



Newsletter 23

Autumn 2014



*One of the new Enviro 200 (E20D) diesel buses bought by Stagecoach for Bedford Park & Ride last year. **Suzy Scott***

- Changes to your Committee
- Minutes from 2014 Annual General Meeting & Chairman's Report
- Hertfordshire Consults on evening/Sunday buses, including the 97



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

Welcome to the BABUS Newsletter 23

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!

Your **Newsletter** is compiled by Miss Suzy Scott, who can be contacted by post at Apartment 4, 38-40 Stonehills, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, Hertfordshire, AL8 6PD. E-mail **suzy.scott@babus.org.uk** and is produced through her company, Here To There Publishing Ltd.

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

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

Any other written communications with the Society should be addressed to Miss Frances Horwood, 34 Rectory Orchard, LAVENDON, Olney, Buckinghamshire, MK46 4HB. E-mail **fhorwood@btinternet.com** (BABUS email address to follow!)

Join our Facebook group **www.facebook.com/groups/BABUSbeds/** or follow us on Twitter @BABUSbeds **www.twitter.com/BABUSbeds** - use **#BABUSbeds**

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.

Next Newsletter Deadline Date for News and Contributions...
....Monday 17th November 2014

Our New Look Committee

Further to our annual General Meeting on Saturday 5th July 2014 (minutes following next in this Newsletter), our Committee has been revamped. Thanks to those who responded to our requests for help.

For the benefit of everyone reading this newsletter, here's a quick run-down on who the committee members are – as at Monday 15th September 2014;

John Smith – Chair and Committee Member

Colin Franklin - Vice Chair and Committee Member

Francis Horwood (Miss) – Secretary and Committee Member

Simon Norton – Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Committee Member

Martin Brookes – Publicity Officer and Committee Member

Suzy Scott (Miss) – Communications Officer (incorporating Website, Newsletter, Inbound Communications via telephone/fax/web) and Committee Member.

Marilyn Basketter (Mrs) - Committee Member Without Portfolio

Minutes of 2014 Annual General Meeting

By Peter G. Williams

Bedford Area Bus Users' Society
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
of the Bedford Area Bus
Users' Society held at the Woolpack
Hub, Commercial Road, Bedford,
on Saturday 5 July 2014.

Present:

Godfrey Willis – Chairman

Colin Franklin – Vice Chairman

Martin Brookes – Publicity Officer

Frances Horwood - Committee Member

Simon Norton – Membership Secretary

Suzy Scott – Communications Officer

Stephen Sleight – Bedfordshire Rural
Transport Partnership

John Smith – Committee Member

Peter G Williams – Secretary and
Treasurer

Eight other members were present
including our Speaker, Mrs Linda
McCord.

1 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed those present, explaining that the Meeting would be comprised of two parts: the first part being the conduct of business required for the continued operation of the Society followed by a presentation on the work of Passenger Focus.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Marylin Basketter, Alan Hunter, Doreen Hunter, Elizabeth Hunter, Alan Sprod, Ian Wigley and John Yunnie.

3 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 15 June 2013

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

4 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5 Annual Report for year ending 31 March 2014

The Chairman verbally presented his Annual Report. This had not been circulated to members beforehand and would subsequently be published in the Newsletter. It is also appended to these Minutes. ***(ED: this follows in the next article in this Newsletter).***

6 Treasurer's Report for year ending 31 March 2014

Members had received copies of this with the A G M papers. There were no queries on the finances of the Society and the Report was received.

The Treasurer, Peter G Williams, proposed that "The Executive Committee be authorised to raise subscriptions for individuals 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". This was approved.

7 Election of Officers

The Chairman, Godfrey Willis, explained that there was a need to elect a new Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and that names had been submitted for individuals prepared to cover these posts. There were no further nominations from the floor.

The following Officers were elected:

Chairman – John Smith, proposed by Godfrey Willis, seconded by Suzy Scott
Vice-Chairman – Colin Franklin, proposed by Suzy Scott, seconded by Martin Brookes

Secretary – Frances Horwood, proposed by Godfrey Willis, seconded by Colin Franklin

Treasurer – Simon Norton, proposed by Godfrey Willis, seconded by Colin Franklin

Current Committee Members Martin Brookes (Publicity), Simon Norton (Membership with Treasurer) and Suzy Scott (Communications) were willing to stand again. There were no other nominations. Colin Franklin proposed that they be appointed "en bloc" and this was seconded by Frances Horwood. This was agreed by the Meeting.

The Chairman said that he wished to make a number of points. Following the serious illness of the previous Newsletter Editor, Alan Hopkinson, Suzy Scott had stepped in at short notice to cover the role. Since then there had been an impressive set of Newsletters published and Suzy was thanked for her hard work.

At the last meeting of the Executive Committee, Mrs Marylin Basketter of Sharnbrook had been co-opted to the Committee as 'Member Without Portfolio'. This was endorsed by the Meeting.

The Chairman then voiced serious concerns that there was now no representation on the Committee reflecting the interests of individual and corporate members in Central Bedfordshire. This weakness did not bode well for the future.

8 Any Other Business

- i. Simon Norton, Membership Secretary, provided a verbal summary of current membership numbers for the Society.
- ii. Martin Brookes wished to put on the record appreciation for the work of the retiring Chairman and Secretary, noting that much had been achieved through their hard work and efforts. Chris Pettifer said he wished to endorse those sentiments, registering his thanks to BABUS for fostering a unique relationship with local authorities and bus operators, based on professionalism and integrity.

The Chairman closed the formal part of the Meeting at 10:55 and introduced our Guest Speaker, Mrs Linda McCord, Passenger Manager, Passenger Focus who then gave a presentation describing the work of her organisation in promoting the interests of bus users.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2013/4

*By our outgoing Chair, Godfrey Willis,
who stood down at the AGM in July
2014.*

This report covers the activities of BABUS during the past membership year. As in previous years it can only be a summary as our Bulletin Board and regular Newsletters have carried detailed reports of meetings and events. The past year has been a bit like the "Curate's Egg" in that we have had some successes and some failures i.e. good and bad bits.

Following last year's elections your Committee has remained constant with Office Bearers carrying out their roles diligently. I wish to thank members of this committee for the effort and hard work put in to ensure that BABUS has continued to take forward its aims and objectives to remain an organisation respected by other parties within the local bus service world. I shall be dealing with two specific efforts later in this report.

Following on from the BUUK workshop in Birmingham last year we have met and struck up bonds with two neighbouring groups viz. Northampton and Milton Keynes and have found that as a South Midlands body we have several common issues and have avoided both duplication of, and varying approaches to, the same problems.

The principal "common" issue has concerned bus services to new housing estates. With each group highlighting instances, we have realised that the

issue is greater than a local one, and we are asking BUUK to take up the matter nationally.

The biggest success story of the year must be the smooth transition to on street bus terminals in Bedford following the closure of the old Bus Station. BABUS was involved from the outset and not only provided behind the scenes input, committee member Martin Brookes really went beyond the call of duty by assisting with the roadshows before the closure and spending days and days on the front line on behalf of both the local authority and the bus operators in directing bewildered passengers. The fact that this coincided with continual wet weather produced another reason why the Bedford members of the committee were invited by the Mayor to tea in his Parlour in appreciation of the efforts.

We have had some success through the Bedford Stations Travel Plan Meetings in highlighting bus services but on the negative side unfortunately we have not had much success at all with the Flitwick and Harlington Travel Plan.

Bus services within "our" area have remained generally consistent during the year but we note the considerable slowing down of the X5 due to increased traffic problems, the introduction of a new operator and additional routes to and from Milton Keynes, the emergence of Center Parcs at Woburn (albeit not yet operating public services) and changes in the Arlesey/Stotfold area.

Two items with which we believe we have had little success so far are the provision of roadside information within the urban area of Bedford Borough and a slight lack of joined-up thinking at Toddington between Bedford and Luton bound buses.

On the contrary we thank Bedford Borough Council for much detailed work undertaken to ensure that the rural area does have up-to-date bus information – alas lilac coloured bus flags tend to fade in the sun which, of course, is the prevailing weather north of Bedford.

Whilst on the subject of rural transport – we have to record two "near misses" or "almost successes". During the year a submission was made by Bedford Borough (in conjunction with BABUS and local operator Grant Palmer) to both the Association for Public Service Excellence and the National Transport Awards entitled "Fare Deal for Bedford Rural" showing how during times of financial austerity rural bus services had been retained north of the town. Whilst we reached the finals in both cases we did not win but on one of the awards nights seeing the Secretary of State for transport standing in front of a photo of a Grant Palmer bus was quite an achievement. At least we brought home the "runners up medal".

The other Committee member who needs special mention is the one whose output you can all see and judge – the newsletter editor. Twelve months ago I stood at the A.G.M. to advise how grateful the Society was to our webmistress, Suzy Scott, for stepping in

at short notice and producing a newsletter following the tragic illness of the current editor. Initially it was to be a temporary arrangement but after a year's worth of outputs I am sure that you will agree that our newsletter has gone from strength to strength and each edition is a hard act to follow but then...

There will be changes to your Committee after today's meeting as the positions of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer fall vacant following the standing down of long serving member Peter Williams plus myself. From a personal point of view I have enjoyed my time as Secretary and Chairman and when I took Mr Parkinson along with me all was well but, as some will be aware, he now tells me what to do and it is not possible to continue either in office or on the committee – I shall however remain a member.

We have some thoughts over possible replacements and these are subject to the election process to be held shortly BUT the Society is desperate for input from members in the Central Beds area – from the date of our AGM we have no-one on the Committee who resides in that area and thus BABUS will be without eyes and ears (or local knowledge) for the likes of Cranfield, Ampthill, Flitwick, Shefford, Pottton or Biggleswade, which is worrying especially as we believe that another round of budget cuts may well affect the future of local bus services shortly. If you live in those areas or know of a keen member who does then please

come forward – it will be too late when the last bus has gone!

I wish the Society every success in the forthcoming year and hope that it goes from strength to strength – when compared with some of the areas around us we have much to be thankful for.

Godfrey Willis
July 2014

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SECOND EDITION

Stagecoach East Fleet Handbook by Steven Knight Media

If you have an interest in the buses that operate for Stagecoach (the vehicles) operating in our area, this book will certainly be of interest! It's a fully illustrated guide to the Stagecoach East fleet – that's Bedford, Cambridge, The Fens and Peterborough areas. Full colour photography is used throughout.

The book is £5.50 plus £1.00 postage/packaging, with cheques payable to HERE TO THERE PUBLISHING LTD please! (NO cheque surcharge any longer!)

Post to;

Here To There Publishing Ltd
Apartment 4
38-40 Stonehills
WELWYN GARDEN CITY AL8 6PD

www.heretotherepublishing.com

Bus Service changes

By Suzy Scott

From Sunday 27th July 2014 Service X5 (Cambridge – Bedford – Oxford) was forced to change timetable again. We are told that this is down to National Express (who operate and control the station) reducing the number of X5-availible bays at MK Coachway from two to one. Therefore, almost all X5's towards Oxford are running ten minutes later than they do before.

From Sunday 31st August 2014, Stagecoach closed their outstation in Rushden. As a result, Service 51 (Bedford – Oakley) is now being operated from the main Bedford dept. As a result, there are new morning journeys from Bedford to Higham Ferrers, and reverse in the evening, to save the buses running empty.

From Monday 1st September, Grant Palmer Service 25 (Bedford – Sharnbrook – Rushden) is additionally serving Clapham, to allow access to the new Health Centre.

From the start of the school term, all Stagecoach 800-series school buses are no longer be open to the public.

And finally... Where's the last place you'd expect to see a Biggleswade & District-liveried Stagecoach School bus? Kings Lynn? Now you're in luck! New sister company Norfolk Green have borrowed some of these buses (now in the reserve fleet after newer arrivals in Beds) for newly-won school runs, pending arrival of newer stock.

Herts Evening & Sunday Bus Service Consultation

By Suzy Scott

Okay, this might come across as a little indulgence of a cross-border solidarity request. Well, maybe so, but the Sunday buses on Service 97 to Arlesey are also part of the hit-list!

This is a consultation by Hertfordshire County Council. This follows a couple of years ago, consulting to remove school bus subsidies. Now, they are consulting on removing evening bus service subsidies (which they deem after 18.30 Monday to Saturday!) and all day Sundays, to try and save £700,000.

Services which run commercially or supported elsewhere i.e. 71/72 Bedford – Hitchin in the evenings and Sundays, are unaffected by these proposals.

If you use any services – cross-border or within Hertfordshire – at these times, and would like to comment, now is the time to do it! You can fill the form in online; <https://consult.hertsdirect.org/bus-services/>

For those without access to the Internet, fear not as HCC can send a paper form and post-paid envelope to you – just phone 0300 123 4050. **All responses must be received by midnight on 8th October 2014.**

STOP PRESS: There is also an e-petition about these proposed cuts – go to www.save-our-buses.org.uk to sign it.