



Newsletter 29

includes Notice Of Annual General Meeting

Summer 2016

BABUS - Serving Bus Users In Bedfordshire since 2005

**RIP former Committee Member and
Newsletter Editor - Dr Alan Hopkinson
7th February 1950 – 7th April 2016**



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

Welcome to the BABUS Newsletter 29

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 Mrs Suzy Scott, Communications Officer, 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. **See page 4 re future changes to this**

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

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Our website can be found at www.babus.org.uk and our Bulletin Board can be found at www.babus.org.uk/bb or via the links on the BABUS homepage.

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To phone us, simply call **0871 218 then spell out BBUS on your phone. (i.e. 0871 218 2287)**. When you get through, leave us a landline number where we can call you back. If you prefer to fax, then send it to **0871 218 3293** Calls to these numbers are charged at 10p a minute Service Charge, plus your Network Charge as set by your telephone provider. These voicemails and faxes go through to Suzy by email, and will be forwarded as the situation requires. BABUS does not generate any income from the use of 0871 numbers, as the income all goes to the Service Provider, in return for providing us with a free telephone service.

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**Next Newsletter Deadline Date for News and Contributions
is Monday 15th August 2016.**

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RIP Alan Hopkinson ***By Suzy Scott***

It is our sad duty to report the death of our former Committee Member and Newsletter Editor, Alan Hopkinson. Following some progress in his health, he very sadly died in sleep on 7 April, following a heart attack. BABUS were represented at his funeral by Frances Horwood and Colin Franklin. We would ask you to keep his partner Marion in your thoughts and prayers at this difficult time. While the media have mentioned many “celebrity” deaths, Alan Hopkinson surely must be getting top table status, up there looking down on us!

BABUS 2016 Annual General Meeting ***By Suzy Scott***

As announced elsewhere in this Newsletter, the Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday morning, 2nd July at 10.30 in the Meeting Room 3rd Floor, Bedford Central Library.

We look forward to seeing you and your friends at the AGM. All are welcome but only members can vote on the formal business. New members are very welcome to join at the AGM.

Last year’s AGM was popular, but BABUS had to pay a considerable amount for Public Liability Insurance. To give something back to the group, we have had the PLI done as part of our company, Here To There Publishing Ltd. This is at no extra cost to H2T or to BABUS.

**The End of Suzy the Committee
Member – welcome Suzy the Temp!**
By Suzy Scott

I intend not to seek re-election at the 2016 AGM, for the 2016-17 membership period. This is so that I can concentrate on the day job of running a publishing company.

I've been helping the group since 2009, and have given this decision serious thought over the past month. I've enjoyed the time, as I have done with all the voluntary roles. I have also given up similar with LLGS and PSV Circle some time back, but then kept on at BABUS after many changes for the committee.

So – where does this stand? It does mean we have a need for someone to do the Website, and someone to be Newsletter Editor.

As we now use WordPress for the Website, anyone who can type an email can use WordPress. I will leave full instructions for my successor, and will ensure that help is given for at least three months. Bulletin Board will sometimes need a little more help, but I will ensure that the replacement is fully briefed in escalation routes.

The timetable part of the site will be a separate site, **www.bedsbuses.info** site will continue on a free-of-charge public basis, similar to those of DundeeBuses and HarlowBuses. These three sites will remain always free.

The same will be with the BABUS Newsletters, and we have the original files that we can give to a successor, who

will just need to edit things and paste in things each quarter.

I do really appreciate everyone's support and admiration over the last seven years.

So... the temp? Until a successor can be appointed, I will continue to assist with the Newsletter and Website, but just not the committee member part. For now, it's business as usual. But if you feel like a new challenge, get in touch!

Membership Renewals 2016-2017
By Suzy Scott & Simon Norton

Those of you who have a pink form inside your envelope, please be aware it is time for you to renew your Membership, from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017. Once again, our membership fees have been unchanged for another year.

You can renew by posting us a cheque/postal order, payable to BABUS please, with the form completed. If you prefer to pay by credit, debit card, or PayPal, you can do this – go to **www.babus.org.uk** then click on "Renew Your Subscription". Since the last membership renewal, we have improved the Online Payments and Donation facility, to make it more akin to online shopping, and bring it up to almost the same standards as the revamped new look website.

If you did not get a pink form, and feel this to be an error, do get in touch. Forms should be completed and returned to Mr Simon Norton, BABUS Membership, 6 Hertford Street, CAMBRIDGE, CB4 3AG. Questions about your Membership can be written to the same address, or by email to **simon.norton@babus.org.uk**

**Summary of the Bedford Borough
Council Liaison Meeting on 25th
April 2016**
By Frances Horwood

There were various items of good news. Residents in the Cardington Road area had wanted bus services reinstated and this had taken place.

Residents of Great Denham had been pressing for a more frequent bus service and for buses to serve Bedford Railway Station, and there were plans to provide this.

The Council was looking at introducing integrated ticketing, so tickets would be valid on more than one operator's services.

They also planned to improve bus stop information; there had already been an improvement in the time taken to update timetables at bus stops.

At Bedford Bus Station, work to improve the operation of the entrance doors was taking place. In the Travel and Tourism Centre there is a computer for public use and it was agreed that a link to BABUS could be provided on it.

At Bedford Railway Station, taxis parking at bus stops had been a problem but the licensing team had attended and enforcement action had been taken. It was important that bus stops were not obstructed, since more buses would serve the Railway Station in future. BABUS representatives were concerned about cuts to Government funding and the forthcoming Bus Bill.

Regarding cuts to funding, on some little-used journeys the subsidy per passenger was unrealistic; such journeys could be under threat. With regard to the Bus Bill, it was too early to say what the effect was likely to be.

Traffic congestion, which affected the punctuality of buses, was still a concern. We met on the day the Western Bypass opened; this should relieve some of the congestion in the town centre. Some of the delays to buses were caused by road works, which had now been completed.

The next Bedford Borough Council Liaison Meeting will take place in July. Do get in touch if you have any matters or queries you would like us to raise.

**Summary of the Central
Bedfordshire Council Liaison
Meeting on 28th April 2016**
By Frances Horwood

A major concern at this meeting, as at previous meetings, was the Public Consultation on bus services which was currently taking place in Central Bedfordshire. BABUS will be making a submission to this but individuals living in Central Bedfordshire can also contribute; the consultation document is on the Council's website and there is a questionnaire to be filled in. The closing date is July 12th.

There were changes to Services 38, 42 and 49. Construction of a new road between Toddington and Houghton Regis entailed road closures and diversions on certain Saturdays.

There had been a consultation in Sandy, with residents wanting buses along Engayne Avenue again. For the present, residents in that part of the town have Service 83.

In Biggleswade, Services 85 and 85A had commenced operation. Biggleswade residents now have an improved service, with better access to the Sainsbury's store and the Retail Park. The new route had been publicised, with Centrebus producing a leaflet showing all their routes in Biggleswade. The work on the railway bridge was due to be completed by the end of June.

BABUS representatives were keen to know the likely effects of the forthcoming Bus Bill. It was possible that a number of neighbouring local authorities would form an alliance for the provision of bus services.

We await a date for our next meeting with Central Bedfordshire; this will be devoted to the public consultation (***ED: See Page 12 for more information on how to participate in the consultation***).

p.s. Through our many post-2009 split dealings with Central Bedfordshire Council, we have dealt with Paul Dodge, who has had various management roles at Central Bedfordshire Council, FWT and many other bus operators. We hear he is planning on retiring later this year. BABUS has appreciated the time given by Paul Dodge to our liaison meetings and his willingness to consider our concerns and ideas. Our committee would like to wish him a long and happy retirement, when the time comes.

Summary of the Stagecoach East Liaison Meeting on 7th March 2016

By Frances Horwood

There were few problems to be raised at this meeting. We discussed communication with bus users when roads were closed in an emergency. Such a situation had arisen not long before, with the Bus Station being inaccessible. Some bus users who had been directed to catch their buses in St. Paul's Square, had not found anyone there to give them information, though there had, in fact, been somebody there to do so. There were contingency plans in place to deal with incidents which might arise but this incident was completely unexpected, with a number of roads closed.

When there was a bay change at the Bus Station, caused by a late-running service or the use of an Optare vehicle, which could only be accommodated at Bay L, BABUS suggested that a Tannoy might be used to inform waiting passengers of this.

BABUS was also concerned about congestion, which delayed bus services. Measures which could help were bus lanes and parking charges at a level which would discourage car use. Where there were bus lanes, if car drivers were held up in traffic with buses passing them, they might consider making their journey by bus.

A route which tended to be affected by congestion was the X5. Stagecoach considered that, while there were still problems, these were coped with reasonably well, except for unusual circumstances. The main problem was at

the Black Cat Roundabout, since, if roads had to be closed, there were limited options. If roads were closed without warning, it was possible for two X5 services to be stuck in traffic jams, but drivers of subsequent services would have been informed of the problem.

BABUS had been informed of lateness, possible missed journeys and overcrowding at various times but Stagecoach cannot investigate unless full details of the date and time of day are supplied. It may seem that journeys have been missed out when, in fact, traffic congestion has resulted in the correct interval between services not being maintained.

Changes to Putnoe services, which had taken place in January, had achieved the aim of evening them out.

The next Stagecoach East liaison Meeting will be held on June. Do get in touch if you have any matters or queries you would like us to raise.

Summary of the Regional Bus User Groups Meeting on 7th May 2016
By Frances Horwood

Milton Keynes Bus User Group hosted this meeting. There were reports from Milton Keynes, Bedford and Northampton; the Northampton representative was unable to attend but had sent a report beforehand. We were pleased to learn that Stagecoach Midlands were going to put Michael Barlow's name on one of their Gold double deckers. The late Michael Barlow had been Chairman of Bus Users

Northampton. The Bedford and Milton Keynes groups were keen to support the Northampton group, where help was needed.

Included in the Northampton report were details of Northamptonshire County Council's Total Transport proposal. The Council was working with the local university, further education establishments, the NHS and businesses to collect data on current and future transport needs. They were seeking to mitigate the problem of congestion, particularly since the town was growing. There had been some route changes, which gave an improved service to the Railway Station, and there had also been revision of fares, to remove anomalies and encourage bus use in areas where passenger take up was low.

The Bedford report referred to a new IT system at Bedford Borough Council, which would permit improvements to bus stop timetable information. There was still a drawback with Real-time Information screens, with late-running buses sometimes disappearing from the screen once their scheduled departure time had passed.

Late running sometimes necessitated a change of bay at the Bus Station and arrangements for informing passengers of this were not completely satisfactory; BABUS would like a Tannoy to be used. When an Optare vehicle was used, these could only use the farthest bay, Bay L, so this also necessitated a change of bay

There was an Automatic Number Plate Recognition camera at the entrance to the Bus Station, to deter unauthorised access; this had resulted in 279 tickets

being issued since December last year. There had been problems with the entrance doors to the Bus Station but work had taken place to rectify these. At the Railway Station, taxis obstructing bus stops were a problem.

Central Bedfordshire were undertaking a public consultation on bus services. They would be unable to maintain the current level of subsidies and it was likely that there would be more emphasis on community transport. There had been a change to Travel Aid passes, with Central Bedfordshire ones no longer valid on Grant Palmer services.

In Milton Keynes, the Council was having to make yet more savings. Recent cuts to bus services had not been as bad as they might have been, with just Sunday and bank holiday services on Route 28 being lost. MKBUG had a good relationship with local councillors. The Council were seeking to retain bus services.

Council officers had made "mystery shopper" trips on some routes. In some cases, bus drivers seemed to have no rapport with passengers, even when both drivers and passengers were regulars.

Housing developments and warehousing were planned for various parts of Milton Keynes. Already, in Lower Ninth Street, the road was collapsing and there was the risk that bus operators would refuse to use it.

Milton Keynes had a Head of Transport Innovation, who would consider such things as improved bus stop timetable displays, smart traffic lights and Complete Transport (including social

services, Park and Ride and community transport).

Other matters on the agenda were the forthcoming Bus Bill, effects of budget cuts and the relationship between Bus Users UK and local bus user groups.

The next regional bus user groups' meeting is due to take place in early October.

A Tale of Two Systems (continued) ***By Simon Norton***

In the last newsletter we discussed a report by Transport for Quality of Life on the bus regulatory system and how it related to changes the Government was planning to introduce in its Buses Bill, and promised to update these comments in this newsletter.

Well, as this is written, the Buses Bill still hasn't been published -- we've been told to expect it soon after the Queen's Speech on 18 May (***ED: See Pages 10-12 as I was able to squeeze it in just in time!***). As this newsletter has to go out in time to give notice of our AGM, there could be no question of holding it. However, the Transport for Quality of Life report is now in final form at **www.transportforqualityoflife.com** so we can now give it a definitive review (in which editorial "we" is abandoned to emphasise that this is the personal opinion of the reviewer).

I have no criticism whatsoever to make of what the report says. I think it presents an unanswerable case for moving from deregulation to the type of procurement that prevails in London, usually (rather misleadingly) called

"franchising". (I'm not 100% convinced that franchising -- or municipalisation -- would deliver financial savings on the scale claimed, but even if they didn't the other benefits claimed in the report would be enough to justify the change.) The report is also on the spot in saying that franchising won't by itself be enough to deliver the improvements bus users need and deserve: local authorities need to be given a statutory duty to improve services and increase usage.

I did have a number of criticisms of the earlier version relating to important points that had been left out. Several of them have now been added -- for the benefit of those readers who downloaded the earlier version, here are some of them:

Page 18: Explains why bus operating costs are higher in London. This is an important point because it is often said that higher usage rates in London result from higher subsidies -- but in fact most of these subsidies are needed just to offset higher costs.

Pages 58 and 77: Refer to the need to offer local communities, bus users and operators full participation in decision making.

Page 68: Quotes my own experience with the shortcomings of bus management in Cambridge City Centre.

Page 85: The orange bars in Figure 5.4 are now stated to refer to those changes which "would be extremely difficult (or impossible) to deliver without franchising".

I do however feel that there are still some points whose addition would have improved the report. Bearing in mind that the report is probably long enough already for most readers, I still feel that the following should have been included:

(a) A section indicating why buses are important. The authors are well aware of this, and I'm sure most readers of this newsletter will be. But many MPs and councillors do need to be convinced that buses are an essential part of a transport system that is inclusive, environmentally friendly, economically efficient, and help to knit our society together.

(b) How to get there: all too often a functioning system is destroyed at lightning speed but takes decades to reconstruct. This is the case, for example, with the rail link between Oxford and Cambridge via Bedford -- it is widely agreed nowadays that it should never have been closed, and moves are afoot to restore the link, but I am not sanguine that they will be completed within my lifetime. I am worried that even if the report is accepted in full it will take similarly long to restore a comprehensive bus network, and would have liked to see some proposals which would give us a "world class system" within the lifetime of a single parliamentary or council cycle.

Queen's Speech 2016: Elected mayors to get power over buses
Copy and photo from Chris Ames, www.localgov.uk



The much-anticipated Buses Bill will limit powers to franchise services to areas with directly elected mayors while legislation will be introduced to facilitate the use of autonomous and electric vehicles.

The Queen's speech included plans for a Bus Services Bill and a Modern Transport Bill, as well as measures to improve infrastructure and the digital economy.

In his introduction to the document setting out details of forthcoming Government legislation, Prime Minister David Cameron said: 'To back business, we will make sure Britain has first-class infrastructure, especially when it comes to the transport of the future.'

The government has confirmed expectations that 'London-style powers to franchise local services' will only be given to mayoral combined authorities.

Ministers said a separate Modern Transport Bill 'will put Britain at the forefront of the modern transport revolution, so that we create new jobs

and fuel economic growth around the country'.

It will include: legislation to enable the future development of the UK's first commercial spaceports; new laws to make the UK ready to pioneer driverless cars; and new rules to bring safe commercial and personal drone flight for households and businesses a step closer.

Specific measures will include ensuring that appropriate insurance is available to support the use of autonomous and driverless vehicles.

In the speech, the Queen said ministers 'will ensure the United Kingdom is at the forefront of technology for new forms of transport, including autonomous and electric vehicles'.

However, guidance has made clear that measures on autonomous and driverless vehicles measures will apply to Great Britain only and not Northern Ireland.

A Digital Economy Bill will honour Mr Cameron's pledge to make high speed broadband a universal service obligation and help telecoms providers build the infrastructure needed for faster broadband and better mobile networks.

ED: Does this include the Bedford elected mayor Dave by any chance?

Bus Services Bill is published:
Now the debating can start
By Mel Holley, from RouteOne Magazine online (and presumably will be in the following week's printed copy too)

The wait is finally over as the Bus Services Bill has been published.

The 88-page, 33,500 word bill was published late on Friday afternoon (20 May 2016)

Lord Ahmed of Wimbledon - who speaks for the Department for Transport in the House of Lords - introduced the Bill yesterday (a procedural formality) and ordered it to be printed.

The bill covers eight key areas:

- Advanced Quality Partnership Schemes
- Franchising Schemes
- Advanced Ticketing schemes
- Enhanced Partnership Plans and Schemes
- Powers to make Traffic Regulation Orders
- Powers to require the provision of information about bus services
- Registration of bus services
- Bus Companies: Limitations of powers of authorities

The second reading of the bill takes place in the House of Lords on 8 June. It then goes through the Committee Stage in the House of Lords, before passing to the Commons, with an expected crucial period of debate in mid-October.

The Bill can be viewed and downloaded online, and should be available in print through The Stationery Office soon.

Responding, the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT) has today (20 May) promised to work with the Government and all key stakeholders to ensure that the Bus Services Bill "produces the best possible results for passengers and bus operators alike."

Says CEO Simon Posner: "The CPT and its members fully support the move towards devolution as local bus services serve local bus markets.

The crucial period is the House of Commons Committee Stage – expected to be in mid-October – when amendments will be debated.

"We firmly believe that the best results for passengers are achieved when operators work together in partnership.

"We are convinced that passengers outside London are best served by a commercial regime which has stemmed the decline in patronage and given bus operators the flexibility to respond to passenger needs and aspirations, developing their services accordingly.

"The CPT supports the Government's proposals in the Bill for advanced quality partnership schemes and enhanced partnerships.

"Where such an arrangement offers the best opportunity for growing patronage whilst allowing operators to innovate, develop their services and retain their commercial freedom, the industry will work with local authorities to ensure the best possible deal is achieved for passengers."

On the subject of franchising he adds: "But where local authorities consider

introducing franchising CPT is pleased to see that those proposals will be subject to robust and fair public and financial tests, and that the Bill aims to allow small and medium enterprise (SME) operators to compete fairly.

“The industry supports the Government’s proposal to ensure that passengers are able to access full data on routes, timetables and fares. Much of this information is already available through Traveline, which is a partnership between transport operators, local authorities and passenger groups.”

The CPT will continue to examine the provisions contained in the Bill and will follow its progress through Parliament.

**Central Bedfordshire Bus Review –
more details**
By Suzy Scott

To add to what we said in Newsletter 28, you can now find out more on the Review below, via the Central Beds website, or by telephoning Susan Childerhouse on 0300 300 4394, or email **susan.childerhouse@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk**

It would be of help to BABUS to see copies of any responses from our members, to ensure we know what our members want, and as to how we can help in the future. A copy of the contact flyer is included at the end of this article.

**Central Bedfordshire Consultation
in summary form, from CBC**

We currently provide funding (subsidises) for over half of the bus routes in Central Bedfordshire. These are bus routes which are no longer commercially viable for bus companies to run. We also cover the costs for 43,000 bus pass holders every time they use their bus pass.

Our current approach is no longer affordable so we need to rethink how bus transport is provided.

We are proposing to change how we make decisions on funding bus routes which are no longer viable for commercial bus companies to run. Decision making will be fair, transparent and affordable. We will consider demand and possible alternatives.

We are proposing to facilitate a new process where community bus providers can compete to provide whole or parts of routes if there is enough demand.

We are also proposing to make changes to concessionary fares such as when people can use their bus passes. This will bring us in line with the English National Concessionary Pass Scheme. Changes are also proposed for applications for bus passes and how they are renewed.

These changes are included in the new draft Passenger Transport Strategy (PTS) and we want to hear your views on these proposals before we make a decision.

Why we are looking at our Passenger Transport Strategy

At a time when council spending is being reduced (the Government has reduced our funding by £12m for 2016/17) and demand for our services, such as social care, are increasing we need to scrutinise and prioritise our spending in order to protect our frontline services and the vulnerable.

In previous years the council and therefore council tax payers, have funded, (subsidised) commercial bus routes that are no longer financially viable for bus companies to run.

We spent £1.2million funding bus routes last year.

In the current financial climate and period of austerity this approach is no longer affordable or sustainable. We need to rethink how bus transport is provided.

Subsidised buses - proposed changes

We subsidise 53% of the bus services in Central Bedfordshire.

This cost us (and therefore tax payers) £1.2 million in 2015/16. A subsidy for a single journey can cost up to £17.50.

This is a discretionary service; we are not obliged to do this but historically, we have. This is no longer affordable or sustainable.

We are looking at developing a fair and transparent process to decide whether or not to fund a bus route that is rarely

used, including whether it is financially viable to run commercially.

The decision making process will take into account:

- available alternatives (duplication of routes, alternative provision available)
- accessibility – demand from older people or disabled people
- reducing congestion – based on passenger numbers
- affordability – value for money assessment based on passenger numbers
- network coverage – priority will be given to buses running on core and second network roads

Subsidies will only be provided to buses running at the following times of high passenger demand:

- 8am to 6:30pm weekdays
- 8am to 3pm Saturdays
- no subsidises for Sunday buses

Community transport - proposed changes

There are a range of voluntary and community transport providers. Examples include Dial-a-Ride services, Flittabus, Wanderbus, Ivel Sprinter and Road Runner.

We fund some of these providers and:

- some use volunteers
- some pay their drivers and staff

Services vary with some providers offering door to door services, whilst others have regular routes and timetables. Fares range in price.

These services are particularly popular with people living in rural areas, older and disabled people. We know from a recent survey how important these services are to customers; they really value them and most would be prepared to pay more for the individual service.

We are already seeing community transport solutions stepping in to provide services and we want to encourage more of this. To this end, we are proposing a new tender process where community transport providers can enter a competitive process to provide all or part of the route.

We will continue to provide financial support to these services but it will be through the new tender process.

Concessionary fares - proposed changes

Concessionary travel is a discount on fares for older people (bus passes), people with disabilities and unemployed people (travel aid). These will continue to be available.

43,000 residents hold a bus pass and they represent 40% of all bus journeys in Central Bedfordshire. We currently pay for every journey where a bus pass is used. Nearly £2.4 million was spent on covering these fares in 2015.

We are proposing to adopt national time regulations as set by the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme, when users can use their bus pass.

Bus pass holders will only be able to use their bus passes between:

- 9:30am and 11pm on weekdays

- all day Saturday
- all day Sunday
- all day on Bank Holidays

Our data about current usage suggests that most people using bus passes use them within these times already.

There are no proposed changes to companion passes.

We would like to modernise how we run this service and make it more efficient:

- by 2030 you would only be able to apply for a bus pass online
- bus passes would no longer automatically renew every five years
- you would also have to apply to renew your bus pass, like you do when you tax your car

We also provide discounts for unemployed people via a travel aid scheme. The council would no longer fund this scheme, but it could continue for bus companies wishing to participate.

How to have your say

The draft Public Transport Strategy consultation is open until 12 July 2016.

You can read the full draft strategy online (see full address on next page) and have your say by answering a questionnaire. Alternatively, paper copies of the consultation will be available in all Central Bedfordshire libraries.

The Executive Committee will consider all feedback before making a decision on 11 October 2016.



have
your
say...

on changes to bus service funding and to when you can use your bus pass.

Central Bedfordshire Council is reviewing Passenger Transport services including subsidised transport, concessionary fares and community transport.

For more information please visit

 www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations
or contact Susan Childerhouse on 0300 300 4394
or susan.childerhouse@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

**Central
Bedfordshire**



Notice of Annual General Meeting 2016

Agenda for Bedford Area Bus Users Society 2016 Annual General Meeting

**Annual General Meeting to be held at the Meeting Room, 3rd Floor,
Bedford Central Library, Harpur Street, Bedford, MK40 1PG
on July 2nd 2016 at 10.30 a.m.**

AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 4 July 2015 (copy Circulated in this Notice)
4. Matters arising
5. Chairman's Annual Report for year ended 31 March 2016
6. Treasurer's Report for year ended 31 March 2016 (accounts circulated in this Notice)
7. Election of Officers
8. Election of Executive Committee
9. Any other business

Guest Speaker – Steve Chambers, Bus Campaigner at Campaign for Better Transport, who will give a talk on "Save Our Buses"



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Bedford Area Bus Users' Society

held at Bedford Central Library on Saturday, 4th July 2015

Present:

John Smith - Chairman

Colin Franklin - Vice Chairman

Martin Brookes - Publicity Officer

Frances Horwood - Secretary

Simon Norton - Treasurer and Membership Secretary

Suzy Scott - Communications Officer

Stephen Sleight - Bedfordshire Rural Transport Partnership

Andrew Spearman - Co-opted Committee Member

Ian Wigley - Co-opted Committee Member

Eighteen others were present, including BABUS members, guests from other bus user groups and others with an interest in bus travel.

1. Welcome and confirmation of appointment of Executive Committee members coopted since the last AGM

The Chairman, John Smith, welcomed all to the meeting and introduced Andrew Spearman and Ian Wigley, inviting members to confirm their appointment to the Executive Committee. The appointment of Andrew Spearman was proposed by Leonard Lean and seconded by Suzy Scott, with all members present voting in favour. The appointment of Ian Wigley was proposed by Suzy Scott and seconded by Ian Raby, with all members voting in favour.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from:-

Peter Blakeman, Michael Dewsbery, Paul Owen, Ralph Sewell and Godfrey Willis and also from Hugh Jaeger (Bus Users Oxford) and Paul Spelzini, on behalf of Potters Bar and St. Albans Transport User Group.

3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 5th July 2014

These had already been circulated and were accepted as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising.

5. Chairman's Annual Report for year ended 31st March 2015

This had been included in the current newsletter and so was not read out. It will, however, be appended to the Minutes. John commented that new committee members would still be welcome.

6.1 Treasurer's Report for year ended 31st March 2015

This had been included in the current newsletter. The Treasurer, Simon Norton, said that funds had been very low, earlier in the year. When new leaflets were required in time for the bus station opening, there were insufficient funds to pay for them, so the Chairman loaned the money, which had now been repaid. At present, the net assets amounted to £511.55. This included support from the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity and some cheques which had not yet been paid into the bank account. The cost of hiring the meeting room at the Library was being met by Bedford Borough Council, for which BABUS was very grateful.

BABUS had 32 paid-up individual members and there were 8 who had not yet renewed and a further 5 whose membership had lapsed since they had not renewed it for 2 years. There had been 2 resignations. There were 15 group members, of whom 3 had paid this year's subscription and 13 had not. John Smith expressed thanks to Simon for his work as Treasurer and for insisting that cheaper meeting rooms were hired in order for BABUS to be solvent.

6.2 Resolution to be proposed by the Treasurer:

"The Executive Committee be authorised to raise subscriptions for individual members for the year 2016/17, 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."

Simon Norton proposed this resolution and Peter Williams seconded it. All were in favour. It is not currently intended to raise the subscription but an increase may become necessary, for example if postage costs rise.

Suzy Scott said that her company, Here to There, is now able to print the newsletters inhouse, enabling them to be produced more cheaply.

7. Election of Officers

The following were willing to continue in office:-

Colin Franklin (Vice Chairman), Frances Horwood (Secretary), Simon Norton (Treasurer and Membership Secretary), Suzy Scott (Communications Officer), Andrew Spearman (Committee Member) and Ian Wigley (Committee Member).

Martin Brookes (Publicity Officer) and John Smith (Chairman) did not wish to continue. It was suggested that those willing to continue be re-elected en bloc. This was proposed by Leonard Lean and seconded by Ian Raby. All were in favour.

Martin Brookes had been a stalwart member of the Committee for a long time, with responsibility for publicity. When the old bus station closed, Martin volunteered to assist with directing people to the temporary stops and he performed this task for a month,

during winter weather. He was standing down owing to ill health. Hence a new Publicity Officer was being sought. Ian Raby was willing to carry out this responsibility but he did not envisage joining the Executive Committee. Ian's appointment as Publicity Officer was proposed by Suzy Scott and seconded by Colin Franklin. All were in favour.

John Smith was not standing for re-election as Chairman since he would shortly be moving to Bath in order to be nearer his children and grandchildren, living in Bristol and Wiltshire. He has already joined a bus user group there and his new home benefits from frequent bus services. BABUS was now seeking a new Chairman. The role would depend on whether the Chairman was free during the day on weekdays: if not, the duties would consist of chairing six committee meetings per year, held on a Saturday morning, and the Annual General Meeting but someone available during the day on weekdays could take an active part in attending liaison meetings. Each of these (Bedford Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire Council, Stagecoach and Grant Palmer) takes place quarterly. There are just sufficient committee members to attend these meetings but more help in this respect would be very welcome.

The meeting was asked if anyone wished to stand as Chairman and Ray Smith expressed his willingness to do so. He told us that he had been interested in buses and other public transport for a long time and was familiar with contacting operators, including Stagecoach Midland. His appointment as Chairman was proposed by Suzy Scott and seconded by Colin Franklin. All were in favour.

8. Election of Executive Committee

Committee Member Marilyn Basketter wished to stand down as she had become Chairman of Sharnbrook Parish Council and this role, together with her family responsibilities, took up a great deal of time. BABUS was grateful to her for her membership of the Committee.

Those willing to serve on the Executive Committee were Colin Franklin, Frances Horwood, Simon Norton, Suzy Scott, Andrew Spearman, Ian Wigley and Ray Smith. Their appointment was proposed by Ian Raby and seconded by Alan Sprod. They were voted in en bloc, with all in favour.

9. Any other business

Simon Norton would receive subscriptions at the end of the meeting, if anyone present had not renewed and wished to do so.

David Gower, from Luton, said how grateful he was to have been invited and expressed his gratitude for the help he had received from John Smith. He wished John well for his move to Bath. We learned that hospital staff were very appreciative of the work of bus user groups and wished them well and that they were highly thought of by the BMA. Dr. Rasamuthiah, who had accompanied Mr. Gower, spoke about the benefits of bus travel. He was a lifelong bus user and, originally from Sri Lanka, had lived in England since 1976. His field was psychiatry and he had worked in Luton since 1982. He was

officially retired but was still involved in the hospital in an advisory capacity and was also involved in transport matters, as part of the Senior People's Forum. He said that the restriction preventing free travel for bus pass holders before 09.30, was a problem for people attending hospital, particularly for blood tests. Bus pass holders in Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire, unlike those in Luton, do not have this restriction. Some councils have a reduced fare for bus pass holders travelling before 09.30. This is the case in Milton Keynes; the cost used to be 50p but it has recently risen to half the adult single fare. Other local authorities might consider introducing something similar.

Chris Pettifer (Head of Transport Operations, Bedford Borough Council) thanked John Smith and Martin Brookes for their work with BABUS, speaking on behalf of the Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire Council, Stagecoach and Grant Palmer.

Peter Ballantyne, Chairman of Milton Keynes Bus User Group, advised us of major changes at Arriva. Arriva the Shires will no longer exist and Milton Keynes will come under Arriva Midland. This will lead to difficulties in communication between the new managers and MKBUG. There has been a change of attitude in Milton Keynes regarding subsidies, which shows a lack of understanding of the practical needs of bus passengers. MKBUG was fighting on behalf of bus users; the group has 150 members and Peter is constantly being contacted by members. The knowledge which the committee of MKBUG has is surprising to the council and bus operators.

John Smith said how pleased we were to see Alan Hopkinson, our former Newsletter Editor, at the meeting. The formal business having been completed, our guest speaker, Claire Walters, the Chief Executive of Bus Users UK, spoke. Her talk, concerning the role of this organisation, was very interesting and informative. She then took questions from members of the audience. The meeting ended with a lively and wide-ranging discussion, prompted by points raised by various people present.

BABUS Financial Report for 2015-2016

Income

£195-00	Subscriptions (individual)
£ 96-00	Subscriptions (corporate)
£158-00	BRCC grant
£227-00	Donations
£676-00	Total
£146-44	Branch funds at 1/4/15
£822-44	Total

Outgoings

£107-50	Room hire
£289-04	4 Newsletters + AGM notice
£ 35-99	Web costs
£ 5-19	Paypal charges
£ 7-50	Voicemail
£ 3-52	Posters
£448-74	Total
£373-70	Branch funds at 1/4/16
£822-44	Total

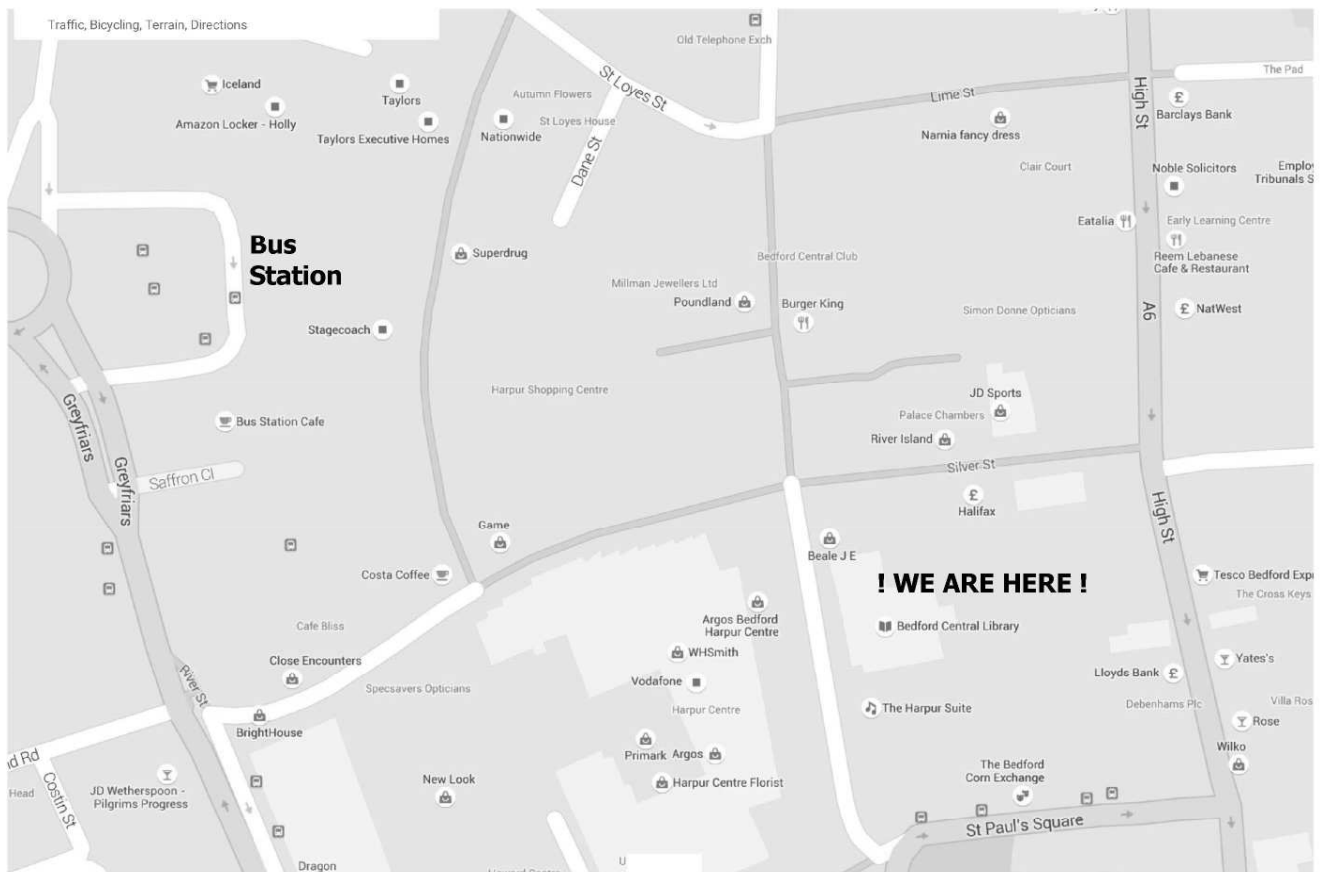
Assets at 1/4/16

£358-23	General Account 1/4/16
£ 7-58	Project Account
£ 5-00	Cheque not yet paid in
£ 13-89	Paypal Account
£384-70	Total

Liabilities at 1/4/16

£ 11-00	Unpaid cheque
£ 11-00	Total
£373-70	Branch funds at 1/4/16
£384-70	Total

Map of Bedford Town Centre, showing the location of the Central Library and the Bus Station



This page is intentionally blank, as there is a poster for the Annual General Meeting on the reverse of this page.
Please feel free to photocopy this, or print more (in monochrome or colour) from our website [**www.babus.org.uk**](http://www.babus.org.uk)



Bedford Area Bus Users Society

Annual General Meeting

Will be held on

Saturday 2nd July 2016,

10.30, at

Bedford Central Library

(Meeting Room), Harpur Street,
Bedford Town Centre, MK40 1PG.

After the formal business, our
speaker will be **Steve
Chambers, Bus Campaigner
at the Campaign for Better
Transport.**

All Welcome.

Visit our website for more information - www.babus.org.uk