

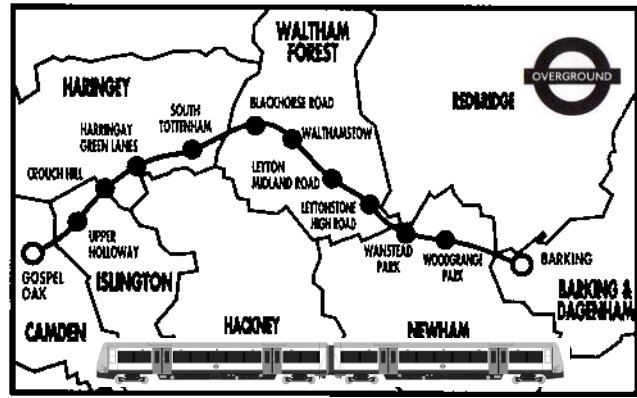
# BARKING – GOSPEL OAK RAIL USER GROUP

FOUNDED 1964

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## NEWS RELEASE

31<sup>st</sup> May 2016



## SO MUCH FOR THE FARES FREEZE!

**As vital commuter route closes for 8 months  
of continuous engineering work,  
many rail passengers face paying more in fares**

**Rail user group urges passengers to keep track of their travel costs**

London Overground's Barking – Gospel Oak Line is a vital orbital rail service running wholly outside zone 1 between east and north London used by around 10,000 commuters every working day, some from as far afield as Benfleet in Essex and Willesden in west London. On the Barking – Gospel Oak service, they travel in packed 2-carriage diesel trains, often unable to board the first train to arrive at the platform. Network Rail will close half of the line on 4<sup>th</sup> June with the remainder following on 24<sup>th</sup> September<sup>1</sup>. 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 Barking – Gospel Oak Rail User Group (BGORUG)<sup>2</sup> welcomes the works," said Group Secretary, Glenn Wallis. "They will enable Transport for London (TfL)<sup>3</sup> to operate longer, electric passenger trains, thus relieving severe overcrowding and enabling faster journeys. We regret the need for major closures of the line, but accept that this is inevitable."





## SO MUCH FOR THE FARES FREEZE!

During the closures passengers will have to find alternative routes for their journeys. Whatever routes they choose, they will be much slower and much less convenient than their normal train journeys.

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

Some passengers may choose to travel via central London. TfL have undertaken to refund extra fares for such regular passengers by rebating weekly in arrears onto their Oyster or contactless cards. However this concession is hedged with unreasonable restrictions.

Also, many passengers – probably most – will find alternative routes which do not involve Zone 1. Many of these will entail higher fares than normal – particularly if they use a normal service bus for part of their trip. TfL have refused to allow any fares protection to these passengers.

“BGORUG has analysed the information that TfL has supplied and worked through a number of examples of alternative journeys that do not pass through zone 1,” said Glenn Wallis. “This shows a common extra cost of **£15** if someone works five days per week – which could be **£510** over the whole of the closures.”

Glenn Wallis said, “We are grateful to Deputy Chair of the London Assembly, Jennette Arnold AM OBE, for agreeing to ask new London Mayor Sadiq Khan how these extra charges on TfL passengers are compatible with his promise to freeze TfL fares for four years?”

“BGORUG, after talking to many passengers has concluded that not many are actually re-planning their commute via zone 1, so they will receive no benefit from TfL’s arrangements.”

**“We URGENTLY ask that all necessary political and other pressure be brought to bear on TfL to ensure that no existing passengers - regardless of their type of ticket - have to pay any more than they pay now. This must include use of alternative National Rail lines and stations and any normal service buses in the area of the line.”**

**Said Glenn Wallis, “BGORUG strongly recommends that all Barking – Gospel Oak passengers keep a careful record of any increase in cost over and above what they normally pay to use the train service with a view to claiming the difference back from TfL.”**

“BGORUG also has concerns about the planned Replacement Bus Services and the fact that the longer electric trains are not scheduled for introduction until May 2018 – almost a full year after the electrification works are completed. However these aspects are less urgent than the fares issue.”

- ENDS -

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT  
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**NOTES FOR EDITORS FOLLOW**



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### NOTES FOR EDITORS

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2. 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, now 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.
3. 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.

### FOLLOW THE LINKS BELOW FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. See [http://barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20160321\\_electrification\\_blockade.pdf](http://barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20160321_electrification_blockade.pdf)
5. See [http://barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20160420\\_press\\_release.pdf](http://barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20160420_press_release.pdf)
6. See [http://barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20160425\\_press\\_release.pdf](http://barking-gospeloak.org.uk/documents/20160425_press_release.pdf)

