



Minutes of the yelabus Association Annual General Meeting

Held at The Gallery Room, YTC, Yateley
12.00, Tuesday 9th December 2025

Attendees:

Richard Whitbread (Chair,Trustee), Bill Hill (Secretary,Trustee), Lorraine Davies (Operations Manager), Mo Ayres (Fund Raising, Trustee), Paul Champney (Treasurer,Trustee), Greg Easterbrook (YTC Trustee), Jim Callaghan (IT Trustee,Driver) Michael Head (Driver), , Ken Gunner (Driver), Alistair Wren (Driver), Gus Staricoff (Driver), James Rowe (Driver), Steve Harrison (Driver)

Josh Leppard (Young Carers) , Lindsay Graham (Young Carers), Gill Gibson (MHA), Anne Wright (Fiske Court), Anne Wright (Age Gap), Pauline Jackson (Age Gap), Cllr Susan Kendrick (Eversley Parish Council), Cllr Alex Worrall (Blackwater and Hawley Town Council), Ralista Malcheva (Committee Member), Patricia Lambert (Eversley Bramshill Trust).

1. Welcome

Richard Whitbread welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Steve Munden (Driver), Gill Hennell (Trustee), Bev Jones (RVS)

3. Minutes of the last meeting

These were proposed for adoption by Paul Champney, seconded by Alistair Wren and were then adopted.

4. Matters Arising

- a. HCC has confirmed that plans to stop funding community transport have been cancelled. There will now be a reduced budget for community transport. Yelabus has successfully tendered for a 4 year minimum term contract. This contract has a value of £7k. Richard Whitbread thanked the members of the committee that were involved in the contract bid.
- b. There was no volunteer to fulfill the role of Independent Examiner and therefore the committee appointed Mulberry&Co to examine the 24/25 accounts. Due to the hard work completed by Paul Champney, Treasurer, the costs were reduced to £350. Mulberry &Co have been retained for the 25/26 accounts.

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. The successful bid for the HCC Yateley Friday shopper contract was presented in detail by Richard. The Chairman thanked Lorraine, The Operations Manager for all her hard work and new business success. Additionally, Richard thanked Gill Hennell for her many years of service as a Trustee. There are now three vacancies on the committee. Richard indicated that this will be his last year as Chair. Finally, the Chair thanked Yateley Town Council for their continued support both financially and through access to the council facilities.

6. Operation Manager's Report

Lorraine Davies provided a report which is attached to these Minutes. Lorraine thanked all the drivers and mentioned the recruitment of a number of new drivers. Yelabus now has 21 drivers on its books. The demand for the buses is increasing, particularly in the Group Hire sector. The new yelabus excursions are performing well. The Operations Manager the additional costs and issues associated with the 10 year old VW bus. To maintain our service these are repaired urgently. Lorraine made special mention of Young Carers and highlighted that yelabus are providing between 10 and 12 return runs each month, supporting over 120 young carers.

7. Josh Leppard gave a very interesting presentation on the work on the Hart and Rushmoor Young Carers including the invaluable support provided by yelabus.

8. 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. In summary:

- a. Turnover increased by 20% year on year
- b. Costs maintained at £57k annually
- c. Grants received from local councils in addition to the county council. There was a one off post-covid grant from the DfT local transport fund.
- d. Donations of £7.2k an increase of 100% on the previous year.
- e. Year end surplus of £17.5k
- f. Thank you to Ellen Lefevre for the continued accounting support

The accounts were proposed for adoption by Paul Champney, seconded by Mo Ayres and the annual accounts for the year ending 30 April 2025 were formally adopted.

The officer's reports were proposed for adoption by Mo Ayres and seconded by Bill Hill.

9. Election of new Committee and Officers

The following were voted unanimously onto the yelabus Trustee committee for the year 2025/26:

Chair – Richard Whitbread
Vice-Chair - Vacant
Treasurer – Paul Champney
Secretary – Bill Hill
Committee member (Fundraising) – Mo Ayres
Committee member (IT) – Jim Callaghan
Committee member (Community Clubs Liason) - Vacant
Committee member (YTC) – Greg Easterbrook
Committee member (Marketing and Publicity) - Vacant

Independent Examiner - Mulberry & Co

Richard thanked the committee members for volunteering .

10. AOB

There was no AOB

The meeting closed at 13.00

Yelabus Chair Report 2025

In a few minutes our Treasurer will review the financial position for the year which ended on 30 April 2025 but as Chair I would like to talk in more practical terms of events over the last 12 months since the last AGM so we are talking about two slightly different periods.

Financially the largest single change is that during the year HCC retendered the contracts which we formerly undertook as a sub-contractor to Rushmoor Voluntary Services. From 1 September we became direct HCC Contractors and the new arrangements have for the first time given us a four-year certainty of their support which is a welcome change from previous two-year periods. One contract was not retendered to operate the Friday Shopper service so our income has fallen but we continue to run the service and the fares almost cover the operational costs. It is anticipated that HCC will cease to exist before the four years expire so there will be a new contracting party eventually.

Inevitably one or two drivers leave us so we have bid farewell to David Shafto but have welcomed a number of others and without all of their contribution nothing would run at all and I thank them all for the many hours they each contribute during the year.

The Operations Manager is the single individual who keeps the charity moving, and Lorraine has settled in very well. I am grateful for the way she manages her links with the hirers, the driving team, the vehicles, the vehicle maintainers, other suppliers and the committee to ensure that all runs smoothly, Paul will talk about the revenue increase she has accomplished.

The Committee running the charity is small but essential and I must thank them all for their efforts over the last 12 months undertaking the duties I mentioned earlier. Jim Callaghan has joined us during the year to look after IT and Gill Hennell has indicated she does not wish to be re-elected. She was originally nominated when she was a local councillor and chose to continue when she stood down from the Council. We are very grateful as she has certainly served for more than 10 years. This leaves us with a number of Committee vacancies – which will increase by one this time next year as I do not plan to stand as Chair next time around. We could do with individuals who wish to look after yelabus, work on our marketing, and also take on the liaison with local councils which would normally be undertaken by a Vice-Chair. We now have three of the driving team on the committee which means we have invaluable knowledge of vehicle problems and passengers which provides a much better insight for the team.

Looking ahead to the next 12 months I believe we have good continuing relations with both Hampshire County Council and Yateley Town Council. We are grateful also to the ongoing assistance from Rushmoor Voluntary Services – they help us in numerous little ways to keep things moving. In terms of the services we provide we want to increase usage – between 40% and 50% of the time the vehicles are not moving and if we could get that down to 30% the increase in income would be very helpful. We have improved contacts with Eversley in the last 12 months and I hope we can find ways of serving the residents there more often

than in the past. Blackwater and Hawley should need our services but we are finding development difficult – but all surrounding areas provide some opportunities to grow.

One of our largest users – Young Carers – will speak in a moment about what they do and the service we provide – the link with them is now about seven years long and we feel it has benefitted both organisations.

Prepared by Bill Hill

Our older vehicle – the VW has been more costly and replacement has been discussed. We are hopeful that the maintenance bills will not continue to grow – but we are aware that a replacement will soon be a very good idea. On this aspect we have had a bumper year in terms of “one-off” donations which the Committee agreed should largely go into the fund to pay for the next new bus – so we are a way down the road to the £60k we might need. I cannot pre-judge our hiring charge review but we suffer inflationary effects like many others and this will have to be recovered in some form. This time last year I opined that more hires would enable us to limit our increase in charges and I am pleased that was achieved. I believe that if vehicle usage is able to increase further with new hirers then the same would apply in the year ahead.

Paul also thanks Ellen Lefevre for much work running our accounts and I will add my voice to the wonderful service and assistance she provides, hidden from most but of huge value. Most significantly both in terms of hard cash and continuing support I must state that without Yateley Town Council we could not continue. The Town Council go above and beyond in helping us operate, providing facilities and assistance without question. Thank you to the Councillors and to the Council Office team for all of this.

Annual Operations Report 2025

Having completed my first full year with yelabus I can report that In 2024 we had a record rise in hiring income of 20%, with similar increases in passenger numbers, and mileage travelled. So far in 2025 (half way through our financial year) we are maintaining a similar level of activity and income - passenger numbers are very slightly down on last year's record - but our mileage is up. We are hopeful that by the end of the year we will again beat last year's figures.

Our volunteer driver numbers have increased after another successful Facebook campaign, we now have another 2 drivers, making a total of 21 drivers. This does make covering our runs easier, as well as enabling us to offer more availability for our group hires and less pressure on the volunteer drivers.

Unfortunately the buses made more trips to the garage than we would have liked during the year, but it is our policy to keep them in excellent condition and to resolve all faults as quickly as possible, for the benefit of our passengers. Our VW has had a new automatic step and an overhauled tail lift.

The users of our Yelabus service are largely made up of local groups, care homes and similar organisations. One of these organisations are Young Carers, who we provide runs approx 10 times a month during term times. 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. Thank you to our drivers who give up their evenings to cover these

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

The yelabus excursions remain popular with our passengers who have managed trips to various places of interest. With some financial support from the Yateley Lions and this venture continues to grow.

The number of new registrations to use our weekly shopping services has increased, and this is something we are looking to increase further with visits to local retirement homes and advertising in local parish magazines and on social media.

Here are a few interesting figures from January to the end of November:

Mileage – VW - 6,463 & MERC – 7,199 Total of 13,662

Passenger numbers – 7,778

Total litres of fuel – 2,886.86

Longest single trip – 137 miles to Burley, New Forest

A special thank you to our amazing drivers who as always go above and beyond in their roles as volunteers, and also to Maureen Ayres for her incredibly hard work as our lead fundraiser, her passion and energy is incredible.

Prepared by Bill Hill

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

Lorraine– Operations Manager 09/12/25

Yelabus

Treasurer's Report 2024-25 (Financial year ending 30 April 2025)

Operational income

For the fifth successive year we have increased our hiring income – this time by 20% over the previous year. This reflects the rebuilding of activity post-covid, (an increase of 10% in passengers carried over 2023-24) as well as inflation. As always, maintaining this income directly reflects the hard work of the Operations Manager and the drivers in promoting, managing and delivering our service.

Costs

After a steep rise in 2023-24 our operating costs (on a like-for-like basis, excluding exceptional grants) remained unchanged at £57k. The historically high bus maintenance costs that we had in 23-24 have unfortunately increased further into 24-25. Our expenditure on advertising and publicity material was significantly higher than previous years, and this was offset by lower depreciation and salary costs (there were exceptional salary costs in 23-24 due to the overlap and changeover of Operations Managers).

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 Council, Blackwater & Hawley Town Council, & also from Hampshire County Council (HCC) to support our group hire and the Connect Shopper Service. We also received a total of £7.4k of DfT Local Transport Fund (LTF) money via HCC for a final tranche of Covid recovery, to cover major maintenance costs on our VW minibus, and a contribution to marketing costs.

Donations

Last year was a record for donations, totalling £7.2k – more than twice as much as 23-24. We are extremely grateful to all individuals and organisations that have helped us – and not least to the very hard work by Maureen Ayres, our lead fundraiser. Two thirds of these donations were allocated to our “New Bus” fund. A list of the organisations and individuals that have supported us over the year is at the end of this report.

Bus depreciation & replacement

At the end of the year our VW bus reached its' 10th birthday and has depreciated to zero. We are depreciating the Mercedes bus over 15 years (to 2034). The depreciation is accounted for in our expenditure, and the depreciated value of the Mercedes is included in the balance sheet. Also within the balance sheet we continue to build the New Bus fund. We expect to start the procurement of a replacement bus for the VW next year.

Overall year end financial position

Due to an alignment of favourable circumstances (increased fare income, YTC grant, final full year of Connect Shopper support, exceptional level of donations, bank interest remaining high on our reserve deposits, covid recovery funding) we have ended the year with a significant surplus on all activities of £17.5k. If we strip out the non-operational aspects of income (donations and interest on our deposits) we ended with an operating surplus of £4.6k. These figures contrast with the an overall deficit in 2023- 24 of £0.3k and an operating deficit of £5.2k.

Our balance sheet showed an improvement over the year, compared to a small decrease in 2023-24. This stands us in good stead to manage the purchase of a new bus, to cover the high depreciation charges of the new bus, and to continue to provide our services in the face of any future financial challenges.

Prepared by Bill Hill

Looking forward

We end the year on a sound financial footing. In the current year we have lost Connect Shopper support from HCC, and we do not anticipate continuation of the discretionary LTF funding that we have received in recent years. At the beginning of the year we made plans to improve our funding sustainability – by maximising interest on our deposits, increasing hire charges, and increasing Friday

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Treasurer's Report 2024-25 (Financial year ending 30 April 2025)

shopper frequency. These measures have proved successful – but as always, with a large fixed-cost base the key to our sustainability is to retain our current customers by providing them with a valued service, and finding new customers who will benefit from our door-to-door service.

Credits

Thank you to Lorraine for managing and tracking income and expenditure, and for providing all of the numbers and data that I have asked for over the year, to Ellen Lefevre for running our accounts, and to Mulberry Accountants for carrying out the Independent Examination of our accounts.

Paul Champney – Treasurer – 19 November 2025

Grants, donations and fundraising 2024-25

The Trustees give grateful thanks to all organisations and individuals who have made grants and donations, and to all who have assisted with or made contributions to fundraising activities.

Grants received from:

Yateley Town Council
Hampshire County Council
Blackwater and Hawley Town Council
Neighbourhood Watch
Yateley Bowling Club
Hart Lottery

Donations received from:

Friends and family of the late Muriel Brent
Friends of the late Lil Gardener
The estate of Irene Seymour
Hawley Almshouses Trust
St Peter's (Yateley) Community Fund
Friends and family of Mrs Maureen Ayers
Ridge & Partners

Fundraising: events organised by Mo Ayres and her family

Prepared by Bill Hill

Includes May Fayre, bingo nights, coffee mornings