

## **York Bus Forum – Background, Progress to Date and Future Plans**

### **Background**

1. The Forum started with a public meeting in April 2016 as a response to York Council's proposals to cut many evening and Sunday bus services and the serious impact of these on residents and visitors. The group mounted a strong campaign against the Council's proposals. A number of ward councillors and other individuals supported our campaign, resulting in £80,000 of the planned cuts being restored on a permanent basis. This led to the retention of most evening services and most of the No 20 route (now operating Heworth to Clifton Moor). We were also successful in obtaining an undertaking from First York that they would continue to produce paper timetables.

### **Structure and Finance**

2. We are an entirely volunteer-run organisation, with democratically elected officers, following the procedure laid out in our constitution (as agreed at our first AGM in April 2017). We are funded from our members' subscriptions, donations and grants. We have about 40 individual members (including some Councillors) and five affiliated Parish and Town Councils.
3. The Forum was fortunate in its application to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Community Fund, who awarded us £1200 for "Core" funding and £500 for "Access" funding. The Core funding was to support the establishment of the Forum so that it can operate in a self-sustaining manner, and to allow us to expand our public engagement activities such as via "drop-in" sessions at library cafes and at other events.

### **Access Working Group**

4. The Access funding was to support the setting up of an Access Working Group - formed to represent the interests of anyone who has difficulty using buses. It produced a report in association with the York Community Transport Group (YBF is a member) and the Council's iTravelYork team '[YorAccess Guide to Buses and Community Transport around York](#)'. Copies are available on our website and there are a few remaining printed copies. The report summarises current bus provision in and around York for people with accessibility issues on buses, and how their needs could be better met. It has attracted favourable comments, and further information which we hope to include in an updated version.

### **Promoting and Developing Services**

5. Whilst we are continuing to campaign on behalf of York's bus users, our focus has now moved on to helping to promote current services – especially those which are less known like the No 20 and No 42 (York to Selby via Naburn and Cawood) and the summer Dalesbus and Moorsbus services from York. We are also trying to look forward and to encourage new developments in services. A recent initiative by York Hospital has enabled the introduction of a new park and ride service aimed at hospital staff and visitors. We are working with the Council and First York to try to develop this and provide a printed and online guide on access to the hospital by bus, bike and on foot. We also have plans for a similar guide for people arriving at York Station, giving them guidance on which bus to catch for their onward journey.

### **Activities and Future Plans**

6. We meet monthly - alternating between members meetings (to which the public are invited) with a range of expert speakers (including academics, bus operators and disabled persons' organisations) and open Committee meetings. We have established ourselves as the main voice for bus users in York. We are now a recognised stakeholder and have regular contact with the Executive Member for Transport and the Council's Sustainable Transport Team as well as the major bus operators.
7. We arranged (jointly with York Older Persons Assembly) a photoshoot with Arriva to demonstrate the importance of aural and visual announcements on buses. We also jointly manned a 'helpdesk' with all major bus operators at a public drop-in organised by Bus Users UK and one with First York at two York University Travel & Transport Group events. We were invited by the Council, and submitted our views, on the next round of supported bus tendering and expect to meet the officer concerned when the bids are received. We are currently working with the Council's Better Bus Officer and LNER's Station Development

Manager on the Council's and LNER/Network Rail's plans for York Station and seeking a meeting with the Council's Head of Sustainable Transport on improving bus access to the new Community Stadium.

8. 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). Both of these provide valuable sources of information – the latter being particularly useful in comparing bus developments in Leeds and York. Two of our officers are taking part in the Group's visit to Harrogate's electric bus network later this month. We have been active in many other directions in an attempt to raise the profile of YBF, including a submission to the Transport Select Committee's Inquiry into the health of the bus network. We issue press releases on important issues, have set up a new, improved website, and have found that the use of Twitter and Facebook has helped to improve our media profile.
9. We made submissions to the York Local Plan and to the York Central consultation. We are working closely with Council Officers and Bus Operators to ensure that York's bus users' needs are built in to their future plans – in particular the next York Local Transport Plan, on which work is due to start later this year. To inform this plan, we are commissioning (jointly with York Civic Trust and York Environment Forum) external research to look at the future transport needs of York's citizens, commuters and visitors. This will be largely financed by grant-making trusts, York BID and the three organisations as well as (we hope) York Council.
10. Manifesto? Other future plans?

**Ray Walker Chair & Graham Collett Vice-Chair**  
**York Bus Forum**  
**3 June 2019**