

**Supporters Event Notes**  
**Trinity Church, Leeds**  
**7 June 2018**

**Welcome**

The event was opened by Bus Users UK's newly elected chair – Ben Colson (BC). BC welcomed all those in attendance and thanked them for coming.

BC introduced the Board members – who each took a few minutes to outline their experience and what they bring to the board of Bus Users UK.

Bus Users UK Board members are: Ben Colson (Chair), Jeff Anderson, Harry Barker, Hugh Jaeger and Jennie Martin (new board member). Between the board members, they all bring a wealth of knowledge around bus operators, bus passengers, local groups/branches, ticketing technology, charity organisation and finance.

BC reminded those present that two years ago at the Birmingham AGM, three promises were made:

- To give all members Foundation Supporter status when paid membership ceased
- To change the procedure for recruiting and appointing Board members and
- To begin the process of becoming a registered charity.

We acted on the first promise very swiftly following that AGM and the Board present was recruited and appointed via an intensive independent nominations process, as promised. The third promise took nearly two years to achieve but BC was happy to announce that charitable registration had been confirmed late the day before. Today's meeting was the result of another discussion in which the Board members at that time agreed to try to organise meetings where possible for Supporters, as the AGMs of the past had been much valued.

**Strategic Direction**

Claire Walters, Chief Executive (CW), announced that legally, Bus Users UK would be known as Bus Users UK Charitable Trust Ltd, but would continue to use the names with which everyone was familiar.

Our mission will be to bring people and communities together, through socially inclusive transport. The ways in which we do this will look fundamentally similar in many ways – advocacy, events, upholding standards of service – but this registration will allow us to get more involved with some of the underlying issues affecting communities at risk of losing their connections to the outside world.

As we now move towards the best ways of achieving these aims, we can look forward to exciting times ahead for Bus Users UK.

**PR & Communications**

Vicki Pulman (VP) outlined that there will be some changes to support Bus Users UK new charitable status and mission statement including some updates for the website. We will also be letting

branches have some guidance on new ways to describe the organisation and what we do, to make the new status clear to all.

VP also presented the soon to be launching #ilovemybus campaign which will be delivered through our social media platforms to get people telling us why they love the bus. In order to try to get more young people engaged with the campaign, Transdev Blazefield is donating an Apple Smartwatch for the winner of the best selfie/hashtag. Please tell all your friends as the campaign will run through June to the end late July, across Catch the Bus Week and beyond. .

## Questions

Those in attendance were invited to ask questions or offer comments about our plans which are summarised below:

- Local groups need advice and support  
CW stated that groups and branches can discuss their needs with their local country office about what they need. We are reviewing materials for branches which more clearly reflect our charitable status.
- What will be the impact of the Accessible Information Regulation?  
There will be a lot of work to be done as many buses do not yet have audio/visual signage. In Wales money is being made available to retrofit some vehicles and we anticipate other funds will be made available in Scotland and England. One issue which wasn't foreseen was that all passengers on both decks need to be able to view this information. That will include the person in the wheelchair space as most buses have the wheelchair space facing backwards and underneath the screen so the occupants would find it very difficult to read the screen. We will be discussing this issue with DfT and operators.
- Buses are cleaner than ever before.  
This is true and actually bus manufacturing is way ahead of car manufacturing in producing clean, green vehicles, so they should be seen as the solution to air quality, not part of the problem. There is a lot more work to be done to break down those perceptions and Bus Users UK will continue to have those conversations and work with others to address those misconceptions.
- There needs to be greater connectivity between buses and trains.  
Yes there does. Bus Users UK has been discussing interchanges for some time and is currently surveying some airports to see how they make life easy or not for passengers arriving or departing by bus and coach. On a regular basis, the issue of train/bus connectivity crops up and it seems there are underlying issues preventing the timetabling of buses to connect in some cases and we're trying to work on those to help make interconnectivity much easier to organise.
- Bus and coaches which run journeys for over 60-90mins should consider including a toilet.  
It seems obvious that longer journeys need to enable access to a toilet. Even if it's not feasible to put a toilet on the bus or coach, operators should at least consider whether a toilet stop might be helpful for their passengers.
- Leeds has seen a decline in passenger numbers, congestion is a huge problem, leading to longer journey times and fare increases.  
Bus Users England is based in Leeds and we have been meeting with First bus in particular, as well as representatives from the Combined Authority. We are raising these issues, but sometimes the action which needs to be taken is not always as quick as we would like. It should also be noted that often the unpredictable nature of congestion is at the heart of the problem. Better management of planned roadworks is another key issue being raised by Bus Users throughout the UK.

- Perhaps the increase in fuel tax presents an opportunity? There are free buses in Estonia, and that idea could be copied in the UK if money raised from fuel taxation was used to fund it. We would agree that the government could look at more innovative ways to utilise funding and support bus services as well as seeing what works elsewhere.

**Presentations:**

The second session consisted of four presentations from invited speakers:

- Mental Health: What do passengers want? - Meera Rambissoon, TAS Partnership
- Mental Health: What are Operators doing? - Karen Cooper, Blackpool Transport
- Bus 18 Initiative: The Local Authority role - Dave Pearson, West Yorkshire Combined Authority
- Bus 18 Initiative: What is the Operators role? - Alex Hornby, Trans Dev Plc –

Slides from the presentations are attached.

The meeting closed at 4.30pm and was followed by a tour around Leeds on a brand new vehicle supplied by Transdev Blazefield.