

## York Bus Forum Meeting Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> July 17.30, by Zoom

Attending: Doreen Magill (Chair), Graham Collett (Vice Chair), Ben Gilligan (Speaker), Duncan Miller, Tony Hudson, Kevin Fradley, Ben Hughes, Julian Ridge (CYC), George Wood, Roger French, David Stuart, John Slaughter, Eden Blyth, Geoff Beacon, Edward Pearson, Dave Merrett, Richard Parker, Dr.C Fletcher, Barry Connor, Brandon Jones (First Group)

1. Welcome and Apologies – Chair reported apologies from: Cllr. Andy D’Agorne, Mary Cannon, Ian Anderson, Niall McFerran (Secretary) and Alan Robinson (Membership Secretary) and welcomed members to the meeting.

Brandon Jones reported to members that Ian Humphries the new Managing Director of First Group in York sent his apologies to the meeting and said he was very much looking forward to engaging with the York Bus Forum.

2. Subscriptions- The Chair pointed out that subscriptions were now due and, as in person meetings were currently taking place, members were encouraged to pay directly with bank details available on the Join Us page of the website. Members should please note to fill in their name if paying personal subscriptions, or the organisation name if paying on behalf of an organisation, in the reference column on bank sites. This would assist the membership secretary to keep membership lists up to date and assist reconciliation of the lists to the bank account.

3. Appointment and role of Roger French

The Chair explained the background to the Committee appointing Roger French to the role of Acting Treasurer until the 2021 Annual General Meeting in order to reduce the workload of Alan Robinson.

4. Financial Statement Update

The Acting Treasurer reported that he was in the process of handover from Alan and that the 2020 Accounts would be taken to the August committee for approval and then presented to the August members meeting along with an up to date verbal statement on available funds in the current year which at the time of the July meeting stood at £378 after allowing for the Zoom subscription to be renewed in October 2021.

5. Minutes of 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021 meeting – the minutes of the 15<sup>th</sup> June meeting were then taken followed by Matters Arising with subsequent Agenda items being renumbered. The minutes were approved with the correction of the spelling of Marcus Bichtemann in item 4 as pointed out by Dave Merrett.

6. Matters arising :

Item 4 15 June minutes Brandon Jones re-assured the Forum that in his responses to questions from members Marcus Bichtemann had not meant to suggest that First Group were not receptive to creative ideas to improve bus services in York.

Brandon also said with reference to Marcus’s response to the question re congestion that there may be a point in the future when difficult decisions needed to be taken to prioritise buses to encourage greater bus usage.

Brandon also offered to promote York Bus Forum on the First York twitter account and this may assist the Forum in its desire to attract a broader age profile of membership.

Item 5 15 June minutes Kevin Fradley stated that it was a very good idea for York, North and East Yorkshire organisations to communicate with each other on potential bus improvements and he and Gail Shuttleworth had subsequently spoken. There were bus champions in East Yorkshire but not co-ordinating meetings.

Graham Collett said that he had met with Colin Walker (Group Manager, Transport services, East Yorkshire Council) and Gail Shuttleworth on 8<sup>th</sup> July and he had shared a draft of the slides that he had produced on behalf of the Bus Forum for a forthcoming presentation to the Labour Party.

7. Presentation by Ben Gilligan, Area Director, East Yorkshire Motor Services

Ben Gilligan gave a comprehensive and wide ranging presentation on East Yorkshire Motor Services including its history, absorption into the Go-Ahead Group whilst retaining operational autonomy, the different markets served across its area with the differing challenges in the City of Hull, rural East Yorkshire and Scarborough where it was both a town service and seasonal service to meet tourist demand. Ben outlined pre- pandemic improvements in its website, branding and its Just Go Demand Responsive service in North Lincolnshire before moving on to the effects of the pandemic and the post pandemic emerging issues in terms of changed travel patterns, staffing challenges, preparing Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs) and decarbonisation. Tendered services amounted to about 15% of the fleet (excluding school contracts) - mostly East Riding commissioned but one York service. About 30% of the fleet was Euro 6 compliant. There were no plans to increase this, as he saw the future as being electric or hydrogen powered buses.

The Chair referred to the ticketing partnership with Transdev and Ben gave an example of how a passenger in Market Weighton could travel on East Yorkshire buses, change to the Coastliner for onward travel to York or Leeds (or vice-versa) with one ticket and at a slightly discounted rate.

The Chair asked how widely the scheme was publicised, as she had not seen any publicity on the Coastliner buses she had used. Ben thanked the Chair for the feedback and took it as an action point to review publicity for the scheme.

Kevin Fradley commented on the loss of the National Express Service from Scarborough to London via Driffield, York and Leeds. Kevin also commented that following Coastliner's withdrawal of its York to Bridlington service and given that he East Yorkshire Motor Services York to Bridlington buses were timed to take 2 hours 20 minutes, as opposed to 55 minutes by car, there was a real need for a speedy service.

In response Ben stated that in terms of National Express services provided by contract by East Yorkshire Motor Services basically East Yorkshire operated what National Express wanted them to run. With regard to York to Bridlington services Ben said a direct service was not financially viable, the main footfall was from local journeys between points on the route.

Kevin also noted that to travel from York to Castle Hill Hospital on East Yorkshire Services the best option was to change in Beverley rather than go into Hull and change but felt that there was little publicity of the Beverley- Castle Hill service to York passengers.

Ben replied that East Yorkshire were about to re-launch their Beverley to Castle Hill service so the feedback from Kevin was timely.

Dave Merrett asked whether the Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) in North Lincolnshire was operational in rural areas or in the larger towns also as he thought there was potential in the Greater York area.

Ben said that DRT was not meant to duplicate existing services. DRT customers could be transported from villages to towns where no such service existed between the village and the town but could not be provided within town where existing services existed. Ben stated that there needed to be a large enough population in a locality to make the DRT services worthwhile and that he considered that where small villages were a significant distance from each other the service was not worthwhile and that in any case to be viable DRT required some level of public funding.

Geoff Beacon enquired whether the tolls on the Humber Bridge had increased the number of bus passengers between Barton on Humber and Hull and asked for Ben's view on whether imposing tolls on cars coming into York would impact favourably on bus usage.

Ben responded that in terms of overall private car costs he did not think that the tolls on the Bridge were so expensive that they significantly deterred private car usage. In terms of the question re York he preferred not to comment.

Barry Connor said that he had undertaken some research on the Go Ahead trials of DRT in Oxford, now discontinued, and in his view the key issue was reaching a critical level of demand. Barry and Ben agreed to swap contact details out with the meeting to discuss further.

Dr. Fletcher commented that he was impressed with the design of the East Yorkshire buses but pointed out that there was little/no indication of where they could be accessed in York, for example in Station Rise. Ben suggested that with enhanced partnership working and co-operation between providers there was an opportunity to address this shortfall.

Ben concluded by offering to provide his email address for circulation to members and also offered to circulate a You tube link to a video re East Yorkshire services and the offer was accepted.

8. Update on Piccadilly Bus Stops, BSIP, Better Bus Stops campaigns.

Graham Collett referred to the temporary bus stop in Piccadilly for East bound bus services e.g. the number 10 to Stamford Bridge and thanked First York for the planned use of an extra bus stop in Clifford Street for these services from July 25<sup>th</sup> which was an improvement on the current situation.

Julian Ridge said that a decision on whether to extend, make permanent or end the temporary one way system in Coppergate with its knock on consequences for the stop at Piccadilly would be taken soon.

Re the BSIP Julian said that the plan was being worked up but guidance on what the funding can be used for was awaited from the government.

The Council had work being undertaken using software that identified gaps in current services, where delays occurred and combined the length of delays with the number of passengers on delayed buses.

Julian said that the Quality Bus Partnership was meeting before the end of July to further progress the BSIP and thanked the Bus Forum for its submission outlining its 5 key points which was valuable input into the planning.

On the Better Bus Stops Campaign the Chair reported that Gail Shuttleworth was looking at the results on behalf of the Forum. Whilst there were a number of comments about the temporary bus stop in Piccadilly and stops in Exhibition Square the majority of comments were specific to individual bus stops.

The general message emerging was that people need cover, seats and information. The Chair raised the issue of the bus stop for the No. 25 at Morrisons in the City Centre where the bus stop roof is made from glass and in hot weather people faced with long waits due to delays could suffer distress in the enhanced heat. In response Julian Ridge pointed out that the bus stops have glass roofs so that street lights can shine through on dark evenings enhancing safety. It was agreed that there was no easy solution.

9. Any other business

Graham Collett raised the issue of the service 2a which has reverted to its ordinary service during the day not serving intermediate stops which had provoked a number of critical comments, including from some councillors. Julian responded that the reversion was part of the unwinding of emergency measures taken during the covid pandemic as tapering of emergency funding is due to commence from August and there was need to get back to commercial equilibrium.

A brief discussion followed on the frequency of alternative services on that route during the day and Julian said that if there were significant gaps that should be something picked up in the modelling previously referenced.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held by Zoom on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2021 when Brian Deegan a Transport Planner from Urban Movement will give a presentation entitled "Optimising the Bus Network".