

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE BUS SERVICE INFORMATION – **APPENDIX 2: BIGGLESWADE AND SANDY DISTRICTS**

Route maps in the Central Bedfordshire timetable booklet dated February 2010.

In preparing this report this booklet has been used for guidance as to where infrequent bus routes are scheduled to operate. However, both maps in the booklet are incorrect in respect of some parts of the routes for **M3**, **E1**, **E2** and **IS3**. These services actually run to and from **Drove Road** via the corner of **Eagle Farm Road** and **London Road**, not via **The Baulk**. Another criticism of the maps is that the route numbers (in the colour-coded diamonds) are so tiny that a magnifying glass is needed in order to read them. Route numbers are not tied to any particular operator so it is a disadvantage to use colour-codes.

In Sandy the Bedford-bound M3 route actually runs via West Road and Old London Road after the reversal in Engayne Avenue. The map (page 54) doesn't even show West Road, and demonstrates a serious misconception of the route and road geographies at the A1 flyover at the north end of Sandy. At this location the Biggleswade-bound M3 route turns off the A1 to go under the flyover. It then curves round to the left to go southward over the bridge and into St Neots Road, before serving **Engayne Avenue**. The map seems to indicate four passages under the **A1**: there is only one, at the old railway bridge.

Bus Stop Information

The Baulk -There is just one pair of bus-stop flags near the Library. They are both decrepit and have neither timetables nor road markings. The only route that does go (one way) via **The Baulk** is the **187** circular.

Biggleswade Railway Station. Two of the **E1** services start at the railway station and can reach the bus station through one of two routes, either via the one-way system or via Station Road. **Routes 82, 197, 200, E7, IS1a & IS4** are all meant to pass the railway station on their southward runs. This is sometimes impracticable when there is traffic congestion on **Market Square**. On such occasions buses are likely to run via **Teal Road** in order to try and maintain scheduled times. There are two flagged bus stops at the station, on opposite sides of the **station square**. The one at the **north side** has a shelter and seat, plain flag, no timetable case, no road marking. The one at the **south side** has a smart flag showing historical routes EB1 and EB2 to Town Centre, Dunton, Wrestlingworth, Cockayne Hatley, Sutton, Potton and Everton, but no shelter, no timetable case, no road marking. This stop is used for rail-replacement buses.

At the **railway station itself**, there is a full set of timetables for all services in the town. There are also various maps of the town at the station, though there is no attempt on them to show where the bus services go.

Langford Road southbound. Three bus stops with plain flags but no road markings.

Langford Road northbound. Three bus stops with plain flags. Only one has road marking.

Teal Road northbound. One bus stop with plain flag and road marking. None within this group have timetable cases.

Route 185 is an hourly, partly one-way service (operated alternately with route **187**). It starts as a two-way route, shared with two **M4** services (early morning and evening only), along **Dells Lane** (one pair of stops), then **Mead End** (3 or 4 pairs of stops). Some stops in **Mead End** – e.g. southbound at the shops and school – are unmarked, and seem to operate just with local tradition. The northbound stop at the shops has a shelter, seat, timetable case and timetable. The stops at the southern end of **Mead End** are flagged at just one side of the road, but the flag does show this.

Holme Court Avenue has a further four pairs of stops with **M4** flags. There is one stop with a shelter and seat and timetable case with timetable M4. Another stop has a timetable case and timetable. After serving **Saxon Industrial Estate**, **Saxon Drive** and **Chambers Way**, the return route of the **185** is via **Kitelands Road**, in which there is one stop with shelter and seat. The booklet timetable describes this stop as Kitelands Road Post Office; it is some distance from the shop that was the PO. (See the comment in the paragraph on **London Road** re the stop directly opposite the end of **Kitelands Road**.) None of these stops have any road markings. The timetables for **M4** only, not for the **185**.

From the far end of **Holme Court Avenue** the **185** route continues via **Saxon Industrial Estate**. The two stops in **Normandy Lane** and **Montgomery Way** have shelters and seats. However, the first timetabled bus of the day to the industrial estate is 10.00 ex Biggleswade, so it is doubtful whether any of the workers there use the bus to get to work. The timetabled **M4** service from **Holme Court Avenue** at 07.25 has to get to that point from the depot, but the trip out from town is not in the public timetable. There are two timetabled **185** services and an **M4** service back to town in the evening. There may be users of these services, but obviously not workers with conventional working hours.

The **185** route continues from **London Road Retail Park** round **Saxon Drive** and **Chambers Way** to get back to **Kitelands Road**, but there are only two flags on this loop. They are quite close to each other – a decrepit one on **Saxon Drive** near the Leisure Centre and a smarter one at the **Leisure Centre**. The timetable in the booklet cites “**Saxon Drive, Saxon Pool and LC**”, so it is not clear whether the **185** uses this smarter stop.

On **London Road** there are five pairs of stops. The first pair, near the Library, are served by **M3**, **E1**, **E2** and **E4**. Neither of this pair is road-marked in any way and they are in an area that is occupied throughout the day by commuters’ cars, so any bus stopping there is going to be ‘double-parked’. Most of the other stops in **London Road** are served only by **E4**. The one stop that could be used on the **185** route is directly opposite the end of **Kitelands Road**, into which the bus must then turn right. This stop is therefore badly sited. Several flags on **London Road** still bear route numbers EB1, EB2, and also 175 and 177 from many years ago when Whippet ran two services a day to Cambridge via Wrestlingworth. There is a further pair of bus stops just outside the town in **Dunton Lane**, near the **Mobile Home Park**. Most of the stops in this **London-Road** group have timetable cases, relevant timetables (**E4**), but no road markings.

Drove Road, Potton Road, St John’s Street and Sun Street. The first pair of stops in **Drove Road** (near **Eagle Farm Road**) are both on double yellow lines in this narrow road. There is often a queue of vehicles waiting to exit **Drove Road** into **London Road**, so drivers of long vehicles coming the other way have problems negotiating this corner.

There are three more pairs of stops in **Drove Road** on the **M3** route, then one pair in **Potton Road**, one pair in **St John’s Street** and another pair in **Sun Street** (outbound with timetable case and timetable **M3**) on the **M3** and **187** routes. From Sun Street one can see an unused flag in **Fairfield Road**, and there is another unused one in **Birch Road**. These two are remnants from a discontinued circular service around this housing development. There is a further pair of stops on **Potton Road**, just beyond **Stratton Way**. It is assumed that they must be for the **E1**, **E2** and **IS3** routes.

The **187** route runs anti-clockwise via **The Baulk, Hitchmead Road** (no flagged stops there), **Stratton Way** with two pairs of stops (the southbound ones not used now), then a section of **Drove Road** southbound with one stop. This is followed by a trip along **Banks Road** with one stop at the end. **187** then goes along **Furzenhall Road** to proceed around **Winston Crescent** with one flagged stop and another with a shelter but no flag. The only timetables for routes **185** or **187** are in the booklet and at the railway and bus stations; there are no route numbers on the flags, including at the bus station.

Shortmead Street and Sainsbury’s. The **M4** services use this direct route. There are two pairs of

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stops in **Shortmead Street** and another pair at **Sainsbury's**. The outbound one has its own little bus lane with timetable case and timetables for **M3** and **M4** with times from Biggleswade bus station. The **inbound** stop is less well equipped. The timetable there is for the **M3 running in the opposite direction (to Bedford)** and the times are those **from the bridge at Beeston**. The timetable for the **M4** is relevant.

Biggleswade Bus Station. There is an almost complete set of timetables with the **185, 187, E** and **IS** routes displayed in one big case. Timetables for routes **193** and **197** are missing. The timetable for the **82** service is displayed in a case which is too narrow, so the beginnings of the stage points are hidden. The timetable for the **82** is not the easiest to read because it takes in the whole route, including the **Purwell** end at **Hitchin**. There are no route numbers on any flags to tell passengers where to wait on either side of the bus station, other than for **M3**. **M4** has no flag. The three cases with for bus information on the west side are used for that purpose. The two frames on the east side have been vandalised and misappropriated for other purposes. Bus timetables for the **M3** and **M4** are displayed in the case headed 'Events'.

In the interval 13.25 to 13.30 Mondays to Fridays it is possible to observe buses on routes **82, 187, 200, E1, E4** and **E7** competing for space on the western and southern stands at the bus station. This assembly of public transport, coupled with the midday traffic, often causes traffic jams affecting the **High Street**.

General. Few of the bus stops have road markings to help bus drivers locate stops and to indicate to other drivers that they should not park there. Some bus stop flags show a Traveline 'phone number; none have a national bus stop number or text (SMS) code that defines the bus stop. Few flags indicate the routes that use the stop and there are few timetables or cases. Real time information has yet to reach Biggleswade. There are few shelters and seats.

Sandy Station

Two sets of flags and route information on same post! Information (both lots) advises EB1, EB2 to Sandy TC, Everton, Potton, Sutton, Cockayne Hatley and Wrestlingworth. No reference to current routes or timetable information noted.

Sandy Market Square

Bus Shelter serves all routes in all directions. No Stagecoach flag but standard council flag showing Dart services EB1, EB2 plus Mars to Bedford and Mars to Biggleswade. Timetable information in shelter covers Mars3, E2, 3, 5, 7.