

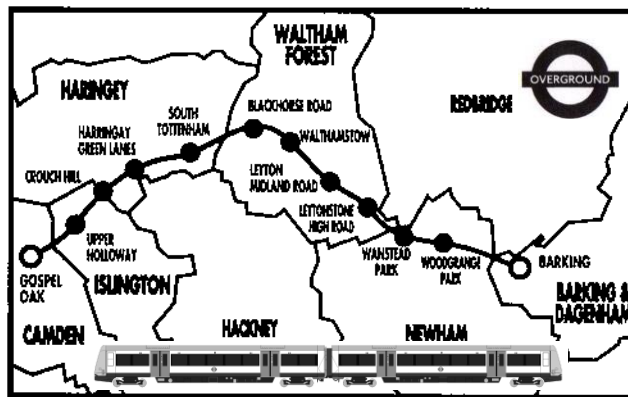
BARKING – GOSPEL OAK RAIL USER GROUP

FOUNDED 1964

Chair: Graham Larkbey

Secretary: Glenn Wallis
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NEWS RELEASE

23rd May 2016



LAST CHANCE FOR A DAY TRIP BY RAIL!

LAST SATURDAY TRAINS UNTIL NEXT YEAR!

This Saturday is the last chance for Barking – Gospel Oak rail users to make a day trip by rail from their local Overground station before their line closes until next February!

The Barking – Gospel Oak Rail User Group (BGORUG)¹ is reminding passengers and local residents that this coming Saturday (28th May) is their last chance for a day out² on their Overground line before half of the line closes on 4th June with the remainder following on 24th September³. The whole line will not reopen until February 2017 and weekend services will not be restored until June 2017.

The prolonged closure is for Network Rail to install overhead wires to allow electric trains to operate over what is the last diesel only passenger railway line in north east London. Ten bridges over the railway need adapting or rebuilding, while the line itself has to be lowered in four locations to provide the necessary clearances for the 25,000 volts AC overhead cables. The most difficult job will be lowering track and platforms at Walthamstow Queen's Road station by as much as 50cm.

“The complexity of the job is one of the reasons why the rail industry has put off this much needed work for so long”, said BGORUG Secretary, Glenn Wallis. “It will also be hugely disruptive and potentially costly for the large numbers of commuters attracted to the line since Transport for London (TfL) took over the service in 2007⁴.”

“Air quality for passengers and line side residents will improve as some freight trains go over to electric haulage and 4-coach electric passenger trains with better acceleration are eventually introduced⁵.”

EXTRA DELAY, INCONVENIENCE AND COST FOR PASSENGERS

BGORUG has made detailed proposals⁶ to TfL aimed at ensuring that during the closures no existing passengers have to pay higher fares than they pay now. TfL has rejected most of our points.

“To expect passengers, who are faced with much longer and much less convenient journeys than normal, to pay higher fares would be completely wrong,” said Glenn Wallis.





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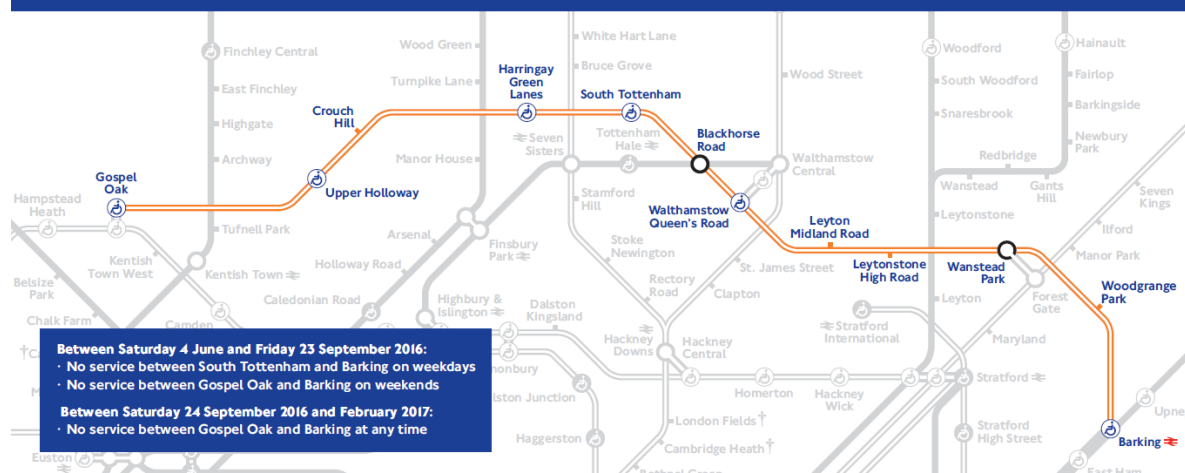
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT
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NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. Formed in 1964 as the Barking – Kentish Town Line Committee to fight Dr. Beeching's proposed closure of the line, the Barking – Gospel Oak Rail User Group has continued to represent the line's passengers and campaign for improved services and station facilities, and also for the electrification of the only non-electrified passenger railway in north east London, finally approved by the Government on 26 June 2013. It is hoped that electric passenger trains will have commenced operation no later than mid-2018.
2. Possible destinations for a day out on the Barking – Gospel Oak Line on Saturday 28th May:
 - Hampstead Heath (Gospel Oak station) Lido, café and a funfair on the East Heath
 - Parkland Walk (Crouch Hill station) former railway line from Finsbury Park to Highgate Woods
 - Brooks City Farm, Skeltons Lane (Leyton Midland Road) just a 10-minute walk from the station
 - Wanstead Flats (Wanstead Park station) just 5 minutes from the station
 - Southend-on-Sea (Southend Central via Barking) pier, amusements, shopping & the Southend Film Festival

3.

London Overground closures: Gospel Oak to Barking



4. Following the transfer of responsibility for the former Silverlink Metro services from the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2006, Transport for London (TfL), let the London Rail Concession to London Overground Rail Operations Ltd (LOROL), a joint Hong Kong/German owned venture, to operate the London Overground network from November 2007 until March 2014, subsequently extended to November 2016 by TfL. TfL has chosen Arriva Rail London Ltd (Deutsche Bahn) to operate the new London Rail Concession from November 2016.
5. BGORUG expects much Anglo-Scottish and North West freight traffic using the Barking – Gospel Oak route to go over to electric haulage once the overhead wires are available for use in June 2017. Unfortunately, TfL does not intend replacing the 8 severely overcrowded 2-carriage diesel trains on the line with new 4-carriage electric trains until May 2018. BGORUG has pointed out to TfL that 'second-hand' 4-coach electric trains will be surplus from the Liverpool Street – Shenfield service by the time Barking – Gospel Oak electrification works are completed and these trains could be used our line almost a year earlier than waiting for the new trains. TfL has so far rejected this proposal on grounds of cost. See http://barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20160331_4car_trains.pdf
6. See http://barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20160321_electrification_blockade.pdf

