



BARKING – GOSPEL OAK RAIL USER GROUP

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NEWS FROM THE BARKING – GOSPEL OAK RAIL USER GROUP

17th October 2014

As some of you may be aware, I have been suffering from ill-health recently, so I hope that you will excuse my circulation of this brief report to Barking & Dagenham Council's Public Transport Liaison Committee on 16 October in lieu of a proper members' update. It is always worth keeping an eye on our website www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk which is kept fairly up to date. Our recent Twitter feed @RidingtheGoblin now has well over 100 followers and is also displayed on our website. You can also look at and post comments on our website **Have Your Say!** message board.

- **Driver Only Operation**

After many months of delay, due to technical problems with the CCTV cameras retrofitted to the outside of the 8 diesel trains and the monitor screens retrofitted to the drivers' cabs, Driver Only Operation (DOO) commenced on 1st September. Technical and safety concerns have continued however, with several instances of the DOO equipment failing and trains being taken out of service resulting in multiple cancellations. Adaptations are being made to some station platforms to mitigate safety concerns. BGORUG remains concerned about how disabled passengers will be dealt with following the withdrawal of the train guards, especially at Barking, where LOROL have no staff.

- **Walthamstow Inter station pedestrian link**

After a 20 year battle, this is now open, although still awaiting some finishing works. There is now a short (approx 5 min) pedestrian link from the new ramped entrance at Walthamstow Queen's Road station to Walthamstow Central National Rail/Underground/bus stations and Walthamstow Town Centre.

- **Winter 2014/15 timetable**

Although the details are still embargoed by TfL, a search of National Rail Enquiries has revealed that additional Mon-Fri PIXC-buster trains will start running from 15 December. There will be new 06:08 and 18:58 trains from Barking although the latter will terminate at Upper Holloway. There will be a new 17:28 train from Gospel Oak, resulting in the existing 17:35 train being retimed to 17:37.

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- **Electrification of Barking - Gospel Oak Route in 2016**

As is already known, Network Rail plan to carry out this work in 2016. BGORUG has expressed previously at this forum its concerns about how the works will disrupt passengers' journeys, as lengthy line closures have been mooted. Earlier this year Network Rail assured BGORUG that it would be consulted, this summer, allowing us to put forward ideas that would minimise the disruption to passengers while electrification was carried out. However, when the planned consultation was due to commence, Network Rail advised BGORUG that it had been delayed and would proceed in the autumn, but as a joint TfL 'stakeholder consultation' and therefore BGORUG would be excluded. This is because TfL does not regard passengers and rail user groups to be 'stakeholders'. It is understood that TfL considers only MPs, London Assembly Members, local councillors and large employers as 'stakeholders' in their services.

- **Extension to Barking Riverside in 2020**

The TfL consultation on this closes on Sunday 19 October. The BGORUG view is that while extending the London Overground service appears to be the cheapest option as far as new infrastructure is concerned, the fact that most passengers originating from Barking Riverside will change trains at Barking will require the widening of platforms 7&8, the enlarging of the circulating area on the 'train side' of the barriers in the station building above and the installation of lifts &/or escalators to safely handle the increased number of interchanging passengers. While the majority of Barking Riverside passengers would change onto c2c and LUL services at Barking, the additional passengers remaining on the Barking - Gospel Oak Line trains should cause serious consideration to be given to equipping the service with 5-car trains in mid 2017 instead of the 4-car trains planned, since TfL does not intend to increase the frequency of the Barking - Gospel Oak Line service to 6 trains per hour until 2040. Although, initially looking more costly, BGORUG believes that extending the LUL Hammersmith & City Line to Barking Riverside should be investigated and costed. An H&C service would greatly reduce the numbers of passengers interchanging at Barking. Finally, BGORUG has received representations from Thames View Infants School and some Thames View Estate residents, asking for a station for the estate. This is also supported by the local councillors. The best site for this would appear to be on the Tilbury Line at the west end of Ripple Lane Yard, allowing c2c trains to call as well as those (LO or H&C) serving Barking Riverside.

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Secretary
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