
Newsletter of BABUS - Bedford Area Bus Users' Society, May 2013

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After the numbered Pages 1 – 7, you will then find attached the Agenda for the 2013 Annual General Meeting, the Financial Report and the minutes from the 2012 AGM. The last page contains a poster, which you can detach and display to anyone who may be interested.

THE CRANFIELD CONDUNDRUM



At Cranfield University there are two bus stop posts and flags within eight feet of each other in the eastbound direction with a shelter and further flag opposite in the westbound direction. Eastbound one flag shows Stagecoach 52 to Bedford (wrong as it starts from the shelter opposite) and 17A (wrong as it was discontinued some time ago). The other flag shows "Queue here" on both faces - but nothing else. The green timetable case details service 45 and has a paper attachment showing 61 and 62 – neither one of which are on either flag.

Travelling west, the dilapidated shelter has the nearby flag (suggesting you queue facing the shelter rather than in it) with no other information but inside is a case with 52 and 45 details and other paper attachments on the windows. The 52 actually leaves from here.

As this is the main location for students residing at the University, is solving the transport arrangements part of the entrance exam?



MEMBERSHIP

Our membership year runs from 1 April until the following 31 March. **To continue to receive all the benefits of membership**, renew your membership by sending a cheque for £5 (£12 for group membership) payable to **BABUS**, to the Membership Secretary, Simon Norton, 6 Hertford Street, Cambridge, CB4 3AG. There is a new class of 'family' membership where multiple members at a single address pay only £5. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope if you would like a receipt by post; alternatively ask for a receipt by email.

For enquiries, contact BABUS through the website at www.babus.org.uk or on the BABUS Enquiry Line 0871 218 2287 or 0871 218 BBUS (24 hour answering and fax service). If you leave a message and would like us to call you back, please leave a phone number. You may send a fax to 0871 218 3293

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Whilst we have not seen major changes to the bus services in our area recently, it is worthy of note that many "temporary" alterations occur as a result of the road closures necessary for remedial work, particularly in the rural areas. I suspect we are all aware of the dreadful state of some of our roads and should welcome efforts to rectify the problems. Unfortunately the "dreaded" Health and Safety rules apply more and more, and what in the past would have been served by traffic lights and single lane working, now requires complete road closures. For efficiency this is generally during the daytime, and thus has a continual effect on advertised bus times. Temporary arrangements are usually made, but we are aware that these sometimes do not reach the passenger waiting at the bus stop. To further compound the issue, the appalling winter weather has also brought about regular flooding in the Ouse Valley, causing further disruption.

It is easy to be negative and critical so, on the positive side I must draw your attention to the fact, that the small amounts of service changes in our area have not been mirrored within adjacent counties such as Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire. They have seen a further round of reductions in bus service provision and we believe that even Milton Keynes is having services reviewed. Therefore in the wider picture the BABUS area compares well.

Details of our next AGM are included below, and it is hoped that you will be able to attend.

Godfrey Willis, Chairman, BABUS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2013

This will take place on Saturday 15 June 2013 at the Harrowden Room, Bunyan Meeting, Mill Street, Bedford. Agenda, and Minutes of the last one, are enclosed. Feel free to pass on the attached poster to someone who may be interested in joining, or attending.

The formal business session will start at 10:15 to be followed by the Guest Speaker, Mr Paul Dodge, Public Transport Manager, Central Bedfordshire Council.

CONCESSIONARY FARES ALL DAY

It has been confirmed that concessionary bus travel within the Borough before 09:30 on Mondays to Fridays (which is discretionary for local authorities) is continuing in 2013/2014 Financial Year as it did in 2012/2013.

RECENT BUS SERVICE CHANGES

There have been no major revisions to services in our area since the last Newsletter. It is, however, pertinent to draw members' attention to the minor changes to the stopping arrangements within St. Neots on X5 along with other changes to local bus services in the St. Neots area.

Within the Marston Vale area Service 49 between Wootton and Leighton Buzzard was extended from 1 April 2013 to run to and from Kempston Sainsburys, no longer serving Wootton. The Service runs on Mons, Weds, Thurs and Sats only, because on Tues and Fris it serves Wavendon and Kingston District Centre instead. These changes were brought about following consultation with regular travellers and with an input from BABUS.

Stagecoach Service 51 had a minor change in March to permit school journeys from Harrold to be included.

As we close for press, an extra bus is being added to the X5 at 1715 from Cambridge to St Neots & Eaton Socon, but not beyond. There are no other changes to the other journeys.

LIAISON WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Representatives from your committee met with Officers of Bedford Borough Council (BBC) on 12 February. Items discussed at the Meeting included:

- The re-introduction of Services through the bollards at New Cardington. Service 9 to Shortstown runs through whilst Services 71 and 72 are currently not doing so, awaiting the necessary equipment on the vehicles.
- Bus Stop Defect Cards. These are provided to Bus Drivers to report any issues relating to Bus Stops. A supply of the cards is now held by BABUS and any member requiring same should contact the Secretary.
- Regarding the 2013 Budget, BBC anticipate that there will be no deterioration in rural bus service provision or evening and Sunday town services in 2013/14.
- Bedford Bus Station is planned to be re-developed with completion by 2015.
- Following meetings between BBC, Grant Palmer and Riseley residents, changes have been made to services in the area (see separate item in this Newsletter)
- Roadside information is often incorrect particularly in the rural areas and BBC were asked to rectify this (see separate item in this Newsletter)

The next meeting is planned for mid-May and any member with an issue to raise should contact the BABUS Secretary as soon as possible.

Unfortunately, the committee has not met with Central Bedfordshire Council officers since the last Newsletter, but a date has been set for late April. A representative did, however, meet with the Public Transport Manager in relation to bus service changes within Marston Vale (see separate item)

ROADSIDE INFORMATION

BABUS remains concerned over the amounts of outdated or inaccurate information displayed at bus stops throughout the area and both local authorities have been urged to address this. Wrong information appears on flags, in timetable cases, on digital information screens, on noticeboards and even at the main exit from Bedford Railway Station. Some of this information has not been updated for many years and, without being flippant, the prize must go to Bolnhurst (north of Bedford) where the information on display is over 10 years old and intending passengers are invited to contact a Luton telephone number for travel information!

COMMITTEE MEETING

Your Committee met in Bedford on 9 February. Items discussed included placing articles in local magazines as a means of publicity, reminding Members that the Bulletin Board on the website is for easy and concise transmission of items and news (see separate item)

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

We are pleased to welcome John Smith from Sharnbrook and Frances Horwood of Lavendon to the Committee. Both have recently joined the Committee following the plea in the last edition of the Newsletter. The Committee's workload continues to grow and more active hands are needed, particularly from Members resident within the Central Bedfordshire Council area. If you feel that you can help please, please get in touch with the Secretary.

PASSENGER FOCUS SURVEY

Passengers waiting for their bus in some parts of England may be asking themselves why their buses aren't as good as those in Nottingham, Oxfordshire or Devon.

This has been revealed by the latest Bus Passenger Survey (BPS), published in March 2013 by independent watchdog Passenger Focus, which shows that passenger satisfaction with bus

services varies widely among different bus operators and local authority areas.

Bus passengers in Nottingham were the most satisfied overall with 92%, while passengers in Milton Keynes were the least satisfied with 73%. Overall satisfaction averaged 84% with a gulf of 19 percentage points between the highest and lowest area scores. Satisfaction with value for money ranged from 30% to 70% across the areas surveyed (averaging 54%).

Anthony Smith, Passenger Focus chief executive, said:

"Each year some 2.3 billion bus journeys are made in England outside of London, meaning that passengers are not satisfied with around 375 million journeys. We hope this report will be a call to action for transport authorities and bus companies to better work together to improve things for passengers. In particular they should closely examine how the high level of passenger satisfaction in places like Nottingham, Oxfordshire and Devon has been achieved, and then look to replicate it."

The BPS surveyed 22,000 bus passengers across 20 areas of England and looked at many factors of passengers' journeys such as punctuality, frequency, helpfulness and attitude of the driver and value for money.

Key findings include:

- Satisfaction with punctuality ranged from 57% to 83% (averaging 70%).
- The proportion of passengers who said they experienced behaviour that caused them to worry or make them feel uncomfortable during their journey ranged from 4% to 17% (averaging 10%).
- The factors affecting passenger satisfaction are broad, but often relate to the bus driver, in particular 'smoothness/freedom from jolting'. Other factors affecting passenger satisfaction are 'on-bus journey time', 'safety of the driving', 'smoothness/ freedom from jolting', and 'length of time waited'.

TRAIN AND BUS FIRMS MUST WORK TOGETHER

On March 14, 2013, Fiona Harvey, environment correspondent in The Guardian reported under the headline "Joined-up-transport scheme designed to persuade passengers to use buses and trains instead of cars for door-to-door journeys."

Train companies are to be forced to work with bus operators and local authorities to make it easier and safer to make long journeys by public transport. The move is part of a government-

backed scheme for "joined-up transport", which will enable people to make door-to-door journeys using public transport. Most people - about 80% - take the car for journeys of longer than five miles and research shows many of them do so because it is hard to find out about public transport for the complete journey.

"If you had to get to somewhere just outside Nottingham, you might know you can get a train to Nottingham, but you wouldn't know how to travel the last two miles from the train station at the other end, and whether there was public transport available," Norman Baker, transport minister, told the Guardian. "You might decide to take the car instead."

That uncertainty, not only of routes but of timetables for connecting public transport services, such as changing from a train to a bus, deters many people, he said. Under his plans, train companies will also have to work with bus firms to ensure their timetables are complementary. "You don't want to get off at a station and the bus has just left, with two hours to the next one," Baker said. "A sustainable journey is only as attractive as its weakest link."

At present, even when the train and bus services are owned by the same company, they often do not take account of these factors. Under the so-called door-to-door scheme, train operators would also provide through tickets, so that passengers could buy a bus ticket for the connecting journey at the same time.

"When people are thinking about their journey, they naturally think about the cost and complexity of the entire trip, door to door, not just the ride on the train or bus. So as well as cutting out the hassle of travelling by bike, foot and public transport, we need to make it simpler and more reliable to combine different ways of travelling to get the whole way from A to B," Baker said.

In a report entitled *Door to door strategy and multi-operator ticket guidance*, the government has set out ways to remove some of these key barriers putting people off public transport use - not only ticketing, routes and timetables but also factors such as safety and comfort. Baker cited passengers concerned about the safety of stations that are vandalised, poorly lit or unstaffed late at night. The solution, for train and station operators, is to clean up stations and make them more accessible.

He also pledged to double the number of stations with bike racks, to make it easier for people to cycle to and from stations, and for local authorities to make it simpler for people to get to stations by bicycle or pedestrian routes.

However, there is no new funding for the door-to-door initiative. Baker said many of the activities were covered by current funds, such as the £600m local sustainable transport funding, and £100m to make stations more accessible. He added that passengers would be able to find door-to-door journey information on the internet, and by other means.

Baker pointed to examples of pilot schemes such as one in South Yorkshire where a multi-operator ticket is valid on buses, trams and trains, and in Oxford where bus and train companies are working together on timetables. The government's plans have the backing of several campaign groups and transport firms.

SUMMARY REPORT OF LIAISON MEETING BETWEEN STAGECOACH EAST AND BABUS HELD 24 JANUARY 2013

Stagecoach management reported that service 827 (Rushden - Sharnbrook - Harrold, Monday to Friday) was to be withdrawn and replaced by service 51 with amendments to the route and the timings. Service 51 would be retimed to improve reliability.

BABUS representatives asked if the 19.56 50 service from Bedford could be retimed to run a few minutes later in order to provide a connection with the first off-peak evening train from London. It was also noted that there was an occasional problem over the acceptability of Bedford Borough concessionary pass before 09.20, Mon-Fri, on Route 50 for journeys wholly within Bedford Borough.

Stagecoach was aware of alleged difficulties experienced by a wheelchair user at South Wing Hospital. There was a system in place to avoid the problem where a driver who became aware of an issue would alert control by mobile phone. They, in turn, would ensure that suitable provision could be made on following vehicles.

Concerning route X5, it was reported that changes were planned for Eaton Socon where the stop at The Green would be transferred to the George and Dragon, which was a more convenient location. The stop in Bicester Market Place was a temporary arrangement which would revert to North Street in due course.

For X5 services the information shown on RTPI displays reflected 'static' Traveline times. A call to Bedford Bus Station (01234 220030) could be made where there was a query on services.

BABUS representatives suggested that the various management regions of Stagecoach seemed to

provide conflicting advice on the availability of Dayrider Gold tickets.

BABUS representatives asked about the position at bus stops served by more than one bus operator and where Stagecoach East was the major player. An example being Sainsburys, Clapham Road, where four different operators had an interest. In reply it was suggested that Bedford Borough Council were negotiating with a software supplier with a view to producing a composite timetable display.

SUMMARY REPORT OF LIAISON MEETING BETWEEN GRANT PALMER TRAVEL SERVICES AND BABUS HELD 16 APRIL 2013

BABUS representatives were shown a preview copy of a comprehensive timetable booklet covering Grant Palmer routes south and west of Bedford. Because routes 'north of Bedford' were subject to so much uncertainty it was not currently planned to produce a similar publication for those services. Additionally, the Bedford Borough Council timetable supplement is already available.

There was some discussion on services between Cranfield and Milton Keynes, and the impact of new routes operated by Souls.

Other points discussed included services to Woodlands estate and to Rushden via Harrold; the use of smartcard; and the impact of changes to Centrebus Route 31 on the connection at Toddington with Grant Palmer Service 42.

A recurring theme in discussions with local authorities and operators in Bedfordshire is the vexed matter of ownership of bus stop infrastructure with respect to timetable displays where a given location is served by several operators.

GOOD NEWS

After a considerable break in service it is pleasing to report that the bus lane at Shortstown is now in operation, permitting Services 9, 71 and 72 to serve the centre of the village once more. The temporary bus stops at the southern boundary of the village have been removed. Readers of this Newsletter will recall that BABUS has been pressing the local authority on this matter since August 2012.

DAY OUT TICKETS DIRECTORY

This article is based on a compilation of information from various websites. We would appreciate feedback from members making use of it. The article covers all day out tickets valid in a wide area

(i.e. not just in a town and its immediate surrounds) which includes part of BABUS's area.

East Dayrider Gold: This is Stagecoach's "prestige" product, which is valid on all Stagecoach buses in the East, Midlands, West, South and South Wales areas - that is everything south of Spalding, Leicester, Hereford and Hay on Wye -- except for the Southwest and Southeast areas (roughly covering Somerset/Devon and Kent/E Sussex), the Oxford Tube (Oxford-London) and London buses. It is the only day out ticket valid on the X5 in Bedfordshire but also the Stagecoach Midlands and West websites.

This ticket is mentioned not only on the Stagecoach East website, so we presume it can be bought on any of their services. However it is not mentioned on the Stagecoach South Wales or South websites.

Currently the price in the East area (which includes all their Bedfordshire services except the 50 Bedford-Kettering) is 13-00 for an adult; there are also child, concessionary and family tickets. Prices may vary if you buy the ticket in another area. The X5 website is the only place we have found where the scope of concessionary tickets is defined -- it covers people over 60 even if they don't have a national concessionary pass, plus students. You may be asked for appropriate ID. It isn't clear whether the same definitions apply if you're not buying the ticket on an X5. If you qualify it may be worth printing the relevant page out to show the driver if necessary -- the URL is www.stagecoachx5.com/faqs.aspx

There is also a significantly cheaper ticket covering everything above except the X5. It is NOT advertised in the Stagecoach East area but it is in the Midlands (as Dayrider Gold -- risen from April 2013 to £11.00 for an Adult, £7.50 Child/Concession, £18.50 group up to 2 adults and 3 children) and West (as Explorer) areas, at varying prices. The West ticket also covers Wilts & Dorset buses, Brighton & Hove Buses, Arriva Southern Counties buses, and most of the South Coast services including the likes of Metrobus. Note that these tickets can no longer be upgraded to allow travel on the X5.

Bedfordshire Dayrider Plus: costs £7-80 for an adult and covers all Stagecoach routes in Bedfordshire except the X5, plus cross boundary services except for the 50 north of Higham Ferrers. Included is the 99 between Milton Keynes and Luton Airport.

One can also buy and use a ticket called an Intalink Explorer on most buses serving Herts (including the 71/72 Bedford - Hitchin, 188/190

Hitchin – Biggleswade – Sandy) and Arriva or Centrebus services in adjoining counties. This costs £8-50 for individuals, £4-25 for children and £12-50 for up to 4 people. While this ticket can be bought and used on the 71/72 and 188/190 it can no longer be used or purchased on the 73/74 between Biggleswade and Bedford.

Herts CC timetables on bus stops and Network Maps, along with the website at www.intalink.org.uk will tell you whether it's valid on a particular route serving Herts. It's also valid on buses in adjoining counties (except for the area east of Chelmsford) operated by Arriva or Centrebus, and also including Arriva's services into Oxfordshire and Berkshire. However it's not valid on GreenLine services, except for the 724 between Maple Cross and Harlow. There are some restrictions on services to Thorpe Park, Paradise Wildlife Park and Warner Bros. Studios Tour London. If you plan carefully, this ticket can allow you to travel as far as Reading, Oxford, Saffron Walden, Chelmsford, Stansted Airport, Harlow, Watford, Slough, High Wycombe, Aylesbury, Stanmore, Edgware, etc

OPTIONAL SOCIAL EVENT AFTER AGM

Bedford's community boat, the "John Bunyan", is expected to start public trips in June. If it's available by our AGM on Sat 15 June, it will offer a chance for some of us to socialise on the regular trip to Cardington (15.00-17.30). Please note that we will not be making a group booking -- if you wish to go it is up to you to make your own booking. Book by emailing bmkboat@gmail.com, ringing 0800 3282803 from landlines or 0330 1239511 from mobiles when the office is open, or visiting Bedford Tourist Information Centre, or (in due course) online at <http://www.b-mkwaterway.co.uk/make-a-booking>. For up to date information see the website at <http://www.b-mkwaterway.org.uk/bedford-community-boat>.

If you can't make that day, why not get a bus into Bedford some other day and go on one of their other trips?

RAILWAY WALK

This doesn't have anything to do with buses directly, but some of our members may be interested. The Campaign for Better Transport will be organising walks from Sandy and Bedford on Sat 29 June as part of its campaign to restore trains between Oxford and Cambridge (not necessarily via this route). The walks, which will be partly along the old trackbed, will meet so

that people can walk from Sandy to Bedford or vice versa and get a bus in the other direction. For more details contact Susan Dye at 01462 442432 or susandye@phonecoop.coop

UNITED COUNTIES AT 100 – AND THE END

Events took place in Wellingborough earlier this year, to mark the centenary of the United Counties Omnibus Company Limited. The name will be well known to some who remember the "green buses", and Stagecoach have repainted a Northamptonshire bus into a modern-day version of the traditional colours.

Since privatisation, we know that the company has since been morphed into both Stagecoach Bedford and Northamptonshire following privatisation in the National Bus Group sell-off, and subsequent rebranding exercises. Following guidance from the Office of the Traffic Commissioner about local area companies having more than one licence, sensibly the companies have merged everything into one – Stagecoach East operations are consolidated onto the Cambus licence, and Midlands will soon be consolidated onto a Midland Red South licence.

There will be no changes to the way you use the bus, services or brand names – this is already an admin tidy-up (done with Arriva The Shires/East Herts & Essex/MK Metro Ltd on 1st January 2013). It does, however, see the end of the company called UCOC Ltd, in its centenary year.

BABUS WEBSITE & BULLETIN BOARD

Although you receive this newsletter three times a year, this is not the only way that BABUS communicates with you! Our website www.babus.org.uk has now been "under new management" for four years now!

Barring any technical difficulties (or unannounced changes) we try and keep the Timetable Library well stocked. This contains timetables and maps for every service in the former county of Bedfordshire. As you can imagine, this goes beyond what we cover as a group, but we know this is proving useful, especially in areas where more than one online timetable can be out of date. Indeed, our website was mentioned for *The Times* Saturday Walks weekly feature, making mention of buses in the Marston Vale. We also list the current dates of the timetables, so you can check your paper copies are still current.

Don't forget the Bulletin Board if you have access to the internet. You can find this at www.babus.org.uk/bb If you have not yet registered, feel free to "try before you buy" – although Members Only items will not be viewable

without joining. You can be a BB member before or during your membership, and it's very easy to join! Simply go to www.babus.org.uk/bb, click on "Want To Join" near the top, then "Click Here To Join..." for full instructions. Using the Bulletin Board means that the Committee can bring information to you more frequently. You don't need your own computer – indeed, many people visit the website from a library, where Internet access is usually free or cheap, and people are on hand to help.

We recently opened up the Bulletin Board to everyone who may find us from the web – previously the password feature meant items posted there could not be found by popular methods like RSS Readers or web searches like Google. This appears to have helped to boost page views, and thus knowledge and awareness, without detrimental effect or financial impact.

If you don't have time to access the Bulletin Board every day, you can set it up so that when a new topic is posted you will receive an email. To do this, when you are reading a particular message and you want to be notified about any further messages on that topic you need to click on the 'Notify' tab. It will then say "Are you sure..." and select OK. This will then alert you to each time a new topic is done. Where two or three are done at the same time on the same board, you will need to login first, before the system sends you any more notifications.

The website is at www.babus.org.uk Any problems can be brought to the attention of our Webmistress – suzy.scott@babus.org.uk – who will be happy to help.

NEW UPDATED BROCHURE

A new edition of our Brochure has been enclosed. This is designed to attract new members and existing ones alike, providing contact details, a Membership Form, and a quick summary of what we've been up to lately. Feel free to ask any committee member if you require more for family or friends. Remember, the more members we recruit, the more we can do.

LAST WORD

The Membership Secretary and Treasurer are most grateful to those members who have paid their membership subscriptions promptly. If you have not paid your subscription by or at the AGM you will receive no further mailings from BABUS. If you do not intend to renew, or circumstances have

changed for any reason, a quick letter or email to let us know would be appreciated.

STOP PRESS

One of our chief aims is to expand the provision of real-time information. We were delighted to hear that, on the last Monday in April, a new widescreen was fitted at Bedford Midland Railway Station. It will pick up the times for passing services 40, 41, plus peak buses on the 6, 42 and 50. At the same time, we are disappointed to see that there are – immediately below the brand new sign – a 2008 bus station poster, which still sends passengers for Cedar 152 to Harpur Street!

At the same time (not shown below), there is still a 2007 display on PlusBus in the "onward travel zone" (as dubbed by FCC i.e. bus shelter to you and me)! Say nothing of the Intalink (Herts) partnership logos on the platforms pointing to the bus stop! The display is certainly a good start.



All articles express the views of their authors and do not necessarily express the views of BABUS. Guest editor this time Suzy Scott, with help from several other committee members.



Annual General Meeting to be held at 10.15 on Saturday 15 June 2013 at the Harrowden Room, Bunyan Meeting, Mill Street, Bedford.

AGENDA

1 Welcome

2 Apologies for absence

3 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 16 June 2012 (copy circulated)

4 Matters arising

5 Annual Report for year ending 31 March 2013 (copy circulated)

6 Treasurer's Report for year ending 31 March 2013 (copy circulated)

Proposed Resolution:

"The Executive Committee be authorised to raise subscriptions for individual members 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"

Proposed by P.G.Williams

7 Election of Officers

8 Election of Executive Committee

9 Any other business

Informal Meeting (approx 10.45am)

Guest Speaker – Mr Paul Dodge, Public Transport Manager, Central Bedfordshire Council

Bedford Area Bus Users' Society

Balance Sheet and Source & Application of Funds
covering 1 Apr 2012 - 31 Mar 2013
(issued 8 Apr 2013)

Opening balance at 1 Apr 2012

Current account

904.39

Project account

7.58

Total funds **911.97**

Expenditure

(Value for 2011/12)

FMH Room Hire (committee meetings)

-48.00

(-36.00)

Website maintenance

-35.99

-

AGM Advert

-105.20

-

AGM Hall Hire

-42.60

(-50.00)

Printing & postage (AGM papers and Newsletters)

-169.87

(-62.11)

Expenses

-19.00

(-13.10)

Sub-total **-420.66**

Income

Subscriptions, individual/family

173.00

(180.00)

Subscriptions, corporate

252.00

(216.00)

Donations

65.00

(39.30)

Sub-total **490.00**

(435.30)

Closing balance at 31 Mar 2013

Current account

973.73

Project account

7.58

Total funds **981.31**

Bedford Area Bus Users' Society



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Bedford Area Bus Users' Society held at the Central Library, Harpur Street, Bedford, on Saturday 16 June 2012

Present:

Peter G Williams – Chairman and Treasurer
Colin Franklin – Vice Chairman
Martin Brookes - Committee Member
Simon Norton – Membership Secretary
Stephen Sleight – Committee Member
Godfrey Willis – Secretary

Twelve other members were present.

1 Welcome

The Chairman welcomed those present and particularly referred to the representatives from adjacent groups such as Stevenage the planned St Neots group. He thanked Mr Bill Jowett for attending and expressed the condolences of BABUS following the passing away of long serving member Brenda. He then introduced the Guest Speaker, Mr Stephen Morris, General Manager of Bus Users UK who would speak after the conclusion of formal business.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Suzy Scott, John Yunnie and Alma Tebbutt.

3 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 11 June 2011

The Minutes were accepted as a true and correct record. The minutes were subsequently signed.

4 Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5 Chairman's Report

Peter Williams had issued his report in advance through the medium of the Newsletter and a copy is appended to these minutes.

Reference is made in the Annual Report, and in fairly unambiguous language, and not for the first time, to the serious need to strengthen the committee structure by members volunteering to share the increasing workload. He continued that he had posted a similar appeal on the Bulletin Board earlier in the year but that it had generated no responses.

For the current operating year there are significant matters that deserve BABUS attention. There are issues over the bus shelter replacements within Bedford town, BABUS is a member of the Bedford Station Travel Plan steering group and we have started debates with Bedford Commuters' Association

on bus-rail access at Thameslink MML Stations. We have a problem with ECML stations as there is no equivalent Rail group at those locations. This is also a question to consider in relation to the new Thameslink franchise where the DoT is inviting representations on public transport interface. Do we get involved, he asked, or if not, might we regret it in the future?

Our Secretary has been working with Bedford Borough Council on the provision of rural bus services to the north of the "county". These services have very low passenger loadings and their viability has been questioned – BABUS seeks all it can get in service provision. Turning to Central Beds Council we are being asked to carry out another Bus Stop Audit and we are represented at the new Flitwick and Harlington stations Travel Plan meetings. BABUS also attends Passenger Strategy workshops.

There must be concerns, however, with the Luton to Dunstable Busway and any negative fall out impacting on council services in other parts of the area.

More mundane issues to deal with relate to roadworks diversions, missing buses, late running, out of date timetables etc.

He concluded by again asking if anyone felt that they had some relevant skills then they consider stepping forward to help BABUS – next year might be too late!

The acceptance of the Report was proposed by John Smith, all in favour.

6 Treasurer's Report

Peter introduced his report (balance sheet and statement of income and expenditure for financial year 2011-2012) which had also been issued in draft form via the Newsletter.

He advised that John Smith had scrutinised the figures and found them to be in good order.

Having briefly referred again to rising costs such as postage he tabled the following proposition:

"The Executive Committee be authorised to raise subscriptions for individual members for the year 2013/14 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 seconded by G Willis and approved

7 Constitution

The existing constitution, produced in 2006, is not fit for purpose – for example it does not define a membership year or financial year and does not make satisfactory provision for control of the Society's finances. There has been prolonged debate since 2008 over the updating of it and copies of the final revised document have been issued prior to the meeting.

The Chairman proposed that "the meeting adopts the revised Constitution (previously circulated) with effect from 16th June 2012- the 2006 Constitution being set aside"

Seconded by Colin Franklin and approved.

8 Election of Officers:

The Society has four Officers – Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary, these being nominated and elected at this meeting and holding post for one year. Peter then indicated that after two years he did not wish to stand again as Chairman and, as is customary, John Smith took the chair for the election of a Chairman. Peter Williams was prepared to continue on the Committee but nominated Godfrey Willis (who was standing down as Secretary) for the post of Chairman. He was proposed by Simon Norton seconded by Leonard Lean and as no other nominations were received Godfrey Willis was duly elected.

To aid continuity Peter Williams retook the chair to the conclusion of this meeting.

The following Members are currently Officers of the Society, and have indicated their willingness to stand for a further year:

Vice-Chairman – Colin Franklin

Treasurer – Peter G Williams

There being no other nominations Colin and Peter were elected.

Godfrey Willis had indicated to the Committee that, due to health problems, he no longer wished to continue as Secretary and a replacement was sought. Peter Williams said he was prepared to carry out the roles of Secretary and Treasurer although this could not be a long term situation. There were no other nominations and Peter was appointed.

9 Election of Executive Committee

The following Members had been nominated to serve on the Executive Committee and had indicated their willingness to continue with their respective responsibilities:

Alan Hopkinson - Newsletter Editor

Martin Brookes - Committee Member

Simon Norton - Membership Officer

Suzy Scott – Webmistress

They were appointed “en bloc”

Reference was made to the passing away of founder member and long standing Committee member Brenda Jowett and the resulting vacancy. This needed to be filled. Furthermore Alma Tebbutt the Publicity Officer had been indisposed for some time and, although slowly making a recovery was unable at present to continue with the Publicity role. Martin Brookes had been carrying out these duties and was appointed as publicity Officer for 2012/13. Alma will remain on the Committee awaiting her eventual return.

Both Stephen Sleight (Bedfordshire Rural Transport Partnership) and John Smith (Bus Users UK) will continue in advisory roles.

In conclusion the outgoing Chairman referred to the contributions made by the committee members in enabling BABUS to operate at its current effectiveness. Inputs should not be taken for granted and he reiterated his plea for others to come forward and join the committee.

10 Any other business

10.1 L Lean advised that comments on the MK Bus Strategy document are due by 6th July it is believed it covers not only the City but routes to and from surrounding areas.

10.2 Bill Jowett said that BABUS did not promote itself in the rural areas –GW responded that we had tried to get Parish Councils to put our notice on village notice boards and include an article in local magazines. This had met with limited success but would be re-examined.

10.3 Chris Pettifer on behalf of Bedford Borough Council thanked BABUS for the work it had carried out during the last year and was pleased over the way we often approached issues jointly.

10.4 Returning to marketing and promotion, Grant Palmer said he would be prepared to put a BABUS advert on the back of his ticket rolls in the near future – he was warmly thanked for this offer.

The Chairman thanked all those who had contributed and closed the formal part of the meeting at 11:00.

He then introduced our Guest Speaker Mr Stephen Morris of B.U.U.K.

On the reverse of this sheet of paper, you will find a poster, which advertises our Annual General Meeting. Feel free to detach this sheet, and display the poster prominently in your Village Hall, Church notice board, Parish Council case, Library, or wherever! You can print off more from our website **www.babus.org.uk**

Bedford Area Bus Users' Society



Annual General Meeting of the Bedford Area Bus Users' Society will be held at the Harrowden Room, Bunyan Meeting, Mill Street, Bedford, MK40 3EU, on Saturday 15th June 2013 at 10:15 am

Following the business proceedings there will be a talk by Mr Paul Dodge, Public Transport Manager, Central Bedfordshire Council

All are welcome. Light refreshments