

NEWS ACROSS THE GROUP

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A message from David Brown

Dear all,

We're now in the swing of 2021. While January can seem like a bleak month at the best of times – after all it has a 'Blue Monday' – it's certainly positive to see how our companies have kept colleagues' and passengers' spirits up.

With colleagues rebranding the day 'Blue Monday' to 'Colourful Monday' or 'Brew Monday' (page 2), we can still do so much to keep communities connected – even if it's from a distance. On page 4 you can read how passengers are praising our bus workers – with the art of rock painting, no less.

In 2021 we're especially keen on seeing how the government delivers on its promise for more than 4,000 zero-emission buses in the UK, especially as we wait for the forthcoming National Bus Strategy.

I recently spoke about these issues as part of an online panel to an audience of bus manufacturing investors based in Canada. They're interested in what's going on in the UK and we're further ahead than North America in our development of electric buses.

We are always aiming to be at the forefront of innovation and new technology. We are bringing in even more electric buses this year, with 70 more to arrive at Go-Ahead London by April. It may well also be the year for hydrogen, as we're still in talks in what has the potential to be Europe's biggest ever order of hydrogen buses. So, watch this space.

However, for now it is essential we keep connected during these times and support our communities. We must all remember that we are one

big Go-Ahead family and there is so much more we can offer than just providing bus and train services.

Good examples of this include Southeastern and GTR using their station car parks to help in the UK vaccination effort (page 4), while Go North East have introduced colourful vaccination shuttle buses to support communities (page 7). I'm proud that many colleagues are also volunteering to support the vaccination effort, helping save lives and bringing us closer to better times.

Until next month,

David Brown,
Group Chief Executive

Carbon cutting champions

We have received our highest-ever accreditation from the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), receiving an 'A-' rating

Since 2016 we have achieved a 22% absolute reduction in group-wide carbon emissions, which is particularly impressive when you consider how much we have expanded in this time, including in Germany, Norway, Singapore and Ireland.



(not so) Blue Monday

Why be blue when you can wear the rainbow?

January can be a challenging month, when people often feel flat after the excitement of Christmas, so Go North East colleagues decided to rebrand 'Blue Monday' as 'Colourful Monday'. The company encouraged colleagues to dress as colourfully as possible to lift the spirits of colleagues and customers.

Internally, the company is continuing efforts to support the mental health and wellbeing of colleagues, including highlighting its Employee Assistance Programme, where they can access online and telephone counselling and support on a range of topics, such as stress and anxiety, financial wellbeing and relationship issues.

Martijn Gilbert, managing director at Go North East, said: "We know January can often be a month where people can be at their lowest, so we're encouraging this light-hearted initiative to try and put smiles on people's faces on 'Blue Monday'.

Meanwhile, GTR and the Samaritans spent the day (Monday 18 January) to highlight how taking the time to talk could be lifesaving.

Replacing 'Blue Monday' with 'Brew Monday', GTR worked with the Samaritans to turn 18 January on its head and into something positive by encouraging the public and colleagues to get together over a warming virtual cuppa and have a chat.

GTR's colleagues often find themselves on the frontline of helping those most in need. Last year alone, they made more than 400 lifesaving interventions, either through conversations or physically intervening when someone tried to take their own life.

60 GTR colleagues have therefore been given a Samaritans Lifesaver award in recognition of their brave actions. This includes South London Station Assistant Kayode, who has helped four vulnerable people to safety – two who were close to taking their own lives, and two children running away from home.

GTR Suicide Prevention Manager Laura Campbell said: "Starting a conversation with someone who is trying to hurt themselves or someone who feels they want to end their life isn't easy. That's why it's so important that we recognise those who go out of their way to help.

"It's been a challenging year for many of us and showing some compassion and a willingness to take time to listen could be all that it takes to get someone the help they need to put them on the road to recovery, which is the essence of Samaritans' Brew Monday campaign too."



Arrangements for Augsburg

How we're ensuring a smooth mobilisation

We are due to start operating rail services in Bavaria, Germany, from December 2021. This means we need to do a lot of preparation work behind the scenes to ensure a smooth mobilisation.

Siemens Mobility has been busy preparing trains for Go-Ahead Bayern (Bavaria). From December 2022, we will be operating 56 units on the routes around Augsburg, a city in the west of the region.

We also need to ensure that trains are effectively maintained. Go-Ahead Bayern has therefore reached an agreement with Swiss company TMH international to provide train maintenance.

In the interim, TMH International will maintain trains at the existing Augsburg Railway Park. However, the plan in the long-term is to build a specific, separate maintenance facility.

If all goes to plan, the new maintenance centre will open in Summer 2022, ahead of routes going live in December of that year. This will also bring in 40 new jobs to the region, especially for managerial and technical roles.

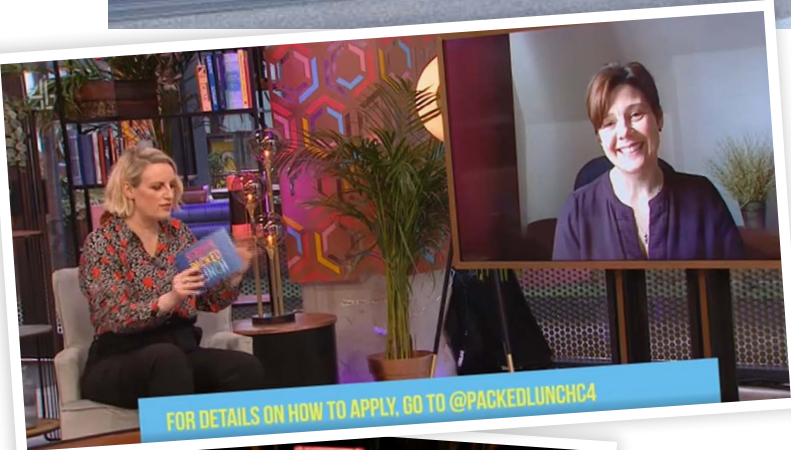
Go-Ahead's Head of Fleet Stephen Head said: "TMHI is a well-established train maintenance company, who have approached the negotiations constructively and with great enthusiasm. We are very pleased to have them as our partner and we are confident that they will do a great job in delivering the construction of the train maintenance facility as well as the maintenance of our trains."



Spotlight on apprentices

Our apprenticeships were featured on Channel 4

Our Group Strategy and Commercial Officer Katy Taylor made an appearance on the Channel 4 daytime programme 'Steph's Packed Lunch' this month. She discussed our apprenticeship scheme and our aim to hire more than 1,000 apprentices across bus and rail this year. With National Apprenticeship Week a critical part of February, apprenticeships remain a focal part of our employment agenda.



Drive for cover

Saving lives through station car parks

Station car parks have become unlikely heroes in the fight against Covid-19. Southeastern and GTR colleagues have joined forces with local medics who are delivering life-saving vaccines. Charing, Sevenoaks, Elstree and Harpenden stations have all offered free parking to those involved in the vaccination effort – from drivers giving lifts to the elderly and vulnerable, to the medical staff on the front line.

“We’re delighted to be able to provide this practical support to the vaccination effort,” said Southeastern’s



Sevenoaks Station Manager Elliott Waters “We also took over some coffee vouchers and other freebies for the teams, which received lots of thank-yous!”

Thameslink Managing Director Tom Moran said: “Our teams have been working throughout this pandemic to support our local communities, and keep services clean, safe and operating. I’m delighted that we can now provide practical support to this crucial mass vaccination effort.”



Bus travel rocks

A colourful stone is guaranteed to brighten up a rocky day

Local people in Norfolk, Suffolk and North Essex are being encouraged to take part in East Anglia’s #bustravelrocks campaign. Schoolchildren and families are being asked to celebrate bus drivers across the East of England by getting involved in rock painting.

A simple message or picture on a rock left at the bus stop will truly brighten our drivers’ days.

Now home schooling is back on the agenda, the company is also offering

free printing service at all our depots. This will allow staff with children of school age to print out any school resources they may require and help support those who may don’t have the necessary equipment at home.



Beating the virus

Writing for the region

Go North East has been getting involved in a regional campaign called ‘BeatCovidNE’. One of the 10 individuals who has been chosen to front the campaign is driver Jaswinder (Jas) Singh.

He has been selected as the representative for County Durham. As part of the campaign, Jas and five other North East people are writing their own Covid diaries to share their experiences of lockdown life, why it’s so important to follow the rules and how months of tough restrictions have affected them and their families.

Jas, commenting on adjustments to working life, said: “It was so strange seeing all the passengers on the bus in masks at first, but it is so normal and part of everyday life now. People are really good about keeping a distance on the buses and we have lots of information on board to remind people about hands, space, face.

“It’s really important that the message continues to be heard, especially on public transport, because this isn’t over yet – I wish it was. The buses are subject to a strict cleaning regime so they are Covid-secure, but we’ve all got to do our bit to stay safe.”



Showing support

A converted bus makes the world of difference

Brighton & Hove and Metrobus body shop colleagues have joined forces with local charity Sussex Homeless Support to convert a bus that will help to feed homeless people.

The bus has been adapted to allow for food preparation, with a series of serving hatches downstairs – allowing volunteers to provide more than 100 meals per hour. Upstairs, there will be a food bank.

The bus will be housed at the company’s Conway Street depot while it is renovated to protect it from vandalism. Colleagues have also worked with an external company to fit and replace all the bus windows so it can be ready for use in February.

It is the charity’s second bus – the other is used as a night shelter that houses up to 20 people per night. Unfortunately, this has not been in operation for the last year due to the pandemic.

Jim Deans, Head of Sussex Homeless Support said: “With many homeless people now in basic accommodation, the opportunity is there to help keep them off the streets. The bus will play a big part in this, while keeping the crew safe.”





Always Improving

Southeastern is the star of the show

Southeastern is continuing to provide a better experience for passengers. This month the company took delivery of the first two units in its new Class 707 fleet. The trains are set to replace some older, less reliable Networker trains in the company's Metro area.

Built by Siemens, and very similar to the Thameslink trains operated by GTR – the trains feature modern, spacious and air-conditioned interiors. The new units made their way to the network from South Western Railway and are the first of 30 five-car sets to be joining SE in total.

Meanwhile, work on the £1.25bn South East Upgrade continued at pace over the Christmas period, with progress made on a range of projects to boost infrastructure reliability.

On the Southeastern network, the biggest task by far was the replacement of track, points and the track bed at two key hotspots in the Lewisham area – with nearly two miles of new track laid on 7,500 tonnes of ballast and 1,460 sleepers. Overall, four sets of points and two diamond crossings were replaced at St Johns and Parks Bridge junctions – with the aim of providing smoother, less disrupted travel for passengers on these congested parts of the network.



Safe and aware

Spreading awareness of diabetes

Our colleagues' health, safety and wellbeing are our top priorities. Go-Ahead London's Croydon Bus Garage has been hosting Diabetes Health and Wellness workshops to teach the team how to recognise the signs of type 2 diabetes and how to improve their health to both prevent and manage it.

The sessions are run by Phylex Green, a bus driver at Croydon and a Diabetes UK Champion, and are supported by Kyle Simmons, Assistant Operating Manager. Phylex's sessions provide a space for all colleagues to ask questions about diabetes. Drivers can visit during their meal reliefs and get a mini assessment about their concerns.

The assessments are 10 minutes long and determine whether the driver is at high or low risk of type 2 diabetes. If they are considered high risk, a form is filled out which a driver can take to their GP for further testing. Phylex also provides the drivers with tailored shakes and regimes that help prevent, manage and control diabetes. This also helps with fatigue and helps drivers feel more prepared for their duties.



Shuttle bus success

One of the UK's first dedicated vaccination shuttle bus services

Go North East is celebrating the fantastic efforts of the NHS throughout the pandemic through its new 'ConnectorShuttle' bus. Running every 15 minutes, seven days a week, the bus service helps connect communities to the NHS Nightingale Hospital North East in Sunderland.

Martijn Gilbert, managing director at Go North East, said: "We're delighted to be helping the NHS with the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccination programme and have moved fast to ensure that good public transport links are in place."

"In partnership with other North East bus operators and Nexus, we've also recently introduced a dedicated vaccination bus stop in Newcastle outside the Centre for Life vaccination centre."

"We're committed to doing all that we can to work with partners to ensure that public transport plays its part in supporting this national effort with good quality, clean and safe public transport links, which is why we have very quickly mobilised this new special shuttle service."



Electric city

The future could be electric for Oxford

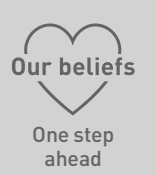
Oxford Bus Company is working with Oxfordshire County Council and other bus operators to develop a business case that could see Oxford become one of the first in the UK to operate an 'all-electric' bus fleet.

The government has shortlisted Oxford and Coventry after receiving 19 bids from across England to become the first all-electric bus town or city. Subject to the development of a positive business case, each area could be awarded up to £50 million towards replacing its entire fleet of buses with all-electric version and install new infrastructure.

Phil Southall, Managing Director of Oxford Bus Company said: "We have always been at the forefront of embracing clean technology and are delighted Oxford has been shortlisted in the all-electric bus town bid."

"The key next step is working with the Department for Transport through Oxfordshire County Council on the rules of engagement, ahead of stress testing the collective business case for delivery. I accept that this is going to be extremely challenging under the current circumstances but we will see if we can develop a business case that is acceptable to all to deliver up to 166 new vehicles for Go Ahead fleets across Oxfordshire"

Last year an electric bus was introduced to the City Sightseeing Oxford fleet as part of a government funded programme that will see a total of five open-top buses retrofitted to electric.



The results are in

Southeastern shows off its credentials

Despite the continued challenges of the pandemic, Southeastern colleagues have continued to shine – delivering their best-ever Period 10 results for operational performance. With a 10% increase in key metrics year-on-year, and an average of 70% of trains arriving On Time throughout the season, the results are comfortably ahead of comparable pre-pandemic periods. There was great news customer service-wise, too, with a superb 90% of passengers saying they were satisfied with their Southeastern journey in a recent survey.



Our beliefs
One step ahead

Praising key workers

Commending local lockdown heroes

Our attitudes
Agile

Go South Coast has launched a campaign to recognise the mammoth efforts of key workers and community heroes during the Coronavirus pandemic. They plan to honour these 'Lockdown Heroes' in a bus naming ceremony.

Go South Coast Managing Director Andrew Wickham said: "As key workers, my colleagues here at Go South Coast have huge respect for others who are keeping us all going – whether they are NHS, supermarket staff, postal workers, carers or teachers."

"It hasn't been easy for the many heroes who have continued to work in some incredibly challenging conditions. We would not have been able to manage without them. There is no way we could ever thank them enough – but we'd like to do something to recognise their efforts."

"So we're inviting nominations from within our local communities, for those who deserve to be named as a Lockdown Hero – for all to see – on our buses."

Let's watch this space.



Batty for Buses

Two East Yorkshire colleagues spotted something different in the depot...

When people see a bat signal, it's usually in a specific comic book series or superhero film. Not this time, though. Suzy and Shirley from East Yorkshire's Bridlington depot recently found a bat clinging to the wall of the depot.

It was clear that the poor animal was trying – and struggling – to hibernate. The colleagues called up a bat expert (the batman, presumably) who came to rescue it. Interestingly, the expert said it was a Natterer's bat, which are widespread in Europe but scarce in the UK.



Our attitudes
Down-to-earth

Stepping up for Christmas

A new take on the phrase 'fast food'

Southeastern Railway and Network Rail workers delivered food to hungry lorry drivers who were stuck in Operation Brock on the M20.

They sent seven trains with crates of food on the 23 December and Christmas Eve, with colleagues working late in the night to fill more crates with much-needed supplies.

An estimated 6,000 lorry drivers were at the time stuck trying to leave the UK, with roughly 2,000 waiting on the Kent motorway.

Southeastern workers took the initiative when they recognised that rail station shops would have excess food stock. Working with Network Rail, they collected food donations from London station outlets including Leon, Boots, Pret A Manger, Starbucks and M&S.

Colleagues filled crates with donated food and put them onto trains from London St Pancras, Charing Cross and London Bridge stations.

The crates were picked up at Ashford International railway station in Kent, which the Salvation Army distributed to stranded lorry drivers.

This act of kindness was featured in most major media outlets on Christmas Day, with mentions in the Guardian, BBC, the Mirror and the Daily Mail.

David Statham, Managing Director of Southeastern Railway, said: "We saw that lorry drivers in Kent were in a difficult place and we wanted to play our part in helping other transport professionals. I'm proud of how quickly our colleagues have reacted to this situation and are helping people in difficult circumstances."

Our attitudes
Down-to-earth

