

## **York Bus Forum Meeting Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 17.30, by Zoom**

Attending: Doreen Magill (Chair), Graham Collett (Vice Chair), Niall McFerran (Secretary), Eckhard Schlaefke (Speaker), Kevin Fradley, Jim Harbus, Barry Thomas, Tony Hudson, Diana Robinson, Julian Ridge (CYC), Don Southall, Duncan Miller, Mary Fairbrother, Alan Robinson (Membership Sec.), Roger French (Finance), David Stuart, John Slaughter, Lionel Lennox, Eden Blyth, Richard Parker, Brandon Jones (First), Dave Merrett, John Bibby, Cllr. Andrew Waller and Ursula Landers.

1. Welcome and apologies – there were apologies from; Geoff Beacon, Barry Connor, Cathy Croston, Tony Clarke, Stephen Lewis, Iain Mitchell, Sharrow Smith, Gwen Vardigans. In view of our speaker being present it was decided to move straight to the main presentation.
2. Talk by speaker from Munster on the operation of electric buses in their city. ES represents Stadtwerke a utilities company in Munster that provides the bus network on behalf of the city.

The project to electrify the network started in 2011, currently 30 of the 200 buses in the city are electric with a target to upgrade them all in the next five years.

They have standardised their charging infrastructure ensuring compatibility amongst bus suppliers. Public acceptance has been high with most customers preferring the electric vehicles over their diesel counterparts.

On power consumption it was stated that inner city vehicles could be charged at the bus depot, outer city vehicles will require charging stations and that for long distance journeys the use of hydrogen powered (provided it is sustainable in manufacture) is the best solution.

Electric buses are approximately twice the price of diesel vehicles currently. Most of fleet standard 12m size but articulated vehicles are entering the fleet, but they require extra charging. Finance for the move to electric buses comes from earnings, the Munster authorities, the German Government and the E.U.

It is anticipated that in 3-4 years there will be driverless buses in the fleet.

Solar panels and storage batteries are installed at the depot but as yet they do not make significant impact.

Buses are popular with the drivers as they are easier to work with. They are popular with the population as they are less noisy, create less congestion, lower emission levels and have better safety record.

JR thanked the speaker for his talk and issues invitation to visit York.

BJ asked about accidents and congestion statements, the answers lay in the increased use of bus priority lanes and the addition of collision alert mechanisms on the buses and better blind spot mirrors.

NM asked about the running costs, ES replies that the running fuel costs were approximately two thirds less and that the payback time for the investment was around six years with a bus life expectancy of 12-15 years.

ES also said that the electric bus technology is improving very fast now major manufacturers were involved and issues of range and reliability and problems of battery consumption in cold weather would soon be addressed.

AR asked about efficiency of hydrogen powered buses. ES agreed that they are less efficient than electric buses but, at this time, they were the better alternative for greater distance journeys.

DMag Thanked the speaker for an excellent talk and suggested their example is something York is aiming for.

3. Minutes of last meeting accepted. NM asked if information regarding BSIP had been circulated? It has.

DMag reported that as CYC had instructed staff to work from home for the winter than the hybrid meeting option is not currently available.

4. BSIP document- JR reported that this is now with the DfT and they are waiting for response.

GC advised group that a letter of support from YBF had been sent to accompany the submission.

JR advised that a further bid under the ZEBRA electric bus scheme had been submitted.

JB asked who would own the buses acquired if bids under the current schemes were successful? JR and BJ responded that there is a complex financial model by which these vehicles will be acquired. JB asked if the money saved by the HS2 cancellation could be used on bus schemes?

JR advised that the city centre bus study brief will be available following a meeting on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> November.

5. Worst Bus stops etc. – NM reported that we had had some candidates for our campaign, which will be run in the spring. He again invited members to nominate poor stops and send in pictures of poorly placed and provided stops with a preferably people in shot.

He reported on another useful meeting in our programme of discussions with York Inner MP Rachael Maskell. Also, a useful discussion with Cllr. D'Agorne and JR on the BSIP application.

A meeting with a representative of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England had revealed the funding for the National Bus Strategy is less than first advertised! The promotion by First of the YBF is going ahead in January, it is hoped this will encourage more members and hopefully improve diversity amongst the group, BJ was thanked for his help in this.

DM reported on his attendance at the latest QBP meeting. He confirmed concerns about funding levels for new bus schemes as some authorities had submitted claims for substantial amounts of the projected total. He reported that there are still concerns regarding driver shortages and that the use of marketing campaigns to encourage bus use may be delayed until the spring.

6. Subscriptions etc. – RF presented his paper regarding the current financial state of the group and suggestions for a new subscription level plan. He also reminded the group that there were still some outstanding members whose subscriptions had not been received.

He outlined a plan for an EGM on December the 7<sup>th</sup> to address the issues.

7. Complaints – DMag suggested that the operators need a standardised system for complaints handling with targets on time for response and a mechanism to elevate issues if required.  
JR reminded group that if required his department should be notified of unresolved complaints. It was suggested that the contact details for CYC could be more widely distributed although JR reminded group, they are on every bus stop.  
DR advised that many of the real-time timetables were not currently functioning, JR asked if we could advise which.  
BJ advised that this is a concern as they normally promise to turn round issues within 5 working days.  
DMag asked if there could be a complaints hotline?
8. Date of next meeting is EGM on 7th December with Members Forum meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup>.
9. AOB – BJ announced that First had received a National Bus Award for their partnership scheme with local businesses.
10. RP asked if intermediate timetable stopping points could be improved as bus reliability was poor at these stops? JR confirmed that these are calculated by the bus operators using traffic data but could not account for all fluctuations in congestion. He invited members to feed back any individual issues if they were regular.  
KF reported that most bus policy meeting at the TUC have been dominated by West and South Yorkshire issues and asked if this group could become more active in this process? GC asked if details of the meetings could be supplied