



# NewsBRIEF



## MERRY CHRISTMAS

After the trauma of COVID 19 in 2020 and 2021 we were all hoping for some respite in 2022, with less upheaval and more stability in our lives. Sadly, this has not been the case as a series of global and domestic events have bounced us all from pillar to post, and it would seem that 2023 has all the ingredients to be equally stressful. I am not particularly nostalgic but I can hear a whole generation saying "oh for the good old days".

Despite so much negativity there have been many positives in 2022, such as the roll out of vaccines, the return of international travel, the weather, and the Lionneses winning the European Championships.

The background to the main global problem has been the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. Not only has this had a devastating impact on a brave nation but it has also greatly exaggerated international supply chain issues that were already stressed by the impact of Covid 19. The legacy of this has been a huge uplift in inflation that has left both businesses and people worse off in real terms. Although the government is battling to bring inflation back down to the 2% target, I suspect this will not happen until the war finishes and we see an improvement in global supply chains.

It certainly hasn't helped that we have had three Prime Ministers this year, along with multiple ministerial changes in all government departments. Running the country is a giant version of running a business and the revolving door the Government has seen will undoubtedly hinder progress. We consider stability

with our senior management team to be a significant positive- but then I would say that after 37 years at the helm!

The current climate presents massive cost pressures for all UK businesses. Our customers are in the same boat as us and therefore, working together in partnership has never been more important. In 2021 our customers understood that we needed support during the driver crisis - now we must demonstrate the same level of understanding. We need to keep price increases to a minimum, maximise efficiencies and continue to deliver an exceptional service. By working together through tough times, we will come through the otherside together.

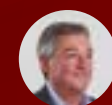
Another significant event in 2022 was the passing of the Queen, at Balmoral Scotland, in September. The ascension of The Prince of Wales to become King Charles was another unique chapter in our lives and as a supporter of his Countryside Fund charity we wish him three cheers. As many of you will know we were honoured in 2019 to have Prince Charles visit our Culloompton depot to celebrate our Centenary, and recent events make that seem even more special. Sustainability was at the forefront of his interest in transport and he was particularly impressed by our drive to be at the forefront of the industry's move to alternative fuels. A mission we will continue to evolve in 2023.

So, there is no sugar coating it... 2023 will be challenging. But Gregory is a stable business. By coming together with a shared mission to continually improve, we will look back on these tough years with a real sense of pride.

Thank you to each of you for your commitment and support through the past 12 months. A big welcome also to our new Gregory Group employees.

As we approach the festive season we would again like to show our thanks by giving you and your family a Christmas hamper which will be available for collection from mid December 2022.

Finally, on behalf of the Gregory family and all the Directors across the Group, we wish you and your family health and happiness for this Christmas and throughout 2023.



**John Gregory**  
CEO



# Why is compliance such a hot topic?

We spoke to Paul Willis, who heads up the Compliance team, to learn more about what compliance means for us as a Group.

## Did you know?

- Drivers are more regulated than airline pilots. In fact, distribution is the most regulated industry in the UK.
- The regulations change regularly - we usually have to implement a change at least once a year.
- The DVSA (Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency) could audit us at any time without prior notice.
- The DVSA regularly stop drivers on the roadside - on average we have 6 stops a month. They check driver compliance, roadworthiness, and load security. They have the power to issue on the spot penalties of up to £1,500 to the driver.
- 4% is the DVSA's driver infringement target. Our average is 2.5%.

### What is compliance?

Compliance is the backbone of our business. It is a combination of processes, equipment and knowledge which all work together to keep us safe. By being compliant we have the foundations we need to be successful in our industry.

### How do we remain compliant?

We all play a vital role in helping us stay compliant. From the drivers who check their vehicles prior to every shift, to the transport managers who manage our driver and vehicle compliance, to the training team who equip us with the compliance know-how, to the audit team who check all our processes are being followed, to the fleet team who maintain our vehicles, to the technology team who implement software to make our compliance processes more efficient. There are very few of us who don't have a connection with compliance. In my opinion, it's the biggest team effort we have.

### What is next on your agenda?

A lot! Compliance never stops and we always want to improve. In addition to the ongoing training, I am particularly eager to cut out inefficiencies. Two big projects on this topic include:

- An update to the defect reporting process to improve speed of reporting and rectification of vehicle defects.
- Improving the reporting process to give transport managers faster visibility of completed inspections, brake tests, and other vehicle related compliance requirements.

Ultimately, the more we can do to strengthen our compliance, the stronger we will be going forward.



**Paul Willis**  
Head of Operational Compliance



In the UK last year, 25 people lost their lives at work due to a collision with a moving vehicle.

We never want to be part of this statistic. To help protect us, we are introducing safe waiting areas for drivers whilst loading and unloading takes place. Areas with these signs will be introduced across all pallet network sites.



and today we support the entire production process at Thatcher's - from the supply of the empty cans and bottles, to finished product distribution. Congratulations to Steve Fox de Vere, Harry Harris and the team for another demonstration of continuous improvement by driving efficient and sustainable distribution solutions.

## MARS

We've secured a contract to supply Mars at Melton Mowbray. The first pallets will arrive in January 2023 with growth plans expected throughout the year.



We recently welcomed Cedo to our customer base. Cedo are the largest and most sustainable supplier of household goods in Europe (cling film, foil, bin bags, etc). Based at their site in Telford, we are supplying the transport for their entire business.



# Supporting our local communities

The eagle eyed amongst you may have spotted this logo on the back of some of our milk tankers. The Prince's Countryside Fund is the only UK-wide charity that empowers family farms and rural communities to create a sustainable future. Gregory Distribution sponsor the charity, hence the logo featuring on some of our tankers.

Our contribution is put towards a number of programmes that provide advice and tools to rural people. The Farm Resilience Programme is one example. One of the beneficiaries is Andy Broomfield (pictured below). He is a third-generation dairy farmer from Devon and this is what he says about the programme:

*"The biggest benefit so far has been access to the knowledge of the consultants that deliver the talks. It would cost a fortune to have them come to your own farm, and often they answer questions that you didn't even realise you should be asking. The programme encourages you to look at your business like a blank piece of paper - you really do make changes that help you become more resilient."*



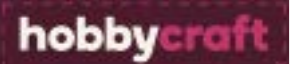
# New polo shirts

A new design of polo shirt will be rolled out across the Group in the New Year. The new design introduces colour panels that will make each of our brands easy to recognise. We also have a new shirt for those of you who work centrally and support all four companies. Note: While the design is changing, the polo shirt brand, and uniform supplier, remains the same.



Should your uniform need replacing, please speak to your line manager who will discuss your requirements in line with the uniform policy.

# Customer news



In the Summer Hobbycraft confirmed a 3-year contract renewal. This contract is facilitated at Hobbycraft's site in Burton-on-Trent.



Have you seen our Gregory/Thatchers dual branding? We have four liveried trailers out on the road (with more to follow!). After winning the Thatchers contract a few years ago our partnership has gone from strength to strength

# Why do we have a new vehicle check app?

We asked Alan Worden - the man responsible for new technology roll outs - a bit about the new vehicle check app we are using across the Group.



### What is the vehicle check app?

The mobile app is a step-by-step checklist that ensures the vehicle is roadworthy and compliant.

### How does the app work?

Everyone responsible for a Gregory vehicle logs into the app on a company mobile phone. The app runs through a series of checks and the transport team are automatically made aware of any defects.

### How did it work before?

Before the app we were reliant on paper forms.

### Why have we introduced the app?

There are huge benefits to us holding this data electronically. There is no risk of forms

being lost, we know about issues immediately, and we can instantly evidence our compliance.

### What has the roll-out process been like?

This has been a huge project. Over 60% of you need access to this app but before we could provide access, first we had to ensure there were mobile phones available for everyone. It has been an intensive few months, but it is worth every effort. With this information instantly accessible we are in a much better position as a company and we are already seeing efficiency improvements.

### When will everyone have access to the app?

All vehicles will have a mobile

phone and access to the vehicle check app by the end of 2022. **If by the end of December, you are responsible for a vehicle and haven't been shown how to use the vehicle check app, please speak to your line manager.** It is important that everyone uses the app because otherwise we will have a gap in our compliance.

### What next?

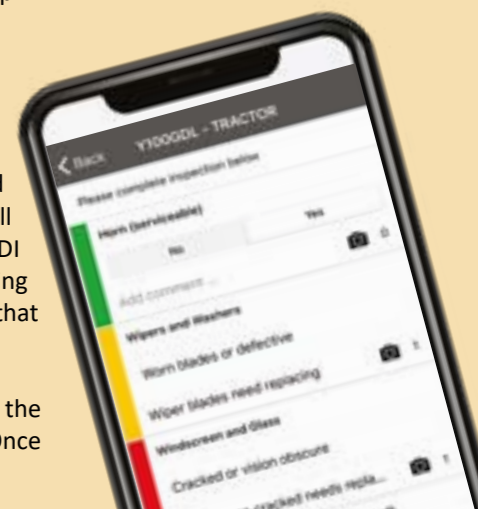
This is just the start! Early next year we will stagger the roll out of an app called CMS SupaTrak. Available to all drivers, it will show the EEDI score and explain the driving habits that have influenced that score.

The New Year we also see the launch of Single Sign On. Once

rolled out, all Gregory Group employees will have just one username and one password to access all our systems and apps. It will make all our working lives much simpler!



**Alan Worden**  
Optimisation Director





# Pension update

“ If like me you are part of the company pension scheme you may have noticed fluctuations in the value of your pension in recent years.

Our company pension scheme is managed by Scottish Widows. They manage the funds on our behalf, constantly monitoring the markets via their internal monetary policy committee.

Like all other pension providers, our Scottish Widow pensions took a real hit during the Covid pandemic, but the value picked up quickly 12 months later. Today we are seeing another dip due to the cost of living crisis and rising inflation.

Whilst these fluctuations are disconcerting, it is important to remember that pensions are a long term investment.

Scottish Widows are an experienced pension provider that only invests in

sustainable and ethical companies. I see this as a very positive approach which will give us one of the most stable pensions available.

That said, I know that a drop in value can be worrying. If you aren't already registered online I encourage you to do so. By setting up an account you can keep an eye on what your fund is worth, transfer old pensions into this one, adjust your contribution, and access useful information about retirement planning. This includes working out how much money you might need to give you the lifestyle you want when you retire.

Have your NI number handy and register at [www.scottishwidows.co.uk/personal](http://www.scottishwidows.co.uk/personal) There are also lots of useful resources at [www.moneyhelper.org.uk](http://www.moneyhelper.org.uk)



**Natasha Stansby**  
HR Director

## PENSION FACTS

- Our pensions are managed by Scottish Widows.
- The company chairs a Pension Governance Committee which meets annually with Scottish Widows to monitor and review pension arrangements.
- There are two contributions that go into your pension - one that comes directly from your salary and one from the company.

### How to join the pension scheme

All employees over 21 are auto enrolled into the pension scheme 3 months after starting with us. Should you not be part of the pension scheme, but you'd like to join, email the Payroll Team on [payroll@gregory.co.uk](mailto:payroll@gregory.co.uk)

## About this hamper!

By now you will have no doubt rummaged through your Christmas hamper! We are lucky to be able to source a lot of the hamper gifts from our customers. Here's a list of what's included this year (everything in gold comes from one of our customers):

- \* Billionaire's shortbread - Kernow Chocolate
- \* Iron Brew Pastilles - Golden Casket
- \* Waxed Cheese - Barbers
- \* Rosemary & Olive Oil Crackers - Fine Cheese Co
- \* Lightly Salted Crisps - Burts
- \* Blood Orange Cider - Thatchers
- \* I Love Prosecco - Ooberstock
- \* Festive Spiced Fudge - Orchard Valley Foods
- \* Karma Cola - Karma Drinks
- \* Water Bottle - Purple Company
- \* Festive Friends - Freshstores Ltd

Merry Christmas

## We never tyre of discounts!

It's a terrible pun we know! But don't forget that as a Gregory Group employee you receive a 10% discount on Michelin tyres. Buy your tyres online at [www.blackcircles.com](http://www.blackcircles.com) using the code: **BCGDJH10**, and visit one of the 2,000+ garages across the UK to have your tyres fitted.

## Employee Awards

Thank you to everyone who nominated their colleagues in the Employee Awards. We were blown away by the number of entries. Huge congratulations to everyone who has been short-listed. The winners will be announced at the conference on 19th January 2023.

## Employee Referral Scheme

Know someone that might like to work at Gregory Group? If you recommend someone and they start with us, you could earn up to £1,000. Visit [www.gregory.co.uk/careers/vacancies](http://www.gregory.co.uk/careers/vacancies) to see our latest vacancies. To recommend someone, fill in the referral poster which can be found in the weekly vacancies email, from your line manager, or by emailing [recruitment@gregory.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@gregory.co.uk). The applicant will also need to mention your name on the application form.

## LET'S GET SNAPPY!

Do you have the perfect Gregory themed photo that captures the essence of what we do? If so, send it in before 31st December and you could win a professionally framed copy of your photo. Send your photo to: [miranda.pearcey@gregory.co.uk](mailto:miranda.pearcey@gregory.co.uk)