

NEWS ACROSS THE GROUP

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A message from David Brown

Dear colleagues,

This may be the most unusual summer holiday period on record. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic we have been seeing a lot more people taking staycations or taking their holidays closer to home this year.

Some of our services – especially on the south coast – have added extra buses to their timetables to keep up with the increased demand while enabling social distancing. Our open top bus tours have also been busy during the sunny tourist season. Open top buses help to introduce visitors, day-trippers and curious locals to the sights around them and to connect with local communities.

As we ease into September and with students going back to school, we continue to remind passengers of the safety of our bus and rail services. Greater use of public transport is absolutely essential to getting the

economy moving again, and various studies have shown that infection risks are extremely small on buses and trains; less than 0.01% based on an hour-long journey in a carriage with no social distancing or face coverings. Customers can travel on our services with confidence, and we need to do all we can to convince our ensure our authorities and stakeholders embrace this message. If confidence in using public transport doesn't increase there will be more car use, congestion and more air pollution, leading to another health crisis. We released a video to stakeholders on these issues, which you can read about in this issue.

Our enhanced cleaning regimes and social distancing measures continue. In other countries where we operate, such as Singapore, they have introduced temperature checking into depots to ensure bus drivers' safety. Colleagues have been coming together across our operations to promote new guidelines

– Southeastern has even launched a 'face mask' train. On page 10, Oxford Bus Company managing director Phil Southall discusses how the pandemic has affected Oxfordshire, noting an improvement in air quality and easing of congestion.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the sad news this month of the train derailment near the Scottish town of Stonehaven. This was an incredibly serious incident and I send my thoughts to anyone who was affected by the tragedy, including Scotrail and the wider Abellio Group, the British Transport Police and Network Rail. We are all part of the railway family.

Until next month

David Brown,
Group Chief Executive

Our third venture in DRT



East Yorkshire has won a contract from North Lincolnshire Council to provide demand-responsive buses in the region. From next month, East Yorkshire will operate the new 'JustGo North Lincs' on-demand services across North Lincolnshire.

Passengers can hail a ride through a smartphone with the 'JustGo' app, which was developed in conjunction with tech company Liftango. This follows from our one-year trial in

Sutton in conjunction with Transport for London, and a two-year trial in Oxford of the PickMeUp service.

PickMeUp was the most successful scheme of its type in the UK but not commercially viable. As JustGo is contracted by North Lincolnshire Council, East Yorkshire can focus on providing a high-quality transport service and building a customer base without having to take revenue risk.

Covered at High Speed

Southeastern has found a novel way to encourage face coverings

One of Southeastern's iconic Highspeed trains was treated to a timely makeover last month, with the addition of this vinyl face covering over its nose cone. It was designed to remind passengers of the requirement to wear face coverings on board trains and at stations.

The 140mph Javelin has sped across the news from city and country to coast and achieved some superb media coverage in the process, with features right across the region's news.



Protecting passengers

Face coverings have become a staple part of public transport



Brighton & Hove Buses Supervisor Team are hopping on and off buses to help passengers travel safely and give them the confidence to plan their journeys. Supervisors are talking to passengers and making sure they are okay – helping to bring a sense of community back into buses.

The team have been handing out face coverings for passengers who may have left theirs at home or are not aware they need to wear one. They have also been educating passengers about the new exemption card scheme.

The company recently produced cards that say 'Please be supportive. I'm exempt from wearing a face covering'.

This is because some passengers who are exempt from wearing a face covering may feel anxious about the possible reaction from other people because they are not wearing one. This card is to help those people feel more comfortable. No one has to prove they are exempt but the card gives users the option of discretely sharing, if they wish to do so.

The team has estimated there has been around 96% compliance from passengers who can wear a face covering.



Environmental investment

Reducing emissions through investments



Oxford Bus Company and Thames Travel have increased the volume of ultra-low emission buses in their fleets thanks to a £2 million investment in green technology. Nine new Euro VI buses use the latest micro-hybrid technology to minimise environmental impact, using regenerative braking.

The companies have previously retrofitted 66 buses and five City Sightseeing buses with Euro VI technology, and they are trialling the first electric bus in Oxford.

Phil Southall, Managing Director of Oxford Bus Company and Thames Travel said: "This significant investment represents the next stage in our on-going strategy and commitment to introduce more sustainable modes of transport. We have always been committed to being at the forefront of the industry on environmental technology innovation and well over half of our buses are now powered by hybrid technology."



Electric fleet for the North East

Clean, green energy is hitting the north east streets

Go North East is trialling an electric single decker bus on its services between Newcastle and Gateshead this month. The trial follows on from the company's announcement last year that it would be investing in nine fully electric buses.

The nine new electric buses represent a £2 million investment, which has been supported by top up funding from the Government's Ultra Low Emission Bus Fund. They are set to arrive later this year.

Go North East, in partnership with Nexus, was awarded funding to support the additional capital cost of electric buses and depot charging infrastructure. The buses will form a key part of ongoing efforts to improve air quality and will be the first latest generation full electric buses capable of all-day service to operate in the North East.

Martijn Gilbert, Managing Director at Go North East, said: "The Covid-19 pandemic has shown us how clean the air can be with fewer polluting vehicles on the road. We're now underway with our next phase of extensive electric bus trials, which may see us add to the existing nine we have on order. It is great to have the Optare MetroCity EV on trial, a British built product from a North East of England manufacturer.

"170 low emission buses have also joined our fleet in recent years and there are more on the way and we are committed to ensuring that our buses provide a clean, safe and efficient way of getting around our region as the economy recovers."



Our beliefs

One step ahead

True lifesaver



A colleague's heroic actions

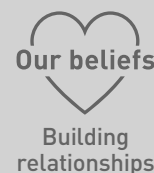


In August, Go-Ahead Bayern (Bavaria) colleague Daniel Goppel was enjoying a day off, when he saw young people sitting on the rails at the train station in the small town of Burgau. He recognised the seriousness of the situation immediately and sprinted towards the incoming train to signal for it to make an emergency stop.

Daniel, who is 20 years old, had been training to be a driver for several weeks and had only learned the stop signal in his lessons the week before. His quick thinking worked – the driver immediately hit the emergency brake, and the train came to a halt within only a few metres of the young people.

Daniel said: “I was nervous – obviously the young people weren’t aware of how dangerous their behaviour was.” Bastian Gossner, Managing Director of Go-Ahead Bayern, officially praised Daniel’s courageous actions, handing him a bouquet of flowers and a shopping voucher for his lifesaving actions.

Celebrating 170 years of railway history



This month, the railway connecting Peterborough to London celebrates 170 years of service. To mark the occasion, GTR has released a series of commemorative videos that celebrate the transformation of the route.

GTR has operated the Great Northern brand since 2014. Together with Thameslink. Three new fleets are now in service, which means more trains are running than ever before. The videos are presented by British journalist, broadcaster and railway enthusiast Michael Portillo. They provide a snapshot of Great Northern Railway’s 170-year heritage between Peterborough and London and look to the future transformation of the East Coast mainline.

Steve White, Chief Operating Officer at GTR commented: “It is 170 years since the first Great Northern Railway train carried passengers between Peterborough and London. The railway has a proud history and a bright future. It is now undergoing a digital transformation. We are proud to be the custodian of the iconic Great Northern name.”

Michael Portillo added: “The East Coast Mainline is one of Britain’s most important railway arteries. Over the years it has played a key part in the growth of towns and cities along the route, and still does today – which is definitely worth celebrating.”



Cycling for a good cause

This charity event got all colleagues involved



Go-Ahead London recently organised a charity bike ride to raise money for Cancer Research and Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH). The day was organised by Katarzyna Bilinska, Accident Prevention Supervisor based at Merton Garage.

On the day of the event 30 participants from various garages cycled from garage to garage to collect donations, which included toys, books and superhero pyjamas for GOSH children. Starting from Northumberland Park Garage in Tottenham, North London, the group took various routes to other premises before meeting at Merton Garage in Colliers Wood, South West London.

Many of the experienced cyclists competed the whole route between all the garages, covering an impressive 51 miles.

The less experienced cyclists completed route two, covering 27 miles. Colleagues sang songs to keep up morale during the day and they even had their own anthem.

The cyclists were welcomed on arrival by the garage teams with cheers and cold water and fruits, and even a slice of handmade cheesecake. The day exceeded expectations and at the end each participant was presented with a medal recognising their efforts and success working together as one team.

Katarzyna went above and beyond to organise the cycle relay, using her own time and personal money to make the day a big success.



Bikes on board

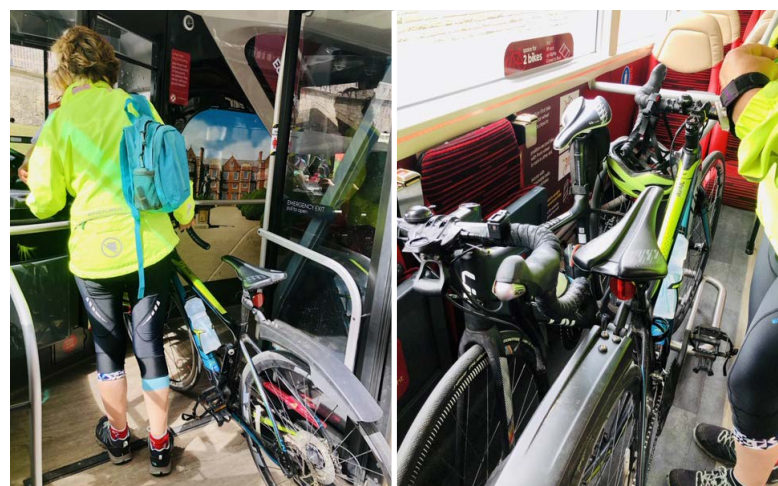


Adapting fleets, adjusting seats

East Yorkshire buses will become one of the first operators in the country to have bike-friendly buses. In a £2 million investment, East Yorkshire has bought eight state of the art, environmentally friendly double decker buses, which have special bike racks on board.

As well as being good news for cyclists, the buses will have WiFi, wireless chargers, tables and luxury interiors. The buses will have the latest advancements in customer comfort and have cameras instead of wing mirrors to avoid blind spots.

Ben Gilligan, East Yorkshire's Area Director, said that the new buses are designed to make travelling a pleasure. "When we ordered the new buses, we wanted to make sure they had everything passengers wanted," he said. "At the moment, everyone's talking about getting active, so the ability to bring your bike along is a game changer. It opens up



huge possibilities for both commuters and those who cycle for fun to make the most of the endless opportunities for cycling in our amazing part of the country."

Open-top buses boost local economy

A breezy boost to local communities

Open-top buses are running across Go North East, East Yorkshire, Oxford and Go South Coast to spread sunshine cheer and happiness in tourist havens. All buses are subject to extra cleaning and have fully Covid-secure safety arrangements on board.

Across East Yorkshire, the 'Beachcomber Buses' are running along the Scarborough seafront every day. Ben Gilligan, East Yorkshire's Area Director, said: "Since it was announced that tourism attractions could reopen, we've done everything we can to make sure our open top buses are safe, from extra cleaning and social distancing notices on board, to special 'fogging' machines that disinfect every nook and cranny of the bus."

And what's more, the Beachcomber buses have just been awarded a 2020 'Traveller's Choice' award by travel website Tripadvisor. This places the buses in the top 10% of attractions worldwide.



Meanwhile, Southern Vectis' open-top shuttle bus has returned to the Isle of Wight's Shanklin seafront and esplanade, with the town's famous lift unable to run. The Shanklin lift usually allows people to access the Isle of Wight's cliffs quickly.

Richard Tyldsley, Southern Vectis' General Manager, explained: "The lift carries thousands of people each year to

the beach and businesses on the Esplanade here in Shanklin and, understandably, it can't currently re-open because of social distancing requirements."

"We are pleased to be running the Shanklin Shuttle service, with stringent cleaning measures in place. Our seating layout also allows for social distancing, so this is a wonderful opportunity for local people and visitors to enjoy the wonderful views here from our open-top buses safely and in comfort."



Picture by Gary Trötter

Go South Coast adds Morebus-es

Extra bus seats as Dorset's beauty spots see influx of visitors

Morebus has added extra bus services to its fleet in response to the rise of local people and visitors coming to Dorset to enjoy the summer heatwave. This year has seen an increase in the amount of people who are taking staycations or spending their holidays in the UK, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Operations Manager Richard Wade said they have been adding extra services

so "nobody gets left behind." He said: "This part of Dorset is hugely popular. This is a very important period for our tourism industry, and we wanted to do what we could to support businesses and locations along this route. It's a wonderful opportunity for [passengers] to leave their cars at home and take in the sights and sounds of our breathtaking coast and countryside."



Tracking temperatures

Keeping our Singapore colleagues safe

Colleagues at Go-Ahead Singapore are undergoing daily temperature taking when reporting for their duties. This is important to ensure the safety of colleagues and commuters. Recently, Go-Ahead Singapore trialled a new solution at the Loyang bus depot, in collaboration with Lexbuild. TracStem is designed to provide precise and contactless measurement of a person's forehead temperature. This is especially useful as we ensure that everyone has their temperature taken in the shortest possible time.



Travel in safety and with confidence

Our beliefs
Being can-do people

David Brown updates customers in new video

In a video intended primarily for external audiences, David Brown has spoken about public transport now being open to everyone and how customers can be confident in the safety of our buses and trains. In reflecting on the current situation, he emphasises the importance of public transport complementing active travel, the need for fares and ticketing reform in rail, and our commitment to helping reinvigorate the communities we serve.

Click here to watch the video 



Information stations

Keeping passengers informed from the platform

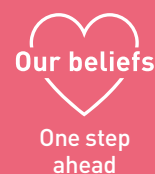
Our attitudes
Agile

This July, Southeastern became the first UK train operating company to roll out major new customer information functionality, designed to help passengers travel with confidence and to provide additional insights to colleagues.

Including a capacity planning dashboard to show the busiest times at stations and on board, enhanced information on on-board toilet availability, and access to average loading data across key services, the trio of upgrades provide enhanced information to support social distancing and capacity management - particularly useful as passenger numbers continue to increase. What's more, further functionality is in the pipeline for the coming weeks - with all the core information to be available in just a click, via the Southeastern On Track app.



Improving reliability

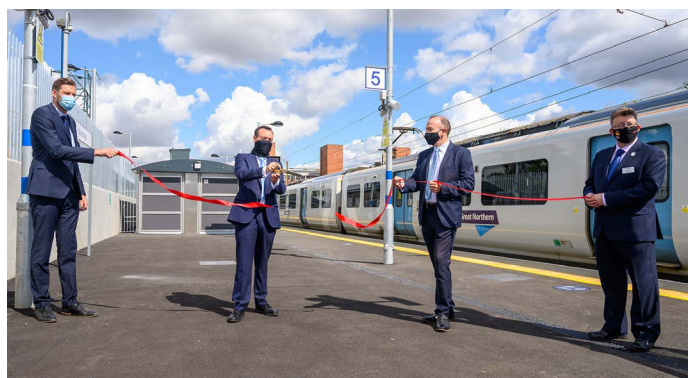


A new platform at Stevenage will improve the customer experience at GTR

Rail passengers will benefit from more frequent and reliable services thanks to a new £40 million platform and track at Stevenage station. Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris visited the station to unveil the new Platform 5 at the beginning of August. Network Rail worked with GTR to accelerate the project and deliver it 12 months earlier than planned.

The new platform and track separates the local 'Hertford Loop' services from longer distance mainline Great Northern, Thameslink and LNER trains – meaning there will be better reliability for passengers.

Steve White, GTR Chief Operating Officer, said: "The most recent independent customer satisfaction survey showed Great Northern as the most improved operator."



This is more good news for our customers. We have worked closely with Network Rail on this important project as part of the continuing transformation of our railway."

Away in style

A touch of Nordic blue

We're proud to present Go-Ahead Nordic's brand-new design for its Oslo-Stavanger routes. In these pictures, you can see the blue livery is modern and quintessentially Scandinavian. This branding, which was launched in July, will help passengers experience the true beauty of southern Norway.

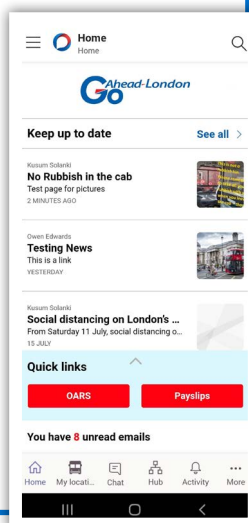


Appy to help

Connecting colleagues across London

Go-Ahead London is launching its new employee engagement app, iGo! In September.

The new app comes with a range of benefits for colleagues that make their business updates and communication clearer, faster and easier to access. Through the app, colleagues can find garage news and duty swaps and access their pay slips. There will also be a chat feature so colleagues can connect with each other.



Travel Out to Help Out

Taking advantage of the government scheme

Go South Coast operators have been backing the government's 'Eat Out to Help Out' scheme by offering passengers two bus tickets for the price of one. The Eat Out to Help Out initiative is a government scheme that gives patrons money off their meals on Monday-Wednesdays throughout August.

One of the rare positive impacts of Coronavirus is that it contributed to reduced congestion across the region - and Go South Coast is encouraging people to leave their cars at home when going out to eat. "We have seen a tremendous difference in levels of traffic across the region since lockdown began and feel it would be fantastic if we could build on that as a community," said head of marketing, Nikki Honer.

"Go South Coast fully supported the government's Eat Out to Help Out scheme because we know how important it is to the local economy here. We can't wait to see our high streets and hospitality industry start to bustle once more, so we are delighted to be joining in with this offer for our customers too."



BLOCKBUSTERS

Work continues apace on the mammoth £1.25bn South East Upgrade across Kent and South East London - with the completion of a supersized blockade the latest milestone in the programme. Routes through Southeastern's Hither Green were closed for nine days in July and August to allow for the essential work, which included replacements and upgrades to over 250 axle counters, 150 signals & signal heads, and 43km of specialist cabling.

Improving infrastructure

Next in line for improvements on the Southeastern network are Catford Bridge and Crayford, which will be closed over the August Bank Holiday weekend - and looking further ahead, there'll be major track work at St Johns and New Cross over the festive period, to bring much-needed performance boosts in the Lewisham area.



Building a greener city

Oxford Bus Company's Managing Director Phil Southall discusses Coronavirus' impact on the environment and green initiatives



During a tough period for bus and coach operators, there have still been some positives to emerge from COVID-19.

In Oxford, air quality has improved, and congestion has reduced meaning buses have been running on average 20% faster than in normal traffic conditions. Additionally, there appears to be an increased will to embrace positive change.

In Oxford City a recently published City Council air quality report revealed since 2013 there has been a 7% decrease in NOx emissions from transport. We were pleased to discover NOx emissions from buses has decreased by half, from 64% to 32%. This is a significant reduction and should now help dispel the misconception that buses are the biggest contributor to pollution.

Major investments in low carbon technology by both us and our main competitor has directly contributed to the overall improvement in air quality in the city centre. We have not only invested millions in new buses to Euro VI standard, but the City Council has also received funding via the Clean Bus Technology Fund to help us upgrade earlier engines to the Euro VI standard. Furthermore, Oxford Bus Company introduced the first electric bus to the city earlier this year via the City Sightseeing Oxford fleet with more to come later this year.

But as COVID-19 restrictions continue to ease some of the environmental benefits will be challenged.

Therefore, it is imperative key stakeholders continue to work closely together to ensure continued positive environmental change.

Encouragingly there are some positive proposals on the table to introduce at least two new bus gates in Oxford. Bus gates are key to reducing congestion by providing 'free flow' conditions to give greater certainty to customers on journey time. Additionally, they could enable additional cross-city and new bus routing opportunities that customers regularly ask us for.

Currently a major part of our on-going work is rebuilding confidence that buses are safe to travel on. We have broadcast informative videos and run social media campaigns with partners including Oxford City Council.

In a bid to encourage increase visitors into our city Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council are providing free parking at all five of Oxford's Park & Ride sites throughout August. Additionally, we are offering local people a free ticket on our Oxford City Sightseeing service as part of a 'Rediscover Oxford' campaign in a partnership with Oxford City Council and the Oxford Mail newspaper to further promote our economy.

We will continue to work to promote bus and coach travel as the solution to congestion and pollution. And as ever I extend my thanks to all colleagues who are all continuing to do an excellent job in challenging circumstances.

