ANNUAL REPORT
Sep 2014 to Aug 2015

SATA
Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance

Scottish Charity No SC 027600
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SATA Annual Report 2014-15

This report should be read in conjunction with the financial report which is made to OSCR and contains details of office bearers, members of the committee, how SATA meets its charitable purposes and its financial affairs.

Membership

Membership levels remain fairly constant. We never achieved the intended increase in membership as a result of the DPULO project. Commercial organisations and charities have been reluctant to take on any financial commitments which are not necessary, but although we hear of the large percentage of the population which has some disability individuals do not seem to want to join our ranks.

There are approximately 30 corporate members of SATA this year and another 20 or so which have not renewed their membership to date. These corporate members include commercial operators, local authorities, access panels and organisations which deal with specific disabilities.

There are approximately 20 current individual members with another 10 'defaulters'.

Management Committee

The management committee has met five times in the year, once before each of the members meetings with an additional committee meeting in August. Between meetings as far as possible business is conducted by email thus covering the gap of 2 to 3 months between meetings, cutting down on the length of meetings and the amount of time and expense of getting committee members together.

Members' Meetings

September 2014 (Premier Inn, Glasgow) AGM and awards ceremony

The guest speakers were John Binning and Gordon Dickson, both of SPT. The SATA achievement awards were presented to Patrick Nyamurundira and the Community Transport Association. The citations relating to these awards can be read on the SATA website.

November 2014 (FVSC, Camelon)

There was no guest speaker as we considered that discussion of two major topics – our Accessible Transport Strategy and Action Plan for Scotland and the formation of Regional Groups - would provide more than sufficient content for the meeting. On the former of these there was some intense and heated discussion with no final complete agreement but it was resolved to move forward and release the draft allowing until mid-January for consultation. At this time several local authorities had indicated that they would be curtailing or even
completely cancelling their use of taxi cards, which caused considerable disquiet to a number of our members. Before the meeting there had been some discussion by email about the regional groups which had been proposed as part of the DPULO project considering both the aims and the practicalities of implementation. This was referred to a small working party for further analysis and proposals.

Outstanding topics
Perhaps this is the place to report on three items which came up at this time and have still not been fully resolved.

1. Regional Groups. There seem to be sticking points. The first one is that our membership is spread very thinly outside the central belt, with the exception of a pocket of concentration in Aberdeen and so there is a question of how members would meet or contact each other and what kind of action they might be able to achieve. The second is that while we have a small amount of money set aside as part of our project funding to set up these groups, there is no funding for maintenance.

2. The Constitution. This is in need of being revisited, partly to make sure it still conforms to the requirements of the charity and partly to fill in any deficiencies. A working group has been appointed to look at this.

3. The Business Plan. This has now expired and needs to be looked at. It started to be ignored when we got the DPULO funding and had to produce a project plan which tended to override the original business plan. We now need to sit down and work at this.

February 2015 (FVSC, Camelon)
Speaker Mike Smith of Abellio, in the approach to its take-over of the ScotRail franchise on April 1st

The report on the consultation of our ATSAPS was presented and discussed and arrangements made for some amendments before it was generally released. Issues that came up in discussion were largely to do with franchises. These were rail (the sleeper, ScotRail and East Coast) and ferry (Clyde & Hebridean). Various SATA members have contributed to these in both face-to-face public and private meetings as well as in the written consultations. Very often members will be there also as members of another organisation or as a private individual but it is very rare that there will be a conflict of views or interest. Where appropriate SATA normally puts in a written opinion based on the expressed views of members (where we can persuade members to give us these views!).

Two matters of local interest also came up at this time. The first is the progress of EGIP (Edinburgh Glasgow improvement project). This has been scaled back, but the work that is going to be done is causing significant disruption. At the time of writing this (mid July) the Winchburgh tunnel is closed for electrification and the Edinburgh Glasgow via Falkirk service is broken either by a bus link or by diversion to Dalmeny, and the work on Queen Street station has begun.
The second one is more geographically local, but of more international importance. This is the access to Waverley station for disabled people. Decisions having been taken by the UK government regarding anti-terror activities and by Network Rail as to how these should be implemented all without consultation or regard for the users, eventually a Waverley Access group was set up which has had some success in that there are now regular meetings of all the parties involved (disability groups, taxi owners, community transport, train operators, Edinburgh Council and Network Rail) and some of the errors are being corrected and the views of users are being listened to.

May 2015 (MV Hrossey, Aberdeen Harbour)
Having had James Linklater and Fiona Anderson as speakers at a SATA meeting only a year ago, they were not invited to speak again but they were kind enough to arrange for a brief tour of parts of the ship at the end of the meeting. Being in Aberdeen we took advantage of inviting Norman Wood, Training Manager of First Group, to speak to us about the disability training they give their drivers. This is a topic close to the hearts of many SATA members. We realise the difficulties for small bus companies who do not have training facilities and for very large companies which operate over a very large geographical area. All need to provide initial training on first employment as well as regular updates and refreshers. All need to have some means of responding effectively to customer complaints, and sensitivity in their treatment of both passengers and drivers, recognising the many stresses involved in being a bus driver (traffic, safety, bad and volatile passenger behaviour etc)
Other topics that came up in discussion were those of guide dogs in taxis – increasingly it appears that taxi drivers are unwilling to take dogs, ambulances – both A&E and patient transport, and the Paulley judgement relating to wheelchairs versus buggies.

Awards
At the AGM in September 2014 SATA Achievement Awards were presented to the Community Transport Association and to Patrick Nyamurundira.

Links with organisations, operators, officials
There is an extensive but often informal connection and flow of information between SATA and other organisations, operators and officials. This may be in the course of attending meetings or making communications to seek or provide information or to make suggestions or even complaints. It is not uncommon to go to a meeting and find that between one third and one half of the people present are members of SATA. The committee maintains a list of which of its members is the 'official' point of contact with the main bodies we deal with. This helps to ensure we don't miss anything which is vital, but it's only a small part of the mosaic. As an example, I can list some of the conferences, consultations, presentations and meetings that I have been at during the last year.
Scottish Transport Conference
Roads for All Forum
Scottish Rail Accessibility Forum
Abellio consultation on the Hitachi 8500 configuration
SDEF: various sessions
Waverley station: access consultation group
Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Group on Disability
Scottish government's Transport Accessibility Summit
Transform Scotland: various sessions
Walking Cycling and Connecting Communities Conference (Living Streets and Paths for All)
NHS Lothian Innovations Conference (on patient transport)
NHS conference on "revolutionising the outpatient experience"
Scottish Ambulance Service consultation on design of A&E ambulances
Scottish Ambulance Service Involving People Group
Perth and Kinross Council equalities group (presentation to them about street access)
Euan's Guide

Some of these are one-off or annual events, others are regular meetings. I am sure that most members of the committee could produce a similar list, and so could many other members who are not on the committee. All this is an indication of the kind of coverage that we have and the influence that we can have.

**Groups**
The topic subgroups which SATA has (rail, sea, road (vehicle), road (footpath and pedestrian), air and policy) do not currently have any formal part in the management of SATA, but the names of people particularly interested in this provide a group which the secretary can refer to for advice. With the many things that come to the secretary's inbox it is often possible to make a response based on existing knowledge or policy; however with something new or controversial there is a need to get additional advice or opinion from a small group who have some knowledge in that area.

**Publications**
Our former secretary, Alan Rees, continues not only to make history but to write history. Having two years ago written the history of Handicabs ("Out and About, Door-To-Door – Handicabs, the First 30 Years"), he has now put together a monograph "**The SATA Story, 1995 to 2015**".

The big publication of this year's SATA's **Accessible Transport Strategy and Action Plan for Scotland**. The first draft went out for consultation to our members in April 2014, and the second draft went out for more general consultation in December. Following these the final version was released in March 2015 and widely circulated. By this time the Scottish government through
Transport Scotland was making some moves in a similar direction starting with the Transport Accessibility Summit in March. Progress with this is very slow.

We have continued to support what was the Responsible Parking Bill (now the Footpath Parking Bill) and sympathise with its promoters in its continual setbacks on legal minutiae.

**Mystery Shopping**

This year some of our members have done some mystery shopping in connection with the Caledonian and Hebridean ferry franchise. This has highlighted some of the difficulties disabled people face on ferries particularly navigation, information and physical access on the smaller ones. But a big plus for the attitude, awareness and helpfulness of the present CalMac staff on board.

**The future**

The last business plan which SATA produced was overtaken by our DPULO project for which we had to produce a separate plan. In this last year we have been rather busy looking at what other people ought to be doing – things which are outside our control; what we need to do now is to look at our plan for the next four or five years and identify what we need to do, what we ought to do and most importantly what we can do.

Mike Harrison, Hon. Secretary
2015-08-26