

NEWS ACROSS THE GROUP

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A message from David Brown

Hello everyone,

June has been a month of slow change to a new kind of normal. Lockdown restrictions have been lifting across the world but the threat of Covid-19 remains real, and we must continue to be vigilant in protecting our colleagues and passengers.

We have been implementing innovative solutions to facilitate the new demands for passenger transport. For example, GTR has installed face mask vending machines at its larger stations – in response to the new requirement for passengers in England to wear face masks when travelling on public transport (page xxx). It has also been using technology in partnership with Siemens to gauge how busy services are to ensure social distancing rules are followed.

This month, we also launched new technology across our UK bus services that helps passengers

understand how busy their bus stops are at certain times, and therefore decide the best time to travel. We are only allowing a small number of people to board our bus services at a time, so this technology will help to space out passengers boarding and make sure no one is stranded.

Sadly, one innovative pilot scheme has now come to a close. Oxford Bus Company withdrew its PickMeUp service this month after a two-year trial. It had exhausted all external funding avenues and was not financially viable. We have learned a lot about demand-responsive travel from this trial, which will only help us in looking towards the future of transport.

In other news, we celebrated a few anniversaries this month – Go North West has now been operating for a year while Hedingham Buses (part of Go East Anglia) reached its 60th anniversary. Making our move into

Manchester has certainly been an interesting challenge, with figures indicating a 6% increase in passenger numbers pre-Covid 19.

Finally, I would like to express my condolences to those who have been directly affected by Coronavirus – whether you or a family member have had symptoms or if someone close to you has tragically passed away. Any loss is one loss too many.

Your work is critical in keeping the country moving, but if you do have any symptoms please self-isolate and inform your manager immediately by phone. We are committed to keeping you safe.

Until next month,

David Brown,
Group Chief Executive

Germany goes ahead

Go-Ahead Germany is working hard to get back on track after some teething issues earlier this year.

In the past few months, regular customers have been given a one-time compensation for any affected timetable changes, punctuality has risen to 98% and the company has launched a brand new website: go-ahead.bayern.de. Stefan Krispin, the former Managing Director, has left the business as we search for a new local replacement. The company will begin operating more trains around Munich at the end of 2021.

How busy is your bus?

The Go-Ahead tech tool that takes the bus sector into the future

The phrase 'artificial intelligence' can evoke the image of a futuristic world with robots, but we've been using advanced technology in our bus and rail operations for many years now. In March we launched a unique technology tool based on artificial intelligence that helps bus passengers plan how and when to travel.

The tool is both a mobile app and a website for passengers that shows the best – and critically, the quietest – time to travel on our services. This is especially important now as only a limited amount of people can travel on our services at a time due to social distancing. A double decker bus that could normally take up to 75 people is currently limited to about 15.

The technology – called 'When2Travel' – offers dynamic, colour-coded bus timetables that indicate seat availability. It is being used across our bus operators, including Go North East, Go North West and Brighton & Hove Buses. If a time is marked 'green' this is the quietest time to travel, with 'red' signifying the busiest.

The technology was developed in partnership with technology company CitySwift, who specialise in analysing bus networks and optimising timetables. The app gives bus capacity predictions on a stop-by-stop basis, so passengers can have the confidence to travel to work and school. We originally worked with CitySwift as part of the Billion Journey Project – Go-Ahead's innovative programme that works with start-up companies over ten weeks to develop their ideas.

Using artificial intelligence and algorithms that learn from recorded passenger use, the data updates dynamically. This means it can provide accurate and up-to-date data for each bus stop.

As lockdown restrictions ease in the UK, When2Travel will help customers plan journeys around seat availability – taking away worries of long waits or being left stranded. The dynamic data set will also help our bus companies to plan future timetable changes based on emerging demand.

Katy Taylor, Go-Ahead Group's Commercial and Customer Director said: "Our customers have told us their priorities are cleanliness, social distancing and knowing they can get a seat on the bus home. We want customers who need to travel to be able to plan their journeys with confidence, knowing they will be able to board the bus at a particular time, and get one home at a time that suits them".

Martijn Gilbert, Go North East's Managing Director said: "Helping customers plan their journeys will be key to public transport continuing to play its role as a clean, safe and efficient way of moving large numbers of people to connect our towns and cities and help ease congestion, whilst also improving air quality. The When2Travel tool is an important part of this and we're delighted to have worked with innovative technology partner CitySwift to quickly develop this tool".

Our beliefs One step ahead

introducing
our new dynamic prediction tool

When2Travel

helps you plan the best times to travel using big data and whizzy artificial intelligence

Powered by CitySwift Data Engine

new

how many seats are left on my bus?

will my bus have free Wi-Fi and USB charging?

will my bus be a double decker?

we can tell you!
visit gonortheast.co.uk

Go North East



We're also using AI technology on our trains...

GTR is using weight sensors, supplied by Siemens Mobility, to monitor the number of passengers who are on trains.

The Advanced Passenger Loading report was developed in just under two weeks to support timetable changes. The report flags services where passenger loading is more than 10%, as anything above 15% fullness reaches a point where safe social distancing becomes more challenging. Siemens' Mobility Technology is already being used by GTR to monitor passenger loading, temperature and on-board facilities.

ALL WRAPPED UP

Face coverings are now mandatory on public transport in the UK. Although wearing a face covering does not necessarily protect you, there is evidence that masks reduce the risk of spreading those to others if you have no symptoms.

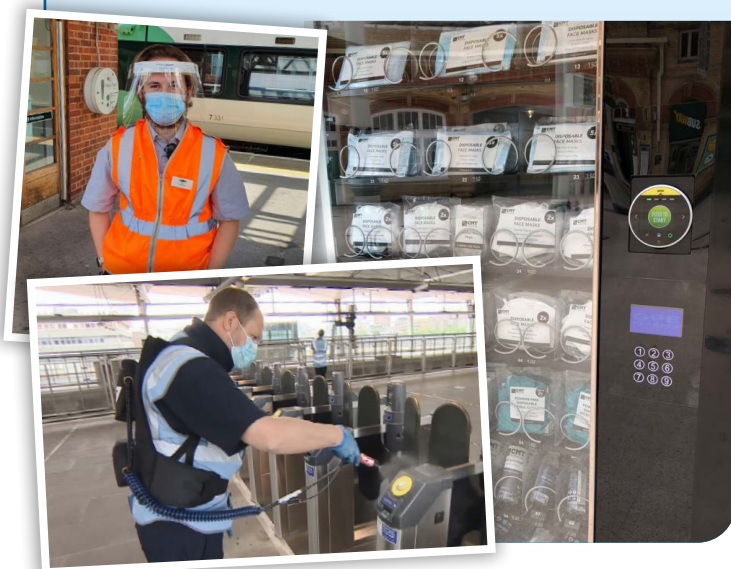
GTR

The rail company has ordered more than two million coverings and distributed 300,000 to colleagues in stations, depots and across the network so they are in constant supply. It has also installed eight face mask vending machines for passengers to purchase coverings if they have no other choice. The vending machines also offer temporary gloves, with ten more machines are coming soon. Eastbourne MP Caroline Ansell commented on Facebook: "Very good to see this facility to support travelling safely. Thank you to all the team in the station and on the trains looking after passengers."

Brighton & Hove

essential travel for our city

Two former fashion students have made nearly 2,000 face coverings for Brighton & Hove drivers and passengers. Dana Nicola and Katlin Siversten decided to help Dana's father Steve, who is a Stores Manager at Brighton & Hove Buses, using their free time on redundancy and furlough to good use.



Q Do colleagues have to wear a face covering?

A It depends on your role, so ask your manager for specifics. Bus drivers, for example, do not have to wear a mask if you are separated by a plastic screen, but you will have to wear a face covering if you are getting out of the cab and helping a passenger – such as those who need assistance.

Q Do passengers have to wear a face covering?

A Passengers must cover their faces if they are travelling on the bus or train, but do not need to wear them outdoors at the bus stop or at the train station. However, some people are exempt, which includes children under the age of 11, those with breathing difficulties, people with anxiety or panic disorders and those with 'hidden' disabilities (such as autism).



Diamond anniversary



Our attitudes

Collaborative



Hedingham celebrates 60 years

Hedingham buses has come a long way since its founder purchased eight petrol buses for £3,000 in 1960. The company – now part of Go East Anglia – is 60 years old and runs 132 buses across Essex and Suffolk. Go-Ahead acquired the company in 2012. To celebrate its 60-year anniversary, Go East Anglia made a nostalgic video and gave each employee a commemorative pin badge in celebration of their service to the business.

Jeremy Cooper, Managing Director of Go East Anglia said “It is a great honour to lead such a long established and well-regarded company as Hedingham Omnibuses. During its 50 years of private ownership, the company built an enviable reputation for the cost-effective delivery of school services and subsidised rural bus services, expanding through changing times.

Working for Hedingham is like being part of a family. There is a willingness to get the job done in a way that serves the local community, whilst looking after each other and finding sensible practical solutions to keep the business viable. Since its purchase by the Go-Ahead Group in 2012, the company has continued to evolve.”

Brand the Bus unveiled

How a bus becomes a moving billboard

The Oxford Bus Company has now unveiled the final design of this year's winner of its Brand the Bus competition. This year's winner was Home-Start Oxfordshire, a voluntary organisation that provides welfare to families with at least one child under five years old. The eye-catching bus has now hit the streets and will be used across a variety of routes.

Phil Southall, Oxford Bus Company Managing Director, said: “The bus looks fantastic and we're proud to support such a vital good cause in our community. In the current climate Home-Start Oxfordshire's services will undoubtedly be even more important and we hope the bus will help raise awareness of its vital work.”



We are one



Go North West has come a long way in 12 months

Just over a year ago, Go-Ahead had the challenge of turning a business from one set of rules to another overnight, after acquiring the Manchester depot from First Group. In a remarkably short period of time, the team installed replacement IT systems, created a whole new brand and onboarded more than 600 colleagues.

In the past year it has been all hands on deck. The company has introduced three new route brands, introduced 36 'new' buses and replaced 25% of its fleet.

The company has also launched the employee app Blink to keep bus colleagues informed. Each month the company also hosts 'Business and Breakfast meetings' where colleagues can chat to managers and find out the latest company developments.

To celebrate its one-year anniversary, Go North West hosted a week of celebrations – including recognising 12 of its colleagues with special Queen's Birthday Honours and unveiling a giant birthday card that highlights the company's achievements so far.

Nigel Featham, Go North West's Managing Director, said: "A strong public transport offering is vital to Manchester's future, and the response from passengers to the improvements we are making has been encouraging. The team here, the engineers, the cleaners, the office staff and the drivers, have all made such a tremendous effort to make a real difference for our customers, and I'm pleased to say that the city is already seeing these changes out there on the road".

The team also made special videos to commemorate the occasion.



Go North West's giant birthday card

[See the video](#)



Salisbury stays sustainable

New buses for the activ8 route

Salisbury Reds has unveiled three new environmentally friendly buses as part of its investment in the region's sustainable transport. The ADL Enviro MMC vehicles are now in operation on the region's 'activ8' route between Salisbury and Andover.

Go South Coast Managing Director Andrew Wickham said: "These past few months have been particularly challenging, and our team has been working incredibly hard transporting those making essential journeys throughout the coronavirus crisis.

"We made this investment prior to lockdown, and we are pleased to be introducing them to our customers across Wiltshire and Hampshire now. One positive to come from the



past three months is that the area's congestion has greatly reduced.

"This is a chance for us to build on that. We want to encourage local people to leave their cars at home and travel on sustainable transport once the Government eases lockdown and we return to something close to normality.

"Our team is very much looking forward to a time when these buses are full of passengers working, shopping and enjoying social occasions. Until then, we will enjoy showing them off to those making essential journeys across the region."

Record boost for community rail



Communities are at the heart of what we do

Southeastern was delighted to recently announce a six-figure investment in its local communities, with £400,000 on offer to support neighbourhood groups. Existing Community Rail Partnerships, along with local groups looking to establish a CRP by April 2021, were all able to bid for a share of the funding, which was established in partnership with the national Community Rail Network and the Department for Transport.

The successful bidders will be chosen by the end of this month and will receive the funding over the course of the next two years - money that will no doubt make an incredible difference to sustainable travel, social wellbeing, and much more.



Reflecting on no reflections

No mirror, mirror on the bus

Remember when buses with mirrors was normal? It has now been eight months since Go-Ahead London's Croydon bus garage started using mirrorless buses on its route 197. Instead, it has a Camera Monitoring System (CMS), marking the first time that buses of this kind have operated in London. It was initially a huge change for drivers as it represented a large departure from standard wing mirrors – first added to vehicles in 1921, nearly 100 years ago.

Route 197 driver Domingos Martins said: "For me, they're the best! I don't want the old mirrors anymore. Sometimes drivers from other bus operators come and ask me if it is better, and for me I say much better! At night, for reversing, in the rain, in the fog, for seeing other cars, I could go on."

Richard Conn, Satellite Manager at Croydon believes that the CMS mirrors have aided the engineers by reducing the number of call outs and lost mileage to replace broken mirrors. "When the mirrorless buses first arrived, there was a few teething problems, which we have fully rectified and now they are performing well. For both the engineers and the drivers, there was a period of acclimatisation as we all got familiar and accustomed to this new technology."



Our beliefs
One step ahead



Caring from a distance

Our attitudes
Down-to-earth

GTR colleagues lend a helping hand

A group of GTR volunteers are helping vulnerable people from a distance. GTR has created a satellite CCTV suite in East Croydon so volunteers can look for vulnerable people at stations. They can also spot antisocial behaviour and contact the appropriate authorities, such as the British Transport Police.

The train operator's CCTV is already manned 24/7, but volunteers are there to help bolster surveillance at a time when people are more likely to be feeling vulnerable. In the first six weeks they identified 11 vulnerable people who needed assistance.

Brighton-based passenger host Dan Moon, who has worked on the railway for 13 years, is among those to volunteer. He said: "There are a lot of vulnerable people out there at the moment and we're the eyes to spot them. You might not see anything for five days and then there may be one day when

you spot someone who is vulnerable and get help to them, possibly saving that person's life."

Fellow CCTV volunteer Colin Latimer has been spending five days a week helping at the satellite suite. The Brighton-based fraud control officer said being able to put his time to good use had helped his own mental health. He said: "It has saved my sanity. I have suffered with mental health issues in the past and being involved in this has helped. I feel as though I'm doing something worthwhile and productive. It's vital to have people looking out for the vulnerable; we may pick up something that no-one else has."



Stepping up

Bus worker helps hospital during furlough

Go North East, alongside many of our bus companies in the UK, has had to temporarily furlough some team members. This was in response to there being less work and services as well as to protect jobs in the longer term.

Bus worker Nathan Carr took advantage of his time off to support the North East Ambulance Service. He provided vital support for their Scheduled Care Service, working alongside the ambulance services' staff to clean and drive patient transport vehicles.

Nathan, who works in Go North East's recruitment and training department, has now returned to work, alongside many other bus workers who had been on furlough. He is now considering future volunteering roles with the North East Ambulance Service because of his experience.

Commenting on his time volunteering, he said: "I thought that it was important to keep busy and do something that would benefit the community, and this provided me with an opportunity to try something I would never have otherwise had the chance to do.

"I've loved every minute of it, particularly being able to get out and deal with the public. I've worked with some fantastic people and learnt a lot. These guys are out on the frontline but what really stuck out for me was how willing they are to just get on with their jobs and put themselves second to everyone else. Overall, it's been an absolutely amazing experience!"



Our attitudes
Down-to-earth



Colour me in

Children get creative with colouring

Two Go-Ahead London colleagues have launched an initiative to help children show off their creative skills, support transport workers' children and help brighten up the depot all at once. Go-Ahead London's Silvertown garage Operating Manager Brad Campbell and Garage Administrator Karen Smith were inspired by the rainbow pictures children have been drawing for key workers to support the NHS.

The initiative was to encourage drivers to ask their children to colour in the image of a bus in recognition and support of London bus drivers who are keeping the city moving for key workers. Karen said: "We had a great response with some brilliant works of art presented from the children of our drivers."

Brad said: "We have many pictures displayed nicely around the garage on a special board in recognition of the great job our colleagues are continuing to do. The pictures are certainly helping to raise extra smiles in and around the garage at this time of uncertainty. Thank you to all the parents and children who took part in a bid to show your support and simultaneously help brighten up a bus driver's day."



Transport tech

Innovation in a changing landscape

Two Singaporean bus captains recently took part in a Zoom conversation with Transport Minister Mr Khaw Boon Wan. Salim and Kian spoke about why they decided to join the bus industry from their previous jobs as taxi drivers: stating that working in buses has helped with income stability and employee benefits. Kian, who joined Go-Ahead Singapore in April this year, has realised how important customer service skills are in the bus industry and helping his commuters.



Meanwhile, Go-Ahead Singapore is continuing to upskill its workforce using technology. Bus captains have been issued with mobile phones and a suite of employee-centric apps to help on their daily tasks. Bus Captain Ahzman can now complete his tasks with a company-issued mobile phone – from making early morning transport arrangements to conducting pre-service vehicle inspections at the touch of a button.

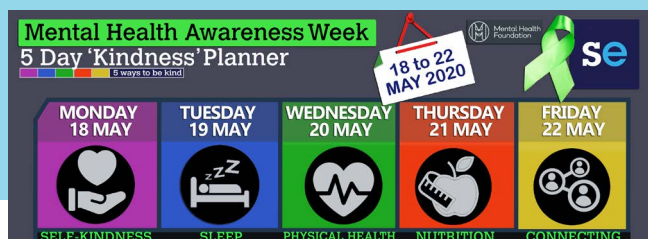


Connect Five for mental health

Taking care of your mental wellbeing

Mental Health Awareness Week, marked right across the country this May, saw Southeastern launch a five-day toolkit for mental wellbeing, focusing on aspects of positive mental health that may be surprising.

Exploring linked elements such as nutrition, sleep and exercise, along with the importance of self-care and maintaining emotional connections, the event enabled colleagues across the network to check on their mental wellbeing, and support others who may be struggling. The Connect Five challenge, launched on the last day of the initiative, saw teams take time out to chat to five people they hadn't spoken to during the lockdown so far, from office colleagues to long-lost family members.



A tasty thank you

Waitrose delivers to Waterloo

Lucky colleagues at Go-Ahead London's Waterloo Garage received a huge donation of chocolate from Waitrose at King's Cross in London. This delivery of chocolate goodies was Waitrose's way of saying thank you for keeping London moving during this difficult time.



After Head Office received a call from Kings Cross Waitrose store manager with this generous offer, it wasn't long before the delivery of chocolate arrived.

Warmly received by Operating Manager Lance McFarlane, the goodies were neatly displayed ready for colleagues at Waterloo to enjoy. Lance said: "This kind offer is brilliant. When does being given chocolate not put a smile on your face? In this current climate, it is pleasing to see how a kind gesture can bring people together (maintaining social distance of course). Colleagues here were most thankful for their donation and gesture of thanks for helping to transport keyworkers to work and home again! A huge thank you to the Waitrose team for their generosity!"



In my words...

CHRIS FORD

Chris Ford, Finance Director at Brighton & Hove Buses, discusses how our bus companies can rebuild, innovate and grow with lessons learned, and how we shouldn't go back to 'business as usual'.

In an industry sometimes considered to be slow to change direction, Go-Ahead's regional bus businesses like Brighton & Hove have proved to themselves just how agile they can be and how vital this is going to be for our future.

We have sometimes said of a need to change direction that it's a bit like turning an oil tanker, yet there are many examples of this new-found agility: frequent schedule changes with even more alternative service level scenarios mapped out; regular and close dialogue with trade union representatives at all levels; quick and collaborative decision making; rapid and widespread effective dissemination of decisions and associated information both across the business and to customers and stakeholders; reconfigured systems and home working and adapting to frequent and short notice changes to 'the rules of the game'.

In terms of digital transformation alone, the business had quickly established: [a digital copy of the colleague magazine] Infolink on Blink [an employee app] on a daily basis; online payslips for everyone; made great strides towards cashless buses; a more productive culture of virtual meetings; weekly video briefings from the executive team; and consistently high levels of engagement in digital comms through Blink.

It's so important for the business to 'bottle' this new agile spirit that we have cultivated together over the last two months and not revert back to business as usual if the further new challenges ahead are



going to be successfully overcome. We need to ask ourselves if the business can:

- leverage the benefits of operating a younger fleet in reduced breakdowns and higher miles per gallon
- continue the strides towards reducing cash on buses – to remove completely
- move away from the traditional fixed twice per year timetable change to much more dynamic scheduling driven by other strategic considerations
- move to online video consultations with team of neighbourhood advisors instead of seeing customers face to face in travel shops
- resolve issues for staff and for representatives by keeping the regular weekly discussion between the Unite reps and managers and directors going instead of reverting to the big quarterly meetings approach

We have seen a big culture shift in the space of three months and it is working for everyone's benefit. And certainly no-one says "but we've always done it that way" anymore! Let's rebuild this business together making the most of the agile ways of working we have now become accustomed to and leverage the opportunities this offers to protect jobs and return to being a successful business once again.

You can read the full article on:
<https://www.buses.co.uk/cf-blog>