



## UK Coach Operators Association

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## Members Meeting - Minutes

Tuesday 9 July 2024 at 10:30 - Via ZOOM

### **Present**

Anthony Marett	UKCOA Chair (Marett's Chariots)
Stephen Telling	UKCOA President
Allan Acklam	Acklam Coaches
Amy Baker-McCormack	Leoline Travel
Richard Bamber	Anthony's Travel
Emma Bell	Shuttle ID
David Blake	Blakes Coaches
Peter Bradley	UKCOA Managing Director
Peter Brown	Princess Coaches
Pete Bovington	DJ Coaches
Paul Cartwright	A&P Travel
Paul Coates	McCarron Coaches
Blaine Cooper	Coopers Tours
Judy Dale	Royale European
Symon Dawson	RB Travel
Clive Edwards	Taf Valley Coaches
Tom Grindle	Grindles Coaches
Del Haggerty	DH Team
Tina Hailstone	Hailstone Travel
Ilir Hoxha	Big Ben Coaches
Danny Kenny	Southgate & Finchley Ltd
Lennox Mackie	Mackie's Coaches
Kevin Mayne	Maynes Coaches
Richard Matthews	Princess Coaches
Terry McIntyre	Golden Boy
Margaret O'Kane	UKCOA Membership and Administration Manager
Andy Palmer	A Palmer Associates
Marc Preston	SBC Coaches
Sarah Reily	Bliss Travel
Peter Rice	Southgate and Finchley Coaches (UKCOA Finance Director)

Andrew Scott	Stanley Travel
Val Sheppard-Evans	Longmynd Travel
Amy Smith	Backhouse Jones
Steve Spiller	Centurian Coaches
Tim Southby	Heathside Travel
Justin Stott	Airconco Ltd
Jackie Thomas	Edward Thomas and Son
Ivan Thomas	Edward Thomas & Son
James Vallance	Safeguard Coaches
Phil White	Gallagher Insurance Brokers
Kevin Wilde	Mitcham Belle Coaches
Paul Blakey	C.E. Niehoff & Co. Ltd (Guest)

### 1. Welcome (42 attendees)

Anthony Marett welcomed members to the meeting.

Peter Bradley welcomed our new Membership and Administration Manager: Margaret O’Kane, replacing Laura Li

**Guest** Paul Blakey – CE Niehoff & Co – UK subsidiary of US parent company; manufacturer of heavy-duty alternators, power and charging systems. Focused on the coach industry, looking for opportunities for getting message across on issues that they can assist the coach industry with.

### 2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from:

Mark Anderson	Anderson Travel
Mark Ballam	Alexander Dennis (Plaxton)
Andy & Sophie Repton	Repton Coaches
Ivan Shears	Chalfon Coaches of Harrow
Richard Telling	Falcon Coaches
Rose Williams	Williams Coaches

### 3. Minutes of last meeting 14 May 2024, and any Matters Arising

Minutes not produced; anything relevant from last meeting; will be added to these minutes

### 4. Subscriptions and Finance/VAT/Invoices

There are a number of invoices outstanding; both member subscriptions and some reissued invoices which now attract VAT. **Peter Bradley** thanked members and Industry Partners for their continued support and encouraged recruitment of more members; the bigger the organisation; the more influence we have with stakeholders including the DfT.

## 5. UKCOA Sub -Groups

### PSVAR - Stephen Telling /Peter Bradley

**Peter Bradley** reported back on meeting with Robert Johnson and Yann Holzapfel working within the DfT Accessibility Team. There were a number of salient points

- You are still able to register for PSVAR Exemptions for Home to School and Rail Replacement Fleets. If anyone needs assistance, they can contact Peter direct;
- DfT understand the difficulties with the supply of new and retrofitted PSVAR vehicles and especially the issues this may create for meeting the 2025 PSVAR minimum level of compliance; they will report back to us. Peter asked for specific examples of members experiencing delays in ordering new coaches or booking a retrofit;
- The responses to the PSVAR Call for Evidence are still being reviewed; however, the election will cause some delay to this;

### AIR (Accessible Information Regulations)

**Peter Bradley** reported that the first stage of implementation of the AIR comes into effect on 1 October 2024, applying to all vehicles that are five years older or less. For coaches, Home to School services are excluded, but Rail Replacement work is not, together with any scheduled service open to the public. Peter has heard that many operators are experiencing issues with obtaining slots for retrofitting. Whilst the DfT are unable to give guarantees, if you have proof that your coach is booked for a retrofit but it cannot to be done before 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024, the DVSA should take this into consideration if they inspect the vehicle.

The DfT are considering whether any exemptions for AIR could be made for coaches involved in Rail Replacement work (possibly by relying on Driver announcements).

Peter also said that the DfT were made aware that Rail Replacement no longer attractive to coach operators. He asked those members present or their views and these can be summarised as follows:

- not enough drivers for Saturday/Sunday's and late nights;
- many operators dropping out from rail replacement work from 1 October rather than have the equipment fitted;
- many operators have ceased rail replacement work as rates offered are very low; most operators felt this was quite a strong point for their lack of interest;
- many coaches used are too large for the smaller stations where there was a requirement to turn round;
- Rail operators have been quite severe on drivers loading and unloading wheelchairs and not assisting the drivers;
- Some operators would consider rail replacement work again if drivers could make announcement rather than use the new equipment;

PB thanked everyone for their comments as will feedback to the DfT

**Stephen Telling** reported back on the visit of the DfT to York Pullman in March to see PSVAR in action (and especially issues with the wheelchair lift), which seemed to enlighten the DfT.

### **Update on Schools including BODS – Steve Spiller**

- **Steve Spiller** apologised for the lack of progress on this issue, many of which were outside the control of the UKCOA. He continues to recommend that the issues are brought to the attention of the schools, especially the charging of different fares depending on distance travelled which required a closed-door school route to be registered and therefore eligible for BODS;
- If any member has an issue with a closed-door home to school service, then please get in touch with Steve. Hopefully we can move forward into the new academic year favourably.

### **Driver Training Academy – Peter Bradley for Mark Anderson**

**Peter Bradley** reported that it was incredibly tough to get matters moving forward, as we have hit an impasse with the DWP; however, Mark has now gone back to his original contact at the DWP to get things moving again. Will report back in September.

### **Holiday Bonding – David Blake**

David Blake said that Blakes Coaches have renewed with ABTOT on very favourable terms on par with the Bonded Coach Holidays (BCH) scheme through CPT. Now working on application form to simplify, then members will be able to apply directly to ABTOT without going through CPT.

Hopefully when we all return in September the information will be on the UKCOA website; in the meantime, if more information required, do not hesitate to get in touch with David.

### **6. Any Other Business:**

- Any issues on any subject over the summer do drop Peter Bradley a line
- David Blake: Low on WAYBILLS, lot of European Tours have to purchase from CPT (Confederation of Passenger Transport) is there any way we can supply to our members. **ACTION PB Noting and will research**
- Steve Spiller updated on North Parade Bridge in Bath, which has reopened.

### **7. Date of Next Meeting**

- Tuesday 17 September 2024 (later rearranged to 24 September 2024) at 10:30 online.

## **UKCOA Members Event Schedule 2024**

**Tuesday 24 September** at 10:30 – Members Meeting

**Tuesday 22 October** at 10:30 – Members Meeting via Zoom

**Tuesday 12 – Thursday 14 November** – Euro Bus Expo, NEC Birmingham

**Tuesday 26 November** at 10:30 – Members Meeting via Zoom

## **UKCOA Members Event Schedule 2025**

Members meetings to be arranged

**Saturday 25 January** – New Season Winters Ball at the Royal Garden Hotel, 2- 24 Kensington High Street London W8 4PT

**Sunday 9 March** – UKCOA Members Dinner - Delta Hotels by Marriott Warwick - Stratford Road, Warwick, CV34 6RE

**Monday 10 March** - UKCOA AGM, Conference and Network Lunch, Volvo Group UK Limited, Wedgnock Lane, Warwick, CV34 5YA