

Minutes of the 1st Annual General Meeting

Monday 18th March 2024 at 7pm, held at Crieff High School

Present from the Committee:

Ian Aikman (Chair), Sally Stewart (Vice-chair), Louise Pengelley (Minutes Secretary), Ingrid Clayden (Bus Convenor), Margaret Morrison, Alastair Petrie, Kim MacKinnon, Margaret McPhater

Apologies:

Fred Mason, Kathleen Coffey, Ken Arton, Elizabeth Malloch, Peter Airey, Sue Maclean, Wilma Martin (Building Bridges), Mary Gavin (Cameron House, Comrie), Anne Pearson (Tuesday Club), Heather Morris, Margaret Lawson, Katie Lang, James McConnell (Crieff Rotary)

Welcome

Ian Aikman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all for coming.

The **Minutes of the 47th Annual General Meeting of Strathcare**, held on 27th March 2023, were accepted as accurate. Their adoption was proposed by Sally Stewart and seconded by Ian Aikman.

Treasurer's Report (read by the Chair)

The Financial Statement has been approved by the Trustees, checked by our independent examiner and forwarded to OSCR as shown on their website. It is also available on the Bertie Bus Website.

The statement only covers the period 11th July 2023 till 29th February 2024 as all financial transactions prior to this were included in the final Financial Statement of Strathcare.

Regarding Receipts

The exceptionally large amount shown as Donations is due to the donation or transfer of £134,173 which represented the final balance from Strathcare. This left actual third-party donations at a very welcome £7,217. The amount of Interest shown only represents the interest on the Bank of Scotland notice account. The interest on the long-term savings account with United Trust Bank, opened August 2023, is only added annually.

Regarding Payments

The unusually high Governance cost of £ 3,240 is the cost of using a solicitor to assist in winding up Strathcare and creating Bertie Bus as a SCIO.

Ignoring the donation from Strathcare the true surplus for the year was £1,578 which although does not match inflation still represents a good result for the year.

Chairman's report

When the year started, we were still Strathcare, a registered charity. After 18 months of hard dedicated work by Ian Buchan, Fred Mason, and Anne Orchardson we changed our charitable status to a SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) and changed the name of the charity to Bertie Bus on the 30th of June 2023. This was done to give greater protection to our trustees and all the other volunteers. We have for many years have referred to our bus as Bertie Bus, so we felt it made sense to rename the charity Bertie Bus.

Our regular runs: Comrie and Library clubs, Muthill shopping and Tuesday shopping trips, the Wednesday and Friday clubs, Richmond house runs, the lunch club and the Cinema club were all up and running by the end of March, bringing much pleasure to our passengers.

The Sunday Tea dances, organised and run by Strathearn Arts, were so popular that passenger numbers exceed Bertie Bus's capacity. Happily, some of our very kind volunteers helped by using their own vehicles to transport passengers so that no one missed out.

On the 6th of July 2023 we organised a summer lunch, held at the Royal British Legion on Perth Road, whom we would like to thank for the use of their facilities. The Bertie Bus but with the Coco bus bringing passengers from Comrie, and some of our kind volunteers using their own transport bringing passengers from Crieff and surrounding areas. Campbell's bakery put on a great spread which was served along with tea and coffee by around 15 of our volunteers. It goes without saying that a great time was had by all.

Bertie Bus also organised a coffee morning and chat for over 20 passengers on 5th September 2023 at the Steading in Crieff. A big thank-you to the Steading for putting on a selection of sandwiches and cakes that was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Several volunteers received First Aid Training and Dementia awareness training in November. Midas training by Perth and Kinross Council was organised for all our new drivers, and those existing drivers whose tests were due.

The website www.bertiebus.org.uk has been refreshed and improved.

For many of the people we serve in and around Crieff safe door-to-door transport, friendly volunteers and a change of scenery provide a welcome highlight to their week. Those in nursing or care homes also enjoy outings. Library users unable to use public transport also appreciate the service provided.

Demand for our services has been high over the past year. The Wednesday, Friday, Marks and Spencer, Comrie and Tea Dance groups often run at full capacity. Only the Thursday lunch run is low on numbers and efforts are being made to increase passengers for this run. We get new passengers mainly via word-of-mouth, but also through the Social Prescriber. As Bertie goes around Crieff the bus is our best advertisement.

Bertie Bus provides leaflets aimed primarily at possible users, public displays of photographs and contact material and a website. But more crucially perhaps, Bertie Bus positively offers information meetings with front line health and care professionals and arranges the provision of leaflet supplies to their offices. The office bearers continue to receive calls from family members and concerned professionals and offer support where possible. Our relationship with the Local Social Prescriber has continued to increase the number of people we can assist. groups and transport already support a considerable number of passengers with memory or functional limitations and much credit is due to the passenger assistants and drivers who ensure their safety and enjoyment.

Bertie Bus currently has fourteen volunteer drivers and thirty-six volunteer passenger assistants who give freely of their time and services, all volunteers are offered training as appropriate

I would like to thank all our volunteers for all their hard work and support over the last twelve months. It is very much appreciated; we could not operate without these amazing people.

Last summer Anne Orchardson our secretary took the decision to step down for health reasons. I would like to thank Anne for her many years of commitment as a trustee and know that while she is still volunteering for us we can tap into her extensive knowledge. I am pleased that Anne has not stepped away completely, she is a very active passenger assistant and also runs the tea dances group along with Shona Cramb.

Ian Buchan has decided to step down as a Trustee as of this AGM. Ian has fulfilled a few different roles latterly Chair. I would like to thank him for his commitment and contribution as a trustee to Bertie bus over the last 8 years or so. I am delighted that Ian is staying on with us as a driver. He has also committed to supporting the driver assessments and the volunteer training that is due to be run soon. Ian's wealth of knowledge and experience are still going to be available to us should we need them, which is very good news.

Thank you, Anne and Ian, for all your hard work.

Bus Convenor's Report

The past year has been a good one for Bertie Bus with a full schedule of runs taking the bus out most weekdays and some weekend days too. Care has been taken to ensure an appropriate mix of able-bodied and less able passengers, supported by sufficient passenger assistants, so that there is room for an increased number of walking aids on the bus. Very recently the board has concluded that our Covid protocols can be relaxed in line with government guidelines so that passengers and volunteers are no longer required to have vaccines before coming on to Bertie. However, we expect all passengers and volunteers to stay away if they feel unwell.

As always, I am extremely grateful to Hamish Duncan for his role in ensuring that Bertie is maintained in good working order with fuel and supplies topped up and for repairing minor damage to the bodywork. Unfortunately, Hamish has now had to give up this role, as well as his role as a Bertie driver, for health reasons. He will be sorely missed, not least by me as I take on many of the jobs he has had to relinquish! In that regard I am grateful to Ian Buchan for his help in keeping the bus on the road and for taking test drives with potential new drivers. We wish Hamish a swift recovery and hopefully a return to Bertie Bus.

In addition to Hamish, Maitland Wilson has had to retire from driving Bertie on age grounds leaving us with 14 active drivers going into 2024. We thank Maitland for his contribution to driving Bertie. We are actively recruiting new drivers and providing MiDAS and other training both for new and existing drivers. New driver suggestions and introductions are always welcome.

Ingrid Clayden, Bus Convenor

Wednesday Club Report (read by the Secretary)

The Wednesday Group has maintained a list of passengers numbering in the 20s throughout the last year, currently 21. While gaining 11 new members we did lose 9. Of the current number of 21, 9 have either physical challenges or a level of dementia. This certainly puts quite a burden on the PA volunteers.

We visited many different locations during the year, including Dobbies in Stirling and Perth, the Bankfoot Visitors Centre, Marks & Spencers Dunblane, Gloagburn, The Mustard Seed. Only one trip was cancelled caused by lack of numbers when only two people wished to go out.

The usual very successful Christmas lunch was held at Comrie Golf Club, with 20 passengers and a large number of volunteers. Many thanks to the PA and driver volunteers for helping throughout the year. They all do a great job.

Kathleen Coffey, Wednesday Club Co-ordinator

Friday Club Report

There are 13 active members of the group, with 2 "reserves" if anyone cancels. There are rarely fewer than 9 people out, usually more. We have a waiting list of five. Turnover is happily low which makes it a very stable group. They know each other and really take pleasure in one another's company. Lots of good trips over the year, occasionally further afield in the summer.

Christmas lunch at the Murraypark was attended by all the passengers and PAs and several drivers. We bid farewell and thanks to Alison Hockly and Kate Macaulay but happily Kate has returned to us! Thanks, as ever to all the PAs and drivers whose hard work makes the Friday Club run so well.

Louise Pengelley, Friday Club Co-ordinator

Library Group

Library visits continue to be well attended, with ten around passengers taking part each month. We have continued to finish the library visit with a trip to "The Steading". This has proved very popular with the passengers who enjoy their cup of tea and a chat.

Each library trip now has 2 Passenger Assistants (PAs) on each trip. As most PAs have commitments on other trips, there is a rota of PAs which has worked very well. My thanks to the PAs who have given so generously of their time.

My thanks also goes to our drivers whose help is much appreciated on each trip.

A particular highlight this year was when four girls from the Crieff High School carried out interviews with the passengers as part of their Young Persons Philanthropic Initiative (YPI). The passengers were delighted to hear that the girls won the competition and were present when the cheque for £3000 was presented to Bertie Bus.
Alastair Petrie, Library Group Leader

M&S Shopping Club Report

We have had 9 trips to Marks & Spencer's at Dunblane, with one rescheduled to run in March, averaging 10 passengers per trip. Due to Bertie problems and Storm Jocelyn, we have had a challenging time, cancelling and having to reschedule trips. When this happened our passengers and PAs were disappointed as they all look forward to their jaunt to M&S.

The staff in the store, and in particular in the cafe, are always very welcoming and helpful and contribute to making this an enjoyable outing. A huge thank-you to our drivers and PAs for rising to all the challenges- without you none of these trips would happen.

To arrive back in Crieff and hear "I have so enjoyed my afternoon ". That is why we all do what we do.
Margaret Morrison, Kim MacKinnon, M&S Group Leaders

Cinema Group Report

The group has 14 members of which 7 are regulars. It aims to attract members across the age range. All outings are to the Vue cinema in Stirling every 2 months. It has been transformative for some in turning round their lives. Until recently the Cinema club was successful in obtaining funding to cover the costs of tickets, bus maintenance and depreciation. Unfortunately, 2 recent applications for further funding have failed. In the meantime, the Bertie Bus charity is covering the costs of the tickets and bus mileage.

As always, I am grateful to the charity for continuing to support this club and thanks to all the PAs Eleanor, Sheena and Louise. Sorry I can't be with you tonight...I'm at the cinema!

Peter Airey – Cinema Club Organiser

Comrie Group Report

At present we have 18 passengers and 9 passenger assistants, including myself. We have 7 passengers with walkers, that can be a little trying at times. We average 10 to 12 passengers each trip.

Since April last year, we have been to Blairdrummond Smiddy, Bankfoot, Quarrymill, Dobbies, Cultybraggan, The Black Watch Museum and quite a few more. Some of the venues have food or gift shopping, which the ladies all enjoy. At Christmas we enjoyed soup, sandwiches and Christmas pies at Comrie Golf Club. Again, we did not take the bus out in January. Our first outing in 2024 went to the Golden Larches at Strathyre, all enjoyed fresh made scones and were delighted to be waved off by the owners.

I would like to thank the ladies who travel on the bus and take care of the passengers, also the drivers who kindly drive us around the countryside.

Margaret McPhater, Comrie Group Leader

Tea Dance Group

In 2023-24 Bertie Bus continued to take passengers to the monthly Tea Dances organised by Strathearn Arts. Despite a dip in attendance in 2022, numbers increased in 2023 with a full bus most trips. The Tea Dances restarted in March 2024 after the winter break, proving to be as popular as ever among regulars and new passengers. Numbers are high despite a few inevitable last-minute cancellations due to ill health, falls, etc. Most people go for the music, the chat and the afternoon tea, but a few are invited to dance, which gives them great pleasure.

The dances run for 8 months of the year with an average of 16 passengers per trip. Over the year 10 PAs and 4 Bertie drivers have helped to make this possible, including those who took their own cars. While there have been enough volunteers to make this possible, more offers of help would be welcomed, particularly from Bertie drivers.

Strathearn Arts volunteers and the regular dancers always make Bertie Bus passengers very welcome. Huge thanks are due to the organisers at Strathearn Arts for initiating and enabling this excellent collaboration, now in its third year.

While Anne Orchardson arranges the volunteer Rota, the considerable time that Shona Cramb gives to contacting passengers every month as well as liaising with volunteers and the Tea Dance organisers is very much appreciated by everyone concerned.

Anne Orchardson, Tea Dance Co-Ordinator

Thursday Lunch Club

All is running smoothly with thanks to those who stood in when Sue was away recently.

There are usually 5 or 6 passengers, but the RVS are trying to find a few more for us. Many thanks to all the drivers Ona Thursday, and to the PAs, your time and help is much appreciated.

Sue Maclean, Thursday Lunch Club Co-Ordinator

ELECTION of TRUSTEES

Ian Buchan is standing down as a trustee, Terry Hughes resigned last year. There are two new nominations: John Bray and Christopher McDermott. In accordance with the Constitution, four existing trustees (one third of the total) are retiring but standing for re-election.

Trustee	Proposed By	Seconded By
Ian Aikman	Kim McKinnon	Alastair Petrie
Ingrid Clayden	Sally Stewart	Margaret McPhater
Kathleen Coffey	Ian Aikman	Ingrid Clayden
Kim McKinnon	Louise Pengelley	Alastair Petrie
John Bray	Ian Aikman	Sally Stewart
Christopher McDermott	Ian Aikman	Louise Pengelley

ELECTION of OFFICE BEARERS

Louise Pengelley and Ian Buchan have been sharing the role of Secretary since Anne Orchardson stepped down but Christopher McDermott is nominated as Secretary.

Position	Nominee	Proposed By	Seconded By
Chairman	Ian Aikman	Margaret McPhater	Alastair Petrie
Vice Chairman	Sally Stewart	Kim McKinnon	Louise Pengelley
Treasurer	Fred Mason	Ingrid Clayden	Alastair Petrie
Secretary	Chris McDermott	Ian Aikman	Kim McKinnon

AOCB

Anne Jarvie thanked all those who help with the Thursday lunch club. She also emphasised the need to find more people from outside Duchlage Court who might want to join and asked us to recommend it to our other passengers.

Alastair Petrie informed the meeting that the YPI interviews will be available to view once technical issues are ironed out, and the consent of all the students' parents is part obtained.

The students from Auchterarder School are also using Bertie for their YPI entry this year - they know that the Crieff students won with it last year.

Ingrid Clayden asked the new secretary Christopher to introduce himself to us, which he duly did. He explained that his interest in Bertie arises from the support he has been giving his mother after the death of his father seven years ago. She has been isolated at home suffering from dementia. He was warmly welcomed to Bertie Bus.

The meeting closed at 7.42 pm

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