



Newsletter 35

Spring 2018



HACT (Huntingdonshire Association for Community Transport) run the 150 from St Neots to Tilbrook six days a week, for onward connections to and from points on Grant Palmer Service 28. Their Mercedes Sprinter minibus HV 62 OJY is seen at St Neots, Market Square. © Suzy Scott 2018

The newsletter of the Bedford Area Bus Users Society, or

BABUS, is brought to you by public transport information in one place



Welcome to BABUS Newsletter 35

BABUS - serving Bedfordshire Bus Users Since 2005

	<p>This BABUS Newsletter is brought to you by Mrs 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 and is produced through her company, Here To There Publishing Ltd. She is our Communications Officer [on a part-time basis]. We welcome contributions and corrections from everyone, and please note that the next Newsletter deadline shall be on Friday 18th May 2018.</p> <p>Disclaimer; The views and opinions in this Newsletter are those of the individual writing them, not necessarily BABUS unless stated otherwise. The writer's thoughts are those of the person, and not any other company or group they represent.</p>
	<p>The BABUS Website is also the responsibility of Suzy Scott (see previous row), and you can find us at www.babus.org.uk. To sign up for the Bulletin Board, which is also there, send Suzy an email with your preferred user name, own name, email, and membership status (i.e. committee, regular member or non-member) so we can set you all up accordingly.</p>
	<p>We are also on Social Media! Find us on Twitter @BABUSbeds or online at www.twitter.com/BABUSbeds You can also join our Facebook group www.facebook.com/groups/BABUSbeds/</p>
	<p>Our Treasurer and Membership Secretary is Mr Simon Norton who you can contact by post at 6 Hertford Street, CAMBRIDGE, CB4 3AG or by email to simon.norton@babus.org.uk . Simon can deal with Changes of Address, Change from Paper to Digital newsletter (or vice-versa,) Membership Renewals and queries on Payments, and Accounts Payable.</p>
	<p>For everything else, contact our lovely Secretary, Miss Frances Horwood, BABUS Secretary, 34 Rectory Orchard, Lavendon, OLNEY, MK46 4HB, or by frances.horwood@babus.org.uk. To contact us by telephone, call 0871 218 2287 (BBUS). Leave a message, and we will return your call. We legally need to tell you this costs 12p per minute, plus your Network Operator's Access Charges. Fax us on the same cost basis – 0871 218 3293.</p>

What's Inside This Time?

Annual General Meeting	Page 3
Newsletters & Publicity Update	Page 4
Bedford Evening Ticket and Cygnet	Pages 4-5
Liaison Meeting Summary	Pages 6-7
Speaking of Community Transport...	Pages 7-8
Forthcoming Thameslink and East Midlands Trains changes, and KeyGo	Pages 8-11
Bus Service Changes	Pages 12-23
Travelling Outwith Your Bus Pass – Part 1, By Train	Page 18 (part)
How do we make the bus more appealing to young people?	Page 24
The EU Is Giving Teens a Month of Free Train Travel Across Europe	Pages 25-26
Satisfaction with Stagecoach Bus Services Rises To 90%	Pages 26-27

Who Are We?

BABUS – or Bedford Area Bus Users Society in full – are a voluntary Bus User Group. 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 Newsletter, usually every quarter, to keep you informed of our activities. 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 This includes Members Area access to our Bulletin Board, which keeps you updated between Newsletters.

If you are not already a member, why not join us? Send a Cheque/Postal Order (payable to BABUS) for £5 (Individual/Family) or £12 (Group/Corporate) to Simon Norton, **6 Hertford Street, CAMBRIDGE, CB4 3AG**, or join online at **www.babus.org.uk**

Annual General Meeting

By Suzy Scott

The 2018 Annual General Meeting date has been provisionally set for Saturday 7th July 2018. More details, and the formal notice paperwork, will be included with Newsletter 36. This will therefore mean another hard copy circulating to all our BABUS members.

Newsletters & Publicity Update

By Suzy Scott

Okies, sorry we are running a little behind schedule again... it's accounting season here at Here To There, and we have been working on the delayed Essex book, as well as another updated and refreshed batch of BABUS brochures and posters.

This time, we have sent everyone a hard copy of this Newsletter, even those who have electronic copies of the Newsletter – we only usually do that where there is an AGM Notice. This is so we can put in the new Brochure. Everyone should have had two copies – one for you, and one for a friend. Please pass on the second to a fellow bus user or friend, who may not know

Posters and leaflets are in the midst of being dropped off to everywhere that has had these before. If you'd like some for display, or you have a location where we can share these, get in touch with Frances Horwood, using the details on Page 2.

Incidentally, as well as brochures and posters, I put together an advert version of this – for places where we can't say "pick up a leaflet" like other books and adverts. If you run a mailing list or Newsletter, and you would be happy to run a one-page advert for BABUS, we'd love you to do this! You can get the publicity on our website at **www.babus.org.uk** in both JPG or PDF formats, and you can get an example on the the last page of this Newsletter.. If you require these in any other formats, or need something else, please contact Suzy Scott, using the details on Page 2.

The refresh came from my own idea, intending to push the "bus users group" message, to try to increase interest. The

blue background goes with the BABUS logo in blue.

Incidentally, on a semi-related note, we've had no responses to my request/offer in Newsletter 33, re handing over this work to other people. Suzy therefore assumes you are all happy with her work, including Editor's comments on the Newsletter!

(ED: tee hee hee!

mwhahahahahahaha *giggles*)

Bedford evening tickets and Cygnet

By Suzy Scott

Two new tickets are to be reported here, and the first one is fairly easy!



Evening travel in Bedford has just become cheaper! All single tickets on Stagecoach buses after 7pm each evening will cost just £2 from 13 November 2017.

Cygnet Ticket

The long-promised "integrated ticketing" from Bedford Borough Council has finally materialised, but even six months on, you'd be very hard pushed to get more information on this!

I was initially alerted to this on Social Media via a mutual friend of another committee member, who posted (with a pic) of the ticket she'd just bought. Grant Palmer have purchased the physical cards from Stagecoach but adding a note alongside these for new purchasers.

At the moment, neither the Stagecoach website or Bedford Borough Council website has any mention of it! While Stagecoach does mention Intalink Explorer, MK Moove and (Cambs) Multibus, there is no mention of Cygnet. Bedford Borough only mentions PlusBus. Grant Palmer's website currently makes no mention of it either – but that has just been redeveloped, so maybe I've missed it!

However, by using my sources, I can exclusively reveal that the price is £5 for one day, £17 a week, with a 50p card charge if you don't have one already (reusable) and is valid as per the Bedford MegaRider area (see end of this article for the full definition). Sources – an article in the last BABUS Newsletter (34) !!!

After drawing up blanks while putting this feature together, I did an online search for "bedford cygnet"... top answer is... Bedford Maternity Ward/Gynecology Department at South Wing Hospital, Cygnet Ward...

(ED: I wish I was making this up....)

... but I did find this press release from last year (text in italics)...

On 1st October the new 'Cygnet' smartcard will be launched, enabling bus users to switch freely between two local bus operators without the need to buy multiple tickets.

Bus operators Stagecoach and Grant Palmer have been working with Bedford Borough Council to launch this new smartcard, which will allow for unlimited travel on any bus within the designated area, across a day or a week.

The Cygnet travel zone equates to the area currently covered by the Stagecoach

Megarider and includes the whole of Bedford and Kempston, as well as surrounding villages such as Bromham, Clapham, Cople and Elstow.

Cllr Charles Royden, Portfolio Holder for Transport at Bedford Borough Council said: "This will make local bus travel easier and more convenient, so it's good news for bus users. Enabling people to change from one operator to another on the same smartcard ticket removes a barrier to bus usage, and is a real step forward for local public transport."

Zoe Paget, Operations Director at Stagecoach East, commented: "We're always looking for ways to make life simpler for our customers, and this smartcard will enable passengers to make best use of the local bus network."

Dave Shelley, Director of Grant Palmer said: "The launch of this ticket is fantastic news for bus users in Bedford, allowing them to buy a ticket to use on the buses of both local operators for the first time. The added convenience and value for money will, we hope, encourage more local people to use the bus to get around town."

Validity Area

Both these tickets are valid throughout the Bedford MegaRider zone, which is all the town services, plus X5 from Rail Station to Goldington, 41 as far as Biddenham, 53 as far as Wootton, 42 as far as Interchange Retail Park, 81/44 as far as Elstow, 71/72 as far as Shortstown, 74 as far as Cople, 73 as far as Priory Business Park, 50/51 as far as Oakley and all services as far as Bromham.

Combined Bus Operators and Local Authorities Joint Liaison Meeting Summary, 29th January 2018

By Frances Horwood

Having for some time had joint Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Councils Liaison Meetings, the suggestion was made by Andy Hamer of Bedford Borough that local bus operators should also be invited. The meeting in January was the first of its kind. It was particularly pleasing that two representatives from Uno attended the meeting as we had not previously had any contact with their company; we are grateful to Andy Hamer for arranging the meeting.

(ED: Sadly, the representation from Grant Palmer was unable to attend that day. We are planning a stand-alone meeting in the very near future).

Some changes to bus services were reported, the main one being the forthcoming withdrawal of Stagecoach Service 11 in Bedford, which was not sufficiently used ***(ED: Sorry – me again! See Grant Palmer 24 for a partial reprieve for this route, under Service Changes section).***

BABUS raised the issue of information available about roadworks which entailed diversions and, therefore, delays to bus services. Sometimes information on websites was not up to date, if work either overran or finished sooner than anticipated. The difficulties encountered were explained by the Council representatives: they did not have sufficient staff to update information more frequently than at present and the provision of more comprehensive information, specifically for bus users, would, in fact, incur expense. We can expect roadworks to be prevalent, in view of all the development taking place.

BABUS is still trying to ensure that printed bus timetables are widely available in Bedford Town Centre. The Borough Council has placed them at Borough Hall, the Customer Service Centre and the Central Library. At the Library, some timetables are now available on the Ground Floor. However, these locations are not very close to the Bus Station. BABUS representatives suggested the Jobs Hub as another suitable outlet for timetables and wondered if it might be possible for timetables to be stocked in the Post Office. Post Offices elsewhere, such as at Flitwick and Ampthill, do stock timetables. Uno only publishes timetable booklets in September; any changes at other times are publicised on their website.

BABUS asked whether new requirements for drivers of community buses would adversely affect services in our area. It was not thought that the impact would be severe in this area. The DfT was seeking to clarify the regulations covering these services, since they had been abused elsewhere, resulting in unfair competition with commercial bus services. It was emphasised that community buses in our area either operated where no commercial routes existed or provided a service for people who were unable to use buses.

BABUS is keen for Councils to take action to discourage the use of private cars. Our local councils did provide bus services to new developments, but these might not be well used. Operators sought to encourage use of their services. Stagecoach sometimes gave special offers to residents of new homes, such as free travel for an introductory period. Uno sought to offer a high standard of comfort, including free Wi-Fi, and found this approach successful.

All present considered that this joint meeting had been very worthwhile. The next meeting of this kind will take place at the end of April.

As ever, please get in touch with Frances if you'd like us to raise any of your local issues.

Speaking of Community Transport...

By Suzy Scott

One community transport operator under investigation is the combined Fenland Association for Community Transport and Huntingdonshire Association for Community Transport. This is being undertaken by forensic accountants PKF, on behalf of the Cambridgeshire Coach and Taxi Drivers Association. Their coverage in this area is minimal, but you may have seen their buses out and about. One service they do operate Service 150 from Tilbrook to St Neots, which connects to and from Grant Palmer Service 28 to enable access from villages north of the X5 route to still have transport to St Neots six days a week.

As at 23rd November 2017, it was said that the report would be forthcoming in early 2018. Duncan Wilkinson, the council's chief auditor, says the time needed to support the investigation has been "much higher than initially expected".

The county council agreed to fund the investigation by forensic accountants PKF to resolve a long running dispute between the community transport provider and the Cambridgeshire Coach and Taxi Drivers Association.

County council chief executive Gillian Beasley, as well as authorising the external probe, has also confirmed she has asked

police to investigate alleged forged responses to a community transport survey last year.

Investigators are nearing completion of what is expected to be a 200-page report into FACT and its subsidiaries in Ely and Soham (ESACT) and Huntingdonshire (HACT) and it is likely it will go the audit and accounts committee in the New Year.

Mr Wilkinson told councilors this week that the council's own auditors had been assisting PKF in their work.

"Due to the high time pressure created by providing support to the community transport investigation, the audit plan is currently at capacity," he said referring to other work streams undertaken by his department.

However, he warned that although some other audit work had been cancelled to make way for the PKF inquiry, "it will not be possible to cancel further audits without undermining the plan's coverage".

His department would be making requests to the council for extra funding to support the additional work, he said.

Meanwhile the county council says it is acting on advice from the Department of Transport about licensing of community transport operators who had "confirmed our approach is proportionate".

A council spokesman said the ministry had not asked any local authority to cancel any contracts in the light of amended advice and they did not expect that any should have to do so.

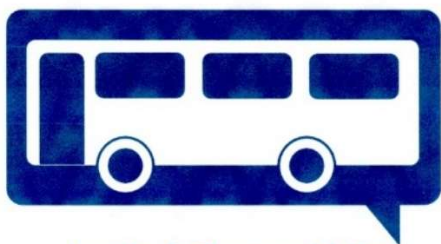
The spokesman said: "So nothing has changed in the short term."

Mr Wilkinson had earlier confirmed that the resources needed to provide the requested documentation for the PKF inquiry "were significantly more than originally estimated, reflecting both the complexity of the information and the difficulties experienced in access it".

Also, in November 2017, East Cambs Council withdrew a grant provisionally allocated to ESACT and are rolling it over to next year.

Councilor David Ambrose-Smith, chairman of the community services committee, said: "Whilst this opportunity has only become available due to an ongoing investigation by the county council, we hope that current issues can be resolved, and we look forward to hearing from ESACT in the future."

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Forthcoming Thameslink and East Midlands Trains changes, and KeyGo

By Suzy Scott

While this is a bus users group Newsletter, there are major improvements for two local railway lines in our area – provided you are heading south!

Thameslink expansion on the rails – new links across Beds and Beyond

Over the last 19 years, the government has been working in a plan initially Thameslink 2000, then Thameslink Programme, now Thameslink Rail Plan 2020. This involves combining of the Thameslink and Great Northern services to improve north-south access across London even further. There are to be improved timetables happening in stages from May 2018, and the last of a massive order of new trains has just been delivered to the franchise holder, GoVia Thameslink Railway, better known as Great Northern, Southern, Gatwick Express and Thameslink.

The plans include direct links – for example - Peterborough to Horsham. While through passengers end to end might be limited on this one, there are more intermediate links by the same service, like Biggleswade and Sandy direct to Gatwick Airport, without having to change at Hatfield-bus-St Albans or in central London.

There are little changes planned to the West London Line, which links stations on the West Coast Mainline to south London, including Leighton Buzzard in Central Beds.

As part of the massive increase in services on the Thameslink line, with longer trains, you might wonder how they will squeeze them all in! Well...

East Midlands Trains will be replaced by buses in the peaks from Wellingborough to Bedford

East Midlands Trains services will no longer call at Bedford during peak periods.

- Southbound - after the 0538 departure from Bedford, no other trains will call at Bedford until the 1013 departure from Bedford to London
- Northbound - the last off-peak train that will call at Bedford will be the 1547 from London. After the evening peak, the first train that will call at Bedford will be the 1904 from London

On weekdays, some off-peak departure times will change too:

Bedford to London

Trains at 17 and 47 minutes past will be at 23 and 13 minutes past.

London to Bedford

Trains at 01 and 29 minutes past will be at 47 and 05 minutes past.

Travelling northbound

East Midlands Trains services will continue to run from Bedford to the north during morning peak and off peak hours, including weekends.

If you're travelling northbound from Bedford on an East Midlands Trains service during evening peak hours, you'll need to use our bus service to Wellingborough. From Wellingborough you can connect onto a train service to your destination. The bus service between Bedford and Wellingborough offers air conditioning, free Wi-Fi and town centre stops. East Midlands Trains season ticket holders travelling via the bus service will be offered up to 50% discount and there will be up to a 25% reduction on anytime fares for travel on the bus.

So, as far as we know at the moment, train fares and tickets will apply (so including Railcards, PlusBus and other special promotions), as these are being advertised as a Rail Replacement service. The times are in full in the EMT Summer timetable booklet, but from Wellingborough at 06.26, 06.50, 07.24, 07.48, 08.14, 08.48, and from Bedford at 16.28, 16.58, 17.28, 17.59, 18.28 and 19.04. Buses will take 40-55 minutes, depending on the time, and road traffic on the day. As the Thameslink Programme is being rolled out in phases, it is not known whether or not this will be a permanent arrangement.

KeyGo comes to Beds – and beyond!

Before the combining of the franchise of Southern and First Capital Connect (now GTR), Southern started a pay-as-you-go option to their key Smartcard. This was started about four years ago now, with the option to place money on the card (now £25) initially, and also then have a continuous top-up applied, to allow you to travel around a limited part of the Southern network around Sussex. Every day's travels would be totted up, and taken from the balance, and/or an auto-top up generated.

Now, the ticket is valid almost throughout the franchise in Bedfordshire (and beyond) – see Map on Page 11 – except to Peterborough or beyond Harrow & Wealdstone on the WLL (so not currently valid at Leighton Buzzard). KeyGo now works on the basis of charging 1p you're your credit or debit card, then taking off every day travels at the end of the day. From their website...

"Once you have KeyGo on your Key Smartcard, all your entry and exit taps across the network will be analysed to calculate the best day fare for your journeys

based upon the tickets you could have purchased that day. KeyGo will then charge the most appropriate ticket(s) for the journeys you made that day against your nominated payment card.

The best day fare offer is based on tickets that can be bought on the day of travel. We will charge you the cheapest fare based upon the taps you have made on your journey and the journey length to best guess the route you took. Fares are based on paper equivalent tickets defined as Peak, Off-Peak Day and Super Off-Peak Day single and Day return routed 'Any Permitted', 'Southern only', 'Thameslink only' and Oyster fares for journeys made wholly within the London zones 1-6.

Where journeys occur within the London zones 1-6, journeys will be Price Matched with the equivalent Oyster fare or Travelcard price for journeys that begin or end outside the London area. This includes daily capped fares.

Journeys made on Gatwick Express and services between Merstham and Gatwick Airport will be charged the National Rail fare. Please note that first class fares and Railcard discounts are not available on KeyGo."

While the card does not offer railcard/bus pass holder discounts or Oyster-style price

capping yet, it will offer the best fare "on the day". This means, for example, if you travel from Bedford to Luton then Luton to central London (and then home direct to Bedford) all at off peak times, you will only be charged the Bedford – London off-peak fare (as the stop in Luton is classed as breaking your journey). But before, if you bought a peak paper ticket, and then only used it during off-peak times, you'd be losing out. The card will charge either Peak, Off-Peak, or even Super Off-Peak, depending on the time and day. It's useful for those of us who often travel occasionally, and/or on the spur of the moment... usually on the same day half the station is queuing for a ticket!

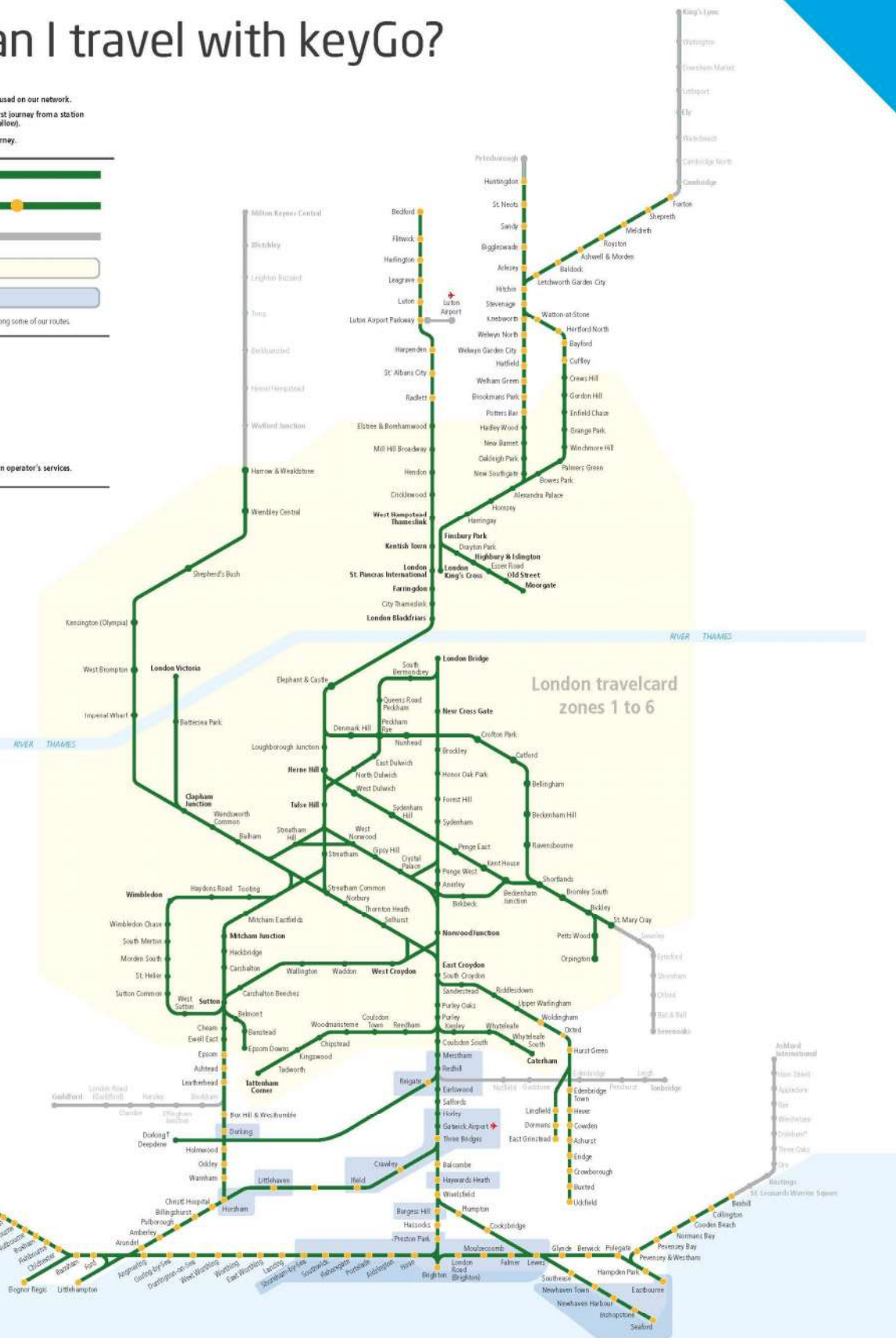
The card can also be used on buses in their sister companies Brighton & Hove and Metrobus, but nothing else for now. (***ED: Should BABUS be adding this to our campaigning? It fits under improving rail-bus interchange! Please do let us know what you think, our contact details are on Page 2).***)

To find out more, visit **www.greatnorthernrail.com/keygo** or telephone 0345 026 4700, option 1 then option 2 then option 2 again.

Where can I travel with keyGo?

This is a general guide to where the keyGo can be used on our network.
After registering for keyGo you must make your first journey from a station outside of the London area (stations highlighted yellow).
Always remember to touch in and out on every journey.

keyGo is valid on these routes	
Collect keyGo by making your first journey	
keyGo is not valid on these routes	
London travelcard zones 1 to 6	
Metrobus and Brighton & Hove buses	
Other train operators may provide additional services along some of our routes.	
keyGo is valid for use on:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gatwick Express • Great Northern • Southern and • Thameslink services • Great Western between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Redhill and Dorking Deepdene - Warblington and Brighton • Metrobus and Brighton & Hove buses 	
It is not valid on Transport for London or other train operator's services.	



Service Changes

By Suzy Scott

We start with roadworks... before catching up with old, then bringing in the new!

Clophill High Street Roadworks

Due to water main replacement, the High Street in Clophill will be closed in several stages between Monday 29 January 2018 and Thursday 21 June 2018 for 24 hours a day. During this closure, Grant Palmer service 200 will not be able to serve the High Street; it will operate via the A507 in both directions and can be caught at The Green at its usual times.

Flittabus services FL1, FL6A and FL7 can still be caught at Great Lane or Jacques Lane at their usual times and will still provide a bus service to this end of Clophill village.

Welwyn Garden City Bus Station Refurbishment

Welwyn Garden City bus station will be closing for refurbishment until April 2018. From Monday 9th October bus services will instead serve stop 7 (outside Waitrose), Stop 8, new stop 8A (outside of John Lewis), new Stop 9 (outside Waitrose) and new Stop 10 (outside the Marks and Spencer car park). Wanderbus Services W4 and W14 to Shefford are using Stop 8 (layby at the side of John Lewis), and Service 366 will use the following arrangements;

366 From Luton/Towards South Hatfield
Will use the temporary shelter Stop 9, adjacent to Waitrose car park.

366 To Luton/From South Hatfield Will pick up from the temporary bus stop 10 opposite Waitrose, then Stop 8 at John Lewis as normal. However, because of the lack of a turning point, shortly after announcements

have been made to show that the 09.20 and 18.20 towards Luton will ONLY pick up from the stop at John Lewis (Stop 8).

Watford Town Centre Redevelopment of Clarendon Road/High Street (including bus stops) from 8th January 2018 until September 2018

Closed due to enhancement works taking place in the town centre. Stops A, B, C and D will be closed, and services will now call at stops M and O on Beechen Grove. Service 321 to Luton will therefore now stop at Beechen Grove, Stop O.

From Friday 29th June 2015

Huntingdonshire Association for Community Transport Service 150 (St Neots – Kimbolton – Tilbrook)

Timetable changes, with extensions to/from Eynesbury (St Neots), Tesco Superstore. *(ED: This was delayed being included as I was unaware of the change, until a recent FOI request (after an unanswered timetable request!!!) brought the council's leaflets to me, for the first time in years...again I wish I was joking!)*

From 11th June 2017

Stagecoach in Bedford Service 99 (Luton Airport – Milton Keynes)

Revised timetable with some poorly used journeys removed.

From ?? August 2017

NEW SERVICE Grant Palmer CX (Luton – Dunstable White Lion Retail Park/Amazon)

New half-hourly Busway service – also see 31st October 2017 and 19th February 2018.

From w/c Sunday 27th August 2017

Red Eagle Service 29/30/31 (Berkhamsted – Hemel Hempstead)

Further to the listing in Newsletter 33, the extra peak period journeys are withdrawn. However, the daytime Service 29 will now operate into Studham with support from Central Bedfordshire Council.

Uno Services 610/611 (Enfield Town - Cockfosters – Hatfield – Luton) Revised timetable to improve reliability. Also see the 3rd April 2018 entry.

From Monday 4th September 2017

Grant Palmer Services 25/26 (Bedford – Harrold – Carlton) Minor timetable changes. Also see the 23rd October 2017 and 9th April 2018 entries.

Grant Palmer Service 27 (Bedford, Great Denham & Ravesden Circular) Minor timetable changes. Also see the 25th September 2017 entry.

Centrebus Services 34/35 (Dunstable – St Albans) Revised times with some timetable changes. Also see 4th December 2017 and 1st April 2018.

Grant Palmer Service 44 (Amphill Heights – Clophill – Bedford) Minor timetable changes.

Centrebus Service 46 (Hemel Hempstead – Luton) Revised timetable, and curtailed at Bridge Street/Marlowes, instead of Riverside in Hemel Hempstead.

Centrebus Service 78 (Shefford – Barton-le-Clay – Luton) Revised timetable to improve reliability. Also see entry for 15th October 2017.

NEW SERVICE Cozy Travel BVC1 (Potton – Wrestlingworth – Bassingbourn Village College), BVC5 (Eyeworth – Biggleswade – Ashwell – Bassingbourn Village College) New school services operating one return trip on BVC schooldays only. These services (and others which do not run into Central Bedfordshire) replace the 127A-127D series and require a smartcard to be obtained before travelling. Also see 16th April 2018 entry.

NEW SERVICE Landmark Coaches LM1 (Arlesey – John Henry Newman School, Stevenage) New service replacing most of CB1/CB2 services by Chambers Coaches. While CC didn't post any notice of cancellation, but local press did make several mentions of services not turning up towards the end of the 2016/2017 school term year. However, at the same time, the company changed hands.

NEW SERVICE Centrebus Service Y (Luton Interchange – Busway – Dunstable – Houghton Regis) New half hourly service. However, also see 4th December 2017 entry re Service Y being replaced with an AZ and ZA services.

NEW SERVICE Grant Palmer Services 825 (Clapham – Oakley – Sharnbrook Upper School) One journey at school times on schooldays only from Clapham, Anglers Rest at 07.45, with the return service from the school at 15.25.

From w/c 17th September 2017

NEW SERVICE Arriva Luton Town Service 11 (Luton, Church Street – Crawley Green Road – Lalleford Road – ASDA Wigmore Lane)

A new half-hourly service (Mon-Fri 06.34 to 18.59, Saturday 09.19 to 17.34, no Sunday Service). Between 11 and the 100 there are now four Arriva services every hour between central Luton and the refurbished ASDA at Wigmore Lane.

Arriva Luton Town Service 28/29 (Luton – Hockwell Ring) The 28 service now operates via Biscot Road and Blundell Road, instead of direct along Leagrave Road.

Uno Service C1/C10/C11 (Bedford – Cranfield – Milton Keynes) Revised timetable to improve reliability.

Uno Service C3 (Cranfield - Marston Moretaine – Bedford) Service is withdrawn but replaced on an improved basis by Service C12.

NEW SERVICE Uno Service C12 (Cranfield – Marston Moretaine – Lidlington – Broughborough – Ridgmont - Marston Moretaine – Cranfield Circular) New Service replacing Service C3 on an improved timetable with five journeys per day, Monday to Friday. A full timetable can be had on Page 19, which includes details of a further service change from 28th January 2018.

From Friday 25th September 2017

Grant Palmer Service 27 (Bedford, Great Barford & Ravesden Circular)

Further to the change made on 4th September 2017, a further short notice change is that the 07.35 Cardington –

Bedford journey now runs 10 minutes earlier, to improve reliability further.

From Sunday 15th October 2017

Centrebus Service 78 (Sheffield – Barton-le-Clay – Luton) Service withdrawn. Following the combining of both Service 20 and 79 into a new Service 78 in Spring 2017, the service had not proved reliable, even after a timetable change in September. As a result, the operator has ended operation of the service. Grant Palmer have introduced a service, which only covers the Sundons on selected journeys, and omits Sharpenhoe and Harlington. Also see Grant Palmer new Services 78, 79, and revised Service 200 (from 23rd October 2017).

NEW SERVICE Grant Palmer 78 (Luton – Streatley – Lower & Upper Sundon)

Service operates twice per day, from Luton at 08.26 and 11.56*, before returning from Upper Sundon 08.46* and 12.19, serving Lower Sundon three minutes later.
* also via Bushmead

NEW SERVICE Grant Palmer Service 79 (Luton – Streatley – Barton-le-Clay – Shillington – Meppershall – Sheffield)

New direct service (also see Centrebus 78 above) which runs five times per day weekdays, or three times on Saturdays.

From Monday 23rd October 2017

Stagecoach Bedford Local Services 1 (Kempston), 2 (Elstow Park & Ride), 3 (Fenlake), 4 (Goldington via Holbury), 7 (Woodside), 8 (Great Denham) and (Goldington via Putnoe)

Minor timetable changes are being made to routes 1, 2, 3,

4, 7, 8 & 10 are being made to improve the reliability of these services.

Grant Palmer Services 25/26 (Bedford – Harrold – Carlton) Route change in Carlton, with both northbound and southbound buses using the same set of bus stops. Also see the and 9th April 2018 entry.

Stagecoach in Bedford Service 73 (Biggleswade – Sandy – Bedford) Early morning timetable changes, and also see 12th March 2018 entry.

Centrebus 85/85A (Biggleswade Town Services) Revised timetable to enhance connections with rail services, but the Sunday Service withdrawn.

Centrebus Service 188/190 (Hitchin – Biggleswade – Sandy) Revised times with peak time timetable changes.

Grant Palmer Service 200 (Biggleswade – Shefford – Flitwick) Service diverted via Gravenhurst, minor changes to timetable. Most Service 200's at Flitwick will continue then as Service 44 to Bedford.

From Monday 4th December 2017

Centrebus Luton Town Service 19 (Church Street – Wigmore Lane and Stopsley) Revised timetable to improve reliability.

Centrebus Services 34/35 (Dunstable – St Albans) Revised times, with most journeys on Service 34 also serving Langdale Estate.

Centrebus Service 231 (Luton – Caddington – Dunstable) Revised timetable to improve reliability.

Centrebus Service B (Luton – Dunstable – Downside Estate) Revised Sunday timetable to improve reliability.

Centrebus Service G (Luton – Dunstable – Langdale Estate) Withdrawn and replaced on the busway by Services AZ/ZA and 34 and X31 to Langdale Estate.

Centrebus Service Y (Luton – Dunstable – Houghton Regis) Withdrawn and replaced by Services AZ/ZA.

NEW SERVICE Centrebus Service AZ (Luton – Dunstable – Houghton Regis – Lewsey Farm – L&D Hospital – Luton) and Service ZA (in reverse of above) Half hourly service introduced as a complete circle. Services registered as two separate routes A and Z (thus matching Arriva!) but running through in a circle.

Centrebus Service X31 (Luton – Dunstable – Milton Keynes) Services to and from Milton Keynes withdrawn. This had been proposed earlier in 2017, but some support from Milton Keynes Council continued, enabling the service to continue then. The Luton – Dunstable service is now half-hourly, with buses then continuing as 34/35 to St Albans, or every hour to Langdale Estate, as a replacement for Service G.

From Monday 18th December 2018
South Beds Dial A Ride Service 43 (Studham – Hockliffe – Leighton Buzzard) No longer serving Salters Way. Service 74 (below) will serve Salters Way.

South Beds Dial A Ride Service 74 (Dunstable – Tebworth – Toddington)

New extension to and from Hockliffe/Dunstable. Revised timings, now via Salters Way in Dunstable. Also see 11th March 2018 entry.

South Beds Dial A Ride Service 232 (Pepperstock – Caddington – Dunstable) Revised timetable.

From Tuesday 2nd January 2018

Arriva Services 96/96A (Letchworth & Arlesey Circular) Service withdrawn but replaced by Centrebus Service 96/96A on a revised timetable).

Centrebus Service 96/96A (Letchworth & Arlesey Circular) New service with slightly reduced early morning/late evening service, and reduced Saturdays (see timetable in Newsletter 34).

Arriva Service 97 (Hitchin – Letchworth – Stotfold/Arlesey)

Withdrawn between Arlesey and Stotfold, aside from journeys for Etonbury Middle School. Peak period adjustments made with some 97's replaced by 98 (Hitchin – Letchworth – Baldock), and vice-versa.

From Sunday 14th January 2018

Courtney Buses Luton Flyer 350 (Luton Airport – Slough – Reading – Bracknell) Service withdrawn following poor demand.

From Sunday 29th January 2018

Uno Services C1/C10/C11 (Bedford – Cranfield – Milton Keynes) and Service C12 (Cranfield University – Marston Moretaine – Lidlington – Cranfield Circular) Revised route in Milton Keynes on Saturdays, additional journey to Bourne End and minor timetable changes. Route C12 extended to Cranfield University Innovation Centre. A new timetable can be had on Page 19 for Service C12.

From Monday 19th February 2018

Grant Palmer Service C (Luton – Dunstable – Weatherby Estate) and CX (Luton – Dunstable – Amazon) Minor changes to route and timetable.

Centrebus Service X31 (Luton – Dunstable) One additional Dunstable service will be extended to Langdale Estate.

From Monday 5th March 2018

Stagecoach in Bedford Service 11 (Bedford – Biddenham – Great Denham) Withdrawn but see below for a part replacement. (Incidentally Stagecoach 8 is also on diversion past the rail station at the moment, until July).

NEW SERVICE Grant Palmer Service 11 (Bedford – Biddenham – Great Denham) Some journeys from this service are being maintained after Stagecoach have pulled out – the 06.10, 06.49, 07.19 from Great Denham, and the 18.12, 18.43 and 19.15 back from the railway station. Also see Service 24 (below).

Grant Palmer Service 24 (Bedford – Kempston – Great Denham) Revised timetable for service 24, with journeys after

17.30 withdrawn (and replaced by Service 11).

From w/c Sunday 11th March 2018

Arriva Luton Town Service 32/33 (Luton Interchange - Hockwell Ring)

Some timetable changes to both services, with the withdrawal of some early morning and evening journeys. Some of the morning 33's which are being withdrawn will be replaced with short service 32 journeys from Beechwood Road to Luton Town Centre.

Arriva Leighton Buzzard Local Services 32/33 (Station – Brooklands Drive)

Following changes to services 70 & F70, Arriva are revising the Leighton Buzzard local services, withdrawing service 33 and extending service 32. Service 32 will serve Stanbridge and Tilsworth.

Arriva Services 70 and F70 [and new F77] (Luton – Leighton Buzzard – Milton Keynes)

Service 70 is withdrawn and replaced by new Service F77. F70 timetable is being revised to improve reliability. New route F77 is introduced as a partial replacement for withdrawn service 70 operating via the Busway, Dunstable, Stanbridge, Leighton Buzzard and Bletchley.

South Beds Dial A Ride Service 74 (Tilsworth – Dunstable)

Service 74 will now serve Tilsworth village and no longer serve Goose Green (Hockliffe) but will still serve Hockliffe southbound. The change is due to the withdrawal of the Arriva 70 service.

From Monday 12th March 2018

Stagecoach in Bedford Service 73 (Biggleswade – Sandy – Bedford) and

X5 (Oxford – Bedford – Cambridge)

New timetables to improve reliability.

FUTURE SERVICE CHANGES after the publication date of this Newsletter

From Friday 30th March 2018

NEW SERVICE Centrebus 200 (Luton – Dunstable – Whipsnade Zoo)

New daily service (including bank holidays) during the Easter School Holidays Only – or Easter Holiday Weekend, depending where you believe! This is running as an experiment, to improve access to Whipsnade Zoo. Whether or not the service returns in the future will depend on passenger use. The bus will leave Luton Interchange at 10.00 and 11.00, returning from the Zoo at 16.45 and 17.45, taking about 24 minutes.

From Tuesday 3rd April 2018

Centrebus Services 34/35 (Dunstable – St Albans)

Revised timetable in the peak periods.

Uno Services 610/611 (Enfield Town - Cockfosters – Hatfield – Luton)

Saturday Service introduced into Luton and Central Beds to run Potters Bar – Luton.

During the week, in the morning and afternoon peaks, an additional new service will run as Service 612 on schooldays only (presumably Uni of Herts days!) serving Oaklands College, Sandridge, Marshalwick, Wheathampstead, Harpenden, then Newmill End, Luton Airport Parkway Station (for Airport bus) before running onto central Luton.

The service will now be branded Dragonfly, and will get new luxury buses, to include Wi-Fi, USB chargers, leather seats, and more besides. The vehicles are the first of

their kind in the world – a Volvo B8 chassis with new MCV Evora bodywork.

From Monday 9th April 2018

Grant Palmer Service 25/26 (Bedford – Rushden – Harrold) and Service 68 (Bedford – Kempston – Stewartby)

Buses on route 68 will operate hourly off peak and will extend to Ampthill following customer requests.

- Buses on route 26 will be renumbered 25.
- Buses on route 25 will operate up to hourly between Bedford and Harrold. A revised timetable will be introduced to improve reliability and offer improved journeys to Bedford and Rushden.

Two brand new buses are presently in course of delivery to the company, and we also hear that the revised 25 and new 68 will change to run through Bedford together. You can see the new timetable for Service 25 on Pages 20/21 and Service 68 on Pages 22/23.

From Monday 16th April 2018

Cozy Travel BVC5 (Eyeworth – Biggleswade – Ashwell – Basingbourn Village College)

Service withdrawn, a partial replacement will be on Service BVC2.

Travelling Outwith Your Bus Pass – **Part One: By Train** ***By Suzy Scott***

Your bus pass is valid across all bus services in England at off-peak times, but Bedfordshire bus pass holders can also get money off with trains too!

Thameslink and Great Northern provides 50% off any journey wholly in Herts & Beds i.e. from Elstree & Borehamwood – Bedford on Thameslink, or Potters Bar or Hadley Wood or Crews Hill as far as Royston or Sandy on Great Northern. The offer is valid after 10.00 Monday-Friday, or anytime Saturday, Sundays, Public Holidays. Accompanied children £2 tickets can be added if needed. For journeys outwith these areas, an extra ticket at full fare needs to be bought. Get these from any GTR ticket office, or ticket vending machine (Buy a CHILD priced ticket from the latter – this might flag up by the ticket gate, but the staff are aware of this permission).

For the holders of Bedford Borough or Central Bedfordshire ENCTS pass, London Midland provides 50% off any journey on the Marston Vale line, between Bedford and Bletchley. Valid after 10.00 Monday-Friday, or anytime Saturday, Sundays, Public Holidays. For journeys outwith these areas, an extra ticket at full fare needs to be bought. Get these from any ticket office, or conductor at unstaffed stations.

In Part Two, I will go through ticketing options for National Express coaches, and how to get discounts and save money, as well as the services you can access at Milton Keynes and Luton.



CRANFIELD - MARSTON MORETAINE (Circular)

C12

Monday to Friday (exc PH)

Schedule commences 28th January 2018

Service No	C12	C12	C12	C12	C12
Cranfield Innovation Centre (Adj)	0933	1058	1228	1358	1528
Cranfield University, Main Gate (NB)	0935	1100	1230	1400	1530
Bourne End, Bourne End Road	0940	1105	1235	1405	1535
Cranfield, The Co-Op (Opp)	0946	1111	1241	1411	1541
Cranfield, War Memorial (Adj)	0949	1114	1244	1414	1544
Cranfield Innovation Centre (Adj)	0954	1119	1249	1419	1549
Cranfield University, Main Gate (NB)	0959	1124	1254	1424	1554
Cranfield, Crane Way (EB)	1006	1131	1301	1431	1601
Marston Moretaine, Moreteyne Road (Adj)	1014	1139	1309	1439	1609
Marston Moretaine, Gold Furlong	1018	1143	1313	1443	1613
Marston Moretaine, Social Club (Adj)	1021	1146	1316	1446	1616
Lidlington, Great Farm Close (Opp)	1023	1148	1318	1448	1618
Lidlington, Railway Station (NB) 	1025	1150	1320	1450	1620
Brogborough, Shops (Adj)	1029	1154	1324	1454	1624
Ridgmont Railway Station 	1033	1158	1328	1458	1628
Brogborough, Shops (Opp)	1036	1201	1331	1501	1631
Marston Moretaine, Moreteyne Park	1043	1208	1338	1508	1638
Cranfield, Crane Way (WB)	1050	1215	1345	1515	1645
Cranfield University, Main Gate (SB)	1055	1220	1350	1520	1650
Cranfield Innovation Centre (Opp)	1057	1222	1352	1522	1652

25



Bedford - Harrold - Carlton / Rushden

Includes journeys to Rushden

from 9th April 2018

Mondays to Saturdays

	25 MF	25 S	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25 S	25	25	25
Bedford, Bus Station (Stop R)	0715	0800	0910	-	1010	1110	1210	1310	1410	1520	1610	1720	1820
Sainsburys Clapham	0718	0803	0913	-	1013	1113	1213	1313	1413	1523	1613	1723	1823
Clapham, Highbury Grove	0721	0806	0916	-	1016	1116	1216	1316	1416	1526	1616	1726	1826
Oakley, Lovell Road	0724	0809	0919	-	1019	1119	1219	1319	1419	1529	1619	1729	1829
Pavenham, Weavers Lane	0730	-	0925	-	-	1125	-	1325	-	-	1625	-	-
Stevington, opp Stevington Cross	-	0814	-	-	1024	-	1224	-	1424	1534	-	1734	1834
Carlton, The Fox	-	0826	0936	-	1036	1136	1236	1336	1436	1546	1636	1746	1846
Carlton, Crossroads	-	0827	0937	-	1037	1137	1237	1337	1437	1547	1637	1747	1847
Carlton, Post Office	-	0827	0937	-	1037	1137	1237	1337	1437	1547	1637	1747	1847
Harrold, The Institute	-	0832	0942	-	1042	1142	1242	1342	1442	1552	1642	1752	1852
Hinwick, o/s Park Farm	-	-	-	-	1053	-	-	-	-	-	1653	-	-
Podington, o/s Church	-	-	-	-	1055	-	-	-	-	-	1655	-	-
Odell, opp The Green	-	0836	-	-	-	1146	-	1346	1446	-	-	-	1856
Sharnbrook, St Peter's Church (Stop T)	-	-	-	0930	-	1152	-	1352	1452	-	-	-	1902
Souldrop, Stocking Lane (E-bound)	-	-	-	0934	-	1156	-	1356	-	-	-	-	-
Knotting, o/s St Margaret's Church	-	-	-	0942	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Melchbourne, Knotting Road (N-bound)	-	-	-	0946	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Yelden, opp Spring Lane	-	-	-	0950	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wymington, opp Church Lane	-	-	-	1002	1058	1204	-	1404	-	-	1658	-	-
Rushden, Skinners Hill	-	-	-	1007	1103	1209	-	1409	-	-	1703	-	-

 Mondays to Fridays only
 Saturdays only

 Saturdays only

25



Rushden - Harrold - Carlton - Bedford

Includes journeys to Rushden
2018

from 9th April

Mondays to Saturdays

	25 MF	25 MF	25 S	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
Rushden, Skinners Hill	-	-	-	-	1010	1110	-	1250	1410	-	1710	-
Wymington, adj Church Lane	-	-	-	-	1020	1120	-	1300	1420	-	1720	-
Podington, opp Church	-	-	-	-	1023	-	-	-	1423	-	1723	-
Hinwick, opp Park Farm	-	-	-	-	1025	-	-	-	1425	-	1725	-
Yelden, adj Trailly Close	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1312	-	-	-	-
Melchbourne, Knotting Road (S-bound)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1316	-	-	-	-
Knotting, opp St Margaret's Church	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1320	-	-	-	-
Souldrop, Stocking Lane (W-bound)	-	0828	-	-	-	1128	-	1328	-	-	-	-
Sharnbrook, St Peter's Church (Stop S)	0632	0832	-	-	-	1132	-	1332	-	-	-	1902
Odell, adj The Green	0638	0838	0838	-	-	1138	-	1338	-	-	-	-
Harrold, o/s The Institute	0642	0842	0842	0942	1042	1142	1242	1342	1442	1642	1742	-
Carlton, o/s The Fox	0648	0848	0848	0948	1048	1148	1247	1348	-	1648	1748	-
Carlton, o/s 2 The Causeway	0649	0849	0849	0949	1049	1149	1249	1349	-	1649	1749	-
Stevington, adj Stevington Cross	0658	0858	0858	-	1058	-	1258	-	-	1658	-	-
Pavenham, adj Weavers Lane	-	-	-	0958	-	1158	-	1358	-	-	1758	-
Oakley, opp Lovell Memorial Homes West	0704	0904	0904	1004	1104	1204	1304	1404	-	1704	1804	-
Clapham, adj Highbury Grove	0707	0907	0907	1007	1107	1207	1307	1407	-	1707	1807	-
Bedford, opp Sainsburys Clapham	0710	0910	0910	1010	1110	1210	1310	1410	-	1710	1810	-
Bedford, Bus Station (Stop R)	0715	0915	0915	1015	1115	1215	1315	1415	-	1715	1815	1922

Saturdays only
Mondays to Fridays only

68

Bedford, Bus Station (Stop R)
 Ampthill Road, Morrisons
 Kempston, Walcourt Road
 Kempston, Sainsbury's
 Box End, Slater's Arms
 Kempston, West End
 Wootton, Wootton Upper School
 Stewartby, Montgomery Close
 Ampthill, Prince of Wales
 Ampthill, Glebe Road
 Ampthill, Fallowfield



Bedford - Stewartby - Ampthill

Via Bedford Hospital, Kempston & Wootton

from 9th April 2018

Mondays to Saturdays

68	68	68	68	68	68	68	68	68
0735	0920	1020	1120	1220	1320	1420	1620	1750
0743	0928	1028	1128	1228	1328	1428	1633	1802
-	-	-	-	1239	-	-	1643	-
0752	0937	1037	1137	1242	1337	1437	1646	1811
-	-	-	-	1247	-	-	1650	-
-	-	-	-	1250	-	-	1653	-
-	-	-	-	1258	-	-	1700	-
0806	0951	1051	1151	1306	1351	1451	1708	1825
-	0957	1057	1157	-	1357	1457	-	-
-	1000	1100	1200	-	1400	1500	-	-
-	1001	1101	1201	-	1401	1501	-	-

Sorry, no service on Sundays or Public Holidays

68

Amphill, Fallowfield
Amphill, Prince of Wales
Stewartby, Montgomery Close
Wootton, Wooton Upper School
Kempston, West End
Box End, Slaters Arms
Kempston, Sainsbury's
Kempston, Orchard Street
Kempston, Walcourt Road
Amphill Road, Morrisons
Bedford Hospital A&E (Stop E)
Bedford, Bus Station



Amphill - Stewartby - Bedford

Via Wootton, Kempston & Bedford Hospital

from 9th April 2018

Mondays to Saturdays

68	68	68	68	68	68	68	68	68
-	-	-	1001	1101	1201	-	1501	-
-	-	-	1008	1110	1210	-	1510	-
0705	0818	0928	1018	1118	1218	1308	1540	1710
-	-	-	1029	-	-	1319	-	-
-	-	-	1035	-	-	1325	-	-
-	-	-	1038	-	-	1328	-	-
0717	0834	0944	1044	1134	1234	1334	1556	1726
0721	0838	0948	-	1138	1238	-	1600	1730
-	-	-	1047	-	-	1337	-	-
0725	0842	0952	1054	1142	1242	1344	1605	1736
0727	0844	0954	1056	1144	1244	1346	1607	1739
0733	0850	1000	1102	1150	1250	1352	1617	1747

Sorry, no service on Sundays or Public Holidays

How do we make the bus more appealing to young people?

By Transport Focus



Young people are the biggest users of the bus – but don't feel services are designed for them.

Transport Focus held a launch event in Birmingham earlier this month to talk about the results of the *Using the bus – what young people think* report. We brought together bus operators and local authorities, young people who use the bus and experts from outside the transport sector to start addressing how to make using the bus more appealing to young people.

Director David Sidebottom said:

"We know that young people – like most other public transport users – are concerned with the value for money, punctuality and reliability of their service. Our report is a call to action for governments, local authorities and bus operators to act now to make sure they don't lose their customers of the future."

Young people had the opportunity to directly share their personal experiences of using the bus with members of the bus industry as well as having the opportunity to ask questions.

While several bus operators have brought in initiatives, including cheaper fares and Wi-Fi for example, the report finds that such schemes are limited across the country.

Young people said that:

- they don't feel services are designed with them in mind, or that enough is being done to encourage them and make them feel valued
- not knowing how the system works or what to do is a barrier and a source of anxiety about 'getting it right'
- improving the journey experience is important
- there is a need to design systems better, learning from other industries in the way they appeal to young people
- fares for young people are confusing and inconsistent. Over half didn't know what special fares and discounts are available for young people or even if they are available at all.

To maintain the momentum the watchdog will follow up with workshops to help operators and authorities focus on how to improve young people's experience of bus.

The EU Is Giving Teens a Month of Free Train Travel Across Europe ***By Feargus O' Sullivan, Citylab.com***

The cultural enrichment plan could change young lives, and maybe even revive the heyday of the Interrail train pass. As state-funded freebies go, a plan just confirmed by the EU seems too good to be true.

This summer, the European Commission is offering 18-year-old European residents a free Interrail ticket—a rail pass that permits travel across 30 European countries for a month. What's more, they're not just offering it to one or two teenagers.

With a budget of €12 million for this year, the commission plans to fund trips for 20,000 to 30,000 young people, with the possibility of more passes in the years to come. Exact details of how to apply and who will be get an Interrail pass, worth up to €510 (\$628), will be released in the next few months.

But one thing is already clear: A large town's worth of European 18-year-olds will be able to travel from Lapland to Lisbon by train this summer, and the price they will pay is precisely nothing.

Why fund a bunch of free trips? The intent is to broaden young participants' horizons and hopefully instill some sense of Europe's connections. "Education is not only about what we learn in the classroom, but what we discover about the cultures and traditions of our fellow Europeans," Tibor Navracsics, E.U. Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, said in a press release.

The commission has certainly chosen its tool wisely. For decades, spending a month traveling through Europe with the Interrail pass was not just a cheap way to get around Europe. For many, it was a latter-day version of the 18th century Grand Tour, a chance to discover first-hand what the continent actually was, and to explore its nature and heritage.

Visiting any major European station 25 years ago, you would have found the summer platforms packed with young people using Interrail passes, heading off to pretty much wherever they fancied on a whim.

Its price—a then-steep £27.50 (\$38) when first launched in 1972—meant that the experience was largely confined to young people who had middle- or upper-income parents, or who had jobs to help them save up.

In an era when flights were still an exorbitant luxury and part-time jobs for teenagers more readily available, it was still a great deal. Night trains made it possible to cut accommodation costs, and the sheer range of countries included— all of Western Europe and even much of the Eastern bloc before 1989—was dizzying.

In 1998, the pass had its age limit removed (before that, it was only available to people under 26), but by then, the heyday of Interrail was waning. The pass shifted to a zone model, where countries were sorted into different price bands, and costs steadily rose.

Above all, it was the cheaper flights available from the late 1990s that made the pass's opportunities less special. With advanced booking, it became possible to

fly across Europe for very little cash, and while Interrail tickets have remained on sale, its cultural place as a youth phenomenon has waned somewhat.

The E.U.'s championing of the pass as a motor for youth enlightenment—and finding funds to match the rhetoric—could well see Interrail's profile revive once more.

It is certainly a pass that helped to transform my life. After saving money I'd earned working a year of Saturdays in a jelly bean store, I travelled on an Interrail pass at 17.

When I arrived back in London after the end of my month's travel, following a four-day overland from Istanbul, I was scrawny from stomach bugs and limping from an injury that was entirely the fault of my own stupidity, after scrambling over a railway track with no shoes on. I also had a head full of impressions that have never left me, and set me on a path toward sitting here, writing this.

British teenagers today will still get a chance to apply for a free pass—for now, anyway, the U.K. is still in the EU. It's still somewhat sad, as someone to whom that summer of travel meant so much, to see this new door for young people opening just as Britain's door to the EU starts to swing shut.

Satisfaction With Stagecoach Bus Services Rises To 90% ***From the Stagecoach Press Office***

Satisfaction with Stagecoach bus services has risen to 90%, according to

independent research by consumer watchdog Transport Focus.

Britain's biggest bus and coach operator recorded the biggest improvement in overall passenger satisfaction of any major UK operator.

Customer also once again rated Stagecoach as the best value of the major UK bus operators, for the fifth year in a row.

More than 9 in 10 customers in Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Tees Valley and Tyne and Wear gave the thumbs up to the company's services, while the company also recorded high levels of satisfaction in Scotland and Wales.

The results follow continued significant investment by Stagecoach in new low emissions buses, smart ticketing, contactless travel and live bus tracking.

Stagecoach Managing Director for Stagecoach UK Bus in England and Wales, Mark Threapleton, said: "These independent results are a fantastic endorsement of the hard work of our employees across the UK in delivering better bus services, better customer service and industry-leading value for money.

"Bus users in metro-mayor areas across England, including Greater Manchester, are backing the work we're doing in partnership with other operators and transport authorities to provide easier, more affordable and better joined up journeys. We are also seeing high levels of satisfaction with our bus services in the rest of England as well as in Scotland and Wales.

“We know there is still more work for us to do, but we desperately need tougher action from local authorities to address the impact of car congestion. Congestion is damaging local air quality, slowing bus journey speeds, holding back our economy, and pushing up the cost of transport for local people. It is also undermining the gains in bus use that we have delivered through our continued investment in better bus services for local communities over many years.”

The detailed results also showed:

- 90% of Stagecoach customers reported being satisfied with their bus service, compared to 86% the previous year. 88% of Stagecoach customers and 90% in Wales said they were satisfied overall.
- Average satisfaction with all bus operators across England was 88%, across Scotland was 89% and across Wales was 90%.
- 68% of Stagecoach customers in England said they were satisfied with value for money - the highest of any major operator.
- The highest scoring Stagecoach companies on overall satisfaction were Stagecoach in Nottinghamshire (94%), Stagecoach Merseyside (93%), Stagecoach South Yorkshire (92%) and Stagecoach in Tyne and Wear (92%)
- Overall satisfaction with Stagecoach bus services in Manchester rose from 82% last year to 91% this year. 75% of Stagecoach customers in Manchester are satisfied with value for money, well above the national

average, and a rise from 71% last year.

- Overall, Stagecoach passengers are more satisfied with punctuality than during the previous year, up from 72% to 75%.
- Satisfaction among Stagecoach customers with on-bus journey time has also increased from 82% to 85%
- 93% of Stagecoach customers in the south east of England reported being satisfied with the safety of driving on their journeys
- Most Stagecoach bus companies in England and Scotland said their biggest priorities going forward are making buses more frequent and more reliable.

Stagecoach has made a series of improvements to help transform bus travel for customers, including the 'Stagecoach Bus' smartphone app which provides customers with journey planning, next-stop information and live bus tracking, and enables people to buy and download bus tickets straight to their mobile phone.

Contactless payments – along with Apple Pay and Android Pay – are now accepted on buses in Oxfordshire, Manchester, the North East, South East, South, Yorkshire, Merseyside and South Lancashire, East, West and Wales, with the technology to be available at all Stagecoach bus companies by 2018.

More than £1billion has been invested in new buses and coaches for the UK in the last 11 years.

The group for anyone who uses the bus... whichever bus you use...



If you'd like to become part of a group with a proven track record in helping as well as lobbying, across Bedford Borough and parts of Central Beds, then we'd love to hear from you! You can find our brochures in many libraries and information points around Bedfordshire. Alternatively, please call 0871 228 2287 anytime, 24 hours a day. Leave a message with your name and address, and tell us where you saw this advert, and we'll send you a brochure, and copy of our most recent Newsletter. Or, email **2018advert@babus.org.uk** or visit our website at **www.babus.org.uk**



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