

Railway Update

This update follows a meeting with the Managing Director of GWR on Nov 29th.

Poor service levels

Problems have largely resulted from the large amount of work being undertaken by Network Rail and the consequent delays in dealing with issues.

Electrification and future of the branch line

There is no prospect of electrification of the line in the near future (if ever). We are assured that the branch line was not under threat.

Services on main line

GWR will run electric trains from Paddington to Maidenhead by May 24th 2017. This may relieve some of the load on trains to Twyford and beyond. By the end of 2017 electrification from Paddington to Reading will be complete and electric trains (8 car) will be running from Jan 3rd 2018.

Prior to the start of Crossrail services from Reading, GWR will run the present 30 min slow service, calling at Twyford, to/from Paddington and a (2 per hour) fast service stopping Maidenhead and/or Slough at peak times. Following introduction of Crossrail from/to Reading the 30 min service will be operated by Crossrail but the GWR fast service will remain. (i.e total of 4 per hour)

Services on the branch line

There will be no through services to/from Paddington and Henley after December 2017.

A 30 min service on the branch will start in May 2017. Some trains will not stop at Wargrave at off peak times. It was hoped that with the introduction of electric trains the service would be faster and allow stops at all stations for all services. With no electrification the possibility of that now depends in finding other ways of speeding the service, e.g re-laying the remaining parts of the track with continuous line and finding ways to allow trains to slow less at the pedestrian crossing points (of which there are 3 or more in Shiplake). GWR will press NR on this.

The service on the branch line will continue to be operated by diesel units. They may in due course be refurbished. The present intention is that they be 2 car units at all times, including the rush hour services. (Currently the busiest through service from Henley is 6 cars). GWR has agreed to undertake load surveys on the branch to find out many people would stand. This number multiplied by the duration of their journey, compared to the same data from other services in the region will indicate whether it is appropriate for GWR to provide longer trains on our branch.

On a positive note

If a reliable 30 min service stopping at all stations, with good and sufficiently spacious trains is established, and with good connections at Twyford, then operationally the situation would be no different than had the line been electrified, and the disruption and visual consequences would have been avoided.

Ray Wild