Road . Access to the southbound platform is via a slope of gradient greater than 1 in 12 . The station is on the Cross Country Route between Bristol Temple Meads and Bristol Parkway , and on the Severn Beach Line from Bristol Temple Meads to Severn Beach . It is 1 mile 50 chains (2 @.@ 6 km) from Bristol Temple Meads . Directly to the north of the station is a bridge over the A432 , then a bridge over the M32 , then Narrowways Hill Junction , where the Severn Beach Line diverges from the Cross Country Route . The next station north along the Cross Country Route is Filton Abbey Wood , the next station north along the Severn Beach Line is Montpellier , and the next station south is Lawrence Hill .

The station is on an alignment of 150 degrees , curving towards the east . There are two active platforms : the western platform , platform 1 , serves northbound trains ; the eastern platform , platform 2 , serves southbound trains . Platform 1 is 216 metres (236 yd) long ; platform 2 is 211 metres (231 yd) long , however both have the southern 100 metres (110 yd) fenced off . The southern end of the platforms bridge the residential street St Mark 's Road . Platform 2 is part of an " island " platform , the other face of which served the northbound " up fast " line through the station , which was removed in 1984 along with the southbound " down fast " and fourth platform which served it . The disused trackbed and fourth platform are home to the Eastside Roots community garden , part of the Bristol Permaculture Group . Access between the platforms is by an open , stepped footbridge .

As of 2013 , facilities at the station are minimal ? there is a metal and glass shelter on each of the two platforms , and a row of seats on the northbound platform . The station is completely unstaffed , and there are no facilities for buying tickets . There are customer help points , giving next train information for both platforms . There is no car park or taxi rank , and the nearest bus stop is 120 metres (130 yd) away on the A432 Stapleton Road . There are eight bicycle stands on the platform . A mural depicting local life and history is painted on the wall of platform 1 .

The line through Stapleton Road has a speed limit of 60 miles per hour (97 km / h) northbound

and 75 miles per hour (121 km / h) southbound . The loading gauge is W8 , and the line handles over 15 million train tonnes per year . It is not electrified , though it is planned that it will be electrified by 2017 as part of the 21st @-@ century modernisation of the Great Western Main Line .

= = Services = =

Services at Stapleton Road are all operated by Great Western Railway . As of the December 2013 timetable , Monday to Friday , three trains every two hours run along the Severn Beach Line from Bristol Temple Meads to Avonmouth via Clifton Down , with one extended to St Andrew 's Road and Severn Beach . Most services start at Bristol , but one evening service to Avonmouth begins at Weston @-@ super @-@ Mare . On Saturdays there is a similar level of service , but more trains continue to Severn Beach . Sunday sees a roughly hourly service to and from Bristol , with only two services extending to Severn Beach , except during the May ? September timetable period , when all services are extended . The first and last Sunday trains towards Bristol are extended to Taunton via Weston @-@ super @-@ Mare , and there are similar workings in the other direction . Most trains call at all stations , but some services omit Lawrence Hill . In 2012 , the single fare to Clifton Down or Bristol was £ 1 @. @ 50 , and £ 3 return for the whole line .

Southbound services from Great Malvern and Gloucester to Westbury and Weymouth call at Stapleton road , with one train per hour . Hourly northbound services from Weston @-@ super @-@ Mare to Bristol Parkway also call , as do some peak northbound services from Taunton to Cardiff Central and two evening southbound services from Cardiff to Bristol . All trains southbound call at Bristol Temple Meads , although this requires Gloucester @-@ Westbury trains to reverse . CrossCountry trains pass Stapleton Road non @-@ stop throughout the day , operating two trains per hour each direction between the South West , Bristol , Manchester and Scotland .

Services from Stapleton Road are operated using a mix of Class 150 Sprinter , Class 153 Super Sprinter and Class 158 Express Sprinter diesel multiple units . Until 2012 , Class 143 Pacer units were a regular sight , but these have mostly been moved south to work in Devon and Cornwall following a cascade of Class 150 / 1 units from London Midland and London Overground .

The standard journey time to Bristol Temple Meads is 7 minutes , to Bristol Parkway 13 minutes , and to Avonmouth 23 minutes .

= = History = =

Stapleton Road opened on 8 September 1863 when services began on the Bristol and South Wales Union Railway (BSWUR) , which ran from Bristol Temple Meads to New Passage Pier , north of Bristol on the banks of the River Severn . At New Passage , passengers were transferred to a ferry to cross the Severn to continue on in to Wales . The line , engineered by Isambard Kingdom Brunel , was built as single track 7 ft 1 7/8 in (2 @, @ 140 mm) broad gauge , with a platform on the west side of the track . The BSWUR was amalgamated with the Great Western Railway , which had from the beginning operated all BSWUR services , in 1868 ; and in 1873 the line was converted to 1 @, @ 435 mm (4 ft 8 1/2 in) standard gauge . In 1874 , the Clifton Extension Railway opened , connecting the Bristol Port Railway and Pier to the Great Western Railway at Narrowways Hill Junction , north of Stapleton Road . To cope with the expected increase in traffic , the line was doubled , and a second platform was added to the east of the two tracks . Two more tracks were added in 1888 , giving a layout of two sets of two tracks , with platforms on the outside and on an island in the middle . Trains to and from Clifton Down and Avonmouth used the western platforms while trains to and from South Wales used the eastern platforms . There were buildings on all the platforms , with the booking office on the eastern outer platform , at the head of the access road . The refreshment room was on the island platform , and a covered footbridge connected the platforms . There was a yard to the north of the station , on the other side of Stapleton Road , which handled goods traffic including coal and other minerals .

Stapleton Road became one of Bristol 's busiest stations . The opening of the Clifton Extension Railway meant that Stapleton Road became a junction station , and when the Severn Tunnel was

opened in 1886 , replacing the ferry from New Passage , trains from London to Wales began to run via Bristol instead of Gloucester . Many would call at Stapleton Road instead of Bristol Temple Meads because this avoided having to run the locomotive around the train . In 1886 , the daily Great Western service along the Clifton Extension Railway was 6 trains each way between Avonmouth and Temple Meads , 24 trains from Clifton Down to Temple Meads and 26 the other direction . By 1910 there were 17 services daily from Avonmouth to Temple Meads and 15 the other way , a further 20 trains each day operating between Clifton Down and Temple Meads . For many passengers on the Clifton Extension Railway , Stapleton Road was where they would change for services to South Wales and the South Coast of England , and by 1912 the station name boards showed " Stapleton Road Junction for Clifton and Avonmouth " , although the station was never officially renamed . By this time however , the number of services to Wales had decreased due to the opening of the " Badminton Line " from Wootton Bassett to Patchway , now part of the South Wales Main Line , which allowed trains from London to avoid central Bristol entirely . From 1924 , many trains to Avonmouth were extended to Severn Beach , a growing seaside resort , and some on to Pilning , then back to Temple Meads via Patchway . Circular trips via Henbury were also common , and by 1930 a total of 350 trains would pass the station each day . The station was also used by excursion trains , and by trains of evacuees during the Second World War . By 1947 , just before the start of the British Rail era , there were 33 daily services each direction between Avonmouth and Temple Meads , and 18 on Sundays . The station also saw the arrival of Prime Minister David Lloyd George in the 1920s .

When the railways were nationalised in 1948 , Stapleton Road came under the aegis of the Western Region of British Railways . A gradual decline of services at Stapleton Road began . While as late as 1963 name boards at the station read " Bristol Stapleton Road " , trains between South Wales and the South Coast were eventually re-routed via Bristol Temple Meads ? the introduction of diesel multiple units making it easier for the trains to reverse ? and no longer called at Stapleton Road . Passenger numbers along the Clifton Extension Railway , now known as the Severn Beach Line , also dropped , and in 1963 the Beeching report suggested that all services along the line be withdrawn . In the end , services continued to Severn Beach but were discontinued via Henbury and Pilning . The goods yard was closed on 29 November 1965 , and staff were withdrawn from the station from 17 July 1967 as a cost-saving measure . In 1975 the M32 motorway was opened north of the station , passing through the southern end of the goods yard . The eastern tracks were removed in 1984 , although the bridge which carried the line across the A432 and M32 was left intact . The remaining station buildings were demolished at the same time , the buildings on the island platform having already been removed by 1958 . Plans to use the disused trackbed as part of a light rail scheme linking the city centre to the northern suburbs were formed in the late 1990s , with the aim of an operational scheme by 2008 , but the plans had been shelved by 2004 . It was suggested in 2008 that the trackbed could be used as a cycle path to join together communities which had been separated by the construction of the M32 motorway , however this was dropped due to Network Rail asserting that the trackbed might be necessary for future rail expansion .

British Rail was split into business-led sectors in the 1980s , at which time operations at Stapleton Road passed to Regional Railways . All trains along the Severn Beach Line ran to Severn Beach , but the service pattern was irregular . This was changed in the mid-1990s , with a more frequent service to Avonmouth but very few on to Severn Beach and no Sunday services . Services at Stapleton Road were boosted due to the proximity of Eastville Stadium , but this use ended in 1986 when Bristol Rovers F.C. moved to Twerton Park in Bath .

When the railway was privatised in 1997 , local services were franchised to Wales & West , which was succeeded by Wessex Trains , an arm of National Express , in 2001 . The station was brightened in 1999 when a mural illustrating local life was painted on the wall of the western platform by Bill Gilding . Services along the Severn Beach Line were increased to 10 per day in each direction by 2005 , with Bristol City Council providing a subsidy to Wessex Trains . The Wessex franchise was amalgamated with the Great Western franchise into the Greater Western franchise from 2006 , and responsibility passed to First Great Western , a subsidiary company of FirstGroup ,

rebranded in 2015 as Great Western Railway . A minimum service requirement was written into the franchise agreement , ensuring an hourly service along the Severn Beach Line . Passenger traffic increased significantly , and in 2010 , Sunday services to Severn Beach were restored .

By 2005 , the disused eastern trackbed was filled with rubble , brambles and weeds , and the station had acquired a bad reputation due to muggings and the use of illegal drugs on the station premises . A community garden project , Eastside Roots , was set up in the disused trackbed by local permaculture enthusiast Nick Ward . It was built using sustainable materials , including bricks dug out during the construction of the Cabot Circus shopping centre . The project led to a general improvement of the station ambience , and residents were more willing to use it . The footbridge was replaced in 2013 to allow for electrification of the line , but the new , higher , bridge angered local residents who felt it infringed on their privacy .

= = Future = =

First Great Western declined a contractual option to continue the Greater Western passenger franchise beyond 2013 , citing a desire for a longer @-@ term contract due to the impending upgrade to the Great Western Main Line . The franchise was put out to tender , but the process was halted and later scrapped due to the fallout from the collapse of the InterCity West Coast franchise competition . A two @-@ year franchise extension until September 2015 was agreed in October 2013 , and subsequently extended until March 2019 .

The line through Stapleton Road is due to be electrified by 2017 as part of the Great Western Main Line electrification project . However , the Severn Beach Line , the Cross Country Route , the Bristol to Exeter Line and the Heart of Wessex Line will not be electrified , so services at Stapleton Road will still be provided by diesel trains , with " Sprinter " units expected to be replaced by Class 165 and 166 " Turbo " units . The group Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways supports the electrification continuing beyond the main lines , as does MP for Weston @-@ super @-@ Mare John Penrose . The electrification scheme also includes the four @-@ tracking of Filton Bank , including the reinstatement of the disused trackbed at Stapleton Road , to allow more services between Parkway and Bristol Temple Meads and separate fast inter @-@ city services from local stopping services . The two eastern platforms at Stapleton Road will be demolished to allow trains to run faster , although it has been suggested that they be kept for use in case of service disruptions .

Stapleton Road is on the Weston @-@ super @-@ Mare / Yate corridor , one of the main axes of the Greater Bristol Metro , a rail transport plan which aims to enhance transport capacity in the Bristol area , including half @-@ hourly services along the Severn Beach Line . The scheme could see the reopening of the Henbury Loop Line to passengers , with the possibility of services from Bristol Temple Meads to Bristol Parkway via Clifton Down and Henbury . Plans for a loop were rejected by the West of England Joint Transport Board , however Bristol City Councillors voted to send the decision back to the board for further discussion .