

Newsletter 19

Summer/Autumn 2013



Cover photo is the vintage bus shelter at Ravensden Crossroads *see Page 18*

- Updates and full Minutes from the Annual General Meeting
- Bus Station redevelopment – can we learn from Retford?
- Information on bus service changes across our area
- Reports from Passenger Focus and Bus Users UK events
- Have your say on what we do, bus services and infrastructure



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

Welcome to the BABUS Newsletter 19!

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!

Change of contact details for Newsletter Editor

Until further notice and with immediate effect, your **Newsletter** is being compiled by Miss Suzy Scott, who can be contacted by post at Apartment 4, 38-40 Stonehills, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, Hertfordshire, AL8 6PD. E-mail **suzy.scott@babus.org.uk**

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, 6 Hertford Street, CAMBRIDGE, CB4 3AG or by email to **simon.norton@babus.org.uk**

Website or Bulletin Board queries should be addressed to Miss Suzy Scott, who can be contacted by post at Apartment 4, 38-40 Stonehills, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, Hertfordshire, AL8 6PD. E-mail **suzy.scott@babus.org.uk**

Any other written communications with the Society should be addressed to Mr Peter Williams, BABUS Secretary, 12 Knolls Way, Clifton, SHEFFORD, Bedfordshire, SG17 5QZ. E-mail **peter.williams@babus.org.uk**

NEW! We're gone Social! Find us online in addition to our website & Bulletin Board; Join our Facebook group **www.facebook.com/groups/BABUSbeds/** Follow us on Twitter @BABUSbeds **www.twitter.com/BABUSbeds** - use **#BABUS**

To phone us, simply call **0871 218 then spell out BBUS on your phone. (i.e. 0871 218 2287)**. When you get through, leave us a landline number where we can call you back. If you prefer to fax, then send it to **0871 218 3293** Calls to these numbers are charged at 10p a minute plus any network extras. These voicemails and faxes go through to Suzy until further notice (see above).

Contributions for the next letter to Suzy (see above) **for the next newsletter.** There will now be **four newsletters a year** for which we plan to release as follows;

Title	Number	Deadline for contributions
Summer 2013	19	Tuesday 13 th August 2013
While the dates beyond this point are yet to be confirmed, we plan to be as follows;		
Autumn 2013	20	November 2013
Winter 2013/14	21	February 2014
Spring 2014	22	late April 2014 (<i>earlier for AGM papers</i>)

Please supply images as attachments rather than embedded into documents, as this is easier for the Editor to use. Thanks in advance!

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This is the first of our new-format Newsletters. Your thoughts on the content, size and readability would all be welcomed! I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Committee Members for their support over the past few months – it's been a learning curve since 2009, but even more so now. I am genuinely impressed that my efforts are being welcomed! I'd also like to thank everyone who contributed something to this edition of the Newsletter!

*Miss Suzy Scott – Newsletter Editor
Contact Details On Page 2*

2013 A.G.M. – IN SUMMARY

The 2013 Annual General meeting was held at Bunyan Meeting, Mill Street, Bedford on Saturday 15th June 2013 – ironically back in the very room where BABUS was set up around eight years ago. The attendance was small which, hopefully, suggests that members feel that what the committee is doing on their behalf is acceptable. A full set of minutes is shown from Page 20 onwards, but in summary;

Two new members had joined the committee following the appeal at the previous A.G.M and all office bearers and committee members were re-elected for 2013/2014. The Treasurer's Report contained a proposal that would enable the Committee to raise subscription rates for ordinary members during the year 2014/2015 by up to £2 if this was necessary for the proper running of the Society – this was carried.

The Annual Report that was given by the Chairman to those present is detailed below.

After the conclusion of the formal business there was a talk by Paul Dodge, Public Transport Manager for Central Bedfordshire Council followed by a discussion session.

Got a friend who wants to join us?

On the last two pages, you will see an abbreviation of our current Membership Brochure. Feel free to cut out Pages 29 and 30, and present it to a friend who may be interested in joining us!

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2012-2013

This report covers the activities of BABUS during the last membership year. It can only be a summary as detailed reports of Meetings and events have appeared in Newsletters and on the Bulletin Board during the year. It should be seen as covering contributions by all members of the Executive Committee and not just the principal officers.

I want to start this summary report with reference to the "state" of your Committee. Last year we had to report the passing away of a Committee Member. This year we have to do the same as you will be aware that our Publicity Officer Alma Tebbutt (another Founding Member) passed away in November following a long illness.

More recently, and during the compilation of the latest Newsletter our Editor, Alan Hopkinson, suffered a major stroke; was rushed to Addenbrooke's Hospital and is now in South Wing Hospital, Bedford awaiting transfer to a long-term neurological establishment in London.

His wife has confirmed he will no longer be able to work for BABUS. Although this occurred just outside the review period of this AGM I hope Members will understand the problems we faced in producing the last Newsletter and all your AGM documentation for today. Your Committee is deeply indebted to our Webmistress, Suzy Scott, for stepping in at very short notice and to a very tight timescale. The work of Alan in producing Newsletters over the past years should also be recognised.

Furthermore you may note that our Secretary and Treasurer, Peter Williams is absent today and not taking the notes of this Meeting as he is recovering from the second in a series of eye operations, and in this event we must thank Frances Horwood for taking on that role. On a more positive note Frances, along with John Smith stepped forward to join the Committee following the plea at last year's AGM. In addition Martin Brookes who had been covering part of the Publicity Role widened this, following the passing of Alma.

Let us now turn to Bus Issues...

- Representatives have met regularly with Bedford Borough Council.
- Similarly we have met with Central Beds Council.
- Representatives visit Grant Palmer Depot when need arises.
- Meetings have been held with Stagecoach East and to a lesser extent Stagecoach Midlands.
- We attend the Bedford Station Travel Plan meetings and have instigated changes to Bus Information at the Rail Station.
- Representation by BABUS at Flitwick and Harlington Station Travel Plans.
- BABUS was included in the village agents meeting concerning services in the Riseley area.
- We also had input to the revisions on Route 49 which now serves Kempston.

There have been many other meetings and BABUS does not always win the arguments, but through a non-

confrontational approach has secured the respect of other parties.

Summary reports on liaison meetings with local authorities and bus operators have been reported through the Newsletter as they arise, together with accounts of involvement in a number of study groups. We again must express our appreciation of these opportunities at a time when our partners are under unrelenting financial and time pressures.

In recent months, however, it has been increasingly difficult to maintain the agreed diary of formal meetings. The trend towards more informal contacts was explained in the Annual Report for last year.

The announcement of major refurbishment to Bedford Bus Station did in fact come too late for the year in question.

Our membership has remained fairly stable in terms of numbers despite the annual subscription having been increased from £3 to £5 from April 2013. This increase was agreed by the Committee last Autumn as a necessary and prudent step to maintain the finances at a reasonable and realistic level.

Members who attended the 2012 AGM will recall that an early indication of the increase was given at that time which was the first increase in subscription since BABUS was formed. Since that time postage costs, alone, have more than doubled and the previous subscription rate of £3 was not covering

the cost of producing and distributing three Newsletters per year.

The Newsletter being the only means of contact between BABUS and those members who do not have access to the Internet or e-mail.

In passing it is worth noting that BABUS membership is comprised of almost equal numbers of males and females; 53% men and 47% women at a recent count. Why is it that women are so under-represented at Committee level where only Suzy and Frances are involved?

BABUS is affiliated to Bus Users UK. There the positions of President, Chair and Chief Executive are all occupied by women, in addition to a number of other roles within BUUK. The Chair of the House of Commons Transport Select Committee is a woman. Bus users, as a whole, must comprise a majority of women so why do they leave it to men to look after their interests?

At this point BABUS must thank our Webmistress for driving the compilation and production of our brand new "member friendly" membership application form which can be found in Libraries, Tourist Information Centres, Village Shops etc. throughout our area.

Throughout 2012-13 there have been few negative changes in service provision across our area of influence and we still compare favourably following reductions affecting some neighbouring local authority areas such as Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire. At the same time we can make unfavourable comparisons with *some* aspects of public transport

services in areas such as Milton Keynes and Hertfordshire.

The lack of progress in matters such as bus-rail connectivity and the generally poor level of roadside route and timetable information, particularly in the rural areas, demands our continued attention.

PUBLICITY – THE ROLE OF ROSETTA PUBLISHING

Rosetta Publishing of Bedford produce a series of magazines covering much of the former county of Bedfordshire. These consist of *Kempston Calling* which is distributed in that area, *Castle Quarter* covering the Castle Ward in Bedford, *Biggleswade Bulletin* relating to the Biggleswade/Sandy/Potton area and *Mid-Beds Bulletin* for the Ampthill and Flitwick district. A further edition covers St. Neots and is thus generally outside our area.

Since April we have submitted a monthly item on pertinent bus news along with an invite to join BABUS. This is seen as an efficient and cost-effective way of both informing the neighbourhoods of latest developments and making them aware of the existence of BABUS.

If you live in the above areas you no doubt, have seen the finished product which is in addition to our members newsletters and the website Bulletin Board.

ALAN HOPKINSON – AN APPRECIATION



The above photo was taken of Alan when off working in October 2012. Taken from Alan's Facebook profile.

Keen- eyed readers may have noticed a different Editor for this Newsletter. There is also a reference to the Annual Report will confirm that we have had a change in Editor. Alan Hopkinson has edited our Newsletters for some time but regrettably during the compilation of the last edition (18) he suffered a stroke and was rushed to Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge. After a while he was transferred to South Wing Hospital, Bedford where your Chairman visited him and read extracts from the Newsletter. Unfortunately at that stage there was no response. Alan has now been moved to a long-term neurological establishment in London, and he will no longer be able to work for BABUS. Your committee is greatly in debt to Alan for his efforts over the years, and hopefully we will continue to receive bulletins as and when progress is known.

Updated contact details for the group can be found on Page 2 of this Newsletter.

SUMMARY OF BUS SERVICE CHANGES - SUMMER 2013

Report By Suzy Scott -

Compiled with help from Colin Franklin, Godfrey Willis, Peter Williams - plus data from Arriva, Bedford Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Stagecoach East & Traveline.

Having gone through a quiet time it now seems that everything is happening at once. Summarised below are recent and/or imminent changes to our buses. Timetables for most of these are on the BABUS website now, with the rest up by the time you read this.



1. Stagecoach East: From 28th July 2013, many minor changes were made to services within Bedford and to Northampton, Flitwick, Biggleswade and Hitchin to name but a few. New leaflets are available from the Bus Station Travel Shop (or e-copies on the website) showing these changes which are too numerous to individually list here. These are the changes that had been previously advertised by Stagecoach to start on 17th June 2013, which were subsequently postponed as the Office of the Traffic Commissioner

refused to grant a short-notice dispensation at the time.

1A. Still on the subject of **Stagecoach East**, from 1st September 2013, there will be changes to **Service X5** which will enhance reliability in the morning peak. The 05.10, 05.40, 06.10 and 06.25 coaches from Bedford to Cambridge will run 10 minutes earlier, Monday to Friday. Similarly, coaches back from Cambridge at 06.20, 06.50, and 07.20 will run up to 10 minutes earlier between Cambridge and Bedford, Monday to Friday.



2. Cedar Coaches: This Operator will cease its stage carriage work between Bedford and the North Beds villages from the end of August, which will see the end of a long established operation which commenced when United Counties reduced their rural services some 25 years ago.



3. **Grant Palmer:** There are considerable alterations to services north of Bedford from 2nd September together with the introduction of a new commuter service between Woodlands Estate and Bedford Rail Station and cross town service between Woodlands Estate and Abbeyfields Estate (Elstow). Some changes are as a result of the Cedar Coaches withdrawing Services 151 and 152, some in response to passenger requests and others on economic grounds.

3. **Grant Palmer:** There are considerable alterations to services north of Bedford from 2nd September together with the introduction of a new commuter service between Woodlands Estate and Bedford Rail Station and cross town service between Woodlands Estate and Abbeyfields Estate (Elstow). Some changes are as a result of the Cedar Coaches withdrawing Services 151 and 152, some in response to passenger requests and others on economic grounds.

NEW SERVICES 20 & 21 (Woodlands Park - Avon Drive – Larkway – Bedford Rail Station [most of 20 terminates] – Bus Station – St Paul’s Square – London

Road – Abbeyfields Estate) Brand new services to provide enhanced links, broadly replacing Service 28 in Woodlands Park & Larkway, except for one morning peak bus into Bedford at 0828 at the Estate roundabout and 0832 at Larkway. The service will provide three morning peak Service 20 buses from Woodlands Estate to the Railway Station (all times Monday to Saturday unless stated) at 0610, 0646, and 0733, with the third bus extending to the Bus Station. The return 20’s will leave the Rail Station at 1812, 1843, 1915, with the first one starting from the Bus Station at 1820. The daytime off-peak crosstown route will be provided by Service 21 before continuing south to the new Abbeyfields development. There will be an hourly service between these points, but there is a slightly complex series of changes at school times.

Bedford Shopper Service 22 – no change.

Services 25 & 26 (Bedford Bus Station – Pavenham or Stevington – Carlton – Harrold – Odell - Sharnbrook – Souldrop or Hinwick – Rushden) Timetables revised, with some buses now running through between both routes (at the moment passengers change from the 25 to/from 26 at Harrold Institute).

Service 25 Section (Bedford – Harrold)
0715 Bedford - Sharnbrook (Mon-Fri) unchanged.

0820 Bedford – Odell now runs as far as Harrold throughout the week – then running to Odell on Saturdays, through bus on 26 Rushden weekdays.

0945 Bedford – Harrold unchanged but changes to times of connecting 26.

1100 and 1215 Bedford – Harrold no longer connect with Service 26.

NEW JOURNEY at 1305 Bedford via Clapham Road, Oakley, Pavenham, Carlton, Harrold, then changing number to 26 but continuing as a through bus to Odell, Sharnbrook, Souldrop, Wymington to Rushden.

1330 Bedford – Harrold unchanged.

1445 Bedford – Harrold unchanged, but no longer connects to Service 26.

1600 Bedford – Harrold unchanged, but changes to connecting Service 26 times.

1715 Bedford – Harrold unchanged, but no longer connects to Service 26.

1830 Bedford – Sharnbrook and back to Bedford via A5 road unchanged.

0627 Sharnbrook – Bedford unchanged.

0852 Odell – Bedford now leaves 1 minute later at 0853, and now connects with a 26 from Souldrop and Sharnbrook.

NEW JOURNEY at 0905 from Rushden as 26, MONDAY TO FRIDAY, via Wymington, Harrold where the bus number changes to 25 but the bus runs through, Carlton, Pavenham, Oakley, Clapham Road to Bedford Bus Station.

1020 Harrold – Bedford unchanged, but changes to connecting 26 times.

1135 Harrold – Bedford unchanged, but no longer connects from Service 26.

NEW JOURNEY at 1130 from Rushden as 26 (this one runs Monday to Saturday), Wymington, Sharnbrook, Odell, Harrold where the bus number changes to 25 but the bus runs through, Carlton, Pavenham, Oakley, Clapham Road to Bedford Bus Station.

1250, 1405, 1520, 1635 Harrold – Bedford unchanged, but no longer connects from Service 26.

1750 Harrold – Bedford unchanged, but changes to connecting 26 times.

26 – Odell to Rushden

As can be seen in the previous paragraph, there will now be through buses from points on this service to Bedford at key times of the day. No buses will run to or from the Asda superstore in Rushden.

0900 (Mon-Fri only) Sharnbrook – Rushden now starts from Bedford (as 25) 0820 as far as Harrold (not serving Sharnbrook) and then via Hinwick, Wymington to Rushden.

NEW JOURNEY 0900 Sharnbrook via Souldrop, Knotting, Melchbourne, Yelden, Wymington to Rushden.

1020 Harrold – Rushden will now serve Hinwick, Poddington and Wymington, not Sharnbrook or Souldrop.

1135 Harrold – Rushden withdrawn.

1250 Harrold – Rushden withdrawn.

NEW JOURNEY at 1330 from Harrold to Rushden – see 25 paragraph as this now runs through from Bedford.

1455 Harrold – Sharnbrook (Souldrop on school holidays, Saturdays and on request weekdays during school terms) now runs at 1430 but terminates at Sharnbrook on all days.

1635 (Saturdays and School Holidays) or 1649 (School terms) Harrold – Rushden revised to run at 1640 on all days.

1739 Harrold – Sharnbrook withdrawn.

0900 (Mon-Fri) and 0920 (Sat) Sharnbrook – Harrold via different roads will now run at 0843 from Souldrop (Monday to Friday) via Sharnbrook, Odell, Harrold, and on Saturdays runs the same but from Odell onwards (0853 at Odell).

NEW JOURNEY 0905 (MON-FRI ONLY) from Rushden via Wymington, Poddington, Hinwick, Harrold where the bus changes number to 25 but the same bus will run through, Carlton, Pavenham, Oakley, Clapham Road to Bedford.

0938 Rushden – Harrold now leaves at 0945 (Mon-Sat) via Wymington, Souldrop, Sharnbrook, Odell to Harrold.

1155 Rushden – Harrold (via different routes Saturday or Monday to Friday) is now replaced by a bus running at Monday to Saturday from Rushden 1140 via Wymington, Poddington, Hinwick, Harrold where the bus changes number to 25 but the same bus will run through, Carlton, Pavenham, Oakley, Clapham Road to Bedford.

1415 (Schooldays) or 1435 (Saturdays and School Holidays) are replaced by a bus at 1400 every day from Rushden via Wymington, Poddington, Hinwick, to Harrold.

1555 (Saturdays and School Holidays) Rushden – Harrold withdrawn.

1633 (Schooldays) Sharnbrook – Harrold withdrawn.

1708 Rushden – Harrold – Sharnbrook is replaced by a bus at 1700 from Rushden to Harrold only.

Service 27 (Bedford Bus Station – Carrington Road – Willington – Great Barford – Wilden – Ravensden – Salph End – Norse Road – Goldington Green – Bedford Bus Station) Timetable changed slightly. A new Monday to Friday morning bus will start from Renhold Green at 0805 via Wilden, Ravesden, then Mark Rutherford School (NOT Salph End) at 0825, Norse Road, Goldington, to Bedford. The current

0902 from Ravensden to Bedford on Schooldays will now start back at Renhold 0850. Schoolday journey at 1425 from Bedford to Riseley will no longer run via South Wing Hospital. A new Schooldays only journey will depart from Mark Rutherford School at 1515 via Ravesden, Wilden to Renhold Green.

Service 28 (Bedford Bus Station – Colmworth – Riseley or Little Staughton – Kimbolton) Service revised to maintain links withdrawn on Cedar Service 151/152, along with some further changes. To discuss the daytime service it is easiest to split this into two;

28 via Thurleigh – new variation

This paragraph covers the additional journeys being introduced, to provide replacements for the withdrawn Cedar Coaches Services 151 & 152, but at the same time, maintaining links to/from Kimbolton.

A morning peak bus will run Monday to Friday only from Swineshead 0705 (via Riseley 0711) to Bedford, and an extra Monday to Saturday bus from Riseley High Street 0915 to Bedford. The revised core of the service is a two-hourly route from Bedford 0910, 1110, 1310, 1510, direct up the Kimbolton Road, then Ravensden, Thurleigh, on request to Bletsoe except on 0910 bus, Riseley High Street, Swineshead Church, then the 0910, 1310 and 1510 buses continue to Upper Dean, Lower Dean, Tilbrook, and Kimbolton (maintaining connections where available on Service 150 to St Neots), then back via Pertenhall, Swineshead, Riseley etc. to Bedford Bus Station. The 1110 bus will go the other way round i.e. Pertenhall

first, and The Deans on the way back. Afternoon peak bus departs Bedford at 1740, to serve most points served.

28 via Colmworth – existing service

This paragraph discusses the 28 as it is now. The service no longer serves Larkway or Woodlands Park, replaced by the new Services 20 & 21 (except one journey) thus speeding up journeys for out of town passengers. The Kimbolton journeys will run via Riseley – see previous paragraph. Morning peak bus (Monday to Friday only) from 0741 from Pertenhall will now start from Little Staughton at 0753 and running a little earlier into Bedford to provide a more reliable service. A two-hourly service will start from Bedford 0955, 1155, 1355, providing a circle via Ravensden, Colmworth, Bushmead, Little Staughton, Pertenhall, Keysoe, Keysoe Row, Bolnhurst, Bushmead Crossroads, Ravensden, and back to Bedford. Afternoon peak bus departs Bedford at 1740, to serve most points served.

The two parts of the route combine to provide a roughly-hourly service between Bedford Bus Station, Ravensden, and Pertenhall.

Service 29 (Pavenham – Sharnbrook – Colmworth – St Neots) – no change

Service 68 (Bedford Bus Station – Kempston – Wood End – Wootton – Stewartby) – no change

3A. On the subject of **Grant Palmer**, a **NEW SERVICE 41** is being introduced from Clophill Green at 07.00 via Silsoe, Barton-le-Clay to Luton, with a return

bus from Luton Galaxy Centre, Stop S2, at 18.00, Monday to Friday only. This service makes use of a bus otherwise running empty between the depot in Flitwick and Luton for a daytime service there, and follows the main Service 81 route into and out of Luton.



4. **Centrebus:** As a result of funding changes in the south of the county, this operator recently revised Service X31 so that the regular connections at Toddington with Grant Palmer Service 42 have in many cases been lost for now. In particular, Saturday working by Centrebus has been withdrawn on the Toddington route. However a service is about to return on an improved basis – see item 4A below.

4A. **Centrebus on the new Guided Busway:** There will be major changes in September with the opening of the Luton to Dunstable Guided Busway. While most of this is beyond our usual remit, the expansion to run two buses an hour between Luton, Dunstable and Toddington Green should certainly be welcomed, as it should then offer more opportunities to connect with Service 42 to Bedford. This will operate as Service E, and all three operators on the new guided busway will use letters instead of

numbers. New Service E will operate Toddington to Houghton Regis on normal roads, then onto the new guided busway through Dunstable (albeit skirting outside!) to Luton – over much of the former Dunstable branch line.

4B. Not related at all is the fact that **Luton Borough Council intend to withdraw all local bus** subsidy from September 2013. There will be no impact on any services in our area, but it does show that we are better off in Bedford Borough and Central Beds!



5. **Uno:** A new operator in the Bedford area, has announced that from early September it will be running seven days a week service from Milton Keynes to Bedford via Cranfield (University and village), Wootton and Kempston. The hourly proposal on weekdays will make a big impact in the area and those with not too long memories will recall Route 158 doing much the same. The service is in conjunction with Cranfield University, and is replacing the current Services 61 & 62 by Soul's of Olney (between Cranfield Uni and MK or Bedford), but not replacing any other bus service.

NEW SERVICES C1 & C10 will provide the core of this new service network, linking Bedford Bus Station Stop X, St Paul's Square, South Wing Hospital, Kempston, Gibraltar Corner, Wootton, Upper Shelton, Cranfield village, Cranfield University, then a small number of buses as C10 via Newport Pagnell, but all other buses as C1 via Moulsoe, then all buses via Broughton, Kingston, Middleton, Campbell Park, CMK, to Milton Keynes Central Railway Station. Services will run every hour throughout the main part of the day from around early morning until late evening (every 90 minutes after 1900). Some buses will terminate or start at Cranfield, more so on Fridays. Last bus from Bedford through to MK will be 2110, or 2210 as far as Cranfield University. A similar level of service applies on Saturdays, with buses starting about 90 minutes later, and ending at the similar times to now, but all buses as C1. On Sundays, buses run every 90 minutes during what could be dubbed "shopping hours" i.e. later start and earlier finish.

NEW SERVICE C2 will provide a commuter link between Cranfield University, Cranfield village, The Sheltons, Marston Moretaine, Lidlington, Ampthill, to Flitwick Railway Station and *Crown*. This service will start from Flitwick *Crown* at 0705 Monday to Friday, 1755 Fridays, and 1825 Monday to Thursday. Returns from the University main gate will be 0617 Monday to Friday, 1707 on Fridays, and 1737 Monday to Thursdays.

A new route between Milton Keynes and Flitwick is also planned, no doubt with

the new Centreparks development in mind.

6. Following the cessation of Arriva's **Sunday Service to Lavendon (1)**, a commercial replacements is being [provided between **Milton Keynes and Lavendon** (for Bedford) by **Meridian Bus Service 101**.



7. A few months back, there was a reduction in the east, with the withdrawal of some afternoon town services in **Biggleswade** by Herbert's Travel. However, from 1st September 2013, a **NEW SERVICE 80** will provide a new local link to and from the new development at Kings Reach. Some of the afternoon buses will run via Mead End to replace withdrawn journeys on **Service 185**.



8. Changes from 1st September on the **Bedfordshire/Hertfordshire border**. This will include some commercial changes and changes to the subsidised services in the area (by Central Bedfordshire Council) to better meet demand. J&D Travel **Service E7** (Baldock on Fridays - Letchworth – Biggleswade - Sandy) will be withdrawn. **Service 90** by JD Travel (Chicksands – Shefford – Henlow – Stotfold) will also be withdrawn, along with **School Service 690** by Herbert's Travel (Fairfield Park – Etonbury School) – the latter will be replaced in part with Service 97 changes (below).

These will be replaced with some new routes, such as a **NEW SERVICE 95** which provides an Monday to Friday daytime return service, with the new route operated by Herbert's Travel. The bus will leave Biggleswade Bus Station at 09.30 then via Langford, Henlow Newtown, Clifton, Henlow *Crown*, Fairfield Park, then onto Letchworth Garden City Railway Station before proceeding to the large Sainsbury's supermarket on the Letchworth/Baldock border. This is in a retail park which has many other stores too. The return bus will leave Sainsbury's at 12.00, before continuing to Letchworth, Station, Stop

C (For town centre and Morrison's) at 12.06.

In addition to the 95, a more comprehensive service will be provided in the form of a bi-directional **NEW CIRCULAR SERVICES 96/96A** by Arriva. Service 96 will provide a circular from Letchworth (and Sainsbury's during the day) to Arlesey, Stotfold, Norton, and back to Letchworth every hour Monday to Friday, and every 2-3 hours on Saturdays. Service 96A will provide a similar circular service in the opposite direction, on similar frequencies. This is tied in to the main Service 94 from Hitchin to Baldock rerouted away from Norton on the Herts/Beds boundary and replaced with a twice-an-hour Service 98. Finally, Service 97 from Hitchin to Stotfold (by Arriva) will be doubled from every hour to every 30 minutes during the main part of the day, with the 97A (via Works Road and North Herts College) variation replaced by more 97's. In addition to this core service, some buses will extend to/from Arlesey – including three morning peak buses through from Arlesey to Letchworth and Hitchin, and six in the afternoon peak returning. These changes combine to provide a bus every 15 minutes from Hitchin to Letchworth). These changes provide a good improvement for the well-used areas of these services.

Got a friend who wants to join us?

On the last two pages, you will see an abbreviation of our current Membership Brochure. Feel free to cut out Pages 29 and 30, and present it to a friend who may be interested in joining us!



9. Centrebus expands on Sundays.

Unrelated to the points in Point 4A, and outwith our area, but worth a quick mention nonetheless. During the week passengers from Bedford, Clophill, Wixams, Wilstead, Silsoe etc. can get very easily to Hemel Hempstead's markets and shopping area at The Marlowes and Riverside, by changing once to a Service 46 bus in Luton. At the moment, this doesn't operate on Sundays, but from 1st September 2013, Centrebus will be running an hourly service from Luton to Hemel Hempstead Marlowes and Riverside. The first bus from Luton, Church Street, Stop C9, will be 10.30, with the last through bus to Luton (for the 81 connection) will be 16.23 from Riverside stop 27 i.e. adjacent to Debenhams, and 16.25 at Bridge Street for the main part of the Marlowes, or connecting further afield.

10. Finally, we have been informed of the withdrawal of two services by **Litchfield Cars Services 138 & 139** through Eversholt in late September 2013. Central Beds Council intend to offer some sort of replacement.

BEDFORD BUS STATION REDEVELOPMENT

"Bedford gained a fine new bus station of which the town and United Counties could be proud and it has retained its unique interest due to the intensity of operations in very pleasant surroundings"

Thus says the official history of United Counties covering the opening of the present bus station.

The current bus station was opened in December 1960 as the previous one, located at St Peters, had become unsatisfactory and overcrowded. No doubt, the dissatisfaction being expressed today regarding the current facilities suggest that the wheel has turned full circle and that the phrase quoted above is no longer applicable!

Already feelings are running high about what should and what should not be done with the bus station and at this stage it is believed that BABUS should concern itself with fact, not opinion, and deal with issues that will directly affect bus users.

The Bus Station Regeneration Project also includes work on the adjacent multi-story car park, the public conveniences and the provision of a new surface car park. The planning application for the work was approved on 24th June 2013 and detailed plans are being finalised. The closing date for tenders to undertake the work will be this autumn and work on the bus station will commence in January 2014 with completion in March 2015.

Work has already started on the site of the former tower blocks in Greyfriars to provide the new surface level car park, which in due course will allow all "non-bus" activity to be moved from the bus station.

BABUS has already met some of the Borough Council Planning Team and further meetings are anticipated. It is understood that five bays will be available in the main bus station at any time and as the work progresses, irrespective which five are free, the same route numbers will be accommodated (details not yet known).

Additional stands will be provided where the current disabled parking is located and temporary stops will be introduced in Greyfriars (outside QD) and River Street (outside Tesco). St. Paul's Square, Harpur Street and the Rail Station are also being considered as temporary termini.

Upon completion all routes whether town or rural and irrespective of operator will be able to use the facilities. Within the building a new Travel Centre including the present Tourist Information Centre will replace the Travel Shop.

Members will appreciate that we are still in the early stages of planning and that, unlike the 1960 situation, the work will be carried out around an operational bus station rather than on a separate site until opening day.

CAN WE LEARN FROM RETFORD?

Report by Peter G. Williams



Preliminary discussions between BABUS and Bedford Borough Council have included verbal references to Retford Bus Station as a model of good design from the users' point-of-view.

Retford Bus Station opened July 2007 following a nine month construction period and cost £1.4m.

Nottinghamshire County Council claims that the modern and comfortable design has boosted passenger safety and acted as a catalyst for growth and change in the town centre. Since the new bus station opened the number of passengers has increased by a quarter of a million, an increase of 35% (466,000 to 722,000).

Although the bus station is now six years old it is in good condition, clearly well-maintained to a high standard. The bus station is operated by Notts CC with contributions from Stagecoach. There is a staffed information office and a County Council run café.

The new bus station claims a number of key features (*comments by the author in italics*):

- Totally enclosed concourse (*Figure 2*) and seating area (*Figure 4*)
- Toilets – ladies, gents, baby changing (*provision is minimal – leading to queues, especially for ladies*)
- CCTV
- Information point (*Figure 6*)
- Café within concourse (*well patronised*)
- Real time displays at each bay (*difficult to read against bright daylight*)
- Designed with spare capacity (*observed throughput of passengers and vehicles less than at Bedford – see photos attached*)

Observations

The concourse and surrounding area is clean and tidy, spotless in fact. A Stagecoach staff member was working around the outside of the building (*Figure 7*). The absence of the accumulations of cigarette ends found at Bedford was striking. Having said that – on a visit to Swindon Bus Station on 6 and 8 Aug 2013 the author noted that the concourse there was in a filthy condition. Stagecoach staff members standing around smoking between their offices and the bus bays – adjacent to 'No Smoking' notices!

At Retford there are poster displays for bus routes and times (*Figure 5*) and RTPI displays above the exit doors for each bay. These were a little difficult to read against the background of a bright sky. The exit doors remain closed when there is no bus in the bay (*Figure 3*).

The concourse seemed busy enough but the number of buses entering and leaving the bays is much less than at Bedford. There was no more than one Stagecoach vehicle in the Bus Station at any one time (over about 45 mins) – Figure 1.

The eight bays are lettered A to H. The Bus Station is open from 7 to 19 hrs, Mon-Sat. Out-of-hours and on Sunday all buses use Bay A and coaches use Bay H. The Café seemed to be busy and there appeared to be one member-of-staff. There was one person on duty in the information office. The interior of the building is subjected to tuneless, tinny, musik.



Figure 1 – Exterior from bus driver's point-of-view



Figure 2 – Passenger concourse is entirely enclosed by automatic doors



Figure 3 – Passengers are confined within the concourse



Figure 4 - Passenger concourse – ample natural light; spotlessly clean and tidy (5 & 6 on next page)



Figure 7 – The Stagecoach Transit belongs to the man standing between the parked bus and the

exit door where he is sweeping and cleaning the external parts.

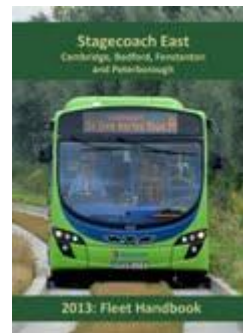


Figure 5 – Panel with local bus information



Figure 6 – the Information Point is within the concourse – staffed and accessible

ADVERTISEMENT



Stagecoach East Fleet Handbook 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! It's a fully illustrated guide to the Stagecoach East fleet – that's Bedford, Cambridge, The Fens and Peterborough areas. Full colour photography is used throughout, and the book includes a look back at the vehicle changes that happened during the period of the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games.

This book is currently on it's third edition, and the most recent will be sent to you, with an Allocation Supplement.

The book is £5.50 plus £1.60 postage/packaging, with cheques payable to HERE TO THERE PUBLISHING LTD please!

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new for August 2013***

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PROOF THAT YOU CAN STILL LOOK GOOD DESPITE BEING OLD!

The Bus Shelter at Ravensden Crossroads (see the Cover Image of this Newsletter) is one of the last remaining examples of the Eastern National prefabricated shelters that were erected between the wars across the company area. Another local example is on the Ampthill Road south of Chimney Corner, and a third is believed to be in the Sutton area. It has been painted and cleaned, it contains a sturdy seat and timetable information. The only thing missing appears to be a flag. It still carries out the role of sheltering bus users after some seventy years of service. With the forthcoming North Beds changes (see Service Changes article on Page 7) it hopefully has a future ahead of it.

MEMORY CORNER

In March 1953 United Counties having taken over the western section of the Eastern National Omnibus Co renumbered all their routes. They introduced 152 as the number for Bedford – Ravensden – Thurleigh and on to Kimbolton and St Neots. With the withdrawal of Cedar Coaches services at the end of August the number “152” ceases. It is believed that this is the only remaining service number allocated in 1953 and having continuously run over its original route (or part). Having just managed to notch up its golden anniversary it is now the end of an era.

.....AND THAT IF YOU WAIT LONG ENOUGH A BUS WILL COME

This is the information provided at Bolnhurst as referred to in our last Newsletter. It is believed that the information is well over ten years old, that waiting for a 153 to Renhold might be fruitless as might be a telephone call to the Luton number. At the shelter provided down the road there is a seat, somewhere to put your litter – alas no regular bus service! But maybe then one day

153 Little Staughton Keysoe Renhold Bedford	
Monday to Saturday	
	101 153 153 153 153 153 153 153
	NS, A C SH01
LT. STAUGHTON Grays Grove	0733 0812 1453
PERTENHALL Rectory	0740 0919 **
KEYSOE Brook End	0744 0923 **
KEYSOE ROW Western End	0747 0926 **
KEYSOE ROW White Horse	0749 0928 **
BOLNHURST School Lane	0752 0931 ** 1532
BOLNHURST Cross Roads	0757 0936 1117 1900
WILSON'S Victoria Arms	0804 0943 1124 15071
RAVENSDEEN Horse and Jockey	0809 0948 1129
REHOLD Green	0738 0817 0956 1137 1317 1510 1651 1730
REHOLD South	0743 0822 1001 1142 1323 1504 **



BUS USERS UK AGM 2013

Report By John W. Smith



The AGM of Bus Users UK was held in Oxford on 27th April 2013.

As our members will know, BABUS is one of a growing network of local bus users group affiliated to Bus Users UK (BUUK), the national association representing the interests of bus users. There are currently some fifty such local groups, of which our nearest neighbours are at Milton Keynes, Northampton, North Hertfordshire and St Neots.

BUUK was founded about 25 years ago. As it has grown, it has developed into a very professional organisation recognised and consulted by the governments in England, Wales and Scotland on a wide range of bus-related matters. Just lately, the government has confirmed BUUK's official position as the body to review and seek to resolve complaints from bus users in England (outside London).

The AGM of BUUK provides a forum for both representatives of local groups and individual members to share their concerns and to put forward suggestions for possible improvements to the way in which UK bus services are provided and operated. It is also the

principal occasion, along with the BUUK's quarterly magazine 'bususer', to brief members on forthcoming BUUK national projects.

Two particularly popular features of the AGMs are the 'Just a minute' session and the opportunity for delegates to vote informally on potential BUUK national campaigns.

In the 'Just a minute' session, members and delegates who have given prior notice address the meeting on any bus-related subject of their choice but only for one minute. Subjects this year ranged from 'Building an integrated public transport interchange' to 'Barriers to using public transport for disabled passengers.'

Topics for potential BUUK national campaigns over the coming months included 'More multi-operator ticketing', 'Audio and visual route information on buses' and 'Enforcement of no parking at bus stops'.

Membership to BUUK is available to anyone who uses buses for whatever purpose. It doesn't matter if you only use them occasionally. It's also open to groups of bus users and organisations who share our concern for better public transport. You can either join online or download a form from the website, Do visit the website at **www.bususers.org**, or contact them by post as follows;

**Bus Users UK
Terminal House
SHEPPERTON
TW17 8AS
Telephone 01932 232574**

**Bus passengers' experience of
delays and disruption**
**A research report by Passenger
Focus (April 2013)**
Report Summary By
Peter G. Williams



Outline summary:

Bus passengers understand that services buses will inevitably be affected by traffic congestion, roadworks and accidents in the same way as other vehicles on the public highway. This they can accept, to a degree, as part and parcel of bus travel. Nevertheless, passengers feel that bus companies could do more to reduce delays by focusing on those elements perceived to be within their control.

The consequences for passengers of bus delays are varied, including being late for work, late picking up of children, or late for medical and other appointments.

As well as these practical issues, passengers were concerned about anxiety, stress and sometimes additional expense (for example, if a missed connection meant buying a new ticket for a different bus company or taking a taxi).

Passengers thought that improvements in two principal areas would help bus users when delays and disruption occur. These are better information and a

more customer-focused attitude from bus drivers.

Better information – the research gives a strong sense that bus passengers feel powerless when faced with delays. There is, many feel, no means of finding out what is going on. Providing information that empowers passengers to make an informed decision in these circumstances will make a significant difference, and there is a clear preference for real-time departure displays at bus stops.

Driver attitude – the research shows a significant gap between passengers' experiences and their desire that during delays and disruption drivers act as the bus company's customer service representative; providing information, demonstrating empathy and expressing regret. Closing this perceived gap by fostering a strong customer service ethos among driving staff is vital, at the same time as exploring how to reduce the burden on drivers by communicating directly with passengers already on board.

Passenger Focus has made a number of recommendations in the light of this research, including that the Government should have an objective to put in place the infrastructure to allow real-time bus departures information to be provided throughout the country.

Passenger Focus will report later this year on measures that could help improve punctuality of bus services in the first place.

2013 A.G.M. – COMPLETE MINUTES

From a handwritten set of notes taken by Frances Horwood

Present:

Godfrey Willis – Chairman
Colin Franklin – Vice Chairman
Frances Horwood - Committee Member
Simon Norton – Membership Secretary
Suzy Scott – Webmistress
Stephen Sleight – Bedfordshire Rural Transport Partnership
John Smith – Committee Member
Eight other members were present including our Speaker, Paul Dodge

1 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed those present, noting that some had travelled from a distance to attend

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Peter Williams, Martin Brookes, Paul Owen, Grant Palmer, John Yunnice and Alan Sprod. The Chairman noted the indisposition of Peter Williams who was the current Secretary and Treasurer and wished him a speedy recovery.

3 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 16 June 2012

Members had already received these and they were accepted as a true and correct record.

4 Matters arising

- i. There had been a need for new committee members. Since then, John Smith and Frances Horwood had joined the committee.
- ii. Grant Palmer had offered to put an advertisement for BABUS on the reverse

of his bus tickets. This has not done this since a new ticketing system is to be introduced. Instead, a full page ad was placed (at no cost to BABUS) in one of his most recent timetables instead, for which we expressed our gratitude.



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42 Dunstable • Toddington • Flitwick • Ampthill • Bedford
44 Bedford • Wilstead • Flitwick • Silsoe
45 Milton Keynes • Cranfield • Flitwick

Bedford Area Bus Users Society

We represent the interests of bus users in the Bedford area.

We encourage people to use buses

We act as a focal point between bus users, bus companies and local authorities.

BABUS has an interest in all bus services operating in Bedford Borough, and most of Central Bedfordshire. BABUS is affiliated to Bus Users' UK, the national watchdog for bus passengers



BABUS

Visit our website www.babus.org.uk

To find out more, leave your landline telephone number on our Voicecall – 0871 218 2287 (calls cost 10p per minute plus any network setup fees)

5 Annual Report for year ending 31 March 2013

The Chairman gave the Annual Report. This had not been circulated to members beforehand as Alan Hopkinson, our Newsletter Editor is in

hospital and the production of the May Newsletter was taken over at very short notice by Suzy Scott. The Chairman expressed thanks to her for doing so.

The Annual Report for 2012/2013 can be found in this Newsletter from Page 4.

6 Treasurer's Report for year ending 31 March 2013

Members had received copies of this in advance with the A.G.M. papers. As mentioned earlier with the Treasurer being absent owing to ill-health, the Chairman would try and deal with any issues but would contact him afterwards for help if required. There were none.

The Treasurer, Peter Williams, had proposed that *"The Executive Committee be authorised to raise subscriptions for individuals for the year 2014/2015 by a sum not exceeding £2, if in the judgement of the Committee such an increase is necessary for the proper running of the Society"*. The Chairman emphasised that subscriptions would not automatically be raised but that an increase might become needed e.g. if postage costs were to rise. The resolution was seconded by Leonard Lean. All were in favour and the resolution was passed.

7 Election of Officers:

John Smith took the chair for the election of a Chairman. Godfrey Willis was prepared to stand again. There were no other nominations and he was elected and retook the chair.

The following Officers were elected:-

Vice-Chairman – Colin Franklin, proposed by Simon Norton, seconded by Suzy Scott

Treasurer and Secretary – Peter G Williams, proposed by Godfrey Willis, seconded by Colin Franklin

Current Committee Members Martin Brookes, Frances Horwood, Simon Norton, Suzy Scott and John Smith were willing to stand again. There were no other nominations. Colin Franklin proposed that they be appointed "en bloc" and Peter Turner seconded. This was passed by the meeting.

The Chairman considered that, although Alan Hopkinson will not be well enough to fulfil a role in BABUS, there would seem to be sufficient committee members to continue the running of the Society. However any future health problems of committee members could create a need for other members to join as the workload of the committee continued to increase. Members residing in Central Bedfordshire would be particularly welcome as this area is under-represented.

8 Any Other Business

i. Simon Norton referred to the possible boat trip which had been mentioned in the Newsletter. In fact, the boat is not operating yet but may be available on 18 July. He enquired if there was any interest in such an activity, but there was little interest in this suggestion.

ii. Stephen Sleight proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman, Godfrey Willis. He considered that, although it had been a turbulent year for BABUS, a lot had been achieved behind the scenes.

The Chairman closed the formal part of the Meeting at 10:45 and introduced our Guest Speaker Mr. Paul Dodge, Public Transport Manager, at Central Bedfordshire Council.

Bedford Borough Council Makes Changes to Bus Services from 2nd September 2013

Bedford Mayor, Dave Hodgson, has announced a further investment in rural bus services which will see existing services saved, new routes opened and increased services in some rural areas.

Following the announcement in June that Cedar Coaches would cease operating the 151 and 152 bus services, this decision ensures the continuation of services to Riseley, Thurleigh and Bletsoe as well as other villages currently served. In addition to this, there will also be a new service operating to Abbey Fields, Elstow, and improved services to Woodlands Park and Ravensden.

After evaluation of a number of proposals, Bedford Borough Council has worked with Grant Palmer Limited to extend the current rural network to provide early morning and evening commuter journeys plus hourly buses during the day to Woodlands Park, and a new hourly service to meet the needs of residents in Abbey Fields.

Mayor of Bedford Borough, Dave Hodgson, said: "At a time when many other local authorities are reducing support for local buses services, we are investing in bus services which are a lifeline in our rural communities. I am delighted that we have been able to cover the rural areas currently served by the 151 and 152 bus services, improve services to Woodlands Park, to the parish of Ravensden, and provide a new service to Abbey Fields, Elstow."

A spokesman for Grant Palmer Limited added: "We know how much these buses are valued by people of all ages but particularly older residents and those with mobility problems. We are sure that the changes to our existing rural network will be sufficient to meet the needs of the residents of the villages of North Bedfordshire and that the new services to Woodlands Park and Abbey Fields will be a welcome addition to the network."

Service changes and new services will come into affect on 2nd September; revised timetables are available on the BABUS website. We have also summarised the changes in the Service Changes feature above.

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Summary Report of Bedford Borough Council Liaison Meeting, 14 May 2013

It was reported that a series of sectional timetable booklets had been produced by the Borough covering rural routes; this was a trial exercise. A decision had yet to be made on re-printing the booklet covering Town services BABUS asked how bus users might obtain details of services in adjacent areas to their own.

It had now been agreed by all parties that the contentious stop at Harrold should be located at the Institute and Highways had been requested to provide the appropriate markings.

Following an audit of rural bus stops recently undertaken by BABUS in which numerous anomalies had been highlighted, the Borough had prepared new timetables for 30 locations. Staff would be working through these locations updating timetables, cases and flags as resources allowed.

The matter of a planning application for a Taxi Office at St Pauls Square North, Bedford, was briefly considered. BABUS is concerned that parked taxis might hinder the flow of buses through congested St Pauls Square North.

The Borough would be installing an unmanned electronic information point in the Harpur Centre; similar to the new facility installed at South Wing Hospital.

Proposals for Bedford Bus Station redevelopment were discussed at length though not in detail. Up to the present

time the negotiations had involved Council legal officers but had moved quickly to the planning stage. The public transport team had not been directly involved, thus far, but the situation was now rapidly developing. Many significant issues had yet to be addressed. For example the matter of interim arrangements for operators and passengers during the time the Bus Station was a building site.

BABUS representatives indicated support for the planning application by the Council. They welcomed the opportunity to contribute to any discussions concerning details affecting bus users as the scheme is worked up and confirmed a particular interest in the creation of a bus station user forum where the interests of planners, bus operators and bus users might be jointly promoted.

Borough officers clarified the Council policy on the scope and introduction of smartcards, noting that the technology should aid rather than disadvantage smaller operators. Interchange-ability of tickets between different operators was a significant feature of smartcards.

Got a friend who wants to join us?

On the last two pages, you will see an abbreviation of our current Membership Brochure. Feel free to cut out Pages 29 and 30, and present it to a friend who may be interested in joining us!

**Bus Users UK Training Day -
Communications, 20th July 2013
*Report By Colin Franklin***

On Saturday 20th July 2013 I travelled up to Selly Oak, on the outskirts of Birmingham to attend, on behalf of BABUS, a Training Day on the subject of Communications. This had been organised by Bus Users UK (BUUK), of which BABUS is a member of.

Claire Walters, the BUUK Chief Executive, opened the introductory session. She said that this Training Day was the second such event they had held, the last one was two years ago, although a lot of groups felt isolated at that first meeting. She then handed over to Stephen Morris who then gave an overview about the work of BUUK. This included the opening of their new office in Scotland to replicate the work that they do for England and Wales, the development of a new website which will be ready in the Autumn of 2013.

BUUK's Strategic Plan which they have whittled down to two main aims, one "external" and the other "internal". Copies of this were available on the day in hard copy. He also talked about developing better communications between user groups and BUUK as well as the sharing of information and better support from BUUK. An interesting idea that he "floated" was the sharing of new BUUK members with their associated local user group as well as sharing membership fees. This would save the individual(s) two membership fees.

We then split in to three groups for the first Workshop, the theme of which was about communication among local groups and the role of the new website. In charge of three groups were Barclay Davies, Jeff Anderson (BUUK Vice Chairman) and Stephen Morris respectively. Each group then had to decide as to what they thought the three most important issues were on this issue. The results are as follows:

Barclay's Group

- 1) More communication between BUUK and user groups.
- 2) A regional identity based on a geographical basis to each local group in the form of "branches".
- 3) Website development and the provision of a website template for user groups.

Jeff's Group

- 1) Merge local groups and national membership and give local groups access to membership lists.
- 2) Give local groups a budget for publicity and communication.
- 3) National strategy to create and develop local groups, e.g. Regional Development Officers, website template, training/draft constitution and standing orders.

Stephen's Group

- 1) Better communication between user groups and also between BUUK and user groups.
- 2) Website to contain support information for grants including templates and enquiry route.
- 3) The need for written material.

Each group then appointed a spokesperson from that group to explain their issues to the other attendees.

After lunch there was a brief presentation by Claire Walters on the rebranding of the BUUK Brand Identity, which had started in June 2013. This involves looking at different logos, fonts, colour variations, styles etc and came about as a result of negative feedback on their old logo. It's all about getting their message out and being much more "punchy".

There then followed a discussion about a set of policy documents that BUUK has produced. Subjects covered include:

- Bus Service Operator Grant (BSOG).
- Concessionary Fares.
- Passenger Safety.
- Quality Partnerships, Statutory Quality Partnerships and Quality Contracts.

These policy papers are still in the draft stage and will be made available on the new website.

A discussion then ensued as to whether additional policy papers covering other topics will be produced, as I suggested one covering bus stop information and flag details.

The second Workshop of the day was all about using the media locally. This was led by Vicki Pullman, a media specialist that has recently been engaged by BUUK. Subjects covered included: how to do press releases, the protocol for handling media enquiries and the dos and Don'ts of how to use the media.

These were illustrated in handouts circulated during the Workshop.

This was then followed by a feedback session, questions and answers and the summing up before the Training Day concluded.

I found the day on the whole extremely interesting although it highlighted three areas that BUUK need to look in to. They are:

- 1) Better communication between user groups, especially neighbouring ones.
- 2) Better communication between user groups and BUUK.
- 3) Developing a regional identity geographically around the country.

JOIN ONLINE

You can now join BABUS online! Simply visit **www.babus.org.uk** and follow the links to Membership. You can pay using credit or debit cards, and existing PayPal users can pay using their existing account balance, card or Direct Debit arrangements. While this will not be of much use to those existing members, you may be interested to know that you will be able to do so, when the time for your renewal comes up.

BABUS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Look for us on Facebook – BABUS – and Like us for the latest news and happenings. Also find us tweeting – follow us on Twitter @BABUSbeds . When discussing matters re group or Newsletter, use the hashtag #BABUS

Summary Report of Central Bedfordshire Council Liaison Meeting, 23 May 2013

Brief reference was made to the future of selected supported routes and funding of services. It was still the intention to develop an effective strategy, not least to reflect significant changes to the way in which BSOG will operate from Oct 2013 when funding is devolved to local authorities.

A formal of bus stop infrastructure would, initially, cover Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard. It would be undertaken by consultants using experience gained in Buckinghamshire.

Examples of the application of Section 106 funding to bus services support were cited.

These included significant improvements in Houghton Regis, plans relating to the Kings Reach area to the east of Biggleswade, and to new housing South of Stotfold.

Central Bedfordshire Council then outlined planned changes for routes 90 and E7 and probable developments in the Stotfold and Arlesey areas.

Details of a new publication designed to improve awareness of ticket availability and fares in the Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard areas were presented.

YOUR SHOUT a new letters page!

No matter how much we write here, or how many people we have on the Committee, we cannot see all, do all Committee Members do like to hear feedback of things good and bad, so we've decided to open up a space on every Newsletter for your views.

This could be your views on BABUS as a group – how are we doing as a society, what could we improve, or give you that we don't already?

This will also include Bus Services – have drivers been missing stops regularly, not running to time, or have there been other problems?

This section will also cover Council issues like bus stop and shelter provisioning, timetable displays and so forth.

While we cannot promise an instant fix, this Newsletter does go to our Corporate members, and we can always raise matters at council and operator liaison meetings. So, get in touch;

BABUS Newsletter – Your Shout
Miss Suzy Scott
Apartment 4
38-40 Stonehills
WELWYN GARDEN CITY
AL8 6PD

You can also email us at **suzy.scott@babus.org.uk** with a Subject Line of **Your Shout/BABUS** or something similar. All communications to Your Shout will be considered for publication. The Editor reserves the right to snip or reformat letters.

Got a friend who wants to join us?

On these two pages, you will see an abbreviation of our current Membership Brochure. Feel free to cut out these two pages, and present it to a friend who may be interested in joining us!

BABUS - the group for everyone who uses the bus!

BABUS (short for Bedford Area Bus Users' Society) was founded in November 2005, and is one of a growing number of voluntary local bus user groups, operating across the country. Our aims are threefold;

- ♦ **to represent the interests of bus users who either live, work or travel through the Bedford area**
- ♦ **to encourage people to use buses**
- ♦ **to act as a focal point between bus users, bus companies and local authorities**

BABUS has an interest in all bus services operating in Bedford Borough, and most of Central Bedfordshire. BABUS is affiliated to Bus Users UK, the national watchdog for bus passengers, and liaises with several other groups which have areas bordering our own.

Members receive a regular newsletter, and invitations to meetings. Volunteer Committee Members help to keep the Society going, and every little helps, if you feel you may like to do something to help the Society.

If you have access to the Internet, either at home or at a library, café etc. you will be able to access our website, **www.babus.org.uk** including a Bulletin Board and Timetable Library.

BABUS is involved in lobbying for better bus services, user facilities, passenger information, such as;

- ♦ **Redevelopment of bus stations to meet the needs of bus users,**
- ♦ **Integration between bus & rail services,**
- ♦ **Provision of bus shelters and timetable information,**
- ♦ **Expanding Park & Ride facilities,**
- ♦ **Easy access to buses,**
- ♦ **Improved services in rural areas,**
- ♦ **Real-time information on running times**

BABUS works with its members and get involved in bus related issues that concerns you. You will enjoy the benefits of a lobbying group with a proven record of airing and solving local bus issues. So, what have we done recently?

- ♦ **Campaigning by us successfully brought buses into Bedford Bus Station. Previously, passengers for some Grant Palmer services had to cross the main road, and Cedar Coaches passengers had to walk to Harpur Street. So we suggested taxis should be covered by an extended area around Greyfriars near the shopping centre. Now, all buses – regardless of the operator – can fit into the Bus Station.**
- ♦ **We've also been involved in discussions regarding the new Bus Station site, taking a longer term approach to today's problems that exist for bus users.**
- ♦ **We were involved, through liaison meetings, in the development of revised rural services north of Bedford, and a new look commercial Stagecoach network around the town.**
- ♦ **We have worked with like-minded user groups that border our area, and helped to inspire those wishing to start their own.**
- ♦ **We conducted a comprehensive review of every rural bus stop in Bedford Borough, reporting where problems existed, or out of date information was still displayed. We've also helped to work on a Bus Stop Defect Card to make reporting even easier.**

Got a friend who wants to join us?

On these two pages, you will see an abbreviation of our current Membership Brochure. Feel free to cut out these two pages, and present it to a friend who may be interested in joining us!

Membership Form – For A Friend

I would like to join BABUS. Payment is enclosed in full (payable to **BABUS**).
You can join online via PayPal, credit or debit card, if you visit **www.babus.org.uk**
**If you are a group that requires to be invoiced, or wish to pay by BACS,
please ask for information**

Name _____

Address _____

Post Code _____ Telephone Number (_____) _____

Email address _____

Annual fee enclosed (tick correct box)

☐ INDIVIDUAL £5 per year

☐ FAMILY £5 per family per year please add these additional names

☐ ORGANISATION £12 per year

Membership is subject to the Terms & Conditions, such as our Constitution. In accordance with the 1998 Data Protection Act, please sign and date below to give your consent to your details being held on computer.

Signature _____ Date _____

Next, simply tear off these two pages from the Newsletter, and post to;

Mr Simon Norton
BABUS Membership
6 Hertford Street
CAMBRIDGE
CB1 1AA

If you require a paper receipt, please enclose a SAE.

USING BUS PASSES ON FIRST CAPITAL CONNECT TRAINS

If you hold a English National Concessionary Travel Scheme pass – or “Bus Pass” – issued by Bedford Borough, Central Beds, Luton Borough or Hertfordshire County Councils, you will know you can use these far and wide. But, did you know you are also able to get a discount on First Capital Connect train fares too?

You obtain a 50% discount on single or day return rail fares for travel wholly in Bedfordshire and / or Hertfordshire;

- Between Bedford and Elstree & Borehamwood, and all stations intermediately
- Between Royston or Sandy and Crews Hill or Hadley Wood, and all stations intermediately

This applies after 10:00 Mondays to Fridays and all day on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays. Tickets with this discount may be purchased from any staffed ticket office, by showing your pass. You can also purchase these from ticket vending machines by purchasing a CHILD ticket. When you travel, make sure that you carry their valid Concessionary Bus Pass with them throughout the journey.

Want to go further? A discounted ticket to Elstree & Borehamwood / Hadley Wood / Crews Hill may be combined with an undiscounted ticket (including a Travelcard) from those stations southbound to London. However, the train must stop at Elstree & Borehamwood / Hadley Wood / Crews Hill for such a combination of tickets to be valid. If you wish to use fast trains

that do not stop at these points, you must buy a discounted ticket to either Potters Bar or St Albans, and then have your undiscounted tickets from there. £2.00 accompanied child flat fare tickets are valid with these fares. No further discounts with Railcards or GroupSave.

In the next Newsletter we will explain a similar scheme by London Midland on the Bedford – Bletchley line.

DISCOUNTS ON TRAIN TRAVEL FOR EVERYONE ELSE

If you don't have a bus pass, Railcard, or just want to make a substantial saving, try a First Capital Connect DaySave for £17.00 Adult, £2.00 Child.

You can travel to/from Brighton, Gatwick Airport, Hayward's Heath, Croydon, Wimbledon, or anywhere served on the First Capital Connect *Thameslink* lines – those in timetable book B. It's a “go-anywhere” ticket, so you can break your journeys as often as you like – but it's only valid for one day.

DaySave cannot be used before 10:00 Monday to Friday (no restrictions at weekends) and is also not valid for travel on northbound services departing St Pancras International between 16.30 and 19.01 for journeys to any station between St Albans and Bedford inclusive from London. If you are travelling from Brighton, Gatwick Airport etc. then there are no peak restrictions.

DaySave tickets cannot be bought at rail stations, and must be pre-purchased from Bedford or Sandy Tourist Information Centres in Bedford, and similar facilities along the line.

FREE STAGECOACH SMART CARD FOR BEDFORD BUS TRAVELLERS



Stagecoach customers can 'get smart' and replace their paper ticket with a StagecoachSmart card completely free of charge at **Bedford Bus Station Travel Shop** from Monday 12th August 2013. Weekly tickets can be purchased and loaded straight onto the card. Also, customers can go online to register their card and buy megarider xtra or megarider plus xtra — the best value tickets for regular travel, with recurring monthly payment.

Terms and conditions apply, free cards are available only while stocks last and are limited to one per customer.

Alternatively customers can go online to purchase megarider xtra or megarider plus xtra and receive their card in the post. Available from **www.stagecoachsmart.com**

This is the first of our new-format Newsletters. Your thoughts on the content, size and readability would all be welcomed!

*Miss Suzy Scott – Newsletter Editor
Contact Details On Page 2*

MORE CRANFIELD CONUNDRUM AND BEDFORD RAILWAY STATION

The "Cranfield Conundrum" featured in the last edition of our Newsletter has not been solved but with major bus service changes due in the area – look out for our next issue!

The Bedford Station signage issue (mentioned in the last edition Newsletter 18) was rectified by the installation of some new displays under the Real Time information screen.



Unfortunately, all the outside displays still retain out of date information – such as a poster introducing Bedford PlusBus but including a Bedfordshire County Council logo!

