



# Newsletter 24

## Winter 2014/2015

**MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY  
NEW YEAR FROM THE COMMITTEE!**



*One of the new larger coaches for the X5, which is seen at a public event in Central Milton Keynes. © **Luke Garley***

- Full update and reviews of Committee and Liaison Meetings
- Update on bus service changes, and Christmas/New Year services
- Hertfordshire consults on more cuts!



The Newsletter of the Bedford Area Bus Users Society (BABUS) is produced by [here to there](#)

## Welcome to the BABUS Newsletter 24

If you have any further questions, you want to send a contribution for the newsletter, or you spot something you think is wrong, please feel free to drop us a line!

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**Membership queries – including changes of address for your membership, or to change either way between electronic copies and paper copies** should be addressed to Mr Simon Norton, BABUS Membership & Treasurer, 6 Hertford Street, CAMBRIDGE, CB4 3AG or by email to **simon.norton@babus.org.uk**

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Our website can be found at [www.babus.org.uk](http://www.babus.org.uk) and our Bulletin Board can be found at [www.babus.org.uk/bb](http://www.babus.org.uk/bb) or via the links on the BABUS homepage.

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**Next Newsletter Deadline Date for News and Contributions... Monday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2015**

## **Committee Email Contacts** ***Updated December 2014***

Should you ever need to reach a specific BABUS committee member, it's now even easier to remember! Simply send to firstname.surname @babus.org.uk, as per the list given below.

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**Mrs Marilyn Basketter** - Committee Member Without Portfolio;  
**marilyn.basketter@babus.org.uk**

## **Summary of the Bedford Borough Council Liaison Meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2014** ***By Frances Horwood***

The following matters were discussed at this meeting:-

**Bedford Bus Station;** Our meeting was held shortly before the Borough Council were due to attend a meeting about this, so there was little news at this point. We did, however, hear about the Real Time Passenger Information screens which would show departures and the facility for visually impaired people to access this information. BABUS Committee Member, Martin Brookes, will be assisting passengers to find their way around when the new Bedford Bus Station opens early in 2015.

**Information at bus stops;** Stops in the rural area of the Borough have been surveyed and a report compiled of the information which needs updating. The Borough will now undertake this work.

**Improvements to bus stops;** Phase One is under way and consists principally of installing more hard standing and raised kerbs. Agreement has been reached to install a number of additional bus shelters, both in rural and urban parts of the Borough.

**Budget cuts;** These have reduced the size of the Borough's public transport team but there has been no reduction in the Borough's supported bus services.

The next Borough Council and BABUS Liaison meeting will be held in January. Please do get in touch if there are any topics you would like us to raise.

**Summary of the Central  
Bedfordshire Council Liaison  
Meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2014**  
***By Frances Horwood***

The following matters were discussed at this meeting:-

**Route taken by Service 73 in Sandy;** A public consultation had taken place as a result of requests for buses to serve the Tesco store. It was proving difficult to please everybody and a decision had not yet been made.

In this context, the problem of new developments being built with roads too narrow for full-size buses was highlighted. Central Bedfordshire Council is keen that, in future, the roads should be adequate for conditions which may prevail some years hence. This will be taken into account when new developments are planned.

**Changes to bus services in Central Beds;** There was interest in the provision of better bus connections at Pottton and Sandy railway stations. The possibility of modifying some journeys slightly to accommodate rail passengers was being considered.

A new Uno service, C3, has been introduced (Cranfield – Ridgmont – Marston Moretaine - Bedford). This should prove popular with people wishing to shop in Bedford or

Kempston, providing that the operator actively promotes the service. An area of Marston Moretaine, where there is sheltered accommodation, is served, which should be welcome. It also provides a through service to Bedford for residents of Brogborough and their parish council will promote it.

**Flitwick and Harlington Stations  
Travel Plan: bus implications;**

Improvements are to be made to the interchange at Flitwick as part of the town centre redevelopment. Very few people using Flitwick station use buses for their journeys to and from the station; there is good parking provision there and evening buses do not run late enough for rail commuters to use them to get home.

A proper interchange is desirable, with convenient bus services, and a solution to this problem is being sought.

At Harlington, also, few people use buses to get to and from the railway station. A Plusbus ticket is available but very few of these are sold. An improved pick up point for buses is under consideration. In fact the walking distance between the railway station and Harlington is not far.

**Issues in Arlesey;** BABUS had been notified of several matters of concern to residents of Arlesey. Buses parking for more than a few minutes with their engines running had been reported and this would be investigated by the Council when more details had been received.

There was interest in having better bus connections at Arlesey Station. One bus

stop is no longer used as it was dangerous for drivers to pull out. From the nearest bus stop it is 2 or 3 minutes' walk to the station. Consideration will be given to this in the future if circumstances warrant it.

**Companion Entitlement on Bus Passes;** Non-acceptance of companion passes for carers when returning from Bedford to Arlesey was raised: this is a matter to be negotiated between Central Beds. Council and Bedford Borough Council.

The next Central Bedfordshire Liaison Meeting is due to take place before the end of 2014. News of this meeting will appear in Newsletter 25. Please do get in touch if there are any topics you would like us to raise at the first CBC Liaison Meeting of 2015.

**Summary Report of the Stagecoach  
East Liaison Meeting of 12th  
November 2014**

***By Frances Horwood***

BABUS raised the following matters at this meeting;

**Roadside information;** At some bus stops, information is incomplete, not all services serving the stop being shown. Bedford Borough Council are to convene a meeting with all bus operators involved. Stagecoach are very willing to display other operators' timetables at bus stops, provided that the information is supplied to them.

**Availability of printed timetables during Bedford Bus Station**

**redevelopment;** Timetables can be obtained from Bedford Tourist Information Centre, and the Reference Library also stocks timetables for some routes. It had been stated that timetables would be available in some shops in the vicinity of the bus station but this has not happened. Stagecoach are to make some available in a supermarket which has space to display them.

It was also suggested that the availability of timetables in the Tourist Information Centre be publicised. For bus users with access to the Internet, the most up to date information can be obtained from the Stagecoach website.

**Route of Service 73 in Sandy;** A decision has still to be made on this, following the public consultation carried out by Central Bedfordshire Council. Stagecoach have given the Council their preferred route and are awaiting a decision.

**Service 41 to Northampton;** Users of this service experienced disruption in June as a result of a road closure at Brafield on the Green. Signs directed drivers to take a very long diversion which was suitable for long-distance traffic but not for buses having to serve intermediate villages. Stagecoach makes arrangements to deal with road closures well in advance but, when the work begins, the arrangements agreed beforehand may not be feasible, the situation having changed in the meantime or the contractor's staff at the site being unaware of the assurances which were given. Stagecoach liaises

with local councils rather than directly with the contractors.

**Changes to times on Services 51 & 851;** Two early morning northbound services had been introduced, since the vehicles had to start out from Bedford to form services starting from Rushden. There proved to be little demand for these, some of the villages served being very small.

**Update on Bedford Bus Station;** As reported in the local press, the new bus station is scheduled to open in February. At this time, the Travel and Tourism Centre will also open. We look forward to having a modern bus station which will give visitors a good first impression of the town.

Already we have very good toilet facilities, clean and spacious – and there is usually even a vase of flowers in the Ladies!

**Service X5;** This service has also had delays and disruptions. Severe delays resulted from contractors at road works rupturing a gas pipe, a situation beyond the control of Stagecoach.

**New vehicles for Service X5;** These are on order: BABUS representatives at the meeting were shown illustrations of these and they looked very smart. They will have a greater capacity than the present ones and will, of course, carry wheelchair users.

***(EDITOR: if I can add a little here; since the meeting happened, 18 new tri-axle Volvo/Plaxton Elite 14m coaches have been delivered. They will enter service on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2015. A photo of one of***

***the new vehicles is on the cover of this Newsletter).***

**Looking ahead to 2015;** There are good things to look forward to in the New Year but, where improvements could be made or where bus users have had a disappointing experience during their journey, BABUS can discuss these matters with the bus operator in question.

Our next meeting with Stagecoach will be in the New Year. Please do get in touch if there are any topics you would like us to raise.

**Summary Report of the Grant  
Palmer Liaison Meeting of 18th  
November 2014**

***By Suzy Scott, using the minutes  
taken and supplied by Frances  
Horwood***

BABUS raised the following matters at this meeting;

**Diversion of Service 25 via Clapham for new Health Centre;** The diversion is certainly proving popular in terms of passenger numbers. While there have been some reports of journeys running late, these can be taken in context of knock-on delays from the rush hour.

**Drivers and staff retention;** Reported elsewhere was the suggestion of a bus driver getting lost near Rushden in the Autumn, and this resulted in a passenger injury after a sharp brake was required. Grant Palmer

had received no information confirming such an incident.

Recruitment of drivers and engineers was mentioned. Engineers tended to stay in the job long term and drivers to leave for reasons other than dissatisfaction; it was not particularly easy to replace drivers.

**Timetable information for Grant Palmers services, on bus stops and on paper;**

The provision of this is an ongoing problem. Bedford BC currently have no staff to put up information. The arrangement is that the Borough Council deals with this in the rural area and Stagecoach are responsible for displaying information regarding all operators in the urban area. They require the information to be provided in a compatible format. There are GP timetables at all temporary stops in Bedford town centre. Some other stops have the large posters, detailing all services, and some have RTPI.

GP stated that his timetables were available on his website and also on the Borough Council website, in pdf form. He considered that the Borough Council should liaise with Stagecoach on behalf of his company and Uno. The Borough Council were intending to convene a meeting of all operators but this had not yet been arranged.

The availability of printed timetables was discussed. GP pointed out that these went out of date very quickly whereas information obtained from the website would be up to date. It was thought that Bedford Borough might produce a new timetable book when the

new bus station opened but may not produce them in the future. GP praised the Intalink scheme which runs in Hertfordshire. The various operators there contribute to the cost of this, depending on the size of their operation in that area. He wished there could be something similar in Bedford. Grant agreed to liaise with the Borough Council over having a supply of hard copy timetables in the Tourist Information Centre.

John Smith had put up some new timetables in Kimbolton. He had also been granted a key to Northamptonshire County Council timetable cases, which would enable him to put up timetables of routes 25 and 26 in Rushden. He pointed out that there is an error on the Bedford Borough Council website in the timetable for route 42: this is given as running on Saturdays only when in fact it runs from Monday to Saturday. The error could have originated with Traveline.

**Services 20/21 Issues;** Passenger numbers here are increasing too. There was confusion over whether the stop at Bedford Railway Station was the inner or the outer one as sometimes drivers used one and sometimes the other. It should always be the inner one.

One driver was in the habit of dropping a regular passenger at the top of Shakespeare Road, which is not a bus stop. GP was happy with this, provided that it was a safe place to stop. The last quarter of the route (Woodlands) is "hail and ride" so there was no objection to



drivers dropping passengers at other points on request.

Additional passengers might be carried on Grant Palmer services if drivers stopped to pick up passengers waiting for other services. GP said drivers would only stop if intending passengers signalled for them to stop, as is normal practice. Otherwise, services could be delayed, especially if passengers boarded with Stagecoach Megarider tickets and then had to get off again when they found these are not valid.

**Service 22 Queries;** There was a query as to whether the No. 22 Shopper service could be caught by people waiting at stops on its route and whereabouts the stop was on Linden Road. Linden Road is a "hail and ride" section but people tend to wait outside one of the old people's homes.

**Services to and from Center Parcs Woburn Forrest;** Many of the staff travelling to work at Center Parcs from Flitwick and Ampthill have to go by car since those working in catering, for example, work unsocial hours. A public service is not envisaged. At present services are provided, on changeover days only (twice a week), for housekeeping staff and for guests. This is done on a private hire basis. There is now a waiting room on the forecourt of Flitwick Station for this service.

Our next meeting with Grant Palmer will be in the New Year. Please do get in touch if there are any topics you would like us to raise.

**Summary of the Regional Bus User  
Groups Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> October  
2014**  
***By Frances Horwood***

This meeting, held in Milton Keynes, was attended by the Chairman and Secretary, together with representatives of the Milton Keynes and Northampton bus user groups, and was chaired by our Chairman, John Smith.

The effect of road works in the various areas was discussed. There was severe disruption to Route 41 (Bedford to Northampton) in July, when there was a road closure at Brafield on the Green. Stagecoach had contacted Northamptonshire County Council beforehand and plans had been made to deal with this. However, when the work started, some bus drivers lost their way (and had to be directed by passengers) and some buses on this route ended up in Wellingborough. The signage was the problem in this instance. The local authority delegates the provision of signs to the contractor. Northamptonshire C.C. did not stipulate the wording to be used and the contractors did not consider buses when deciding on the wording.

In Milton Keynes, it was considered that co-ordination between the various parties involved was generally good. Signs are displayed at bus stops and Arriva also informs bus users by means of RTPI. Arriva drivers are given notice of diversions. Things do not always go according to plan as contractors may vary what has been agreed or work may overrun. In Northampton, Stagecoach



Midlands shows diversions on its website and puts notices in buses.

In all three areas there are new bus stations either completed or being built. BABUS was very happy with the transition to the temporary bus stops in Bedford, which went very smoothly. Since the meeting took place a few days before BABUS was due to meet with Bedford Borough Council, it was not possible to report on the progress in Bedford.

In Northampton there have been some problems since the bus station was completed. It was felt that The Drapery is not wide enough to have bus stops on both sides. Also, any incident arising in the town centre can easily cause gridlock.

National Express coaches arrive at and depart from Victoria Street, without facilities for passengers having been provided.

The Milton Keynes representatives reported that there were some problems with the new Bletchley Bus Station. Passengers have been disappointed with the seating and the lighting and improvements are to be made. Also the RPTI panels were not aligned with the bus stops. Not all bus stops are under cover and so it may be necessary to extend one end of the shelter. However, on the whole, the new bus station is working well. MKBUG were not consulted on these matters and it was considered that user groups should be consulted at an early stage.

Bus/ rail integration was discussed. In Northampton, this was considered to be good. At Bletchley, only one hourly service passes the railway station. This stop is also used by people going to Bletchley Park and to a college. In Bedford, two buses an hour pass the railway station. At Milton Keynes Railway Station, buses share an entrance with cars and private hire vehicles, though not with taxis. This means that buses sometimes take ten minutes to get in. MKBUG had suggested possible solutions to this problem.

In Central Milton Keynes, it was still hoped that a proper bus interchange would be created.

It was reported that, in Milton Keynes, a Bus Passenger Charter is being produced - something of interest to the other user groups.

The next regional meeting is to take place in January, in Bedford.

### **Not Already A Member?**

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Norton shown on Page 2.

If you prefer not to use payment cards  
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membership brochure from our website,  
and send that back with a cheque/PO.

**Stagecoach East Changes in our area, from Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2015**

**By Suzy Scott, using material from Stagecoach East**

**Bedford Park & Ride Service 2 (Elstow Park & Ride – Bedford Bus Station)** The two early morning journeys at 06.15 and 06.35 from Marsh Leys, are transferred to Service 52, with revised times to enhance reliability (see below). Other than changes to these 2 and the 2A, there are no changes to Service 2 at this time.

**Service 2A (Bedford Bus Station – Shortstown – Marsh Leys)** The single journey at 05.19 on this service, is transferred to Service 52, with revised times to enhance reliability (see below).

**Service 41 (Bedford Bus Station – Olney – Northampton)** The 0715 Bedford to Northampton journey will now depart Bedford at 07.00 and operate 15 minutes earlier throughout the journey.

**Service 52 (Bedford Bus Station - Cranfield University)** This service now only consists of workers journeys to Marsh Leys, including those that formerly ran as a 2 or 2A. (For the main daytime service, see the enhanced 53 below). An abbreviated new timetable for these (it's the easiest way to explain it!) can be found in the next column. These services accept all local passengers for any journey, not just to or from Marsh Leys Distribution Centre.

<b>Monday To Saturday</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>52</b>
Goldington Green	05.04	-----	-----
Brickhill, Marlow Way	05.14	-----	-----
Bromham Rd for Rail Stn	05.24	-----	-----
Hurst Grove, Ford End Rd	05.26	-----	-----
Bus Station	05.28	-----	13.25
River Street	-----	05.09	-----
Shortstown, North Drive	-----	05.24	-----
Harrowden Rd Shops	-----	05.29	-----
Interchange Retail Park	-----	05.35	-----
Kempston, Saxon Centre	05.36	-----	13.35
Elstow, Park & Ride	-----	05.40	-----
Marsh Leys DC	05.40	05.45	13.40
Marston Moretaine	05.50	-----	-----
Cranfield University	06.10	-----	-----

<b>Monday To Saturday</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>52</b>
Marsh Leys DC	06.15	06.40	14.15
Elstow, Park & Ride	06.20	06.45	-----
South Wing Hospital	06.26	06.51	-----
Kempston, Saxon Centre	-----	-----	14.22
Bedford, Bus Station	06.37	07.02	14.35

**Service 53 (Bedford Bus Station – Wootton)** Service increased in frequency, no doubt following the increase in service from Uno earlier this year. Buses will run every 20 minutes during the day from Bedford to Wootton, while one bus an hour continues onwards to Marston Moretaine, The Sheltons, Cranfield *Swan*, Cranfield Technology Park, Cranfield University, Moulsoe, Milton Keynes town centre, and Milton Keynes Hospital (replacing Service 52).

**Services 71/72 (Bedford Bus Station – Hitchin)** The 18.45 Service 72 (Sundays) from Hitchin to Henlow Camp, is extended in service to Bedford.

**Service 73 (Bedford – Sandy – Biggleswade)** The 07.45 from Biggleswade to Bedford will now be operated by a double deck bus, to reduce the need for a duplicate service.

**Service 81 (Bedford – Silsoe – Luton)** 07.30 Bedford to Luton journey will now depart Bedford at 07.15 and will operate 15 minutes earlier throughout. The 22.00 & 23.00 journeys between Luton and Bedford (Monday to Friday) will now depart Luton at 22.10 & 23.10 and operate 10 minutes later throughout. Other than these changes (which are tied in with the enhanced timetable on Service 99), there are no other changes to this service.

**Service 99 (Luton Airport – Luton – M1 – Milton Keynes)** This fast service is outwith our formal coverage area, but is operated from stagecoach's depot in Bedford, hence it's inclusion. During weekday peak periods, this service will be increased to every 30 minutes. The service will use six of the displaced X5 coaches, which will be branded for this route. This will reduce the need to have service buses on this route at peak times, although the coach replacement should reduce their use throughout the day too.

**Service X5 (Cambridge – Bedford – Oxford)** This service will have eighteen new coaches from this date, as per the photo on the cover. At the same time, the route is being split into four separate service sections. Coaches will still run through. This will mean, instead of leaving Cambridge displaying X5 Bedford, the coach will now show X5 St Neots for Milton Keynes for Buckingham for Oxford. Passengers can rest assured there will be no changes to the actual times, but this change is to ensure the X5 can run on domestic driving hours. This will align the X5 with the rest of the

Bedford depot operations, and mean that tachograph cards are not required.

## ADVERTISEMENT



### Megadekka – Britain's Biggest Bus! by Steven Knight Media

If you have an interest in the buses that operate for Stagecoach (the vehicles) operating in our area, this book will certainly be of interest! The Megadekka was a 110 seater Leyland Olympian tri-axle, which was new for a school contract in Glasgow in 1989. Subsequently, the bus spent most of its life in Bedford and Biggleswade, and was kept for a very busy journey on what is now the 73 at 07.35. (Also see Page 10 as this is an equally busy bus now!). Not only did Steven sponsor the repaint of the bus, but he put together an intriguing record of the life of the bus. It's a full colour A5 landscape album with 32 pages.

The book is £4.95 plus £1.00 postage/packaging, with cheques payable to HERE TO THERE PUBLISHING LTD please.

Post to;

**Here To There Publishing Ltd  
Apartment 4  
38-40 Stonehills  
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where you can find out – or buy – the Stagecoach FLF's, and a wide range of other Albums and Fleetbooks.

**Expansion of Uno services around  
Bedford, Cranfield and Milton  
Keynes**  
***By Suzy Scott***

From Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2014, [Universitybus Ltd t/a] Uno have revamped the timetable, in time for the start of the new Cranfield University term. The main Service C1 has been joined by an all day Service C10. Both routes now run hourly Monday-Friday daytimes, combining to provide a half-hourly bus over most of this route. On Saturdays, there will be an hourly service, and Sundays every 90 minutes, but they will now alternate between C1 and C10.

The routes have changed, so this is a good time for a recap of the new routes Buses leave Central Milton Keynes via Kingston Centre (C1) or Newport Pagnell (C10), then North Crawley (C10) or Moulsoe (C1) to Cranfield University, Technology Park, and Cranfield town centre. Services then split in two, with C1 running into Bedford via Upper Shelton and Wootton, while the C10 serves Marston Moretaine. Both buses then run into Kempston and Bedford Hospital, St Paul's Sq. to Bus Station.

Of more potential interest is the reintroduction of a through service to Bedford from Woburn Sands, Aspley Guise, Ridgmont, Lidlington, and Marston Moretaine to Central Bedford. Three years ago, Service 160/165 was replaced by an enhanced service on Connect49, but that was to be cut back in November. As a replacement for the Kempston for Bedford connections on

the 49 three days a week, sees a new Monday to Friday shoppers service.

The new Service C3 bus now runs through, with no need for passengers to worry about missing connections. The bus starts from Cranfield Uni at 09.35 via Salford 09.43, Wavendon Arms 09.47, Woburn Sands Station at 09.50 and Swan 09.52, Aspley Guise Square at 09.55, Ridgmont Station Road 10.04, Station 10.08, Broghborough 10.10, Lidlington Station 10.13 and Great Farm Close 10.15, Marston Moretaine Social Club 10.18, Browns Close 10.19, Woburn Road 10.21, then via Kempston and Bedford Hospital to St Paul's Square 10.42, and Bedford Bus Station at 10.45. After shopping, the return bus leaves Bedford Bus Station, Stop X, at 12.45, then River Street RS2 and St Paul's Square P1 shortly afterwards.

Service C2, between Flitwick and Cranfield University at peak times, has been withdrawn following poor usage.

As an aside, it was around the time of these changes that Uno drivers were balloted for industrial action by their trade union. Hatfield-based drivers objected to the majority of the newer stock being taken away to be used in Cranfield and Northampton, to be replaced by former London buses (many still as-acquired with paper window bills!) An agreement was reached which was acceptable in the eyes of the staff. This was not just financial, but has seen some of the Mercedes Citaro's moved back to Hatfield, with double-decks and smaller singles replacing the Northampton fleet. As you will read

elsewhere in this Newsletter, this might prove futile with further cuts to the Herts CC local bus budget being proposed.

Finally, Uno's Hatfield depot has won a new contract to provide Service 383 for Transport for London in the Barnet area.

### **Industrial Action Called Off** ***From Stagecoach East***

Stagecoach East is pleased to confirm that the industrial action has been called off as Bedford drivers have accepted a revised offer. This happened back in October, after Bedford-based drivers rejected a new pay deal.

Andy Campbell, Managing Director at Stagecoach East, said: "The talks we held with Unite were very productive and we are pleased they have accepted the latest offer from the company. This is great news for our passengers and we will continue to engage constructively with Unite."

### **Stagecoach East on Social Media** ***From Stagecoach Press Office***

Following a successful experiment in Scotland, you can now reach Stagecoach East online at [www.twitter.com/Stagecoach\\_East](http://www.twitter.com/Stagecoach_East)

They send out service alerts between 07.00 – 19.00 Monday-Friday and 09.00 – 17.00 on Saturdays and Sundays. They can reply to messages between 09.00-17.00 Monday to Friday.

### **Other Local Bus Service Changes**

***By Suzy Scott***

Aside from the Uno changes on Page 13, and the January 2015 changes with Stagecoach Bedford services, here is a quick recap of changes this past Autumn;

**Centrebus *Connect49* (Kempston or Kingston – Ridgmont – Leighton Buzzard)** From 15<sup>th</sup> November 2014, the shopping service extensions to Kempston and Kingston are withdrawn. The Kempston one [for Bedford] has been replaced by a direct C3 service, which you can find details of on Page 12. The rest of the Monday – Friday service is unchanged, but the Saturday service is reduced to a return trip to Leighton Buzzard from Woburn Sands, and is operated by Grant Palmer.

**Stagecoach Midlands Services 49/50 (Kettering, Brambleside - Bedford)** Very minor changes to this timetable from 7<sup>th</sup> November 2014, as a result of network-wide changes around Kettering. As far as I can tell, no change to the times in Bedfordshire.

**Leighton Buzzard area** A number of changes have happened here, which is out of our coverage area. Timetables will be up at [www.babus.org.uk](http://www.babus.org.uk) by the time you read this. One major interurban change is the short 70's between Luton and Leighton Buzzard have been speeded up considerably, then continuing to MK, as Service F70. This route is the first new service to be introduced to the Luton – Dunstable Guided Busway, following its opening last year.



**New Owners for Go-Whippet  
*Taken from the Hunts Post. They  
 operate Services 75 to  
 Wreslingworth, Service 404 to  
 Bedford in the former county of  
 Bedfordshire, as well as the Coastal  
 Services in the summer. The latter  
 have not served Bedford recently.*  
 Photo by Suzy Scott**



Whippet buses has been sold to an Australian firm, says former director Peter Lee.

The sale of the Swavesey-based company to Tower Transit was completed on Friday 14th November 2014.

Speaking to The Hunts Post, Mr Lee, whose grandfather Henry set up the business, said the decision to sell had been a tough. "It's been going for 95 years and we would have liked to have made it to the 100th year. But the family is getting older and we decided we would not go to a fourth generation so we thought this would be the best move.

"It was the right time to make a change and let someone else have a go and make the business a success.

"At the moment the business is in a good position and we would like it to remain that way."

Whippet Coaches Ltd was originally based in Graveley, where Henry lived after moving from London. It moved to Hilton, then Fenstanton before shifting to its current headquarters in Swavesey five years ago.

It has a fleet of about 50 buses and employs about 100 people. No jobs were threatened by the sale, said Mr Lee, who preferred not to reveal how much the company had been sold for.

He added: "We would like to thank everyone who supported us over the years and all the staff. We hope the new business has a successful future."

Tower Transit operates buses in London and is part of Transit Systems, which runs bus services across Australia.

### **Stagecoach Group in the UK Top 20 for Corporate Reputation *From the Stagecoach Press Office***

Stagecoach Group is one of the top 20 most admired businesses in the UK, according to an authoritative annual survey of corporate reputation.

The transport group, which operates bus and rail services in the UK and North America, was rated 20th out of nearly 240 businesses across 24 sectors

in the Britain's Most Admired Companies (BMAC) 2014 Awards.

Stagecoach was ranked above well-known businesses including Marks and Spencer, Alliance Boots, BT Group, Coca-Cola Enterprises, and Rolls-Royce.

It was voted the top public transport operator in the survey and was second only to easyJet in the wider transport sector. Stagecoach was ranked above International Airlines Group, parent company of airline BA, and Transport for London.

In conjunction with Birmingham City Business School, Management Today asked Britain's largest public companies to rate their peers using nine measures on a scale of zero to 10. Criteria include financial soundness, community and environmental responsibility, value as a long-term investment, quality of goods and services, use of corporate assets, quality of marketing, innovation, ability to attract, develop and retain top talent, and quality of management.

The table below shows the position in the full list and total score for each of the public transport groups surveyed:

<u>POSITION</u>	<u>COMPANY</u>	<u>SCORE</u>
20	Stagecoach	64.80
58	Go-Ahead	60.73
98	National Exp.	57.20
169	Arriva	52.08
201=	FirstGroup	47.10

The Britain's Most Admired Company Award 2014 went to sustainable

technologies specialist Johnson Matthey, with a score of 72.93.

**Megabus 2015 Seat Sale – now including European services**  
***From the Stagecoach Press Office***

The Megabus winter sale is back and now it's even bigger and better than before! We have 20,000 free seats\* available on journeys for travel from 12th January – 12th February 2015 in England, Wales, Scotland and Europe!

Book your seat now and forget about those January blues!

To get your hands on these free seats, use the search and buy section to find available journeys and book your ticket for your chance to get one of the thousands of free seats at megabus.com.

If you don't manage to get a free seat this time, don't worry, there are still loads of seats available with prices starting from £1 + 50p booking!

Where will you travel to in 2015 on your free seat?

\*50p booking fee still applies. Free seats for travel Monday - Thursday from 12th January 2015 until 12th February 2015. Seats are available on journeys in England, Wales, Scotland and Europe (excluding Internal Scottish routes). Free seats are not available on megabusGold services. Full terms and conditions at **[www.megabus.com](http://www.megabus.com)**



**ANOTHER Herts local Bus Service  
Consultation – Happy New Year  
from Herts County Council...**

***By Suzy Scott, using material from  
Welwyn-Hatfield Liberal Democrats***

Do you remember I mentioned a consultation from Herts County Council about removing subsidy from evening & Sunday buses, including the 97 to Arlesey?

- Despite over 12,000 signatures on petitions against the cuts to supporting bus services.
- Despite the overwhelming response to the county councils own consultation - only 30 people supported the cuts out of 4,500 responding.
- Despite almost every local council in Hertfordshire saying they were concerned.
- Despite the NHS chiefs saying it was a stab in the back, and would make many of their plans unworkable.
- Despite the fact the savings the councillors wanted had already been found.
- Despite all this, ruling Conservative counsellors decided at last week's Highways and Waste panel meeting that the cuts proposed were not deep enough.

Well, that didn't appear to be enough!

A few concessions were offered - Sunday buses that serve hospitals will be protected until 19.30 - though still well before the end of visiting times. and the weekday curfew going back an

hour, but against that many daytime buses are now under threat.

As we understand it, this consultation will be going live early in 2015. This is aimed at saving a further £1.5 million. If this goes ahead, support for buses in Herts will have gone down 66% in 6 years !

Services which are wholly or partially supported by Herts CC running into Beds, include the 188/190 around Hitchin to Biggleswade, daytime buses on the 97 to Arlesey, and more.

To add insult to injury, this information was sent to us through a neighbourhood councillor's door-drop of a Newsletters, as opposed to the County Council themselves. Kind of says it all about the area I moved to in 2007! Years gone by, the Intalink Partnership and the Council's' efforts with comprehensive publicity were envied from afar. Now, no timetable books, three leaflets issued for an entire network in two year, a bi-yearly map split into three areas (our home is on all three, yet there is nowhere local has all three!), with everything else pointed to their website. It has been revamped lately, and sadly not for the good!

A thread has also been put together on the BABUS Bulletin Board; <http://babus.org.uk/bb/index.php?topic=462.0> which will continue between Newsletters.

## **Your Shout**

This is a letters page for the benefit of the general membership, and committee members alike. Correspondence should be sent to Your Shout, BABUS Newsletter, c/o Suzy Scott, at Apartment 4, 38-40 Stonehills, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, Hertfordshire, AL8 6PD, or by email to [suzy.scott@babus.org.uk](mailto:suzy.scott@babus.org.uk). The Editor reserves the right to snip or reformat letters, where needed. All letters show thoughts and opinions of the writer only, not necessarily those of BABUS.

### **Buses to Centre Parcs**

It is very disappointing that the public service to Center Parcs is not materialising. It is surely just about the only benefit which we, the public, might get to offset all the traffic and urbanisation created by the development. And it could have bridged the main missing link in the Central Beds network - from Flitwick, at the end of route 200, westward towards Milton Keynes and Leighton Buzzard.

This is by no means the first time public transport users have been short changed by developments which might have benefited them. The pledge to make buses to Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre available to the people of Clapham was never redeemed.

Tempsford lost most of its buses when right turning to/from the A1 became too much of a hassle, and didn't get them back when the Highways Agency eventually got round to using taxpayer's (i.e. our) money for grade separation.

Similarly in Cambridgeshire. The leisure centre behind Cambridge station could have helped to improve late evening buses serving the station if only the design hadn't been changed to remove the direct walking link. I remember objecting to road schemes on the A428 and A1(M) because they didn't provide access from convenient bus stops to Cambourne and Stilton respectively. Now Cambourne has virtually no buses to St Neots and other towns westward, and Stilton has hardly anything to Huntingdon and Cambridge.

***Simon Norton***

# **Christmas 2014 & New Year 2015 Bus Service Changes**

This information is correct to 15<sup>th</sup> December 2014, and is published in good faith.



## **Arriva (Luton/Dunstable/South Beds area and Arlesey/Stotfold areas)** **Christmas & New Year Services**

Christmas Eve Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> December 2014 – Services will run to a normal weekday service, although buses will finish early on Service 97 (last bus will be the 19.35 from Hitchin). Other routes in the Luton area will be curtailed at similar times.

Christmas Day Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> December 2014 - No Services.

Boxing Day Friday 26<sup>th</sup> December 2014 – No Services, although Green Line 757 will run a Sunday-style service from Luton Interchange and Luton Airport to London Victoria.

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> December 2014 – Saturday service.

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> December 2014 - Sunday service.

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> December 2014 - Saturday service in the Luton area. Services 96/96A & 97, and other services in North Herts, will run to a Monday timetable.

Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> December 2014 - Saturday service in the Luton area. Services 96/96A & 97, and other services in North Herts, will run to a Tuesday timetable.

### **Arriva continued**

New Year's Eve Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014 – Saturday service in the Luton area.

Services 96/96A & 97, and other services in North Herts, will run to a Wednesday timetable. Curtailments as per Christmas Eve. GreenLine 757 will run throughout the night (it does not on Christmas Eve).

New Year's Day Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 – Sunday service in the Luton area. No service on 96, 96A or 97, or any buses in North Hertfordshire.

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2015 – a normal service returns from today.

### **Centrebus Christmas & New Year Services**

Date	Service Level
Wednesday 24th December	Normal service with early finishes: <b>10A</b> Last journey will be the 19:10 departure from Luton. <b>19A</b> Last journey will be the 18:40 departure from Luton <b>27</b> This service will not operate on days with early finishes. <b>X31</b> Last journey will be the 19:33 departure from Luton.
Thursday 25th December	No service
Friday 26th December	A special service will operate on the Luton 10 providing a half-hourly service. No other service will operate.
Saturday 27th December	Saturday service
Sunday 28th December	Sunday service
Monday 29th December	Saturday service except: <b>44/45, which will operate a weekday service</b>
Tuesday 30th December	Saturday service except: <b>44/45, which will operate a weekday service</b>
Wednesday 31st December	Saturday service except: <b>44/45, which will operate a weekday service</b>
Thursday 1st January	Sunday service

**Normal service resumes Friday 2nd January**

## **Grant Palmer Passenger Services Christmas & New Year Services**

Monday 22nd December - Normal weekday service.

Tuesday 23rd December - Normal weekday service, 77 and 197 WILL operate.

Wednesday 24th December - Normal weekday service with last departures by 18:00 as per below:

Service 3, 21, 22, 26, 30, 35, 36C, 41, 68, 200 - Normal service.

Service 20 - No evening service.

Service 25 - Last departure 17:15 from Bedford - drop off by request.

Service 27 - Last departure 17:10 from Bedford - drop off by request.

Service 28 - Last departure 17:40 from Bedford - drop off by request.

Service 36A - Last departure 17:15 from Leighton Buzzard High Street - drop off by request.

Service 37 - No evening service.

Service 42 - Last departure 17:40 from Bedford, will terminate at Flitwick Post Office at 18:25 and will not operate through to Dunstable.

Service 44 - Last departure 17:40 from Bedford, short journeys from Flitwick Post Office at 18:25 and 18:50 will not operate.

Service C - Last departure 17:58 from Luton to Dunstable - will drop off by request around Dunstable.

Christmas Day & Boxing Day - No Service

Saturday 27th December - Normal Saturday Service

Sunday 28th December - No Service

Monday 29th December - Normal Saturday Service

Tuesday 30th December - Normal Saturday Service. 77 and Tuesday 197 WILL NOT operate.

Wednesday 31st December - Normal Saturday Service with last departures by 18:00 as per below:

Services 3, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 35, 36C, 49, 68, 197, 200 - Normal Saturday service.

Service 20, 30, 37, 41 - No service on Saturdays, so no service today.

Service 25 - Last departure 17:15 from Bedford - drop off by request.

Service 42 - Last journey 17:40 from Bedford, will terminate at Flitwick Post Office at 18:25 and will not operate through to Dunstable.

Service 44 - Last journey 17:40 from Bedford, short journeys from Flitwick Post Office at 18:25 and 18:50 will not operate.

Service C - Last journey 17:58 from Luton to Dunstable - will drop off by request around Dunstable.

Thursday 1st January - No service.

Friday 2nd January - Normal weekday services resume.

### **Stagecoach in Bedford Christmas & New Year Services**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>SERVICE OPERATION</b>
23 <sup>rd</sup> December 2014	Normal Service
24 <sup>th</sup> December 2014	Normal Service – WITH EARLIER FINISH *
25 <sup>th</sup> December 2014	NO SERVICE
26 <sup>th</sup> December 2014	NO SERVICE
27 <sup>th</sup> December 2014	Saturday Service
28 <sup>th</sup> December 2014	Sunday Service
29 <sup>th</sup> December 2014	Saturday Service
30 <sup>th</sup> December 2014	Saturday Service
31 <sup>st</sup> December 2014	Saturday Service – WITH EARLIER FINISH *
1 <sup>st</sup> January 2015	NO SERVICE
2 <sup>nd</sup> January 2015	Saturday Service

\* - See below for last buses

**\* - LAST BUSES ON CHRISTMAS EVE & NEW YEAR'S EVE IN BEDFORD**

Route 1	Town Centre to Kempston	20:00	Kempston to Town Centre	20:13
Route 2	Town Centre to Elstow Park & Ride	19:45	Elstow Park & Ride to Town Centre	20:00
Route 4	Town Centre to Tesco	20:00	Tesco to Town Centre	19:50
Route 5	Town Centre to Elms Farm	20:01	Elms Farm to Town Centre	20:00
Route 6	Town Centre to Brickhill	19:41	Brickhill to Town Centre	19:43
Route 7	Town Centre to Woodside	20:00	Woodside to Town Centre	19:56
Route 8	Town Centre to Great Denham	19:45	Great Denham to Town Centre	20:02
Route 9	Town Centre to Shortstown	20:15	Shortstown to Town Centre	20:05
Route 72	Bedford to Hitchin	19:35	Hitchin to Bedford	20:40
Route 73	Bedford to Biggleswade	19:55	Biggleswade to Bedford	18:50
Route 81	Bedford to Luton	19:30	Luton to Bedford	20:30
Route 99	Luton to Milton Keynes	20:05	Milton Keynes to Luton	19:55



**\* - LAST BUSES ON CHRISTMAS EVE & NEW YEAR'S EVE ON THE X5**

CAMBRIDGE to OXFORD	15:40	
CAMBRIDGE to OXFORD	16:40	<b>terminates at Milton Keynes</b>
CAMBRIDGE to OXFORD	17:40	<b>terminates at Milton Keynes</b>
CAMBRIDGE to OXFORD	18:40	<b>terminates at Bedford</b>
CAMBRIDGE to BEDFORD	20:30	LAST DEPARTURE
OXFORD to CAMBRIDGE	16:30	
OXFORD to CAMBRIDGE	17:30	<b>terminates at Bedford</b>
OXFORD to CAMBRIDGE	18:30	<b>terminates at Bedford</b>
OXFORD to CAMBRIDGE	19:30	<b>terminates at Bedford</b>
OXFORD to BEDFORD	19:30	LAST DEPARTURE

**MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY  
NEW YEAR FROM THE COMMITTEE!**



**Bedford Area Bus Users Society**

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### **Uno (Bedfordshire) Christmas & New Year Services**

Christmas Eve Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> December 2014 – Services will run to a normal weekday service, although buses will finish early at;

Services C1/C10 eastbound – 18.00 Milton Keynes to Bedford (C1) then at 18.11 (C10) and 19.08 (C1) Milton Keynes to Cranfield only.

Services C1/C10 westbound – 18.15 (C10) Bedford to Cranfield, 18.35 (C1) Bedford to Milton Keynes, and 19.45 (C10) Bedford to Cranfield only.

Service C3 – Normal

Service 101 – ONLY the 19.15 from Hatfield to Luton will run, but it will terminate at Hitchin, not continuing to Luton.

Service 636 – Normal Service.

Christmas Day Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> December 2014 - NO SERVICES.

Boxing Day Friday 26<sup>th</sup> December 2014 – NO SERVICES.

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> December 2014 – Normal Saturday Service.

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> December 2014 – Normal Sunday Service.

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> December 2014 – Saturday Service (no C3 or 636).

Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> December 2014 – Saturday Service. (no C3 or 636).

Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014 – Saturday service, with buses finishing early at; Service C1/C10 eastbound – 17.31 (C1) Milton Keynes to Bedford, then 18.31 (C10) Milton Keynes to Cranfield, and 19.15 (C1) Milton Keynes to Cranfield only.

Services C1/C10 westbound – 18.00 (C10) Bedford to Milton Keynes, 18.45 (C1) Bedford to Milton Keynes, then 19.45 (C1) Bedford to Cranfield only.

Service C3 – Does not run on Saturdays

Service 101 – ONLY the 19.15 from Hatfield to Luton will run, but it will terminate at Hitchin, not continuing to Luton.

Service 636 – Does not run on Saturdays.

New Years Day, 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 – Services C1/C10 operates a Sunday service. No other services in Bedfordshire.

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2015 – normal service resumes.



## **Bedford Area Bus Users Society**