

# NEWS ACROSS THE GROUP

January 2024

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## Oxford's journey to sustainable travel

Embarking on a transformative journey towards sustainable bus travel, Go-Ahead's Oxford Bus Company, in partnership with local collaborators, is introducing one of the largest electric bus fleets in the UK, representing an £82.5 million investment. Beyond the significant financial commitment from Oxfordshire County Council, Go-Ahead's Oxford Bus Company, and Stagecoach, this initiative will revolutionise the commuting experience for Oxfordshire residents.

A total of 159 battery electric buses, including 104 from Oxford Bus Company and 55 from Stagecoach, will grace the streets, marking a new

era in public transport. Notably, the conversion of Oxford Bus Company's Cowley House depot into a leading electric bus charging station underscores the commitment to sustainable travel, enabling a robust 200-mile daily journey for each bus.

Go-Ahead is proud to lead the way with over 700 zero-emission buses currently on the road and ambitious plans for more than 1,000 by the end of 2025. This initiative not only enhances the passenger experience but also champions environmental sustainability, setting the stage for a greener, more efficient public transportation system in Oxford.



## Celebrating a decade of electric buses in London!

Colleagues at Go-Ahead London came together to honour the 10th anniversary since the journey of London's first modern fully electric bus on December 18th, 2013. The celebrations at Camberwell depot included a specially crafted zero-emission bus-themed

birthday cake. In the span of a decade, Go-Ahead London has evolved from a single electric bus to a formidable fleet of 520 zero-emission vehicles, all proudly serving Transport for London, and all whilst saving 40,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions.



# Welcome

from Miguel Parras



Dear colleagues,

It's shaping up to be an exciting 2024 for The Go-Ahead Group. We're an ambitious business, with a new management team, and we see lots of big opportunities looming across rail and bus.

On the rail front, we're known, of course, around the world for operating GTR – the biggest, most complex railway network in the UK, and many of you reading this are involved in delivering a fifth of all rail journeys in Britain.

We're aiming to build on that by expanding in light rail. We're bidding for several international networks including the world's largest light rail contract in Melbourne, Australia – and we're eyeing opportunities closer to home, in England, too.

Moving to the bus world, we're bidding to run more Bee Network buses in Greater Manchester, where Go North West has got off to a great start running services on behalf of

TfGM in Bolton and Wigan. We have successfully secured a £50m financing facility for the Bolton and Wigan franchise fleet totalling 261 buses, including 50 new zero emission buses, in a bespoke transaction with no recourse to the Group.

In Oxford, we've just launched our biggest fleet of zero emission buses outside London, running 104 brand new vehicles in the university city. And across the UK, Go-Ahead bus companies are working on proposals with local authorities for more electric buses – under a government funding scheme called ZEBRA.

To make customers' journeys more convenient, we're introducing innovations across the company. For example, we're working with Google to pilot a new Google Wallet feature at Brighton & Hove Buses that will give passengers clearer visibility of how much they're paying for travel when they use their phones to pay.

It's been good to see some of the community initiatives cropping up around the country. At GTR, our rail colleagues were out offering free hot drinks to passengers on a very chilly 'Blue Monday' in early January. And Go East Anglia staff have been teaching young people the dos and don'ts of bus travel in a project called Generation Go.

Thank you, to all of you, for your hard work in delivering outstanding transport to our customers. Remember, you're not just part of a local rail or bus company – you're part of The Go-Ahead Group as a whole.

Best regards,

Miguel Parras  
Group Chief Executive



## Welcome aboard, Javier!

Javier Pérez Fortea is the new Non-Executive Chair of The Go-Ahead Group. Javier has been the CEO of Globalvia, the Spanish infrastructure company owning 49% of The Go-Ahead Group, since 2013. His appointment follows the tenure of Clare Hollingsworth.





## Go-Ahead joins with Google to enhance the bus travel experience

In a pioneering move, Go-Ahead's Brighton & Hove Buses, in collaboration with Google and Littlepay, introduces an innovative feature integrated with Google Wallet.

The integration with Google Wallet not only offers passengers real-time insights into savings through time-based fare caps but also provides a comprehensive ride history, fostering an effortless way for customers to track their bus journeys and accrued savings. This strategic collaboration prioritises security and convenience in payment transactions, reinforcing Go-Ahead Group's commitment to delivering a frictionless and enhanced travel experience for its passengers.



## Go-Ahead's triple win at the UK bus awards

Go South Coast was named Top Shire Operator, while Brighton & Hove Buses won Top City Operator at the UK bus awards last year. Topping this off, Go South Coast won the biggest prize of all, taking away UK Bus Operator of the Year for 2023.

An honourable mention too to Lee Peters, a driver at Go South Coast's Damory Coaches, who was named as the industry's unsung hero of the year for keeping a cool head in an incident in which a live hand grenade caused disruption in Portland, Dorset. Go North East with Arriva, Nexus and Stagecoach collectively won an award for Partnership for Excellence for the Great North Run.

## Bake our Day!

The leadership team at Go North West embarked on a journey to connect with our teams at depots and interchanges, actively seeking their input and feedback. To facilitate open conversations, colleagues set up a stall featuring a tempting array of bakery products, aligning with the "Bake our Day" theme. The initiative sparked engaging discussions, and colleagues have already noticed positive changes with our bus driver colleagues on the front line.





# News on the Rails

## London's newest railway station

Go-Ahead's UK rail company, GTR (Govia Thameslink Railway), celebrated the opening of London's newest railway station – Brent Cross West.

Brent Cross West became the first mainline station built in London in over a decade and is served by up to eight Thameslink trains an hour, efficiently transporting passengers into central London in as little as 12 minutes.

Congratulations were extended to GTR, Barnet Council, and their partners for their hard work in successfully delivering a major rail infrastructure project.



## Paving the way for independent rail travel for disabled youth



Southern, a subsidiary of Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR), is championing independent rail travel for disabled youngsters through a dedicated initiative. Recognising the importance of accessibility and inclusivity, Southern has collaborated with Disabled Persons Railcard and Network Rail to provide comprehensive support, empowering disabled young individuals to navigate and experience rail travel autonomously. This commitment to fostering independence aligns with Southern's dedication to creating an inclusive and accessible railway environment for passengers of all abilities, ensuring that disabled youngsters can confidently and comfortably engage in the convenience of independent rail journeys.

## Blind and partially sighted passengers to gain confidence in train travel



In a collaborative effort between GTR and the Thomas Pocklington Trust, the 'Try a Train' initiative aims to empower blind and partially sighted passengers, fostering confidence in train travel. Recognising the unique challenges

faced by this community, the partnership endeavours to provide specialised training, support, and resources to enhance their overall experience. By addressing the specific needs of blind and partially sighted individuals, GTR

and the Thomas Pocklington Trust are committed to fostering inclusivity and accessibility within the realm of train travel, ensuring that everyone can navigate the railway system with confidence and ease.



## ***GTR is on the way to a carbon net zero future***

In a significant step towards achieving a carbon net-zero future, GTR has embraced sustainable practices with the installation of a massive solar roof at the Bedford depot, which is served by Thameslink. Almost 1,000 photovoltaic panels (932) will generate 322 MWh of electricity a year – enough to power 120 homes every year, saving more than 66 tonnes of CO<sup>2</sup>. They form part of GTR's commitment to become carbon 'net zero' for all its energy needs by 2050.



## ***Arsenal and GTR kick off community art project***

Arsenal FC and GTR have joined forces to kick off an art project with community art organisation, Co-Creative Connection.

This collaborative initiative aims to launch a series of arts workshops in which local young people will design a vibrant mural for Finsbury Park station in London.

## ***Double Triumph for GTR***

Southern Rail Enforcement Officers Bridget Nolan and Jeremy Rogers have achieved well-deserved recognition, jointly securing the prestigious Safety Person Award at last year's RailStaff awards. This accolade highlights their exceptional commitment to ensuring safety within the rail environment.

Additionally, GTR emerged triumphant in the Digital Marketing Awards for the Travel & Leisure category, taking away the Gold Award for their innovative spring campaign titled 'every stop is a story.' This accomplishment underscores GTR's excellence in digital marketing, showcasing their creativity and effectiveness in engaging audiences within the travel and leisure sector.





## Go East Anglia donates buses to support the children of Ukraine

Go East Anglia recently contributed to the humanitarian efforts in Ukraine by donating two buses from Hedingham and Chambers to the Swindon Humanitarian Aid Partnership (SHAP), these buses are making a significant impact on the lives of children affected by the ongoing conflict. Jordan Craig, Assistant Operations Manager for Hedingham and Chambers, personally drove one of the buses to Calais, ensuring its onward journey to transport vulnerable and disabled Ukrainian children to school. The second vehicle, driven by Shane Buffham, Lead Operations Manager for Hedingham and Chambers, is being transformed into a Children's Story Bus in Swindon. Gavin Smith, Managing Director of Go East Anglia, expressed pride in repurposing buses that had served Suffolk, Norfolk, and Essex for many years, stating, "We are a modern progressive company and keen to contribute where we can to our community." These two buses are part of a larger effort, with Go-Ahead having donated a total of six buses to Ukraine thus far.

## John Trayner, awarded OBE for outstanding contributions to public transport

Congratulations from everyone at The Go-Ahead Group to John Trayner for his OBE in the New Year Honours. John's remarkable contributions to public transport, skills, and training is truly commendable. Serving as the Managing Director of Go-Ahead London from 2006 to 2022, he played a pivotal role in the company's doubling in size, introduction of zero-emission buses, and collaborative efforts with city authorities to promote public transport usage among Londoners. Starting his career as an apprentice engineer for London Transport, John has been a tireless advocate for individuals from diverse backgrounds and a driving force behind training and development initiatives. Under his leadership, Go-Ahead London established the largest apprenticeship academy in the transport industry, providing crucial training to hundreds of bus drivers annually and imparting life skills, including GCSE literacy and numeracy. While he continues to contribute as a Senior Adviser to The Go-Ahead Group, we extend our best wishes to John for his well-deserved trip to the palace.



## Go-Ahead Nordic celebrates record year with a 17% Surge in passenger numbers

Go-Ahead Nordic is marking a year of remarkable growth, witnessing an impressive 17% surge in passenger numbers on its Jaerbanen line in 2023 compared to the previous year. This achievement sets a new record for the company, showcasing not only its commitment to providing efficient transportation services but also the growing popularity and trust among passengers in the region. The significant increase in ridership reflects the success of Go-Ahead Nordic's efforts to enhance the travel experience and meet the evolving needs of the community.



## East Yorkshire Buses spread festive joy this holiday season

VikingFM's Alex and Nicola joined East Yorkshire Buses this Christmas for a special mission – gathering presents and toy donations in Hull and the surrounding areas for Mission Christmas: Cash for Kids. The goal was ambitious: to fill the entire bus with presents. The initiative was a resounding success, with continuous radio coverage throughout the day from the bus. This collaborative effort exemplified East Yorkshire Buses' commitment to community engagement and making a positive impact during the holiday season.



## Go-Ahead Ireland and Down Syndrome Ireland raise €2,347

Embracing the spirit of generosity, Go-Ahead Ireland collaborated with Down Syndrome Ireland for their annual December fundraiser, "Christmas Jumper Day for Down Syndrome Ireland." Colleagues were invited to don their most festive Christmas jumpers and encouraged to contribute small donations to support Down Syndrome Ireland, facilitated through donation buckets and QR codes strategically placed in our depots. After Go-Ahead Ireland matched every internal donation made, they are happy to announce they have raised €2,347.

## Go-Ahead Singapore marks World Braille Day

On World Braille Day (4th January), Go-Ahead Singapore takes a moment to reflect on its significant strides in enhancing support for visually impaired passengers. The company has implemented thoughtful improvements, such as introducing tactile ground surfaces at bus interchanges and installing clear audio systems on all new buses. These initiatives underscore Go-Ahead Singapore's commitment to inclusivity and accessibility, ensuring that visually impaired

passengers can navigate the public transportation system with greater ease and confidence.

In addition to this, Go-Ahead Singapore colleagues recently celebrated a Gold Award for Transport at the National Kindness Awards. The National Kindness Awards recognise and acknowledge the commendable efforts of transport and staff who consistently go the extra mile to assist others.







# Get to know... **Leonard Lee**

*Go-Ahead Singapore Managing Director*

## **How did you get into transport?**

I was working at the Container Port in an Engineering role when I received a call from a recruiter who asked if I'm keen to work for a new bus company in Singapore called Go-Ahead Singapore. The job sounded interesting, was a good fit to my skill set and so I joined GAS just before it started operations here!

## **What does your role with Go-Ahead entail?**

I am accountable for Go-Ahead's business in Singapore, from its operational performance to managing the local stakeholders and its financials. Luckily I am supported by many talented and dedicated colleagues in GAS.

## **What are your hobbies?**

I enjoy going for hikes. I've recently done a hiking trail in Vietnam and Hong Kong. I find it very therapeutic to immerse myself in nature.

## **If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be?**

Karnataka, India. I went there for a volunteer trip at an orphanage 20 years ago and it left many wonderful memories. I'd like to see how they are doing now.

## **What's your go-to comfort food?**

Too many to choose from! Local delights such as Laksa (rice flour noodles topped with a umami coconut broth) or Chicken rice.

## **Do you have a favourite book, movie, or TV show?**

For a TV show, it would be the Big Bang Theory. It's a witty American sitcom. I think Leonard (from the show) is amazing. For books, I read Nudge by Richard Thaler last year and it is now ranked among my favourites. It is very insightful and tells of how our everyday decisions are often made.

## **What's a skill or hobby you'd love to learn?**

Rock climbing. I've dived into this when I was much younger (and fitter) and would certainly love to pick this up again in the future!

## **What's your favourite type of music or favourite band?**

Coldplay. I attended their concert a few years ago when they came to Singapore and hope to watch them "live" again.

## **What's a goal or dream you're currently working towards?**

To grow the business in Singapore. We currently have one big bus contract – I'm hoping to win a second one, on another part of the island – while retaining the existing one.



# **Dave the Cat**

At Go North East's Sunderland bus depot, a cat named Dave has transformed into a 'local legend,' capturing the hearts of drivers. Dave's journey began as a stray kitten, and he has since made the bus depot his fur-ever home. Now an honorary member of the Go North East team, Dave is 'on the payroll,' receiving compensation in the form of treats, food, and plenty of attention.