

SATA

Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance

Scottish Charity No SC027600

Transport Access Matters

ANNUAL REPORT

2008-9

Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance (SATA)

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1. Introduction

SATA is an unincorporated association registered as a charity in Scotland founded in 1995. It brings together individuals and groups whose aim is to work for the provision of accessible transport as a basic right for everyone. This report outlines its concerns and activities over the year to the Annual General Meeting on 17th September 2009.

2. Membership

The membership of SATA is made up of individuals and representatives from a mix of voluntary, statutory and commercial organisations, including many groups of disabled people, local authorities, national agencies and transport operators. The total number of subscribing members at 31st March 2009 was 66, made up of 44 corporate bodies and 22 individuals. We record with sadness the death of Sylvia Carswell. Nine members have joined/rejoined since. Members are listed in the Appendix.

Membership is based on the payment of an annual subscription unless waived by the Management Committee, the rates to be agreed at an Annual General Meeting or Special Meeting. Honorary Membership was awarded during the year to Alan Rees for his services as Secretary and to Tom Porter for his work to up-date the SATA website.

All members are invited to 'full' and 'open' meetings and receive copies of agenda, minutes and other papers. Between meetings they are kept abreast with transport developments and issues.

3. Full and Open Meetings of Members

SATA's constitution says that meetings of SATA members should be held not less than three times a year. It has been decided that some of these will be advertised as being open to non-members. In line with this, an open meeting took place at the Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living on 13th November, a members' meeting at the Forth Valley Sensory Centre at Camelon, Falkirk on 12th February (sponsored by RNIB), a further open meeting in the Queen's Hotel, Dundee on 14th May, and a members' meeting will be held at the RNIB in Edinburgh following the AGM on 17th September.

Agenda items have included information exchange and feedback from other meetings and

conferences. The following gave presentations:

November: Phil Preston of Calmac on 'Ferry Access' and John Finlay of Transport Scotland on the 'Review of the Scotland-wide Free Bus Scheme'.

February: Bob Kemp of First ScotRail on the 'New Class 380 Trains'.

May: Eric Guthrie of TACTRAN on 'Regional Accessibility Issues and Priorities'

The presentation at the **September** meeting will be given by Anne MacLean OBE, Convener of the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS).

4. Management Committee and Office Bearers

SATA is governed by an annually elected Management Committee of members acting as trustees and it met on the dates given above with an extra meeting on 24th June 2009.

At the AGM in September 2008, Stanley Flett, Maggie Killin, Alan Rees, and John Ballantine were elected respectively as Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.

The following were re-elected as Committee Members: Paul Cross, Bob Edwards, Douglas Gilroy, Pat McGuigan, Jackie Maceira, Jim Ritchie, Terry Robinson and Muriel Williams.

5. Business

The following matters were considered during the year:

5.1 Scottish Government and Parliament

(a) MACS

In 2008 SATA members successfully campaigned to prevent the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) from being dissolved as part of the Scottish Government's 'bonfire of quangos'. It had been proposed to the Scottish Parliament that the Public Transport Users' Committee (PTUC), which had been set up in 2007, should take over its functions with a slightly enlarged membership. The campaign was supported by Inclusion Scotland and the Scottish Disability Equality Forum.

The Parliament's Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Committee rejected the Government's proposal and it was annulled. MACS has now been revived with new members, although only the Convener and 6 members were appointed to start in January 2009 out of a possible 15. A number of SATA members were unsuccessful with their applications but one, John Ballantine, was appointed and subsequently he was also appointed to be the Scottish Government's representative on the Disabled Person's Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC). A further recruitment round has now been undertaken.

(b) Equal Opportunities Committee

The Parliament's Equal Opportunities Committee continued to monitor the impact of its report 'Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities' produced in March 2007 which made 27 recommendations on transport. As we reported last year among the recommendations was a call for a "coherent and comprehensive strategy for achieving equality of mobility for disabled people" which should be "an integral part of national, regional and local transport strategies" and backed up by "clear target setting and

monitoring". Disabled people should be actively involved in the strategic development, design, implementation and monitoring of transport services.

(c) Blue Badge parking and charges

Following a period of consultation and consideration in the Scottish Parliament, Jackie Bailie MSP's Private Member's Bill was passed on 26th February 2009 as the Disabled Persons' Parking Places (Scotland) Act and came into force on 1st April. It places a duty on local authorities to promote proper use of parking places for disabled person's vehicles. SATA members supported the bill and will now keep close watch on how it is implemented and enforced.

Members also became aware that some local authorities were charging up to the maximum of £20 allowable under the regulations for the issue of a Blue Badge, whereas others were issuing them free. This has led to inequalities across the country. Representations were made to the Scottish Parliament through Jackie Baillie and to the Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) but so far without a satisfactory resolution.

(d) Regulation of bus services

Between November 2008 and February 2009, Charlie Gordon MSP consulted widely on his proposal to introduce a private member's bill on the regulation of bus services. This included measures to improve services for disabled people, notably the extension of the national concessionary travel scheme to include more demand-responsive and community transport services and also to extend eligibility to people on the lower rate of the Disability Living Allowance - which many had lost when the national scheme was introduced. By June he had gathered enough support to take his bill forward.

5.2 Transport Scotland

(a) Consultation

SATA has continued to be represented at meetings of Transport Scotland's Scottish Rail Accessibility Forum and the Roads for All working group. Representatives of Transport Scotland have attended SATA meetings as observers.

(b) Concessionary Travel

The Scotland-wide concessionary fare travel scheme for older and disabled people on scheduled bus services started in April 2006 and is administered by Transport Scotland. The number of entitlement card holders stands at over 1.1 million and the number of journeys taken has risen to some 223 million. A Scottish Government review of the scheme was begun in 2008 and SATA expressed concerns that many people who are considered disabled under the DDA did not meet the scheme's eligibility criteria. Furthermore, thousands who are eligible cannot benefit from the scheme because, for a variety of reasons, so many buses and coaches are still inaccessible or services are just not available for them to use, especially in rural areas. Along with other organisations, we strongly advocated the inclusion of more demand-responsive and community transport services in the scheme. However when the findings from the review were published in May 2009, disappointingly the only change was to extend eligibility to injured forces

veterans, and even this is delayed until the spring of 2011.

5.4 Transport services and strategies

As a result of a 'concordat' between the SNP Government and COSLA, responsibility for the funding of services, including public transport, passed from central to local government within a set of broad national outcomes, indicators and targets and a 'Single Outcome Agreement' (SOA) for each authority to take account of local priorities. This has enhanced the role of local government but with the level of central government funding described as 'tough' and the freezing of council tax rates, together with the absence of 'ring-fencing', many local and national services have come under threat or been cut back, including voluntary and community services for disabled people. Local and regional transport strategies had to be re-written. The promotion of equality and social inclusion remains amongst the stated commitments as does the duty to consult. However commitments and consultations are pointless unless they result in service improvements.

6. Consultations and publications

SATA responded to a number of consultation documents issued by the Department for Transport and the Scottish Government. We also receive official reports on these consultations and other matters. Members are informed of these and their views sought. Responses are posted on the SATA website. Further references to these documents are made under section 7 below.

7. Transport Services

Members of the Management Committee have six sub-groups under the following headings: to consider issues concerned with transport services and where necessary consult with members.

(1) Air services

The Department of Transport's publication *Access to Air Travel for Disabled Person's and Persons with Reduced Mobility - Code of Practice* was noted and circulated to SATA members. Sub-group members were involved in consultations regarding the rail link to Glasgow airport and the tram link to Edinburgh airport. They also looked into ways of improving representation on passenger forums.

(2) Bus and coach services

Claims from a group of mums with prams for equality of access to spaces reserved for wheelchair users on buses became a media-supported campaign directed at Lothian Buses in Edinburgh and it widened in November 2008 when a petition (PE1206) was sent to the Scottish Parliament. In a briefing paper, SATA defended the need to give wheelchair users priority, while its local members sought for greater understanding and compromise solutions. The outcome was that Lothian Buses agreed to design extra space for prams and buggies on future vehicles. This may also be of some help to users of mobility scooters who currently also have restricted access, the varying size and manoeuvrability of models on the market making it difficult for operators to accommodate everyone.

SATA members attended the second 'Try a Bus Day' at Ocean Terminal, Edinburgh on

9th June 2009 organised by Ecas.

(3) Rail services

Representatives of First ScotRail, Network Rail, National Express East Coast and Transport Scotland have attended SATA meetings and reported on developments. Members were regularly up-dated on projects funded under the 'Access for All' programme and other small scheme and minor work improvements at stations such as lifts and step-free access, REACT signage, tactile maps, wide aisle gates, customer information systems and help points.

The following reports were received from the Department for Transport and information about them circulated to members:

- *Consultation Report on Revision of Train and Station Design for Disabled Passenger: A Code of Practice.*
- *Consultation Report on Revision of How to Write Your Disabled Persons' Protection Policy: A Guide for Train and Station Operators*

These reports were the outcome of consultations last year to which had SATA responded.

Comments were submitted to First ScotRail during the annual revision of its Disabled Persons' Protection Policy (DPPP).

At the invitation of the developers, members inspected the Edinburgh tram mock-up in Princes Street and suggested improvements. Likewise on 7th May they were invited by ScotRail to view the mock-up of the new 'Desiro' Class 380 train at Glasgow Central station. On 29th May 2009 Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) held a presentation on proposals to improved access to the Glasgow Subway. Both these developments were relevant to the Department for Transport's consultation on *Improving Access to Light Rail* to which responses were invited by 2nd July.

(4) Sea/Ferry services

Sub-group members continued to attend the Accessibility Workshop as part of the Scottish Ferries Review being convened by CalMac. Its report is expected shortly.

(5) Car, door-to-door travel and community transport

Jackie Bailie's Private Member's bill in the Scottish Parliament to tighten up the enforcement of parking regulations has already been noted. It was passed on 26th February 2009 as the Disabled Persons' Parking Places (Scotland) Act.

In February 2009 the Department for Transport issued a *Consultation on Improving Access to Taxis* and held a seminar in Edinburgh on 31st March. A number of SATA members attended and a response to the consultation was submitted by the 24th April deadline. SATA supported the option for the regulation of vehicles under the DDA but also pressed for additional measures to make taxis more available and affordable. The text of our response was posted on our website.

(6) Transport policy, information and the environment

The annual report to Scottish Ministers from MACS in November 2008 was entitled *Action Required to Improve the Mobility of Disabled and Older People* and it made a number of important recommendations on the way forward. These included a gap analysis of needs and provisions, guidance on the design and development of accessible demand-responsive transport, and assessing eligibility for travel concessions. SATA accepted the need to monitor the impact of this report and the extent to which it's advice was followed.

Like other public bodies, Regional Transport Partnerships have a duty under the DDA to consult disabled people. HITRANS, SESTRAN, SPT and TACTRAN have all kept SATA informed of their plans and members have been involved in these consultations.

Good staff training is crucial to improving access to services. On 1st July 2008 the Disabled Person's Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) published a *Research Report on the Development of a Disability and Equality Awareness Training Framework for Transport Staff*. Copies were later received and details circulated to SATA members.

On 27th January 2009 the Scottish Government published the draft of *Designing Streets*, a new planning advice guide, and invited comments. SATA's responded on 18th March and the text is on our website. SATA supported a campaign by Guide Dogs at the Scottish Parliament for a moratorium on the development of shared (kerb-less) surfaces on streets until their impact on the mobility of blind and partially sighted people was fully assessed.

8. Contacts with other organisations

As well as its members, SATA maintains contact with the following:

Access Exchange International
Access for All Forum
Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC)
Department for Transport
Derek Haldane Consultancy
Describe Online
Dial-a-Journey, Stirling
Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC)
Edinburgh Trams
Equality & Human Rights Commission
HITRANS
JMP Ltd
Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS)
Mobility Choice (re Mobility Roadshow Scotland)
NESTRAN
Network Rail
Passenger Focus
Reid-Howie Associates
Scottish Executive/Government (various departments)
Scottish Parliament (committees and cross party groups)

Scottish Transport Studies Group
SESTRAN
TACTRAN
Transport Research Institute, Napier University
Transport Scotland
UK Disability Forum for Europe
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9. Finance

SATA's financial year runs from April to March.

Receipts

Income is almost wholly derived from annual subscriptions from individual and corporate members. This decreased from £1,205 in 2007-8 to £1,060 in 2008-9. Current members are listed in the Appendix.

Other sources of income are bank interest, and individual and corporate donations.

Payments

SATA has no paid staff or office and so currently funds are only required to meet the cost of meetings and the expenses of office bearers and other members working in a voluntary capacity. These rose over the year from £657 in 2007-8 to £1,266 in 2008-9.

Balance

Over the financial year receipts exceeded payments by £49 leaving a balance of £1,192 This compared to a balance of £1,143 at the start of the year.

A separate Financial Statement for the 12 months to 31st March 2009 is available.

The SATA Business Plan sets out its key objectives and the resources needed to meet them. To help implement the Plan an application was made to the Lloyds TSB Foundation for a grant under its Capacity Building Programme but was unsuccessful. Work on the Plan is ongoing and in the meantime measures are being taken to increase membership and income further.

10. Appreciation

The Office Bearers and Management Committee members record their appreciation to all who support SATA and contribute to its activities. They look forward to this continuing and developing in the coming year to strengthen the organisation and achieve its aims.

At the September AGM, the contribution of Alan Rees as both Secretary and Treasurer was acknowledged by the award of Honorary Life Membership. The Management Committee held celebratory lunch for Mr and Mrs Rees on 19th February 2009.

For copies of this report, to ask for it in different formats, or to make comments on it, please contact:

**The Secretary
SATA
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Edinburgh EH4 2BZ**

**Tel: 0131 315 3006
E-mail: at.rees@sol.co.uk**

August 2009

Appendix

(a) Subscribing members at 31st March 2009

Corporate Members	Aberdeen City Council Aberdeenshire Action on Disability Angus Transport Forum Arthritis Care in Scotland Badenoch & Strathspey Transport Company Calmac Ferries Limited Community Transport Association UK Cumnock & Doon Valley Access Panel Deafblind Scotland Deeside Access Panel Disability West Lothian Dumfries & Galloway Coalition of Disabled People Dundee Accessible Transport Action Group (DATAG) ECAS ENABLE Scotland Fair Deal Fife Council Transportation Service First ScotRail Ltd Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living Halcrow Group Handicabs (Lothian) Help the Aged Scotland Highland Council, TEC Services, Inverness Inclusion Scotland Inverclyde Council on Disability Leonard Cheshire Disability Lochaber Action on Disability Lochaber Disability Access Panel London Taxis International Vehicles Ltd Lothian Community Transport Services National Express Trains
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National Federation of the Blind for the UK
North Lanarkshire Disability Forum
Northlink Ferries
Oban & District Access Panel
PAMIS
Prestonfield Neighbourhood Project
Quarriers
Scottish Council on Deafness
Scottish Disability Equality Forum
Scottish Taxi Federation
South Edinburgh Amenities Group (SEAG)
TRANSform Scotland
West Dunbartonshire Council (for West Dunbartonshire Access Panel and
West Dunbartonshire Partnership)

**Individual
Members**

Ballantine, John
Barr, Caroline
Campbell, Jean
Carswell, Sylvia (deceased)
Cross, Paul
Flett, Stanley
Gilroy, Douglas (Hon. Life Member)
Gilroy, Margaret
Goodall, Jan
Killin, Maggie
Logan, Mac
MacDonald, Mina
McLeod, Roderick
Meadows, Trevor
Meighan, Ruth
Patullo, Thomas
Porter, Tom (Hon. Member)
Rees, Alan, MBE (Hon. Life Member)
Ritchie, James
Robinson, Terry
Sim, Ruth
Williams, Muriel, MStJ (Hon. Life Member)

(b) Subscribing members since 31st March 2009

**Individual
Members**

Barlow, Terry
Clow, John
Cross, Katryn
Forbes, Roseanna
Wood, Susan

**Corporate
Members** Allied Vehicles/Cab Direct
First Aberdeen
Guide Dogs Scotland
Oban & District Disability Forum

**For details about SATA
Including meeting dates, proceedings, links and how to join,
Visit our website ~**

www.scottishaccessibletransport.org.uk