



Auchterarder Community Bus Group (ACBuG) Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements

01 September 2020 - 31 August 2021



SCIO, Charity No. SC048669

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Chair's Introduction

Despite the significant challenges and restrictions in our community caused by COVID-19, Auchterarder Town Bus Service has operated throughout the year and provided an invaluable transport service for a good number of residents.

This third Annual Report by Auchterarder Community Bus Group (ACBuG) charts the journey over the twelve months and highlights some of our plans for 2022 as we continue to strive to make our community more accessible and inclusive for all residents.

Establishing, maintaining, and developing the Town Bus Service would not have been possible without the vision, hard work and ongoing commitment of the Trustees.

We are also very grateful to Colin Docherty and the staff at Docherty's Midland Coaches. Their supportive approach with passengers - and proactive relationship with ACBuG - has been very welcome.

The assistance we have received from Auchterarder Community Facilities Fund and the wider Auchterarder community has also been very important.

My sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed.

Andrew Warrington
Chair, ACBuG

Charity contact information

Auchterarder Community Bus Group (ACBuG)

Scottish Charity Number: SC048669

Address c/o St Margaret's Health Centre
St Margaret's Drive
AUCHTERARDER

Postcode PH3 1JH

Email address acbug2018@gmail.com

Telephone no. 07510 303862

Website www.acbug2018.com

Twitter @acbug2018

Facebook Auchterarder-Community-Bus-Group



Charity Trustees

Neil Anderson	Treasurer	re-elected 09 December 2020
Ross Brodie		re-elected 09 December 2020
Carol Duncan	Secretary	
Tom Gray		
Lisa McGraw		re-elected 09 December 2020
Irvine Small		
Andrew Warrington	Chair	

Objectives and activities

ACBuG was formed in 2017 to address a severe lack of public transport provision in the residential areas of Auchterarder.



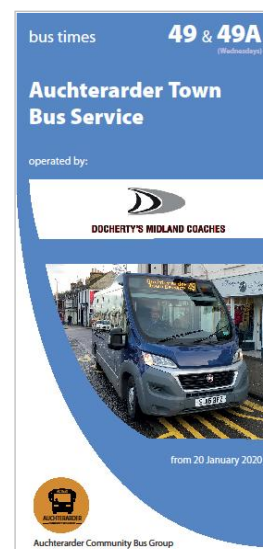
After seeking views about the transport problems being faced, through a community wide survey, and analysing the results, we decided to provide an innovative transport solution. We worked in partnership with PSV-licensed Docherty's Midland Coaches to deliver a publicly available Town Bus

Service, which started on 05 August 2019. It is available six days a week, with an hourly daytime frequency for Services 49 and 49A.

A low floor, wheelchair accessible vehicle, with a dedicated livery, provides the service. It operates as 'hail and ride' along most of the routes to facilitate passenger access.

In terms of fares, a low flat fare of £1.20 applies to all journeys and is valid for 75 minutes. The elderly, and people with a disability, who have a National Entitlement Card, travel free of charge.

Experience and user feedback led to a small number of route and timetable changes being made in January 2020 and these operational arrangements are still in place.



Structure, governance, and management

Charitable status and purpose

ACBuG became a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) on 30 August 2018, charity number SC048669.

The organisation's purpose is to *'provide a public transport service for those inhabitants living in Auchterarder and surrounding area that supports the advancement of citizenship or community development'*.



The Trustees run and manage ACBuG according to a Constitution (single-tier) that was accepted by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

Being a SCIO allows ACBuG to apply for grants from a variety of trusts and public/third sector funds.

Trustee recruitment and appointment

The initial Board of Trustees was appointed at the time that ACBuG gained charitable status.

Thereafter, appointment of trustees is by the ACBuG Board, by way of a resolution passed by a majority vote at a board meeting.

The Constitution requires that we have a minimum of three trustees and a maximum of nine.

At the conclusion of each Annual General Meeting, one third (to the nearest round number) of the charity's trustees shall retire from office. The Constitution explains the process for re-electing or replacing such trustees.

ACBuG is keen to have a diverse board to reflect our community and would welcome expressions of interest from any members of the community who feel able to help take the charity forward.

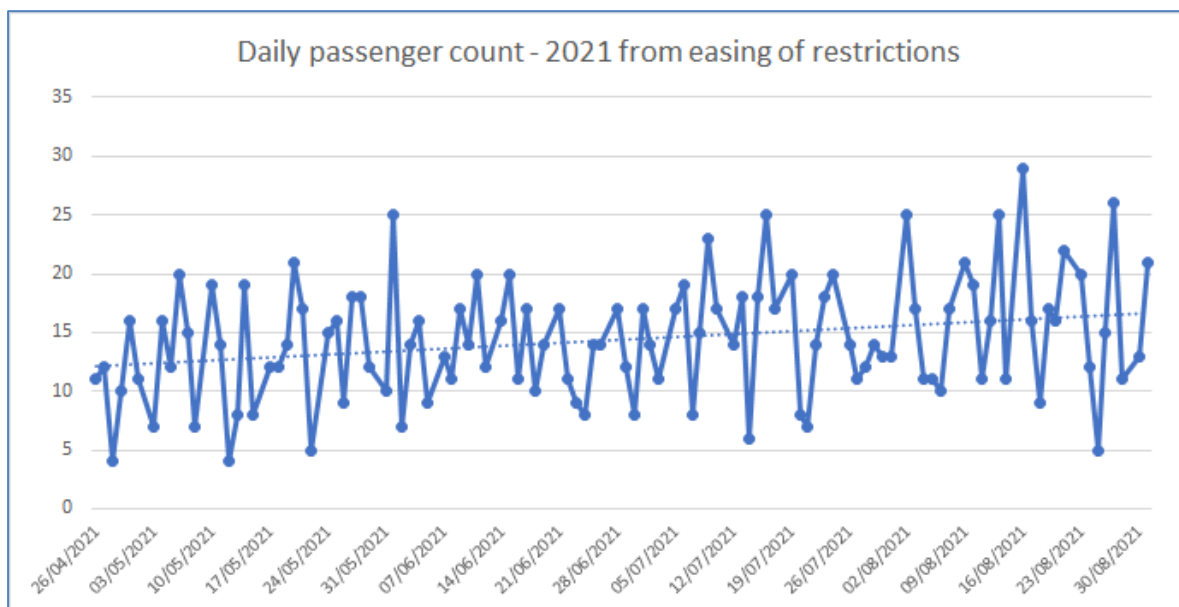
Operational Experience

The aim of the Town Bus Service was to help people to participate in community life and access local services/facilities. We were particularly keen to provide a public transport option for those residents who may be experiencing social isolation, assisting them to carry out their daily activities.



From launch of the Town Bus Service up to March 2020, there had been an encouraging growth in passenger journeys, with the average passenger journeys per day reaching 23 by February 2020, the last full month prior to lockdown. The busiest week at that time had been w/e 18 January 2020 when 161 passenger journeys were made.

Due to COVID-19, the Town Bus Service was suspended from 28 March 2020 to 06 July 2020, and further Covid restrictions over the winter of 2020-21 affected passenger numbers. However, since the easing of restrictions at the end of April 2021 we have again seen consistent signs of recovery. Passenger numbers grew by 26% from May 2021 to the end of the financial year, and that growth has continued in the most recent months, such that we are now well on the way to achieving pre-Covid levels.



The value of the Town Bus Service, even during the COVID-19 lockdowns, was articulated by users, but it was clear that far more development work still needs to be undertaken, focusing on interventions for those residents who face barriers which prevent them from using the bus.

ACBuG has tried to engage with users and other interested parties throughout the year - both on the bus, via social media and in the local papers - to help keep the profile of the bus to the fore.

The latest promotional initiative has been a *Town Bus Treasure Hunt*, commencing in October 2021, with answers for the ten clues being found as the Town Bus travels around the Town. Hopefully this will have generated a good deal of local interest and encourage a few new users of the Town Bus.

Financial Review

Funding

Operating a local bus service is clearly expensive and needs significant levels of subsidy. As a result, trustees continued to look at opportunities to raise funds. So far, ACBuG has raised £200,000 out of a four-year funding target of circa £330,000.

Financial Statements

The financial statements on Pages 13-15 provide details of income and expenditure for the third year of ACBuG's existence, during which we were very pleased to receive £50,000 of funding from Auchterarder Community Facilities Fund.

Looking ahead, we have a further £60,000 of funding which has been committed. With operating costs of around £5,500-£6,000 per month, we already have sufficient funding to take us up until May 2022. In addition to the costs due to the bus operator, we anticipate having additional expenses for publicity materials, a further community survey and, potentially, for some bus infrastructure.

Statement of the charity's policy on reserves

Funding income will come in unevenly, being linked to successful grant applications, while outgoings are largely regular and predictable. Therefore, we don't have a specific policy on reserves, but we would always aim to have secured funding to cover up to six months of operational costs.

Future Plans

When the second Annual Report was written the aim had been to progress on to the next phase of what had been an initial four-year Business Plan in Spring 2021.

This development timeline subsequently had to be revised due to the on-going restrictions on community activities caused by COVID-19. Many community facilities have remained closed, with groups/organisations either suspending their activities or at best meeting remotely via Zoom.

It was clearly not practicable for ACBuG Trustees to undertake direct engagement with residents (possibly in their own homes), whilst there were no opportunities to undertake promotional activities at community-based meetings or at facilities such as St Margaret's Health Centre or Auchterarder Library.

Consequently, Trustees decided to reschedule the wider implementation of its development initiatives until late Autumn 2021/early 2022 - when hopefully community organisations and facilities will have recommenced their activities.

In the intervening period, ACBuG trustees have however progressed two important strands of work:

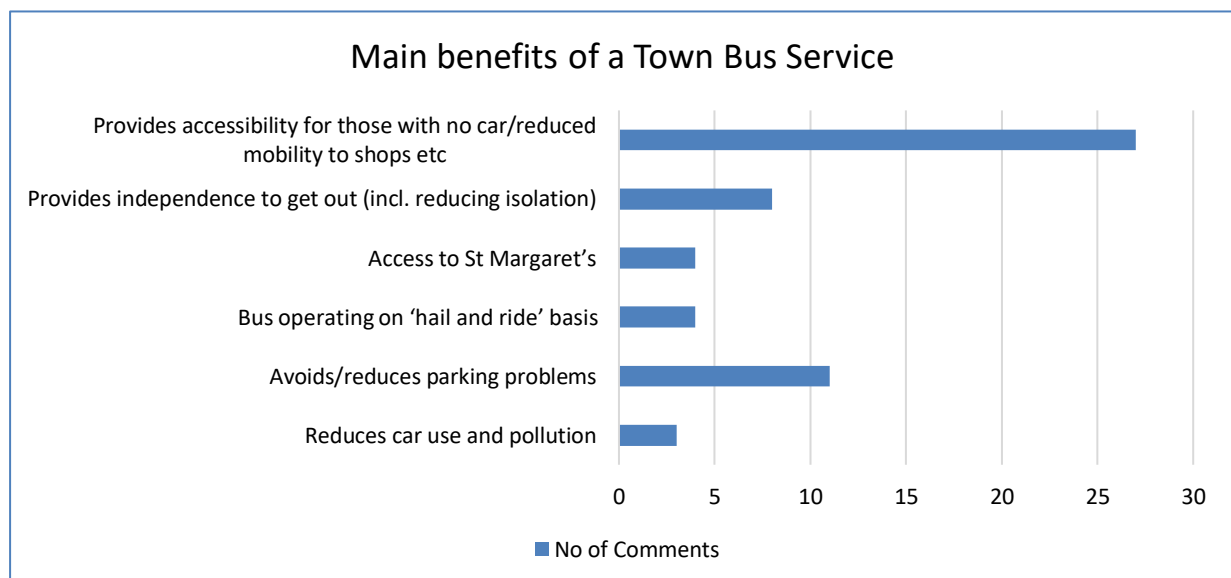
- Survey of Town Bus Users
- Scoping out a new project - Travel Assistance for Independent Mobility (TAIM)

Survey of Town Bus Users

In late May 2021 ACBuG made available a survey for current and previous users of the Town Bus Service to gain their views on the Town Bus and its future development.

By the closing date in mid-June 2021, ACBuG had had a very good response from 46 users (and former users) of the Town Bus who provided a wide range of comments and observations.

Overall, the respondents were positive about the current operation of the Town Bus Service, so wholesale changes were clearly not justified. Worthy of note, 89% of respondents said they would, or may, make more use of the service post-lockdown.



When asked about the main benefits of the Town Bus Service, 72 comments were received. Grouping the comments into themes, accessibility to the shops and other community facilities for those with no car or reduced mobility was by far the most popular benefit. Complementing accessibility, several respondents mentioned the bus providing them with independence to get out, including reducing isolation.

One respondent, aged 91, commented ‘... without the bus I would be housebound’, whilst another said, ‘if you cannot walk far, it gives you independence to get out’.

Respondents were asked if they had any ideas/suggestions about how ACBuG can make the Town Bus more attractive to local residents - in terms of timetable changes, route changes and/or other suggestions.

ACBuG Trustees have considered all the feedback received to assess potential service changes in the short/medium term. It is acknowledged however that enhancing provision in some areas may require reduced levels of service in other parts of the timetable.

Maintaining an hourly timetable is viewed by Trustees as crucial to the future success of the Town Bus Service, so that residents get used to the bus serving their residential location consistently and reliably at a given time.

A summary of the Results from the Users Survey is to be published towards the end of 2021, together with an indication of the operational changes being considered.

Travel Assistance for Independent Mobility (TAIM)

For a not insignificant proportion of the local community, carrying out essential daily activities, such as shopping or going to a medical appointment, is difficult or even impossible. These inequalities have been exacerbated by the closure or severely restricted access to a whole range of community facilities due to COVID-19, whilst local groups have been unable to meet in person. Feedback from health and social care practitioners, and others working in the community, has emphasised that social isolation is a real issue for some residents.

The TAIM project will provide direct, tailored, but flexible, assistance to individuals who are socially isolated and unable to participate fully in their local community. The clear aim is to help the identified residents become independent travellers, with the Town Bus underpinning the initiative.

The TAIM Project will commence in late Autumn 2021 and focus on three key outcomes:

- Isolated older people will have more opportunities to be involved in core community activities
- Local people will be better connected within their community
- More local residents will find it easier to reach appointments at the St Margaret’s health facilities.

Each strand of work is underpinned by several actions which address different elements of unmet transport demand.

ACBuG will formalise and embed a Referral System for the TAIM Project within our community partners, with organisations able to identify residents they consider would benefit from using the Town Bus Service but who need support/training to make the initial steps, whether due to a mobility issue, a lack of confidence or another concern that is proving to be a barrier to independent mobility.

ACBuG will be looking to reduce isolation and loneliness for those participating in the TAIM Project, whilst enhancing their self-esteem and mental wellbeing, and, as a result, quality of life.

The initial target is to provide tailored travel training for 25 people in the next year, although ACBuG will happily provide more general support to other potential bus users. This links in with a more general target for ACBuG of achieving 20% annual passenger growth for the Town Bus Service.

Sustainability

Trustees have continued to focus on the sustainability of the Town Bus Service and its financial stability, primarily through fundraising. Applications will be submitted to a number of local and national funders in the year ahead, highlighting the partnership we have with Docherty's Midland Coaches.

Whilst the primary focus of ACBuG is addressing unmet transport needs, a significant additional advantage will be the ability of the Town Bus to help reduce local car traffic.

In the User Survey, even for those with direct access to a car, the Town Bus was viewed positively in helping to avoid parking problems in central Auchterarder.

Apart from the clear environmental benefits of reducing car traffic, the additional passengers and income for the Town Bus will help with its future sustainability.

ACBuG are also conscious of a need for the Town Bus Service to reduce its own environmental footprint, so we are beginning to investigate opportunities for operating an electric bus in the future

Risk Management

Whilst ACBuG has had a strong organisational emphasis on assessing risk, the experiences of the last 18 months have provided an added focus on the importance of organisational flexibility and resilience if we are to continue to provide our core services in what may be challenging circumstances.



The recent User Survey has highlighted the importance of the Town Bus to users being able to undertake their key daily chores. The number of users will increase as a direct result of TAIM, so it is vitally important that a thorough reappraisal of the Risk Management framework is undertaken to ensure, wherever practicable, adequate mitigation measures are in place.

Acknowledgements

ACBuG is exceedingly grateful for the financial support from funding partners - both received to date and also committed - without whom we would not be able to operate the Town Bus Service. These include:

- Auchterarder Community Facilities Fund (managed by the Council)
 - Robertson Homes
 - Muir Homes
 - Stewart Milne
- Community Investment Fund
- Friends of St Margaret's
- New Transport Initiatives in the Community Fund

Additionally, ACBuG would like to acknowledge the support from the following:

- Auchterarder & District Community Council
- Public Transport Unit, Perth & Kinross Council
- St Margaret's Health Centre
- Davidsons Chemists
- Auchterarder Library
- James Urquhart Ironmongers
- Café Kisa
- LivingLOCAL

... and the shops and community facilities that stock and hand out the Town Bus Service timetable leaflets.

Declaration

The Board of Trustees declare that they have approved the Annual Report and Financial Statements.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:

Signature(s)	<i>A J Warrington</i>	<i>N A Anderson</i>
Full Name(s)	Andrew Warrington	Neil Anderson
Position	Chair	Treasurer
Date	12 December 2021	12 December 2021

Statement of Receipts and Payments

	Note	Year to 31 August 2021 £	Year to 31 August 2020 £
Receipts			
Grants	4	50,000	50,000
Fundraising		0	0
Total Receipts		50,000	50,000
Payments			
Costs of Charitable Activities	5	66,790	47,282
Fundraising costs		0	56
Governance costs - other		318	180
Total payments		67,108	47,518
Surplus (Deficit) for the period		(17,108)	2,482

Statement of Balances

	As at 31 August 2021 £	As at 31 August 2020 £
Opening cash at bank and in hand	41,233	38,751
Surplus for the period	(17,108)	2,482
At end of year	24,125	41,233

Bank and Cash Balances

	As at 31 August 2021 £	As at 31 August 2020 £
Current Account	24,125	41,233
At end of year	24,125	41,233

Notes to the Financial Statements

1 Basis of accounting

These accounts have been prepared on the Receipts and Payments basis in accordance with the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

2 Nature and Purpose of funds

Unrestricted funds are those that may be used at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the objectives of the charity. The trustees maintain a single unrestricted fund for the day-to-day running of the charity.

Restricted funds may only be used for the specific purposes. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for specific purposes.

3 Related party transactions

No remuneration was paid to the trustees or any connected persons during the period.

4 Grants received (year up to 31 August 2021)

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total £
Auchterarder Community Facilities Fund	50,000	50,000
	<u>50,000</u>	<u>50,000</u>

5 Cost of charitable activities (year up to 31 August 2021)

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total £
Payments to Docherty's Midland Coaches	66,652	66,652
Market Research - Printing of Users Survey	138	138
	<u>66,790</u>	<u>66,790</u>

Independent Examiner's Report on the Accounts

APPENDIX 3



		Independent examiner's report on the accounts v2					
Report to the trustees/members of	Charity name	AUCHTERARDER COMMUNITY BUS GROUP (ACBuG)					
Registered charity number		SC048669					
On the accounts of the charity for the period	Period start date				Period end date		
	Day	Month	Year	to	Day	Month	Year
	01	09	2020		31	08	2021
Set out on pages	13-14					(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)	
Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner	The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) 2005 Act and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended). The charity trustees consider that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1) (d) of the Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1) (c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.						
Basis of independent examiner's statement	My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeks explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and, consequently, I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.						
Independent examiner's statement	<p>In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention [other than that disclosed on the attached page*]</p> <p>1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to keep accounting records in accordance with section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations, and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations <p>have not been met, or</p> <p>2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.</p>						
Signed:	<i>A Macpherson</i>			Date:	12 December 2021		
Name:	ANDREW DAVID MACPHERSON						
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	FCCA						
Address:	xx xxxxxxxx xxxx						
	EDINBURGH EHxx xxx						

*Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply. If the words do apply, set out those matters which have come to your attention on the following page.