



## Minutes of the yelabus Association Annual General Meeting

Held at The Tythings, Yateley  
13.00, Tuesday 12th December 2023

### Attendees:

Richard Whitbread (Vice-Chair,Trustee), Bill Hill (Secretary,Trustee), Sarah Currie (Operations Manager), Mo Ayres (Trustee), David Shafto (Trustee), Paul Champney (Treasurer,Trustee), Greg Easterbrook ( Trustee), Alan Peever (Driver/ Independent Examiner), Jon Watcham (Driver), Eddie Brown (Driver), Michael Head (Driver)

Beverley Jones (RVS Operations Manager), Josh Leppard (Young Carers) , Lindsay Graham ( Young Carers), Tania Skinner (HVA),

#### 1. Welcome

Richard Whitbread welcomed everyone to the meeting and he explained that currently there is not a Chair and he will be acting as the Chair for the AGM.

#### 2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Steven Boakes (Driver), Margaret Claydon, Steven Munden (Driver), Colin Hennell (Driver).

#### 3. Minutes of the last meeting

These were proposed for adoption by Bill Hill, seconded by David Shafto and were then adopted.

#### 4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

#### 5. Chair's Report

Richard Whitbread presented the chair's report (copy attached). Richard highlighted the hard work undertaken by the volunteer Trustees and drivers. Richard particularly thanked Tracey and Sarah for all their hard work as Operations Managers.

During his report Richard covered the issues of future funding from HCC and reassured the meeting of the financial stability of yelabus.

Richard thanked all our clients for their continued support.

#### 6. Operation Manager's Report

Sarah Currie provided a report which is attached to these Minutes. Sarah thanked all the drivers and indicated that the demand for the buses is increasing, particularly in the Group Hire sector. She has developed several new business initiatives. Sarah thanked the drivers and the Trustees for the support in her role.

## 7. Annual Accounts and Treasurer's Report

Paul Champney presented a summary of the key elements of the annual accounts and his full report is attached. yelabus remains in a strong financial position driven by increasing revenue and significant "one-off" support from Hampshire County Council funds. YTC increased its support to yelabus and Paul thanked the council. Mo Ayres work as fund raiser provided £2.5k of funds.  
Paul highlighted the expected cessation of Community Transport funding by HCC in 2025.

Paul thanked our examiner, Alan Peever and Ellen Lefevre for managing accounts and payroll.

The accounts were proposed for adoption by Paul Champney, seconded by Mo Ayres and the annual accounts for the year ending 30 April 2023 were formally adopted.

The officer's reports were proposed for adoption by Mo Ayres and seconded by Jon Watcham.

## 8. Election of new Committee and Officers

The following were voted unanimously onto the yelabus Trustee committee for the year 2023/24:

Chair – Richard Whitbread  
Vice-Chair - Vacant  
Treasurer – Paul Champney  
Secretary – Bill Hill  
Committee member (Fundraising) – Mo Ayres  
Committee member (IT) – David Shafto  
Committee member – Gill Hennell  
Committee member (YTC) – Greg Easterbrook

Independent Examiner (not on committee) – Alan Peever  
YTC Liason (currently non-trustee role) – Nicky Jones

Richard thanked the committee members for volunteering .  
The YTC liason role is subject to further discussion as to its trustee status.

## 9. AOB

- a. Lindsay Graham thanked yelabus for their continued support of Young Carers and re-stated that the transport provided allowed the Young Carers club to continue.

- b. Bev Jones pointed out that the consultation for the proposed removal of the HCC Community Charity funding commences in January and requested yelabus's support. This was agreed unanimously by the AGM.

The meeting closed at 13:45

## **Yelabus AGM 2023** **Chair's Report**

I usually end my report with my thanks to all involved with the charity. For once I would like to reverse that approach.

Without the volunteers and our one employee yelabus could not function and as we are looking back to the financial year which ended in April 2023 I should note once again our thanks to Tracey for her efforts and in particular her contribution to the smooth transition to Sarah Currie who took up the reins as Operations Manager back in May 22 just after the financial year started.

Alongside her we have seen one or two departures among the driving ranks and we have seen some new volunteers join us. I do not under estimate the difficulties of remaining cheerful and helpful especially when traffic and roadworks which seem ever more prevalent complicate what should be simple journeys.

Within the financial year we also saw a number of changes of Trustees and this is ongoing with further changes more recently.

One area where there has been no change is Mo and her commitment to ensuring that donations and financial support continue. She has been a tower of strength for a very long time.

So can I formally offer the thanks of myself for all of those who involved in bringing a successful year to a conclusion.

In a few minutes Sarah will talk about our operations and Paul will speak about the finances. So I feel I should speak about wider matters.

We commenced the financial year at a point where we were steadily seeing the end of the worst impacts of covid. Inevitably recovery in our operations and passengers was slow and key was Sarah's enthusiasm to get in touch with our hirers and to find new hirers - an ongoing battle she will readily admit - but we are now reaching a more stable level of usage.

Hampshire County Council have always provided significant support financially and whilst their own finances led to a reduction in ongoing support they have provided additional amounts separately in both the last and current financial years which ensure that yelabus has not suffered too significantly from the impact of covid for which we are grateful.

Yateley Town Council has its own financial pressures and we hope that they will feel able to continue the support at the levels offered in past years.

The future for local authority funded community transport looks very uncertain as budgets are reviewed. However yelabus is in a strong financial position and following its strategy of diversifying into a wider client base has a number of sources of income. We believe that the increasing isolation of certain groups of the local community is a growing issue and yelabus can be a strong force for change.

We are very dependent on the existence of various clubs, associations, social groups and the likes of young carers who can see the need for social interactions and we exist to ensure that mobility difficulties do not prevent those interactions happening. We believe we have better resources with additional volunteer drivers and two very suitable vehicles and hope that usage can increase to engender income to replace the financial support that councils may reduce

## Annual Operations Report 2023

A positive start to 2023, and we have continued to grow slowly and steadily back to pre-pandemic levels.

Going into 2023 with only 11 drivers and some taking time out for various reasons and broken buses at times, it has made covering runs a challenge. However, we've made it through the year by using our paid driver a little more than anticipated and calling on RVS to use their buses with usually, very little notice. Thanks Phil and RVS!

For those that are unaware of our activity in the community, our passengers age range is from 7 years to 97 years!

We carry out 8-18 runs per month for Young Carers, this enables these young people, sometimes in very difficult living circumstances, to take a break and get any additional support they may have the need for.

We operate weekly runs for local shopping trips, coffee and lunch clubs and have some adhoc runs for special trips for some groups like guides, rotary club, groups of friends and resident groups throughout the year.

I have successfully introduced yelabus excursions this year and by working with our passengers, have managed trips to various places of interest. With some financial support from the Yateley Lions, this venture continues to grow.

We have increased numbers on regular services we provide and continue to push this forward with new registrations becoming a familiar weekly admin exercise. We started the year with 40 registered passengers, and now have 77.

Group hire has increased significantly, with more in the pipeline for 2024 with new groups forming and positive signs that some are still bouncing back slowly after the pandemic. 2022 finished on 20 groups using us throughout the year, 2023 I anticipate finishing on 24 groups.

The website and Facebook have seen improvement, more activity and we continue to work on this by keeping it active.

It is my intention to continue to grow group hire. We will have 5 new drivers trained and ready to go as we move into 2024 so I can confidently engage with new groups knowing I have a strong bank of drivers.

A special thank you to our amazing drivers who as always go above and beyond in their roles as volunteers

Thank you to the board and trustees for their support, as sometimes we all forget they are also volunteers.

Sarah – Operations Manager 28/11/23

## Treasurer's Report 2022-23 (Financial year ending 30 April 2023)

### Operational income

The last financial year was another strong step in post-Covid recovery, showing a 30% increase in hiring income over 2021-22 (in cash terms) – to £18.8k. We are budgetting for an increase this year of a further 17%, bringing us close (in cash terms) to our last pre-covid year when hiring income was £22.8k. These increases directly reflect the hard work of the Operations Manager and the drivers in promoting, managing and delivering our service.

### Costs

In achieving the increase in hiring activity and income over 2021-22, our costs remained almost unchanged at £47k – highlighting the nature of our cost base as largely fixed-costs (salaries, bus depreciation, insurances).

### Grant Support

To enable us to keep our cost to customers affordable we are reliant on grant support to close the gap between our operating costs and our operational income. During the year we received grants from Yateley Town and Blackwater & Hawley Town Councils, & from Hampshire County Council (HCC) to support our group hire and the HCC Shopper Service, and DfT Local Transport Fund (LTF) money via HCC earmarked for Covid recovery. This last item was an exceptional grant of £8.2k, which made a significant difference to our end of year financial position.

### Donations

Donations from various fundraising events and the Hart lottery provided an income of £2.5k. Half of this was allocated to our “New Bus” fund.

### Bus depreciation & replacement

We are depreciating the VW bus over 10 years (ie to 2025) and the Mercedes over 15 years (to 2034). The depreciation is accounted for in our expenditure, and the depreciated values are included in the balance sheet. Also within the balance sheet we are building a New Bus fund, which will reduce the demand on our General Fund when the time comes to replace a bus.

### Overall year end financial position

Without the exceptional LTF grant mentioned above the 2022-23 outturn would have shown a deficit on normal operations of £1k – an improvement over the 2021-22 deficit of £5k (on an equivalent basis). This improvement reflects the increase in activity. Our actual surplus for the year including the LTF grant (together with a few minor adjustments) was £8,421. This has returned our reserves to a precovid level.

### Looking forward

We face significant financial challenges in the medium term. High inflation affects all of our costs, whilst the related cost of living pressures constrain our ability to increase costs to customers. Continuing to grow our customer base – along with increasing our volunteer driver resource - is key to our financial future. Also, on the horizon we have a bus replacement to undertake, and we are aware of HCC plans to cease all Community Transport funding.

### Credits

Thank you to all who have helped ease me into the treasurer role this year, to Sarah for providing all of the numbers and data that I ask for, to Ellen Lefevre for running our accounts, and to Alan Peever for acting as independent scrutineer of our accounts.

Paul Champney