

# EPSOM POINTS THE WAY TO STAY ON THE BALL

## Telematics to keep up with the big boys

EPSOM Coaches reckons it may have the answer for independent bus and coach companies who want to take on the industry's big boys.

Founded in 1920, The Epsom Coaches Group is one of the foremost family-owned bus and coach operators in Britain. It operates a fleet of over 80 vehicles from its base in Surrey and is committed to providing high standards of customer service. The company is continually looking at ways of building on its success and, with this in mind, they decided to opt for a telematics solution which would provide them with vehicle tracking and management information.

After scouring the marketplace they opted for Pinpointers, the industry leaders in web-based,

effective, and Pinpointers satisfied all three criteria. We estimated that the system would pay for itself if we saved just 500 miles per coach, per year. Given an average mileage of over 30,000 per vehicle, this has been easily achieved."

A longer-term benefit of the system has been the immediate accessing of vehicle performance information previously provided by Epsom's own bus inspectors. Inspectors can only be in one place at a time whilst with Pinpointers system they can see any vehicle at any time. The real-time tracking system in buses or coaches means that inspectors can watch the progress of all the vehicles and monitor their positions relevant to Quality Incentive Contract (QIC) points. When

QIC performance is of the utmost importance and vehicle tracking is a critical part of that. The comparative running costs of the Pinpointers system are extremely small compared to labour costs as we could have twenty inspectors out on the road and they wouldn't be anywhere near as effective."

Epsom Coaches were particularly attracted by the ease of use and the flexibility of the Pinpointers vehicle tracking system. Pinpointers does not just sell pre-packaged solutions but works closely with its customers to identify their exact requirements and provide a fully bespoke solution.

Once Epsom understood how the Pinpointers solution could be used to best effect, the system was reconfigured to suit its exact needs.



are constantly tracked and of their responsibility to run on time.

Pinpointers offers a variety of customised services for the Bus and Coach industry which means that companies can begin to offer new services to their customers. This might mean alerting them of the location or proximity of a bus to their current position, or perhaps offering a custom web page showing the locations of the buses on a service route, allowing customers to check from the comfort of their own home or office when the next bus will be arriving.

Jon Pope, Sales Director at Pinpointers, explains: "Like many bus and coach operators Epsom Coaches were looking for a number of benefits from a telematics solution that could help them retain and win business. Foremost was a dramatic improvement in fleet visibility, as the Pinpointers solution enables users to know exactly where their vehicles are at any one time which can prove invaluable in meeting QIC targets."

"This inevitably leads to an overall greater efficiency and effectiveness and an ability to ensure all way points timescales are met. Management time is greatly reduced because there is instant knowledge of the facts.

"With fuel prices marching higher and higher, quickly identifying if vehicles are idling unnecessarily can help to contain costs directly associated with fuel consumption. There is no doubt that a highly adaptable, easy to use bus/coach tracking system like Pinpointers can be an invaluable tool in this competitive marketplace, enabling bus and coach companies to provide better and more innovative services for the consumer."

● For details, call 01202 496694 or visit [www.pinpointers.com](http://www.pinpointers.com)

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GPRS/GPS vehicle telematic solutions for business fleets and mobile assets. The system was purchased and set-up within the Epsom fleets in August 2004 and, just 12 months later, this vehicle tracking and information system has become an essential management tool.

Steve Whiteway, commercial director at Epsom Coaches Group explains: "We were looking for a tracking system that was simple to understand, could be accessed from any computer and was cost

the rules are broken this is easily visible. Moreover, any customer complaint or QIC enquiry regarding a particular bus can be dealt within minutes instead of hours.

In short, by having full fleet visibility, companies like Epsom can more effectively and efficiently manage their bus operations to provide optimum customer satisfaction and meet the QIC arrival/departure targets thereby being rewarded and not penalised.

Mr Whiteway added: "Our

And Mr Whiteway says the effect on the drivers has been very positive: "They are supportive and appreciate that the better we perform, the higher prospective bonuses there will be and the better their job security."

Epsom Coaches are about to install a plasma screen in the drivers' recreational area so they can see where their colleagues are and when they should be back in the depot. Underlying this move is the reminder to drivers that buses

