

General Election – Rally at Temple Meads to highlight local rail issues

23 May 2017

On Tuesday 23 May 2017 at 11am, FOSBR held a public meeting outside Temple Meads Station. Modelling our cross-party approach, "grass-roots" members affiliated to each of the four political parties explained their parties' approach to local rail improvements and the meeting was addressed by special guest speaker Cat Hobbs, Director of We Own It (<https://weownit.org.uk>), an organisation campaigning to nationalise key industries such as water, bus and rail services.



Tina Biggs, FOSBR Secretary, opened the meeting by explaining that FOSBR works across the political parties in a very harmonious way and therefore we felt that despite the events in Manchester and the suspension of campaigning today, we felt it important to demonstrate and model how we as voters in different parties can encourage our candidates to work together for what the community needs – in our case, local rail services which are Regular, Affordable, Integrated with bus services and Local. We know that local rail serves all sectors of society and is very much a “no-brainer” for investment. Tina distributed copies of our FOSBR Aims and Map and urged the people present to send them to their MP candidates and to ask them how they propose to promote local rail improvements.

The photo shows various FOSBR members and rail campaigners. The coloured discs representing each party were worn by rail campaigners with affiliation or sympathies to the respective political parties (Conservative – Dave Redgwell; Labour – Heather Jarrett; Lib Dem – Terry Miller and Green – Barbara Segal). No parliamentary candidates were present, but each “grass-roots representative” took it in turns to explain how each of the political parties put local rail as an important part of their political agenda. Cat Hobbs, Director of We Own It, second from left, then explained how the concept of national ownership of rail, so foreign to the political scene even a few years ago, was now increasingly being discussed, and how We Own It were being invited on national radio to explain how this could work and indeed save significant sums of public money.

From right to left: Nigel Bray (Railfuture); Diane Karoui, Peter Gould (FOSBR ex-chair), Rowland Dye, Terry Miller (FOSBR), Dave Redgwell (South West Transport Network), Heather Jarrett, Barbara Segal, Esther Biggs, Julie Boston (FOSBR), Cat Hobbs (We Own It) and Don “The Whistler” Townsend.

Our heartfelt thanks to all our rail friends who took part. We are a great team and I hope our continued co-working will inspire equally harmonious cross-party campaigns in Bristol and wider afield.