

# First edition

THE FIRST MAGAZINE FOR PEOPLE IN LONDON

MARCH 2011

**London & Berks is better by Giles**

Giles Fearnley, appointed Managing Director UK Bus on 26<sup>th</sup> January came to Paddington to meet Adrian Jones (pictured) in his first week in the job. We look forward to working with Giles and benefiting from his huge experience of the bus industry.

This First Edition once again finds us facing exciting times. The Olympic preparations are starting to gather momentum and with Driver volunteer registration closing on 11 March it is really starting to take shape. First Games Transport (FGT), the company set up to deliver the transport for the games, will be starting to request volunteers for Supervisors shortly. I am fully committed to working with FGT as I think it will present a unique and valuable opportunity for our staff to participate in a once in a lifetime event. We must also ensure that we continue to service our 'regular passengers' to the same high standards they expect.

Lea Interchange has seen lots of positive publicity for the new depot and the Hydrogen maintenance and refuelling facility. Staff there have been great during the upheaval, but with new routes on the horizon and the buzz of the Olympic Park next door I'm sure it will be worth it.



Another major area of disruption surrounds the CrossRail proposals which seriously impact Westbourne Park. Through no choice of our own we must displace routes while one of the biggest engineering projects in Europe commences. Given a choice we wouldn't move, but we are legally displaced and whilst we are doing everything we can to minimise the impact on staff, there will be disruption. I hope staff work with us to overcome these difficulties and ensure we maintain the high standards of service TfL expect from us to ensure the future viability of the routes.

I want 2011 to see a step change in the way we all engage and I hope you will join with me in making this change.

**Adrian Jones**  
Regional Managing Director

**Want to hire a Routemaster?**  
See page 3 for 20% staff discount



## Safety

Adrian Jones noted at a recent Senior Managers meeting that he was very glad to see First London continuing to set the standard and lead the safety tables across London operators, but noted our lead is shortening and we still have many 'at fault' incidents. 'We can not afford to be complacent' was the key message. He sees every incident as a failure and we will continue to pursue investigations and a 'First To Zero' approach. A "minor scrape" isn't an accepted part of the day job, it is potentially a few inches away from a major accident. Nobody goes to work expecting to be injured and we must all ensure we do all we can to keep it that way.

He reminded all Managers of our key safety message.

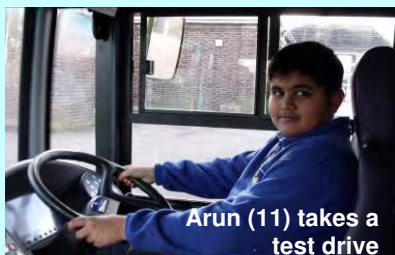
## Injury Prevention

If you cannot do it safely, don't do it

## Back To School

Raj Chadha (DGM Greenford), Eamonn Sweeney, James Bennett, Egbert Verley, Americo Mota and David Leavold donated their free time to help paint a classroom at Chatsworth Primary school (Hounslow). The school approached the depot for help and along with a £250 donation to the School's Book Fund the team finished the classroom in a day.

This was a really great local initiative and helped give something back to the community. The labour was due to be provided by a local NatWest bank, but due to CRB rules and regulations the school was short of labour, which is why they got our painters and decorators in.



Arun (11) takes a test drive

Headmaster, David Wright, wrote to Raj thanking his team and noted that bringing the bus, driven by Maggie Bojarojc, was a nice touch and proved very popular with the children. In particular it helped to engage one of the nursery kids who unfortunately has learning difficulties.

The school were so impressed with the quality of the work the team has been invited back to do the School Hall and while Raj is thinking about it, he is starting to have some grand ideas ...



Rumours that Raj didn't get involved were disproved when he said "It was a wonderful way to help the school and most satisfying was seeing the smiles on the kids faces as they all joined in with me as I sang 'the wheels on the bus'; shame Simon Cowell wasn't there to hear me".

If you have a similar project or idea that can help our local community ask your Depot Manager and you never know. For more details on sponsorship or charitable donations go to:-

[www.firstgroup.com/corporate/community/charity\\_and\\_sponsorship\\_committee.php](http://www.firstgroup.com/corporate/community/charity_and_sponsorship_committee.php)

### Celebrating Long Service

Congratulations to the following staff who will over the coming months all reach significant service milestones:



#### 45 Years Service

Primus Allain – Driver – Westbourne Park

#### 40 Years Service

Winston Dottin – Driver - Willesden Junction

#### 35 Years Service

Davidson Nicholas - Driver – Westbourne  
Seamus Gallagher – Driver - Alperton



#### 30 Years Service

Preston Brooker – Performance Manager  
Malcolm Ryell – Driver  
Both based at Uxbridge Depot



#### 25 Years Service

Peter Rowe – Driver  
Suryakant Patel - Driver  
Both based at Alperton Depot

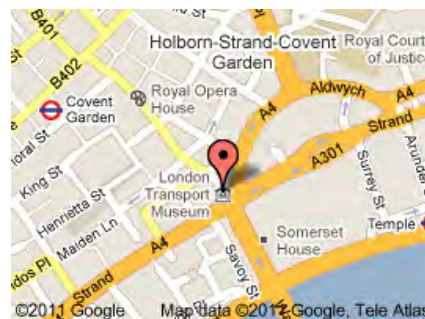
#### New Staff

We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome all the staff who have joined us during the last 6 months. We hope that in 25 years time we will see you in this table

### London Transport Museum-Covent Garden

Did you know that holders of London Transport staff passes get free entry to the London Transport Museum? It is a great day out with interactive transport exhibits and history at your fingertips. Children under 16 go free (when accompanied by an adult). If you would like to take a friend we have access to a limited number of tickets which we can make available to First London and Berkshire staff. All you need to do is email [david.fielding@firstgroup.com](mailto:david.fielding@firstgroup.com) and explain what you have done personally to improve the life of the 'London Commuter'. Please provide your Staff Number, give dates when you would like to go (before 31 October 2011) and provide a contact number. The Judges decision is final and more details of opening times and events can be found via

[www.ltmuseum.co.uk](http://www.ltmuseum.co.uk)



### Open Top Routemasters For Hire



### Bus for Hire

Do you have a special occasion on the horizon? Would a bus be a perfect mode of transport for you and your friends or family? If so you can now hire a bus and Driver for that occasion and if you are an employee of First you will benefit from a 20% discount. We can even organise a special blind. For a hire quote please contact the Private Hire Manager on **0208 709 0341** and ensure you mention you are an employee to secure your 20% discount. Typically an 8 hour hire with discount costs around £425.

### **WORKING TOGETHER**

The Directors, Senior Managers, Regional Industrial Organiser and Trade Union Convenors and Representatives attended a joint 'working together' event, facilitated by ACAS (the conciliation service) last September. During the day the delegates worked together to identify what they felt were our strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats and the outcomes will be reflected in some of the actions that we take forward as a result of the feedback in the 'Your Voice' staff survey. Further joint work is planned in March when ACAS will run Discipline and Grievance seminars for Managers, Convenors and Representatives.



### **CCTV Reaps Rewards**

CCTV is now part of our daily lives. It's on the streets when we walk to work, on the daily commute and is fitted to all our buses. Last year we received some excellent feedback about how our CCTV had assisted the police in apprehending criminals.

We received a request for a CCTV download as three passengers travelling on a U5 bus were robbed and assaulted by seven individuals. Met Police officer DC Richards later contacted us and confirmed they had identified five of the suspects because of the good quality CCTV footage. The exterior cameras captured the main assault on two of the victims which took place outside the bus. The five suspects were arrested and they gave the names of the others suspects. One suspect was charged with ABH and robbery and five suspects, although released on bail are expected to be charged at a later date. It was brilliant to receive positive feedback from the Police and good to know that all the hours of footage is not taken in vain!



### **FirstEdition**

Is there anything you want to see in your staff magazine? Do you want to know about a particular area of the business? Do you have a story for us? Do you plan to bathe in a bath of beans for charity? Have you got an interesting or unusual hobby?

We would love to hear your stories – we are always

looking for new and interesting articles to ensure this magazine interests all our employees.

If you have any ideas or feedback on the magazine please call 02072987300 and ask for Debbie Lamshead or Dave Fielding or email them to [debbie.lamshead@firstgroup.com](mailto:debbie.lamshead@firstgroup.com) or [david.fielding@firstgroup.com](mailto:david.fielding@firstgroup.com) and we will see if we can accommodate your ideas!

### Greenford Learning Centre

Congratulations to the following Greenford drivers who completed a City & Guilds qualifications in Adult Literacy. They attended weekly sessions in the learning centre over 12 months. Well done to all the successful learners featured in the roll of honour below :-



In addition to achieving success in literacy the Greenford Drivers below also achieved a Level 1 qualification in Information Technology.



Finally well done to those listed below who Achieved a Level 1 qualification in Information Technology.



### Training Department – New Vehicles

January 2011 saw the introduction of the first Dart type vehicles into the training fleet. By April 2011 there will be 7 of these vehicles dedicated to driver training. DSA guidelines require certain standards in Training Vehicles including ABS and tachographs. To meet these standards the buses have been upgraded over recent months. They also have a raised Instructor seat to give clear all round vision. Training Manager Kieran McDonnell said “Our training Coaches were great for training as they were smooth to drive and very long, but the new vehicles are much closer to our modern fleet especially in terms of braking and acceleration. They allow our trainee drivers get a feel for low floor characteristics, dual door use and to practise ramp use”.



Instructor Jacque Samms pictured with Trainee Sam Brooks with one of the new training fleet

### Instructors continue to Learn

As part of an upgrade to their existing NVQ in Driving Instruction the First Instructor Team have taken part in a PCV test. The Delegated Driving Examiner Israr Ahmad said “This was a full PCV test including a reversing exercise and it allowed Instructors to demonstrate the high standards they teach to new and existing employees. It was a great opportunity for Instructors to feel the pressure the trainee’s may have on test day and I was delighted they embraced it with such a positive attitude”.

**What's the ARC?**



The ARC (Accident Repair Centre) is a specialist unit attached to Dagenham depot. They employ a team of five Coach Makers who specialise in repairing any of First's vehicles that have been involved in accidents. The unit will repair any vehicle damage from a small bumper change to heavy accident damage which may involve a complete rebuilding of a section of a vehicle. They also take on work that other depots either are unable to or do not have the time to do; as they are focusing on day to day maintenance and delivering vehicles for service.

The ARC makes financial sense because using an external repair centre or vehicle manufacturers can be costly and we do not have the same influence over quality control that we have with our own team. All the team are skilled in the various vehicle designs and as you can see from the photos they do really need to know the vehicles both inside and out!

Haydon Sherwin has worked at the ARC for 5 years and worked on most fleet types during that time. He said *"the best thing about being part of the ARC team is that every job is different. One week I could be repairing a heavy front end crash, which involves a complete strip down and rebuild, the next might just be a simple re-paint preparation where we only change a few panels"*.



The ARC's skilled staff have recently expanded their capability and begun to rebuild bus engines and whilst only a trial they are already seeing a high cost saving by being in-house.



The team is available to do work for companies outside First London and this is where we want to be expanding. Any damage to our buses means costs, disruption to services and potential injury to staff and or passengers. As an example the bus pictured cost £32,000 to fix and took 300 man hours. A simple message from the ARC team to our drivers:

**"Drive Safely and apply the Smith System's 5 Key Principles"**

### Lea Interchange - Driver Vacancies

We have vacancies at Lea Interchange as a result of new work which starts in June 2011. We are looking ideally for candidates with a PCV driving licence and no more than 3 live penalty points and no bans within five years. Do you have friends or family who may qualify please ask them to visit:

[www.firstgroupcareers.com](http://www.firstgroupcareers.com)

Alternatively follow the links from the First London website or call our Recruitment Helpline on **0800 731 7016**.



### Andy Smith – Depot Engineering Manager – Lea Interchange

I started work at Lea Interchange in September 2010. I previously worked for East London Bus Company as Engineering Manager at Plumstead depot.

I joined First because I considered it a professional and progressive company who's ethos was more aligned to my own, for example valuing staff, a strong culture of Health & Safety and putting customers first.

I knew First was planning bold and progressive steps to improve engineering and I saw a real opportunity to be part of the first operating company to invest in engineering; giving drivers a better driving experience, improving bus availability and promoting First. I was also tempted by the new multi million pound depot at Lea Interchange which is very close to the Olympic Site and home to the state of the art Hydrogen bus project. These factors together with the three new routes recently gained from East London Bus Group, gives the site a total bus count of around 200 which in itself presents an exciting challenge for me.

I was pleasantly surprised at how well the Operating and Engineering teams work together; there is a genuine feeling of getting the job done together with no "them and us" mentality. Having been in the military for 22 years it is refreshing to be part of such a positive environment and makes coming to work easy and drives my desire for outstanding results, particularly as the workplace has been a building site/bus depot for so long. Vince Dalzell (DGM) is striving to make Lea Interchange the flagship depot and I fully support his vision.

I'm a Yorkshire lad with a, not so, broad accent and I 'support' a real football team Leeds Utd, who currently play in the Championship, but I am sure they WILL rise like a phoenix from the ashes to thrash all the London wannabee teams . . . maybe. I drink real beer, enjoy all sports and being a Yorkie am a direct "say it as it is" kind of person. This has led to some ruffled feathers with ex Prime Ministers, but that is a whole other story.

I look forward to meeting everyone, and will be happy to let you buy me a beer - as I certainly follow one White Rose stereotype and am tighter than a duck's back side.



### Kick Off In Style

Are you involved in Under 16's football? We have been successful in bidding for four complete football strips allowing your club to kick off the new season in style.



FirstGroup is determined to help the communities we serve and the Charity and Sponsorship Committee considers all requests for charitable support. They have already awarded almost £300,000 to deserving causes, many linked directly to our colleagues throughout First.

FirstGroup is now supporting local football teams. Grass roots football is very important and FirstGroup is focussing on Under 16's football teams to give them a kick start to bring the beautiful game a beautiful kit. All First London & Berks staff can apply. You could be a parent, a referee/linesman or have links with a club close to your depot.

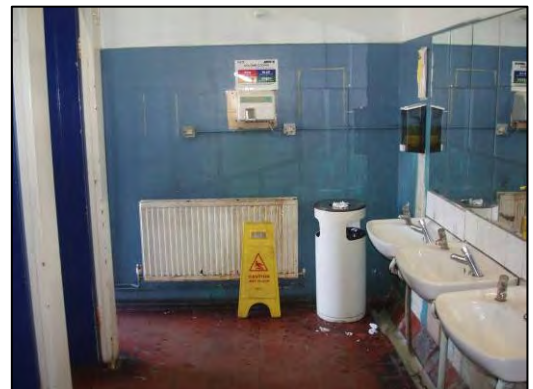
If you are interested you will need to complete an application form **by 31 March** outlining why you think your team deserves to win. For full details on how to apply, either e-mail [firstforfootball@firstgroup.com](mailto:firstforfootball@firstgroup.com) or call **Dave Fielding** on 020 7298 7306.

### Not Bog Standard

The 'Your Voice' comments clearly outlined that your working premises are not always as maintained and clean as you would expect. We want you all to know we are listening. We understand that it is Important to have well maintained facilities.

### Northumberland Park

Opposite are photographs of the before and after views of the recently refurbished toilets at Northumberland Park. We are sure that you will all agree, particularly those at NP (or should that be N-Pee), that the new toilets are a huge improvement for all.



↑ BEFORE & AFTER ↓

### Greenford

The toilet facilities at Greenford have also recently been extended to accommodate more drivers and provide additional facilities for all staff.

### Westbourne Park

The toilets here were also in need of refurbishment and this work has recently been completed offering huge improvements for all staff based there.



Building work, as our Facilities Manager, Ken Fennell reminds us, takes time and organisation. However I am sure you are all appreciating these improvements which demonstrate we are listening and will continue to look at ways to improve the premises and facilities you work in!

### Got a Question or Suggestion?

Keep an eye out for posters advertising Question Times which will be run throughout 2011. But don't worry if you can't make a session, notes are taken and posted at your depot with space for you to add your own questions which your Managers promise to answer.

If you can't wait for the next Question Time? All Depot Managers are encouraged to have an open door policy and if you need to see them, just ask. In addition Lawrence Breach, Employee Director for First London & Berkshire is available, when not driving a Westbourne Park bus, at [fortyfive1956@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:fortyfive1956@yahoo.co.uk).

Safety issues? If you have **ANY** safety concerns/suggestion ask any Manager for an Injury Prevention conversation and it will be formally recorded and actions taken if necessary.

If all the above don't help and you still have issues, the [Ask.Adrian@FirstGroup.com](mailto:Ask.Adrian@FirstGroup.com) email box is still open. Adrian personally reviewed a wide range of issues during 2010 and is committed to respond within one working day of receiving queries.

### UK Bus Awards 2010

Phil Hiatt (Dagenham) won the prestigious Luke Rees-Pulley Award for Top London Driver and Charlotte Whitfield was runner-up in Manager of the Year Award.



It shows the quality and depth of talent we have that we were also shortlisted for 'Express Coach Operator of the Year' (RailAir), 'TfL's London Garage of the Year' (Lea Interchange and Uxbridge), 'Service Quality' (FLCC), 'Luke Rees-Pulley Award for Best London Driver' (Stephen Elliott – Uxbridge) and 'Chris Moyes Memorial Award for Top National Bus Driver (Krishna Kumar Rai – Bracknell Driver). Well done to all short-listed.

### TFL Awards 2011

Jennie Guidotti (Dagenham) and Abdi Hassan (Alperton) were joint winner of the 'Above & Beyond The Call of Duty' Award at the TfL London Bus Awards on 23 February 2011.

Willesden Junction were Runners Up in the 'Service Quality' Award.

### Super-Dooper Superstar

The FirstGroup Superstar of the Year 2010 was won by Slough Driver, Javed Azam. He was nominated by a passenger who noted Javed's actions when he saw an elderly passenger who was lost and confused. Javed drove the gentleman up and down the route letting him get on and off to see if he knew where he was. A great example of patience, compassion and great customer service.



First London Commercial Contracting, Ben Wakerley, Stephen Elliott and Phil Hiatt are all short-listed and nervously await the London Transport Times Awards which take place on 28 April - Fingers crossed.

### Northumberland Park's New Starters

Route W4 started on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2011 with eleven brand new Enviro 200s running between Ferry Lane Estate and Oakthorpe Park. The first day of operation went very smoothly mainly due to the hard work by all staff involved in its preparation. Special thanks also go to our **driver buddies** who assisted with route learning; **the training department** who inducted and type-trained; our **engineers** who checked every vehicle before it went into service and **traffic office** staff who prepared duty boxes, rotas and allocation. We'd also like to formally welcome twenty five former Arriva staff who TUPE'd over with the route and helped make the launch a real team effort.



### Don't Be A Waster

TfL are undertaking covert observations looking at our buses where Drivers do not switch off their engines when waiting at stands for over two minutes. Noisy, wasteful running of engines often leads to complaints from neighbouring properties, as well as being bad for the environment.



It saves money, the environment and cuts complaints, so please make sure you –

**Switch Off  
On Stands**



### ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES

London continues to improve its mile per gallon rate with Green Road and environmental driving keeping both London & Berkshire on an improving path. Overall Green Road scores are falling as drivers make less harsh movements which has the benefit of making the passenger ride much smoother. More and more drivers are joining the pool of eligible staff to enter the Green Road prize draws.

We are looking at introducing a cycle2work scheme (see page 12).

The new Hydrogen vehicles have now taken to the road on the RV1 leading to vastly lower emissions and improved air quality.

### STOP

#### Raindrops From Falling On Your Head

Do you have an idea how we can save energy, reduce waste, cut emissions and reduce your depot's carbon footprint? Send to [gavin.peace@firstgroup.com](mailto:gavin.peace@firstgroup.com) by 31 May 2011 and the best idea will win a limited edition CentreWest London Buses red and yellow golf umbrella.

### Ink Cartridges

We are now recycling waste laser and ink jet cartridges. If you have any please send them (wrapped securely) to Macmillan House in the internal post. We will arrange central recovery and recycling via our partner Reclaim-IT.



### London and Berkshire Golf Society

2010 saw a successful season for the First London Golf Society. There were a total of six outings, with Paul Griffiths from Hayes winning Golfer of the Year award (awarded to the golfer with best 3 card total from all outings) while Jim Dow was crowned Individual Match-play champion. Plans for the 2011 season have almost been finalised, with one outing each month from April to October. The Captain for 2011, Jim Burry, will be organising a Captains week-end where the title is decided over 36 holes. If you are interested in joining the society or attending the outings please contact Keith Rogers at [keith.rogers@firstgroup.com](mailto:keith.rogers@firstgroup.com).

### British Heart Foundation Charity Jog : Hyde Park – Have fun, get fit, save lives!

Now in its 5th year the BHF Hyde jog (run or walk) is a 5k or 10k run around Hyde Park. This year's event will take place on 13<sup>th</sup> April at 6pm. For the third year we will be entering a Team to raise money and have a laugh. If you want to join the team, or form your own, register for free at [www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk) and tell **Keith Rogers**. If you can't make it please sponsor the team at [www.justgiving.com/firsthydepark](http://www.justgiving.com/firsthydepark). All support is very welcome.



### Return of the Monster

The **First Monster Challenge** returns for the fifth year on 3<sup>rd</sup> September. Last year £188,000 was raised and Save The Children was the main beneficiary.

The 'Monster' is a 120km team relay race around Loch Ness with 4 team members each completing running and cycling legs. Some free places for First teams are available and if you want to enter a team please contact [kirstin.aram@firstgroup.com](mailto:kirstin.aram@firstgroup.com) (☎ 01224 650145). For more info visit [www.firstmonster.com](http://www.firstmonster.com) or see the First Monster group on Facebook.



### Alperton Quitters

Reyaz Musthaq (Driver and ULR Rep) at Alperton has arranged a No Smoking Day on 9<sup>th</sup> March to encourage smokers to quit. Brent Council and FirstCare will also be at the depot for the health advice day where staff can raise any issues and be tested for various health concerns.



### Uxbridge (not so) Easy Riders

On 18<sup>th</sup> July 2010 a team from Uxbridge depot cycled the 59 miles from London to Southend.

A mix of Drivers/Controller/Instructors rode for Save the Children and British Heart Foundation charities. A donation of £400 by FirstGroup's Charity & Sponsorship Committee helped them raise over £2K.



They will be doing it all again on 19th June, this time between London & Brighton. Rumours that Uxbridge Depot General Manager Stavros Heracleous will be doing it in a tutu are not to be believed ... unless possibly the team get £5,000 in sponsorship.

### Air System Champions

Ten engineers recently attended an Air System Training Course at Assured Performance Group in Blackburn. The course will help raise engineering standards



by broadening the attendees knowledge of vehicle air systems and components. All the attendees passed the end of course test with flying colours showing their competency. The attendees were praised by the trainers who said "*The overall abilities of the individuals was the best I have seen in training to date in the PCV industry and they all have the ability to do well in their roles as Champions*". High praise indeed. So if you have an Air System problem speak to one of the depot Champions.

### Goodbye Bendy 18's, Hello Double D's



WJnc welcomes the new R18s

Well done to all Willesden staff and other helpers who transformed 36 bendy buses into 53

deckers overnight. Now that's magic!

### Drivers for the 2012 Games

Drivers must register by **11 March 2011** at [www.firstgroupcolleagues.com](http://www.firstgroupcolleagues.com) to be considered for employment by First Games Transport. Please see the leaflet and posters in depots for further information or email [olympics@firstgroup.com](mailto:olympics@firstgroup.com).



### Cycle To Work Scheme

Consideration is being given to introducing a 'Cycle to Work' scheme for staff in London and Berkshire. A "tax break" allows you to obtain a new bike and safety gear hired from your Employer, which is free from Tax and NI (up to a 52% saving). You agree to pay back your portion over 12 months and the bike is then yours to do with as you please, making your journey to work much healthier.



The cycle2work scheme benefits both employers and employees with healthier staff and employees getting a great deal on the savings offered. The decision on whether to introduce the scheme will be based on the level of interest. If you are interested please send an email to [flbc2w@firstgroup.com](mailto:flbc2w@firstgroup.com) or for more details on the scheme see 'Cycle2Work Explained' in the 'Customer Service' section of the Halfords website ([www.halfords.com](http://www.halfords.com)).



### A Final Word On Changing Times

With a continuing busy tender market I hope to bring in more cost-effective work to secure the viability of the company, despite the still rough economic times. We've won some vital routes in the East and I'd like to welcome drivers from Arriva who have already shown they can deliver a great route W4.

I met with my Senior Team recently and discussed the future of the business. There were a number of things that I want all Managers to do differently and consistently across the company. These ideas came out of the Union get-togethers and 'Your Voice' results. I want to see a culture of values, honesty and trust spreading all the way from the top.

Finally I'd like to wish Leon Daniels all the best in his new role at TfL.

**Adrian Jones**