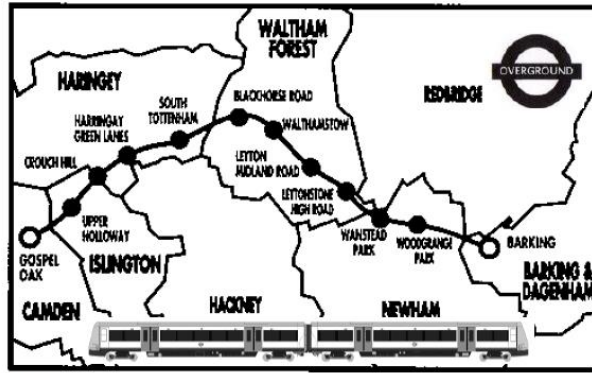


**BARKING – GOSPEL OAK
RAIL USER GROUP**
FOUNDED 1964

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NEWS RELEASE

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3 DAYS TO GO & STILL NO SIGN OF NEW OVERGROUND TIMETABLE!

The summer London Overground timetables start on Sunday 20th May but the Barking – Gospel Oak timetable is still “in production”!

Commuters have no idea what to expect on Monday

Long cursed by serious overcrowding at peak times, Barking – Gospel Oak passengers were promised new 4-car electric trains and a new timetable from May 2018. Three days before the expected new timetable is due to start, Transport for London (TfL) had still not admitted to passengers that there are **NO** new trains and, apart from retiming one morning train, there is **NO** new timetable!

ELECTRIFICATION DELAYED

Network Rail is now well over a year late in delivering the electrification of the Barking – Gospel Oak route and it is hoped that the new infrastructure will be in operation by August this year, providing the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) is able to approve it for general service [1].

NEW TRAINS DELAYED

The first of an order for a total of 54 new electric trains from Bombardier’s Derby plant was due to be delivered in January this year, but delays in starting testing to gain Network Rail certification to operate on the national network and further delays in the testing programme itself have so far prevented the delivery of any trains to London Overground^[2].

SCRAMBLE TO REINSTATE OLD TIMETABLE

Since 2011, London Overground has had to run additional trains in the peak periods to deal with very serious overcrowding caused by the service operating with 2-carriage diesel trains. In spite of this many passengers are unable to board the first train to arrive at the platform. In 2016 it was reported that the service carried 10,000 passengers on a working day.

It was originally planned that these additional relief trains would be withdrawn in the summer timetable as new 4-carriage electric trains would be in service and a flat 15-minute interval service would be operated.

Somewhat late in the day, TfL realised that without the new 4-car electric trains, many hundreds of passengers would be unable to travel unless the peak period relief trains were reinstated on Monday 21st May. Network Rail was able to put these trains back in the timetable apart from the 07:59 Woodgrange Park to Willesden Junction service. This is the only through train to Willesden Junction and is very popular with its own group of regular passengers. This train has had to be retimed to run 15 minutes later to avoid a clash with a North London Line train at Gospel Oak junction, the North London Line also having a new timetable from 20th May.

Barking – Gospel Oak Rail User Group (BGORUG)^[3] Secretary, Glenn Wallis, said, “As TfL have still not published a Barking – Gospel Oak timetable, the Willesden train’s passengers have no idea that from Monday their train is going to start from Barking and run 15 minutes later. Initial feedback from Twitter indicates that this retiming is going to make many late for work”.

The TfL website still states that the Barking – Gospel Oak timetable is “still in production and will be published soon.”



Morning peak at Barking 12/03/2018 [@janecell JaneH]



07:59 SSuX Woodgrange Park to Willesden Junction Low Level calls at Blackhorse Road on 15/02/2018 [@CMPD CJ]

FOR NOTES FOR EDITORS SEE PAGE 3 & 4

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. BGORUG first launched its campaign for the electrification of the Barking – Gospel Oak rail route in 2007. TfL offered a £25m contribution towards electrification, with government contributing the remaining cost. The Chancellor finally announced the scheme would go ahead in 2013, adding £90m to the TfL contribution. The scheme was added to the enhancements package for Network Rail to deliver during Control Period 5 2014-2019. Network Rail awarded the contract for the works to J. Murphy & Sons in 2015 for completion in mid-2017. The scheme included electrified links to the Midland Main Line, Tilbury Railport and London Gateway port but these were subsequently dropped. This means that most freight trains will have to remain diesel hauled.

The line was closed between June 2016 and February 2017 to enable the bulk of the work to carry on continuously. However, when the line reopened it was clear that the work was nowhere near completed and due to faulty design work, much work would need to be redone. Further closures took place during late 2017, but the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) have required Network Rail to carry out more work before it will approve the infrastructure for the use of electric trains. It is currently hoped that electric trains will get the green light this August.

2. The first of 54 new Class 710 trains for Transport for London's London Overground service took to the works' test track at the Derby plant of Bombardier Transportation on 7th November 2017. These new electric *Aventra* type trains are a development of the *Capitalstar* trains that have been operating London Overground's orbital services for several years and, like those trains, the new ones will have all longitudinal seating and walk-through connections between carriages.

When delivered, the full Class 710 fleet will comprise:

- 18 four-car trains for the Barking – Gospel Oak and Euston – Watford Junction services. This will relieve overcrowding; allow the Barking – Gospel Oak service to be extended to Barking Riverside in 2021 and the Euston – Watford Junction service to be increased from 3 trains per hour (tph) to 4tph in December 2018.
- 30 four-car trains to take over Liverpool Street – Cheshunt (via Seven Sisters), Chingford and Enfield Town services.
- 6 five-carriage trains to help provide improved service frequencies on the orbital routes (Stratford – Richmond/Clapham Junction and Highbury & Islington – New Cross/Clapham Junction/Crystal Palace/West Croydon).

The delivery of the fleet to London Overground has been held up due to the delay in getting Network Rail (NR) *type approval* which would allow the trains to run on NR tracks. The first new Class 710 train, 710256 was delivered to the NR testing facility at Asfordby in Leicestershire just before Christmas 2017. The centre was already testing new automatic cab signalling equipment on London Underground S7/8 trains and type testing Class 345 *Aventra* trains for the Elizabeth Line and Class 800 series Inter City Express Programme trains. This meant that Class 710 testing got off to a slow start.

As Class 345 is the first *Aventra* type to be built, while many tests will be generic to Class 710, Class 345 has much more sophisticated signalling equipment for operating over several different types of NR signalled tracks, the Elizabeth Line tunnel and the Heathrow tunnel. The urgent need for the Class 345s to be ready for the Elizabeth Line opening this

BARKING – GOSPEL OAK RAIL USER GROUP NEW OVERGROUND SUMMER 2018 TIMETABLE

December means that testing the numerous software upgrades required as testing continues has priority over testing the Class 710.

It is now hoped that Class 710 will receive type approval soon, allowing deliveries to London Overground to start, in turn allowing NR route approvals to be obtained and driver training to start with a view to the trains entering service in September this year.



710256 on test at NR's Leicestershire test track on 15/02/2018 [Carl Westwood]



710256 stabled at NR's Asfordby test centre on 26/04/2018 [@RiggerMortiss]



Stored Class 710 vehicles at Derby Litchurch Lane Works 13/02/2018 [DPE Rail]



Interior of Class 710 will resemble this Class 345, but Class 710 will have no transverse seats [ARS technical]

Contracts have been signed for the eight 2-car Bombardier Class 172 diesel trains that have provided the Barking – Gospel Oak service since 2010 to move to the West Midlands Coventry – Nuneaton service for the start of the December 2018 timetable.

3. The Barking – Gospel Oak Rail User Group started life in 1964 as the Barking – Kentish Town Line Joint Committee*, a joint passenger and local authority organisation formed to fight the closure of the service that was proposed in the famous Beeching report.

*The service was diverted from Kentish Town to Gospel Oak in 1981, funded by the erstwhile Greater London Council and the group therefore adopted a more suitable title.