

# Taking care of every journey



Go South Coast  
Sustainability Report 2019





Go South Coast operates a fleet of 824 buses across Dorset, Wiltshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. With around 140 routes, all of our buses are locally branded to give the buses within the towns we operate in a local identity.

Our brands include:



**Bluestar**  
Southampton



**Damory**  
West Dorset



**morebus**  
Bournemouth & Poole



**Salisbury Reds**  
Salisbury



**Southern Vectis**  
Isle of Wight



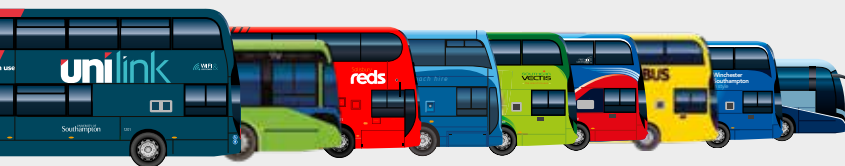
**Swindon's Bus Company**  
Swindon



**Unilink**  
University of Southampton



**UNIBUS**  
Bournemouth University



We're part of The  
**Go-Ahead**  
Group

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## Find out more...

### Twitter:

@bluestarhq  
@damorycoaches  
@morebusco  
@myunibuses  
@salisburyreds  
@southernvectis  
@swindonbuses  
@unilinkbus

### Website:

gosouthcoast.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 six sections:

### Happier customers

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

→ Read more on page 4

### Stronger communities

To support colleagues with fundraising events which support the local community.

→ Read more on page 6

### Smarter technology

To implement new market-leading technology and adapt it accordingly.

→ Read more on page 8

### Cleaner environment

To improve air quality and encourage fuel efficiency at all locations across the business.

→ Read more on page 9

### Better teams

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

→ Read more on page 10

### Finance

To work together with suppliers to jointly deliver the best possible service.

→ Read more on page 12

# Managing Director's message



## 2019 highlights

- We continue to invest in new vehicles
- Newly extended Bluestar 17
- Our first Chatty Bus launches – all aboard the Piano Bus!
- Community Fund in full swing
- morebus continues to support Poole Hospital Charity
- Embracing new technology with Contactless
- All new buses come with next-stop audio/visual
- 52 new Euro VI buses
- World's first air filter bus
- Solar panels on electric buses
- Night with the Stars to reward and recognise our colleagues
- Crowned Bus Operator of the Year

“I hope you enjoy reading our 2019 Sustainability Report. We have enjoyed another successful year, and this success is due entirely to my 1,803 colleagues who work tirelessly to keep the wheels turning 365 days a year.”

**Andrew Wickham**  
Managing Director

Transport Focus carries out independent surveys of our customers. This year, 91.4 % of those surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied with their journeys. There was a particularly large increase in customer satisfaction at our relatively new Swindon's Bus Company. This demonstrated that the changes we've made since buying this company – improved training, new buses, giving change on the bus – have been well received.

We continue to invest in new vehicles and expand our routes to give a more comprehensive service. Christmas Day was our busiest yet with many services running in Bournemouth, Poole, Southampton and on the Isle of Wight. Our newly extended Bluestar 17 has also proved extremely popular, by further improving connectivity in the Southampton area.

We strive to be a responsible member of our local communities. Our Piano Bus and Chatty Bus brought together people who had not previously met, thereby helping to tackle loneliness. Our Community Fund is also now in full swing. Separate to our existing work with selected charities, such as morebus's support of Poole Hospital Charity, the Community Fund helps smaller charities and good causes across our area, mainly nominated by our own employees.

We continue to embrace new technology. Contactless payments continue to increase, and we have launched new websites, an example being that of Southern Vectis, which features a journey planner and real time information.

All our new buses now come with next-stop audio/visual information, which is also being retrofitted on older vehicles in some areas.

Buses remain one of the most environmentally friendly forms of transport. During the year, we introduced 52 new Euro VI buses, fitted with engine stop-start devices to reduce carbon and particulate emissions in Southampton. We also introduced the world's first air filter bus, which cleans the city's air as it plies its route. Further to this, we launched an experiment to fit solar panels to bus roofs, with the solar energy used to help power vehicle electrical systems, thus reducing the amount of fuel burned.

Our people remain our greatest asset, and it is vital we recognise their efforts and thank them for their excellent work. Salisbury Reds held its first 'Reds Fest' this year – a summer afternoon party for colleagues and their families to relax and enjoy themselves – a way for us to say 'thank you'. We continued with our enormously popular Night with the Stars event, where we recognise and reward both loyal long-serving colleagues, and those who have gone the extra mile.

Our efforts were again recognised in industry this year. We were awarded 'Bus Operator of the Year' at the National Transport Awards, 'Large Bus Operator of the Year' at the Route One Awards, and 'Bus Operator of the Year' at the UK Bus Awards. No other bus operator has ever achieved this hat-trick – and it is the second year running for two of these awards. I thank my colleagues for their hard work and dedication, which made these wins possible.



Chatty Bus: Eastleigh

# 1,803

colleagues

# 91.8%

customer satisfaction

Transport Focus independent survey

# 52

new vehicles with Euro VI engines

# Award hat-trick!

**Bus Operator of the Year**

at the National Transport Awards

**Large Bus Operator of the Year**

at the Route One Awards

**Bus Operator of the Year**

at the UK Bus Awards



**Award success:** Andrew Wickham collecting the UK Bus award Gold

# Happier customers

Customer satisfaction remains high across our Go South Coast bus brands with an average rating of 91.8%. However, significant to note is the huge increase during the last 12 months for our recently acquired Swindon's Bus Company (formerly Thamesdown Transport Ltd), which has increased by 15%, with a satisfaction rating of 93%. This annual research is carried out by independent body Transport Focus.

Communication, convenience and good quality timely information is essential to keeping customers happy; along with the welcoming friendly faces of our front-line colleagues, a comprehensive network of services and a modern, clean, green bus fleet. With an average fleet age of just 7.25 years across Go South Coast, our continued investment is a strong message to residents, shoppers and commuters that we are a sustainable bus operator serious about improving the image of the bus and reducing congestion.

## Convenience

We've invested in new websites across all of our bus brands in the last 12 months and these demonstrate many improved features for customers. They are all fully responsive, meaning they work well on smart devices, suiting people on the move. Each bus route has an interactive map and live bus times that update every 30 seconds, allowing better control and convenience for users. Customers can personalise their web experience to suit their own needs and can save favourite stops and journey plans, so they are available each time they access the site.

For those new to the bus or making a new journey, we have accurate journey planners and fare look up tables.

Contactless payments continue to grow in popularity with approximately 33% of on bus transactions being contactless, as well as app and smartcard payments remaining popular. These are essential for our users with the closure of bank branches and the withdrawal of cash point ATMs across the UK.



Bus Launch:  
Bluestar 18 Launch



## Key highlights

# 467

drivers trained as **Dementia Friends** in 2018/2019

# 33%

of transactions are now **contactless**

# £4m

investment of 19 **ADL Enviro 400 City** double-decker buses

# 7

**new websites**



### New websites:

Fully responsive with improved features; live bus times and journey planning

## Valuing opinions

It would be naive of us to think we can make the best decisions without gaining feedback from bus users. We have introduced focus groups to gain further insight and understanding of particular issues and experiences our customers face. When introducing our new websites, we had several enjoyable interactive sessions with customers in the Poole region who have helped us develop our web features to their best advantage.

## New buses

A modern, attractive, well-presented fleet makes bus travel more appealing. Our popular Bluestar 18 service was converted to bigger double decker buses in November 2018 with an investment of £4m in 19 British-built ADL Enviro 400 City double deckers – increasing capacity and cementing our commitment to lowering emissions across the city and improving congestion.

Each new bus was fitted with Wi-Fi, USB chargers and ‘Next Stop’ audio visual announcement facilities ensuring our buses are fully accessible for all. A new feature for this service was the introduction of double doors for speedier boarding and alighting helping to keep our buses on time.

## Drivers

All of our front line driving colleagues have now completed a five day CPC course entitled the Customer Promise, teaching them new skills and empowering them to make the best decision for our customers. The course covered working with people with hidden disabilities and a focus was given to understanding dementia which is one of the fastest growing diseases in the UK.



# Stronger communities

This year Go South Coast has taken a different approach to community support.

## Community Fund

We recognise our place in the local community and this is one of the main reasons why we keep our individual brands in the areas we serve. Often seen as a significant force within our towns, we are frequently approached by local charities, schools and other organisations for our help and support.



**morebus Community Fund:**  
Carer community choir appearing at Poole Bus Station



**Waterside Street Pastors:**  
Bluestar offer free travel to support their vital work



## Key highlights

# £12,000

allocated to supporting our local communities

It can be difficult to know who to say yes to and how to help. With that in mind we launched our new Community Fund.

Our Community Fund is a dedicated resource for supporting local causes, charities and organisations; whether it is monetary support, marketing assistance, free travel or the use of a bus/coach for an event.

The Community Fund is open for applications from everyone in our local community, whether it's a charity, a sports team, a school or one of the local events that makes our operating area an exciting place to live.

This application could be as small as a raffle prize or as large as a £500 donation. We have a total of £500 to give away, twice per year, per brand.

A great example of how we have helped a community this year, was when we were asked to fund the cost of a uniform and training for a street pastor in the Totton area of Southampton.

The pastors are Christian volunteers who go out onto the streets, listening, talking and providing practical support to those in need.



Karen Dyer, coordinator from Waterside Street Pastors said “We are very grateful for this support from Bluestar, it will help to train several new street pastors and enable us to get more patrols out on the streets. We often assist people in using public transport to get home safely so it is fitting that we work with our local bus company. It all helps keep our area a pleasant and safe place to live.

Another fun appreciation of our support was when we were asked to donate £150 to a local community choir in Poole as their equipment was rather outdated. In return to show their thanks and gratitude to morebus, the choir visited the bus station on a cold, dreary afternoon and put on a performance for our customers whilst waiting for their buses. A great example of how spreading support can bring joy to others

### Chatty Bus – helping end loneliness

Currently one in ten people go at least one day a week without speaking to anyone – and a third of Britons admit they deliberately catch the bus to have some human contact.

With these worrying stats in mind, we decided to introduce our Chatty Bus campaign, where we have been out and about in our local communities encouraging people to talk to each other. However, we wanted to make it fun and give people a special reason to come and see us, so we installed a piano on a bus!

It’s all about engaging in conversation with our customers and helping to remove the stigma of talking to strangers. By putting the piano on board and having our colleagues on hand to get the conversation or song going, it was a fun way to cover such a serious topic.

The campaign has been such a success that we will continue with various chatty bus events during the next year.



Piano Bus



Bluestar bus friends



The Community Fund

# Smarter technology

Being in control adds to customer confidence and satisfaction. This year Go South Coast has invested in new websites with journey planners and live times.

We know being at a bus stop on the outskirts of town on a cold winter's morning can be a lonely place. By improving our communications and information available to customers, this not only empowers them, but enhances their confidence and improves their experience with us.

Our new websites have been launched a brand at a time throughout the last year. They have been developed with local Dorset tech company, Passenger, and by working together and holding focus groups with our morebus users, we have been able to fine tune the features to improve the overall customer experience.



## Highlights are:



### journey planning

including postcode or bus stop search



### interactive maps

find your stop on a map



### live bus times

that automatically refresh every 30 seconds



### favourites

bookmark your regular journeys



### service updates

direct from our control rooms



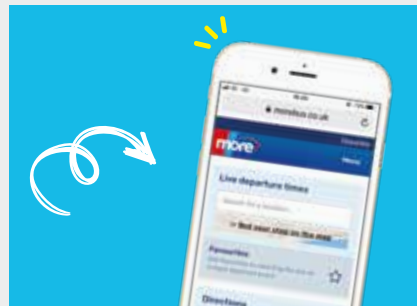
### fare look up

for any journey



### our websites

receive over 0.5 million visits monthly



**Smarter technology:** Journey planning, live bus times, service updates and new websites

# Cleaner environment

**During the last 12 months we have achieved a UK first by partnering up with UK Aerospace company, PAL, and inventing the first air filtering bus in a technology trial. It actually cleans the air as it goes!**

The trial, which launched in September 2018, saw our Bluestar bus mounted with a unique filter, cleaning 3.2 million cubic metres of the city's air, the equivalent volume of 1,288 Olympic swimming pools. Following this success, all five of our ADL Enviro 200 Euro VI buses operating on Bluestar 7 will be fitted with air filters, cleaning the air on an 11.5 mile path running across the city.

While the single bus has the capacity to clean the air on its route every 215 days, to a height of 10 metres, it will take just nine days for the newly expanded fleet to achieve the same feat.

The air filter takes in one cubic meter of air per second meaning that, in one hour, it filters the same volume of air as 6,000 people breathing. Our estimates show that the expanded fleet could remove as much as 1.25kg of PM10 from the air every year. If the air filter was deployed on 2,500 buses across the UK, it could remove as much as 588kg of PM10 particles every year.

Go-Ahead Group Chief Executive David Brown said: "When we launched the air filtering pilot, we wanted to play our part in tackling the crisis in urban air quality and show that buses could be an answer to pollution in cities. We already know that a fully loaded double decker can take up to 75 cars off the road, reducing congestion and pollution, and now we have hard data showing that buses with the fitment of an air filter can actively improve air quality."

Southampton was chosen as the location for the pilot following a 2018 World Health Organisation (WHO) report, which warned that the city is at its limit of unsafe air pollution.

The filter was designed and manufactured in collaboration with PAL Aerospace and fitted on to the roof of the bus. It is made in an engine barrier-type filter construction and designed to remove up to 99.5% of particles from the air without any impact on the customer or travel experience.

Now Solar Panel technology experiments are being tested too!

Bluestar has been fitting solar panels to buses, with a total of 19 vehicles now carrying them. Early indications show this is helping to reduce fuel consumption.

To enhance the trial, one of the air filtering buses will also have solar panels installed. This will enable a trial later this year to see whether solar energy can be used to make the air filter completely self-sufficient.



**Bluestar Air Filter bus:** Cleaning 3.2 million cubic metres of the city's air



## Key highlights

In 1 hour, it filters the same volume of air as

**6,000 people breathing**

# Better teams

Work hard – play hard. Over this last year, we've been encouraging our teams to socialise together to improve morale, show support and encourage colleague networking.

Some of our brands have borne the brunt of industry-wide driver shortages, and many of our current colleagues have gone the extra mile for us and covered extra shifts and rest days. However, all work and no play isn't a good mix for morale, so our local management teams organised some family fun days where colleagues could socialise with each other as well as letting their immediate family be part of it too.

2019 saw our first ever Reds Fest event!

Our local Salisbury Reds Operations Manager, Richard Gagg, wanted to think big – festivals are all the rage and it is the new socially acceptable place to be seen.

A field was sourced, a young talented band was recruited to entertain, as well as a bouncy castle and face painting for the kids. A typically British BBQ was on the go all day, not letting anyone go hungry! The cherry on the cake was a football match between Salisbury Reds and another local bus company.

The day was attended by over 100 people and plans are already in place for Reds Fest 2.0.

In a similar fashion, our colleagues at Bluestar saw the return of the annual Bluestar BBQ, where over 250 hot dogs were served by our chef and Engineering Administrator, Jim Bubb.



## Key highlights

# £3,500

prize for employee of the year

# 24/7

Employee Assistance  
confidential helpline

# 467

drivers registered as  
Dementia Friends in 2018

# 1,057

drivers attended the  
Customer Promise Course



**Reds Fest:** Salisbury Reds colleagues enjoy family time

This event was free to attend for all Bluestar colleagues and their families.

The Go South Coast Night with the Stars was once again well attended. This VIP event is exclusively open to those who are celebrating 25, 30, 35, 40, 45 or 50 years service, as well as our individual employees of the month for our local brands. It is an event to which colleagues aspire to be invited. Each brand announces its employee of the year who receives £500 and then the overall Go South Coast winner receives an additional two weeks' annual leave as well as £3,000.

### Training is key

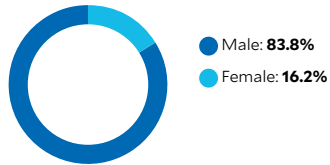
Training remains high on the agenda for building stronger teams, and we are now in the final stages of all driving employees attending a five-day Customer Promise CPC course. The course offers new techniques and skills; empowering them to do the right thing for the customer, thus improving their own working day.

### Health and wellbeing

New for this last year is the introduction of Mental Health First Aiders. They have been specially trained so that they can support colleagues through any difficult issues they are facing. For those that would rather keep things private but still require support, our newly subscribed Employee Assistance Programme offers a confidential helpline that is open 24/7, 365 days a year. Each employee is also entitled to claim free face to face counselling if they prefer this method of support.



### All employees



### Senior management



### Gender pay gap



Median pay for men is **4.8%** higher than that of women, compared to the national average of **17.2%**.

# Finance

**Our journeys provide our customers with a convenient way to travel around the communities we serve, helping them get to work, engage in social activities and access essential services. Go South Coast makes a direct positive contribution to the communities we serve.**

Our services strengthen the UK economy by connecting communities and supporting local companies and trades. In the Go South Coast area of operation, we have 1,803 employees and we are dedicated to providing training and development, creating supportive inclusive workplaces, engineering apprenticeships, and a graduate and internal management trainee programme. This investment allows our people to reach their full potential with the aim to improve our customer's overall experience.

23% of our buses are now Euro VI. Real world testing of Euro VI rated diesel buses demonstrates a 95% reduction in NOx emissions compared with previous models. We also purchase vehicles which further conserve fuel through reductions in weight and advances in the technology used in gear boxes.

Contactless ticketing allows our customers to access our services in a modern, efficient way which has improved the punctuality of our services through reducing loading times.

## Engaging with our suppliers

We realise the importance of partnering with suppliers who align their work with our values as this supports efficient delivery of our services. We rely on suppliers to take a partnership approach in working together to jointly deliver the best service possible.

Our ethical procurement approach is embedded in our supply chain procurement and management processes. We take into account ethical as well as commercial and technical factors when considering which suppliers to partner with, and we encourage our suppliers to adhere to similar high standards of corporate responsibility.

We are also working closely with local authorities on their aspirations and requirements for implementing clean air zones. In the coming year this will include converting buses to meet the standards required for Southampton's clean air zone and we will meet this requirement well in advance of the legal deadline.



## Key highlights

# 1,803

Average number of employees

# 23%

of the fleet Euro VI

# 56

million journeys taken with us each year



Contactless ticketing on all commercial services

# Key data: Go South Coast

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
<b>Society</b>			
<b>Safety</b>			
Bus accidents per million miles	55	62	65
Fleet with CCTV (%)	89	85	77
Number of reported crimes	111	106	96
<b>Environment</b>			
Carbon emissions per passenger journey (kg)	0.78	1.12	0.78
<b>Community</b>			
Community spend per employee (£)	6.81	0.45	1.15
Number of stakeholder events	76	336	195
<b>Community</b>			
Customer satisfaction score (%)	91.4	91	91
Expenditure on new buses in financial year (£'000)	14,843	14,596	6,171
Average age of bus fleet (years)	7.25	7.5	8.1
<b>Accessibility</b>			
Bus fleet which is DDA compliant (%)	99.1	96.2	97.5
<b>Our people</b>			
<b>Average number of employees</b>			
	1,803	1,805	1,699
RIDDOR accidents per 100 employees	0.78	0.83	0.97
Engagement score (%)	67	62	63
Employee turnover rate (%)	11.4	12.5	13.7
Absenteeism rate (%)	4.5	4.4	3.8
Training spend per employee (£)	515	423	379
<b>Diversity</b>			
% of female employees	16.2	15.4	14.1
% of Asian, black and other ethnic group employees	4.7	4.0	2.2
<b>Finance</b>			
Passenger volume growth (%)	5.3	6.9	6.1

## Key

RIDDOR – Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations at workplaces  
DDA – Disability Discrimination Act



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



## More information

You can find out more about Go South Coast by visiting our website [gosouthcoast.co.uk](http://gosouthcoast.co.uk) and more information on how Go South Coast manages sustainability can be found by visiting: [gosouthcoast.co.uk/sustainability](http://gosouthcoast.co.uk/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 Managing Director, Andrew Wickham, at the following address:

Go South Coast  
Towngate House  
2-8 Parkstone Road  
Poole  
BH15 2PR

## Summary Verification Statement from Bureau Veritas UK Ltd

Bureau Veritas UK Ltd (Bureau Veritas) has provided verification for The Go-Ahead Group plc. (Go-Ahead) over selected sustainability indicators contained within the Group's Annual Report. The information and data reviewed in this verification process covered the period 1 July 2018 to 29 June 2019.

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

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

