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Members Meeting

Tuesday 10 May 2022 at 10:30 - Via ZOOM

Present

Kevin Wilde	UKCOA Chairman
Mark Anderson	Anderson Travel
Amy Baker-McCormack	Leoline Travel
Mark Ballam	Alexander Dennis
Richard Bamber	Anthony's Travel
Blaine Betts	Coopers Tours
David Blake	Blakes Coaches
Andrew Bliss	Bliss Travel
Rob Blowers	Gallagher Insurance
Peter Bradley	Managing Director – UKCOA
Mark Carver	Carvers Coaches
Matt Clayson	Ready Tours Ltd
Graham Cooper	Coopers Tours
Judy Dale	Royale European
Clive Edwards	Taf Valley Coaches
Peter Evans	MET
Paul Flisher	Ready Tours Ltd
Steve Griffiths	South Mimms Travel
Nathan Hadley	Prospect Coaches
Tina Hailstone	Hailstone Travel
Illir Hoxha	Big Ben Coaches
Lennox Mackie	Mackie's Coaches
Anthony Marett	Marett's Chariots
Robert Marriott	Bayliss Executive Travel
Rick Martin	Coach Services Ltd
Richard Matthews	Princess Coaches
Kevin Mayne	Mayne Coaches
Ross Mendenhall	Extra MSA Group
Mark Peace	Cheney Coaches
Steve Price	Gallagher Insurance
Sarah Reilly	Bliss Travel
Peter Rice	Southgate and Finchley Coaches
Andrew Scott	Stanley Travel

Elaine Scrivens	Southgate and Finchley Coaches
Val Sheppard-Evans	Longmynd Travel
Richard Slack	Slacks Coaches
Justin Stott	Aircono Ltd
Robert Whelan	Corbel of London
John Williams	Williams Coaches

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Kevin Wilde welcomed everyone to the meeting and Peter Bradley welcomed new member Repton Coaches.

Apologies were received from:

Stephen Telling	UKCOA President
David Ashdown	Reg's Coaches
Jamie Brown	Princess Coaches
Pete Brown	Princess Coaches
Darren Curd	Wrightsure
Andrew Day	Wrightsure
Mark Griffin	ITT Hub
Del Haggerty	DH Team Ltd
Paul Harnden	Chauffer Hire Coaches
David Hull	Wrightsure
Tom James	York Pullman
Chris Mobbs	Dawson Group
Andy Palmer	A Palmer Associates
Richard Telling	Falcon Travel (Surrey)

2. Minutes of last meeting 5 April 2022, and any Matters Arising

Minutes agreed with no amendments. No matters arising

3. PSVAR – Update

Kevin Wilde reported that **Peter Bradley** has put together some guidance notes for distribution to members detailing how the DfT plan to bring in the medium-term exemptions through to 2026. The deadline for the Rail Replacement only or Rail Replacement and Home to School exemption is 17 May and the deadline for the Home to School only exemption is 31 May. If you don't have a home to school exemption you must meet full PSVAR requirements when the new school year starts in September.

Peter Bradley explained that he is happy to answer queries from members but noted that he is not a legal expert in PSVAR. Queries raised were:

- The relevant number for your fleet is the number of vehicles you are using for rail replacement or home to school and not your entire fleet;
- If your fleet size changes you should tell the DfT;
- As long as your declared fleet meets the requirements you can send any vehicle on any route;

- If you bring new vehicles into your fleet and you move up a band you will have to meet the PSVAR requirements of that new band;
- The number of vehicles required to meet the standards are always rounded up, so if you had a requirement for 3.5 compliant vehicles that would actually be 4;
- In August 2023 you will need to have the correct number of compliant vehicles based on the size of your fleet at that time.

Peter Bradley thanked all the members for their co-operation and sharing their ideas and views. UKCOA were the only trade body to put forward the PSVAR Lite concept and it is testament to the work that members have undertaken that the DfT took it on board.

4. Fuel Prices

Kevin Wilde reported prices remain high at around £1.05 - £1.10 a barrel and asked if members were experiencing any issues with local authorities not yielding to the higher costs.

Mark Peace reported that he has a contract with one local authority that offers an annual increase based on CPI/RPI. He has been contacting them since February but received no response. Coach operators could be put in the position where they are paying to take their children to school. Local authorities are threatening coach operators that if they terminate their contracts they will sue.

Val Shepperd-Evans reported that her local authority agreed to an emergency temporary uplift of 5% on home to school contracts from March to July.

Richard Slack reported that he has quite a good relationship with his local authority and they were offering an uplift for March and April. Negotiations are ongoing about May - July and he is hopeful. If it starts to cost him money to operate the contract he will stop. Richard asked if there was anything UKCOA could do regarding getting coach operators exempt from paying the RTFO. **Peter Bradley** will speak with the other trade bodies to see if there is any merit in sending a collective letter to the minister.

Peter Evans asked if UKCOA could draft a letter for members to send to local authorities about the fuel price. **Peter Bradley** undertook to do that.

5. UKCOA Sub -Groups

Decarbonisation – Stephen Telling

Kevin Wilde reported in **Stephen Telling's** absence. There was a good meeting last Friday attended by **Magnus Hammick** COO of Green Biofuels, **Jasmine Bishop** of Equipmake, **Mark Ballam** from Alexander Dennis and **Tony Stuart** from Hovis. The group talked about putting a submission to the DfT about how to negotiate the pathway from fossil fuels to electrification or hydrogen.

There is a call for evidence from the DfT. The specific questions are:

- What challenges are there to transitioning to a zero-emissions coach fleet?
- What might be a realistic date to end the sale of non-new emission coaches?
- What would need to be true and in place to make a phase-out on no-zero emission coaches happen?
- What might government do to accelerate the transition?

Until there is a solution in place for long-distance coach the Association could not even begin to suggest a date. Equipmake are looking at being able retrofit diesel coaches to electric power and biofuels could replace diesel as a fuel, thus reducing emissions by 90%. That would give time to come up with a permanent solution. If the coach industry shows it is willing to put forward ideas and try things out it will hold us in good stead to ask for more time to make the transition to zero emissions. It was pointed out that there are problems with the pricing of Biofuels and whilst it remains more expensive than diesel there is no incentive for operators to make the switch.

School Travel – Kevin Wilde/Steve Spiller

Kevin Wilde reported that there has been no real movement whilst **Steve Spiller** has been very busy. Kevin will follow up.

Driver Academy – Mark Anderson

Mark Anderson reported that MET in Watford had been in touch with their local job centre with the help of **Carl Widdowson** and have 10 candidates to interview. Mark has been unwell with Covid and has not had the opportunity to speak with Bridgnorth about providing some trainers. Mark apologised for being a little behind and will now pick things up.

Coach Marketing – Anthony Marett

Anthony Marett reported that the quote page is now live on the UKCOA website and it should start to generate a number of enquires over time. It will evolve as measures are put in place to advertise it. There will be a presentation at the June meeting about SEO marketing. Anthony is also unwell with Covid and will pick things up when better.

Bonded Holidays

Kevin Wilde apologised that this is still outstanding. He will contact **Andrew Day** from Wrightsure soon.

6. Presentation - Ross Mendenhall, Senior Operations Executive, Extra MSA Group

Kevin Wilde introduced **Ross Mendenhall**. Ross spoke about what Extra have done to upgrade their facilities at some of their key locations and what is on offer for the coach sector. Ross ran through facilities at Leeds, Peterborough, Cambridge, Cobham, Beaconsfield and Baldock. Details of the facilities at these locations and the full presentation are available online [Extra MSA Group Presentation](#). Any questions can be directed to Ross at Ross.Mendenhall@extramsaproperty.co.uk Kevin thanked Ross for his presentation.

7. New Members and Membership Drive

Peter Bradley reported that there are 2-3 prospective new members and expressed his gratitude to **Tom James** for the recommendations. Personal recommendation is always the best method of recruitment and members were encouraged to reach out to people they know, especially operators who are not already a member of any trade association.

8. Managing Director Roundup

Peter Bradley reported:

- The ITT Hub takes place on 11 and 12 May and Peter encouraged members to attend if at all possible. The UKOCA stand is next to the Bus and Coach Lounge sponsored by Bus and Coach Buyer Magazine. The lounge is offering free refreshments and hosting a series of talks.
- In response to a member query about parking at Gatwick Airport, **Mark Anderson** has been investigating. Mark reported that NCP have taken over the car park and decided that all coaches need to pay at pick up and drop off. It is done by camera recognition. The charge is £5 and can't be paid in advance; it must be paid afterwards, within 24 hours. Operators can register their whole fleet with NCP via the Gatwick website and payment can then be taken automatically: <https://dropoff.gatwickairport.com/register> Mark reported he has registered and the system is working well. It looks as though the problem with being charged for a drop-off when coaches are picking up has been fixed, but the new system has been introduced very poorly. **Peter Bradley** will write to NCP and ask for a meeting to clarify some points on the new system.
- **Peter Bradley** asked members to let him know if they were experiencing any issues at their regional airports. He is hoping to put an airport section on the UKCOA website in due course.
- In June and July members meetings will be no longer than 90 minutes and will be a presentation followed by a brief update on current issues. There will be no meeting in August. The usual meeting format will resume in September, but the aim will be to keep them to two hours.

9. AOB

Peter Evans raised a question about Zeelo. Kevin Wilde reported that this has been discussed in the schools sub-group. He is due to have a meeting with Zeelo soon to see what they can do for UKCOA and will then report to the board. This type of service is part of the industry now and we need to decide how we approach it as an organisation.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 14 June 2022 at 10.30 – Presentation about SEO online marketing; speaker TBC.