



Scottish Charity No SC027600

Strengthening Work on Transport Access

**ANNUAL REPORT
2012-2013**

Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance (SATA)

Annual Report 2012-13

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 25th September 2013.

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 2013 was made up of 46 corporate bodies and 25 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 but were unchanged in 2013.

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 10 and 11 of the newsletter 'SATA News' were sent to members in March and August 2013. They are posted on the website.

3. Full and Open Meetings of Members

SATA's constitution says that meetings of 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 13th September, an open meeting at the Forth Valley Sensory Centre at Camelot, Falkirk on 8th November, a meeting of members at the offices of RNIB in Edinburgh on 7th February, and an open meeting at the Valley Sensory Centre on 9th May.

The following gave presentations:

September (AGM): Ian Hamilton, BBC presenter and journalist on his travel experiences as a blind person.

November: Richard Wheater of People 1st on transport staff training.

February: David Sindall of ATOC and Maria Zedda of Widaware Training on rail passenger assistance and the 'Travel Made Easy' website.

May: Gavin Booth of the UK Bus Users Group on bus access issues in Scotland.

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

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, Douglas Gilroy was re-elected Chairman and Terry Robinson was elected Vice Chairperson. Mike Harrison and John Ballantine were elected respectively as Secretary and Treasurer. The following were elected as Committee Members: Stanley Flett, John MacDonald, Rod Murchison, Jim McKay, Pauline Nolan and Keith Robertson. Keith later resigned due to pressure of work. Pauline went on maternity leave in July 2013 and we congratulate her on the birth of a son. .

Frances Simpson was re-appointed as Meetings Organiser/Minute Secretary for the year April 2013 to March 2014 and Alan Rees took on the role of Assistant Secretary. From April 2013, Brian Masson was appointed for 18 months as the Development Worker for the DPULO project (see below)

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

5. Events

5.1 SATA Achievement Award

In a ceremony after the SATA Annual General Meeting at the Norton Park Conference Centre, Edinburgh, in September 2012, BBC presenter and journalist Ian Hamilton presented the first SATA 'Achievement Awards'. They went to Lothian Buses plc for its long record of quality service delivery, including pioneering the Audio Visual Next Stop (AVNSA) system on its Route 10 buses, and to Wayne Pearson, Chief Executive of HcL Handicabs (Lothian), for his 27 years in providing all-the-year-round accessible door-to-door transport for mobility challenged people.

The purpose of the awards is to recognise the outstanding achievements of individuals or organisations in providing transport and transport-related services and facilities for disabled people. They can also be given for work on specific projects or extended work over a lifetime. Recipients can be individuals or organisations and are not limited to

those who are members of SATA.

In April nominations were invited for the 2013 awards which will be presented by Dennis Robertson MSP after the AGM on 25th September 2013.

6. Strengthening DPULOs Project

SATA successfully applied for and was awarded a grant of £29,250 by the UK Office on Disability Issues (ODI) under its Strengthening Disabled Persons User Led Organisations (DPULO) Facilitation Fund. The funded project started in April 2013 and will run to September 2014.

SATA's charitable objectives are (1) to promote the welfare of disabled people in Scotland by ensuring that transport facilities and services are available to meet their needs and (2) to advance education and research into transport issues; and to disseminate the knowledge gained from this research.

In line with these and our business plan, this project is concentrating on (1) recruiting new members to reach sustainable membership levels, (2) collecting data on current transport services and accessibility issues in Scotland as a basis for a national strategy, (3) reviewing recent research and secure funding for new research on the social and economic impact of disabled people's inability to travel. To lead the project a Development Worker, Brian Masson has been engaged. Since April he has publicised the project widely, contacted over 750 organisations, and gather a large cross-section of opinion and information. A number of local meetings have been arranged for the autumn.

7. Consultations

7.1 Welfare benefits and concessions

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

7.2 Transport advisory bodies

Having faced overwhelming opposition from disability organisations, including SATA, the UK Coalition Government decided not pursue its intention to abolish the **Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC)**. This was a most welcome outcome from the consultation and new members will be recruited by 1st April 2014. However, the committee's budget and secretariat have been severely cut which inevitably mean its effectiveness will be reduced. The **Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS)**, which had also previously been threatened with abolition and reprieved, has continued its work despite similar cuts. SATA member John Ballantine has been a

member of both DPTAC and MACS and has reported regularly on these developments.

7.3 Responsible Parking (Scotland) Bill

SATA is a member of an Alliance Group headed by **Living Streets Scotland** which is supporting Sandra White MSP's bill which sets out to provide freedom of movement for all pedestrians by restricting parking at dropped kerbs on pavements and double parking. Fifty nine MSPs across all political parties signed up to support the final proposal - the highest ever for a Scottish Parliament member's bill - which was lodged in January 2013. Since then the focus has been on drafting the actual legislation and dealing with the complicated mix of reserved and devolved powers that affects all transport legislation in Scotland.

7.4 Bus Regulation (Scotland) Bill

SATA responded positively to the consultation drafted by Iain Gray MSP which seeks to give authorities greater powers to set service levels for local bus services, including powers to group profitable routes with non-profitable routes before going out to tender.

7.5 Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee on Community Transport

John Macdonald was an obvious choice of person to be 'grilled' by the committee of MSPs on the operation of community transport and the viewpoint of its operators. Mike Harrison was one of three 'users' interviewed in a later session.

7.6 'Blue Badge' Bill

SATA supported Dennis Robertson in his proposed bill to deal with abuse of blue badges and use of blue badge spaces.

8. Issues

8.1 Bus and coach

All-over bus advertising on windows came to the fore as an issue for people with visual impairments. It limited visibility and caused confusing reflections. The **Aberdeen Disability Advisory Group** raised the matter with the city council and the operator, First Bus Aberdeen, resulting in the practice being discontinued.

Last year 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 a subsequently formed 'Bus Stakeholders' Group', charged by the Minister to look at strategic issues for the industry in Scotland, had no regular representation from disability groups. We were told SATA could be raise concerns through the Bus Users Group but, given the terms of reference the Minister had laid down, it was not felt to be an adequate substitute.

8.2 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.

Along with others, SATA members have been involved in discussions on proposals for restricting vehicle access to **Waverley 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 such as HcL which provide transport for disabled people to and from the station.

9. 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
- 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

10. 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 slightly from £1,483 in 2011-12 to £1,302 in 2012-13. 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 £1,232 in 2011-2012 to £1,734 in 2012-13. The increase was largely due to the greater cost of meeting venues when there has been no sponsorship.

Balance

Over the financial year receipts exceeded payments by £154, leaving a balance of £4,321. This compared to a balance of £4,167 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. The Management Committee regularly reviews and revises the plan, recognising the constraints of limited capacity and resources. It has resolved to continue efforts to retain and increase membership which provides the main source of income, whilst keeping firm control on expenditure.

11. 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:

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Appendix

Subscribing members at 31st March 2013

Corporate Members

Aberdeen Action on Disability	Lochaber Action on Disability
Aberdeen City Council	Lochaber Disability Access Panel
Allied Vehicles	Lochaber Transport Forum
Badenoch & Strathspey Transport Company	Lothian Buses
Calmac Ferries Limited	Lothian Community Transport Services
Capability Scotland	Midlothian Council
Community Transport Association UK	National Fed'n of the Blind of the UK
Cumnock & Doon Valley Access Panel	North Lanarkshire Disability Forum
Disability West Lothian	Oban Disability Forum
Dumfries & Galloway Transport Advisory Group	PAMIS
Dundee City Council	Prestonfield Neighbourhood Project
East Coast Trains	Quarriers
Ecas	Serco Northlink Ferries
First Scotland East Ltd	Scottish Council on Deafness
First ScotRail Ltd	Scottish Disability Equality Forum
FOCUS	Scottish Taxi Federation
Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living	South Edinburgh Amenities Group (SEAG)
Guide Dogs Scotland	The Stroke Association
HcL, Handicabs (Lothian)	TRANSform Scotland
Highland Council, TEC Services	Visibility Scotland
Inclusion Scotland	West Dumbartonshire Partnership
LCIL	West Lothian Ability Centre

Individual Members

Ballantine, John	Logan, Mac
Barlow, Terry	Meadows, Trevor
Burt, Amanda	Macrae, William
Campbell, Jean	McGuigan, Pat
Cross, Kathryn	McLeod, Roderick
Cross, Paul	Murchison, Rod
Dewar, Derek	Porter, Tom (Hon. Member)
Fletcher, Sheila	Rees, Alan MBE (Hon. Life Member)
Flett, Stanley (Hon. Life Member)	Ritchie, Alison
Gilroy, Douglas (Hon. Life Member)	Ritchie, James
Gilroy, Margaret	Robertson, Anne
Goodall, Jan	Robinson, Terry
Harrison, Mike	Stirling, John
Hush, Douglas	Williams, Muriel (Hon. Life Member)

**For details about SATA including meeting dates, newsletter,
proceedings, links and how to join,
visit our website**

www.scottishaccessibletransport.org.uk