

NEWS ACROSS THE GROUP

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A message from David Brown

Dear all,

It's getting lighter and brighter in the UK – with our lockdown easing, shops and outdoor hospitality can open again. It's great to see more people out and about, but it also means change. Passengers will be making new choices about when and how they travel, and it's important that public transport remains the option of choice.

We need to avoid a car-based recovery from Covid-19. I spoke about this in the Times recently (page 2), and we have focused our messaging on this for Earth Day. We need to remember that we all have a collective responsibility to help fight against climate change, and public transport is sustainable – as well as safe and available to use.

With our bus and rail services increasing, we're also seeing our tour buses come back, such as in

East Yorkshire and Newcastle (page 7). With many people opting to holiday in the UK this year, we hope that our buses will be a central part of rebuilding our communities.

This month, we've also focused on accessibility, from autism awareness week to accessibility policy changes. GTR and Southeastern continue to review their policies and listened to disabled people to make sure services can be accessed by all.

GTR's goal is to ensure that pre-booked assistance is now only required six hours before travel – reducing to two hours by this time next year. I am sure that is something that will be truly welcomed by passengers who use this service.

This month we also saw the Rail to Refuge scheme extended (page 3). This all came about after Southeastern Station Manager

Darren O'Brien watched a documentary on Channel 4.

I am so impressed at how one colleague's idea has helped to create something so important – helping more than 1,300 victims of abuse reach safety. As Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall said this month: "We need more Darrens" in the world.

So I leave you with this – if you have an idea that can help others, no matter how small you think it may be, share it with the business. Tell your managers or your colleagues. One idea can make a massive difference.

Until next month,

David Brown,
Group Chief Executive

Save our Earth

This Earth Day (22 April) we urged people to leave the car twice a month for the good of the planet. Motorists typically make around 600 car journeys annually. Switching just one in every 25 of these journeys to a bus – equivalent to a couple of trips a month – would reduce the UK's carbon dioxide emissions by two million tonnes per year.



Stop Motion
Video

Singapore goes Solar

The Sun shines down on Singapore

Go-Ahead Singapore is trialling two buses with ultra-thin solar panels. This proof-of-concept trial will run until September 2021.

The panels will convert solar energy into electricity to charge the buses' batteries. This reduces the load on the vehicle's alternator, and in turn saves fuel and reduces carbon emissions. The company estimates it will save 4,000kg of carbon emissions per bus, per year.

The trial aims to evaluate how the buses perform in Singapore. This includes how effective the panels are in harnessing solar energy and reducing fuel

consumption, as well as ensuring the panels are robust enough to withstand higher temperatures of the country and daily washing.

Given Singapore's sunny and tropical climate, buses are expected to do even better in the city state than in Southampton, where we have been trialling solar panels on 18 Bluestar buses.

Andrew Thompson, Managing Director of Go-Ahead Singapore says, "If the outcome of the trial is positive, this would offer an additional option in our drive towards a more sustainable public transport system."



THE TIMES

In race to reduce emissions, Go-Ahead boss declares we mustn't miss the bus

CEO is set on reviving a form of transport he sees as 'the glue that holds society together'

David Brown, of Go-Ahead Group, believes that more bus usage can be delivered with zero-emission vehicles, which have been encouraged by Boris Johnson

Almost opposite London's renowned Old Vic theatre is a bus depot. Tucked away off a side street, you'd be forgiven for not noticing it. It claims to have the best drivers' canteen in the capital. Sir Peter Hendy, chairman of Network Rail and a former head of Transport for London, regularly pops in.

In deference to the residential flats that surround the site, large letters on the depot's roof read 'GO AHEAD' but the sign is a piece of art in its own right. For this garage, which houses electric depot, one of only a few in the world, housing electric vehicles. The only sound to be heard is the clacking of canteen

Read here

We mustn't miss the bus

Our CEO talks to The Times

Our Chief Executive David Brown was profiled in The Times this month, discussing his career, why it's time to get serious about buses and the challenges of making the switch to zero-emission. In David's words, "the bus is the glue that holds society together".

David started his career as a graduate for London Transport in 1983 and held various roles, including as Managing Director for Go-Ahead London, before becoming our Group Chief Executive in 2011.

He said: "I tell my graduates that if you are going to lead people, you have to know what this job is. The

graduates all learn to be bus drivers — though they laugh when I tell them I was a conductor. It is practical, hands-on, you learn bloody quick, especially when someone is screaming at you for something that's not your fault. If you have been in their skin, you can relate back to that when you have to manage it. You can't just come in at the top and manage these businesses. Most people come to work to do a decent job. All you need is to understand what motivates people and what they need from you."



Royal seal of approval

A small idea with a big impact



Southeastern was delighted to receive some great news earlier this spring – following almost a year of full operation, the pioneering Rail to Refuge scheme was officially extended, potentially saving countless more lives in the weeks and months to come.

The scheme offers free train tickets to domestic abuse survivors – allowing them to escape dangerous home situations and get to safety. The scheme has supported more than 1300 people since last April, equivalent to an average of four every single day.



The idea for the scheme came from Station Manager Darren O'Brien in September 2019, after he watched a documentary on women's shelters in Kent.

Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cornwall met Darren and other people who pioneered the scheme at the end of March. She commented: "This is a brilliant initiative. And you should feel very proud of yourself. It's amazing during this lockdown how many wonderful ideas have been thought up... we need more Darrens!"

Darren said: "It was a real honour to meet with Her Royal Highness today, and to discuss the importance and significance of the Rail to Refuge scheme. When I first came up with the idea, I had no idea how many people it would support, but I was motivated by the possibility that it could be life changing, even if just to one person."



The Duke of Edinburgh, the longest-serving consort in British History, died aged 99 this month. Rail companies activated 'Operation Forth Bridge' protocols in line with Rail Delivery Group Guidance. During the period of mourning, our train companies changed their website to feature a graphic of Prince Philip and all social media and press activity were put on hold for a week.

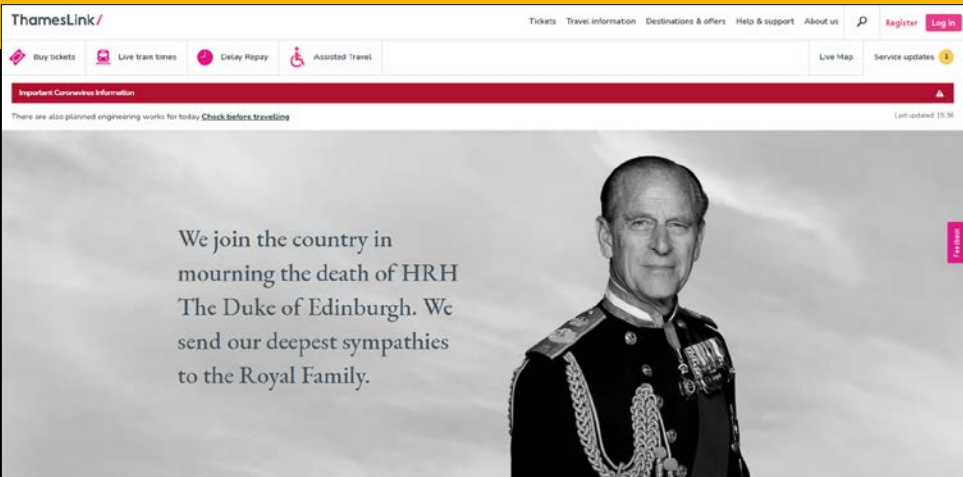


Table Tennis stars

Brighton honours table tennis stars

Two table tennis stars have been featured on Brighton & Hove's buses. Tim Holton and Wen Wei formed Brighton Table Tennis club (BTTC) in 2007 and work across the community, having set up tables in homeless centres, hospitals and prisons.



Our beliefs One step ahead

BTTC was originally formed to give working-class children from deprived suburbs something to do, but it has since grown into something much bigger. Nowadays, the club has its own full-time centre in Kemptown and 200 tables across Sussex. In 2016, it became the world's first Club of Sanctuary for its work with refugees, a title previously reserved for cities and schools.

Brighton & Hove and Metrobus Managing Director Martin Harris said: "Tim and Wen Wei are great examples of the tremendous, enduring difference two people can make to the lives of hundreds of other people. I've been really inspired by the stories of all of the Above & Beyond community champions and I am so pleased to publicly recognise the work they do by putting them on our buses."



Access for all

Transport is open for everyone

GTR and Southeastern are continuing to improve and revolutionise their disability initiatives to help passengers.

GTR has unveiled a pledge in a new Accessible Travel Policy, with promises including: better training (pledging to retrain 3,000 customer-facing colleagues by 31 July), less time needed to book assistance and clearer signposting, with signs at 38 of GTR's larger stations.

Meanwhile, Southeastern has launched its brand new Disability and Everyday Inclusion Training Programme. Members of the Executive Team, along with Senior Managers from across the business, have completed their sessions this month. Over time, all 4,500 Southeastern colleagues will take part in the course, to gain a greater understanding of the issues that can impact the journey of a person with a visible or non-visible impairment, and how they can all help, no matter what their role might be.



Our attitudes Down-to-earth

GoSouthWest turns one

12 months in the South West

Doubling the size of your business during a worldwide pandemic sounds unbelievable – but that's exactly what Go South Coast has done in the past year. Plymouth CityBus effectively doubled in size in March 2020 when it took over operations in Cornwall.

Despite the pandemic, it has come through the year in good shape. Go Cornwall Bus now employs more than 800 colleagues with a bus fleet over 300.



Early last year, Go South West received a Platinum Investors in People accreditation, which only 2% of companies achieve. The company were also awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise in 2020, the highest honour which can be bestowed upon a company.

Our attitudes Agile



Photo Mission

Helping to get that photo

Swindon man Sam has been thanking key workers through lockdown by dressing up in key workers' uniforms – from police officers to supermarket workers. Go South Coast Ltd were happy to help out, providing Sam a uniform and a photo opportunity to continue his challenge.

Sam, who has Down Syndrome, was accompanied by his mum Leslye. She said: "Sam's started dressing up as key workers to thank all those helping us through lockdown. Sam has always loved transport vehicles and has really missed his bus journeys since the pandemic so this was an amazing afternoon for him. Sam was thrilled to wear the Swindon's Bus Company uniform and loved the drivers giving him a beep and wave at Fleming Way."



Our attitudes Down-to-earth

Opening UP

Go-Ahead's Head Offices opened in April for colleagues to come in and collaborate in a socially distanced way. Richard Jones, Head of Internal Audit, brought in his wife's homemade cupcakes into the offices in Grey Street, Newcastle, which everyone got stuck into.



Our attitudes
Down-to-earth

Hero for Dorset Celebrating local talent

Morebus is honouring a Dorset woman as a 'Covid Hero'. She will have her name on the side of a bus for the next 12 months. Jules Lunniss was singled out for the volunteering she has carried out in the local community.

Go South Coast Managing Director Andrew Wickham said: "We were inundated with nominations from people across Dorset, telling us about the wonderful acts of kindness carried out by so many in the most difficult of times.

"Jules stood out because of her selfless attitude – delivering food parcels to vulnerable people affected by Covid 19. She has also made shopping trips for those who are shielding – as well as volunteering at a local food bank. Jules represents the very best of us, and I am delighted that we are able to recognise her as a Dorset Covid Hero."



Prince's Trust

Youth can do it Acting in partnership

This April, Southeastern welcomed seven young people into their railway family, as part of the pioneering Prince's Trust charity programme, Get Into. Designed to provide young people aged 16-30 with work experience and essential workplace training, the scheme takes place over a four-week period – after which each candidate will have a chance to shine at a real Southeastern job interview, with the potential to secure a permanent position.

"My experience so far has been very positive – I've been shadowing a variety of roles, from Gateline and Platform to Ticket Office," said one of the candidates, Manny: "Everyone's been so friendly – sharing lots of helpful tips, like using an open palm to give directions rather than pointing – and I've been really impressed by all their knowledge. Southeastern is definitely a company I want to work for, and I'd love the opportunity to work at London Bridge".

GTR's long-standing collaboration with The Prince's Trust has delivered more than £5 million worth of social benefit over the last five years, and has helped more than 200 people gain experience in the railways.



Our attitudes Collaborative

Charting a course Mental health matters

This month saw some superb news for mental health support across Southeastern and beyond, with the announcement of a brand new commitment for the whole rail industry – the Railway Mental Health Charter (RMHC) is set to be launched later this year, which will be a free-to-adopt framework available for all railway companies to join. It will underpin their commitment to ending the stigma about mental health challenges, and providing high-quality support to colleagues going through tough times.

Southeastern's Mental Health Lead Manager, Lee Woolcott-Ellis who developed the Charter in partnership with the Rail Safety and Standards Board, said: "Following the recent closure of the Time to Change charity – whose workplace pledge we signed in 2018 – it was really important to carry on their legacy, and continue championing the importance of mental health conversations."

Our attitudes Down-to-earth



Toon Tour returns Back... but not for swimming

Go North East teased the return of its 'Toon Tour' bus on April Fools Day, joking that the upper-deck was to become a swimming pool. Although there won't be a pool, the bus has made a comeback – linking sights of the North East in preparation for visitors this summer.

Martijn Gilbert, managing director at Go North East, said: "It's great to be able to launch these services so that people can start to enjoy days out, or longer trips, with their friends and family as well as boosting the staycation market and supporting local businesses. We can't wait to welcome people on board our clean, safe and comfy buses."



Our attitudes
Agile

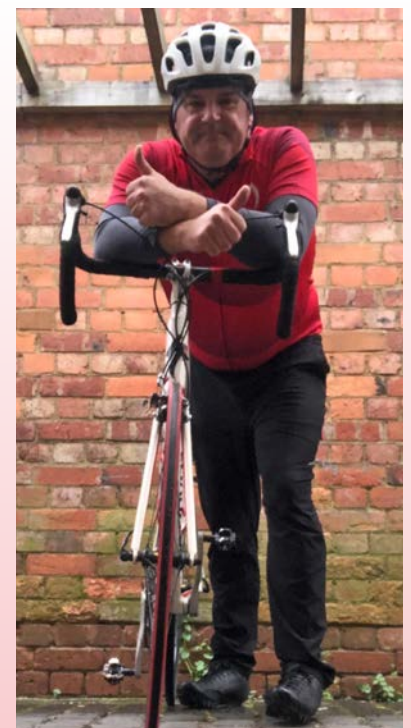
On your bike Cycling 1,000 miles without leaving Sussex

Our attitudes
Down-to-earth

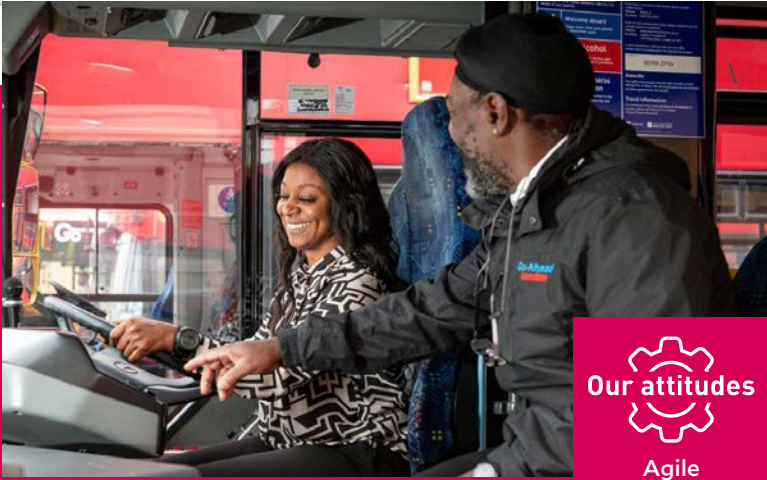
Brighton and Hove Buses' driver Ryan Mayo is cycling 947 miles in support of his sister, Sharon, who needs a heart transplant. This is the equivalent of cycling from Land's End (in the South West of England) to John O'Groats, the most northern part of Scotland.

He is cycling 28 miles every day to and from Lewes Road depot to his home in Worthing. With the money he has raised, he has bought an exercise bike for his sister, who has been asked by specialists to lose some weight before being added to the transplant list.

He is raising money for the Royal Sussex County Hospital cardiac ward, where his sister has spent much of her adulthood, with the rest of her funds going to the British Heart Foundation.



Helping colleagues



Our attitudes
Agile

Go-Ahead London launches Employee Assistance Programme

Go-Ahead London has launched an Employee Assistance Programme to support its colleagues. The programme is a free, confidential service that provides colleagues with help, advice and resources including counselling, legal and financial advice and bereavement and loss. The company is also sending out messages for 'Wellbeing Wednesdays'.

Internal Communications Manager Tiffany Nicole who worked on the project team said "Our colleagues are working hard on the frontlines to keep the city of London

moving in difficult circumstances, it essential that they are provided the support they need. This is an important step in the right direction"

The personal importance of introducing the EAP was driven by my always wanting to help colleagues where I can. Once the directors agreed to fund the scheme, an underlying desire for GAL to provide additional support to colleagues who have a wide range of issues, which often affects their general wellbeing, which can impact on their effectiveness at work."

Autism Awareness

Spreading the word



Our attitudes
Down-to-earth

Read Victoria's blog

April marked World Autism Week and World Autism Awareness Day. Brighton & Hove and Metrobus' Accessibility Officer Victoria Garcia wrote a blog post for the Go-Ahead website, detailing how we can help and what more we can do.

Meanwhile, Southeastern and Go-Ahead Head Office have been taking part in neurodiversity awareness sessions, while Go North East is continuing work with the Sunflower lanyard scheme to recognise hidden disabilities such as autism and raising awareness of autism across its workforce.

Martijn Gilbert, managing director at Go North East, said: "Our work with the Sunflower lanyard scheme is a great example of our efforts to recognise hidden disabilities such as autism, but for World Autism Awareness Week we're also starting a conversation about autism to further educate and inform people about it."

Calling at...

Southeastern launches colleague podcast

Southeastern is sharing unique stories from across the business in its newly-launched podcast. The initial series of six episodes sees a new recording released every fortnight, with the first exploring Revenue colleague Kirsty Dowle's double life on the railway and as a FIFA-accredited referee.

Future episodes will 'call at' a range of diverse topics, from 'fake news', to how the Paralympics inspired the company's assisted travel transformation – if you'd be interested in having a listen, contact calling@southeasternrailway.co.uk



Our attitudes
Down-to-earth

A greener welcome

Brightening up Borehamwood

GTR's £15 million Passenger Benefit Fund is being used to provide tangible benefits for passengers who faced disruption after major timetable changes in 2018. A grant of £80,000 was confirmed for Elstree & Borehamwood – above the £60,000 average per station – with a project to improve the barren forecourt into a green garden.

Tom Moran, Managing Director for Thameslink and Great Northern, said: "Our improvement programme is making stations smarter, more efficient and more sustainable. It's great to be working with local partners here at Elstree & Borehamwood to make the station a better experience for passengers, and the best asset it can be for the community."



Our attitudes
Down-to-earth

Enhancing air quality with Park & Ride

Oxford Bus Company's Managing Director Phil Southall discusses the sustainability benefits of the city's Park & Ride service.



Oxford's first Park & Ride opened in 1973, following controversial plans to build a new road across Christchurch Meadow to solve the city's transport problems. Local councils acknowledged that 'there must be another way' to manage congestion. It sought to contain and reduce private transport use within the Oxford Ring Road, by encouraging the use of public transport, cycling and walking.

We now have five sites around the ring road, making Oxford's Park & Ride system one of the largest in the UK.

As we emerge from Covid-19 restrictions, our key challenge is to encourage people to re-embrace bus services, not least the Park & Ride. The Park & Ride services, which take people into Oxford, are still designed to reduce congestion and pollution as it was 50 years ago.

Via an article in our local newspaper, I challenged people to imagine the negative impact on Oxford if Park & Ride didn't exist. It was deliberately provocative. We need people to return both commercially and environmentally.

In 2019 almost 3 million people used it. A daily average of 8,000 people and 4,000 cars that did not clog up

key roads. If the service ceased and traffic attempted to access Oxford, this would be 10 miles of additional queues and roads would not cope.

We are at an interesting fork in the road in Oxford's ambition to become carbon neutral by 2035. Our leadership team continues to encourage all local stakeholders to collaborate for the greater good.

Bus journey times need to speed up by 10% to ease congestion and fund converting our fleet to zero emissions. We have made progress on improving air quality. Since 2013 NOx emissions from transport decreased by 7% in Oxford. The Oxford City Council air quality report revealed NOx emissions from buses decreased by half, from 64% to 32% and that cars are now the biggest contributor to air pollution.

We will continue to promote the benefits of bus travel in our region. And as we all seek to bounce back, I hope our communities re-embrace sustainable and safe travel to visit our beautiful city.

As ever my thanks goes to my colleagues who are all playing a huge role in promoting sustainable transport.

