

# BARKING-GOSPEL OAK LINE USER GROUP

[www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk](http://www.barking-gospeloak.org.uk)

## MAY 2007 NEWS UPDATE

### **Saturday Nights – Another Campaigning Success!**

The summer timetable starts on Sunday May 20<sup>th</sup>, and the good news is that Silverlink have agreed to our request to infill the remaining one-hour gaps in the Saturday evening service. As a result, this will run half-hourly right through the evening, from Sat May 26<sup>th</sup> onwards. We are delighted at this outcome – we have been pressing this issue for a long time, and it is very unusual for an operator to make this sort of service improvement only a few months before they give up the franchise. The Mon-Fri evening service is much busier since it went half-hourly, and we confidently expect Saturdays to be the same, especially with tired-but-happy day trippers returning from Southend, Kew, Richmond etc.

### **Blue Sunday.....**

Less good news regarding Sundays, as (a) the one-hour evening gaps then will remain, and (b) during May we shall have no Sunday train services **at all** due to engineering works. Moreover, we shall only get replacement buses on May 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> – they will not be provided on May 6<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup>. The reason for this particular absurdity lies in the terms of the franchise, under which Silverlink are only obliged to provide any sort of Sunday service during the summer timetable. So we shall get buses on the third and fourth Sundays, but not the first or second. Apparently the Dept for Transport now decide these things, though we're unclear what's to stop Silverlink providing buses on the other Sundays at their own expense to avoid inconveniencing people. There is also an all-weekend service suspension on June 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, with replacement buses on both days.

A few Mon-Fri trains will be slightly retimed to run a minute or two earlier or later from May 21st. As ever, remember you can always ring the Help Point line on 0208 963 6087 before setting out, to check how the service is running. And if you witness or experience anything that needs reporting to the British Transport Police, the number to ring is 0800 40 50 40.

### **Revenue Update**

Silverlink's revenue crackdown has continued, albeit rather erratically, and we hope the momentum will be maintained. Though surely all conductors and inspectors should have been issued with Oyster readers before the exercise commenced....?

### **Infrastructure Update**

We and others are hopeful that the TfL/Network Rail application for Transport Innovation Fund money will be successful, enabling our line to accommodate 4 trains an hour each way as well as expanded freight capacity. An official announcement is expected in the not too distant future. Electrification is a thornier problem – it seems everybody wants it, but the cost estimates vary wildly and it's not mentioned in the latest Network Rail plan. We and others will continue to press strongly for this over

the coming months – it has to be the way forward, and many other European countries would probably have rubberstamped it already.

### **Station to Station**

**Walthamstow Queens Road** is acquiring a second “Pod” shelter, on the eastbound platform to match that on the westbound. No further news on the construction of the Pedestrian Link between Queens Road and Central; apparently negotiations are still ongoing about land issues. Rest assured we will continue pressing this strongly. We have also responded to the council’s Town Centre redevelopment consultation, and have stressed that a direct pedestrian link between Queens Road platforms and the shopping area should be constructed under the Chingford line whichever of the three development options is selected. It is only mentioned in one of them – but we regard it as essential whichever one is chosen. We are still trying to get decent (waterproof) poster frames installed at **Leyton Midland** (why is something so simple so difficult to accomplish.....?). Following our complaints, Waltham Forest Council are looking into the long-running litter issues at the entrance to **Leytonstone High Road**. However, provision of an information display here will probably have to wait until the new operator takes over in November – and an announcement on who that will be is about a month or so away. We await the decision with eager anticipation – we shall seek an early meeting with whoever is taking over, and will be inviting them to our September meeting to outline their plans and proposals.

### **Holidaying in Wales This Summer?**

Try and fit in a trip on our rather-more-scenic “twin”, the Heart of Wales line, which runs from Swansea and Llanelli up to Craven Arms and Shrewsbury. A lovely run through fine countryside, stopping at many towns and villages en route. Check out [www.heart-of-wales.co.uk](http://www.heart-of-wales.co.uk) for all the details!

### **Sign up a Friend!**

Many thanks to everyone who’s paid their subs for this year (if you haven’t, there’s still time). And if everyone signed up one other person, we’d double our membership and make our bank balance look a bit healthier. A bargain at only £3 for the year!

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 7 15 pm at Barking Town Hall. All welcome!

*Barking-Gospel Oak Line User Group, 35 Carr Road, London E17 5ER*