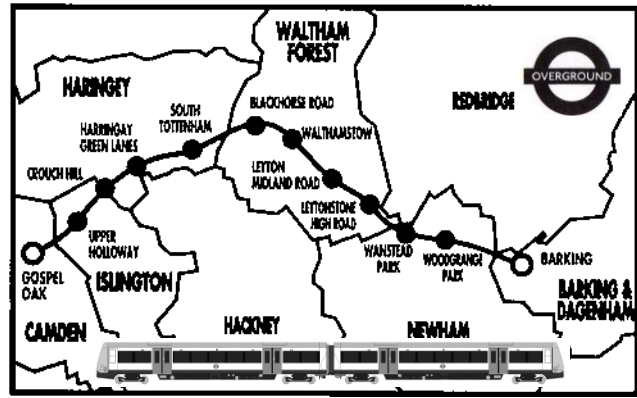


BARKING – GOSPEL OAK RAIL USER GROUP

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Photography © G. Wallis/BGORUG



NEWS RELEASE

26th May 2015

COMMUTERS' DREAMS TURN TO NIGHTMARES!

WAIT FOR MORE CARRIAGES GOES ON AND ON!

As a promised 3 year wait for electrification & new trains with more carriages stretches towards 5 years – could the wait be even longer?

On 26th June 2013, Chancellor George Osborne finally announced that he was providing the cash to allow the electrification of the Barking – Gospel Oak Line to go ahead. There was great jubilation that the chronically overcrowded 2-carriage diesel trains would be replaced with 4-coach electric trains.

By the end of 2013 it had emerged that the new overhead wires would be finished by the end of 2016 and the new electric trains to be ordered by Transport for London (TfL)² would arrive during the first half of 2017. As these trains were to be part of the same batch of new trains to be ordered for Liverpool Street – Cheshunt (via Seven Sisters)/Chingford/Enfield Town and Romford – Upminster services that TfL take over at the end of this month, the Barking – Gospel Oak Rail User Group (BGORUG)¹ obtained an assurance from TfL that the Barking – Gospel Oak route would be the first to get the new trains.

As Barking – Gospel Oak peak services were already seriously overcrowded, BGORUG asked London Overground and TfL to consider short term measures such as hiring an additional train or adapting the line's 8 diesel trains to carry more standing passengers in better comfort, but these requests were rejected. Passengers would have to continue to fight their way on and off the existing overcrowded trains until 2017.





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In late 2014, rumours started to circulate amongst expert rail commentators that Network Rail was having difficulties in completing electrification schemes already under way on time and on budget. Over the last twelve months Network Rail has cancelled at short notice four meetings arranged at BGORUG's request to discuss the timing of the electrification works.

TfL maintain that electrification will be delivered on time, but the projected delivery date for the new Barking – Gospel Oak and West Anglia trains has now slipped to mid 2018 and TfL have still yet to place an order for them.

Just before the last session of Parliament ended, Jeremy Corbyn, MP for Islington North, obtained a statement from Transport Minister Claire Perry, which said that Network Rail had completed "option selection" (GRIP 3) for the main Barking – Gospel Oak scheme in March this year and that that electrification would be completed by mid 2017. Yet as far back as 2013, TfL Transport Commissioner Sir Peter Hendy had told the London Assembly Transport Committee that at his request, Network Rail had started work on GRIP 3.

GRIP STEPS	
1	output definition
2	feasibility
3	option selection
4	single option development
5	detailed design
6	construction, test and commission
7	scheme hand back
GRIP – Network Rail's 'Governance for Rail Investment Projects'	
April 2015 Modern Railways 65	

Glenn Wallis, BGORUG Secretary said, "Our expert rail industry advisers tell us that for Network Rail to have taken three years to complete GRIP 3 indicates that they have not exactly been throwing resources at the job. The likelihood of Network Rail completing electrification of the line by mid 2017 is now said to be *improbable*."

Rail industry magazine *Modern Railways* recently reported that Network Rail was unable to cope with the amount of electrification and signalling work that had been authorised for the 2014 – 2019 control period and was suffering from a backlog in the approvals process.

"It now emerges", said Glenn Wallis, "that Barking – Gospel Oak electrification is not part of the 2014 – 2019 railway control period regulated by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) and that the project seemingly has no protection from government cuts or postponement to beyond 2019. We are seeking clarification from the ORR on this point."

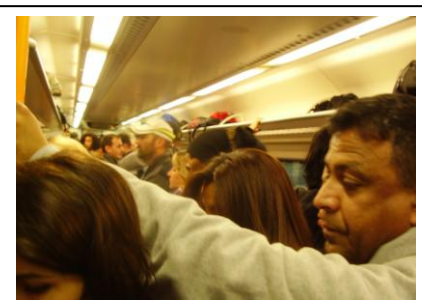
"In the meantime, our passengers have to look forward to at least another three years of crush loaded trains. Trying to get to the BGORUG AGM at Barking on 29th April, a train was cancelled and I had to let two trains go at Walthamstow Queen's Road before I could squeeze aboard the third. That's not what I call a *turn up and go service!*"



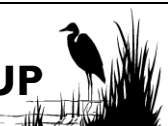
08:32 ex Barking 02/06/2012



17:05 ex Gospel Oak 05/03/2014



17:05 ex Gospel Oak 23/08/2014





COMMUTERS' DREAMS TURN TO NIGHTMARES!



Some passengers succeed in boarding the 17:05 ex Gospel Oak at Walthamstow Queen's Road 23/08/2014

Meanwhile passenger growth data recently released to *Modern Railways* by TfL shows that passenger growth on the Barking – Gospel Oak service continues to increase, up 19% from intermediate stations in 2012-14, with a 25% growth at Gospel Oak, the interchange for the North London Line (Stratford – Clapham Junction/Richmond) over the same 2012-2014 period.

Said Glenn Wallis, "TfL recently said that much needed additional handrails for standing passengers were being installed in the existing eight diesel trains, but we have yet to see any. While we welcome the extra handrails, what's needed is at least one extra train to provide more passenger capacity until the new electric trains arrive, whenever that will be."



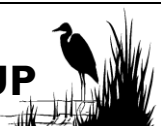
No room on the 17:50 ex Gospel Oak at Walthamstow Queen's Road station Wednesday 29th April 2015



The doors close on a full and standing 07:33 Barking to Gospel Oak at the start of its journey on 6th January 2015

"TfL are just complacently sitting on their hands saying 'There is nothing to be done' when that is patently not the case. Two other train operators have recently been able to source additional *Turbostar* trains like ours to deal with passenger growth. With a bit of persistence and ingenuity TfL and the rolling stock companies should be able to find one or two *Turbostars* or the *Sprinter* trains that used to run our services, now in the South West with First Great Western. There is no new diesel train that meets current European emissions standards, but there is a company that is now transforming ex District Line trains into smaller diesel trains of 2 or 3 coaches that do meet EU standards."

"Our passengers just cannot endure these intolerable travelling conditions for at least another three years, TfL have got to do something NOW!"





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One of the trains transferred to First Great Western in 2010 seen at Gospel Oak in 2007



Vivarail are re-engineering former District Line trains into EU regulations compliant diesels. This is what the 'City' D-Train will look like. It will be available in early 2016



Metro district format: 'D' stock interior similar to that in use in London.

- ENDS -

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT
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NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. 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 by the end of 2018.
2. 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 Metro (MTR)/German State Railway (DB) owned venture, to operate the London Overground network from November 2007 until March 2014, subsequently extended to November 2016 by TfL.

