

SATA
Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance

Scottish Charity No SC027600

**Working for Better
Transport Access**

ANNUAL REPORT

2011-2012

Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance (SATA)

Annual Report 2011-12

1. Introduction

SATA is an unincorporated association founded in 1995 and registered as a charity in Scotland. 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 13th September 2012.

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 2011 was 70 made up 46 corporate bodies and 24 individuals. The 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. The rates were increased by 5% from 1st April 2012

All members are invited to 'full' and 'open' meetings and receive copies of agenda, minutes and other papers. Between meetings they are kept abreast of new developments. Numbers 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the newsletter '*SATA News*' were sent to members in March and August 2011 and in March and August 2012. They are posted on the website.

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, a members' meeting was held in Edinburgh following the AGM on 15th September, an open meeting at the Forth Valley Sensory Centre at Camelon, Falkirk on 10th November (sponsored by RNIB), a meeting of members at the Forth Valley Sensory Centre at Camelon, Falkirk on 9th February (sponsored by RNIB) and an open meeting at Transport Scotland in Glasgow on 17th May (sponsored by Transport Scotland).

Agenda items have included information exchange and feedback from other meetings and conferences. The following gave presentations:

September: Euan Page, Equalities and Human Rights Commission on its report about transport related harassment

November: Allan Anderson, Transport Scotland on the Rail 2014 ScotRail franchise consultation.

February: Paul White, Confederation of Transport Scotland on issues for bus and coach operators

May: Keith Irvine, Living Streets, on the Responsible Parking (Scotland) Bill consultation.

4. Management Committee and Office Bearers

SATA is governed by an annually elected Management Committee of members acting as trustees. It met on the dates given above and will have a meeting on 23rd August ahead of the AGM.

At the AGM in September, Stanley Flett stood down as Chairperson after six years of service. Douglas Gilroy was elected to succeed him and James McKay was elected as Vice Chairperson. Alan Rees, and John Ballantine were re-elected respectively as Secretary and Treasurer.

The following were elected as Committee Members: Stanley Flett, Mike Harrison, Jane Horsburgh, John MacDonald, Rod Murchison, Pauline Nolan, Terry Robinson

Frances Simpson was re-appointed as Meetings Organiser/Minute Secretary for the year April 2012 to March 2013 and Mike Harrison took on the role of Assistant Secretary. In this capacity he helped with organising the SATA Achievement Award and developing the SATA website.

The practice of having sub groups to consider matters to do with different transport modes was continued, with Douglas Gilroy as co-ordinator. They are each led by a committee member but also have non-committee members. They took a lead in responding to the various consultation documents received during the year.

5. Campaigns

5.1 Welfare benefits and concessions

The UK Coalition Government passed its 'Welfare Benefits Reform' measures despite widespread opposition. SATA members joined with other disability organisations in lobbying the Scottish Parliament to take action to mitigate the impact of the changes including the loss of travel concessions.

5.2 Advice to government

In 2011 the UK Coalition Government announced its intention to abolish the **Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC)** as part of its campaign to reduce the number of quangos. The enabling legislation was passed as the Public Bodies Act. In June 2011 the Minister asked for views on five options for 'successor arrangements' saying a formal consultation would be held later regarding the selected option. SATA organised a meeting in Edinburgh to respond to the proposals and in a letter to the Minister made clear its strong opposition to abolition. This was underlined in a further meeting in July 2012 after the formal consultation was published. Meanwhile the number of committee and staff members has been cut to save money.

5.3 Scottish transport access forums

In February SATA asked the Scottish Government's Transport Minister Keith Brown to

set up a **Scottish Bus and Coach Access Forum** along the lines of the Scottish Rail Accessibility Forum and the Roads for All Forum which are convened by Transport Scotland and on which SATA is represented. SATA's proposal was rejected and even a subsequently formed '**Bus Stakeholders' Group**', charged by the Minister to look at strategic issues for the industry in Scotland, will have no regular representation from disability groups

6. Events

6.1 Community transport conference

The Community Transport Association in Scotland and SATA held a joint two day conference on '**Community Transport, Access and Mobility**', at the Stirling Management Centre on 4th and 5th October 2011. A keynote speaker was Scotland's Transport Minister Keith Brown. Topics on the programme were

- the impact of cuts - how can we survive and progress in a climate of cuts in public spending?
- marginalised people - who are they and how can the sector protect and meet their needs?
- rights and equality - are we making progress towards greater mobility for all?
- new technology - how can it work to help us and our communities?

The conference was well attended by members of both organisations and its proceedings disseminated. In taking things forward, it was recognised that public finances were tight but there was a need for communities to be more involved in the development of local services including transport.

6.2 Taxi research day

SATA members were invited to take part in a **Taxi Research Day** held on 26th July 2012 at Inghliston, Edinburgh, organised by the Edinburgh Napier University's Taxi Research Institute. There was wide representation from the UK and abroad with presentations and discussion on topics such as the taxi market, new technologies, vehicle design, taxi cost and supply. There were focus sessions on visual impairment and wheelchair use, whilst a number of vehicles were on show.

Scottish Government statistics show that in 2011 there were 10,600 licensed taxis and 10,717 licensed private hire cars in Scotland. Numbers have steadily increased over the past few years but the percentage of wheelchair accessible taxis has remained at 42-46% and phcs at 2.0-2.5%, with marked contrast between different licensing authorities and between urban and rural areas still persisting.

Our own information shows that the number of local authority taxicard schemes has shrunk from 16 to 14 and there is a tightening up on eligibility criteria. Concessions under the schemes are not keeping pace with rising fares, making this convenient form of travel less affordable.

7. Issues

7.1 Bus and coach

In 2011 the South East of Scotland Regional Transport Partnership (SEStran), working

with its Equalities group on which SATA is represented, and using the former Thistle Travel Card as a model, produced the '**SEStran Thistle Assistance Card**' for use in its area. It has been widely distributed and hopefully will be copied for use in other regions across Scotland.

7.2 Equality Duty

A response was submitted to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's consultation on '**Public Sector Equality Duty Revised Draft Regulations**' before the 25th November closing date

7.3 Ferries

The Scottish Government consulted on its '**Ferries Review Action Plan**' and, after consulting with members, a response was made in March.

7.4 Glasgow subway

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) has continued to consult on its proposals to improve the '**Glasgow subway**' and ticketing. But although there will be some progress, it is unlikely that access for wheelchair users will be significantly enhanced and there will be no overall expansion of its network.

7.5 Pedestrian environment

Joe Fitzpatrick MSP consulted on his proposals for a '**Responsible Parking (Scotland) Bill**' to provide local authorities with increased powers to control parking on pavements and dropped kerbs. SATA joined an alliance led by Living Streets and Guide Dogs Scotland to rally support for the bill which will come before the Scottish Parliament in September/October 2012.

7.6 Rail travel

Representatives of First ScotRail, Network Rail, East Coast Trains 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, signage and customer information systems.

Network Rail's '**Waverley Steps**' improvement project has now been completed with the installation of additional lifts. Along with others, SATA members have been involved in discussions on proposals for restricting vehicle access to the station. Taxi ranks and drop-off points are to be re-located to Waverley Bridge and Market Street. Many groups have expressed concern including organisations which provide transport for disabled people to and from the station.

Documents relating to the '**Rail 2014**' consultation regarding the next ScotRail franchise were circulated to members and responses submitted to the Scottish Government in February. The Department for Transport consulted on the installation of ticket machines and in its response SATA pointed out that many people do not find machines easy to use and benefit most from face to face service.

8. Contacts with Other Organisations

As well as its own members, SATA has maintained contact with the following:

- Access for All Forum
- Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC)
- Department for Transport
- Describe Online
- Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC)
- Equality & Human Rights Commission
- Gilroy Disability Consultancy
- HITRANS
- Independent Living in Scotland
- Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS)
- Mobility Choice (re Mobility Roadshow Scotland)
- NESTRAN
- Network Rail
- Scottish Executive/Government (various departments)
- Scottish Parliament (committees and cross party groups)
- Scottish Transport Studies Group
- SEStran
- TACTRAN
- Transport Research Unit, Edinburgh Napier University
- Transport Scotland
- UK Disability Forum for Europe
- UPDATE

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 increased from £1,785 in 2010-11 to £2,052 in 2011-12. Subscribing members at 31st March 2012 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 increased over the year from £484 in 2010-11 to £1,232 in 2011-2012. The increase was largely due to taking on the services of a Meetings Organiser/Minute Secretary on a sessional basis. RNIB and Transport Scotland kindly provided meeting venues free of charge.

Balance

Over the financial year receipts exceeded payments by £1,300, leaving a balance of £4,167. This compared to a balance of £3,347 at the start of the year. A separate Financial

Statement for the 12 months to 31st March 2011 is available.

Business Plan

The SATA Business Plan sets out its key objectives and the resources needed to meet them. During the year the Management Committee reviewed and revised the plan, recognising the constraints of limited capacity and resources. It resolved to make further efforts to increase membership which provides the main source of income, whilst keeping firm control on expenditure.

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.

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

The Secretary, SATA, 20 Seaforth Drive, Edinburgh EH4 2BZ

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

Appendix

Subscribing members at 31st March 2012

Corporate Members

Aberdeen Action on Disability
Aberdeen City Council
Allied Vehicles
Arthritis Care in Scotland
Badenoch & Strathspey Transport Company
Calmac Ferries Limited
Capability Scotland
Community Transport Association UK
Cumnock & Doon Valley Access Panel
Deafblind Scotland
Deeside Access Panel
Disability West Lothian
Dumfries & Galloway Coalition of Disabled People
Dundee City Council
East Coast Trains
Ecas
ENABLE Scotland
First Scotland East Ltd
First ScotRail Ltd
FOCUS
Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living
Guide Dogs Scotland
HcL, Handicabs (Lothian)
Highland Council, TEC Services
Inclusion Scotland
LCiL
Lochaber Action on Disability
Lochaber Disability Access Panel
Lochaber Transport Forum
London Taxis Company Ltd
Lothian Community Transport Services
Midlothian Council
National Federation of the Blind of the UK
North Lanarkshire Disability Forum
Northlink Ferries
Oban Disability Forum
PAMIS

Prestonfield Neighbourhood Project
Quarriers
Scottish Council on Deafness
Scottish Disability Equality Forum
Scottish Taxi Federation
South Edinburgh Amenities Group (SEAG)
TRANSform Scotland
Visibility Scotland
West Lothian Ability Centre

Individual Members

Ballantine, John
Barlow, Terry
Barr, Caroline
Burt, Amanda
Campbell, Jean
Cross, Kathryn
Cross, Paul
Dewar, Derek
Flett, Stanley (Hon. Life Member)
Gilroy, Douglas (Hon. Life Member)
Gilroy, Margaret
Goodall, Jan
Harrison, Mike
Hush, Douglas
Killin, Maggie
Logan, Mac
McGuigan, Pat
McLeod, Roderick
Murchison, Rod
Patullo, Thomas
Porter, Tom (Hon. Member)
Rees, Alan MBE (Hon. Life Member)
Ritchie, James
Robinson, Terry
Williams, Muriel (Hon. Life Member)