

# February 2007 News Update

## **Timetable Update**

Our new timetable – the most frequent in living memory – seems to be bedding down well. The extra morning and afternoon/evening trains are very welcome – and are picking up patronage as people get used to the new times. We are still pressing for the remaining one-hour gaps on Saturday & Sunday evenings to be filled in from the next timetable change in May – they are inconvenient, unnecessary, and catch a lot of people out. There is also a train which leaves Gospel Oak on Mon-Fri evenings at 23 00 and runs empty to East Ham depot – we've asked for this to run in passenger-carrying service to Woodgrange Park, thus fulfilling our long-held aspiration for a later eastbound service.

Meanwhile Transport for London (TfL) have narrowed the bidders down to two, to run the London Rail Concession (that's Silverlink Metro to you & us) from November 07. These are GoVia (operators of Southern) and MTR Laing Rail (parent company of Chiltern). Both will now be invited to present a "Best and Final Offer", and the winners will be announced in summer.

## **Look Out – More Engineering Works Ahead**

Our line will be closed for engineering works on the last weekend of February and March – and once again we shall be face with the absurdity of having replacement buses provided on the Saturday but not the Sunday. This is because Silverlink are contracted to provide a service on winter Saturdays – but the winter Sunday service is not a contractual obligation, and in fact is paid for by TfL, so Silverlink aren't obliged to run anything then. That may be obeying the contract to the letter, but it's not exactly in the spirit of maintaining a decent service to the travelling public. We've asked both Silverlink and TfL to look at this again, so that passengers do not suffer any more inconvenience than necessary.

## **Station to Station**

**Leyton Midland Road, Leytonstone High Road and Wanstead Park** are all having their platform walls repainted, which should brighten them up significantly. We have also had a site meeting with Silverlink at Leytonstone, when we looked at the off-putting, tatty and inconspicuous entrance and discussed ways of improving it. These include moving the "double arrow" station sign from the wall to the bridge pillar, putting up an information display, and asking Waltham Forest Council to resite the rubbish bins – it's completely inappropriate to have these at a station entrance. Negotiations are proceeding on the **Walthamstow** Pedestrian Link between Queens Road and Central; Transport for London regard it as a high priority and we are assured funding for it is secured once all the approvals are in place. **Gospel Oak** is having ticket gates fitted, and we are told Silverlink will shortly be cracking down on fare collection on our trains. We've heard that promise many times before, from a succession of managers, but none has ever succeeded in

cracking it properly. If this latest effort succeeds – and more importantly is maintained - we shall be delighted. **A number of our stations** have substandard cheapo-cheapo poster boards which let in water and are easily vandalised; we have asked Silverlink to replace these with decent ones. And we have been in correspondence with Network Rail about the build-up of litter behind platforms and fences (the labyrinthine complexities of rail privatisation mean that some station areas are Silverlink's responsibility but others are Network Rail's – clarifying who should be doing what isn't always easy). Hopefully we should see improvements soon.

### **Security**

Responsibility for our line has passed from British Transport Police at Stratford to Islington, and we have had encouraging news of their activities on trains and station. They are scheduled to attend our next meeting to give a further update.

### **Next Meeting & AGM**

Next open meeting: Tuesday February 13<sup>th</sup>, starting 7 15 at Barking Town Hall. The AGM will immediately follow the open meeting (the AGM is open to members only).