

SATA

Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance

Scottish Charity No SC027600

**Accessing Transport
Services**

ANNUAL REPORT

2009-2010

Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance (SATA)

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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 16th September 2010.

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 2010 was 83, made up of 54 corporate bodies and 29 individuals. We record with sadness the death of Mina MacDonald, a loyal and enthusiastic individual member. Members at 31st March 2010 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.

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. The first edition of *SATA News* was sent to members in July 2009 and this was followed up with No 2 in October 2009, No 3 in January and No 4 in June 2010. Copies 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, an open meeting took place at the Forth Valley Sensory Centre at Camelon, Falkirk on 12th November, a members' meeting at the same venue on 12th February (both sponsored by RNIB), a further open meeting at the Millennium Hotel, Glasgow on 6th May (sponsored by Strathclyde Partnership for Transport), and a members' meeting to be held at the Blackfriars Development Centre, Perth on 16th September following the AGM (sponsored by Perth & Kinross Council).

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

conferences. The following gave presentations:

November: Keith Robertson of the Scottish Disability Equality Forum on 'British and European Standards: Friend or Foe?'

February: David Goldthorpe of Inverclyde Council on Disability on 'Access to Taxis'

May: John Binning of Strathclyde Partnership for Transport on 'Improving Accessibility Across the West of Scotland Network'.

The presentation at the **September** meeting will be given by John Berry of Dundee City Council on 'The Journey to Healthcare - Whose Responsibility?'

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 2010.

At the AGM in September 2009, Stanley Flett, Maggie Killin, Alan Rees, and John Ballantine were re-elected respectively as Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.

The following were elected as Committee Members: Paul Cross, Douglas Gilroy, John MacDonald, Jim McKay, Pat McGuigan, Jim Ritchie, Terry Robinson, Liz Rowlett. Tom Porter assisted the Committee by improving and managing the SATA website free of charge and was made an Honorary Member.

The practice of having sub groups to consider matters to do with different transport modes was continued and their membership was widened to include non-committee members. Douglas Gilroy was appointed to co-ordinate them.

5. Business

The following occurred during the year:

5.1 Scottish Government and Parliament

(a) MACS

The Convener of the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS) addressed the SATA meeting on 18th September 2009. Nine new members of the committee were appointed in October and one subsequently, bringing the total to one less than the full complement of 15. A number have also become SATA members.

(b) Equality Act 2010

The Equality Bill received the Royal Assent in April 2010 and Chapter 12 of the Act consolidates provisions for transport regulation regarding trains, public service vehicles and taxis. Previously the Scottish Parliament had consulted on the Specific Duties provisions and SATA responded by the deadline of 15th January 2010.

(c) Blue Badge parking

Following the passage of the Disabled Persons' Parking Spaces (Scotland) Act on 1st April 2009, SATA members have been involved in consultations on ways of monitoring enforcement. Members responded to a Scottish Government consultation on policy for parking at rail stations and are currently also considering proposals for reforming the Blue Badge Scheme which include mandatory charges for badges, increased fines for

misuse, a tightening of eligibility, changes in the application process and benefits to badge holders.

(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. Sadly however his bill did not receive the necessary parliamentary support.

(e) Cross Party Group on Disability

SATA is a member of the Group and a number of our members attend its meetings. On 3rd March 2010 the subject was transport and Alan Rees made a presentation covering a range of issues including the need to implement research findings on ways to improve access to public transport services and affordable door-to-door services.

(f) Thistle Travel Card

After 6 years of operation, the Thistle Travel Card for people wanting extra assistance on buses and other transport was discontinued because ENABLE, which administered the scheme, was unable to obtain the funding it had requested from the Scottish Government to keep it going. The card was held by some 280,000 people across Scotland. SATA produced a briefing paper for the press and lobbied MSPs. A motion was put down by Des McNulty MSP (Scottish Labour) in the Scottish Parliament. The matter was also raised at a meeting of the Cross Party Group on Disability. An appeal was made to the major bus companies represented by the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT) to take over the scheme. This came to nothing and although First Bus now has a 'Safe Travel Card' to help people needing assistance, this only applies to its own services.

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 bus travel

The Scotland-wide free bus travel scheme for older and disabled people scheme 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, whilst supporting the scheme, expressed concerns that many people who are considered disabled under the DDA did not meet the eligibility criteria. Furthermore, thousands who are eligible cannot benefit 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, SATA 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 positive change was to extend eligibility to injured forces veterans from the spring of 2011, although the Scottish Government did state its underlying commitment to continuing the scheme despite financial pressures.

SATA has suggested to Transport Scotland that there should be a Forum covering issues to do with the operation of the scheme and the scheduled bus and coach services associated with it.

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 continue to come under threat or have been cut back, including voluntary and community services for disabled people. 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. Response are posted on the SATA website. Further references to these documents are made under the section that follows.

7. Transport Services

Members of the Management Committee have six sub-groups under the following headings to consider issues concerned with transport services and consult with SATA 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

The Department for Transport consulted on *Improving Bus Passenger Services through the Regulatory Process*. Although concerned with services in England and Wales, there

were issues relevant to Scotland and SATA responded accordingly.

Audit Scotland invited views on its paper *Evaluation of National Concessionary Travel in Scotland for Older and Disabled People*. This had to do with the Scotland-wide free bus travel scheme and SATA expressed its concerns about disabled people excluded from the eligibility criteria and continuing problems with access to services and vehicles.

(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.

Comments were submitted to First ScotRail during the annual revision of its Disabled Persons' Protection Policy (DPPP) and members visited a mock-up of the new 'Desiro' Class 380 trains coming into service on south west Scotland routes. Transport Scotland consulted on a government policy for the provision of parking at rail stations.

In November Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) held a presentation on proposals to improve access to the Glasgow Subway. This and the tram project in Edinburgh were relevant to the Department for Transport's consultation on *Improving Access to Light Rail*.

(4) Sea/Ferry services

The Scottish Ferries Review report was published in June 2010 and SATA will be responding. Members on the SATA ferries sub-group were involved in looking at access issues as part of the process of drawing up the report.

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

SATA responded to the Department for Transport (DfT) consultation on *Changes to Laws Governing Powered Mobility Vehicles*, mainly in respect of issues to do with the carriage of scooters and wheelchairs on public transport.

SATA's policy outline statement on *Affordable and Accessible Taxi and Private Hire Services* was reviewed and updated. Following the DfT's *Consultation on Improving Access to Taxis*, a Ministerial statement in October said further regulation was not favoured but instead best practice guidance would be issued and three demonstration schemes or trials would be run to explore how better to tailor taxi provision to demand in order to ensure that the needs of disabled people were effectively met. So far there have been no developments on this.

(6) Transport policy, information and the environment

SATA continues to monitor the impact of MACS report *Action Required to Improve the Mobility of Disabled and Older People* in November 2008 and the extent to which it's

advice is or is not being followed. The report made a number of important recommendations on the way forward, 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.

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

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

Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC)

Edinburgh Trams

Equality & Human Rights Commission

Gilroy Disability Consultancy

HITRANS

Independent Living in Scotland

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 increased from £1,060 in 2008-9 to £1,235 in 2009-10 . Subscribing

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 decreased over the year from £1,266 in 2008-9 to £952 in 2009-10 largely due to sponsors kindly providing meeting venues free of charge.

Balance

Over the financial year receipts exceeded payments by £854 leaving a balance of £2,046. This compared to a balance of £1,192 at the start of the year. A separate Financial Statement for the 12 months to 31st March 2010 is available.

The SATA Business Plan sets out its key objectives and the resources needed to meet them. Work to implement the plan is on-going and measures are being taken to increase membership and income further. Members and supporters can now raise funds for SATA on-line through our account with easyfundraising.com, which can be accessed from our SATA website.

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 2010

Corporate Members	Aberdeen Action on Disability
	Aberdeen City Council
	Allied Vehicles
	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)
Dundee City Council
East Coast Main Line
ECAS
ENABLE Scotland
Fair Deal
Fife Council Transportation Service
First Aberdeen
First ScotRail Ltd
Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living
Guide Dogs Scotland
Halcrow Group
Handicabs (Lothian)
Help the Aged Scotland
Highland Council, TEC Services, Inverness
Inclusion Scotland
Inverclyde Council on Disability
LCIL
Leonard Cheshire Disability
Lochaber Action on Disability
Lochaber Disability Access Panel
London Taxis International Vehicles Ltd
Lothian Community Transport Services
Midlothian Council
National Express Trains
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)
Stirling Access Panel
TRANSform Scotland
Visibility
West Dunbartonshire Council (for West Dunbartonshire Access Panel and
West Dunbartonshire Partnership)

Individual Ballantine, John
Members Barlow, Terry
Barr, Caroline

Campbell, Jean
Clow, John
Cross, Kathryn
Cross, Paul
Flett, Stanley
Forbes, Roseanna
Gilroy, Douglas (Hon. Life Member)
Gilroy, Margaret
Goodall, Jan
Hush, Douglas
Killin, Maggie
Logan, Mac
MacDonald, Mina (Deceased)
McKay, James
McLeod, Roderick
Meadows, Trevor
Meighan, Ruth
Murchison, Rod
Patullo, Thomas
Porter, Tom (Hon. Member)
Rees, Alan, MBE (Hon. Life Member)
Ritchie, James
Robinson, Terry
Sim, Ruth
Williams, Muriel, MStJ (Hon. Life Member)
Wood, Susan

**For details about SATA including meeting dates, newsletter,
proceedings, links and how to join,
visit our website ~
www.scottishaccessibletransport.org.uk**