

# TAKING CARE OF EVERY JOURNEY

The Oxford Bus Group

Sustainability Report 2021



**oxford**  
bus company

*Thames Travel*

 carousel

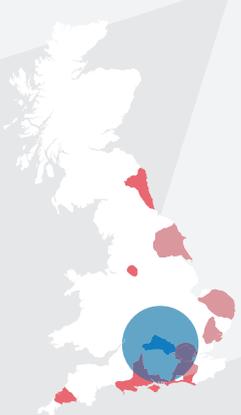
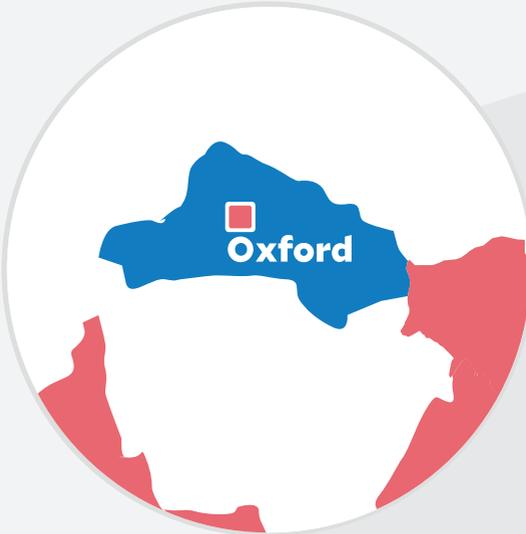
**City Sightseeing**  
**Oxford**

**Oxford Bus Group have connected passengers across Oxford, South Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Reading since 1881. We also provide services between Oxford and Heathrow and Gatwick Airports. The Group's fleet consists of 271 buses and coaches across three depots (Oxford, Didcot and High Wycombe).**

We have also offered open-top bus tours of Oxford, since acquiring City Sightseeing Oxford in December 2017. Since then, we have made multiple improvements to the fleet, further enhancing the customers' experience.

We provide employment for over 700 people throughout the region.

As with many other businesses, the services we operate were significantly affected by the sudden outbreak of COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. However, all four of our businesses have worked incredibly hard to ensure the safety of our colleagues and customers.



## In this report

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## Find out more...

### Social media:

-  [Oxfordbuscompany](#)
-  [ThamesTravel](#)
-  [Citysightseeingoxford](#)
-  [theairlinecoach](#)
-  [@OxfordBusCo](#)
-  [@Thames\\_Travel](#)
-  [@CarouselBus](#)
-  [@OxfordOpenTop](#)
-  [@theairlinecoach](#)

### Websites:

- [www.oxfordbus.co.uk](http://www.oxfordbus.co.uk)
- [www.thames-travel.co.uk](http://www.thames-travel.co.uk)
- [www.carouselbuses.co.uk](http://www.carouselbuses.co.uk)
- [www.citysightseeingoxford.com](http://www.citysightseeingoxford.com)
- [www.theairlineoxford.co.uk](http://www.theairlineoxford.co.uk)



## Our reporting structure

We are committed to operating our buses in a way which helps to put our services at the heart of the communities they serve. This report is split into five sections:

### Better teams

To perform all job roles and tasks competently to allow further growth.

→ [Read more on page 4](#)

### Happier customers

To gain more happy customers and reward colleagues for receiving positive feedback.

→ [Read more on page 10](#)

### Stronger communities

To be a responsible partner, supporting our colleagues and wider local community.

→ [Read more on page 18](#)

### Safer working

To implement new market leading technology and adapt it for the best results for our customers and colleagues.

→ [Read more on page 24](#)

### Cleaner environment

To improve air quality and encourage fuel efficiency at all locations across the business. This section includes the Climate Change Strategy.

→ [Read more on page 28](#)

# Managing Director's Message



## 2020/2021 highlights

- City Sightseeing Oxford and Carfax Tower win TripAdvisor Traveller's Choice Award
- Five new Euro VI buses purchased across the business
- Launch of new leadership team
- New customer facilities at Seacourt Park&Ride
- All-female tourism management appointed
- City Sightseeing Oxford opens new Visitor Information Point
- New and approved mobile apps launched for customers
- Winners of 'Brand the Bus!' 2021 competition announced
- £60,000 raised for Bernardo's
- Mobile COVID-19 testing buses launched in Norfolk
- ISO 45001 certification achieved
- Carousel Buses expands fleet of clean technology vehicles

"The bus industry has continued to face significant challenges as we bounce back from the pandemic.

While keeping our colleagues and customers safe has remained a key priority, we have strongly focused on diversification to ensure we rebuild better from the impact of the pandemic. Central to this has been changing the way we work, adapting services and ensuring public transport remains at the heart of communities and a core part of the overall solution to ensure the UK hits its 2050 carbon neutral target.

I'm proud of the way everyone at our group of companies responded to the pandemic and overcome multiple challenges. My thanks go to all my colleagues for their commitment, passion and hard work.

As we emerged from lockdown, we wanted to use the experience to improve how we operate as a business and as people. We replaced our Senior Management Team structure with a new and improved Leadership Team who meet regularly. It formalised our wider leadership team, put us in a stronger position to tackle further challenges and made us more accessible to colleagues.

Our people are the heart of our business and in addition to being Investors in People, all our colleagues are paid more than the Oxford Living Wage. We continue to provide on-going training and support and this year welcomed four new engineering apprentices. Investing in developing people is crucial to the long-term sustainability of the business.

At the time of writing, driver recruitment is a significant challenge for the bus and coach industry. We have launched a multi-pronged campaign to attract and train new bus drivers on an unprecedented level to seek to overcome the challenge.

Part of our business diversification strategy, we have created a revamped tourism management team at City Sightseeing Oxford and Oxford Bus Company. The all-female team was created to ensure we provide a world class welcome to visitors and delivery of tourism related services. We have focused on developing partnerships with key visitor attractions which has led to the creation of new revenue streams.

A partnership highlight was the launch of our collaboration with the prestigious science and technology organisation Milton Park at the start of 2021. It has delivered significant improvements to bus connectivity including new direct connections to Headington, Wantage and Grove and an improved service to Oxford, Didcot Parkway and Abingdon.

We have continued to embrace technology and have introduced several innovations to benefit our customers. We launched a new and improved mobile apps to make travel even easier for passengers. New features include being able to track where a bus is on a map in real time. Further digital investment has provided a departure screen and top up machine at Didcot Parkway for Thames Travel passengers. Additionally, new contactless technology has been introduced across our fleets to provide customers with convenient touch free ways to pay.

At Carousel Buses, we increased the number of ultra-low emission vehicles in our fleet via a £200,000 investment in Euro VI technology. This has positively improved air quality in our communities.

We have worked hard to encourage people back to bus working in partnership with key partners including Oxford City Council.

# 4,810

Colleague training days

# 724

Colleagues employed

# 17.7 million

Passenger journeys

Another key objective is helping deliver the Go-Ahead Group's Climate Change Strategy. Continuing to improve clean air technology needs to be combined with policy and behaviour change to encourage people to reduce private vehicle use and embrace more sustainable modes of travel. We have bid for DfT Zero Emission Buses for Regional Areas (ZEBRA) funding in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council to start electrifying our fleet in 2023."

**Phil Southall,**  
Managing Director



**INVESTORS** | Silver  
**IN PEOPLE**

# Better teams

Oxford Bus Group is committed to sustainability, continued improvement and creating an outperforming place to work. One of our Company values is working as a team and this enables us to make the delivery of a very complex bus operation easier for all.

We are one of Oxfordshire's largest employers and all colleagues are paid more than the Oxfordshire Living Wage. We are proud of our silver accreditation from Investors in People and we are also part of the Go-Ahead Group which achieved a gold standard accreditation. The standard defines what it takes to lead, support and manage people well for sustainable results.

We continually invest in professional training and support for our drivers and wider teams. This has seen many colleagues progress through the Company from entry roles into senior positions. We also invest in apprenticeships with a commitment to encouraging people to fulfil careers in public transport.

Our drivers are paid while receiving professional training and support. All of our colleagues receive a free travel pass, enabling them, their partner and their children under 18 to travel on all Oxford Bus Group services including airline coach services to Heathrow and Gatwick Airport.

There are flexible shift patterns to accommodate modern life and overtime. We continually recognise success and reward outstanding colleague activity with vouchers via a staff app.

We're very proud to have an excellent team able to step up to challenges brought in by the pandemic and help the business adapt to the frequently-changing environment that we currently live in.



## Key highlights

# 80%

Employee engagement

# 724

Colleagues employed



**Keeping it in the family:** Adam Marsden behind the wheel, following in his uncle's footsteps.

## Case study: Oxford Bus Company intern keeps it in the family

The nephew of one of Oxford Bus Company's former long-serving employees is following in his uncle's footsteps, after joining the organisation's internship scheme.

Adam Marsden, a transport management student at Aston University in Birmingham, is combining planning bus routes with driving as part of his one-year placement.

The 20-year-old joined Oxford Bus Company as a Network Coordinator three years after his

uncle, Paul Marsden, retired following 30 years of service driving buses on Oxfordshire's roads.

Adam's internship sees him work in the planning department working across Oxford Bus Company, Thames Travel, Carousel Buses and City Sightseeing Oxford services.

The Oxford resident said being able to provide customers with the best possible service by solving problems quickly has helped him develop a strong understanding of working effectively within a team.

"No two days are the same at Oxford Bus Company," said Adam. "My uncle Paul worked here for a very long time driving on the park&ride300 service and enjoyed every day of his job, it's easy to understand why.

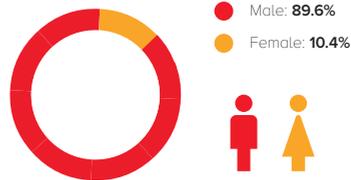
"Tackling fresh challenges each day in a fast-paced but friendly environment really makes me want to work in route planning when I'm older. I enjoy the challenges we are set and trying to source the most efficient ways of completing tasks.

"Making small improvements to our countywide and regional services to improve customer satisfaction is what the role is all about. This means every day presents a new challenge and it's why I enjoy my role most."

Internships at Oxford Bus Group allow students to gain relevant skills in their sector of interest and establish strong industry contacts while being paid for it. Adam said developing his knowledge of working in a professional environment and his role's flexibility are what attracted him to Oxford Bus Company.

"I knew from my uncle that Oxford Bus Company would be a great place to develop," said Adam. "They really care about the people who work for them. I feel very fortunate to combine my working hours with the planning team and driving routes many of our customers depend on.

### All employees



"Being out in the community serving Oxfordshire's roads has really helped me understand what is required to make our services even more enjoyable and reliable. Customer satisfaction is so important in the transport sector, which is why engaging with people who use our services is so important. It's definitely made me realise a career in transport planning is something I want to pursue."

### Apprenticeship scheme

Oxford Bus Company offers an engineering apprenticeship scheme and graduate management trainee scheme. As part of the Go-Ahead Group, we are proud to have been nationally recognised by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) for the quality of apprenticeships across our business.



**Our apprentices.** Jamie, Tafara and Max, engineering apprentices at Oxford Bus Group.

## Case study: engineering apprentices

We are pleased to have welcomed four new engineering apprentices to our Engineering Departments during August 2021; three at Oxford Bus Company and one at Carousel Buses.

All four apprentices are working to complete a four-year apprenticeship programme, combining on-the-job training and additional study done on block release at S&B Automotive in Bristol, who run specific apprenticeships in transport engineering maintenance. The apprentices are each allocated a mentor to oversee their progression and get the opportunity to work with a variety of engineering colleagues, to develop their skills and knowledge. At the end of the four years, the companies will have three qualified mechanical engineers and one electrical engineer.

At Oxford Bus Group, we have had fantastic success in developing apprentices over the years, many of whom have gone on to have a long career with the Company.

## Leadership team introduction

Following the experience of the pandemic, the Oxford Bus Group Directors have been reflecting on the way that the business is managed. One thing that has been particularly noticeable during this time was how well all colleagues have risen to the various challenges.

At Oxford Bus Group, we are keen to make sure that we build on the good work that has been done during this period and not just “go back to how things were before.” To this end, the Company decided to make some changes to how we do things, in order to give more responsibility and empowerment to those who run the business.

As part of these changes, the previous “Senior Management Team” structure was disbanded and replaced with a new, larger “Leadership Team.” The team includes all those in leadership roles across the business and regular meetings have already been held to review how the business is doing and to discuss what is coming up on the horizon.

Along with linked initiatives, it enables more interaction and engagement with colleagues, more listening and recognising and rewarding of good service. The latter can now be achieved by the introduction of a faster and easier colleague rewards system that complements our Star of the Month programme which has been running for a few years now. It means good service can be instantly rewarded with vouchers on HapiHub.

The way we all worked together to successfully navigate our group of businesses through the pandemic demonstrated how strong we are as a team and that it is broader than the Senior Management Team. Therefore, formalising the wider leadership team was a natural progression in our journey. By strengthening our leadership team, we are better equipped than our competitors to overcome further challenges. It means we have a stronger range of skill sets and experience within our leadership pool, are





more accessible to colleagues, more adaptable and able to introduce new sustainable ways of operating.

### TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice Award

In October 2020, City Sightseeing Oxford scooped a prestigious award from TripAdvisor - after it was ranked as one of the top tourist attractions in the world.

The open-top bus tour, owned by Oxford Bus Company, scooped the accolade based on a full year of TripAdvisor reviews prior to any changes caused by the pandemic. Award winners are known for consistently receiving great visitor feedback, placing them in the top 10% of tourist attraction businesses around the globe.

And in a double boost, the Carfax Tower, which is operated by City Sightseeing Oxford on behalf of Oxford City Council, was also awarded a TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice award.

Phil Southall, Managing Director of City Sightseeing Oxford, said: "We are proud to have won this globally significant award that

independently recognises the excellent service we provide to Oxford visitors.

"Providing a world-class welcome to all visitors to Oxford is crucial to attracting people into the city. We maintained the City Sightseeing service throughout the summer despite the COVID-19 challenges to help support Oxford's visitor economy at this challenging time."

Councillor Mary Clarkson, Cabinet Member for City Centre, Covered Market and Culture, said: "This award shows what can happen when the public sector works together with local businesses. Not only has Carfax Tower generated an income for both organisations and created jobs, it has also provided an excellent service and helped draw tourists into Oxford to benefit even more businesses."

Kanika Soni, Chief Commercial Officer at TripAdvisor, said: "Winners of the 2020 Travellers' Choice Awards should be proud of this distinguished recognition. Although it has been a challenging year for travel and hospitality, we want to celebrate our partners' achievements. Award winners are beloved for their exceptional service and quality."

## Two engineers retire after 97 years of excellent service

Mechanics Dave Cook and Ray Leach downed tools after almost a combined century servicing buses at Oxford Bus Company.

They have both retired after spending nearly 50 years each keeping buses in top condition. In careers spanning six decades, Mr Cook and Mr Leach experienced significant developments in the transport industry.

Mr Cook joined Oxford Bus Company in August 1971, when Edward Heath was prime minister and How Can You Mend A Broken Heart by Bees Gees was Number One in the charts. He completed 49 years' services in total.

Mr Leach joined the company a year later in August 1972, when School's Out by Alice Cooper was Number One in the charts, the average bus fare was 3p and a pint of beer 15p. Mr Leach completed 48 years' service in total.

The pair were at the forefront of ever-developing transport technology during their careers, which has included a recent transition from diesel vehicles to hybrid.

They have both experienced so much development in the bus industry and always kept abreast of engineering advancements. At Oxford Bus Group, we are fortunate to have many loyal and hard-working colleagues who are a credit to the company."

## All-female tourism management

Oxford Bus Company and City Sightseeing Oxford created a revamped tourism management team across both companies to help drive the visitor economy.

The trio of Jane Marshall, Clarisse Garcia and Val Connor form the all-female team created to ensure visitors to Oxford receive a world-class welcome. The focus is on developing partnerships with key visitor attractions, marketing what Oxford has to offer and delivering first-class customer service. The tourism triumvirate was created as a part of a commercial restructure at both companies focused on ensuring top-class delivery of tourism-related services in the City.

Jane's role as General Manager of City Sightseeing Oxford has been expanded, and as Head of Tourism she has a renewed focus on forming mutually beneficial partnerships. Former bus driver, Val, oversees the management and engagement of drivers for City Sightseeing Oxford. Clarisse was promoted to Retail Manager, having previously worked as a travel shop supervisor and she is now responsible for the High Street Visitor Information Point, Gloucester Green Travel Shop and Carfax Tower, and oversees colleagues working at those locations, along with tour guides working on the City Sightseeing Oxford buses and



**Farewell after 97 years of service!**  
Managing Director Phil Southall sending off Dave Cook and Ray Leach.



**City Sightseeing Oxford - let us show you Oxford** Oxford Bus Company introduces an all-female tourism management team.

running City Sightseeing's walking tours.

Oxford Bus Company and City Sightseeing Oxford play an integral role in Oxford's crucial visitor economy.

Oxfordshire is an attractive destination, and Oxford Bus Group remain committed to ensuring to deliver a world-class welcome to visitors.

The all-female management team is also a boost to Oxford Bus Group's parent company the Go-Ahead Group's 'Women in Bus' initiative. It is designed to address the long-standing lack of gender diversity in public transport.

Go-Ahead's Women in Bus network provides visible role models to colleagues and creates a forum for women to raise issues, share experiences and support each other.

Mr Southall added: "The Go-Ahead Group's female colleague-led networking is the first of its kind in the bus industry and we're proud to be making a positive contribution to its success.

"One of our core values is embracing diversity and we want our workforce to fully reflect the great diversity of our passengers and the communities that we serve. There are great opportunities for people to work in our industry and we are committed to working to attract more females into the bus business."

### Case study: bus driver recruitment

In June 2021, Thames Travel launched a new recruitment campaign that encourages people to consider bus driving as an alternative career to that they are currently engaged in.

Funeral director turned bus driver James McGee is one of the first to feature to demonstrate that bus driving can be an attractive option as a second career. Mr McGee joined Thames Travel in 2018 after 13 years of working in the funeral sector. The Oxford resident also works as a control room operator at the low-carbon Didcot depot and is responsible for the smooth running of bus services.

Thames Travel has expanded its services across south Oxfordshire to improve connectivity for passengers between Oxford City, the South Oxfordshire Market Towns, new housing developments, rail stations and business hubs. It includes the new X36 service providing links between Didcot and new housing developments in Wantage and Grove.

Improved services providing connectivity to Milton Park and Culham Science centre have also been launched. A variety of shift patterns to accommodate different lifestyles are available with drivers working 40-hour weeks and the pay rate that's very competitive.



**"I haven't looked back!"** Thames Travel colleague, James McGee, tells his story about joining Thames Travel.

"Since changing careers, I haven't looked back," said Mr McGee. "I was provided with full training upon joining and work now fits around my lifestyle. During the pandemic, my role has been essential to people requiring a smooth, safe and reliable transport service to essential destinations.

"As a sole controller based at our operational hub in Didcot, my day-to-day role is not dissimilar to that of an air traffic controller - just on a smaller scale and with buses, not aeroplanes. It's about providing passengers with the best possible service through instinctive problem-solving and good communication skills."

His colleague Joyce Pickett has been driving on Oxfordshire's roads for more than 30 years after starting her career as a bus driver in 1990. The Wolvercote resident joined Thames Travel in August 2020 and now covers routes in central and south Oxfordshire.

She said: "Working with Thames Travel is great; I've got a fantastic mix of city and countryside driving which I love. Everyone at Thames Travel gets along well, there is a great team spirit and feeling of working for each other rather than independently. If you are considering a change of roles or would like to start your career, I would recommend joining the team. Working through the pandemic and transporting people to their COVID-19 jobs has been particularly rewarding."

Phil Southall, Thames Travel Managing Director, said: "After a challenging year for the transport sector, it is fantastic to be in a position where we are actively recruiting drivers. Our investment in expanding our services in central and south Oxfordshire has created new job opportunities. Our increased services have improved connectivity which is vital for the economic recovery of the county."

## Mental Health Wellbeing Team

At Oxford Bus Group, we introduced a 'wellbeing team' to provide mental health support to colleagues.

A group of 11 volunteer wellbeing support champions have received specialist mental health training to help them spot triggers, reassure colleagues and source further support where required. The scheme has already successfully provided support to colleagues.

Phil Southall, Managing Director at Oxford Bus Group said: "The pandemic has been a particularly challenging period for public transport workers who have kept essential services running throughout the year, irrespective of restrictions in other walks of life.

"We want to make sure colleagues are properly supported and this initiative ensures support is readily available across our various locations. There must be no stigma around mental health, and we want to make sure everybody knows help is at hand when they need it."

Clare Child, HR Manager at Oxford Bus Group said: "We are pleased to be launching our Mental Health Wellbeing Team having invested in training with "Mental Health First Aid" for colleagues. It is vital that our colleagues are properly supported and this initiative ensures that support is readily available across our companies."

Oxford Bus Company service delivery and private hire manager Kev Flannagan is one of the new wellbeing team. Having suffered with his own mental health crisis six years ago, he signed up to be in Oxford Bus Company's first ever cohort of wellbeing support champions.

He helps colleagues work through mental health issues and identifies people who may feel vulnerable. With more than 20 years' experience in the bus industry he has seen first-hand the 'seismic shift' in the sector's culture and how it deals with mental health.

Mr Flannagan said: "15 years ago, if a driver was off sick for depression, you'd never know. It is a lot more open now. Knowing where the bottom of the barrel is – you don't want to see anyone else hit it"

The wellbeing team builds on the operators' long standing Employee Assistance Programme which provides mental health support, including access to counsellors. The new initiative was launched as part of Go-Ahead's mental health charter.

Four-fifths of Go-Ahead's workforce is male, although initiatives are in place to encourage more women to consider careers in transport. According to Mental Health Foundation, Men are more likely than women to have lower levels of life satisfaction and are less likely to access mental health support. The COVID-19 pandemic has also been found to sharply escalate stress, anxiety and isolation among transport workers.



Here for you!  
Members of the wellbeing support team.

# Happier customers

**We are here to serve our customers and they are at the heart of everything we do.**

Oxford Bus Group places a strong emphasis on putting the customer first and one of our core values is to be customer focused. The more we understand our customers, the better service we can provide, meaning customers will choose our services again and again.

## Supporting key workers during the pandemic

During the pandemic, Oxford Bus Company, Thames Travel and Carousel Buses took their role in supporting the nation's key worker heroes very seriously.

The companies continued to operate throughout the pandemic and provided customers with the ability to request timetable changes if the emergency timetables introduced during the pandemic didn't meet their essential needs. Several journeys were added as a result of

customer feedback, and many of these have been made a fixture of regular timetables as the lockdown restrictions have eased.

## New customer facilities unveiled at Seacourt Park&Ride

A raft of brand-new customer-friendly facilities were opened in April 2021 at Seacourt Park&Ride to help welcome people back onto bus services.

They include toilets and an enclosed waiting area open from 06:00 hrs to 20:00 hrs daily, as well as digital information screens which provide real-time journey information.

The car park capacity has also been increased by 595 spaces taking the number of spaces for vehicles to more than 1,300. The improvements were made possible thanks to an investment by Oxford City Council.

Seacourt Park&Ride is located on Botley Road, just off the A420 and is one of five car parks located on Oxford's ring road which provide parking and onward bus journeys into the City Centre.



**Improvements for park&ride customers:** park&ride400 bus in front of a brand new bus shelter at Seacourt Park&Ride.

## Customer feedback

“Sleek modern coach offered comfortable seats as we glided along from Oxford to Heathrow Airport. Excellent driver made coach entry and luggage pickup as easy as could be. Left afterwards with a smile. Most excellent recommendation... cheers to the Airline team.”

The airline customer

“I was a passenger on the city35 service. Another elderly passenger, who was clearly ill, also boarded this service. I was very impressed with the concern for this gentleman’s health that was shown by the driver, which I feel went well beyond what might be expected.”

A city service customer

“I wanted to thank the Customer Services Team for your very prompt reply to my question and of course also to thank the company for being willing to extend the validity of my ticket. My family and I have been using the Oxford Bus Company buses for many years and have always been very happy with the services provided. This is another welcome example of great customer service.”

The airline customer

The park&ride400 service operates between Seacourt, Oxford and Thornhill daily. Oxford Bus Company operates all Park&Ride bus services to the City Centre, which are designed to help reduce City Centre emissions and congestion. Customers can benefit from joint parking and onward bus tickets.

The Oxford Bus Company invested £4.5m in the fleet of Park&Ride buses in 2017. Each bus has free WiFi, audiovisual next stop information systems, USB and conductive charging points and Euro VI micro-hybrid engines with the cleanest available vehicle emissions standards.

A further £1m was invested in rolling out contactless payment functionality to the fleet to make the boarding experience as frictionless as possible.



Supporting Oxford tourism. Jane Marshall, Head of Tourism, providing information to a customer at the Visitor Information Point.

## City Sightseeing Oxford Visitor Information Point

In September 2020, Oxford Bus Group opened a new Visitor Information Point to help welcome tourists and provide support to Oxford visitors.

The Visitor Information Point is located on High Street in the heart of Oxford and provides a ‘one-stop shop’ for visitors, and group or event organisers visiting the city.

Visitors can obtain swift access to information including directions, bus routes, event calendars, accommodation, and information and history sheets to key attractions. Bus tickets, books, maps, and tickets to certain visitor attractions can also be purchased.

The opening of the facility by the open-top bus tour company comes after the closure of the Experience Oxfordshire Visitor Information Centre in Broad Street. Oxford Bus Group is working with various stakeholders in the visitor economy to develop additional partnerships to expand its offering at the new Visitor Information Point.



**New bus liveries for Milton Park.** Encouraging employees to choose bus when returning to office environments.

## New Milton Park bus liveries to boost sustainable transport

Thames Travel launched its branded Milton Park buses in March 2021 as part of its ongoing partnership with the prestigious science and technology park.

It followed the introduction of substantial improvements to bus connectivity launched by Thames Travel and Milton Park in January 2021, which included new direct connections to Headington, Wantage and Grove, and improved service to Oxford, Didcot Parkway and Abingdon.

Thames Travel also unveiled three branded buses designed to highlight the services to passengers and celebrate the growing partnership with the flagship business park.

The services provide enhanced connectivity between Milton Park and major residential areas, rail services, and Oxford. Milton Park employees can travel from anywhere in the Didcot area to Milton Park using their special employee tickets for a subsidised price of £20 per year.

Milton Park, managed by MEPC, is one of the leading science and technology communities in Oxfordshire and is home to 250 companies. The partnership benefits the park's occupiers, visitors, and local communities.

The new buses feature decals which show the what3words the routes' start and finish points so passengers can easily find the pick-up and drop off locations. what3words is a free app that divides the world into three-metre squares and gives each one a unique address made of three words: a what3words address. For example, the Didcot station bus stop is at `///regrowth.butterfly.presuming` and `///local.courier.librarian` for St Aldate's in Oxford. All go to `///scores.honey`. ambitions, which is the destination for the Park's Innovation Centre. This may be a sign of things to come, with what3words innovative location mapping soon likely to become more integrated into transport journey planning.

22 ultra-low emission Euro VI buses operate on the Milton Park routes between 06:00 hrs and 23:30 hrs daily. They are all equipped with WIFI and contactless payment solutions, with many also having USB charging sockets and audio-visual next stop announcement systems.

Veronica Reynolds, sustainable travel advisor, Milton Park added: "At a time when people are starting to consider returning to work, they are also evaluating how they can travel around

more comfortably, sustainability and economically. The unveiling of the buses' new livery is a great alternative travel mode offering people the opportunity to relax, read or work on the bus while saving the average £162 per month that it costs to keep a car on the road.

"By taking cars off the road, we can all work towards improving air quality and reducing traffic congestion. We hope that people enjoy seeing the new livery and experiencing the enhanced services."



New mobile app. Improving the customer experience.

## New and improved mobile apps

Oxford Bus Company, Thames Travel and Carousel Buses have launched a revamped mobile app to make travel even easier for passengers.

New features include being able to track where a bus is on a map in real-time, seeing how much space is on-board, improved live travel updates, which users can tailor to their own favourite services, and an improved journey planner. The new app was created following customer feedback and redesigned to provide more intuitive menus and better real-time information.

The app includes real-time tracking of buses from Oxford Bus Company, Thames Travel and Carousel Buses, as well as those from other

local bus operators including Stagecoach, Arriva and Red Rose. Travel passes and multi-trip tickets can be purchased on the app. The technology continues to enable passengers to scan their phones when boarding the bus, for quick and easy travel.

At Oxford Bus Group, we are committed to making bus and coach travel as accessible as possible for customers and technology helps us provide access to key information for passengers.

## City Sightseeing Oxford helps locals rediscover Oxford

In summer 2021, tourism in Oxford started bouncing back, as 2,000 visitors per week enjoyed open-top bus tours of the city in June.

Oxfordshire Residents were offered the opportunity to reconnect with the city thanks to a special offer from City Sightseeing Oxford in support of #RediscoverOxford. Oxford Times readers were able to enjoy City Sightseeing Oxford's open-top bus tours or a visit to Carfax Tower via a free 2for1 voucher.

The #RediscoverOxford partnership spearheaded by Oxford City Council, Experience Oxfordshire, Independent Oxford, Oxford Times, Oxford Mail and Oxford Bus Group intended to encourage people to visit the city centre and refuel the visitor economy.

To kick-start the school holidays, City Sightseeing Oxford also offered 'free child tickets' as part of the #RediscoverOxford campaign.

# Stronger communities

Oxford Bus Group operates in many different estates, villages, towns and cities and we have an impact on them all. We are proud to say we give consistently give back to the people we serve and the environment.

We support a variety of charities and other good causes, helping to build a stronger local community through partnerships, challenges and fundraising activities.

## 'Brand the Bus!'

In early 2021, Oxford Bus Company announced the winners of the third edition of the 'Brand the Bus!' competition. The competition offers local good causes and charities the chance to have an Oxford Bus Company bus emblazoned with their branding. People can then vote for their favourite good cause to win this unique opportunity. Some 7,165 online votes were cast for 23 entries during the third edition of the competition.



## Key highlights

2,418

Total contributions

502

Stakeholder events

£2,548

Leverage - total spend on payroll giving

Abingdon RDA's bus! Julie Summersbee (L) and Alice Summersbee (R) and Jasper (R) and Jim-Bob (L) the ponies of Abingdon RDA with Phil Southall of Oxford Bus Company.





**Winners!** Members of Blue Skye Thinking were delighted to see their 'Brand the Bus!' competition winning bus at the launch event.

Home-Start Oxfordshire, which won the inaugural 2019 'Brand the Bus!' competition have now been benefiting from their branded bus for over a year. In the 2020 competition, local charity Blue Skye Thinking scooped first prize in the keenly contested competition to become the latest good cause to win the unique opportunity to have a bus decked out in its own branding. Abingdon Riding for the Disabled was the second-placed charity and received a bus rear advertisement space.

Despite the pandemic significantly affecting the business, Oxford Bus Company managed to launch both branded buses in July. This was greatly appreciated by the charities.

Sally Hall, Director of Blue Skye Thinking, said: "As a small local charity, we cannot thank the Oxford Bus Company enough to have chosen to support us in tackling the number one fatal cancer disease in young people.

"We are so excited to finally share the #BigBlueDreamBus with the community. We are focusing our bus design on never giving up on your dreams and hope people will spot the bus,

take a photo and share on social media to generate valuable funds for Blue Skye Thinking. Generous, local businesses will be sponsoring £5 per photo shared, bringing the whole of the Oxfordshire community together for one common goal."

Alice Summersbee, of Abingdon Riding for the Disabled Association said: "We are all so grateful to Oxford Bus Company for running the Brand the Bus competition and selecting our charity to be on the back of one of its double-decker.

"The publicity this will bring for the charity will be second to none, and we look forward to using the bus to raise awareness of what we do within the charity."

The competition was created as part of Oxford Bus Company's commitment to be socially responsible and to encourage the community to recommend organisations to support, rather than selecting a chosen beneficiary.

The next edition of the 'Brand the Bus!' competition was launched in May 2021.



Christmas Light Bus delivering Christmas cheer! City Sightseeing Oxford bus fully decorated and ready to tour Oxford to deliver Christmas cheer and presents.

## Christmas Light Bus

In November 2020, City Sightseeing Oxford bus filled with starry lights toured Oxford as part of the annual Christmas Lights Festival. The bus was filled with stained-glass window designs by students from City of Oxford College with street artist Mani, and it also played Christmas tunes with support from JACKfm.

Thanks to an overwhelmingly positive public response to the event, Oxford Bus Company and JACKfm have funded another three tours in December to bring Christmas cheer to local communities.

Volunteers from local charities KEEN Oxford, Yellow Submarine and Mencap were on-board the Christmas Lights Bus and distributed more than 100 presents and sweets to children. The tours were also broadcast live via Facebook to spread the goodwill further.

Phil Southall, Oxford Bus Company Managing Director said: "The Christmas Lights Bus tour has been a wonderful experience for everyone involved. It helped spread so much joy during a challenging time for us all and it was lovely to see the reaction from the communities we visited. It was good to be able to give something back in partnership with three great charities and JACKfm"

Katie Forsyth, Inclusive Communities Manager for Keen Oxford said: "Just when we thought the usual Christmas party was off, the magical Christmas Light Bus came along to help us bring Christmas joy and sparkle to so many people during a difficult time. The people that KEEN, Yellow Submarine and Mencap work with are some of the most vulnerable in Oxfordshire and have been hit particularly hard during the pandemic, so we are especially grateful to all at Oxford Bus Company and JACKfm for making this happen and getting us to the doorsteps of all our members."

Caroline O'Connor, Business Development and Brand Partnership Manager at JACKfm said: "The Christmas Light Bus was a brilliant initiative created by the team at the Oxford Bus Company. It's been a tough year, so to have the ability to bring some Christmas magic to so many amazing kids whilst obeying the lockdown rules has been really rewarding."

Families welcomed the Christmas Lights Bus in multiple communities around Oxford. It visited areas including Cowley, Iffley, Headington, Wood Farm, Blackbird Leys, Horspath, Risinghurst, Marston, Radley, Kennington, Abingdon, Wootton, Cumnor, Botley, Cutteslowe as well as the City Centre.



**Oxford Bus Company employees donate almost £60,000 to Barnardo's!** Anne Bailey of Barnardo's and Helena Soanes, Control Duty Manager at Oxford Bus Company.

## £60,000 for Barnardo's

Kind-hearted staff at Oxford Bus Company have donated almost £60,000 to children's charity Barnardo's.

Oxford Bus Company has raised £58,280 via a payroll donation scheme and the charity's tax-efficient workplace lottery scheme, the Winners Club. The money is used by the charity to help deliver its charitable work in the community.

Barnardo's supports nearly 300,000 children, young people, parents and carers across the UK. In September, Anne Bailey, Relationship Co-ordinator at Barnardo's, visited Oxford Bus Company's Cowley House depot to thank the team for its support and sign up more donors.

Anne Bailey said: "Barnardo's is extremely thankful to everyone at Oxford Bus Company for their long-standing support. Over the last 30 years, Oxford Bus Company has raised over £58,000 for our work.

"At Barnardo's we believe in children - no matter who they are, what they have done or what they have been through. With the support of Oxford Bus Company, we have been and continue to be able to reach out to children and young people who desperately need our support whether they have been abused, are homeless

or have a disability. We look forward to continuing our relationship with Oxford Bus Company for many years to come."

Phil Southall, Managing Director at Oxford Bus Company, said: "This is a fantastic achievement by our colleagues, past and present, and has helped make a real difference to so many people. We're so proud of our team and their on-going commitment to giving back to our community in so many ways."

## City Honey

Oxford Bus Group always look for ways to improve their social responsibility and in 2017, a beehive was installed at the Oxford Bus Company's Cowley House depot.

Bees are essential to the environment. It is often said that bees are responsible for one out of every three bites of food we eat as most of our crops require pollination by insects.

In 2021, the beehive has been thriving, with in excess of 100 finest honey jars produced - more than four times as much as we saw in the previous year.

The City Honey is available to purchase in the reception of Cowley House for £4 per jar, and each year, the proceeds go to a charity of our choice.



**Beehive at Cowley House depot:** Over 100 Jars of honey produced in 2021.



## Mobile COVID-19 testing buses in Norfolk

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Oxford Bus Company was helping other areas tackle the pandemic across the country via specially converted buses.

Four of its converted buses have been deployed to support communities in Norfolk. The service is part of Project MOVE, a scheme created to support the NHS and local authorities by giving vaccines and tests via converted buses. It was made possible via a partnership between design company 40two and Oxford Bus Company.

The mobile treatment bays on buses have been made available to local authorities across the UK. Norfolk County Council commissioned four vehicles and they have gone into operation after successful use of a demonstration vehicle. Norfolk County Council is using the four vehicles to provide observed lateral flow device tests for asymptomatic people.

It helped identify the one in three people who may have the virus without any symptoms so they can avoid passing COVID-19 to family, friends and colleagues.

**Project MOVE buses.** Ready to support the Norfolk communities.

Each bus has the capacity to undertake up to 100 observed rapid tests a day. Observed tests are where people swab themselves under the guidance of a trained operator who then processes the test, reads the result and records it.

Phil Southall, Oxford Bus Company Managing Director said: "We are proud to be using Oxford buses to help communities receive the support they need.

"Norfolk County Council are the first local authority to commission the vehicles. We have five more buses available and hope others follow Norfolk's lead and partner with Project MOVE. Norfolk County Council are using the vehicles for observed lateral flow device testing. However, our buses can also be used for other purposes if required including administering vaccines."

The converted Oxford Bus Company Mercedes Citaro vehicles are being operated in Norfolk by Go-Ahead Group sister company Konectbus for at least six months.

Director of Public Health Norfolk, Dr Louise Smith said: "This is great news for our county and means testing is even more readily available.



'Brand the Bus!' Blue Skye Thinking team enjoying their winning branded bus.

By identifying those who are carrying the virus without symptoms, we can help break the chain of transmission. Testing is one of the key ways to help us return to normality so it is imperative that people take regular tests, regardless of whether they've been vaccinated."

David Brown of Project Move said: "We've been humbled by the positive support we've received

from Oxford Bus Company and Norfolk County Council. It is great to see the vehicles on the road so they can begin delivering services directly to the public. It's been a pleasure working together and we're already looking forward to the next project."



## Oxford Bus Company delivered a chocolate boost to a local food bank

Oxford Bus Company made a sweet delivery via Quality Street, but it is not a new road name in the county.

Bus drivers handed 120 tins of Quality Street chocolate treats to a local food bank.

The chocolatey stash was left over from treats purchased by bosses to say thanks to the key workers at Oxford Bus Company. So, the community spirited team decided to drop off the haul at the Oxford Food Hub.

And to share the goodwill across the City, it also put five tins in its Visitor Information Point at Queen's Lane and Travel Shop at Gloucester Green for customers to enjoy.

**A sweet delivery.** Marcelo Pollack, Michelle Hunt and Rosemary Southworth from the Oxford Food Bank receiving chocolates delivered from Oxford Bus Company.

Phil Southall, Oxford Bus Company Managing Director, said: "We initially shared chocolates with colleagues as a thank you following what had been a very challenging year. We had quite a lot left, and colleagues thought it would be a nice gesture to share them with our passengers and Oxford Food Hub. We're pleased to say they've been very well received."



# Safer working

Oxford Bus Group remains at the forefront of implementing innovative technological solutions and maintaining overall best practice to ensure we deliver safe and reliable services to customers and our colleagues work in a safe environment.

## Freeflow touch free payments

New contactless technology has been added to Oxford Bus Company, Thames Travel and Carousel Buses fleets to provide customers with safer touch free options to pay for travel.

From June 2020, passengers are able to 'tap on' via the driver's ticket machine at the start of



## Key highlights

6

Bus accidents per million miles  
(down from 17 in 2019)

21

Number of reported crimes  
(down from 633 in 2019)

98.9%

Bus fleet which is DDA (The Disability  
Discrimination Act) compliant

100%

Total UK Driver and Vehicle Standards  
Agency (DVSA) public service vehicles  
(PSV) bus test pass rate  
(up from 80.4% in 2020)

each journey and 'tap off' on a special reader before disembarking, using bank cards and digital devices. The Freeflow payment system does not require a sign-up process and is compatible with Visa and Mastercard payment cards or devices using Google Pay or Apple Pay.

Freeflow contributes to the enhanced hygiene programme on buses and coaches introduced during the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. By using Freeflow's touch free system, passengers



**ISO 45001 certification achieved!** Oxford Bus Group colleagues pleased to receive the certification.

remove the need for an exchange of cash and paper tickets, reducing the number of touch-points on-board vehicles.

Furthermore, Freeflow helps to reduce boarding times and contributes to speeding up journey times.

The Freeflow price is the same as buying an adult single paper ticket on the bus. The total paid each day is automatically capped to the price of a day ticket for the area travelled in, if this is less than the total cost of the single fares. Customers will need to use the same payment card or device for all journeys taken on the same day for capping to be applied.

Ticketeer's CEO, John Clarfelt, said: "We have been immensely proud to work with the Oxford Bus Company and Thames Travel on their new Freeflow payment system. Our ticketing technology, which allows passengers to 'tap off' on our new standalone card reader, has been designed with exactly this in mind; to deliver touch free travel, to increase convenience in

conjunction with enhancing both passenger and driver safety."

### ISO 45001 certification

In May 2021, Oxford Bus Company, Thames Travel and Carousel Buses were awarded ISO 45001 certificate by the British Standards Institution (BSI).

BS ISO 45001 is an internationally recognised occupational health and safety management system. Achievement of maintaining ISO 45001 certification does not mean eradication of risks but it means that you are ready to subject your internal health and safety management system to an unbiased and impartial scrutiny with regard to compliance to the law, accuracy of information and ongoing audits for continuous improvement.

## Free face covering exemption cards

When wearing a face covering on public transport was a legal requirement, Oxford Bus Company, Thames Travel and Carousel Buses produced free cards to help passengers who are exempt from wearing them.

The cards that stated 'please be supportive, I'm exempt from wearing a face covering' were introduced to help those passengers who cannot wear one, but might find it difficult to communicate easily with the driver.

The government's list of exemptions included disabled people, children under 11 and people with certain health conditions. The cards were made available to print off or download via the Company's website and customers could show them on smart phones, or as a printed version.

## The Golden Spanner award

The Oxford Bus Company was awarded a National Express 'Golden Spanner' award in September 2020 after excelling in an annual engineering audit - for the second year in a row.

External inspectors praised Oxford Bus Company engineers for achieving "exceptional



**Golden touch to keeping fleet in top condition:** Oxford Bus Company awarded Golden Spanner by National Express for excelling in an annual engineering audit.



**Face covering exemption cards:** Josh Stone, Commercial Data Officer, presenting the exemption cards.

standards" - including "good quality inspections" and minimal break downs, which all contribute to customer safety.

Oxford Bus Company runs the 737 Oxford to Cambridge via Luton and Stansted Airport service on behalf of National Express. In addition to running the service, it maintains the vehicles at its in-house engineering department in Cowley, Oxford, to ensure they are safe, comfortable and reliable.

National Express, the UK's largest coach operator, conduct annual audits, including random inspections of vehicles, checking safety measures, and confirmed the Oxford Bus Company earned 'Gold Standard', a ranking reserved for exceptional operators. The 2019 Golden Spanner award comes after Oxford Bus Company was awarded the same accolade in 2018 at the National Express network operator awards.

Paul Hennigan, Service Delivery Director at the Oxford Bus Company, said: "Only a few operators achieve gold standard, as the standards are rightfully extremely high, and we are proud to have been judged to have maintained our exceptional standards again. To have retained this respected award is testament to the hard work and dedication of the excellent engineering team we have."



**It's time to get vaccinated:** Luke Marion, Finance and Commercial Director, Kevan Flanagan, Service Delivery and Private Hire Manager, Andrew Morison, Head of Customer Experience presenting the new destination for the city3A service.

Managing Director, Phil Southall, said: "We consistently strive for excellence across the entire business and the engineering team are a superb example of this. It is fantastic to receive such an accolade and our talented team fully deserve the continued recognition for maintaining such high standards of maintenance and safety."

### Vaccination centre services

Oxford Bus Company together with Stagecoach Oxfordshire amended services in February 2021 to provide crucial daily links to the new mass COVID-19 vaccination centre at the Kassam Stadium.

The revised timetables provide a direct half-hourly service to the vaccination centre in Grenoble Road, Oxford, via the Oxford Bus Company city3A and Stagecoach 3A services. The services were also extended at both ends to serve Oxford Rail station as well as the City Centre and extend to Cowley Centre from Oxford Science Park via Greater Leys and

Blackbird Leys, to further improve connectivity to the vaccination centre.

With the Kassam Stadium designated as key vaccination hub in Oxfordshire and as many as 8,000 to 10,000 vaccination expected to take place there weekly, bus operators reacted to ensure improved connectivity to the centre.

The services were made possible thanks to support from the government's COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG). Working in partnership Oxford Bus Company, Stagecoach and Oxfordshire County Council secured funding support to make the services economically viable.

Councillor Yvonne Constance, Cabinet Member for Transport at Oxfordshire County Council said: "Getting vaccinated is a top priority for all of us to help defeat the pandemic and so we as a council are glad to support it with this bus service to the stadium. Residents can be confident that travel by bus to the stadium is safe and will allow you to make your appointment in good time without adding congestion to the roads."

# Cleaner environment

We are dedicated to improving air quality for the benefit of our communities and to help the UK reach its carbon net-zero ambitions. We are continually investing in improving the emissions profile of our fleet and managing the energy we use responsibly.

We also want to educate customers and stakeholders in the areas we serve so that they can fully appreciate the benefits of the investments we have made, and understand how important buses can be in improving local quality of life.

We invested a further £1m in five further new ultra-low emission vehicles during 2020/21, and almost three quarters of our fleet now meets the Euro VI emissions standard, helping to improve air quality in the areas we operate.

Oxford Bus Company has bid for DfT Zero Emission Buses for Regional Areas (ZEBRA) funding in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council to start electrifying our fleet in 2023.

## Carousel Buses expands fleet of clean technology vehicles

Carousel Buses has increased the number of ultra-low emission buses in its fleet, thanks to a significant investment in green technology.

12 buses in the Company's fleet have been upgraded to the latest Euro VI emission standard, through fitment of exhaust after-treatment technology which reduces emissions of harmful nitrous oxides by as much as 90%.

The £200,000 investment in retrofitting the vehicles will positively contribute to improving air quality across Buckinghamshire, and parts of Hertfordshire and Greater London.



## Key highlights

13,781

CO<sub>2</sub> total from all sources  
(down from 22,993 in 2020)

1.34 kg

Carbon emissions per vehicle mile  
(down from 1.41 kg in 2019)

188.8

Total waste generated in tons  
(down from 432 in 2019)

46.7%

Recycling rate

The upgraded vehicles are used on the Chiltern Hundreds routes between High Wycombe, Beaconsfield, Gerrards Cross and Uxbridge.

The buses operate on the 101, 102, 104 and 105 routes. It takes the number of Euro VI buses in the Carousel Buses fleet to 28, more than 50% of the total fleet.

This significant investment is a positive step forward in Company's on-going commitment to introduce more sustainable modes of transport.



**Greenest ever:** Carousel Buses increased the number of ultra-low emission buses.

The introduction of more ultra-low emission vehicles will further help improve air quality in local communities and is another step in helping us build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Earth Day

Oxford Bus Company, Thames Travel and Carousel Buses ran a campaign asking motorists to consider a minor change in their travel habits to make a major difference to the planet on Earth Day in April 2021.

In order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

and improve air quality, we asked car commuters to consider leaving their vehicles at home just twice a month for the rest of the year and switch their journey to bus, rail or bicycle.

Motorists typically make around 600 car journeys annually. Switching just one in every 25 of these journeys to a bus - equivalent to a couple of trips a month - would reduce the UK's carbon dioxide emissions by two million tonnes per year.

This is in line with the UK government target for a reduction in 68% greenhouse gases by the end of the decade, and the Climate Change Committee's recommendation of shifting from

Leave your car at home: Artwork used for the Earth Day.

# EARTH DAY

Leave your car at home twice a month for the good of the planet



private cars to buses.

Saving two million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions is equivalent to the environmental gain that would be made by switching every single one of the UK's buses from diesel to zero emission energy sources, such as electricity or hydrogen.

Phil Southall, Oxford Bus Company and Thames Travel Managing Director said "Earth Day encourages us to think how we, as individuals, can reduce our negative impact on the world. Taking public transport is not only a great environmental option; it is the ethical option. If everyone switched to the bus a couple of times a month, we could collectively rebuild our

communities and avoid a car-based recovery from the pandemic. It would help improve air quality in our communities and reduce congestion."

Private cars account for 55% of greenhouse gas emissions from transport. Buses account for just 3% of emissions, and one double-decker bus has the potential to take as many as 75 cars off the road.

In 2020, we invested £2.4m in eleven new ultra-low emission vehicles. More than two-thirds of our fleet now meet the Euro VI emissions standard, helping improve air quality in Oxfordshire.

# Our climate change strategy

In July 2021 we launched our first Go-Ahead Group Climate Change Strategy detailing how the Group as a whole is reducing our impact on the climate and also how we are managing the impact of climate change on our operations. As a public transport company we have an exciting opportunity to help the transport sector decarbonise; a full bus can take on an estimated 75 cars off the road and so modal shift is critical to decarbonise the transport sector.

→ [www.go-ahead.com/sustainability/climate-change](http://www.go-ahead.com/sustainability/climate-change)

Our Group Climate Change Strategy addresses five priority areas:

- 1 Climate change adaptation: identifying how climate change is affecting us and planning how we are managing those impacts and opportunities.
- 2 Decarbonisation: focusing of our premises, ancillary fleet and bus fleet. Our Group target is to reduce our carbon footprint by 75% by 2035 and achieve Net Zero Carbon by 2045.
- 3 Air quality, from our fleet but also cleaning air via our innovations such as air filtering bus. We have a series of ambitious reduction targets for carbon monoxide (17%), hydrocarbons (49%), nitrogen oxide (63%) and particulate matter (50%) by 2025.
- 4 Water, including our use, leaks and sourcing. As a Group we are aiming to reduce water use by 25% by 2025.
- 5 Waste, including recycling and waste to landfill. As a Group we are aiming to increase recycling rates to 60% by 2025.

Here at Oxford Bus Group, our strategy focuses on decarbonisation and air quality, water use reduction and waste reduction as we recognise we need to continue reducing emissions from our fleet, and we see significant opportunities to reduce the usage of water and production of waste.

Our strategy highlights include:

- 1 Climate change adaptation: identification of locations that could be at risk of extreme weather impacts, identification of top 10 critical suppliers and ensuring they have contingency plans in place, introduction of necessary air conditioning for our colleagues and customers.
- 2 Decarbonisation: conversion of bus fleet and all ancillary vehicles to zero-emission, reduction of energy use in premises.
- 3 Air quality: transition to a fully zero-emission fleet by 2035, introduction of Solar PV.
- 4 Water: increase of water efficiencies with a focus on leaks and water use.
- 5 Waste: implementation of new strategies to improve waste management and increase recycling rates.



Zero emission electric bus introduced to City Sightseeing Oxford fleet of vehicles.



## Climate change adaptation

1. Identify risks and vulnerabilities
2. Quantify costs and source funding
3. Identify risks to properties
4. Work with suppliers to identify and reduce exposure and vulnerabilities
5. Develop business cases for adaptation measures
6. Work with partners

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### We will:

1. Improve engagement with colleagues to make them aware of how climate change is impacting their day to day activities
2. Identify locations that could be at risk of extreme weather impacts
3. Identify the top 10 critical suppliers and ensure they have contingency plans in place
4. Introduce necessary air conditioning for our colleagues and customers

### Group targets:

1. Risk assessment, mitigation plan, and measures embedded by 2023
2. Identify mitigation activities for critical suppliers by 2022
3. Identify local extreme weather predictions, develop premise safeguarding plan, assess high-risk areas, and embed actions and reviews by 2022



## Mitigation: Decarbonisation

1. Bus fleet decarbonisation
2. Ancillary fleet decarbonisation
3. Decarbonisation of properties
4. Develop net/carbon zero commitment

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### We will:

1. We will prioritise the transition of our feet to zero emission buses
2. Develop an Infrastructure Support Plan with Group Premises
3. Develop a Fuel Efficiency plan for reducing fuel consumption

### Group targets:

1. Net zero business by 2045
2. Zero-emission bus fleet in the UK by 2035
3. Non-diesel rail fleet by 2035  
Non-diesel rail fleet by 2035
4. By 2035 reduce carbon emissions by 75%



## Mitigation: Air quality

1. Improve bus fleet by procuring electric vehicles
2. Purchase new buses at the latest emissions standards
3. Remove older lower emissions standards vehicles from the fleet

### We will:

1. Introduce three air-filtering buses to the ST2 service
2. Introduce solar panels to the roof of the High Wycombe depot
3. Add additional solar panels to the roof of Oxford depot
4. Review the gearbox settings on all of our vehicles

### Group targets:

By 2025, reduce:

1. Carbon monoxide (CO) by 17%
2. Hydrocarbons (HC) by 49%
3. Nitrogen oxides (NOx) by 63%
4. Particulate matter (PM) by 55%



## Mitigation: Water

1. Address leaks better
2. Reduce third party use of our water
3. Reduce water use
4. Improve water sourcing

### We will:

1. Review our water data collection
2. Improve accuracy of meter measurement and billing
3. Engage with suppliers to address leaks in a timely manner
4. Identify and agree on timelines for the introduction of water efficiency initiatives
5. Identify and complete separation or sub-metering of all third party supplies

### Group target:

1. By 2025, reduce water use by 25%



## Mitigation: Waste

1. Improve waste management contracts
2. Increase recycling rates
3. Behaviour change programmes for customers and colleagues
4. Reduce waste in supply chain and operational activities

### We will:

1. Implement a new waste management contract strategy
2. Improve data granularity to understand more about our waste streams
3. Run an engagement campaign with colleagues and customers

### Group target:

1. By 2025, increase waste recycling rate to 60%

# Summary

Climate change is the defining global issue of our time; increasing flooding, storms and extreme heat is already being experienced in and around Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Here at Oxford Bus Group, we don't just run buses. Our purpose is to give everyone the freedom to connect with the people and places they care most about so they can live their lives to the full. Climate change impacts that freedom so we need to help build a better climate future.

By 2025, we will have converted all ancillary fleet vehicles and buses operating wholly within the 'Greater Oxford City' (SmartZone) area to zero-emission, with all other buses across our four fleets being Euro VI. We are working with the government and other delivery partners on developing a Hydrogen Strategy that will allow us to convert the remainder of our fleet to zero-emission by 2030 in Oxfordshire and by 2035 in Buckinghamshire.



## Adaptation

Climate change is already upon us. Here at Oxford Bus Group, we have already experienced hotter summers, impacting our drivers and passengers; and wetter winters, affecting road flooding and accelerated vegetation growth.

We will work with Group to identify property locations that could be at risk of extreme weather impacts such as flooding, high winds, and earth movements. We will also locally work with Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council and Buckinghamshire Council to identify what mitigating action we could take to reduce this risk, and what adaptation processes we may need to put in place; collaborative action will be key.

Delivery of adaptation initiatives will require improved engagement with colleagues on how climate change is impacting their day to day activities. We plan to have this as a standard agenda item at our Colleague Relations Forum and quarterly meetings with our recognised Trade Union.

Aligned with the development of our bespoke risk register, we will identify our top 10 most operational-critical suppliers based on the impact a disruption in

supply could have on the Company. We will consider this both from a 'volume of spend' and 'alternative supplier' point of view. We will then develop supplier contingency plans and put in place mitigation plans in case the risk occurs.



## Decarbonisation

As a bus and coach company, our biggest carbon impact is from our bus/coach fleet. By 2025, we will have converted all ancillary fleet vehicles and buses operating wholly within the 'Greater Oxford City' (SmartZone) area to zero-emission, with all other buses across our four fleets being Euro VI. We are working with the government and other delivery partners on developing a Hydrogen Strategy that will allow us to convert the remainder of our fleet to zero-emission by 2030 in Oxfordshire and by 2035 in Buckinghamshire.

With Go-Ahead Group, we plan to introduce initiatives to reduce the consumption of electricity within our premises, including the introduction of LED lighting to our High Wycombe depot by June 2025 and an employee engagement programme to switch off lights, etc.



## Air quality

In line with our decarbonisation plans, the Oxford Bus Group will transition to a fully zero-emission fleet by June 2035. We will also work with our local authority partners on setting realistic targets.

Since 2013, we have introduced Solar PV to both our Oxford and Didcot depots. We reinvigorated the Mix Telematics system in August 2021 to improve driver behaviour and fuel efficiency. We also have extraction units across all of our depots as they are relatively modern to further improve air quality.

We will work with Go-Ahead Group who is establishing a methodology to measure air quality on a representative selection of our sites. A regular emissions factor report will be produced centrally, periodically measuring air quality at a sample of our locations on the four key air pollutants: CO, HC, NOx and PMs.



## Water

We can make a positive difference to water efficiencies, with an improved focus on leaks and water use.

We will instigate a fast-response leaks team with a representative at each site, to resolve leaks and wasted water quickly. We will work closely with Go-Ahead Group and water suppliers to resolve leaks quicker. Combined with introducing new improved products to our premises that will involve setting urinals to flush once an hour, smarter toilets with a dual flush facility and sensors to reduce unnecessary flushes, we believe we can achieve a 25% reduction of water by June 2025 from the faster resolution of leaks. This will also be supported by an ongoing campaign to encourage colleagues not to waste water with appropriate signs and communications.

We will engage a company that is an expert in water leaks (ETP Concepts) to work with us on monitoring leaks using meters, data loggers and anything else this company recommends.

Whenever a significant increase, or an anomaly, is identified in water consumption, our Facilities Manager who works across all sites will investigate, identify the cause and take appropriate mitigation action. We will engage with the Group governance structure to develop initiatives to increase awareness of water consumption amongst colleagues and encourage them to be mindful of their use of water through local campaigns. We will more closely monitor our bus washes and alter washing programmes to optimize water use. We will also assess a range of washes that are on the market to identify those that can recycle water without compromising standards of cleanliness.



## Waste

Go-Ahead Group is implementing a new strategy for waste management contracts to improve waste management and recycling rates. When these are completed, we will work to identify our waste tonnage, recycling rates, and what these are by which waste streams.

We will also improve the data reporting of our local waste contracts. Whilst this strategy is being developed, we will start to audit what our main waste is, segregate on-site more, and develop our requirements for our waste contractor for what they need to do to help us as a minimum.

Some other Go-Ahead Group companies are running waste trials to improve segregation and insight from these trials will be shared. We will need to set up systems to monitor e-waste, battery waste and oil waste and suppliers will be engaged to assist us with this.

We will work with suppliers to reduce waste from packaging and include this as a requirement in future tenders.

A reporting system will be set up in each of our depot sites that will capture feedback from colleagues who receive goods from external suppliers if they consider excessive packaging or use plastic when a more sustainable packaging alternative could be used. We will also monitor waste coming from any local procurement we do within the same system.

We will also identify opportunities to reduce waste taken away by our contractor by recycling it locally to partners who wish to assist us. An early example of this was done in July 2021 when excess Metro newspapers are collected by a local animal sanctuary for their use, improving our reputation in parallel.

# Awards



## Awards

### TripAdvisor Traveller's Choice Award for City Sightseeing Oxford and Carfax Tower

City Sightseeing Oxford has scooped a prestigious award from TripAdvisor - after it was ranked as one of the top tourist attractions in the world.

The open-top bus tour scooped the accolade based on a full year of TripAdvisor reviews prior to any changes caused by the pandemic. Award winners are known for consistently receiving great visitor feedback, placing them in the top 10% of tourist attraction businesses around the globe.

And in a double boost the Carfax Tower, which is operated by City Sightseeing Oxford on behalf of Oxford City Council, was also awarded a TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice award.



## Awards

### National Express 'Golden Spanner' award for Oxford Bus Company

The Oxford Bus Company has been awarded a National Express 'Golden Spanner' award after excelling in an annual engineering audit - for the second year in a row.

External inspectors praised Oxford Bus Company engineers for achieving "exceptional standards" - including "good quality inspections" and minimal break downs. Read more on page 26.



**Golden touch to keeping fleet in top condition:** Oxford Bus Company awarded Golden Spanner by National Express for excelling in an annual engineering audit.

# Key data: Oxford Bus Group

	2021	2020	2019
<b>Better teams</b>			
Average number of employees	724	834	841
Average length of service in years	8.1	7.1	7.3
Employee engagement - UK bus (%)	80	n/a	66
Turnover (%)	25.6	17.1	29.3
Absenteeism (%)	6.2	3.9	2.8
Training spend per employee (£)	60.92	33.49	41.29
Female employees (%)	10.4	12.1	12.2
% Ethnic minorities	14.8	16.2	16.3
<b>Happier customers</b>			
UK customer satisfaction - regional bus (%)*	n/a	92	90
UK regional bus punctuality (%)	81.9	82.8	76.1
<b>Stronger communities</b>			
Total contribution (£)	2418	9962	14901
Community spend per employee (£)	3.34	11.62	17.72
Stakeholder events (number)	502	384	386
Leverage - total spend on payroll giving (£)	2548	3124	3714
<b>Safer working</b>			
Bus accidents per million miles	6	13	17
RIDDOR accidents per 100 employees	0	0	0
Number of reported crimes	21	130	633
Bus fleet which is DDA compliant (%)	98.9	96.4	95.8
DVSA annual test passes (%)	100	80.4	97.5
<b>Cleaner environment</b>			
CO <sub>2</sub> total from all scope 1&2 sources (tonnes)	13781	22993	21199
Carbon emissions per vehicle mile (all energy) (kg)	1.34	1.41	1.41
Total waste generated (tonnage)	188.8	258.8	432
Waste - landfill diversion rate (%)	99.27	87.7	90.2
Recycling rate (%)	56.5	58.6	n/a
Water use (m <sup>3</sup> )	13224	16584	12977
% of bus fleet that is zero or low carbon emission+	70.7	42.1	37.3
Average fleet diesel efficiency (MPG)	8.85	8.53	8.5

## Key

\*Results from Transport Focus independent customer survey. Due to the impact of COVID-19, surveys were paused for this year.

+Electric & hydrogen powered busses and Euro VI diesel busses.



For information on the full Group data, please visit our corporate website: [www.go-ahead.com](http://www.go-ahead.com)

## More information

You can find out more about Oxford Bus Group by visiting our website [www.oxfordbus.co.uk](http://www.oxfordbus.co.uk) and more information on how Oxford Bus Group manages sustainability can be found by visiting [www.go-ahead.com/sustainability](http://www.go-ahead.com/sustainability)

If you have any comments, views or ideas on how we might improve, or have any thoughts on other issues that we should address in this report, please write to:

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## Summary Verification Statement from Bureau Veritas UK Ltd

Bureau Veritas UK Limited (Bureau Veritas) has provided verification for The Go-Ahead Group plc (Go-Ahead) over selected sustainability indicators contained within the Group Sustainability Report. The information and data reviewed in this verification process covered the period 28th June 2020 to 3rd July 2021.

The full verification statement including Bureau Veritas' verification opinion, methodology, recommendations and a statement of independence and impartiality will be released alongside the Group Sustainability Report and can be found on the Go-Ahead Group website:

[www.go-ahead.com/sustainability](http://www.go-ahead.com/sustainability)



Bureau Veritas UK Ltd  
November 2021

Designed by:

**design**portfolio