

## York Bus Forum

### Minutes of the Open Meeting of the Committee held on Tuesday, 18 December 2018 at West Offices, York

Present: Graham Collett (Chair), Dave Merrett (Treasurer & Membership Secretary), Ron Healey (Vice-Chair), S R Irwin, Brian Nye, Alan Robinson, Roger Pierce, Stephanie Hall (item 15)

**1. The chair welcomed those attending.** Apologies had been received from: Geoff Beacon, John Bibby, Cllr Andy d'Agorne, Cllr Mary Cannon, Alan Dawes (Rawcliffe Parish Council), Colin Hall, Colin Mew, C Rutt, G Shuttleworth, Diana Robinson

**2. The minutes** (previously circulated) **of the last meeting** of the Committee held on 16 October were approved.

**3. Matters arising** not dealt elsewhere on the agenda included;

1. Cllr Kallum Taylor had not yet responded to AR re the Front of Station schemes progress.
2. There was no update available from Colin Hall re the suggested leaflet for young people.
3. Route Maps: the chair had had met Brandon, who'd covered this. He'd written to the managing director of First York, but had not had a response. He will write to Julian Ridge at the city council. **Action: Chair.**
4. There was no update from Alan Dawes regarding his suggested local leaflet for Rawcliffe. Ron Healey said he's chase him. **Action: RH.**
5. Balloon Festival delays to bus services: council officers were aware of the acute problems caused and would seek solutions in consultation with the festival operators via the licensing arrangements. The Chair had written to the Council's Assistant Director, James Gilchrist.
6. Bus Users UK Group: The chair indicated that he'd had a not very helpful response from them.
7. It was noted that A d'Ag hadn't supplied the two reports he'd agreed to provide in mins. 14 & 16. Agree to chase him for. **Action: Chair.**

**4. Finance & Membership Report:** The Treasurer & Membership Secretary reported that there had been no further changes since the last meeting. Expense claims by speakers to the disability meeting had not yet been received. On the wider issue of membership, Roger Pierce suggested that the influence of the Forum was probably proportionate to its membership and expertise. He therefore suggested that consideration should be given to creating a new class of associate membership to bolster numbers. Associate members could attend the AGM and receive say, a quarterly newsletter by email. The majority view was that a nominal membership fee of £1 should be charged. Members were asked to ponder the matter for further consideration at a future meeting. The Treasurer & Membership Secretary indicated that due to pressures on his time, he would stand down at the Annual meeting.

**5. Proposed Membership & Promotional Leaflet** (previously circulated); Ron Healey was thanked for his work. Alan Robinson volunteered to join Ron Healey and John Bibby in progressing the leaflet. It was suggested that the group should consider a direct appeal to potential joiners on the cover of the leaflet along the lines of 'helping to improve bus services in York by joining YBF - the passengers' voice'. Ron Healey raised the subject of the name of the organisation. After discussion, there was a consensus in favour of changing the title to 'York Bus Users Forum'.

**6. York Central:** Dave Merrett reported that the timetable for a decision on the current application had slipped following the issuing by the Department for Transport of a Notice of Non-Determination. No application for the new access road had yet been made.

**7. Station Redevelopment:** Alan Robinson had spoken at the meeting of the council's Executive on behalf of the Forum in support of revised bus interchange proposals. The officers' proposals were approved without major modifications. An application for full planning permission would have to be made and approved before the Queen Street bridge could be demolished.

**8. York Local Plan:** DM gave an update. The government inspectors had asked the council to explain how its calculations of housing need met the tests of 'objective assessment'. The council had responded by claiming that the new, substantially-reduced household projections from the ONS that had been issued in between were below its assessment of housing need included in the plan. But there was a legal argument that, having submitted the local plan under the old regulations, then the council had to use the household projections in force at the time. No early resolution was anticipated. So the intended start on the new Local Transport was likely to be delayed further.

**10. Bus Route Representatives:** discussion was deferred to the next meeting in JB/DB's absence. BN said that route 12's performance had significantly improved since the company had put in extra recovery time, though not everyone was happy with the changes. The frequency was now 15 minutes through the central part of the day, 20 minutes peak.

**11. Demand Responsive Transport:** JB's report had been received and was summarised in John's absence by RP. The original TaxiBus proposal was for bookable transport which would augment existing bus services and also serve populations without bus services. A HospiBus was a specific type of service. The concepts had been discussed in the Community Transport Group, Heworth Without Parish Council and the York Environment Forum. Two excellent papers had been forwarded by Prof Tony May which should be considered first. Additional members were required to strengthen the working group. John hoped that the TaxiBus could ideally offer a free service. However, the committee believed that revenue support on the scale required would not be forthcoming although funding for the start-up of an experimental service was possible for a well-argued, compelling proposal. John Bibby also reported the progress made by Roger on examining the existing services already serving York Hospital. They included Hospital Transport, community transport, Nos. 6 and 40 buses running along Wiggington Road and the Nos. 1 and 5 running nearby on Haxby Road. But none of the bus services were mentioned in the letters sent to patients by the hospital. He

therefore believed that the best way to divert patients (and visitors and staff) from using private transport was for the hospital to promote existing services. He particularly favoured promoting the No 6 service to people living in the northern suburbs of the city and beyond because of the abundant parking, shelter and other facilities available inside Tescos. However, existing outward passenger facilities at Wigginton Road were too small, without shelter or electronic information. GC also mentioned that patient information leaflets made no mention of the bus services. He had written to the managing director of First Group and would now write to the hospital. He was asked to raise the issue of the non-working electronic passenger information board inside the hospital. **Action: RP.**

**12. Access for Disabled Bus Users:** Following the resignation of Rosie Baker as Project Officer and Access Group leader, John Bibby had agreed to contact Eleanor Tew of YBPSS. The chair read out JB's report and request for volunteers, but there were no offers. SI mentioned that service 415 did have speaking facilities. RP suggested that suitably embossed passes could be provided for those who needed assistance to show to drivers. SI said First already did something and showed an example. The Chair said he was trying to organise a press article along with YOPA. He'd written to Mike Laycock about this but hadn't had a response.

**13. Other Papers:** Dave Merrett had also circulated with the agenda for information:

1. notes from the meeting of the Quality Bus Partnership held on Monday, 10 December;
2. First Group briefing on the Bus Services Act, 2017;
3. Wigginton Road Bus Improvement Scheme: a reply from Julian Ridge to Dave Merrett's suggestion for bus detection and priority controls. Julian described how staff were exploring the adoption of GPS feed from the bus ticket machine which reduced the need for local detector equipment;
4. Bus information indicators at Rougier Street (south west side shelter): a large new board would be fitted after the windows to the basement cookery school had been installed.

**14. AGM Tuesday, 19 March 2019 at West Offices.** The Chair said he'd arranged a guest speaker from the council who would describe the various bus display systems for passengers. It was agreed that a guided tour of the council's traffic control centre would very helpful to members. This would have to be timed for 4.30. RP raised concerns about the misleading name for the Bus Forum, which sounded more like an operator than user body. DM suggested could change the name to York Bus User's Forum. RP also raised whether it should look to cover a wider area, not just York – e.g. to Selby. RH asked that the image and name of the Forum be discussed and, hopefully, approved at the AGM. The chair gave notice that other demands made them unable to stand for re-election at the AGM, and DM's similar indication.

**15. York University Students' Union:** YUSU's Community & Wellbeing Officer, Stephanie Hall described the difficulties experienced by students with bus services to the university. Services were often delayed (by as much as 45 minutes) and had been reduced. One of the services only stopped at the top of the hill, leaving disabled students the challenge of getting

up the hill to get a bus. They were meant to have frequent conversations with the provider, First York, but they were not responding. The Student Union were also aware of wider problems beyond the University. They felt that there needed to be a relook at how Public Transport was provided across the whole city. The Student Union were looking to put a motion to the Executive Member, Cllr. P. Dew, and were seeking the support of the Forum for asking the city council to conduct an inquiry into bus services in the city. RP made the point that the University had a Section 106 planning obligation to provide bus services to the two campuses, it had been their choice to get First to extend their services onto the campuses rather than directly provide their own. SH said the problem was the section of route past the Retreat. The Uni is trying to get First to sort this. The University had recently met First, who claimed the 66 service was no longer viable, and they wanted to cut it. SH said First weren't being paid by the Uni, it was a zero cost contract. DM said if that happened the Uni still had the planning obligation to meet.

There was a further conversation about car commuting to the Uni and knock on parking problems in residential areas near the Uni.

RP said a traffic & transport commission led by an independent chair had been proposed by the council in 2014 to develop a consensus on future solution. However, this had been scrapped by the coalition in 2015 on the grounds that there was already sufficient local in-house expertise. GC flagged the opportunity of the forthcoming local elections /influencing local party manifestos.

SH summed up that they were looking to launch their initiative on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, and were looking for pledges of support. Members were sympathetic in principle but wanted to know more about the structure of the inquiry sought. RP suggested the text was more about wider transport issues than public transport. DM suggested the SU emphasise the reliability issue more. SH said they were conscious that First were saying that their services were reliable overall, and that they only had a problem with the 66 / 66A. First had consistently refused to provide them any reliability data.

SH was thanked for coming to speak to the Forum and the SU initiative.

**16. AOB** A new CBT report was flagged.

RP/DM 11 January 2019

Future Meetings:

Tuesday, 15 January: 'The Risks and Gains of Bus Travel', Prof Caroline Mullen, Institute of Transport, University of Leeds;

Tuesday, 19 February: Open Committee Meeting;

Tuesday, 19 March: YBF AGM with guest speaker on the Council's Bus information systems.