

# NEWS ACROSS THE GROUP

June 2021

- 3** A royal accolade
- 5** Welcome to the 707
- 7** Combating loneliness
- 9** Hole in One



## A message from David Brown

Dear colleagues,

It's hard to believe we're over halfway through 2021. In June we saw a few weeks of sunny, hot weather, which we hope will return in July for the school holidays. With the rise of staycations, we're hoping buses and trains will be a vital part of people's trips across the UK.

However, it is evident from the constantly changing weather patterns that climate change is truly affecting the way we live. Buses and trains are part of the solution for combating poor air quality and climate change. People need to be encouraged to choose walking, cycling and taking public transport, and only use the car when they really need to, for the good of our planet.

Our commitment to sustainability is also being recognised by others. I was pleased that Go-Ahead was recognised as a 'European Climate Leader' by the Financial Times this month. That means we're in the top

300 companies in Europe for cutting our carbon emissions. There were only two bus and rail operators listed on the report, so it's a testament to our continued hard work.

While sustainability is critical to the way we operate, we would be nothing without our people. Your health, safety and wellbeing are our top priorities. I thought it was a wonderful indictment on our values and how well we've worked together through the pandemic that we actually improved on our investors in people status at Head Office to 'gold advanced' (page 7). Well done everybody and thank you for your feedback.

In terms of wellbeing, Head Office and most of our UK bus companies launched quarterly 'pulse' surveys this year. This helps us to gather data on how you're thinking, feeling and how we can improve. The focus of the summer survey was on health and safety and I'm looking forward to seeing the results and action plans.

Meanwhile, on the rail side we're continuing to focus on best practices. David Statham, Southeastern's Managing Director, has written on rail safety for our blog on go-ahead.com (page 8). I would highly recommend you read it.

To finish on safety – most of you will now have received your first, and many your second, Covid-19 vaccine. I would strongly encourage you to sign up for one if you haven't already, so that you can protect yourself as well as others. This month Go-Ahead London actually brought a bus to its Merton depot to help with the vaccination effort for colleagues, which you can read about on page 2.

Until next time,

David Brown,  
Group Chief Executive

## European Climate Leader

Go-Ahead has been named a 'European Climate Leader' by the Financial Times for our carbon cutting initiatives. The FT gathered data on more than 4,000 European companies, with the top 300 seeing the greatest reduction in greenhouse gas emission intensity between 2014-2019,

measured according to tonnes of carbon emissions per €1 million of revenue.

This year we were also named the 'most admired' company in transport for our commitment to communities and sustainability, and we also received our best mark ever (A minus) from the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP).



# Vaccine vehicle

## All aboard the vaccine bus

At the beginning of June, Go-Ahead London hosted a pop-up mobile vaccination clinic at Merton Garage. This was for all Go-Ahead London colleagues and was set up in partnership with NHS Southwest.

The aim was to bring the vaccine to colleagues to make it as convenient as possible to get the jab, and to have support from their peers.

The unit administered 48 injections on the day onboard a deep-cleaned double decker bus, and an additional 'comfort' bus was provided for a post-jab rest. People who received their vaccine included Operations Director David Cutts and General Manager of Merton Garage Saf Patel.

On the day, John Trayner Managing Director said, "As key workers we have kept the city connected through this pandemic. As an employer, we want to do all we can to protect our colleagues who are on the front line every day."



Our attitudes  
Accountable

"On top of our investment into protective PPE, social distancing at our garages and investment into our colleague wellbeing with the launch of our 24/7 Employee Assistance Programme and The Pod, workplace vaccinations are a welcome initiative to protect our colleagues however we can."

David Cutts said: "I was delighted to see so many frontline colleagues receiving their Covid vaccination when we hosted the NHS at Merton Garage. I took the opportunity to have my second jab and would like to thank all involved for making it straightforward and stress free."



# Voltra on video

## Our electric buses hit the spotlight

Renowned transport Youtuber Geoff Marshall has featured Go North East's electric bus fleet ('Voltra') in a new video. Geoff, who has an impressive audience of almost 230,000 subscribers on the popular social media channel, recently visited the depot to check out the new

fleet of electric buses. The video received 100,000 views in its first week.

As part of Geoff's visit to the region, he also had a behind the scenes tour of Go North East's Gateshead Riverside depot, offering an insight into the inner workings of one of the region's largest employers.

Martijn Gilbert, managing director at Go North East, said: "It was great to welcome Geoff to the North East. We've seen a great deal of him on social media before, with many of his videos receiving hundreds of thousands of views, so we were delighted to have him up here reviewing the region's first fully-electric bus fleet and getting a look at what goes on here at Go North East. We'd like to thank him once again for the visit, and we hope that you enjoy watching his video."



Our attitudes  
Agile

# A presidential welcome

## A special visitor

Go Cornwall Bus shared its parking area at Newquay Airport with a special visitor this month. Air Force One (the US President's private aeroplane) landed at the airport to transport President Joe Biden to the G7 summit in St. Ives.

The 47th G7 summit was held on 11-13 June in Cornwall, with participants including EU representatives, the President of the European Commission and the President of the European Council.

Go Cornwall Bus transported people around Newquay airport to help with the influx of passengers. While dignitaries had assigned cars, press and support staff were transported via buses.

We had five buses in operation, while Go South West colleagues managed airport transfers, road closures and disruption.

Our attitudes  
Agile



Picture by Pete Downes

# A royal accolade

A group of volunteers based on the Isle of Wight have been honoured with The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK.

The Isle of Wight Community Bus Partnership was one of 241 charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups to receive the award. The partnership provides essential bus services to areas across the Isle of Wight – using vehicles from Southern Vectis and volunteer drivers.

Southern Vectis general manager, Richard Tyldsley said: "These services are absolutely vital to those who may otherwise find it difficult to travel across the island – with 93 percent of passengers on routes 22, 24 and 32 using concessionary passes. Every

Our attitudes  
Down-to-earth

## A very important volunteer

year 33,000 journeys are taken on these three services. Southern Vectis provides buses for the routes and will continue to do so, thanks to support from the council – and of course from the drivers who volunteer. Without them, none of this would be possible."





# Staying sustainable

## Singapore's pledge for sustainable employment

Go-Ahead Singapore recently pledged its commitment towards sustainable employment with the Singapore Business Federation. This commitment signifies the company's dedication to ensuring their colleagues receive fair compensation, receive regular upskilling opportunities and work in a professional work environment.

The company will continue to establish fair and ethical contracts with partners to cultivate a more inclusive society, in the belief that happy employees equate to a content and more efficient workplace.



**Our attitudes** Accountable

# Let's dig in

Supporting green-fingered recruits

**Our attitudes**  
Collaborative

GTR and environmental charity Groundwork London have teamed up to boost four young people's employment chances. Recruited through the Government's 'Kickstart' scheme, they have been planting new gardens for passengers and communities to enjoy.

Over 26 weeks, they have 18 station projects, including wildflower and bee gardens. They will also have the chance to receive City & Guilds Horticulture qualifications.



Tom Moran, Managing Director for Thameslink and Great Northern, said: "Over the past year, we've been investing in our stations to create an even better experience for our passengers as they return to the railway. Our partnership with Groundwork London's Green Teams is helping local young people gain great experience, as well as making our stations more colourful and environmentally friendly places for the local communities they serve."

## Speaking up

Building our profile in Ireland

Go-Ahead Ireland's Managing Director was interviewed for the Irish independent this month, discussing the role of public transport in the post-pandemic world.

[Read here](#)

# Welcome to the 707



As plans pick up speed for the launch of Southeastern's Class 707 fleet later this year, a dynamic team of Implementation Drivers are pulling out all the stops across the network, to get the very first units up and running. Orpington's Michael Dyer tells us more...

### What's a typical week like for you in the role?

So far, each week has varied quite a lot – the team is multi-skilling so we can undertake every aspect of the project. I've been route learning all the routes for the 707s, teaching Shunters and Driver Managers, and will soon train Drivers on both theory and practice. We also move the units around the network for staff training and inspection, and we'll start verification trips soon, to ensure we can operate them safely across the network. As there are so many new challenges, the whole team have been supporting each other as we all discover new areas of responsibility.

### How have you found supporting other departments with their training?

It's made me appreciate how much goes into operating a railway and how much goes on behind the scenes. We've worked with colleagues across Southeastern, including Engineering, Learning and Development, Driver Managers, Shunter Drivers and Passenger Services – and have worked with external stakeholders such as Network Rail, SWT and Siemens too. No doubt there are more learning experiences still to come, as we progress through the project plans to deliver these trains successfully.

### How long does it take to get trained on the 707?

It's been drilled into us that we must be experts so we never stop learning; enabling us to train staff using the following format. Week 1 is four days' theory, based in a classroom setting, and incorporating the new 707 simulators to complement the learning. Week 2 is three days' static duties and practical handling. Both weeks are supported by question-and-answer sessions to check understanding.

### What's the 707 like to drive, and are there big differences from the type of unit you're used to?

The two obvious differences are the power brake controller (PBC) and the central seating position. Southeastern units have set brake steps and power notches; a 707 has a notch-less (variable) PBC. It allows much greater control over your unit – I really like it. The other big difference is the HMI (Human Machine Interface). I know this traction was designed with passengers in mind, but it really is a Driver-friendly piece of technology.

# Go North East never sleeps

## Staying awake so you don't miss your journey

Go North East's Managing Director Martijn Gilbert recently wrote a blog for go-ahead.com on how the company is helping to re-open the region's night-time economy.

In the blog, he explains how the bus operator has launched 24-hour services on three key routes, as well as introduced a flat £1 single fare customers can pay between 7pm each evening and 3am the following morning. The company has also provided more night-time buses for shift workers in healthcare and to those working at the Amazon warehouse site in Gateshead and the Nissan Factory.

He said: "We're continuing to deliver strong week-on-week growth that is outstripping underlying evening revenue growth seen in other comparable operations. There is also a halo effect of people trying the bus over an evening and seeing that today's buses are much better than they expected, helping to drive daytime recovery and growth."

[Read more](#)



**Our attitudes**  
Accountable



# A ticket for all seasons

## Working together to help passengers

GTR and Southeastern recently worked together to launch a new online Season Ticket Calculator that provides passengers with greater transparency when it comes to choosing tickets and fares.

The Season Ticket Calculator enables commuters with flexible work schedules to identify and buy the right ticket for the number of days they want to travel. From the 21 June, the calculator also includes the new national Flexi Season ticket, available to book across the country.

**Adam Phayer, Head of Retail at GTR said:** “We’re ready to welcome people back to rail and recognise many will be working very differently from the way they did before the pandemic. The new national Flexi Season ticket will offer passengers more choice for how they want to travel to work and may be the best option for those travelling two to three days a week. Our online Season Ticket Calculator will help people find the option that’s right for their journey and travel pattern each week.”

**John Backway, Head of Retail at Southeastern, said:** “As restrictions lift and we start to welcome more and more passengers onto our network, we want to ensure that the process of identifying the best fare is a seamless experience. The new Season Ticket Calculator will help to build a more transparent ticket-buying process for our passengers, helping everyone to make an informed choice, and one that is best for them.”

Season Ticket Calculator

Leaving from

Going to

☒ Adult

☐ Child

☐ 16-17 Saver

☒ Standard

☐ First Class

How many days a week do you plan to travel?

1

2

3

4

5+

How long do you want to travel for?

0 Months

0 Weeks

Calculate Price



Getting GOLD

A great accomplishment

Go-Ahead Head Office has been re-awarded with a ‘gold’ accreditation from Investors in People (IIP), an internationally recognised standard that defines what it takes to lead, support and manage people well. The accreditation places Go-Ahead Group 8th out of 61 companies in the ‘transportation’ and ‘storage’ category. In the survey, 90% of people believe that Go-Ahead has a positive impact on society, and 100% of people would recommend Go-Ahead as a place to work.

Our attitudes Down-to-earth

Combating loneliness

Go East Anglia continues to work combating loneliness across Norfolk. Konectbus is a proud member of the Norwich Together Alliance that will help collaborative working to combat loneliness. The companies have produced a ‘Talking Heads’ video, in which they discuss what loneliness means to them, why Norwich Together is important for the city, and how people can get involved locally to tackle loneliness.

Watch the video

# Switch to bus

It’s never too late to change careers



Thames Travel has launched a new recruitment campaign that encourages people to consider bus driving as an alternative career. Funeral director turned bus driver James McGee is one of the first to feature to demonstrate that bus driving can be an attractive option.

“Since changing careers, I haven’t looked back,” said Mr McGee. “As a sole controller based at our operational hub in Didcot, my day-to-day role is not dissimilar to that of an air traffic controller – just on a smaller scale and with buses not aeroplanes. It’s about providing passengers with the best possible service through instinctive problem-solving and good communication skills.”

Phil Southall, Thames Travel Managing Director, said: “After a challenging year for the transport sector, it is fantastic to be in a position where we are actively recruiting drivers. Our investment in expanding our services in central and south Oxfordshire has created the new job opportunities. Our increased services have improved connectivity which is vital for the economic recovery of the county.”



# Sussex Day

## Celebrating the region

BBC Radio Sussex broadcast live from one of Brighton & Hove Buses’ open-topped City Sightseeing buses on 16 June to celebrate Sussex Day. The marks the feast day of St Richard of Chichester, Sussex’s patron saint and was officially adopted by West Sussex County Council in 2007.

Radio guests included Brighton & Hove Mayor Alan Robbins, Bake Off contestant and Brighton cake shop owner Julian Plumart, food historian Samantha Bilton, Trevor Beattie from South Downs National Park and Brighton’s singing barber Peter Joannou, who closed the show by singing Sussex By The Sea.





# Staying safe

Your health, safety and wellbeing is our top priority

Southeastern's Managing Director David Statham has written for the go-ahead.com blog on the importance of safety. For those of us who work on the railways, safety is ingrained in our culture – and the good news is that our industry has been successful, over a long period of time, in making the network safer.

Read here



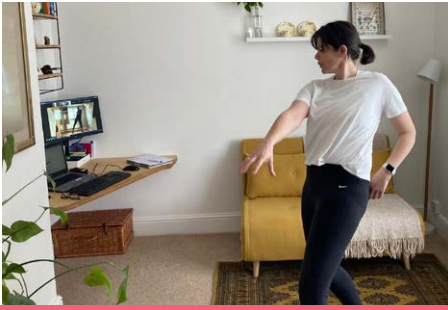
# World of difference

Celebrating difference



Colleagues across Southeastern and Go-Ahead Head Office came together to celebrate World Day for Cultural Diversity last month, creating a short film exploring cultures across their local communities, and taking part in a trio of dance classes sampling styles from street dance to Tai Chi.

The event also inspired a brilliant new initiative, offering colleagues the opportunity to show which languages they're able to speak in addition to English, in the form of colourful flags on their name badges – highlighting the hundreds of languages spoken across the company, and improving communication, accessibility and inclusion for passengers.



# Clean Air Day

Buses are the solution for poor air quality

Go South Coast marked Clean Air Day – Thursday 17 June – by urging people to leave their cars at home and travel by sustainable transport instead, with each Go South Coast operator sending out a pledge.

"We are committed to helping improve the quality of air we breathe in Southampton, and we have been working on this in a number of ways over recent years – from investing in a new fleet of greener vehicles and installing solar panels on our vehicles to trialling the world's first air filtering bus," said Andrew Wickham, Go South Coast's managing director.

"Bus travel has changed beyond recognition over recent years, and those who haven't travelled with us recently will be amazed at the enhancements we've made. Our new buses have more comfortable seating, USB charging points for smartphone and tablet users, accept mobile phone payments, as well as contactless."



# Hole in One

What do you get when you combine trains, buses and... golf?

In June, Brighton & Hove colleagues completed in an annual golf tournament over 27 holes. With all playing abilities balanced out by a robust handicapping system, colleagues at all levels were able to compete. This year's champion was Martyn Quigley.

Meanwhile, the 149th Open Golf, postponed from 2020 due to the pandemic, could see thousands of fairway aficionados take to the Royal St George's course near Sandwich in Kent this July. Southeastern planning teams are overseeing the lengthening of platforms, and the addition of new bridges and walking routes, to handle potentially high volumes of visitors. A reservation system has also been developed for select morning trains travelling from St Pancras to the station during the event – the first of its kind for the network.



# News Across the Group – Your Views

Thanks to all that gave their opinions

Last month, we asked you to fill in a survey on your thoughts about News Across the Group. The randomly chosen winner of the £20 Amazon voucher was Jamie Blowers, from GTR.

We were really pleased to see a lot of people from our Head Office and rail companies giving their feedback and suggestions for improvement. If you are reading this and work in a bus company, we would love to hear more from you about what you think of this magazine (both bad and good) so we know that you have been heard. Please send any feedback to communications@go-ahead.com.

Overall, a lot of you liked that the magazine is quick and easy-to-read. You would like to read more articles relating to technology, sustainability, our international operations and on individual colleagues.

Many of you suggested that the magazine be more interactive, with a Go-Ahead related quiz or crossword.

87% of people who responded have a good impression of Go-Ahead, while 83% of you think that the magazine is 'interesting'.

We will now start to take your feedback on board and think about what our next actions are. We'll update you in next month's issue.





# It's a hat-trick



## Colleagues at Go-Ahead Ireland (GAI) reflect on their three-year partnership with the Gaelic Athletic Association

Earlier this year GAI was exploring ways to raise its profile and engage more in the communities in which they serve across Dublin. With such a broad network, the challenge was to find something that covered many areas. James Caffrey, GAI's Finance Director said, "we challenged ourselves to think wide and think community, and this is why we thought of Dublin GAA".

GAA is the Gaelic Athletic Association, which to the non-Irish colleagues across the Group is Ireland's largest sporting organisation and is celebrated as one of the great amateur sporting organisations in the world. All GAA clubs are community based and there are more than 2,200 clubs across the 32 counties in Ireland. Dublin GAA is one of the 32 counties with 88 clubs and thousands of players across County Dublin, participating in over 50 competitions.

"With thousands of players, and an even wider community, we felt that this would be a positive fit for us, and the fact that our bus routes go past, or very near to more than 60 of the clubs shows how rooted we are in the GAA community, which in most cases, is the local community", said James.

Go-Ahead Ireland have partnered with Dublin GAA for the next three years and will be the title sponsorship

of Dublin GAA's club adult leagues and championships, for football and hurling in both the men's and women's games. Being inclusive was very important and GAI worked closely with Dublin GAA to ensure that they were able to sponsor the men's and the women's leagues and championships.

Another draw to Dublin GAA is that they share similar values to GAI. "They are very much in line with the community values of the GAA where we share a mutually held commitment that everything we do should help to enhance life and living in the communities we serve", said Andrew Edwards, Managing Director.

Many colleagues in GAI are part of a GAA club and the announcement has been well received across the business. It has also been seen as a positive from stakeholders, including the National Transport Authority, who at the last stakeholder survey said they would be keen to see GAI be more active in the community.

GAI will be using the partnership to raise their profile across Ireland and to support many different areas, including combating anti-social behaviour, promoting & delivering the upcoming network redesign and work with clubs and communities on worthy causes.

