

Full Meeting

Minutes of the Full Meeting of members at 1.30 pm on Tuesday 8th February 2011 at the Forth Valley Sensory Centre, Camelon, Falkirk

Present: Stanley Flett (Chairman & Individual Member), John Ballantine (Treasurer & Individual Member), Katryn Cross (Individual Member), Paul Cross (Individual Member), Douglas Gilroy (Individual), Margaret Gilroy (Individual Member), Jane Horsburgh (Blind Dogs Scotland), Douglas Hush (Individual Member), Stephen Joyce (Deafblind Scotland), Mac Logan (Individual Member), John MacDonald (CTA), Pat McGuigan (Individual Member), Jim McKay (Individual Member), Rod Murchison (Individual Member), John Moore (LCTS), Alan Rees, (Secretary & Individual Member), Jim Ritchie (Individual Member), Terry Robinson (Individual Member), Kate Sanford (Quarriers), Ivor Souter (Highlands Council).

In attendance: Christopher Cox (Falkirk Council)

Observers: Chris Clark (Transport Scotland), Frances Simpson (Meetings Organiser/Minute Secretary Designate)

Interpreters: Andrew Dewey, Debbie McKenzie

Apologies for absence: Fiona Anderson (NorthLink Ferries), Caroline Barr (Individual), Arthur Cowie (Lochaber Action on Disability), Jane Dailly (SDEF), Derek Dewer (Individual), Roseanna Forbes (Individual Member), Lena Gillies (ENABLE), Jan Goodall (Individual), Robert Graham (First Group), David Griffiths (Ecas), Paul Kelsey (LTC), Maggie Killin (Individual Member), Lilian Lawson (SCOD), Maggie Lawson (Badenoch & Strathspey CT), Bill McIntosh (STF), Roddy McTaggart (Aberdeen City Council), Patrick Nyamurandira (First ScotRail), Tom Patullo (Individual Member), Matt Short (East Coast Trains), Jean Smith (Cumnock & Doon Valley AP), Carol Tumath (Quarriers), Ann Young (SEAG), Vivian Wardman, Muriel Williams (Individual).

1. Chairman's welcome

Stanley Flett welcomed those present to this first meeting in 2011. He particularly welcomed Chris Cox our speaker and Frances Simpson attending as an observer and prospective Meetings Organiser/Minute Secretary.

2. Apologies for absence

The apologies were read out and accepted.

3. Minutes of the Open Meeting on 11th November 2010

These had been circulated and were proposed, seconded and approved

4. Matters arising

Alan Rees reported as follows:

(a) Consultations

- Scottish Government: Public Sector Equality Special Duty Draft Regulations - no response had been made
- Scottish Parliament (Ross Finnie): Regulation of Dropped Kerbs and Pavement Parking (Scotland) Bill - SATA had been included amongst the supporting organisations
- DWP: Welfare Benefits Reform - consultation was ongoing, especially on withdrawal of DLA Mobility Component from recipients in residential care.

(b) Disability-Related Harassment Inquiry

Evidence to the Equality and Human Rights Commission Inquiry was given in writing by Alan Rees and on the phone by Stan Flett to Ewan Page of the Commission in lieu of a Panel Meeting cancelled because of snow.

(c) SATA Manifesto 2011

Amendments to the 2010 Manifesto are requested but none received so far. However it is suggested that just a few issues should be highlighted with the political parties at the May election.

5. Report from the Management Committee

Alan Rees reported on the following:

- Meetings Organiser/Minute Secretary: Frances Simpson had been appointed to start in April and cover the 4 meetings to March 2012.
- DPTAC: Dai Powell, Chair, had been contacted to express

SATA's concerns and in reply he had said the UK Government would undertake consultation on future options

- SATA News: No 6 was now planned for March. There had been unavoidable delay in posting No 5 on the website.

John Ballantine reported on the financial situation saying it was satisfactory. Members were asked to note the increases in subscription rates from April as per the AGM resolution.

Douglas Gilroy reported that the work and membership of the Sub Groups was under review. More people were needed to sign up for them and volunteer to lead them.

6. Information exchange

The following matters were reported or raised by those present:

(a) First ScotRail

Patrick Nyamurandira had submitted a report in writing which would be circulated to members.

Stan Flett said he had visited Lenzie station to look at improvements but noted that there was no split level on the ticket counter.

Stephen Joyce asked that there should be more consultation before changes were implemented.

(b) East Coast Trains

Matt Short had submitted a report in writing which would be circulated to members.

(c) Passenger Focus

A report had been issued on the *Assisted Passenger Reservation System*.

(d) Blue Badge charges

Pat McGuigan reported that Dumfries & Galloway Council was now charging £20 to issue a Blue Badge. It was noted that most local authorities were charging this as the maximum allowable.

(e) Audit Scotland

There was an investigation underway into Transport for Health and Social Care.

(f) Scottish Government

Brian Juffs, Senior Bus development Adviser, had written a report entitled *A Further Review of Demand Responsive Transport in Scotland* which had been considered by MACS and had been circulated to SATA members.

(g) Describe Online and the National Rail Map

Terry Robinson reported that Describe Online has revised its text equivalent map and station finder for the National Rail and London Underground networks to more closely reflect the likely routes taken by train services. However this is not a journey planner, the emphasis being on listing and identifying the order of stations on physical lines, rather than the actual routes taken by trains. Readers are invited to visit www.describe-online.com and follow the link to our National Rail, London Underground or National Tramways and Metros information. He expressed his thanks to Transport Scotland and First ScotRail for supporting the ongoing development and maintenance of text guides to stations. These guides can be accessed from the map, station finder, or from our portfolio. Please visit www.describe-online.com/intro/portfolio.htm#scottishstations.

7. Presentation

The presentation was given by **Christopher Cox**, Acting Public Transport Co-ordinator, Development Services, Falkirk Council.

He described the wide range of transport services provided by the Council within a budget of £1.5 million. They included financing socially-needed all-day and extended bus services, administering locally the Scotland-wide Bus Travel Scheme for Older and Disabled People and also the one for Young People and Blind People, supporting Dial-a-Ride and Shopmobility services, and funding taxi fare 'Taxicard' concessions.

The Council was now charging the maximum £20 allowed to issue Blue Badges along with 60% of Councils in Scotland

The current concern was next year's budget. It would be hard to sustain the present level of transport services and there was no statutory requirement to do so. The Council's priorities were providing access to employment, education and leisure services. Under-used, early morning, late night and Sunday bus services were likely to be most at risk. However replacement services might include demand responsive transport.

Questions and answers

A wide-ranging series of questions and answers followed.

In reply to Paul Cross and Pat McGuigan, he said Falkirk hoped to avoid wholesale cuts in bus services as was happening elsewhere. He thought the Scotland-wide Bus Travel Scheme was not sustainable in the long term although free transport had generated journeys. He recognised that some disabled people were excluded from the scheme. He agreed with Douglas Gilroy that there could be substantial savings if the eligibility age for older people was raised to 65. On re-regulation, Chris said fares could be higher without competition. He explained to Stephen Joyce, regarding travel outwith his area, that the concessionary fare scheme was centrally funded by Transport Scotland. He agreed with Kate Sanford that there was no consistent way of assessing need.

Alan Rees asked about the Council's Taxicard scheme and was told that it was not in line for a cut but might be "amended" by a restriction on the number of trips allowed. On partnership, the Council co-operated with Stirling and Clackmannanshire to joint fund contracts with Dial-a-Journey and Shopmobility. They were looking at other possible savings. Replying to John MacDonald, he said controlling what services commercial operators ran was difficult and the Council's own services could not undercut them. They had to be aware of obligations under the Equalities Act but it was hard to assess the impact on un-targeted services.

Asked about rail travel, Chris said all Councils helped to fund the Scotland-wide scheme and it was not threatened. ATCO was reviewing the scheme with an eye on the next ScotRail franchise. Paul Cross highlighted the complexity of ticketing.

Stan Flett drew the discussion to a close and thanked Chris warmly for his presentation and for answering questions.

8. AOCB

No other competent business was raised.

9. Next Meeting: 1.15 on Thursday 19th May 2011 at Transport Scotland, Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow G4 0HF

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