

## York Bus Forum Chair's Report 2017-2018

### Structure and Finance

1. The Forum is heavily dependent on volunteers to keep it running. Over the last year, whilst there has been an improvement in attendances at meetings, and enthusiasm for exploring new topics, there has been a lack of people to take these forward. At times, there have only been three or four Committee members present! We urgently need a Secretary/Minutes Secretary and Meetings Organiser.
2. The lack of people to do things was reflected in a cutback in our activities and publicity for these. It became clear that we were unlikely to meet the agreed deadline for submitting a report to the **Joseph Rowntree Foundation** on how we had made use of their **Community Fund grant**. I therefore negotiated with them and, as well as agreeing a very helpful new deadline of June 2018, they also agreed we could retain our grant of £1700, but without the need for match-funding. Part of the new agreement involves rejigging the budget to make it more realistic for both our core work (including provision for a new professionally produced website) and for the important work of our **Access Working Group**. The Group has done some excellent research on bus provision in and around York and its first report should be published soon. I would particularly like to thank Rosie Baker and Eleanor Tew for their work on this.

### Activities and Future Plans

3. The Forum has met monthly (except August) - alternating between members meetings (to which the public are invited) and open Committee meetings. We are establishing ourselves as the voice for bus users in York and have regular contact with the Executive Member for Transport and the Council's Sustainable Transport Team as well as the major bus operators.
4. In June we held a special meeting at the University of York as part of the Festival of Ideas, including speakers from our twin city of Munster and a presentation on Intelligent Transport Systems from the Council's Transport Systems Manager. Our September meeting covered the Council's current bus strategy and sought the Forum's views on a new strategy (see also 6 below), together with the findings from the National Bus Passenger Survey for York. Then in November, we heard from Keith McNally, Chair of York's Quality Bus Partnership about the improvements undertaken to York's bus system. Recent meetings have been very well attended and have covered new developments at Transdev (January) and the proposed Clean Air Zone for York (March).
5. We have good links with the Campaign for Better Transport's National Campaigns Team [www.bettertransport.org.uk/](http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/) and with its West and North Yorkshire Local Group [www.bettertransport.org.uk/west\\_yorkshire\\_local\\_group](http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/west_yorkshire_local_group). We have been active in many other directions in an attempt to raise the profile of the Forum, including press releases for each meeting and for other major issues eg the threat to the Naburn service and to routes formerly served by Stephensons. We have also placed a contract for a new website, to include training so that we can update it ourselves. I am most grateful to Paul Colbeck who developed our current website (including domain name and web hosting) in his own time and largely without cost. In addition to the website, we have been making use of Twitter and Facebook to advertise our meetings and to get our message out.
6. In January, we established a Bus Station Working Group (under the leadership of John Bibby) which has done some useful work and will be reporting shortly. We also set up a Bus Strategy Group (led by Dave Merrett), partly to meet the challenge set us by the Council in September. Both groups are informing the Forum's submission to the York Local Plan and our comments on the York Central consultation. We are also trying to work more closely with the Executive Member for Transport Council (Councillor Peter Dew) Council Officers and Bus Operators to ensure that York's bus users' needs are built in to their future plans. More information is available on our website at [www.yorkbusforum.org](http://www.yorkbusforum.org)

**Graham Collett**  
**Chair, York Bus Forum**  
**27 March 2018**