

December 2006 News Update

More Timetable Improvements!

The new timetable starting Sunday Dec 10th, brings yet more very welcome improvements to our service thanks to Transport for London (TfL) funding support. The 20-minute Mon-Fri peak-hour frequency will start earlier and finish later – roughly 07 00 till 10 30, and 15 30 till 20 00 (trains will run half-hourly at other times). It will also be evened-out to give a more regular 20-minute frequency, and a new 22 38 from Barking will fill the last remaining one-hour gap in the Mon-Fri service. Sadly, the same will not be done for the one-hour gaps on Saturday & Sunday evenings, and we have urged Silverlink to rectify this at the next change in May 2007 – also to see if the Sunday service can start earlier and finish later. However, overall this is the best timetable the line has had for a **very** long time! You can find the full timetable on Silverlink's website – www.silverlink-trains.com – and hopefully the new timetable posters and leaflets will be much more in evidence than they were at the last change in June. In January, zonal fares will be introduced, which will result in some changes (assuming anybody bothers to collect them in the first place.....).

Christmas & New Year Service Arrangements

As in previous years, our line (like most others) will shut down early on Christmas Eve, and it will not run at all on Christmas Day or Boxing Day. Details:

Sun 24th Dec: Last trains 20 20 from Gospel Oak & 21 05 from Barking.

Wed 27th Dec: Saturday service, but first trains 07 55 from Gospel Oak and 08 08 from Barking.

Thur 28th - Sat 30th Dec: Normal Saturday service.

Sun 31st Dec: Normal Sunday service.

Mon 1st Jan: Saturday service, but first trains 09 25 from Gospel Oak and 10 08 from Barking

Looking Ahead

Last month we attended a useful update session from TfL on their future plans from November 2007, when their chosen operator takes over the London Rail Concession (as the current Silverlink Metro group of routes is to be known). Initially, they have put in a bid to Network Rail to run a 20-minute service on our line all day Mondays-Saturdays from December 2007. The Sunday service would remain half-hourly, but would finish later. In addition, they and Network Rail have submitted a bid for Transport Innovation Fund money to the Dept for Transport, to increase our line's gauge for freight wagons and also install additional signals to allow a more intensive service to operate. This is the key to getting the 15-minute service that both we and TfL want to see, and which they plan to bring in in December 2010. This would comprise two trains per hour between Barking and Gospel Oak, and another two per hour between Barking and Clapham Junction (via Gospel Oak and Willesden). Associated with this is a plan to rebuild our side of Gospel Oak with platforms on the through lines.

And what type of trains can we look forward to? There is a growing body of opinion that the line should be electrified, but that won't happen in the immediate future, so we shall have diesel trains for a while longer at least – though TfL's aspiration is for these to be 3 cars long from December 2010. We have stressed the importance of getting the right type of trains to run a busy suburban service with frequent stops (and which aren't delayed by the guard having to go fore or aft at every stop to

operate the doors) – but we shall be lobbying strongly in the coming months for electrification as the real solution.

Station to Station

Success to report at **Crouch Hill**; not only has the planning application to demolish the station house and booking office been thrown out by Haringey Council, but their officers were directed to investigate making it a conservation area – and TfL have now announced they plan to reopen the booking office! The “pod” shelter at **Walthamstow Queens Road** has been a great success – though removing the external Help Point wasn’t so clever as the Pod locks itself at 21 30. We have asked for it to be reinstated. Negotiations are continuing on the details of the pedestrian link with Central; we hope they don’t grind on too much longer. We continue to press for improvements to the dismal street entrance at **Leytonstone High Road**. At **Barking**, we continue to press for better (or indeed any) signage to the lift, which is tucked away at the bufferstop end of Platform 1.

Next Meeting & AGM

Next open meeting: Tuesday February 13th, starting 7 15 at Barking Town Hall. The AGM will immediately follow the open meeting; nominations are invited for Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and executive committee members, and should reach the Secretary (address below) by Tuesday February 6th.

‘Tis the Season to be Jolly

And last but by no means least.....Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all our members, friends and supporters!