

NEWS ACROSS THE GROUP

May 2021

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A message from David Brown

Dear all,

There's been a lot of updates this month across the Group. My personal news is that I have decided to retire as Chief Executive at the end of this year.

It's been a real privilege to lead the Go-Ahead Group for 10 years. I've spent more than 40 years in the transport industry – and almost half of that with the Group. I've thoroughly enjoyed my time working with wonderful colleagues, providing vital transport services to customers, communities and stakeholders.

We've come so far in the last decade – with our operations expanding internationally into Singapore, Ireland, Norway and Germany. We've continued to move forward, while always keeping the passenger in mind.

In the UK, Covid restrictions are beginning to ease – and it does feel

like the atmosphere is changing. I'm looking forward to spending the rest of the year focusing on encouraging customers return to public transport and demonstrating how important buses and trains are for rebuilding the economy and reconnecting our communities.

This month, we've been supporting the Campaign for Better Transport's new campaign – the 'Way Forward is Public Transport', which calls for buses and trains to be at the heart of the UK's green recovery. I attended the launch this month (page 2) to spread the word. It's absolutely vital to avoid a car-based recovery from the pandemic. We don't want traffic clogged streets polluting the air that we breathe.

One of the ways forward for public transport has also been outlined in

the long-awaited Williams Review this month. The Williams-Shapps review outlines the future of rail in the UK. We're working out what this means for us, how it will affect our business and over what timescales. Throughout the change it's important that we stay close to our customers and show how we can make a difference by anticipating their needs.

I'd like to thank all 30,000 of you and more of you for your continued support in my time as Chief Executive, and I look forward to leading you for the rest of 2021.

Thanks again,

David Brown,
Group Chief Executive

What do you think of News Across the Group?

Want to win a £20 Amazon voucher?

We're looking for feedback on how we can improve this magazine and make it better and more tailored for you. Please take part in our five-minute survey and give your feedback. We'll announce the winner in the next issue.



David Brown to retire

Go-Ahead CEO will leave at the end of 2021

After more than 40 years in the transport sector, our CEO David Brown has decided to retire. He started his career as a graduate trainee with London Buses and held positions such as Managing Director of Go-Ahead London and Managing Director of Surface Transport for TFL. He has been our CEO for the last 10 years.

Go-Ahead was the first bus and rail operator to commit to a zero-emission fleet by 2035. We also launched an industry-first Sustainable Procurement Charter and have slashed carbon emissions per passenger by nearly 70 percent in 10 years.

David has also championed the importance of our 30,000 colleagues. He saw Go-Ahead become the first transport operator to become an employer accredited provider of apprenticeship training, which has bought over 2,000 apprentices into our business in the past two years. David has also set ambitious targets to redress the gender imbalance in the transport industry, supporting activities such as the industry leading Women in Bus.

In his time as CEO, David has overseen the expansion of the business into new markets – such as Singapore, Ireland, Norway and Germany and helped the business to become international. Further details of David’s successor will be announced in due course.



Public transport is #thewayforward

Go-Ahead supported the Campaign for Better Transport’s ‘The Way Forward’ campaign this month, which urges the Government to: promote a return to public transport, continue to support buses, coaches, trains and trams, and to invest in making public transport better.

It is a stakeholder focused campaign intended to promote a positive message about public transport (after the negativity of the last year). The campaign is aimed at encouraging Government to adopt

more positive messaging about the benefits of public transport as we recover from the pandemic.

David Brown (Go-Ahead’s Chief Executive) and Katy Taylor (Go-Ahead’s Chief Strategy and Customer Officer) went to the launch event in Westminster, where a Go-Ahead London bus was parked outside the Houses of Parliament.



Mind your mental health

Focusing on you

Your health, wellbeing and safety are our top priorities. May marked Mental Health Awareness week, with a wide range of initiatives across the Group.

At Go-Ahead Head Office, colleagues received daily wellbeing updates focused on mind, body, learning, reconnecting and supporting others. The Group also hosted a resilience seminar and announced the launch of more ‘Coffee and Chat’ sessions – a unique session where colleagues can come together in a safe environment and discuss wellbeing.



We are training Mental Health First Aiders across our bus companies. These include Kevan Flannagan, who shared his story. Having suffered with his own mental health crisis six years ago, he signed up to be in Oxford Bus Company’s first ever cohort of Mental Health First Aiders. He says: “Knowing where the bottom of the barrel is – you don’t want to see anyone else hit it.”

Go South West launched a photography competition in the week based on the theme of ‘Nature’ – chosen because getting outdoors is great for your mental health. The company hosts a number of forums, including ‘Go Well’ – a health and wellbeing forum – and

Go Respectfully – a diversity, inclusion and belonging forum, that gives employees a safe space to listen and respond to issues.

This month Southeastern also launched the Railway Mental Health Charter, developed by Mental Health Manager Lee Woolcott-Ellis and in partnership with the RSSB. Set to be signed by train operating companies and a range of other industry firms, the Charter represents a massive step forward for mental health commitments right across the railway.



Meanwhile, Govia Thameslink Railway recently won an Inside Out award for its mental health initiatives. This includes a network of more than 100 ‘Wellbeing Champions’ and a volunteer support group for colleagues through Covid.

Sam Facey, Go-Ahead and GTR’s Head of Zero Harm, said: “The COVID-19 pandemic has been a particularly challenging period for transport workers who have kept essential services running throughout the year, irrespective of restrictions in other walks of life.

“At Go-Ahead, we want to make sure that everybody within our business is properly supported. There must be no stigma around mental health, and we want to make sure that everybody knows that help is at hand when they need it.”



Chatty bus continues

Keeping people connected

Go East Anglia has been taking our ‘chatty bus’ initiative to the next level. On 13 May businesses for the Norwich Together Alliance – which includes Konectbus – were out on the streets. Their aim was to gather people’s thoughts on what they thought about the city face-to-face, rather than virtually.

Go-Ahead is part of the Government’s Tackling Loneliness Network (TLN), a cross-sector group of organisations who are committed to tackling loneliness. This month the network pledged to focus on four key areas: tackling loneliness in young people, in older people, local and place-based approaches and digital inclusion.



From Oxford to Norwich

Collaboration across our companies – for communities

Communities in Norfolk can test for Covid-19 quicker than ever, thanks to four converted double-decker buses. The buses were provided by Oxford Bus Company for Konectbus and test people who are not displaying symptoms. One in three people who catch Covid-19 are asymptomatic.

The buses were converted by Project MOVE, a scheme that was created to help provide mobile clinical services. Each bus has the capacity to take 100 rapid tests a day, with a trained operator on hand who will process the test, read the result and record it.



A smooth ride

Celebrating careful bus journeys



Go-Ahead Singapore continues to recognise the bus drivers (called 'bus captains') that go the extra mile for commuters. Mohd Nizam Bin Haron received praise this month for his impressive conduct, attendance, driving behaviour and 'Green Road' score. He has been recognised as 'Driver of the Year' consecutively from 2019 to 2021.

When asked about his hat-trick of wins, he said: "Some passengers will tell me that when I drive, they don't feel worried. They will approach me before alighting to compliment me. This is very motivating and makes me want to do better."



Apprentice accolade

Celebration for young apprentice

Morebus engineering apprentice Charlie Hoskins was recognised with a Silver accolade at the BH Stars Awards, which covers the Bournemouth area. Charlie has been working on his Auto Electrical Bus and Coach NVQ with Morebus since October 2018 and hasn't looked back.

Area engineering manager for Morebus, Excelsior and Damory, Kenny McDonald said: "Charlie attends a specialist college in Bristol on block release for a week at a time, staying with a host family." To some, this can be a daunting experience – but he has embraced this challenge.

"We see huge potential here, and now allow him to work on his own to diagnose and repair electrical faults. We obviously have an audit process in place to check his work – and we have all been impressed with his ability to trace and build a process for repair in an accurate and timely fashion.

"Charlie thoroughly deserves his Silver accolade from BH Stars Awards. His agile mind, quick-thinking ability and natural talent for problem solving will bode well for a future career – and will possibly lead to workshop management. This really demonstrates the value of apprenticeship schemes. They can be a huge benefit – both to the trainee and for companies like Morebus. Congratulations Charlie – long may your success continue."



Calling all apprentices

Recruiting the next generation of talent

Go North East is on the hunt for eight new apprentice engineers to grow its highly skilled team of home-grown talent. The successful applicants will complete a four-year apprenticeship, with one day of training a week at Gateshead College's Skills Academy for Automotive, Engineering, Manufacturing and Logistics.

Nearly 90% of Go North East's engineering workforce started their careers as apprentices, including Engineering Director Colin Barnes who himself trained at Gateshead College. Go North East has a long-established partnership with the college, who have also supported the bus operator with driver training and recruitment.

He said: "We're facing a big skills shortage in mechanical engineering and to futureproof our business and the wider sector we need to find and develop our future workforce.

"I joined Go North East as an apprentice when I was 17. Three decades later, I am still doing a job I love and I am now Engineering Director. If applicants are willing to get their head down and hands dirty then this apprenticeship is the perfect opportunity for them to become a fully qualified engineer with the region's biggest bus company."

Operation Interceptor

Ensuring safety across our network

Southeastern's pioneering Operation Interceptor programme has gone from strength to strength this Spring, building on its innovative use of technology to track people of interest across the network. Led by the firm's Revenue and Enforcement team, the programme feeds critical data into a dedicated dashboard, which is actively shared with police – allowing them to review real-time information on people known to have caused issues on the railway.

Over 200 interactions have been recorded since February, ranging from reports of them entering stations, to updated intelligence on their travel times and journeys.



Dementia Friends

Making buses inclusive for everyone

We are committed to ensuring public transport is accessible for everyone. For Dementia Action Week in May, a Brighton woman shared her experiences of living with dementia and using the bus. Because of Brighton’s accessible bus network, Shirley is able to do “everything she wants to do” to get around and see people.

All Brighton & Hove and Metrobus drivers are trained as Dementia Friends, which gives them insight into the challenges people living with dementia may face when they catch public transport – whether it is forgetting a stop or who they are going to meet.

Southern Vectis and Bluestar – have also trained more than 300 drivers as ‘Dementia Friends’. Any new members



of the team will be trained to ensure all customers receive excellent service on the bus, no matter what they have to deal with elsewhere.

The company has also made a commitment to ensure that all new buses have light-coloured ‘dementia friendly’ flooring, as dark spaces can cause issues.

Watch video



Our beliefs
One step ahead

Travel in style for £1

Boosting the evening economy

Go North East has launched a £1 evening single fare to help boost the local economy and encourage more people back onto buses.

The £1 fare is valid on every single journey after 7pm – whether passengers are heading out for a nice meal, or meeting friends for drinks.

Martijn Gilbert, managing director at Go North East, said: “We know that that the night-time economy has been particularly impacted by the pandemic, so we hope that by introducing this promotional £1 fare we can help support local businesses across the region, by making it easy and more affordable to get out and about and enjoy the evenings. We’re looking forward to seeing new and familiar faces back on board our clean and safe to use buses.”



A musical return

Welcoming buskers back

The streets are alive with the sound of music again, as busking became legal on 17 May. Licensed street musicians can once again perform and accept donations in towns, cities, railway stations and at bus stops.

To celebrate the return of live music, Go-Ahead Group and Brighton & Hove Buses teamed up with Brighton music college BIMM to promote two street musician students. Josh Robinson – guitar player and singer – and Alysha Hutchings – a singer – performed at a bus stop in Brighton & Hove’s Palmeira square at a socially-distanced event.

Josh has been busking across the South East for nine years. He is a familiar face around Brighton and a recent graduate from BIMM. “It’s my main source of income,” he said. “People can often overlook how important buskers are for towns, but we play a role in entertaining people, cheering people up and connecting with the community.”

Alysha said: “The whole point in making music is to enjoy the reaction and to interact with the audience. To not be able to do that for a year has taken the whole joy out of music. It will be wonderful to be out performing in front of people again.”

Our attitudes
Agile

Plan of action

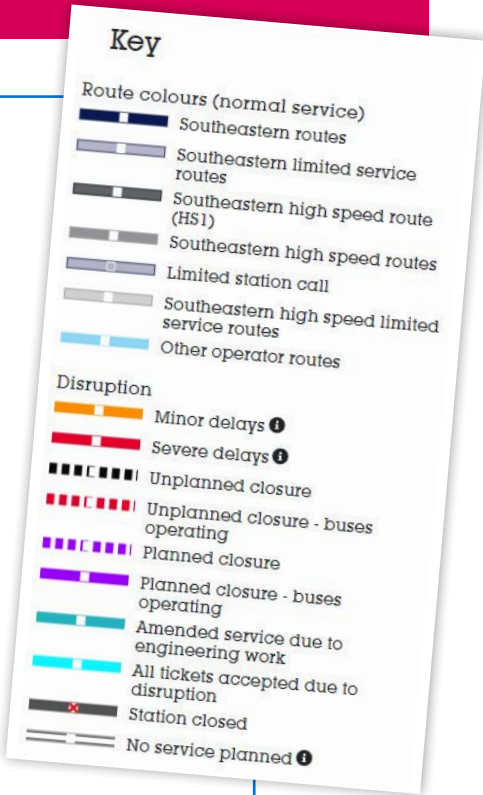
An innovative tool

Last month saw the launch of a brand new journey planning feature for Southeastern passengers – live disruption mapping, which is now available on both the desktop and mobile versions of the website.

Showing passengers, at a glance, where different types of delays or closures are happening, the new addition can also show alternative bus routes between stations, and whether or not local ticket acceptance is in place.

Southeastern’s Head of Information Delivery, John Till said: “The map is our latest innovation to make it even easier for our passengers to find out information about their journey, which is more relevant as we come out of lockdown. It allows passengers to not only see how trains are running from their station, but to see alternative options during disruption, too – something they have told us is really important, that hasn’t been readily available in an easy-to-communicate way before.”

Our beliefs
One step ahead



Climate change is happening

Martin Harris writes for our blog

“Climate change isn’t just a theory, or a worry to be filed under “long term”. It’s a reality that we’re grappling with month-to-month as weather conditions disrupt our bus and rail services.” – Martin Harris, Managing Director of Brighton & Hove and Metrobus, has written for the Go-Ahead blog. This is part of a series of blogs where senior leaders from Go-Ahead will give their views and share their insights.

Our attitudes
Accountable

Read the blog here



Honey, honey

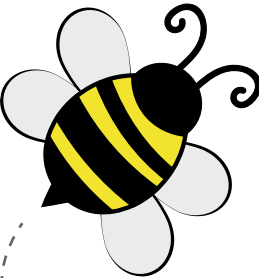
A station abuzz with excitement

GTR and environmental charity Groundwork East have set up a new flower garden at Sandy station in Bedfordshire (or should that be bee-dfordshire?). It is one of five bee gardens being planted as part of GTR's multimillion-pound station improvement programme.

The plants are all selected for their flowers, which are especially attractive to bees and other pollinators. They include lavender, sage, echinacea, verbena and sedums. An interpretation board on the fence will explain the different species and the benefits that pollinators bring to the world.

Tom Moran, Managing Director for Great Northern and Thameslink, said: "We're making stations more attractive for our passengers, and more sustainable assets for their local communities. These bee gardens are a great example of how we're doing just that. We're proud to be working with Groundwork East, among hundreds of partners across our network, to support the post-lockdown recovery – building back better and greener."

Our beliefs
One step ahead



London in Bloom

Planting trees in memory

The Mayor of London joined key workers from Go-Ahead London to mark the anniversary of the nation's first national lockdown by planting the final trees at the London Blossom Garden in the Queen Elizabeth Park.



Claude Parchment, one of our Go-Ahead London drivers who participated on the day helping to plant blossom trees, gave an interview to the BBC and LBC on the day. He said of the experience of working during the pandemic;

"We're getting the nurses to work. We're getting the police officers, the shop workers who are feeding us, the delivery drivers, the dustbin men to work daily. They're helping us to live, we're helping them to get to work. People getting off the bus say, 'stay safe, driver'. That really makes us feel motivated to come back the next day and do the job over again."

Our attitudes
Down-to-earth



Our attitudes
Accountable

Up for air

Helping our communities

Swindon's Bus Company has been selling Wiltshire Air Ambulance-branded face coverings at its travel shop to raise proceeds for the charity.

Swindon Bus Company's General Manager said: "We have been fundraising for Wiltshire Air Ambulance for several years – raising thousands of pounds – and this was our latest effort," said Swindon's Bus Company general manager, Alex Chutter. "The charity is a critical resource which exists simply to save lives, and it relies heavily on donations to carry out its vital work."

Face mask tasks

Keeping everyone safe

In Norway, local regulations have varied on whether or not to wear face coverings. In the past few months, colleagues had noticed a downturn in the number of passengers wearing them. However, with rush hour trains been fairly crowded, the company decided to step in. Over two days in May, administrative colleagues handed out face coverings at busy stations in rush hour.

This was to remind passengers to continue to wear a covering, and to make others feel safe. With conductors out and meeting people every day, this inevitably exposes them to more risk. If passengers can wear a face mask, this will help the reduce the risk of infection – and make the working day less stressful.

Thankfully, Go-Ahead Norway has not yet seen any Covid cases among colleagues. There have been approximately 120,000 cases in the country, with a population of 5.3 million.

Our attitudes
Collaborative



Our attitudes
Collaborative



Time for Tourism

Boosting our regions

Oxford Bus Company has created a revamped tourism management team to help drive the visitor economy in Oxfordshire.

The trio of Jane Marshall, Clarisse Garcia and Val Tachy form the team created to ensure visitors to Oxford receive a world class welcome. The all-female management team is a boost to the Group wide 'Women in Bus' initiative.

They will be developing partnerships with key visitor attractions, marketing what Oxford has to offer and delivering a first-class customer service. The tourism triumvirate was created as a part of a commercial restructure at both companies focused on ensuring top class delivery of tourism related services in the City.

Valentina wrote a blog for the Campaign for Passenger Transport on why buses are vital for boosting the local tourist economy.

Read here

Interview with... **CARINA VIK**

**Go-Ahead Norway's youngest driver –
and only female driver on the Jærbanen
– shares her experiences**

Hi Carina, tell us about yourself

I'm 23 years old and I live in Stavanger, Norway, where I also grew up.

Why did you apply to become a train driver?

It was very random. My mother had seen an advertisement for the role in the newspaper several years before I applied, so I had it in mind. I checked if I qualified to apply, and I did, so I thought it wouldn't hurt to apply.

I was suddenly accepted and said 'yes' – without knowing what I was in for at all. I could probably count on one hand how many times I had taken the train before I started on my course and job training.

What was the training like?

The training was intense but well laid out. I always felt secure. It was especially fun that we could end up anywhere in the country while practicing driving during school.

What is the best thing about being a train driver?

The early mornings with beautiful sunrises – and the rotas. I never get tired of the everyday routine and variety is nice.

What's the worst thing about being a driver?

To turn the clock from night to early morning. Also, there is a chance of colliding with people or livestock, but then we have a good support system around us.

What's your favourite route to drive?

I run the local train from Stavanger, so it's just a local stretch.

What is Go-Ahead Norway like?

We have a very good working environment. I always look forward to meeting my great colleagues at work. I could not have asked for a better job.

You are the only female train driver in Stavanger. Why do you think this is?

It's not easy to say. There were four of us when I started. Now one has moved to the office, one has moved on and one has retired. It seems that more and more women are entering the profession, and that's good.

I think it might be that some women don't really think of it as a career – especially if they are not used to taking the train themselves. Then again, they probably have the idea in their heads that a train driver is an older man (that's what I thought before I joined), but I've realised that's not true at all.

How can we encourage more women to be train drivers?

I think the best way to achieve this is to showcase our profession, in both social media and at trade fairs.

Are there any challenges / difficulties you face being a women train driver?

No, absolutely not. I do not think much of the fact that I am the only one in Stavanger. It would have been cool with more women in the profession. When I'm at work, I work mostly with the conductors, and there is a good mix of women and men.

You're the youngest driver at Go-Ahead Norway. How do you find that?

I don't think about age that much. We have such a good working environment that I do not think about how old people are. I'm glad I found such a great job so early on.

What's been your favourite moment at Go-Ahead Norway so far?

Every day at work is a joy!

