

£130 million to protect bus services across the country

News story

Funding will ensure that vital bus services can continue to run.



- up to £130 million of government funding announced to support vital bus services across England
- measure to protect bus routes which people rely on at a time of rising costs
- funding takes total to £2 billion government support for buses throughout the pandemic

Buses across England will benefit from up to £130 million of government support, ensuring services keep running and millions of passengers can continue using affordable transport.

The funding package announced today (19 August 2022) will cover 6 months from October 2022 to March 2023, and builds on almost 2 years' worth of unprecedented government support to keep bus networks running. Today's funding means almost £2 billion has been made available to over 160 bus operators during the pandemic.

The additional funding will help to protect bus services and routes, which are particularly important to people facing pressures due to the rising cost of living. The government is using every tool at its disposal to help people, from ensuring they can access affordable travel, to providing £37 billion of support for the most vulnerable households.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

This funding will ensure millions across the country can continue to use vital bus services, and brings the total we've provided to the sector throughout the pandemic to almost £2 billion.

At a time when people are worried about rising costs, it's more important than ever we save these bus routes for the millions who rely on them for work, school and shopping.

The government is also investing £3 billion in bus services by 2025, including over £1 billion to improve fares, services and infrastructure, and a further £525 million for zero emission buses.

Published 19 August 2022

[Jo Boaden CBE and Deborah Gregory reappointed to the RSH Board](#)

News story

They have been reappointed for a further term of three years each.



Eddie Hughes MP, the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing, has reappointed Jo Boaden CBE and Deborah Gregory for a further term of three years each, commencing on 1 September 2022 and ending on 31 August 2025.

Bernadette Conroy, RSH Chair said

I am very pleased that Jo and Deborah have been reappointed to the RSH Board. They have a wealth of experience and their contributions will be invaluable as we develop our proactive consumer regulation framework and proposals set out in draft legislation. I look forward to continuing to work closely with them.

Published 19 August 2022

UK Hydrographic Office 2021-2022 Annual Report released

News story

The UKHO's Annual Report and Accounts for 2021 to 2022 is available to view and download



The UK Hydrographic Office has released its Annual Report and Accounts for 2021 to 2022.

In addition to its performance review, accountability report and financial statements, the document contains a range of case studies that showcase the organisation's work to support safe, secure and thriving oceans.

You can download and view the document using the links below:

[UK Hydrographic Office Annual Report and Accounts for 2021 to 2022](#)

[UK Hydrographic Office Annual Report and Accounts for 2021 to 2022
\(accessible version\)](#)

The UKHO is an executive agency and operates as a trading fund within the Ministry of Defence. This paper was laid before Parliament in response to a legislative requirement or as a Return to an Address and was ordered to be printed by the House of Commons.

Published 19 August 2022

Role of Defence Training Estate recognised in commando memorial unveiling

The plaque has been installed at Worbarrow Bay, which is part of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO)-managed military training estate. The land provided a vital training area for the commando unit, which carried out the 'splinter' operation, known as Operation Cauldron, to immobilise German heavy artillery that posed a threat to the beach landing areas in France during WW2.

Following specialist training in Scotland, 4 Commando returned to Worbarrow to carry out crucial cliff scaling exercises in preparation for their task. On 19 August 1942, the commandos launched their raid alongside a Canadian unit, which came ashore under fire from mortars and machine guns. There were 5,000 casualties that day.

There is already a commemorative plaque at West Bay to remember the Canadian troops involved, but up until now, there has been no memorial to acknowledge the role of 4 Commando. Further to the memorial on the Defence Training Estate, a duplicate memorial, unveiled on the same day, will sit in the Weymouth memorial garden, which is used for local remembrance services.

DIO Regional Commander Colonel Tim Jalland, who unveiled the Worbarrow Bay memorial, said:

These Ranges, one of only two sites available for Armoured Fighting Vehicle Fire and Movement Exercises, remain one of the busiest Range complexes in the UK. In addition to their operational importance, the Ranges are located in a beautiful, historically significant and environmentally diverse part of the landscape, which the MOD takes pride in sustaining and maintaining for the Armed Forces and general public alike.

Naval historian and former Chairman of the Weymouth and Portland Residents Association, Alvin Hopper, is the inspiration behind the plaque, which he said will serve as an important reminder of the coastline's history as well as acknowledge the vital role played by the unit.

Mr Hopper said:

We should educate the younger people about their history. They don't get taught this at school, there's a lot that's missed out, especially the local history. Lots of visitors to the area will now be aware of the history. Hopefully, when they see the plaque, they will go and look it up. With the use of modern-day technology, they

can get on-the-spot information.

In his naval role, Mr Hopper served in the mine warfare service, which became the Royal Naval Auxiliary Service, and he knows the Dorset coastline very well. He added that military training areas are as vital for troops today as they were then.

He said:

To have somewhere to train is vitally important. These dedicated training areas give our forces the edge, somewhere to hone their skills. Worbarrow Bay was crucial for 4 Commando because the terrain almost identically matched the terrain they would be facing on the raid.

The duplicate memorial plaque in Weymouth was unveiled by the Mayor of Weymouth, Councillor Ann Weaving and Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Dorset Angus Campbell.

The Lulworth Ranges have provided armoured and dismounted live fire and manoeuvre training facilities for the UK Armed Forces since WW1. The land is part of the Defence Training Estate, which covers around one per cent of land in the UK and plays a vital role in preparing UK and visiting troops for operations across the globe. The UK training area covers 157,000 hectares and includes 9,000 buildings, 21m trees, 3,500km of tracks and more than 70 Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

The estate supports training scenarios that include practising fighting in built-up areas, firing artillery, amphibious landings and assaults, driving tanks and firing from naval vessels and aircraft.

Regulator removes trustees and charity is wound up after trustee attempted to avoid business rates

The regulator found serious misconduct and/or mismanagement in the administration of the charity due to poor financial management and governance.

The Commission's inquiry found that the charity had made payments totalling £129,800 to Dasim Partners, a property development company of which two trustees, Sidney and David Chontow, were partners.

The charity's objects included the relief of poverty, assistance of the elderly, the advancement of education and the advancement of religion.

In 2013, Achiezer was included in a class inquiry conducted into charities which have defaulted on their statutory filing obligations with the Commission on two or more occasions in the last five years. During this class inquiry, concerns were identified about Achiezer's governance and financial management. The Commission opened a statutory inquiry into the charity in June 2015.

The inquiry concluded that the trustees had not managed the conflicts of interest, as there were no independent trustees, and the basis of these payments was unclear.

The regulator also concluded that one of the trustees, Sidney Chontow, had obtained personal benefit. Potential Investment Portfolio, of which Sidney Chontow was a partner, attempted to avoid paying £59,000 of business rates to Bury Metropolitan Borough Council, by letting out property to the charity. Potential Investment Portfolio would be liable for business rates on an empty property, whereas property used for charitable purposes is exempt. The charity became liable for the business rates when it was found that the property was not used solely for charitable purposes and therefore was not entitled to an exemption.

The inquiry also found that the trustees failed to properly manage the charity's funds and did not distinguish between the charity and other entities with which they were connected. The trustees did not effectively manage conflicts of interest, allowing numerous complex transactions to be made to related organisations and their personal companies.

The Commission concluded that the trustees' actions constituted serious mismanagement and/or misconduct. Sidney and David Chontow were removed as trustees in August 2020, and thus disqualified from acting as a charity trustee. Interim managers were appointed to the charity in October 2018 to take over the operational management, governance and administration of the charity, and secure the charity's property and assets.

Sidney Chontow paid the outstanding business rates to Bury Council and the charity's remaining funds, amounting to over £400,000, were distributed to charities with similar charitable aims. The charity was wound up and removed from the Commission's register of charities on 7 April 2022.

Amy Spiller, Head of Investigations at the Charity Commission said:

Trustees should manage their charities effectively and responsibly, including ensuring financial decisions are taken in the best interests of the charity.

The Chontows abused their position as trustees, to derive personal gain for themselves and their businesses to the detriment of the charity. It is right that they were removed as trustees, and that this charity has ceased to operate.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.
2. The Commission opened the inquiry on 23 June 2015, following a class inquiry opened on 11 November 2013.
3. View the full [inquiry report](#).
4. The class inquiry into the other charity which had the same trustees, Achiezer Association Ltd, is ongoing.