

NEWS ROUND-UP FOR MAY 2013

BARKING - GOSPEL OAK RAIL NEWS UPDATE 3 MAY

Since last week's News e-Bulletin (www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/history/20130425_e_bulletin.pdf) there have been some developments:

- **More disruption:** There was a repeat of the signals problem east of South Tottenham last Saturday (27 April) and even greater disruption the following Monday (29 April). The reoccurring problems east of South Tottenham have now been pinned down to a cable fault somewhere between South Tottenham and Wanstead Park. It's now a matter of finding out where the fault is! Monday's disruption was caused by track circuit problems on the North London Line a mile or two to the west of Gospel Oak. What at first looks like sloppy operating by Network Rail allowed the 07:59SX Woodgrange Park *PIXC-buster* train to become trapped on the main line alongside Gospel Oak platform 3, in turn trapping a Barking train in the platform. After around an hour the *PIXC-buster* passengers were taken off the train via the rear cab door and conducted across the track to the platform and left to find alternative ways to finish their journeys. Just as the recovery from this incident started there was a points failure at Gunnersbury Junction! A member suffered a 50 minute wait at Blackhorse Road around lunchtime! I have been in touch with LOROL and they are still involved in an inquiry with Network Rail and promise to advise me of the outcome. LOROL Concession Director, Mark Eaton, was spotted out on the line with other managers the following day (30 April).
- **Walthamstow Progress!** The new Edison Close entrance at Walthamstow Queen's Road is nearly finished! All that remains to be installed is lighting, CCTV, Oyster readers, a ticket vending machine and signage. It appears that it will be several months before the footpath between Edison Close and Walthamstow Central station will be completed.
- **In the Press:** Barking - Gospel Oak and the London Assembly Transport Committee gets a mention in the latest edition of Modern Railways magazine.
- **Stop Press!** We have just received notification that LOROL are seeking to reduce the opening hours of Gospel Oak ticket office.
- **Renewal reminder!** Yet another reminder that time is running out for those who have not renewed their BGORUG membership. **You know who you are!** Funds are getting low, so please renew and allow us to carry on our work for the benefit of users of the Barking - Gospel Oak Line and London Overground in general.

BGORUG NEWS UPDATE 10 MAY

- **LONDON LABOUR ASSEMBLY MEMBERS WRITE TO CHANCELLOR** Four Labour London Assembly Members, whose constituencies cover the Barking - Gospel Oak rail line have written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, urging him to ensure that electrification of this vital orbital rail commuter link and strategic national rail freight route is included in the next round of infrastructure investment to be announced in June. The four Labour Assembly Members
 - Andrew Dismore (Barnet & Camden)
 - Jennette Arnold (North East)
 - Joanne McCartney (Enfield & Haringey) &
 - John Biggs (City & East)

have thrown their weight (www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/history/20130508_electrification_letter.pdf) behind the Assembly's Transport Committee, whose retiring Chair, Lib Dem Caroline Pidgeon, wrote to the Chancellor in March (www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/history/20130311_London_Assembly_letter.pdf) explaining that electrification was vital to relieve severe passenger overcrowding, allow more electric freight trains and improve air quality and was required to be finished in time for the opening of Crossrail in 2018.

- **PiXC-buster cancelled!** The lack of sufficient diesel trains for the line was demonstrated last Thursday (2nd May) when the the 07:59 Woodgrange Park - Willesden Junction relief train was cancelled, delaying many commuters as they waited to try and squeeze aboard the following trains.
- **New Entrance at Walthamstow Queen's Road nearly ready!** Rapid progress by contractor Cleshar has raised hopes that the new Edison Close entrance might open in time for the start of the Summer timetable on 19 May. When visiting the recent Railtex 2013 exhibition at Earl's Court (Overground to West Brompton), we were delighted to see a photograph of the works displayed on the Cleshar stand!
- **Another membership renewal reminder!** The number of renewals so far has been disappointing. We need funds to be able to carry on our work and the annual rate will increase to £5.00 from 1 July. From that date we will be changing the way we do things to ensure members get some *added value* for their membership subscription.

■ BGORUG NEWS UPDATE 19 MAY 2013

- SUMMER NATIONAL RAIL TIMETABLE STARTS TODAY
- PIXC-BUSTER CANCELLED AGAIN!
- DISRUPTION UPDATE
- OYSTER OUT OF STATION INTERCHANGES (OSIs)
- HOPE FOR MORE PLATFORM SHELTER IMPROVEMENTS
- GOSPEL OAK BOOKING OFFICE REDUCTION IN HOURS
- BULLYING AND HARASSMENT DISPUTE AFFECTS LOROL
- IN THE PRESS
- MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS
- BUSES REPLACE TRAINS NEXT SUNDAY

■ SUMMER NATIONAL RAIL TIMETABLE STARTS TODAY

The cover of the London Overground Gospel Oak – Barking 19 May to 7 December 2013 timetable booklet strangely shows *our* 172 006 arriving at Highbury & Islington!

<p>2J96 PIXC-buster public timetable from 20/05/2013</p>
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The main change in the timetable is the retiming of the bulk of the westbound Monday – Saturday Timetable to **run a minute later**. This is assumed to be an attempt to reduce the waiting at Highgate Road for the bay platform at Gospel Oak to be cleared by the previous train. The exceptions are the **06:32 & 06:47** departures from Barking which are unchanged.

Then we have the **Saturday eXceptions**, which again are all westbound. The first of these is the *PIXC-buster* (**07:59SX** Woodgrange Park). Its timings remain unchanged and while the first print run of the timetable booklet still showed it as terminating at Hampstead Heath, the versions on the Transport for London (TfL) website have been updated to show this train now terminating at Willesden Junction. The train has now been included in the North London Line (NLL) timetable as well! Presumably further print-runs of these timetable booklets will show the changes. While these public times over the NLL are a minute earlier (see table), the arrival at Willesden Junction is now *11 minutes later* than previous working timetables! This is assumed to be due the train's actual terminus being in the bay platform in the low level station and allowance being made for conflicts with the Watford DC and Bakerloo Lines' services. Although likely to arrive early, passengers using the *PIXC-buster* and wanting to change onto the following Clapham Junction or Richmond trains are advised to change at Kensal Rise or risk missing them while climbing up the stairs from the low level station.

Woodgrange Park	d.	07:59
Wanstead Park	d.	08:02
Leytonstone High Road	d.	08:05
Leyton Midland Road	d.	08:08
Walthamstow Queen's Road	d.	08:11
Blackhorse Road	d.	08:14
South Tottenham	d.	08:18
Harringay Green Lanes	d.	08:21
Crouch Hill	d.	08:24
Upper Holloway	d.	08:27
Hampstead Heath	d.	08:34
Finchley Road & Frognal	d.	08:36
West Hampstead	d.	08:38
Brondesbury	d.	08:40
Brondesbury Park	d.	08:41
Kensal Rise	d.	08:43
Willesden Junction Low Level	a.	09:00

Other trains to watch out for are the **09:48SX** from Barking which loses time from Crouch Hill (4 mins.) all the way to Gospel Oak (6 mins.). This is assumed to be due to a clash with a train from the East Coast Main Line at Harringay Park Junction. Finally there is the **22:00SX** (Monday – Friday) departure from Barking which runs 3 minutes **earlier** than normal as far as Wanstead Park again, assumed to be due to a timetable clash with another train between Barking and Woodgrange Park/Forest Gate Junctions.

Of course we need more than just additional *PIXC-buster* trains (see below), we remember that back in 2007 *London Overground* was 'sold' to us by TfL as bringing *Tube* style train frequencies and hours of operation to London's heavy rail services. If it has not been quietly abandoned, that goal has yet to be achieved. As was discussed at our recent open meeting (see www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/history/20130409_public_meeting.pdf for notes of the meeting), the morning westbound peak from Barking is the earliest starting morning peak on *London Overground*. Indeed, your scribe's attempt to do a passenger count on the **06:17** departure from Barking last month was thwarted because by Woodgrange Park the train was so packed it was impossible to count the passengers! First **SX** trains have got to be **06:03** west, which might prove to be not early enough (**05:48?**) and **06:05** east. Last **SX** trains should be **00:03** west and **00:05** east, with corresponding later connecting services on the North London Line. First Sunday (**Su**) trains should be **07:38** west and **07:40** east; a 20-minute frequency would probably suffice until around 09:00. Evening off peak services should be every 20 minutes from around 21:00 every day, not every ½-hour after 22:00 as now. The opportunity for BGORUG to meet face-to-face with TfL has very recently arisen and we will use that opportunity to press these issues.

■ PIXC-BUSTER CANCELLED AGAIN!

News reaches your scribe that the **07:59SX** Woodgrange Park *PIXC-buster* has been cancelled again, this time on Thursday 16 May. It was only two Thursdays previously that the train was last cancelled (2 May).

While it was always accepted that LOROL could only run this train subject to the availability of a spare unit, the numbers now using the service (see table) indicate that very serious overcrowding problems will occur if it is cancelled.

The formalising of the Willesden extension in the timetable raises several questions. Will the attraction of not having to change at Gospel Oak cause many passengers to change their morning travel habits and catch this train? Is this one morning Woodgrange Park – Willesden Junction trip the best use of this unit? Starting a bit earlier could it not manage at least two Woodgrange Park – Blackhorse Road trips, with perhaps the last going through to Willesden Junction?

Loading survey on 2J96 07:59SX Woodgrange Pk. Mid week April 2013	No of Pax on departure
Woodgrange Park	55
Wanstead Park	96
Leytonstone High Road	140
Leyton Midland Road	175
Walthamstow Queen's Road	172*
Blackhorse Road	137
South Tottenham	151
Harringay Green Lanes	163*
Crouch Hill	178
Upper Holloway	172*
Hampstead Heath	130
Finchley Road & Frognal	113
West Hampstead	123
Brondesbury	124
Brondesbury Park	114
Kensal Rise	84
Willesden Junction	L/L bay
Those figures marked * have a margin of error of +/- 3. A Class 172 has 124 seats. Pax = passengers.	

Without more trains in the timetable, drastic measures such as removing seats to make more standing room for passengers will have to be addressed. BGORUG will be raising these matters with LOROL and TfL shortly.

■ DISRUPTION UPDATE

LOROL advises that the Network Rail inquiry into the major disruption on Monday 29 April is still ongoing but that the following has emerged. The signalling “blackout” (actually it is very rare for signals to go “black”, they normally fail to *danger*, i.e. red) which affected Kentish Town West to Brondesbury took place just as the *PIXC-buster* was approaching Gospel Oak Junction and there was no time to hold it back at Highgate Road. Meanwhile, no news of any further signalling disruptions between South Tottenham and Wanstead Park has been received, have Network Rail’s signalling technicians finally found and fixed the cable fault? We can but hope!

■ OYSTER OUT OF STATION INTERCHANGES (OSIs)

This is something that I have been meaning to cover for some time. This is one of TfL’s many “open secrets” that are only published to staff, if they are published at all, but are available through Freedom of Information requests to TfL if you know what to ask for!

Where stations on different lines are close enough together to allow a passenger to walk between them, an *OSI* interchange time allowance is made. Providing the passenger touches out at the alighting station and touches in again at the boarding station within the time allowed, Oyster will continue the previous journey and not charge as a new journey (see table below).

OSI interchange time allowances for Barking – Gospel Oak Line stations				
Exit Station	Operator	Entry Station	Operator	No. of mins allowed for interchange
Archway	LUL	Upper Holloway	LOROL	20
Forest Gate	GA	Wanstead Park	LOROL	20
Harringay Green Lanes	LOROL	Harringay	FCC	20
Harringay	FCC	Harringay Green Lanes	LOROL	20
Leytonstone	LUL	Leytonstone High Road	LOROL	20
Leytonstone High Road	LOROL	Leytonstone	LUL	20
Seven Sisters	LUL	South Tottenham	LOROL	20
South Tottenham	LOROL	Seven Sisters	LUL	20
Upper Holloway	LOROL	Archway	LUL	20
Walthamstow Central	GA	Walthamstow Queen's Road	LOROL	25
Walthamstow Central	LUL	Walthamstow Queen's Road	LOROL	25
Walthamstow Queen's Road	LOROL	Walthamstow Central	GA	25
Walthamstow Queen's Road	LOROL	Walthamstow Central	GA	25
Wanstead Park	LOROL	Forest Gate	GA	20
Extracted from a 2010 FOI request to Transport for London				

■ HOPE FOR MORE PLATFORM SHELTER IMPROVEMENTS

Following on from TfL's surprise provision of new shelters at Leyton Midland Road, Leytonstone High Road, Wanstead Park and Woodgrange Park, our constant complaints about the prison cell like existing 1995 vintage shelters at these stations has caused LOROL to offer a 'truce'. They have offered to carry out a trial reinstatement of glazing along the front of these shelters replacing the perforated steel panels that were fitted by Silverlink as a response to vandalism when the stations were unstaffed at one station. BGORUG has nominated Leyton Midland Road and sees no reason why this trial should not prove successful, allowing the rest of the shelters to follow suit.

■ GOSPEL OAK BOOKING OFFICE REDUCTION IN HOURS

A "stop press" item on the 3 May Update stated that TfL had consulted us on a proposal by LOROL to reduce the opening hours of the booking office at Gospel Oak (see www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/history/20130503_TfL_Gospel_Oak_Ticket_Office.pdf for full consultation letter).

The Executive Committee considered the proposal recently and decided to object to London TravelWatch. It was felt that instead of reducing the hours Gospel Oak booking office is open to match the hours other *Overground* booking offices are open, LOROL and TfL should be *increasing* the hours of the other offices to match Gospel Oak. Frequently, staff manning booking hall gatelines and platforms in the early morning and in the late evening are agency staff whose main role is security and who have little or no training in tickets, train services or the transport network. Booking offices are staffed by trained booking clerks who know about tickets, train services and the network. Rail operators should consider staffed booking offices as "adding value to the customer experience" (!) not just for the amount of revenue they bring in. They can sell a customer with Oyster or a Travelcard a 'Boundary Zone 'X' to...ticket' which ticket machines cannot. Objections should arrive at London TravelWatch by 28 May. See the last page of the consultation letter (see link above) for London TravelWatch's address.

■ BULLYING & HARASSMENT DISPUTE AFFECTS LOROL

It is this writer's personal opinion (not that of BGORUG) that while LOROL provides a good service to its users, LOROL staff do not always get such good treatment. Never is this more the case than in the company's continued use of agency staff from STM instead of directly employing all the staff it needs.

LOROL has utilised staff from STM since it took over from Silverlink in 2007. The situation up to when I stopped working on the Barking – Gospel Oak Line in late 2009 was that all the stations except Barking, Blackhorse Road and Gospel Oak were staffed from around 8-9pm to the end of service and sometimes longer by STM security staff. There were periods when the staff were booked off shortly after the last train and others, especially if there was a spate of ticket machine robberies, when they would be required to stay until the LOROL staff booked on in the morning around 6am. The STM staff were also the 'staff of last resort' if no LOROL staff are available. LOROL is fined by TfL if a station is unstaffed when the contract says staff should be present. Following an assault on the LOROL Station Assistant at Walthamstow, an STM staff member had to cover the station assistant's shift and his own, resulting in his being on duty for 16 hours. I've no reason to believe that things have changed much since 2009 except that TfL now insist on agency staff wearing LOROL uniform so that passengers do not realise that they are agency staff.

Therefore, I was not wholly surprised to receive the following from my former RMT branch, although I was surprised to learn that the *Overground* Travel Safe Officers were STM staff, I had assumed that they worked for LOROL. A zero hours contract is just that, you are employed by a company but are only paid for whatever hours they decide to use you for each week. You have no guaranteed hours of work. Of course, those whose faces fit get the most hours work while others consistently get less. Unfortunately, zero hours contracts are widely used by the agencies that supply the rail industry with cleaners, security staff and track workers. It must have taken considerable bravery on behalf of a substantial number of STM staff to join RMT and take part in this dispute.

"Our colleagues who work at STM as Travel Safe Officers on the London Overground network are taking action by way of a protest outside London Overground headquarters this Monday at 9.am. This is following industrial action that was taken yesterday in a dispute over bullying and harassment and an attempt to impose workplace changes without agreement.

In this long-running dispute, RMT officials put forward a possible solution which would help defuse the problems at STM. This involved the creation of a roster which would do away with zero hour contracts and give all Travel Safe Officers guaranteed hours. The union was confident that this would lead to better working conditions and kerb the amount of pressure in the workplace.

At first, STM management were receptive to this idea and a meeting was scheduled to discuss the practicalities of drawing up a new roster. However, without warning STM cancelled the meeting and have since refused to meet with RMT despite continued requests from the union.

As a result of this point blank refusal by the company to discuss the long-standing grievances, RMT's executive has decided to escalate this dispute in the form of further industrial action. ALL Travel Safe Officer members were instructed to take industrial action short of a strike from 00:01 hours on FRIDAY 17TH MAY 2013 in the form of:

- NOT submitting any incident reports following any incidents until further notice.*
- NOT to "tag" whilst visiting stations and trains as part of your duties until further notice.*

RMT General Secretary Bob Crow said:

"Since the middle of April, the union has continuously asked STM for meetings at both formal and informal level in an attempt reach a settlement. In that time, management's attitude has become actively hostile and they have effectively stonewalled the union's negotiating team. RMT feels completely misled, as this is an act of serious bad faith which has undermined the dispute resolution process.

"It is now clear that management have no interest in resolving this matter and are content to bury their heads in the sand, while bullying and harassment remains on the increase. It is that pig-headed and aggressive stance that has led to the escalation of the dispute."

Since these brave members have taken this action they have been locked out of their place of work and threatened with nonpayment. This action is unacceptable and inexcusable. The branch invites all members to attend the protest outside London Overground HQ in Swiss Cottage in solidarity of our members. They are fighting a fight which needs our urgent support. We need to be united in taking the fight to STM and also let London Overground know that they have a duty to look at what STM are doing with these members as they work on their services.

*Today this is happening to Travel Safe Officers, tomorrow it could be happening to **YOU**. Let's show our unity and strength in solidarity against this horrendous act of Bullying."*

[RMT circular to RMT members in London Overground]

■ IN THE PRESS

Further to the report in the current *Modern Railways*, we have received further coverage:

- The 9 May Waltham Forest edition of the *Yellow Advertiser* reported the letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer pressing the case for electrification written by the local Labour London Assembly Members Jennette Arnold OBE, Joanne McCartney, John Biggs and Andrew Dismore.

- Well known transport journalist and Labour Mayoral hopeful, Christian Woolmar, has used his column in the latest *RAIL* magazine to highlight the Barking – Gospel Oak electrification issue.
- There is also coverage in the latest *Today's Railways UK*.

■ MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

There is just over a month until the annual membership subscription increases to £5.00. To join or renew at the existing £3.00 rate print off the membership form at www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/images/membership_form.pdf and post, with cheque, to the address at the foot of the form. Alternatively you can arrange a credit transfer to our HSBC bank account *The Barking – Gospel Oak Line Committee* No. 70132195, sort code: 40-04-17. If choosing the latter payment method, **please email our Treasurer with full details at:** adltack@btinternet.com so that he can identify and confirm the payment on our bank statement.

■ BUSES REPLACE TRAINS NEXT SUNDAY

Next Spring Bank Holiday Sunday bridge engineering works will be taking place between Barking and South Tottenham until 12:15 hours. LOROL will be providing a replacement bus service as usual. It is hoped to publish the Barking – South Tottenham replacement bus timetables and fuller details of the NE London holiday weekend rail travel and replacement bus arrangements within a day or two.

NEWS UPDATE FROM BGORUG 31ST MAY 2013

- **WALTHAMSTOW MP STELLA CREASY ADDS TO TREASURY'S IN TRAY!**
- **AND SO DOES CLEAN AIR IN LONDON!**
- **SIGN THE ELECTRIFICATION E-PETITION!**
- **MAY'S MAYOR'S QUESTION TIME**
- **QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS TOO!**
- **C2C WASHES HANDS OF OVERGROUND PASSENGERS AT BARKING!**
- **BULLYING & HARASSMENT DISPUTE AT LOROL CONTRACTOR ENDS**
- **BGORUG OBJECT TO REDUCTION IN GOSPELOAK BOOKING OFFICE HOURS**
- **WALTHAMSTOW AWAITS STATIONS LINK**
- **LATEST LOROL PERFORMANCE**
- **MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS – YET ANOTHER REMINDER**

■ WALTHAMSTOW MP STELLA CREASY ADDS TO TREASURY'S IN TRAY!

Stella Creasy MP recently added to the letters supporting Barking – Gospel Oak electrification that have been winging their way into the Chancellor's in-tray at HM Treasury (www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/history/20130522_Stella_Creasy.pdf).

Writing to the Chancellor, Ms Creasy said, “*Even on this period of austerity, it is vital that investment in UK infrastructure continues. It makes little sense to be investing in projects like Crossrail and the Tube upgrade, when a large section of London continues to be served by diesel trains.*”

She continued, “*This continued use of diesel also has negative environmental effects.*

[..]

I am urging you to rethink the decision to omit electrification of the line from the previous budget and ask that it is included in the forthcoming Spending Round in June. It has been shown to be a good value for money project and would bring benefits for those living in my constituency as well as the city as a whole.”

The Walthamstow MP’s letter is the latest in a number written to Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, since the electrification scheme was left out of his Budget speech, urging its inclusion in the 26 June Spending Review. Previous London Assembly Transport Chair, Lib Dem Caroline Pidgeon, local Labour Assembly Members Jennette Arnold, John Biggs, Andrew Dismore and Joanne McCartney have all written to the Chancellor in similar vein.

■ AND SO DOES CLEAN AIR IN LONDON!

Simon Birkett, Founder and Director of Clean Air in London (CAL), has written to the Chief Secretary of the Treasury, Lib Dem, Danny Alexander MP, urging him to ensure that HM Treasury contributes towards the electrification of the Barking – Gospel Oak Line in the 26 June Spending Round (www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/history/20130524/clean_air_in_london.pdf).

Reminding Mr. Alexander of his 27 March letter (www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/history/20130410_London_Assembly_Note.pdf) to then Chair of the London Assembly Transport Committee, Lib Dem Caroline Pidgeon, promising to review funding for the electrification scheme in June, CAL emphasises “*the urgent need to reduce air pollution by eliminating diesel trains from a 12-mile stretch of railway line running from east London to Camden.*”

CAL also reminds the Chief Secretary that the World Health Organisation classified diesel exhaust as carcinogenic for humans last year and quotes London Mayor Boris Johnson’s Air Quality Strategy which stresses the contribution rail can make to *local air pollution hotspots*.

■ SIGN THE ELECTRIFICATION E-PETITION!

Thanks are due to local blog *South Tottenham.org* for setting up an e-petition for Government funding of Barking – Gospel Oak electrification on the HM Government web site:-

[Sign the petition](#) to support the long overdue electrification of the Gospel Oak – Barking section of London Overground. The line has seen a massive increase in passenger numbers in recent years and now suffers from frequent overcrowding.

As [RailFuture](#) explain, upgrading this line from diesel would:

- Reduce overcrowding
- Improve air quality
- Benefit freight links to London's new port
- Provide alternative routes for North London Line trains

Transport for London, the rail industry, passenger groups and London's Mayor all support this upgrade. Yet funding was dropped at the last minute from the Budget.

Demand Chancellor George Osborne supports public transport in June's Comprehensive Spending Review by signing the petition at:

<http://bit.ly/electrifyGOB>

Once you've signed the petition, spread the word:

[Share on Facebook](#)

[Share on LinkedIn](#)

[Share on Twitter](#)

... or just forward this email!

■ MAY'S MAYOR'S QUESTION TIME

Mayor Boris Johnson appears on our television screens on an almost daily basis launching some new London initiative or putting the case for government support for a London project, most recently Crossrail 2, but never Barking – Gospel Oak electrification (he has refused to visit the line twice). In a recent letter to BGORUG, Commissioner of Transport Sir Peter Hendy CBE, said that the Mayor was taking the case directly to HM Treasury. London Assembly Member for Hackney, Islington and Waltham Forest, Jennette Arnold OBE, tried to find out a little more:

Mayor answers to London

Barking-Gospel Oak

Question number	1399/2013
Meeting date	22/05/2013

Question by [Jennette Arnold](#)

Can the Mayor outline what personal interventions he has made to ensure that electrification of this vital route is brought forward sooner rather than later?

Answer by Boris Johnson

I have been arguing for substantial improvements to be made to the Gospel Oak to Barking line for some time. TfL has committed £25m to the electrification scheme and my officers and I are taking the case directly to the Department for Transport and HM Treasury at every available opportunity. I wrote to the Chancellor prior to the budget and discussed the matter personally with the Secretary of State, most recently last

month. Any further support from Members of the Assembly and indeed other interested stakeholders in making case would of course be welcome.

So now we know!

Assembly Member for Enfield and Haringey, Joanne McCartney was interested in plans for South Tottenham station and provision of platform shelters for waiting passengers there and at Harringay Green Lanes.

South Tottenham Station

Question No: 1574 / 2013

Joanne McCartney

Further to MQ 592/2013, I understand that LOROL and BGOLUG are in agreement that current proposals for the step-free access and gate line at South Tottenham Overground are problematic. A solution would be to use the former booking office in the development/works. Can you confirm that this is being actively looked into as it proves a sensible solution to passenger access and safety?

Written response from the Mayor

Yes. TfL is looking at a number of options, including one which involves using the former booking office.

Barking – Gospel Oak Line covered shelter (1)

Question No: 1575 / 2013

Joanne McCartney

The Barking – Gospel Oak Line Users Group (BGOLUG) have expressed concerns over the limited covered shelter for passengers at South Tottenham and Haringey Green Lanes stations. Will you look into providing more covered shelters at these stations?

Written response from the Mayor

TfL has considered whether greater cover could be provided but I am advised that this has not been possible for cost reasons – essentially TfL would have to widen the platforms to fit larger shelters on to them.

Barking – Gospel Oak Line covered shelter (2)

Question No: 1576 / 2013

Joanne McCartney

The Barking – Gospel Oak Line Users Group (BGOLUG) have been asking for the perforated steel panels along the front of the existing shelters to be replaced by glazing to make the shelters feel less claustrophobic for waiting passengers. Can you please ensure that this is properly considered?

Written response from the Mayor

TfL has already considered this request from BGOLUG very carefully and unfortunately it would not be cost effective to replace the panels in question. They remain fit for purpose, and removing them would risk damaging the frames, which would require the entire shelter to be replaced.

The Mayor's answer regarding South Tottenham sums up the situation as far as BGORUG is aware; we assume that the *Access for All* funding will need to be spent by next March.

Regarding the shelters, the Mayor's answers are a little harder to swallow. Further shelters have been ruled out on cost grounds but BGORUG would dispute that there is any need to widen platforms.

Again, the minor cost involved seems to be the sole reason that the perforated steel panels remain in the front panels of the 1990s era shelters. Hats off to LOROL, who at their own expense, have agreed to a trial re-glazing at Leyton Midland Road to assess the work and cost involved. We await the outcome with interest.

■ QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS TOO!

Barking – Gospel Oak Line electrification has even been discussed in the House of Lords Chamber!

Railways: Electrification

Question

Asked by **Lord Berkeley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to electrify the Gospel Oak to Barking line; and what are the expected timescales and costs.[HL6787]

Earl Attlee: We recognise there is a good case to electrify the Gospel Oak to Barking line, but the estimated cost of £90 million is significant and strategic rail funding up to 2019 is fully committed. The Department for Transport, Network Rail and Transport for London are looking at both funding opportunities and ways in which the cost of the scheme might be reduced.

Railways: Freight

Question

Asked by **Lord Bradshaw**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase railway capacity to cater for the additional heavy freight expected to be handled by the London gateway port, so as to reduce to a minimum additional heavy lorry traffic on the roads in the area.[HL6783]

Earl Attlee: Freight routing and network capacity are matters for Network Rail. Network Rail undertakes a programme of market and demand studies in order to understand the likely pattern of developing demand from the freight sector, including ports. It works closely with its customers, including the developers of London Gateway, to determine the extent to which demand can be accommodated within existing capacity or may require capacity enhancements. This process informs the prioritisation of Network Rail's investment in the strategic rail freight network.

At least the Government accepts that there is a good case for wiring Barking – Gospel Oak. At the 17 April meeting of the London Assembly Transport Committee,

Commissioner of Transport, Sir Peter Hendy CBE, said that he believed that the final cost of electrification would come in at well under £90m.

■ C2C WASHES HANDS OF OVERGROUND PASSENGERS AT BARKING!

Fenchurch Street to Southend Central and Shoeburyness operator c2c believes other train operators' passengers at its Barking station are none of its responsibility. At a recent Public Transport Liaison Meeting at Barking Town Hall, a c2c manager said their staff had no responsibility for disabled Underground passengers at the station and judging by recent events on Sundays when buses have replaced London Overground trains, c2c clearly has no interest in their passengers either.

Whenever Gospel Oak trains are replatformed to platforms 7 or 8 at Barking, only one public address announcement is put out by the Customer Information System (CIS) while the elderly departures board on platform 1 (where the majority of Gospel Oak trains depart from) is incapable of displaying platform alterations and merely moves to the following timetabled departure, causing passengers to think their train is cancelled and not moved to another platform.

When buses replace Gospel Oak trains, c2c fail to display Overground posters giving details of the replacement bus service and allow Gospel Oak passengers to gather on Platform 1 waiting for trains that are not running.

Last Sunday, BGORUG's volunteer Customer Services Assistant, arriving at Barking to take down signs and timetables identifying the rail replacement bus stop once the rail service restarted, found over 50 passengers on Platform 1 with no knowledge replacement buses were running. The volunteer then had to move them across to platform 7 for the 12:23 Gospel Oak train, while another 50 or so had to be directed to Platform 8 for the 12:38 departure.

Answering a complaint from a BGORUG member, c2c said, "*LOROL should be providing their own staff to assist passengers, when engineering work is taking place and buses are in operation. This is because we have limited staff available on Sundays, who are mainly located in the ticket office or at the ticket gates.*" C2C manage the station under the terms of their franchise from the Department of Transport and are required to treat all passengers using the station equally, but they seem only interested in those passengers who benefit them financially. BGORUG has now formally complained to c2c, LOROL and official watchdog, London TravelWatch.

■ BULLYING & HARASSMENT DISPUTE AT LOROL CONTRACTOR ENDS

After holding two demonstrations outside LOROL's Swiss Cottage HQ, RMT issued the following on 23 May:

Dear Colleagues

BULLYING AND INTIMIDATION, TRAVEL SAFE OFFICERS – STM SECURITY GROUP (UK) LTD (LOROL CONTRACT)

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ALL INDUSTRIAL ACTION IS SUSPENDED

PLEASE WORK AS NORMAL

Further to my letter dated 21st May 2013, I can report a meeting took place with management on 22nd May 2013 to try and resolve the dispute. I am happy to report that as a result of this meeting STM agreed to reinstate your lost wages and give all Travel Safe Officers guaranteed hours contracts on the TSO rate.

Management have also agreed to a fair rostering of shifts and new rosters will be approved on a monthly basis with the RMT. Furthermore, management have agreed to enter into pay negotiations with RMT to discuss an increase the TSO rate of pay, it is anticipated that pay talks will begin in the next 14 days.

The union's Executive Committee has now had opportunity to consider this settlement and has agreed to **suspend the current industrial action short of a strike** to allow these matters to be progressed. You are instructed to return to work as normal.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you all on standing firm in this dispute; it is a testament to the solidarity of our members that we were able to secure this resolution.

Yours sincerely

Bob Crow

General Secretary

■ **BGORUG OBJECT TO REDUCTION IN GOSPEL OAK BOOKING OFFICE HOURS**

BGORUG has now formally replied to London TravelWatch regarding the proposal by LOROL and TfL to reduce the number of hours that Gospel Oak Booking Office is open (www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk/history/20130503_TfL_Gospel_Oak_Ticket_Office.pdf). BGORUG's objection was based on the fact that a booking office, staffed by a trained person(s), directly employed by LOROL, was a useful resource for passengers and prospective passengers of reliable rail travel information and advice on ticket types and availability, other 'Rail Products' (such as Railcards) and the ability to issue 'add-on' tickets to destinations beyond the Oyster/Travelcard area boundary, all services not available from a ticket vending machine. BGORUG has proposed that Gospel Oak and all similar LOROL booking offices should be open from 06:30 (09:00 Sundays) and close no earlier than 22:00, preferably staying open until 23:00.

■ **WALTHAMSTOW AWAITS STATIONS LINK**

Latest word from LOROL is that they are awaiting the installation of Oyster validators by TfL before the new Edison Close entrance to Walthamstow Queen's Road station can be opened. LOROL is also pressing TfL for a ticket vending machine to be installed also. Waltham Forest Council hope to be able to open the new footpath link, 'Ray Dudley Way' between Edison Close and Walthamstow Central station in August.

BGORUG Committee Member, Graham Larkbey, has scored a victory in getting Waltham Forest Council to clear years of accumulated litter from a disputed strip of land between the railway boundary and the footway of Edinburgh Road, by Walthamstow Queen's Road station.

■ LATEST LOROL PERFORMANCE

LOROL have just supplied some Barking – Gospel Oak Public Performance Measure (PPM) figures for the period 1- 27 May.

- B-GO PPM exceeded 99% on 15 occasions
- B-GO missed the LO network target PPM of 95.2% on 6 occasions
 - On 3 occasions the target was missed by less than 0.5%
 - On 1 occasion the target was missed by 1.13%
 - On 2 occasions, due to a signalling cable fault and a freight train failure respectively, the PPM fell well below target.
- Between 1 April and 25 May, the *PIXC-buster* was cancelled on 4 occasions and terminated short of its destination on 2 occasions.

■ MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS – YET ANOTHER REMINDER

A big thank you to all those who have renewed recently. However, a substantial number have still not renewed and they will be losing their regular email updates after 1 July. There is less than a month until the annual membership subscription increases to £5.00. To join or renew at the existing £3.00 rate print off the membership form at www.barking-gospel oak.org.uk/images/membership_form.pdf and post, with cheque, to the address at the foot of the form. Alternatively you can arrange a credit transfer to our HSBC bank account *The Barking – Gospel Oak Line Committee* No. 70132195, sort code: 40-04-17. If choosing the latter payment method, **please email our Treasurer with full details at:** adltack@btinternet.com so that he can identify and confirm the payment on our bank statement.