

## Chair's Report for 2020

This report covers the calendar year 2020, corresponding to the period covered by the finance report and accounts. During 2020 the Transport Economists' Group (TEG) continued to provide a valuable forum for sharing, discussing and debating the latest research and ideas in transport economics by successfully moving online and hosting virtual meetings in the fourth quarter of the year. Our virtual meetings attracted at times over 45 participants from across the UK and globally. While we miss the interaction that live meetings offered, we're proud that we were able to offer a stimulating programme during autumn and winter 2020 that engaged so many participants.

### Monthly Meetings

Our monthly meetings were hosted virtually from September 2020. After February 2020 when the first lockdown was imposed in the UK we suspended live meetings and were able to transition to an online platform for the fourth quarter of 2020. No meetings were held between March and June. We are very grateful to Arup for providing the platform for the meetings and for their technical support with meeting arrangements.

During 2020 the TEG held five monthly meetings where experts spoke on a range of topics:

- January – **Andrew Bustin**, Atkins SNC Lavalin. *East meets West: shaping and making the case for the new East West Railways.*
- February – **Anna Dabrowska**, Atkins SNC Lavalin. *All change? Economic assessment of technology impact in the aviation industry*
- September – **Stephen Glaister**, Imperial College London and LSE. *The Oakervee Review of HS2*
- October – **Rachel Brisley**, Steer, **Professor John Dora** ISO and Climate Sense, Steer. *UK Climate Change Risk Assessment – Where do we go from here?*
- November – **Tom Cohen**, University of Westminster's Active Travel Academy. *Scenario-based planning in transport: potential, limitations and outstanding questions.*

We were fortunate to have an excellent group of speakers in 2020 which attracted strong attendance. Our live meeting attendance ranged from 15-30 participants, while the virtual meetings online attracted between 35-47 participants, averaging 33 overall over 2020. We are very grateful to the speakers for coming to present to us.

### Members

It was great to see another year of energy and enthusiasm for transport economics from TEG's members. The engagement of members in the meetings, and in particular the discussion session after presentations, makes TEG an enjoyable and stimulating group to be a part of. We look forward to pubs reopening so that we can share our enthusiasm over a pint in future.

### Publications

The Transport Economist, journal of the TEG, continued to be edited by Committee member Peter Gordon. Two editions of the journal were published for 2020 (Volume 47 – Number 2 was not published as we did not hold meetings between March and June 2020). Our 2020 editions contained reports of the monthly TEG meetings as well as reviews of books of interest to transport economists.

As has been our convention for some time, copies of the slides used by speakers during their presentations were circulated by email to members after each meeting. We are

grateful to our speakers for allowing us to share their material with members in this way.

## **Membership and Finance**

Our Treasurer and Membership Secretary has written a separate finance report, which shows that the Group is in a strong financial position and that membership numbers are being maintained.

## **Publicity**

The Committee continues to make efforts to publicise the TEG and our events, using the following means:

- Our website ([www.transecongroup.org](http://www.transecongroup.org)), which is updated each month with details of forthcoming talks.
- Monthly emails to members advising of the next talk and the forward programme. This is an effective marketing tool, as many members forward this email to other people in their networks, resulting in a wide distribution beyond the membership.
- A flyer for each talk sent out with the monthly email, intended to be suitable for posting on office notice boards.

We have been inactive on our Twitter and LinkedIn accounts this year, as we have not had a member willing to take on this responsibility.

## **Committee**

As in 2019, all members of the Committee made significant contributions to the running of the TEG during 2020. Their dedication and continued commitment to the TEG and the transport economics profession over many years makes it an enjoyable committee to be a member of. Newer committee members Adriana Moreno Pelayo and Iris Ning were especially instrumental in hosting our virtual meetings and hosting them with aplomb.

Many thanks must go to Gregory Marchant (Treasurer and Membership Secretary), Dick Dunmore (Secretary and Webmaster) and Peter Gordon (Editor of *The Transport Economist*) for the important responsibilities they have each taken on to manage the ongoing activities of the TEG. Tom Worsley, a committee member without portfolio, also continues to make a particularly valuable contribution to the committee suggesting speakers and providing other insights and guidance.

We are very grateful to Melanie Buchan for her excellent work as our Group Administrator. Much of the work that keeps TEG running happens 'behind the scenes' which our members do not always have sight of. The contribution of Melanie, and of committee members, makes TEG possible.

## **In conclusion ...**

In conclusion, while 2020 was a challenging year globally, we are proud that we were able to continue to offer stimulating and engaging debate on current and relevant transport economic issues and indeed enlarge our audience at meetings. We will continue to host virtual meetings during 2021 and consider carefully the platform for hosting future meetings. We are grateful to our community of transport economists: thought-provoking speakers and enthusiastic attendees and members and I hope all keep safe and well in 2021.

*Tali Diamant, Chair, 17 February 2021*