



11TH MAY 2016

Members of the Barking - Gospel Oak Rail User Group (BGORUG) have been extremely busy over recent weeks, filling gaps left by Transport for London (TfL) by producing and distributing leaflets and other hand outs to passengers still largely unaware the Barking - South Tottenham section of the line closes completely on 4 June until February 2017. The whole line is currently closed at weekends and will close completely from 24 September until February 2017.

The only publicity TfL produced for a series of "drop-in sessions" for passengers at stations was a press release on 6 April. Network Rail also produced a similar press release the same day. BGORUG therefore spent funds it could ill afford on producing 5,000 leaflets and additional copies of BGORUG press releases etc to try to inform passengers of what was to happen and that they had an opportunity to ask questions at the "drop-in sessions".

TfL staff did not attend any of the "drop-in sessions" as far as BGORUG is aware. This was left to London Overground and Network Rail staff to operate. At the first session at Barking, three BGORUG members attended, separately. We all discovered that TfL had produced no brief for the staff regarding how fares would be charged for passengers having to take alternative routes, especially if they had to divert through Zone 1. Although all three of us got different answers from the staff we spoke to, the general consensus was that passengers would have to pay more. BGORUG wrote urgently to TfL and issued our press release of 20 April. TfL replied remarkably quickly to our letter and we were able to issue a further press release on 25 April and give better advice in our face to face and email dealings with passengers. At the "drop-in sessions" the immediate result was for staff to refuse to answer fares questions but offer "to get back to" the enquirer. Later, staff were able to refer to an email from TfL when advising passengers. The two most common terms related to us by passengers when referring to the "drop-in sessions" were "useless" and "a waste of time".

To give a further flavour of these and other issues that have arisen, I attach a copy of a letter emailed to our nominated contact at TfL earlier today. I also attach copies of the two BGORUG papers submitted to TfL that are referred to in the letter.

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Secretary
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