



Newsletter 22 and Notice of Annual General Meeting Summer 2014



Welcome to BABUS Newsletter 22 – Summer 2014

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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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, and will be forwarded to as the situation requires.

Deadline for contributions to Newsletter 23 Autumn 2014 will be **Monday 18th August 2014**. The newsletter should then be sent out around the weekend of **Saturday 30th and Sunday 31st August 2014**.

Front Cover photo; of Bedford Bus Station redevelopment;

An information panel has been provided on the outside of the site screens – see photo. The panel highlights the potential of the new facility together with the enhancements made to other developments across the wider area.

It is possible to monitor the rate of progress on construction of the new Bedford Bus Station by means of a camera located in the multi-storey car park. Visit <https://timelapse.regenology.co.uk/api/embedded/230/> (Peter G. Williams)

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Annual General Meeting 2014

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Use #babusagm

This year we have a new venue – The Woolpack Hub on the corner of River Street and Commercial Road Bedford and the date to diary is **Saturday 5th July 2014**.

There are several reasons why it is important to note the date –

Firstly, it is your opportunity to hear at first hand what BABUS has been doing over the past year and to question (or congratulate!) your committee on bus service issues.

Secondly, we have arranged for a special guest speaker to follow the business part of the event – Linda McCord from Passenger Focus. Linda is in great demand and we are privileged to obtain her attention – especially at the weekend.

Thirdly, during the coming year there will elections held both at national and local levels and, as sure as eggs are eggs, bus services or facilities such as concessionary passes will feature somewhere, and it is unlikely to be a wholesale increase!

Even if you are unable to attend in person, please detach the notice in Page 15. This forms a poster, which you can place on your local Notice Board.

BABUS needs to remain at the forefront of local debate but this time round some old faces retire from the committee. If you use the bus, wish to see it retained and can help in any way then please come along on the 5th – you won't be put in any hot seat but your local knowledge may be just what the Society is looking for.

Godfrey Willis
Chairman

Summary report of the Bedford Borough Council liaison meeting on Monday 10th

March 2014

By Godfrey Willis

As Members will be aware your committee has regular liaison meetings with local authorities and we met Bedford Borough Council (BBC) on 10th March. The Meeting consisted of two parts – routine matters and the Bus Station redevelopment. In the first section we were advised that some residents of Salph End were unhappy with Route 27 and that a meeting had been held with Grant Palmer in an attempt to resolve the issue which partly stems from school buses to Mark Rutherford School and partly as a result of traffic congestion late running during the day or even cancellations. It is planned to change the timetable to allow more realistic journey times but with a reduced frequency. Residents of Riseley are also concerned about the early journey on Route 28 and changes were being investigated. BABUS was concerned that it had not been included in any of the discussions which had been instigated by parish councils.

(For details of emerging changes, see separate article in this Newsletter).

BBC in response to a BABUS query, said passenger numbers on the revised Route 68 were healthy and they believed that the requests through Kempston Town Council had been successful. The forthcoming road resurfacing in Chantry Estate would affect bus services.

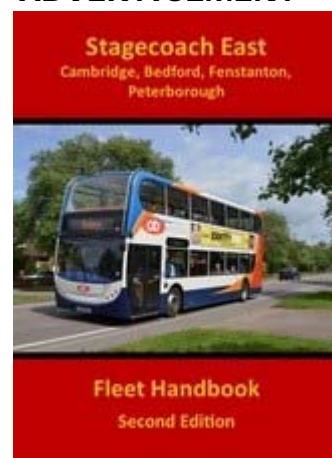
The audit of roadside information in the rural area was virtually complete and attention now had to turn to the urban parts of the Borough and it was agreed a BABUS rep. and a BBC rep. would meet to take this forward in April.

BABUS along with adjacent bus user groups is concerned that often new housing developments are built with roads insufficient for conventional buses and when provided these services were unwelcome to residents. BBC replied that they do not look at developments in isolation but take a holistic approach.

Turning to the Bus Station redevelopment it was felt that the changeover to the temporary “on street” arrangements had gone very well. There had been little adverse comment and this showed that the Roadshows prior to closure of the old Bus Station and on-site assistance had paid off.

Some artists impressions of the new Bus Station were passed around and discussion ensued on a variety of subjects such as seating, rubbish bins, security, passengers keeping in the dry, and cleaning and maintenance. Christmas 2014 was confirmed as the time for commissioning of the new facilities.

ADVERTISEMENT



Stagecoach East Fleet Handbook, Second Edition, 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.

The book is £5.50 plus £1.00 postage/packaging, with cheques payable to HERE TO THERE PUBLISHING LTD please! (cheque surcharge now scrapped!) or buy by phone five days a week on 01707 246232.

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Martin Brookes - Here to help

by Martin Brookes

It was a pleasure to don a yellow, high visibility jacket and assist Bedford Borough Council at the Roadshows held in Church Square on two Wednesdays prior to the closure of the old Bus Station. The purpose was to show the plans for Bedford's long awaited £8.8 million new Bus Station and to inform passengers where to catch their buses during the temporary arrangements. Representatives from Stagecoach, Bedford Borough Council and BABUS manned the single-decker bus from 09:00 – 17:00 on both days. Needless to say some people insisted on giving their views on the issue – some were constructive whilst others seemed simply "crazy" to me. Another strange thing was that the same people seemed to be coming back for information although the issue of Stagecoach Smartcards may well have been an incentive for this.

During the first five weeks of the new arrangements I spent a considerable time in the operational part of the Bus Station with my "here to help" yellow jacket, timetable in hand and map showing the Town Centre stopping arrangements. The weather was awful with rain every day for the first two weeks guaranteeing that I caught a cold in return for my efforts. Some questions asked were nothing to do with Bus Stations and ranging from "Why was the Portsmouth train late into London?" "Is there a bus from Penzance to Truro?" and "Why are you uprooting the trees?". As I was there on behalf of BBC and Stagecoach I treated every one with courtesy.

The next move was into the dry cabin information point which had been erected by BBC to help supply the answers to traveller's questions – here there was the luxury of a heater. Also supplied were plenty of leaflets describing the new arrangements. During my time in this cabin there must have been up to 500 enquiries a day and time passed very quickly. Again, I was able to answer 99% of the questions but queries like "Where is the new

Post Office?" and "Bus services from Wendover" baffled me until I ascertained Wendover Drive

Having a good knowledge of Bedford was a great help as many enquiries related to road names and route numbers. I must admit meeting Bedford's travelling public was an eye opener, but I was a little sad the day I locked the cabin up for the last time and I will be able to say that I was involved in my small way with the redevelopment of the town.

(Martin's efforts were rewarded by BBC in due course – see separate article on the Mayor's Tea party)

South East Midlands Group

By Godfrey Willis

Readers of the last Newsletter will recall the initiative by BUUK for better communication between adjacent user groups on a regional basis and that BABUS had joined with Northampton and Milton Keynes User Groups to form the above regional group.

A further meeting was held at Bedford in March, this time chaired by Mike Barlow, the chairman of the Northampton Group. Each of the three groups gave an update on events within their area – that with the most impact undoubtedly being the virtual gridlock of Northampton Town Centre as a result of the opening of the new Bus Station. One of the main causes of this problem was the mixing of car traffic and buses immediately around the Bus Station – hopefully a lesson for Bedford to learn before our new Bus Station opens.

The biggest common theme across all the three areas relates to an apparent lack of planning in new residential areas for the free-flow of public transport through them. Examples were given by each group of high density housing with a lack of drives together with through roads not wide enough to allow parked cars and conventional buses to use the same road. There was often a lot of anti-bus behaviour by residents who parked their cars in such a way as to stop buses travelling through. Unless that

parking is against traffic laws the police are unable to take action.

The Annual Meeting of BUUK is in Edinburgh and Mike Barlow was hoping to attend and raise the issue as it is believed it is prevalent in other areas. We meet again, in Northampton, at the end of June to consider next steps.

The Mayor's Tea Party

By Godfrey Willis

There are various articles in this Newsletter relating to the planning and execution of the work to rebuild Bedford Bus Station.

BABUS has been involved behind the scenes (i.e. sitting round a table) and on the front line (see Martin's item) and as a result of this Bedford based committee members were invited to take tea with the Mayor in his Parlour which is located in the old Town Hall. The Mayor (Dave Hodgson) welcomed us and referred to the success of the first stages of the scheme especially the temporary bus stop arrangements in the adjacent streets. He was aware of the input from BABUS and thanked us for this, especially the role played by Martin Brookes at the Bus Station despite the appalling weather conditions which seemed to persist day after day.

Following a discussion covering various issues connected with bus services, the Mayor's Officer showed us items of historical importance relating to Bedford along with the robes of office. To "honour" Martin for his work he became Mayor for at least twenty minutes and the only thing that BABUS was criticised for was not eating enough cake.....!

On behalf of BABUS may I also thank Martin for not only helping out as detailed in his "Here to help" article but raising the profile of BABUS – I know that Stagecoach East has also recognised Martin's efforts separately, with a suitable gift.

Station Travel Plans

By Godfrey Willis

BABUS has always felt it to be very important to have good bus - train interfaces so as to enable as seamless a journey as possible for travellers using public transport. We therefore attend the two "Station Travel Plan" meetings covering our area. The one concerning Bedford is chaired by Bedford Borough Council staff and attended by Train Operators, Bus Service providers, user groups and others and is generally a vibrant affair whilst the one covering Flitwick and Harlington "struggles" – there is no equivalent forum for the ECML stations at Sandy, Arlesey or Biggleswade.

Peter Williams has submitted an article on the Flitwick and Harlington position but this one updates members on Bedford issues.

The latest meeting was held in March and dealt with issues such as cycle routes and cycle parking, the upgrading of Bromham Road railway bridge to enable electrification of the line north from Bedford which passes underneath and provide a safer environment at road level for pedestrians and cyclists. This work will have a significant impact on bus services out towards Bromham and beyond and the construction of the "missing link" of Bedford Western By Pass is critical.

The use of the bus bays by taxis, the real time bus information screens and information concerning the temporary bus stop arrangements in the town were all discussed.

The future Wixams station and the upgrading of the Bedford to Bletchley line (the East- West route) were also on the agenda – these will have an impact on bus services.

**Stagecoach Service 73 (Bedford – Sandy
– Biggleswade)**
By Godfrey Willis

Gunn's Bakery in Sandy is, as far as we know, the last commercial producer of the "Bedfordshire Clanger" - a delicacy made to an age old handed down recipe. An alternative clanger is possible in Sandy all relating to Route 73 – take the following ingredients:

- A new supermarket
- A railway station
- An "unsafe" turning point
- A new housing estate
- An established estate
- A commercial bus route
- A subsidised bus route
- Anti bus residents
- Pro bus residents

And a recipe for disaster looms!

We will not go into the history of the issue but with no agreement on the way forward Central Bedfordshire Council has recently carried out a consultation exercise seeking views on how to proceed.

Whilst BABUS members may have responded on an individual basis the Society did not do so corporately as the issue is a minefield and we do not have one overriding view.

At the time of going to press the results of the exercise (which we understand drew a large response) are still being evaluated by CBC. We believe that Stagecoach are seeking an urgent resolution.

Bus Service Changes
By Godfrey Willis & Suzy Scott

Since the January terminus changes in Bedford to reflect the Bus station closure, which did not in fact impact on the actual timetables, there has been a period of stability.

It is good, however, to note that local complaints are listened to and wherever possible action taken and we draw attention to two changes applicable from 2nd June.

Firstly Grant Palmer route 27 has been amended so that journey times now reflect the current traffic congestion and are slowed down by some ten minutes to improve reliability and punctuality – also some changes have been made in the morning at Salph End. The down side of this is that the hourly frequency has been lost.

Secondly route 28 has changes to the early journey into Bedford and the return evening "peak" working on Mondays to Fridays.

There are also some minor changes to Stagecoach X5 from this date ;

- The duplicate journey at 06.41 from Bedford to Cambridge (Monday To Friday) will no longer operate.
- To replace the duplicate coach, a new additional Monday to Friday journey will now run at 06.49 from Eaton Socon (arriving 07.59 into Cambridge), giving a better spread of arrival times.
- Two coaches will no longer operate the 06.25 from Bedford to Oxford.
- To replace this, a new additional Monday to Friday journey will now run at 06.40 from Bedford to Oxford. This is scheduled to arrive at Oxford at 09.00, giving a better spread of arrival times.

Other service changes

By Suzy Scott

In the parts of Beds we don't cover, Luton Borough spending cuts have claimed some local commercial services, cut following uncertainty over concessionary repayments. Unrelated to this, Service 46 (Luton – Hemel Hempstead), which I mentioned improvements to in NL19, no longer runs on Sundays.

Changes to bus services in the Milton Keynes area affecting passengers from Olney and Lavendon

By Frances Horwood, with additional information by Suzy Scott

Services 1 and 101 between Lavendon, Olney and Milton Keynes

From Sunday 27th April 2014, the Arriva (formerly MK Metro) Service 1 to Lavendon (which once ran through to Bedford and/or Northampton) was curtailed to end at Newport Pagnell. This has been replaced by two services.

NEW SERVICE Redline 21 (Central Milton Keynes – Newport Pagnell – Olney – Lavendon) This service, operated by Redline, replaces Arriva Service 1 in the Olney area. Service 1 ran from Lavendon to and from Bletchley but Service 21 terminates at Milton Keynes Railway Station so passengers going to the hospital must change. The hourly frequency and times of the first and last buses are similar to the previous service though the minutes past the hour have changed. This means that the first bus on which free travel for concessionary pass holders is permitted, leaves Lavendon at 9.33, whereas it was previously 10.09. However, pass holders can travel earlier within Milton Keynes at a fare of 50p. The first bus from Lavendon on a Monday to Friday is 06.33 and on Saturdays 07.33. The last bus leaves Milton Keynes Railway Station at 19.35: this is in fact an Arriva Service 1, terminating at Lavendon. The 21 is operated by green-coloured buses with route branding, one of which has been fire damaged.

Service 1 still runs half-hourly between Newport Pagnell and Bletchley so is in competition with Service 1 between Newport Pagnell and Milton Keynes, though Service 21 takes a slightly different route, serving Great Linford. Service 21 also leaves Lavendon only a few minutes before Stagecoach Service 41 to Northampton so passengers to Olney have two buses close together whereas before they were half an hour apart. Off-peak, few people get on and off the Milton Keynes service at Lavendon so it is good that an hourly frequency has been retained.

NEW SERVICE Britannia Bus 321 (Steeple Claydon – Buckingham – Central Milton Keynes – Olney) This new service was introduced by Britannia Bus, who are another trading name of Meridian Bus, who ran the service as 101 on Sundays only until this point. The service was to run hourly between Buckingham and Olney, with every other bus running to/from Steeple Claydon. The only route now serving Lavendon on a Sunday is Stagecoach Service 41, which runs between Bedford and Northampton, via Olney. Service 321 was supposed to operate on weekdays as well. It may have done for two days. It is shown in the printed timetable books but MK Council website says it is "currently suspended".

Ed: The operator has given a statement that says the 321 has indeed been suspended. This following Redline running the 21 free of charge. This happened for at least two periods, despite conditions of contract from Milton Keynes Council specifically prohibiting this. It has been clarified that the suspension is Monday – Saturday, and the Sunday service continue unchanged.

Other Changes not affecting the 1/21/101/321

Vale Travel Service 37 (Olney – Stoke Goldington – Newport Pagnell – North Crawley) This service,, running from Olney via Stoke Goldington to Newport Pagnell and North Crawley, used to be operated by Souls : the new operator is Vale Travel. I have not used this service since the change, having only used it once when it was a Souls bus. I had worked out

that I could use it to get to the Post Office delivery office on the edge of Newport Pagnell. a journey I'm unlikely to make very often.

Evening Shared Taxi Service NP (Lavendon – Olney – Newport Pagnell)

Another service included in the latest printed timetables but which does not run is the evening shared taxi service which was to connect with Arriva Service 1 for passengers from and to Lavendon, Olney, Emberton and Sherington. It commenced last autumn but I didn't have occasion to use it until recently. When I tried to make a booking, the taxi company told me it was discontinued. The service was obtained by local councillors because residents wanted an evening service. I cannot find reference to the cessation of this service on MK Council website: it appears in the electronic version of the timetable.

My advice to intending passengers on any service is to check before travel, even if you have the latest printed timetable.

Summary Report on Stagecoach East and BABUS Liaison Meeting held 13 May 2014

By Peter G. Williams

Bedford Bus Station update

Stagecoach management set out their understanding of the state of progress on the project. The demolition phase had been completed following closure of the Café and ground works were now being undertaken; a key stage that should be completed by the end of May. That would be followed by erection of the main structure ahead of fitting out. The arrangements for the temporary bus stops were working well. It was far too early to start planning for allocation of stops within the new bus station.

X5 issues

It was reported that Stagecoach was examining options for a replacement X5 coach providing increased seating capacity. It was planned to commission a new fleet in early 2015. Some early morning services were being reinforced from 1 Jun to cater for increased passenger demand in St Neots and in Oxford.

Route 73 proposals and CBC consultation

Options for amending the 73 route in Sandy in order to serve Fallowfield, Tesco and Sandy Railway Station whilst still providing for residents at the top of Engayne Avenue were outlined. BABUS had written to Stagecoach East expressing support for the changes being considered.

Bedford Borough bus stops issues

BABUS representatives summarised concerns over the accuracy of roadside information following the organisational transfer of Bedford depot from Stagecoach Midlands to Stagecoach East. Some bus stop flags showed obsolete and incorrect details with timetable information meriting improvement. There were particular concerns over information for Route 50.

Route 41 – Routing within Northampton

BABUS representatives offered comments on Service 41 in Northampton. On the return journey to Bedford, the bus takes a different route to the inbound journey and therefore does not serve a stop in Derrigate on the way back; it is possible to get off there on the inbound journey but on the return leg passengers need to board at the Bus Station. The first stop after the Bus Station on the outbound route is quite far from the town centre, virtually on the edge of the town. Before the move to the new Bus Station the arrangements were judged to be more convenient for passengers.

Thameslink, Great Northern & Southern **Franchise awarded to GoVia**

The Go-Ahead Group welcomes today's announcement (Friday May 23rd) by the Department for Transport (DfT) to award Govia (Go-Ahead 65% / Keolis 35% joint venture) the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern (TSGN) franchise. This is the largest rail franchise in the UK in terms of passenger numbers, trains, revenue, and staff.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **New trains** – introducing three new train fleets
- **More services** – 10,000 additional morning peak seats into London
- **Increasing capacity** – 50% more passenger capacity created
- **Better connections** – up to 24 trains per hour through the Thameslink core in peak periods
- **Station enhancement** – £50m investment in improving facilities

Commenting on the award, David Brown, Group Chief Executive of The Go-Ahead Group said:

"I'm delighted the DfT has chosen us to operate this important and complex franchise and to play an instrumental role in delivering the benefits of the Government's £6 billion Thameslink Programme. This will be the UK's busiest franchise and we will be introducing 50 per cent more capacity into central London during peak times, with 26 per cent more morning peak carriages providing 10,000 additional seats.

"This award is testimony to the experience of our people of working in partnership with the DfT, Network Rail and other industry stakeholders and in delivering major integration projects and change programmes.

"Our bid for the franchise was focused on improving customers' experience and includes two new train fleets for Gatwick Express and Moorgate services, in addition to overseeing the introduction of the Thameslink trains already ordered, as well as delivering improvements at stations.

"I'm looking forward to working with existing colleagues and welcoming new staff and together delivering this transformational franchise."

Alistair Gordon, Chief Executive of Keolis UK, added:

"We are pleased that the strengths of the Govia partnership have been recognised today in the awarding of this important franchise and look forward to delivering its challenging requirements."

FRANCHISE HIGHLIGHTS

The seven year management contract, starting in September 2014, which replaces the Thameslink and Great Northern franchise (operated as First Capital Connect, FCC) will encompass the Southern and Gatwick Express routes from July 2015 and also include a small number of services and stations currently operated by Southeastern which will transfer in December 2014.

Combined, the existing FCC and Southern franchises carry 273 million passenger journeys per year, employ around 6,500 people and generate annual passenger revenues of £1.3bn.

The TSGN network will serve London as well as a number of important regional centres, including Cambridge, Luton and Peterborough to the north of the region, and Brighton,

Portsmouth and Southampton in the south. It also provides direct rail links to major airports (Gatwick and Luton) as well as St Pancras International and Farringdon station for links to Heathrow and Crossrail in due course.

During the course of the franchise the Thameslink identity will be re-introduced and the Southern and Gatwick Express brands retained.

The new franchise is being let as a management contract where ticket revenues are passed directly to the Government rather than retained by Govia, due to the complexity and scale of the planned changes to services and infrastructure. We are committed to delivering these changes and minimising their impacts on customers.

Benefits for customers during the franchise

New trains

- 108 new Gatwick Express carriages designed for airline travellers by 2016
- 150 new metro carriages for Moorgate services in 2018
- 1,140 Thameslink Class 700 carriages already ordered from Siemens delivered between 2016 and 2018

More services

- 10,000 additional morning peak seats into London
- 26% more morning peak carriages into London
- 50% more passenger capacity created
- Improvements to services including:
 - Up to 24 trains per hour during the peak periods through the Thameslink core (St Pancras to Blackfriars), up from 15 per hour today, an increase of 60%

- More direct services to and from Gatwick Airport including a new direct Cambridge to Brighton service
- Improved Brighton Main Line services

Stations and staffing

- £50m investment to enhance all 239 stations including improving access, installing electronic information screens and working with partners on the redevelopment of St Albans and Luton stations
- Staffing hours increased: 100 busiest stations staffed from first to last train
- Simplified ticketing and extension of 'the key' smartcard
- 104 stations with free Wi-Fi
- £1.5m on station access improvements including increased cycle storage and electrical vehicle charging points

Improving standards

- Timetables designed to improve punctuality
- 20,000 days of customer service training for frontline employees
- Investment in technology such as smartphone apps and websites to improve real-time information to make door-to-door travel easier
- On-hand assistance for passengers during the Thameslink Programme works

Local community focus

- Continuing support of Community Rail Partnerships
- Providing young people with work experience and mentoring
- Award winning education programme Go-Learn used with local schools
- £1m per year for local communities to spend on improvements at stations



New East-West Megabus Service *From Stagecoach*



Library photo from Stagecoach media office

Stagecoach releases Children's book for charity *From Stagecoach*

Bus and rail operator Stagecoach Group is capturing the fun side of transport as it releases its first children's book to help support children's literacy. The 16-page book, which is called 'A Very Special Family Party', was also produced to mark the 60th birthday of Stagecoach co-founder and Chairman Sir Brian Souter.

Illustrators have turned the company's well-known brands – including UK Bus, megabus.com, South West Trains, East Midlands Trains and Supertram - into children's characters in a fun story set at a 'family' birthday party for Sir Brian. Along with Sir Brian, characters such as Bobby Bus, Stanley Supertram and Molly megabus.com have been immortalised in cartoon form.

The book, which was written by Stagecoach employee Lindsay Reid, is priced at £4 for a paperback copy. It is also expected that an electronic version that can be downloaded to Kindle will be available for £3.60. The finished product is now available to buy online at www.amazon.co.uk At least £1.50 from the sale of each book will be donated to the National Literacy Trust, which works to improve the reading, writing, speaking and listening skills in the UK's most disadvantaged communities, where up to 40 per cent of people have literacy problems.

The book, which was created as a surprise for Sir Brian's birthday, was designed and illustrated by Devon-based duo Alison MacKenzie and Kate West.

A new Megabus Service M37 has been introduced this May. While it's not serving Beds directly, it's the first Megabus service into Cambridge, and thus offers easy connections at Parkside to and from the X5 at the same block of bus stops.

Four coaches a day will run from Cambridge to Birmingham City Centre, direct and non-stop. In the opposite direction, the same number will serve the Norwich – both the University of East Anglia campus, and the city centre. In the other direction, two coaches then continue beyond to Bristol and Cardiff.

Megabus also offers tickets from £1 (when booked online only) for travel on the Service X5, when travelling end-to-end between Oxford and Cambridge city centres only.

Megabus continues to operate at the "tickets from £1" principle, which means, the earlier you book, the less you pay, with ticket bookings generally opened a few months ahead.

These vehicles are now full luxury coaches, and tickets are sold online at www.megabus.com where you can buy as many tickets as you like for a 50p per transaction booking fee.

Service X5 gets new vehicles next year

From the Steven Knight Media blog



Stagecoach has confirmed to Steven Knight Media that it plans to replace the coaches currently used on its' X5 next year. Replacement of the 17 coaches used on the route which links Cambridge with Oxford via Bedford, Milton Keynes and Bedford had been expected this year following route trials with a number of vehicle types last year, but Andy Campbell, Managing Director of Stagecoach East told Steven Knight Media that "We have not yet made a decision on future vehicle type but we are aiming to replace the existing vehicles in 2015."

His comments came just days after further trials had been carried out using a Megabus "Interdeck" coach with a low floor just at the front to allow wheelchair access without lifts (*see Megabus photo on last page – Ed*). It is understood that there are issues to be resolved around Bicester and at Gloucester Green Bus Station in Oxford if longer vehicles are used.

A new Sunday rural service just over our boundaries – carrying bikes and tourists around South Cambs

From Suzy Scott

While this service is just outwith our coverage area (by a stone's throw) it is still easily reachable by train or the X5. While the service is called BikeBus Explorer, it is open to everyone – and no bike necessary to ride – as this is as public service open to all. Below is the original press feature on the new route. Since this was

issued, it is confirmed that Dews Coaches will be running the service, every Sunday and Bank Holiday from Sunday 27th July 2014 until Sunday 22nd March 2015, at least (with some restrictions around Christmas & New Year).

From Cambridge Evening News (photo by Keith Jones)



Clare Gibbons Development Officer for South Cambs District Council regarding a new Bus route that will help Cyclists around the area using a bike trailer.

Cyclists will be able to explore more of the Cambridge area's beauty spots on two wheels thanks to a new bus which will tow a bike trailer.

Offering a solution to the age-old problem of riding too far and then facing an exhausting ride back, the BikeBus Explorer service will launch this summer running on a circular route between the city's railway station and Gamlingay.

Along the way, it will stop at attractions such as Wimpole Hall and four Wildlife Trust reserves. Riders will have the choice of catching the bus out to the countryside, going for a ride, and then catching the bus back – or just using it for one leg of the journey. Cyclists will also be able to hop and off to enjoy different parts of the district on the same outing.

The project is being led by South Cambridgeshire District Council. Development officer Clare Gibbons said: "It is a first for

Cambridgeshire and will give people a fantastic opportunity to explore the countryside without using their car. "The villages near the route contain a great mix of businesses and visitor attractions, including the Wimpole estate, and we believe that once people use the service and see what is on offer they will be back time and again."

The year-long trial of the project will cost £18,000, with funding coming from the district council, the city council, and the National Trust.

The bus will run every Sunday, and on bank holidays, making four round trips on each occasion.

There will be a £5 Adult Day Explorer ticket (£2 for bike carriage) with child fares set at half price (bike carriage £1). There will also be a family ticket set at £12, for up to 2 adults and up to 3 children travelling together (bike carriage charged in addition).

Local Fares will be available as single or return in the traditional manner, with free English National Concession Passes are valid throughout. The twenty-cycle trailer is being imported especially from the Netherlands, and will be attached to low floor, accessible midibus.

SUNDAY & BANK HOLIDAY TIMETABLE FOR BIKEBUS EXPLORER

Notes :

Cambridge, Station Road	09:00	11:30	14:30	17:00
Barton, Wimpole Road, opp Holben Close	09:15	11:45	14:45	17:15
Orwell, Town Green Road, opp Lordship Close	09:29	11:59	14:59	17:29
Wimpole Estate	09:35	12:05	15:05	17:35
Arrington, Church Lane, W-Bound	09:42		15:12	
Croydon, High Street, opp The Queen Adelaide	09:45		15:15	
Hatley St George, Main Street, Buff Close	09:55		15:25	
Gamlingay, Stocks Lane, opp Blythe Way	09:59		15:29	
Waresley, Manor Farm Road, St James's Church	10:08		15:38	
Great Gransden, Li. Gransden Lane, Crow Tr St	10:12		15:42	
Longstowe, High Street, opp Rushbrook Close	10:22		15:52	
Arrington, Ermine Way, opp No. 75	10:30		16:00	
Arrington, Ermine Way, No. 75		12:11		17:41
Longstowe, High Street, Rushbrook Close		12:20		17:50
Great Gransden, Li. Gransden Lane, opp C T St		12:30		18:00
Waresley, Manor Farm Road, opp St James's Church		12:34		18:04
Gamlingay, Stocks Lane, Blythe Way		12:43		18:13
Hatley St George, Main Street, opp Buff Close		12:47		18:17
Croydon, High Street, The Queen Adelaide		12:57		18:27
Arrington, Church Lane, E-Bound		13:00		18:30
Wimpole Estate	10:37	13:07	16:07	18:37
Orwell, Town Green Road, Lordship Close	10:43	13:13	16:13	18:43
Barton, Wimpole Road, Holben Close	10:57	13:27	16:27	18:57
Cambridge, Station Road	11:12	13:42	16:42	19:12



Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Bedford Area Bus Users' Society will be held at the Meeting Room, Salvation Army, Woolpack Community Hub, Commercial Road, Bedford MK40 1NY, on Saturday 5 July 2014 at 10.15am.

following the business proceedings there will be a talk by

Mrs Linda McCord, Passenger Focus – the statutory body representing interests of bus passengers

All are welcome. Light refreshments may be purchased.

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Annual General Meeting to be held at the Meeting Room, Salvation Army, Woolpack Community Hub\$, Commercial Road, Bedford MK40 1NY, on Saturday 5 July 2014 at 10.15am.

AGENDA

1 Welcome

2 Apologies for absence

3 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 15 June 2013 (copy circulated)

4 Matters arising

5 Annual Report for year ending 31 March 2014

6 Treasurer's Report for year ending 31 March 2014 (copy circulated) Proposed

Resolution:

"The Executive Committee be authorised to raise subscriptions for individual members for the year 2015/2016 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"

Proposed by P.G.Williams

7 Election of Officers

8 Election of Executive Committee 9 Any other business

Informal Meeting (approx 11.00am)

Guest Speaker – Mrs Linda McCord, Passenger Focus

who will give an update on bus research and work undertaken by her organisation

\$ This is the former Woolpack Public House, on the corner of River Street and Commercial Road. Refreshments may be purchased before the Meeting

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Bedford Area Bus Users' Society held at the Harrowden Room, Bunyan Meeting, Mill Street, Bedford, on Saturday 15 June 2013

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 Yunnie 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

There had been a need for new committee members. Since then, John Smith and Frances Horwood had joined the committee

Grant Palmer had offered to put an advertisement for BABUS on his tickets. However, he has not done this since Smartcard ticketing is to be introduced. Instead he had placed a whole page advertisement in his timetable and BABUS is grateful for this.

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.

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, Central Bedfordshire Council.

Financial Statement

BABUS Balance Sheet and Source & Application of Funds
covering period 1st April 2013 – 31st March 2014

Checked and issued Sunday 6th April 2014

(Values for 2012-13)

Opening balances at 1 Apr 2013		
Current account	973.73	904.39
Project account	7.58	7.58
	Total funds 981.31	911.57
Expenditure		
Room Hire (committee & liaison meetings)	-82.75	-48.00
Website maintenance	-51.57	-35.99
Brochure	-123.00	0.00
Printing & postage (AGM papers and Newsletters)	-332.83	-169.87
Vice-Chairman's expenses	-23.15	-19.00
BUUK Subs 2012-13 & 2013-14	-40.00	0.00
AGM Hall Hire	-83.00	-42.60
Transaction fees (PayPal account)	-1.52	
	Sub-total -737.82	-420.66 *
Income		
Subscriptions, individual/family	68.00	173.00
Subscriptions, corporate	84.00	252.00
Donations	12.01	65.00
	Sub-total 164.01	490.00
Closing balances at 31 Mar 2014		
Current account	374.44	973.73
PayPal account	25.48	
Project account	7.58	
	Total funds 407.50	

* 2012-13 expenditures quoted exclude non-comparable items eg AGM advert cost of £105

===== **END** =====



The Newsletter of the Bedford Area Bus Users Society (BABUS) is produced by 