

ReadiBus

REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2012/13



**What would you wish for? ReadiBus tops the Post's 'Wish' campaign
Picture courtesy of Reading Post**

REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2012/13

Responding to the continuing increase in demand for the ReadiBus service has again been the main focus of the year. The number of passengers carried on the ReadiBus service in 2012/13 increased by 5.1% to just under 164,000, an increase on the previous year of nearly 8,000 passenger journeys. This increase was achieved from only a 1.7% increase in miles driven, illustrating a further significant improvement in operational efficiency during the year. There were also 714 new users to the service in the year, up from 548 new users the previous year. There are about 3,500 current users of the ReadiBus service in total.

Despite the increase in demand, the proportion of trip requests accommodated on the service increased from 98.8% to 99.0% in the year, whilst nearly 96% of journeys were scheduled within 30 minutes of the time requested.

Over four-fifths of all journey requests are now accommodated on a pre-routed basis on the weekly user scheme, which has been of considerable assistance to the improvements achieved in operational efficiency. Nevertheless, a great many journeys are also still requested or followed up by phone and ReadiBus staff handled 50,513 incoming telephone calls in the year. This is 562 fewer incoming calls than the previous year, a reduction of 1.1%, which has helped to keep costs in this area down as well as improve performance. For example, only 0.2% of the incoming calls in the whole year received the 'engaged' tone and the average time to answer was about three rings at 9.0 seconds. This is all the more impressive when you realise that up to six incoming lines are being answered by no more than four people at a time.

Booking requests by e-mail has started to become a little more popular, up by 62% on last year to 1,758 requests, though this remains a small proportion compared to the number of booking requests made by telephone.

The number of assisted town centre visits via the shopping assistance scheme decreased a little compared to last year, to 169 for the year. Users of this service again benefited from sponsorship during the year from ORH Ltd and The Blagrave Trust.

There were 11 RTS (ReadiBus Training Services) bookings this year (up from 9 last year). These bookings provide a useful source of additional revenue as well as helping to promote best practice to a wider audience.

There were 138 bus-hires in the year, a little up on last year, reversing the trend of the last few years on this service.



The Parkinson's Society enjoys a bus hire day out May 2013. Picture courtesy of Reading Post

ReadiBus

There were 39 excursions during the year. The excursion programme incorporates a rich variety of trips and is highly enjoyed by many users. Such breaks have great value in enabling people to have a day out. Fares assistance to those most in need was again provided by The Blgrave Trust, which has been of invaluable assistance to beneficiaries.



Windsor March 2013



Warwick May 2013



Southsea June 2013



London June 2013

Not all excursions went entirely smoothly. On returning from one excursion, the Team Worker had to file a bus damage report – “Have to report damage to rear offside mudguard due to it having been chewed by a tiger – sorry.” The bus had been to Longleat for the day...

The volunteer football service continued to enable fans with restricted mobility to travel to home and away games, visiting grounds all over the country, thanks to the support of the fans that volunteer to train and drive the bus, and to the support of the Supporters Trust at Reading (STAR). Unfortunately, not even Readibus users’ support could prevent the team from dropping out of the Premiership.



Football volunteers Dave Renshaw (left) and Tony Knox (right)

ReadiBus

The weekly service from Goring into Reading became fortnightly from May 2013 following the withdrawal of funding for this service by Oxfordshire County Council. The service has been able to continue at a fortnightly interval due to the support of Goring Parish Council and local support group, MIGGS, which has provided short-term financial support and has committed to trying to find further alternative funding.



Users with members of the Parish Council and MIGGS in Goring May 2013. Picture courtesy of Henley Standard.

Fantastic support has been a theme again this year. Our funding local authorities have once again been magnificent in maintaining support to the service, despite severe pressures on their finances. Local councils have also helped in other ways, with Reading Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council successfully leveraging in additional central government funds that ReadiBus has been able to benefit from and all authorities enabling participation in their concessionary fares schemes. Reading Borough Council kindly also provided a second bus shelter for users in Broad Street and Woodley and Earley Town Councils increased their funding to ReadiBus.

There have also been an extraordinary number of generous donations from individuals, companies and charitable trusts. These have been tremendously helpful in not only maintaining but increasing service provision to people who really need it.

We have also received marvellous support once again from our volunteers, with user-volunteers attending 46 events during the year to represent ReadiBus and others volunteering in other ways such as running or marshalling in the Reading Half-Marathon.



The runners and marshals in the half-marathon raised nearly £4,000 in total for ReadiBus

The efforts of our volunteers were splendidly recognised in 2013 with a nomination by last year's Mayor of Reading, Councillor Debs Edwards, for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. Five volunteers enjoyed a reception at the Guildhall in Windsor in April 2013 and a further reception in the Mayor's Parlour in Reading, courtesy of The Lord Lieutenant of the Royal County of Berkshire, Mrs Mary Bayliss.



From left to right Liz Johnson, Eileen Attwell, Deborah Ellis and Trevor Bottomley receive a certificate of nomination for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service from The Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire, Mrs Mary Bayliss JP (centre)

If that wasn't enough, ReadiBus received the most support from the public in the Reading Post 'Wish' campaign in the Autumn and Winter of 2012.



Pauline Wyld, Jenny Turner & Liz Johnson receive the 'Wish' certificate & cheque from Post Editor Andy Murrill

ReadiBus

There's a saying that buses come in threes - and 3 new buses arrived during the year.



The Mayor of Reading, Cllr Jenny Rynn, launches the first of the new buses in Tilehurst in November 2012



Cllr Keith Baker and Cllr Kate Haines launch the second outside Wokingham Borough Council's offices in April 2013



Cllr Carol Jackson-Doerge launches the third at The Beansheaf Centre in Calcot in April 2013. Picture courtesy of Reading Post.

ReadiBus

The bus launch in Tilehurst in November 2012 recognised the support from Reading Borough Council in the provision of the service for the last 31 years, as the event coincided (more or less) with the 31st anniversary of its inception. About 100 people attended the event, including over 60 users of the service. Cllr Tony Page, Lead Councillor for Regeneration, Transport & Planning at Reading Borough Council, commented, “As the councillor who proposed the application for the original Urban Aid Grant which resulted in the creation of ReadiBus over 30 years ago, I have seen ReadiBus go from strength to strength and wish it well in serving people in the Reading area for many years to come.”

ReadiBus Chair, Dr Sophie Bowlby, added, “The Council and its councillors are committed to making Reading a better place for everyone. That commitment has been maintained by Reading Borough Council continuously for the last 31 years in its ongoing support to ReadiBus, for which we, and most particularly users, are most deeply grateful.”

As well as cutting the ribbon on the new bus, the Mayor of Reading unveiled a memorial inscription on the side of the bus to Miss Molly Clen-Murphy, who had died aged 99 earlier in the year and who had left a legacy to ReadiBus that had been used to buy this bus.



Miss Clen-Murphy had been the ‘cover-girl’ in this photo, taken in 2005, that featured on the front page of the ReadiBus leaflets, both for the bus service and for the shopping assistance service that she also used regularly.

Miss Clen-Murphy had used the ReadiBus service since 1985 and booked ReadiBus in order to attend the Senior Citizens Art Group at the library for many years. She loved drawing flowers so her memorial inscription incorporates two yellow roses, yellow being her favourite colour.

ReadiBus

The bus launch in Calcot was part of a 'Meet the ReadiBus' event. Caitlin Foley from the The Wolfson Foundation commented, "The Wolfson Foundation has been pleased to support this important local community service with a capital grant towards the cost of this bus". Cllr Carol Jackson-Doerge, Vice-Chair of West Berkshire Council, added, "I am delighted that this new bus is being launched in Calcot. West Berkshire Council has supported the ReadiBus service in West Berkshire for many years and the availability of this service in this part of West Berkshire is a wonderful mobility aid for local elderly and disabled residents".



Caitlin Foley (left) and Cllr Carol Jackson-Doerge cut the ribbon at the launch. Picture courtesy of Reading Post.

The third bus launched received nearly £9,000 towards its cost from a central government fund passed on to Wokingham Borough Council to support community services such as ReadiBus. Cllr Keith Baker, executive member for highways and planning at the council, commented, "ReadiBus provides a valuable service for our residents with restricted mobility because it gives them the freedom to live their daily lives. We're delighted to be able to support this valued community service."



Mrs Bell and Mrs Mears, both from Wokingham, enjoy a ride on the new bus. Mrs Mears said, "To me, ReadiBus is a lifeline. It means I am able to do my own shopping. Meeting other people in similar circumstances, you don't feel alone. Getting out and about is so important to keeping well." Picture courtesy of Reading Chronicle.

Other donations have included further funds received from the Waitrose Community Matters scheme from the stores in Caversham, Twyford and Wokingham; a grant from the National Lottery to provide an accessible toilet at the ReadiBus office; donations from The Sobell Foundation, The Gerald Palmer Eling Trust and The David Knight Charitable Trust to improve fire safety and in particular in order to install a fire alarm and emergency lighting at the office; a donation from The Rotary Club of Reading Abbey for improved site signage; a donation of three new wheelchairs and one second-hand wheelchair from The Rotary Club of Maiden Erlegh; and donations towards the new buses from The Rank Foundation, The Albert Hunt Trust, Coutts & Co, The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust, The Englefield Trust and The Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation.



Left to right, top to bottom: Project Officer, Harriet Faulkner, receives cheques from Waitrose stores in Caversham, Thatcham and Wokingham and new wheelchairs from The Rotary Club of Maiden Erlegh; new site signage at the ReadiBus offices; the new fire alarm control box; and a fire alarm control point.



Much of this success in securing these donations has been attributable to the work of temporary Project Officers, Harriet Faulkner and Maria Rouseva, following on from the similar success of Steve Hermes when in a similar role previously. Maria has since left for postgraduate study but Harriet has now become a permanent member of the team.

Further staff success has been the development of a new user guide by Team Worker, Michael Burgess, in response to questions from users fielded on the buses. This guide will now be printed and distributed on buses using some of the donation from the Reading Post from the 'Wish' campaign.

ReadiBus staff continue to be key to successful service administration and delivery, and investment in people has driven successive years of incremental improvement. This year has been no different with several training initiatives, including development and modification of internal training programmes and their means of delivery; the addition of new training modules; and improved evaluation. There have also been other improvements such as the issue of new ID cards in sturdier cases for better identification, longevity and security.

In other areas, bus-hire administration in particular has been revamped and improved; more buses have been equipped with CCTV; and new re-fuelling arrangements have been introduced that generate marginal savings by the weekly bulk purchase of fuel at a discount to the pump price. The service continued to be available during the adverse Winter weather and we even came through a VAT inspection in July 2012 with flying colours!

Looking forwards, the future is inevitably a little uncertain given the prevailing economic climate. Nevertheless, ReadiBus has received good support to date and the need for the service is greater than ever with demographic changes, increasing mobility aspirations and the changes to adult social care known as personalisation. Demand for journeys increases year on year and we will try to increase capacity and capacity utilisation to continue to meet as much of this increasing demand as possible, whilst delivering further added value to our local authority funders. To this end, we have initiated an investment programme this year that will see eight new staff members joining the team and the development of a new website, the latter thanks to extra funding from Reading Borough Council via the Sustainable Challenge Fund, a result of the Council's successful LSTF bid to central government for the development of local transport infrastructure.

To everyone who has contributed to ReadiBus during the year – to all funders and donors, particularly our largest funder, Reading Borough Council, supporters, volunteers, directors and staff, a big thank you and a hope that you continue your help, support and enthusiasm into the coming year.

READIBUS BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2012-13



Dr Sophie Bowlby
Chair



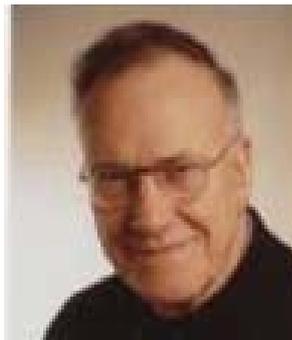
Trevor Bottomley
Hon Secretary



Steven Landau
Hon Treasurer



Mohammed Ayub



Norman Gould



Gul Khan



Tony Mattingley



Angela Robson



Mrs N Schneider MBE



Mrs M Turner

Jeff Beck

Ricky Duveen

Ruth Evans

James Freeman

Kate Haines

Lesley Hayward

Norman Jorgensen

Peter Ruhemann

Derek Spears

Richard Willis

ReadiBus



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Falkland
Surgery



OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Registered office: Cradock Road, Reading RG2 0JT. Company number: 1970233. Charity registration number: 293377