

SATA

Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance

Scottish Charity No SC027600

**Improving Transport
Access**

ANNUAL REPORT

2010-2011

Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance (SATA)

Annual Report 2010-11

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 15th September 2011.

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 of 45 corporate bodies and 25 individuals. The 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. At the 2010 AGM it was resolved to increase the rates by 5% from April 2011, the first increase since rates were introduced.

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 year Nos 5, 6 and 7 were produced in October, March and July. 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, a members' meeting was held at the Development Centre in Perth on 12th September (sponsored by Perth & Kinross Council) following the AGM, an open meeting at RNIB in Edinburgh (sponsored by RNIB), a members' meeting at the Forth Valley Sensory Centre at Camelon, Falkirk on 13th February (sponsored by RNIB), and an open meeting at Transport Scotland in Glasgow on 19th May (sponsored by Transport Scotland).

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

September: John Berry, Sustainable Transport Team Leader, Dundee City Council
November: Brian Juffs, Senior Bus Development Adviser, Scottish Government
February: Christopher Cox, Acting Public Transport Co-ordinator, Falkirk Council
May: Dave Williamson, Policy Officer, Transport Scotland

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, 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: Douglas Gilroy, Jane Horsburgh, John MacDonald, Jim McKay, Jim Ritchie, Terry Robinson and Liz Rowlett. Paul Cross and Pat McGuigan stood down and were warmly thanked for their support over many years. Rod Murchison was coopted at the November meeting. In February 2011 Maggie Killin resigned as Vice Chairperson and committee member due to her many other commitments.

To assist the Secretary in the coping with the volume of work, the position of Meetings Organiser/Minute Secretary was advertised through the membership. Frances Simpson applied and was duly appointed initially for the year April 2011 to March 2012 on a small sessional fee plus expenses. She will cover the scheduled meetings in May, September, November and February.

The practice of having sub groups to consider matters to do with different transport modes has been continued with Douglas Gilroy as co-ordinator. Tom Porter assisted the Committee by managing the SATA website free of charge

5. Business

The following occurred during the year:

5.1 Cuts to services

SATA members passed a resolution at the September AGM expressing concern that disabled people were becoming easy targets for cuts in transport services and this would endanger or seriously limit their mobility and quality of life. The resolution gave examples, noted the governments' declared commitment to equal opportunities, and called on all public bodies to consider the full implications and knock-on effects of their actions and engage in consultation with users and their representatives.

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.

5.2 Thistle Travel Card

After 6 years of operation, the Thistle Travel Card for people wanting extra assistance on buses and other transport was discontinued in 2009 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. The Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT) was approached to take over the scheme. 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. All this came to nothing and although First Bus has developed a 'Safe Travel Card' to help people needing assistance, it only applies to its own services.

Now in 2011 the South East of Scotland Regional Transport Partnership (SEStran), working with its Equalities group on which SATA is represented, and using the Thistle Travel Card as a model, has produced the 'SEStran Thistle Assistance Card' for use in its area. Although falling short of a national scheme, it can be used on a range of services and it is hoped it will be copied for use in other regions across Scotland.

5.3 Transport Scotland Forums

SATA has continued to be represented at meetings of Transport Scotland's Scottish Rail Accessibility Forum and the Roads for All Forum. A formal proposal was made that a similar stakeholder forum on bus and coach access be created to address the many issues involved with these services. However nothing has yet come of the idea. Representatives of Transport Scotland have attended SATA meetings as observers.

5.4 Concessionary bus travel

The Scotland-wide Concessionary Bus Travel Scheme for older and disabled people scheme started in April 2006 and is administered by Transport Scotland. The Scottish Government reviewed the scheme in 2008 but made no major changes. Whilst supporting the scheme, SATA 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.

There is now some progress on this with the drafting of Public Service Vehicles Registration of Local Service (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2011 which would extend local bus regulation and the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) to demand responsive services (DRT) available to the general public and thus qualify them for the Scotland-wide Concessionary Travel Scheme.

5.5 The Equality and Human Rights

The Equality and Human Rights Commission in Scotland held a formal inquiry into disability-related harassment and invited SATA to give evidence on transport. It was not looking for actual examples (of which it already had many) but was interested in how transport agencies were open to complaints and dealt with them. The Commission is due to publish its report in September 2011.

The Scottish Government consulted on the *Public Sector Equality Special Duty Draft Regulations*. The proposals were rejected by the Scottish Parliament's Equal Opportunities Committee. New regulations will now be prepared and will be the subject of further consultation..

5.6 Manifesto for 2011

The existing SATA Manifesto was refreshed for the Scottish parliamentary elections in May 2011 and circulated with two Briefing Papers to members for use in lobbying prospective candidates. Copies of political party manifestos were also circulated from which it was evident that, apart from references to the national concessionary travel scheme, little attention was given to disabled people's mobility needs.

6. UK Consultations

SATA responded to a number of consultation documents and received official reports on these consultations and other matters. Members are informed and their views sought. Responses are posted on the SATA website.

6.1 Welfare Reform

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) consulted in proposals for *Welfare Benefits Reform*. SATA members joined with other disability organisation in opposing the withdrawal of the DLA Mobility Component from disabled people in residential care.

6.2 DPTAC

The UK Coalition Government announced its intention to abolish the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) in a series of measures to reduce the number and cost of 'quangos'. It started to reduce the number of committee and staff members. In June the Minister then 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.

References to other consultation documents are made in 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 tram link to Edinburgh airport. Improving representation on passenger forums remains an issue.

(2) Bus and coach services

Audit Scotland invited views on its paper *Evaluation of National Concessionary Travel in Scotland for Older and Disabled People*. Its subsequent report *National Concessionary Travel* was published in October. It said the scheme "had only limited impact on improving social inclusion, improving health or promoting a shift from car to bus". Despite costing over £199 million a year, it "had not delivered against most of its stated objectives". These included allowing disabled people, especially those on low incomes, to have improved access to services, facilities and social networks.

The Scottish Government has now announced its intention under the Public Service Vehicles Registration of Local Service (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2011 to extend the concessionary travel scheme to demand responsive services (DRT) which are available to the general public. They would come under local bus regulations and be eligible for the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG). But eligibility criteria for concessions would stay the same and continue to exclude those excluded from the scheme at present, notably disabled people on the lower mobility rate of DLA, many with learning disabilities.

(3) Rail services

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 new rolling stock and 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.

SATA members have been involved in Network Rail's development proposals for Edinburgh Waverley and the launch of the Edinburgh-Glasgow Improvement Programme (EGIP) consultation. Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) consulted on proposals to improve access to the Glasgow subway and subway ticketing.

(4) Sea/Ferry services

The Scottish Ferries Review report was published in June 2010. Members on the SATA ferries sub-group were involved in drawing up the report and are monitoring outcomes.

The Department for Transport has been discussing with stakeholders the key issues surrounding the implementation of Chapter II of the EU Regulation 1177/210 concerning "the rights of passengers when travelling by sea and inland waterways relating to the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility".

(5) Car, taxi and door-to-door travel

The Scottish Government consulted on its proposals for *Blue Badge Reform*. SATA

submitted its response in October being supportive of proposals to increase fines for misuse, tighten eligibility, change the application process and give greater benefits to badge holders. However there was opposition to mandatory charges for badges, although some consistency across Scotland was welcomed.

There has been no action on the UK Government's proposals to run three demonstration schemes or trials to explore how better to tailor taxi provision to demand in order to ensure that the needs of disabled people were effectively met. Best practice guidance would then be issued. This followed the DfT's *Consultation on Improving Access to Taxis* and a Ministerial statement in October 2009 saying further regulation was not favoured. It would seem that the Government is determined to do nothing.

The Scottish Government consulted on its *Taxi and Private Car Licensing Best Practice for Local Authorities*. In its response SATA's emphasised the need for the guidance to stress that local authorities should publish their policies for accessible taxis. It highlighted aspects of its own Policy Outline Statement: *Affordable and Accessible Taxi and Private Hire Services*

(6) Transport policy, information and the environment

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.

Ross Finnie MSP consulted on his proposed *Regulation of Dropped Kerbs and Pavement Parking (Scotland) Bill* and SATA gave its support in cooperation with Living Streets, Guide Dogs for the Blind and other organisations. It ran out of time due to the May 2011 election at which Ross Finnie lost his seat. However efforts were being made to get another sponsor in the new parliament.

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

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 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 £1,235 in 2009-10 to £1,145 in 2010-11. At the AGM it was resolved to increase the rates by 5% from 1st April 2011, the first time this has been done since subscriptions were introduced. Subscribing members at 31st March 2011 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 £952 in 2009-10 to £484 in 2010-11 largely due to sponsors kindly providing meeting venues free of charge. For the 2011-12 financial year it was decided to take on the services of a Meetings Organiser/Minute Secretary on a sessional basis.

Balance

Over the financial year receipts exceeded payments by £1,300 leaving a balance of £3,347. This compared to a balance of £2,046 at the start of the year. A separate Financial Statement for the 12 months to 31st March 2011 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
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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
Members**

Ballantine, John
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**