



Warrington's Ultra-Fast Electrification

Warrington's Own Buses is set to replace its entire diesel fleet with new EV's in the coming months. Representing one of the largest orders for electric buses in the UK, the new buses are being powered from renewable energy, making the scheme truly green and as carbon neutral as possible.

However, it's not just the replacement of the ageing diesel fleet that's transforming bus operations and reducing carbon. A brand-new electrification-ready depot has been built and Warrington's Own Buses is completely overhauling the management of the fleet with the introduction of a new digital system to replace a largely manual, paper-based system for engineering. The improved better facilities and IT will improve bus maintenance, reliability, reduce carbon and help to improve customer service.

"We are always seeking to improve our systems, but with the electrification timetable we were cautious about bandwidth," says Ben Wakerley, Managing Director of Warrington's Own Buses. "However, we knew our current system would need a lot of updating to incorporate the new EV's in any case. We concluded that we could phase-in a new system and simply use it for the new buses as they arrived. Yes, it did mean running two systems but we figured parallel running would be a good way to get everyone up to speed on the new system and to de-risk things."

Warrington's Own Buses selected Freeway to supply the new digital system. "I was aware of Freeway from my time at Abellio London & Surrey and had heard good things from other operators. We met Freeway at various bus shows but in the end it was a demonstration from Vitto Pizutti with Freeway-user Transdev that convinced us it was the way to go."

As of early October 2024, Warrington's Own Buses has taken delivery of 20 of the new EV's with the remaining 85 due to arrive by Christmas 2024. Freeway is being used for commissioning the buses and technicians have all been issued with rugged tablet devices. A mobile WebApp running on the devices replaces all the traditional paperwork.

"What's been good is the speed of implementation of Freeway," explains Ben. "We started rolling-out the system when the first EV bus arrived in July and for the electric fleet we are now fully digital; the paper's all gone. It's already proving itself with a level of visibility we simply didn't have before. The support from Freeway has been excellent and has made the whole process much easier than we feared."

Warrington's Own Buses are adding all the electric bus parts to Freeway so by the time the final diesel bus departs, stores and purchasing can benefit from Freeway's automation with barcoded bins, auto-replenishment and parts performance and costs tracking.

According to Ben, Freeway is all about document control and compliance. "Freeway pushes people to improved compliance. The standout benefit is quality control as we can instantly see what has been done, supported by photographic evidence. Freeway basically ensures the job is done properly and we have the digital evidence to support that. And gaining Earned Recognition accreditation should be relatively straightforward once the workshop is fully digital".



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