

FOSBR: Minutes of AGM (ratified at AGM 29th January 2016) 23rd January 2015 at Halo Café, Gloucester Road, Bristol

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed members and speakers to the meeting. There were 30 attendees.

2. Chair's Report (Bernard Lane)

The Chair talked about some points of interest from 2014:

- As of the May timetable, 3 extra trains at stop at Bedminster and Parson Street – FOSBR and SCRIP pushed for this and FOSBR will ask for further timetable improvements at these stations.
- quadrupling of lines on Filton Bank is in progress – preparation work has begun with orange hi-vis on site
- MetroWest Phase 1 is progressing through the business case phase. FOSBR fed back into the Portishead station location consultation in support of Portishead Railway Group.
- Ashton Gate is not included in MetroWest Phase 1 but FOSBR have joined the campaign group to have the station re-opened. The group consists of stadium, business and community representatives.
- Proposals for MetroWest Phase 2 are still under development. FOSBR continue to campaign for the re-opening of the Henbury Loop and stations upon it.
- FOSBR put in representations over 12 times to South Gloucestershire Council, Bristol City Council and the West of England Partnership.
- The Chair described FOSBR as the “sand in the oyster” in the context of FOSBR’s continual pressure on local authorities.
- FOSBR obtained good press coverage for our rally against demolition of the Avonmouth station building; the local councillors and MP are seeking an alternative use for the building.
- Bristol is European Green Capital for 2015 – Tina has proposed 7 “Celebrating Public Transport” events.

[Note: A “FOSBR Round-up 2014” was distributed with the agenda as was a provisional programme for Green Capital events 2015.]

The Chair thanked all those involved with FOSBR efforts including:

- volunteers at Severnside Community Rail Partnership passenger count
- David Wood for covering local rail issues in his column in “The Post”
- Tony Lloyd as newsletter editor and treasurer
- Carol for social media and web content.
- A special thank you went to energetic Tina who was presented with a copy of Charles Loft’s “Last Trains” which sets the context for the Beeching era.

3. Speakers

Graham Ellis - TransWilts Community Rail Partnership (TWCRP)

TransWilts campaign background:

- The TransWilts train service between Swindon and Westbury was reduced from 5 to 2 trains each way per day in 2006.
- Along with other Melksham businesses, Graham was impacted by the service reduction; the proportion of his customers arriving by train shrank from 50% to 5%.
- Graham started the “Save The Train” (which eventually became the TWCRP)

Campaign techniques:

- Use social media to increase reach. The firstgreatwestern.info Coffee Shop message board has hosted 166,000 messages (note: this not a First Great Western website!).
- Think of the motivations of the train operating companies and councils and provide well thought out cases that meet the needs of all parties.
- Let passengers, staff and enthusiasts be your ambassadors.
- Set targets below estimates in order to be able to exceed targets.
- Continual monitoring of passenger numbers – a TWCRP travel pattern survey distributed on train achieved very high return rate of 66%.
- Good promotional materials in tandem with council and First
 - posters of TransWilts destinations with slogan “Wish you were here”
 - timetable printed by local council dropped at every house
 - bus & train shared tickets.

Campaign outcome:

- TransWilts service was quadrupled to 8 each way per day in December 2013.
- Before service improvement, passenger numbers were around 20,000 pa.
- 45,000 was the passenger number objective for 1st year, 108,000 for 2nd year.
- Passenger numbers are way above target for 1st year at around 160,000 (not final figure).
- If trends continue, passenger numbers could reach 500,000 in due course.

Other transport news from Wiltshire:

- There is a campaign to re-open a railway station at Wilton, Salisbury close to the Park & Ride.
- The Royal Artillery Museum is re-locating from Woolwich to Larkhill on Salisbury Plain
- English Heritage are increasing the parking spaces at new Stonehenge Visitor Centre.

Paul Hughes – RMT

- It is important to concentrate not just on improvement but on avoiding deterioration in service.
- There is a risk that the level of customer-facing staff may be reduced on trains and in stations (also in depots) and these "efficiency savings" will impact the disabled, the elderly and infrequent travellers.
- This de-staffing will not result in fare reduction. We must work together to protect existing services.

The RMT union is affiliated to FOSBR and supports the Action for Rail Public Ownership campaign.

Bernard Kennedy – ASLEF

Bernard Kennedy told the tale of two railways.

The nice railway:

- millions are being spent on the advancement of MetroWest Phases 1 and 2
- Great Western Main Line improvements such as electrification and Filton Bank quadrupling
- passenger numbers are up.

The not-so-nice railway

- overcrowding, eg, on the Cardiff Portsmouth line as covered by "The Post"
- inflation-busting fare increases
- lack of rolling stock to cover demand for seats

Bernard urged meeting attendees to write to their MP in support of the Caroline Lucas Railways Bill
ASLEF made a donation of £200 to FOSBR campaign funds.

Break

Councillor Mark Weston – Bristol City Council

Cllr Weston's rail motion obtained approval on Tuesday 20th January at BCC Full Council meeting.

Cllr Weston talked around possible FOSBR campaign targets:

MetroWest Phase 1:

- Bristol rail has lagged behind other major cities in transport but Phase 1 will begin to remedy that.
- Bedminster station should be included in Phase 1 timetabling.
- Phase 1 Portishead line excludes Ashton Gate station but could campaign for inclusion in Phase 2.
- Mayor should commit to Bristol's portion of Phase 1 travel subsidy from 2019.

MetroWest Phase 2:

- "He who targets everything achieves nothing".
- Cllr Weston's advice is to concentrate on a Henbury Loop (ie, not spur) including Henbury and Filton North plus station re-openings at Ashley Hill and Horfield & Lockleaze.
- Every extra requirement increases the budget.
- Ask Mayor to seek developer contributions from CPNN (Cribbs Patchway New Neighbourhood) developers to cover construction costs of at least two stations in North Bristol.

Other aims:

- Planning needs to begin for MetroWest Phase 3 post-2021 for other stations not included in Phases 1 & 2 such as Charlton Halt, St Annes and others.
- In February Council voted to support £1.5m to improve existing stations; Cllr Weston wishes to see this work expedited.
- Cllr Weston advised FOSBR to delay campaigning on an Integrated Transport Authority until after May elections when it will be clear who is in overall charge of neighbouring local authorities.

4. Q&As to Panel

What are key campaign issues for year ahead?

(MW) Devolved funding currently in 2 tranches – 6-years for MW Phase 1, 4 years for MW Phase 2 – would like to see 10 year tranche.

(PH) Nationalisation and public ownership

(BK) Support the railway bill by sending a letter to MP. FOSBR should not be "shy" in campaigning, for instance, electrification on Severn Beach and Portishead lines, Salford station

(GE) Aim for cross-regional improvements and imagine a cross-party coalition post-election.

What is the Panel's view on a transport interchange at Bristol Temple Meads?

(MW) Essential

(PH) BTM should be heart of the transport network – what suburbs can be connected directly to BTM?

Example buses that route via BTM: 70/71 BTM to UWE Frenchay; 506 (Wessex) Spike Island to Southmead via BTM

Example buses that route close to but not via BTM: 75/76 Cribbs to Hengrove via St Mary Redcliffe ; East Bristol buses via Old Market (BK) BTM undergoing significant change with signal box demolition. Current Bristol Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone (BTQEZ) plans exclude Plot 6. Car drivers from South Bristol have poor access to BTM. It is important to consider Plot 6, the Arena, Cattle Market Road and the old Post Office Depot and to get plans right for the wider site.

How can carriage capacity be increased when EU regulations do not allow new diesel trains?

(BK) The current system is not fit for purpose as each TOC does not own its own train sets – they are owned by train leasing companies (Angel, Eversholt, Porterbrook).

(GE) Thinking of commercial view, if a train is at 170% capacity for 6 minutes, eg, Keynsham-Bristol then passengers will endure cramming and there is no extra incentive to hire extra carriages. However, longer journey overload is not acceptable, eg, Bristol-Paddington.

What is the panel's view about Bristol re-signalling not including Avonmouth to Henbury and Severn Beach?

(MW) Need to find solution with the Bristol Port Authority safeguarding adequate access to port if Henbury Loop re-opened to passenger services.

(BK) Sub-optimal if Henbury re-opened to passengers as a spur whilst freight travelled via loop. Current line layout could be reconfigured by returning one freight line to Severn Beach Line use.

5. Treasurer's Report

- Current account balance at end of 2014 was £737 since which date expenditure has brought the balance down to circa £300.
- The cost of printing each newsletter is approximately £225. The Treasurer asked for show of hands on whether newsletter should be continue to be produced in paper form. Many hands were raised in support of hard copy. It was pointed out that paper copies are delivered to all councillors via pigeonhole.
- Rob Dixon (RD) asked if members could be asked for their electronic/paper preference at time of membership renewal.
- Christina Biggs (CB) explained that the new expense line of childcare enabled her attendance at council and WEP meetings.

[Note: The "Treasurer's report for year ending 31st December 2014" was distributed with the agenda.]

6. Minutes from the previous AGM (17th January 2014)

These were accepted without amendment.

Proposed by: Bernard Kennedy

Seconded by: Redvers Skillicorn

[http://fosbr.org.uk/files/20140117_agm_mins.pdf]

7. Elections to the Committee

The following were elected unopposed

Bernard Lane (BL) – Chair

Tony Lloyd (TL) – Treasurer and Membership Secretary

Julie Boston (JB) – Campaigns Organiser, Press Officer

Christina Biggs (CB) - Secretary

Nomination received for Carol Durrant – Press Officer (shared role with existing Press Officers RD&JB)

Proposed by: David Redgewell (DR)

Seconded by: Rob Dixon (RD)

8. Any Other Business

(RD) FOSBR should be promoting discussions about devolution, eg, Green Party event includes "Getting a better transport body for Bristol" (Saturday 31st January 2015 10am-1pm)

(RD) Be wary of post-election cuts (20%?) and try to protect the budgets for local rail such as MetroWest Phase 1.

(RD) FOSBR campaigns can "ask for the moon", for instance, ½ hourly service on Severn Beach Line would have seemed unattainable.

(CB) Bristol Green Capital Sustainable Transport Action Group want to see ongoing transport events so FOSBR Green Capital events (as described in Chair's Report) could become annual.

(DR) Other 2015 transport events include:

- 17th May – vintage bus rally Bristol Harbourside Rally & Running Day

- 9th August - Avon Valley Railway and Bristol Vintage Bus Group are organising a vintage rally at Brislington P&R

- 7th November - RailFuture Severnside are hosting a conference at Mercure, Redcliffe Hill

- improved information displays along the Severn Beach Line and bus integration

(JB) Bristol Rail Activists Network are staging a protest outside BTM on Monday 2nd February 2015 (5-7pm) against "rip off fares" and "cattle truck travel" (repeated every 1st Monday of month)

(DR) BTQEZ consultation ends 18th February 2015 – FOSBR need to make a submission.

(Various) Bristol for Democracy are hosting an event "Could 2015 transpire to bring us real democracy?"

2nd February 2015 7pm, John Wesley's Chapel, Horsefair, Bristol, BS1 3JE

Meeting closed 9:30pm