

# FOSBR: Minutes of Annual General Meeting 26th January 2018 at Alma Church Hall, 29 Alma Road, BS8 2ES

## 1. Notes from the Chair (Rob Dixon)

The Chair welcomed members and speakers to the meeting. There were 38 attendees. 2017 has been another busy year for FOSBR.

- The underground has been making headlines - we await more information with interest and some nervousness!
- Introduction of new IEP trains has been positive after teething troubles.
- SBL problems following the introduction of turbo trains (Carol to cover later)
- FOSBR have organised library walks and Action for Rail days (Julie to cover later)
- The arena saga – there is a possible move to Filton - away from a transport hub to an area where parking is more available; there may be positive side affect, to which we will return later...
- BCC identified and examining options to improve air quality. We see convenient public transport especially rail as key to the substantial modal shift that is required, and have argued for further rail and public transport measures in WECA's Joint Local Transport Plan to ensure this.
- Chris Grayling (Secretary of State for Transport) is now on record as saying he will not recommence electrification to Temple Meads but favours MetroWest instead.
- MetroWest Phase 1 – now recosted at £116m and DfT have advised WECA to put bid in to central funds.
- MetroWest Phase 2 - Brabazon Arena & its potential impact on Henbury Loop; BCC is intending to study Henbury Loop as part of Rail Resilience Plan.
- GW Franchise consultation – deadline is Weds 21th February - suggestions welcome for response.

## 2. Speaker

### Councillor Mhairi Threlfall – Cabinet Member for Transport (Bristol City Council - BCC) Bristol's Air Quality and Transport Plan

- Mhairi talked of her work compiling the Bristol Transport Plan which feeds into the Joint Local Transport Plan refresh.
- West of England Combined Authority (WECA) are funding feasibility studies to alleviate current transport challenges and mitigate future growth.
- MetroWest Phases 1 & 2 face challenges. The report on Henbury station is being released next week and recommends the east site over the west site.
- WECA response to the GWR franchise consultation focuses on better reliability & recommends against splitting the franchise.
- BCC have responded to the Community Rail Partnership consultation.
- The Joint Local Transport Plan goes to consultation in July and will focus on the next 20 years.
- Mhairi took a rail trip with FOSBR members in December which highlighted issues with the Severn Beach Line service – see recent FOSBR newsletter for coverage.
- The Bristol Underground as floated by Mayor Marvin Rees is a study into mass transit options for the city. This will not necessarily be underground but in some corridors there is not enough road space, particularly in the city centre.
- Mhairi has also been working on the Air Quality Action Plan.

### Q&A to Speaker

- Bristol Airport expansion consultation offered 3 options – bigger, bigger or even bigger. This is a challenge.
- There was a comment that Underground running will not suit Bristol – hard rocks to tunnel and tunnel will fill with water. Another questioner responded that the Severn Beach Line runs for ½ mile underground so tunneling in Bristol area is feasible with current technology.
- Commuters need reliability in Bristol in order to give up their cars, for example, Marseille. For instance, unreliable rail service for questioner's daughter has resulted in many problems commuting from St George to Abbey Wood.
- Bath is also looking at a light rail system – feasibility studies will be funded by WECA.
- WECA/CRP needs to assume more responsibility for rail in the region.
- What is Mhairi's opinion regarding the possible location of the Arena in the Brabazon hangar.  
Follow up question: a Filton Arena would likely be car-centric?  
Mhairi commented that Filton would need a resilient transport plan.  
Follow up question 2: much money has already been spent on the Temple Quay Arena site.  
Mhairi commented that the Temple Quay site might have other potential uses.  
Follow up question 3: YTL could fund Henbury Loop and port level crossing dive-under? YTL have rail expertise in-house
- What is Mhairi's opinion regarding the re-opening of the Thornbury line?  
Mhairi works with colleagues who are from Thornbury so she can see the potential.

## 3. Carol Durrant & Julie Boston - FOSBR Passenger Growth & Severn Beach Line

- Carol talked about passenger growth at Bristol region stations, a summary of which can be found here: <http://fosbr.org.uk/growth>

- Severn Beach Line passenger growth was up 8.8% in year to March 2017 by Lennon data but down 4.8% by comparing November 2016 to November 2017. Lennon data to December 2017 was down 0.3% over the year. Thanks to Keith of Severnside CRP for advance release of November count data to FOSBR. Severnside CRP 2018 progress report has since gone up on their website.
- Passenger numbers fell away in latter half of year, particularly on off-peak trains, due to disruption caused by 166 Turbo trains caused by a combination of reasons:
  - Training of drivers – acceleration, gearing, braking
  - training of passengers – where are the bike doors? – causes delays
  - training of guards – longer trains cause blind spots for drivers on curved platforms, doors are closed from rear cabs (until intermediate door opening controls are fitted – 3/8 units done as at end-Jan 2018)
- There have been train problems, traction & doors but now GWR have more 166 units (8) for easier maintenance
- GWR keep 2 spare 150s at Temple Meads (previously 1)
- Speed restrictions on approach to platforms now lifted
- Since January, service patterns take units on and off the line so delays don't accumulate during the day.
- January is almost back to pre-July levels but FOSBR unhappy with duration of disruption, delay in remedies, absence of promised posters and leaflets and poor information at times of disruption around buses and taxis to/from Severn Beach.
- Plus good news! CIS systems on SBL have now converted from 2G to 4G so should be fully functional going forward.
- Julie talked about the “We Own It”, “Bring Back British Rail” and “Don't Bail out Branson” campaigns, where she was part of a team that leafleted Bristol Temple Meads station on 18<sup>th</sup> January
- Julie is organising a campaigns meeting on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2018 at 10.30 - 10.03 train from Temple Meads to Avonmouth station to focus on travel needs of employees in Severnside area businesses such as Range, GKM, Royal Mail, Bakers, Harvey Furniture, Next, Nisbets, Tesco, Amazon
- Julie is organising a walk with Bristol Ramblers on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2018 from Lawrence Hill station 09:45 (arrival of 09.16 from Avonmouth), route St Anne's Wood, Amos Vale, River Avon, Temple Meads (finish time 13.00)
- Bristol Ramblers programme here available on their website.
- Julie wishes to organise a celebration of the Summer Service at Severn Beach with South Glos councillors Possibly at Shirley's Café, Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2018
- Julie also called for attendees to volunteer as station ambassadors.
- FFI on above events: [campaigns@fosbr.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@fosbr.org.uk), 07791 867 512 or 0117 942 8637

#### **4. Rob Dixon & Tina Biggs – FOSBR Update on WECA's Joint Transport Study and Joint Spatial Plan**

- WECA's spatial plan JSP consultation now complete – includes some controversial housing locations such as Buckover Village, Churchill & Langford, Banwell; 6-week statutory consultation of limited scope
- JTS is also complete (Sept 2017) but will “inform” the new Joint Local Transport Plan 2018.
- JTS has huge budget (£8.9bn) which is currently not funded.
- JTS currently includes lots of roads - big & expensive projects – do we need to try and divert funding from this to roads?
- Yet... JTS contains six stations only (Rail 1) and allocates £1bn to Rail 1 plus “Rail 2 – improvements to existing network” – mentions Weston loop. Can we suggest a better way of using the £1bn?
- JTS is now going to “inform” the Joint Local Transport Plan which will be drafted by April 2018 and will have a six week consultation period.
- What extra rail we will actively ask for - new stations, Pilning, overarching rail plan to include infrastructure, service and station improvements?
- Keeping Thornbury & Henbury Loop on the table?
- Tina and Tony did a site visit to the old line of the Thornbury railway with Matthew Riddle (Leader of South Glos council)
- FOSBR have secured the services of 2 UWE MSC students under supervision of Prof David Williams - Centre for Sustainable Planning and Environments - they will likely focus on proving (or otherwise) the business case for Henbury Loop (but this will depend on events between now and then)
- What positive steps members can take in the year ahead – supporting the FOSBR Rail Plan 2018 – we are planning media events – write to MPs and Tim Bowles (MetroMayor), possibly a postcard campaign?
- What we plan to do - keep lobbying, contact MPs, engage with WECA and get Marvin Rees to integrate and maximize use of local rail in his underground proposals.

**BREAK**

## 5. Regional updates

### Donald Davies – North Somerset Council, Pill Ward

- Need to concentrate on WECA as they hold the ultimate responsibility for JSP/JTS (non-WECA North Somerset are included in the West of England Joint Committee meetings)
- 2 important examples of local development where public transport should be key:
- (a) impact of development in Severnside, where a new road junction is going into M49, there will be increased development including the Amazon warehouse with 8000 jobs & residential and commercial development in Easter Compton
- (b) airport expansion, how does potential underground link work with lack of road space on A38 corridor (& 700 feet altitude)? Also nearby will be the garden villages of Churchill and Banwell, will these rely on road-based transport or is there a role for partial use of the Strawberry Line as a transport corridor

### Q&As

- Portishead M5 J19 is to have £2.8m improvements – is this best use of funds?
- Electric cars are not a panacea as although they save carbon emissions there is not enough road space & we still need a mass transit alternative
- A questioner suggested that any local authority plan only lasts 1.5 years on average, ie, there is room for manoeuvre on the JSP/JTS recommendations as they will not be set in stone.

### Olga Taylor – Pilning Station Group

- Network Rail removed Pilning footbridge in November 2016 on the grounds that 46 passengers were not enough to justify new footbridge (ignoring the fact that the service of 2 trains per week was not a reasonable provision)
- Now Pilning Station Group are concentrating on bringing the potential of the station to the attention of WECA and South Gloucestershire Council, eg, nearby development of M49 junction
- Pilning Station Group are collecting data and contributing to a business case
- Jack LoPresti MP has taken Chris Grayling to Pilning (by car)
- On Pilning Station website can be found rules of “Pilning Grand Slam” and “Pilning Scramble” competitions which involve visiting maximum number of TOCs and stations between Saturday arrival and departure at Pilning
- The Pilning Footbridge song can also be found on the website:  
<http://www.pilningstation.uk/>

## 6. Formal business

### (a) Treasurer's report – Tony Lloyd

- Income & expenditure can be found here:  
[https://fosbr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/20180126\\_agm\\_treasrep.pdf](https://fosbr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/20180126_agm_treasrep.pdf)
- FOSBR had 194 private members at end of 2017, this includes 22 new members and 9 organisational members
- Tony proposed membership fee increases from 2019 onwards.

Individual:	Current	£ 8	2019	£10
Concession:	Current	£ 4	2019	£ 5
Under 18s:	Current	£ 1	2019	£ 1
Organisations:	Current	£20	2019	£25

This motion was passed with 35 for, 0 against, 1 abstention.

### (b) Elections

- Elections for: Chair, Secretary, Membership Secretary, Treasurer and Campaigns Organiser  
There were no new nominations for the Committee. The Committee remains unchanged.

## 7. FOSBR Rail Plan 2018

- FOSBR Rail Plan 2018 can be found on website.
- Discussions covered need to:
  - push for the Henbury Loop by having a public meeting
  - press for improvements at Temple Meads in CP6, CP7
  - get more devolution of rail & bus powers
  - seek consultation on the Bristol Underground
  - liaise with other groups and bodies to speak with one voice, eg, example of Devon & Cornwall
- It was also suggested that FOSBR hold 4 public meetings or events per annum to promote these aims.
- The rail plan was approved by the AGM as a focus for 2018 campaigning.

The Chair thanked data analysts, attendees and caterers.

**Meeting closed 9:30pm**