



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

01 September 2021 - 31 August 2022



SCIO, Charity No. SC048669

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Chair's Introduction

Over the last twelve months Auchterarder Town Bus Service has operated successfully and, as the community slowly reopened following the COVID restrictions, has seen good growth in usage.

This fourth Annual Report by Auchterarder Community Bus Group (ACBuG) charts the activities of the charity over the twelve months and provides an overview of our priorities for 2023.

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 his drivers at Docherty's Midland Coaches. Their flexible and supportive approach with passengers has been really important.

Credit is also due to Andrew Macpherson, FCCA, who, for the last four years, has kindly fulfilled the Independent Examiner's role in reviewing our accounts.

My sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed, as we jointly strive to make our community more accessible and inclusive for residents.

Andrew Warrington
Chair, ACBuG

Charity contact information

Auchterarder Community Bus Group (ACBuG)

Scottish Charity Number: SC048669

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Charity Trustees

Neil Anderson	Treasurer	
Ross Brodie		resigned 26 March 2022
Carol Duncan	Secretary	
Tom Gray		re-elected 07 December 2021
Lisa McGraw		
Irvine Small		re-elected 07 December 2021
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, 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.

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.

The elderly, people with a disability, and young people under 22 years of age, who have a National Entitlement Card, travel free of charge. For others, a low adult fare of £1.20 applies to all journeys.

Following a review of the Town Bus Service, route and timetable changes were introduced at the end of May 2022 and these revised operational arrangements have been positively received.

Service No	Days of operation	Current Routing
49	Monday - Saturday	Links the housing areas to the south of the High Street/Townhead and to the north of Hunter Street, as well as Glenorchil, to the Town Centre and St Margaret's Health Centre/Hospital

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.

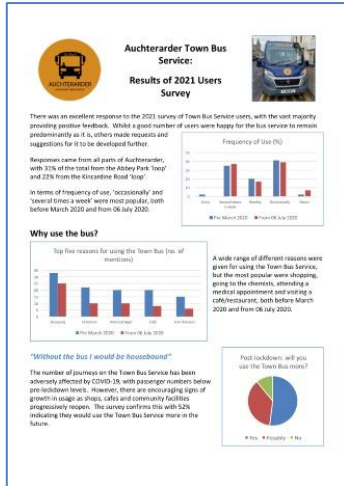
At the conclusion of each Annual General Meeting, one third (to the nearest round number) of the charity's trustees shall retire from office. The Constitution explains the process for re-electing or replacing such trustees.

Operational Experience

User Survey and revised Routing and Timetable

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.

With the easing of COVID restrictions, the Town Bus Service had shown gradual growth, but trustees were clear the bus was not reaching all its intended target users.



In 2021 a survey of current and previous users of the Town Bus Service was undertaken to gain their views on the Town Bus and to inform its future development. Overall, the respondents were positive about the existing operation of the Town Bus Service, so wholesale changes were not justified.

Building on the results of the User Survey (which were published in January 2022), together with a detailed assessment of passenger statistics and further engagement with key stakeholders, ACBuG Trustees considered several timetable and route changes.

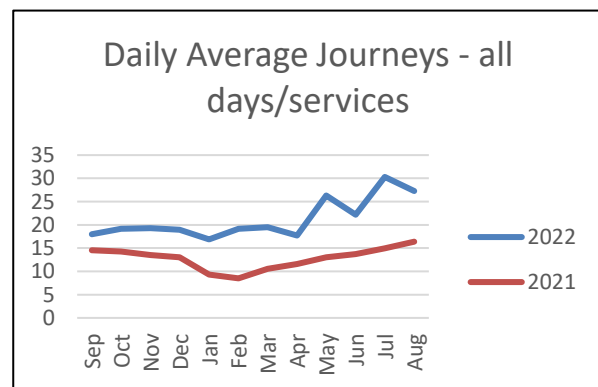
ACBuG trustees thought that retaining a consistent hourly timetable for the Town Bus Service was crucial to achieving an increase in passenger numbers.

After assessing various options, it was decided to withdraw the Wednesday only Service 49A timetable, and to promote a revised and improved Service 49 timetable that would operate the same routing six days a week. Whilst the Town Bus would no longer serve Sycamore Avenue, Tullibardine Road and Glenorchil Crescent were added, with the new timetable being introduced on 30 May 2022.

The new Town Bus timetable was promoted heavily, with features appearing in the Strathearn Herald and livingLOCAL, as well as on social media. A fully updated timetable leaflet was produced, with door-to-door distribution in Glenorchil and the newer residential areas to the north of Hunter Street. Timetable leaflets were also delivered to community facilities (such as the Library, Health Centre and Aytoun Hall) and shops throughout the town, whilst posters were displayed on key community noticeboards (including recently installed digital ones).

The new timetable bedded in well and has proven to be operationally reliable. Most significantly however it has underpinned a really encouraging growth in usage, with a 26% increase in the daily average usage for the first quarter after the change, compared to the previous quarter.

Whilst the upward trend is now higher than at any point since the Town Bus Service commenced operation, Trustees believe there is still significant potential to increase usage further.



What is not known at present is how much of the passenger growth is due to new passengers as opposed to existing users travelling more frequently. Survey work will be undertaken to get a better understanding of the pattern of use. For new users we are keen to understand how easy it was to start using the service

Community Action Plan

We have been very lucky since our formation to have received a lot of assistance from local community groups, and we have looked to reciprocate this by supporting them in their activities. Apart from raising our profile, it also gives us an opportunity to contribute to - and potentially influence - some of development work being undertaken in Auchterarder.

In April 2022 the first Auchterarder and Aberuthven Community Action Plan (A&ACAP) was published. ACBuG was represented on the steering group that worked over a six-month period to formulate the plan, which included a significant amount of community engagement activity. The CAP focuses on six key themes - including health, the environment and transport - whilst the resultant actions include some focused specifically on improved public transport provision, including the Town Bus.



Travel Assistance for Independent Mobility (TAIM)

The TAIM project focuses on three key outcomes:

1. Local people will be better connected within their community
2. Isolated older people will have more opportunities to be involved in core community activities
3. 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.

Originally it was intended that the TAIM project would commence in late Autumn 2021, with a twelve-month programme of activity. Unfortunately, the on-going restrictions on most community activity caused by COVID meant that it was impracticable at that time to work with people on a one-to-one basis.

A subsequent commencement date in early 2022 was then impacted by the new variant of COVID, which resulted in further restrictions being imposed.

However, since late Spring 2022 we have been able to proactively address key elements of the TAIM project, albeit not entirely in the manner we had initially intended.



Travel Assistance for Independent Mobility (TAIM) using the Auchterarder Town Bus

Do you think the Town Bus may help you get around Auchterarder? But are you unsure of the routing, timetables, fares or possibly even how to use the bus?

Don't worry, Auchterarder Community Bus Group (ACBuG) are keen to provide you with assistance and dedicated one-to-one support.

We will accompany you on your initial journeys to show you how it all works and make sure you are comfortable to undertake independent travel.

The Town Bus can accommodate mobility aids and a person travelling in their wheelchair. If eligible, we will also help you apply for a National Entitlement Card.

Why not give us a 'phone for an initial chat (07510 303 862) or send an e-mail to acbug2018@gmail.com

We look forward to hearing from you.

ACBuG is a SCIO charity number SC048669

The TAIM project has been promoted extensively in the local community, including features in livingLOCAL, engagement with key stakeholders - such as the Community Prescriber - and doing presentations to groups like Auchterarder SWI.

Good progress has been made in terms of more local people being better connected within their

community. This has been underpinned by the operational changes made to the Town Bus in May 2022 and publicity about the service being readily available throughout the community. In addition to traditional timetable leaflets, detailed information has been incorporated in other community-based publications, such as the *Doors Open Days* brochure.

We have proactively liaised with the Health Centre and the Community Hospital to try and ensure that residents have the opportunity to reach appointments at the St Margaret's health facilities by the Town Bus. This engagement activity has been extended to include community groups that are using the Community Hospital for their meetings, such as Neurocentral. Vaccination clinics have also been promoted by ACPuG within the community, including on social media - with the convenience of using the Town Bus emphasised.

Whilst health and social care agencies and community groups have been very supportive of TAIM, and despite the initiatives described above, to date there have been few individual referrals. ACPuG Trustees are actively trying to understand, and subsequently address, this situation, which will be a key priority in the next six months.

Ultimately it may be that ACPuG fulfils a more facilitative role in terms of transport provision rather than providing the one-to-one support which had been our original expectation.

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 £247,400 out of a funding target of circa £300,000.

Financial Statements

The financial statements on Pages 13-15 provide details of income and expenditure for the fourth year of ACBuG's existence, during which we were very pleased to receive a combined total of £66,200 from

- Auchterarder Community Facilities Fund
- Community Investment Fund
- Friends of St Margaret's
- Perth and Kinross Community Transport Fund

Looking ahead, we have a further £41,200 of funding which has been committed. With average operating costs of around £5,600 per month, we already have sufficient funding to take us up until the end of May 2023. In addition to the costs due to the bus operator, we anticipate having additional expenses for publicity materials and a further community survey. Operating costs are forecast to rise by over 13% from 01 April 2023 due to fuel and other cost of living pressures.

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

Building relationships and partnerships

ACBuG continues to look for new opportunities to build relationships with different local groups and charities and be proactively engaged in their projects. This will be key to progressing elements of the TAIM project.

Stemming from the A&ACAP, ACBuG has been heavily involved in an important new initiative in Auchterarder - *Cosy Spaces*. For some in our community, due to the cost-of-living crisis, this winter will present significant challenges for keeping warm. A number of community groups, including ACBuG, have come together to provide a programme of '*Cosy Spaces*'.

Cosy Spaces are places where someone can call into, know they'll get a warm welcome, and some free light refreshments.

The current programme will run to the end of March 2023 and all locations in the programme are accessible from the Town Bus. In fact, several sessions have been specifically timed to allow people to travel to and from them by the Town Bus, which itself is a 'warm and cosy way to travel'.

Free 'warm packs' are to be made available containing items to help people stay cosy at home, and these will be collectable from the Town Bus.

ACBuG has offered to travel with anyone who is initially unsure about using the Town Bus to attend a *Cosy Space* and will help people to obtain National Entitlement Cards - if eligible - to allow them to gain free bus travel.

VisionPK have started a new group in Auchterarder for people with visual impairment and ACBuG have offered to provide guidance and direct support to their members to help them use the Town Bus to attend their sessions at the Community Hospital. A similar offer has been made to a local sports group, who are starting a '*sporting memories*' project in early 2023.

2023 Survey

Ensuring that the Town Bus is responding to key community needs is imperative and the 2023 Survey will endeavour to provide quantitative and qualitative information to highlight the successes, and hopefully continual growth of the Town Bus. In addition to the survey, the views of key local community activists and organisations will be sought.

The survey results will also crucially identify areas for improvement and development. Key elements of the TAIM project will be reviewed and hopefully further insight will be gained of how best to contact those people that are isolated, lonely and unable to access community facilities.

The key outcome for the transport service provided by ACBuG is helping people participate more fully in their community, whilst hopefully enhancing their self-esteem and mental wellbeing, and, as a result, quality of life. We are however increasingly flexible, in how this might be achieved.

A bus for all the community

ACBuG is keen to ensure the community is fully aware that the Town Bus is available for everyone to use irrespective of age or mobility.

We are looking to increase our promotion of the bus to younger members of the community, with the introduction by Transport Scotland of free bus travel for under 22s underscoring this aspiration.

Cheeky Monkey's Nursery had many of their children travel on the town bus earlier in the year - and it would appear many thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Hopefully their enthusiasm for bus travel will rub off on their families.

Links have also been made with the Logos Youth Project in Auchterarder to highlight the daytime availability of the Town Bus in school holidays and on Saturdays. The potential for young people who are undertaking Duke of Edinburgh awards to help on the Town Bus has been tentatively mooted.

Recruitment of new Trustees

ACBuG has been fortunate to have a hard-working Board, but following a couple of retirements, we are on the lookout for up to four new Trustees.

We would like to have a diverse Board that reflects our community and would really like to hear from any residents who feel able to help take the charity forward.

Enthusiasm, new ideas and a desire to be part of a closeknit team are the key attributes.

Sustainability

Trustees have continued to focus on the sustainability of the Town Bus Service and its financial stability, primarily through fundraising.



Trustees were delighted when Auchterarder & District Community Trust agreed a £15k award. This is a new funding agreement, and we look forward to building a positive relationship with them.

Further funding applications will be submitted to a number of national and local funders in the next six months, highlighting the partnership we have with Docherty's Midland Coaches.

ACBuG are conscious of a need for the Town Bus Service to reduce its own environmental footprint. There are potentially significant emission and fuel cost savings by converting to a zero-emission vehicle. ACBuG submitted an application to the Energy Saving Trust/Transport Scotland to purchase an electric minibus. Whilst our bid was ultimately unsuccessful, we were encouraged by the positive response to the application and will certainly look to submit another application should there be future rounds of the 'Plugged-in Communities Grant' fund.

Risk Management

Whilst ACBuG has had a strong organisational emphasis on assessing risk, the importance of organisational flexibility, resilience and, wherever practicable, having adequate mitigation measures in place, continue to be key considerations.



Acknowledgements

ACBuG would like to thank two individuals: Ang Laurie, Community Connector A&ACAP and David Homewood, Friends of Aytoun Hall. Both have given a great deal of support to the Town Bus over the last twelve months.

Finally, ACBuG would like to acknowledge the assistance we receive from the shops, local groups 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	05 December 2022	05 December 2022

Statement of Receipts and Payments

	Note	Year to 31 August 2022 £	Year to 31 August 2021 £
Receipts			
Grants	4	66,200	50,000
Fundraising		58	0
Total Receipts		66,258	50,000
Payments			
Costs of Charitable Activities	5	68,238	66,790
Fundraising costs		0	0
Governance costs - other		291	318
Total payments		68,529	67,108
Surplus (Deficit) for the period		(2,271)	(17,108)

Statement of Balances

	As at 31 August 2022 £	As at 31 August 2021 £
Opening cash at bank and in hand	24,125	41,233
Surplus for the period	(2,271)	(17,108)
At end of year	21,854	24,125

Bank and Cash Balances

	As at 31 August 2022 £	As at 31 August 2021 £
Current Account	21,854	24,125
At end of year	21,854	24,125

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 2022)

	Unrestricted Funds	Total
	£	£
Auchterarder Community Facilities Fund	25,000	25,000
Community Investment Fund	10,000	10,000
Friends of St Margaret's	30,000	30,000
Perth & Kinross Community Transport Fund	1,200	1,200
	<u>66,200</u>	<u>66,200</u>

5 Cost of charitable activities (year up to 31 August 2022)

	Unrestricted Funds	Total
	£	£
Payments to Docherty's Midland Coaches	66,410	66,410
Publicity	705	705
Timetables	1,123	1,123
Market Research - Printing of Users Survey	0	0
	<u>68,238</u>	<u>68,238</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		Day	Month	Year
	01	09	2021	to	31	08	2022
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	In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention						
	1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:						
	<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 						
	have not been met, or						
	2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.						
Signed:	<i>A Macpherson</i>			Date:	18 November 2022		
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.