

PRESS RELEASE

Matthews Coach Hire takes delivery of Ireland's first Volvo 9700 double-deckers

Three new Volvo B13R 9700 double-deck coaches have been delivered to County Monaghan-based Matthews Coach Hire – representing the first of their kind to enter service in Ireland.

They form part of an order for five identical high-capacity double-deck coaches, with the first examples now operating across key commuter routes connecting towns including Dundalk and Drogheda with Dublin and University College Dublin. The vehicles each operate up to seven days per week and are expected to cover around 50,000 km per year.

Beyond scheduled services, their premium specification and impressive passenger capacity makes them ideally suited for supporting the high demand Matthews Coach Hire sees for private hire work, bespoke tours, and specialist event transport.

Majella Lambe, Director at Matthews Coach Hire, says: “Reliability is the top priority for us, and Volvo Buses has continued to deliver that. These new 9700s not only look stunning, they offer increased capacity and comfort, and provide a first-class travelling experience for passengers. Our drivers can also be assured that their working environment reflects Volvo’s commitment to quality, safety, and advanced technology. Every detail of the specification is designed to deliver a premium experience for everyone on board.”

As a sign of its commitment to quality, Matthews Coach Hire’s sign-off process included a visit to Finland to inspect and approve the vehicles at coachbuilder Carrus Delta, ahead of delivery. “Volvo’s transparency and engineering standards gave us full confidence,” adds Lambe.

With over 90 per cent of its 45-vehicle fleet already built on a Volvo chassis, the decision to become Ireland’s launch customer for the new model reflects a long-standing trust in the brand – supported by the high standards of aftersales support available from the Volvo Truck & Bus dealer network across Ireland. Growing the fleet with more Volvo models also streamlines maintenance and training for the customer, ensuring consistency in operations.

Each 14.8m Volvo B13R 9700 double-deck coach is wheelchair-compliant and delivers a 34 per cent increase in seating capacity versus the vehicles they replace, enabling Matthews Coach Hire to offer increased availability on its routes, without the need for more vehicles and drivers. They each come with 95 moquette-upholstered ergonomic passenger seats with fold-down seatback tables, smart wood-effect flooring, and full USB-A/C connectivity, enabling passengers to keep their devices charged.

Powered by Volvo’s Euro 6 D13K engine, which can deliver up to 500 hp and 2,500 Nm of torque, the coaches are equipped to effortlessly tackle even the steepest of terrain with a full complement of passengers and luggage. This engine is perfectly matched with the popular I-

Shift transmission, to deliver faster gear changes and lower internal friction, with software optimised for maximum fuel savings.

Diarmaid Thompson, Regional Account Manager for Volvo Bus UK & Ireland, says: “The team at Matthews Coach Hire immediately saw the potential this new model offered when we began discussing specifications following its launch. Now, seeing them on the road, I’m confident they will prove a real winner with passengers.

“It was a very proud moment to deliver the first vehicles into service; they look amazing and have been generating a huge buzz on social media.”

Drivers at Matthews Coach Hire have already praised the Volvo 9700 double-decks for their smooth handling, ride comfort, and enhanced visibility – with each featuring Synetics’ mirrorless camera systems, which offer clearer views when overtaking or navigating in urban environments. Drivers report the system has already proven highly effective in detecting electric scooters and other vulnerable road users.

Based in Inniskeen in County Monaghan, Matthews Coach Hire carries more than 4,500 passengers on 145 daily services. This includes handling a significant volume of student travel to most of Dublin’s major colleges, plus concert and event services in 3Arena, Aviva Stadium, RDS, Croke Park, Malahide Castle, and Marlay Park.

Founded in 1995 by Paddy and Mary Matthews, the company was acquired by FirstGroup in February 2025. Members of the Matthews management team remain with the business to lead day-to-day operations.

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