

## Minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting

### Members / Trustees Present

Ian Aikman (Chair), Sally Stewart (Vice Chair), Christopher McDermott (Secretary), Ingrid Clayden (Bus Convenor), John Bray, Louise Pengelley, Sue Maclean, Alastair Petrie, Kathleen Coffey, Kim MacKinnon, Margaret McPhater and Margaret Morrison.

### Quorum

AS per Article 6.6.1 of the Bertie Bus SCIO Constitution, a General Meeting shall not be less than two thirds of Trustees. I am pleased to report that all Trustees less one was present for the General Meeting. The Quorum was therefore satisfied.

### Others Present

Fiona Warrander (Strathearn Arts), Jim McConnell (Crieff Rotary), Ian Kay, Karin Greevy, Winnie Jamieson, Maddie King, Vicki Smith, Anne Orchardson, Ian Buchan, Carol Buchan, Morag Butt, Shona McCulloch, Margaret Lawson and Diane Scott.

### Apologies

Apologies were received from Fred Mason (Treasurer).

### Minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> General Meeting – Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024

The Minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> General Meeting of Bertie Bus held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024 were circulated to all SCIO Members. Acceptance was proposed by Ingrid Clayden and seconded by Louise Pengelley.

## Chairman's Report

This year has been another very successful year for Bertie Bus. This coming year will be the charity's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Back in 1975, we started life supporting the lunch club once a week and we've grown a lot since then. In 1979 funds were raised to purchase our first adapted Bus - Bertie 1. Since then, we have replaced the bus several times, we are now on Bertie 5.

Our regular runs include: 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. All of these were 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 exceeded 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 18th of July 2024, 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 event was attended by over 65 passengers, taken to and from the lunch not only by Bertie Bus but with the Coco bus bringing passengers from Comrie. Some of our kind volunteers also helped, by using their own transport to bring 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.

Midas training by Perth and Kinross Council was organised for all our new drivers, and those existing drivers whose tests were due.

Our website Bertie Bus.org.uk has been refreshed and improved.

We serve many individuals in and around Crieff, providing safe door-to-door transport, friendly volunteers, and a change of scenery that offers 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 & Spencer's, 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.

Over the last 12 months, Bertie Bus has covered almost 7000 miles, 203 outings carrying the equivalent of 1555 passengers, supported by the equivalent of 440 Passenger Assistants, which puts into context how much we do for the local community.

If we consider each passenger assisted (including journeys where additional transport was offered by volunteers) and tally that up as total days out, then the Bertie Bus team has helped support 1661 days out in 2024.

Bertie Bus provides leaflets aimed primarily at possible users. The team also shares public displays of photographs, as well as detailed and clear contact material, and a comprehensive website detailing the activities and opportunities within the organisation.

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 regularly receive calls from family members and care professionals regarding current and potential service users. Office bearers offer support and additional information wherever possible. Our relationship with the Local Social Prescriber has continued to increase the number of people we can assist.

Our groups and transport already support a considerable number of passengers who demonstrate memory or functional limitations. Much credit is due to the passenger assistants and drivers who ensure their safety and enjoyment.

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

In news relating to the organisational structure of Bertie Bus, Ingrid Clayden has decided to step down as bus convener at the end of March. Her contribution and hard work have been much appreciated over the last few years. I am delighted that Ingrid is staying on as a trustee as her input is invaluable.

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.

*Jan Akman - Chair of Bertie Bus*

### **Treasurer's Report** (read by Chris McDermott)

As a registered Scottish charity, we are required by law to produce an Annual Report and an independently examined Financial Statement. The report has been approved by the Trustees, checked by our independent examiner and forwarded to the OSCR as shown on their website. It is also available on the Bertie Bus website.

The financial statement covers the full year, but it should be noted that the last year's figures only represent the period July 2023 to February 2024 as all financial transactions prior to this were included in the final financial statement of Strathcare.

#### **Regarding the statement of receipts and payments**

Grants, Bank Interest and Passengers' Donations have all shown a significant and welcome increase this year. Whilst the cost of diesel (partly due to change of supplier) and insurance have seen sizable reductions.

This has resulted in a healthy surplus for the year which bodes well for the future. Our current reserves will allow for the cost of the expected replacement bus in a few years' time and still leave sufficient investments to generate interest to help with running costs.

*Fred Mason - Treasurer*

## Volunteers Report

Effective 1 April, it will be a legal requirement to have PVG approvals for all volunteers with Bertie Bus. Until now it has not been required to have PVG approvals, but we have always required these.

Disclosure Scotland has a new process in place where the successful volunteer must give the Bertie Bus representative permission to only view the PVG and we are asked not to keep a copy on file. A chart has been designed to keep a record of the successful PVGs with the appropriate disclosure number. Since the new system was put in place we have had three successful applicants, one withdrawn and one pending.

*Kathleen Coffey - Volunteer Coordinator*

## Bus Convenors Report

From a Bus Convenor's perspective 2024-25 has been a good year for Bertie Bus. Following a very poor start to 2024 with delays in obtaining an MOT, the process this year has been a lot more efficient, though there was considerable leg work to get to that point. However, we now have a suite of reliable garages that will take Bertie through all the necessary checks and certifications and any bodywork repairs.

There have not been too many bumps and scrapes for Bertie this year and the bus has ended the current year in good condition, having had a significant bodywork repair to the rear quarter in the last few weeks.

There have been very few runs cancelled this year, and Bertie has been out almost every weekday as well as some weekends. As usual though, most clubs took a midwinter break and I am most grateful to Ian Buchan for keeping the bus running over the winter, charging the battery and taking Bertie out for short runs as necessary.

Bertie has a great team of drivers, and all are up to date with their MiDAS training or currently going through the process. Our drivers are always willing to step in to fill a gap in the rota and drive Bertie, and changes and swaps of driver have been facilitated by our driver WhatsApp group.

We have a small but steady stream of new drivers joining the team and will need to keep this flow up as older drivers stop driving. So, as always, we would welcome any interest in driving Bertie. Again, I am grateful to Ian Buchan for taking potential new drivers out for test drives.

As I step down from my role as Bus Convener, I wish my successors, Ian Aikman and Sue Maclean, all the best in keeping Bertie on the road with plenty of drivers. I shall continue to drive and remain as a trustee for the time being, so you haven't got rid of me yet!

*Ingrid Clayden - Bus Convener*

**Bertie Club**
**Club Commentary**

<b>Monday Club (Comrie)</b>	<p>Here is a brief synopsis for the A.G.M. of the Monday Comrie Bus.</p> <p>It has been a good year all in all with visits to a lot of different venues, which the passengers all enjoyed, especially if shopping was involved, We averaged 9 to 11 passengers on most outings. We now have 20 folks on the list, with 8 of them having rollators, so some weeks can be a little difficult to organise.</p> <p>Unfortunately, 2 of the original passengers have since last year, moved on to a more secure living.</p> <p><i>Margaret McPhater</i></p>
<b>Wednesday Club</b>	<p>The Wednesday Group has maintained a list of passengers numbering in the 20s throughout the last year, currently 24. While gaining 10 new members we also lost 8.</p> <p>We visited many different locations during the year, including Dobbies in Stirling and Perth, the Bankfoot Visitors Centre, Marks &amp; Spencer's Dunblane, Glogaburn, The Mustard Seed. The usual very successful Christmas lunch was held at Comrie Golf Club, with passengers and many volunteers attending.</p> <p>We now have 13 volunteer PAs to call on for the group. Many thanks to the PA and driver volunteers for helping throughout the year. Special thanks to Winnie Jamieson who helps in coordinating the group. All the volunteers do a great job, and their help is truly appreciated by our passengers.</p> <p><i>Kathleen Coffey</i></p>
<b>Thursday Club (lunch club with RVS)</b>	<p>Thursday Lunch club runs smoothly with 6 volunteers who Sue is very grateful to for their efforts, similarly with the Drivers given the early starts. Lower numbers at the moment predominantly due to Duchlage Court being unable to provide more passengers due to the RVS (who organise the lunch club itself) being at capacity.</p> <p><i>Susan Maclean</i></p>
<b>Friday Club</b>	<p>The Friday Club had a good year in 2024. Three new PAs joined us which has been great. Normally ten or more passengers go out. They are now a group who know each other well, and chat away. There were a couple of new passengers last year with, sadly, a couple of losses, through infirmity or death. Another jolly Christmas lunch happened at the Murray Park. The passengers are incredibly appreciative of the trips. A big thank-you from them, and from me to all the PAs and drivers who work so hard for this group.</p> <p><i>Louise Pengetley</i></p>
<b>Tea Dances (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Month)</b>	<p>In 2024-25 the monthly Tea Dance organised by Strathearn Arts has become an established part of Bertie Bus's regular trips following its introduction in 2021. The dances are held on the first Sunday of 8 months of the year. Over the last year there has been an average of 13 passengers, with the highest attendance being 17 but a few with only 11. On most occasions there are last minute cancellations usually due to ill health, falls or bad weather.</p> <p>Many volunteers have other commitments on a Sunday, but thanks are due to those who offer regularly enabling this run to take place. As last year 10 PAs and 4 drivers have been involved, with some offering to transport passengers in their cars when necessary. Strathearn Arts volunteers and the regular dancers welcome Bertie Bus passengers very warmly and thanks is due to the organisers at Strathearn Arts for this continued and successful collaboration.</p> <p>The considerable amount of time spent by Shona Cramb contacting the passengers every month to arrange the runs is very much appreciated, while Anne Orchardson organises the volunteer rotas.</p> <p><i>Anne Orchardson</i></p>
<b>M&amp;S Club</b>	<p>Nothing to report</p> <p><i>Margaret Morrison &amp; Kim MacKinnon</i></p>

**Cinema Club**

Nothing to report

*Peter Airey*

**Library Club**

Library visits continue to be attended by enthusiastic passengers. There is a drop in numbers which is something we are trying to challenge. A visit to the steading is popular with passengers. Two passenger assistants attend each trip, and it works well and Alastair extended his thanks to the passenger assistants and the drivers who dedicate their valuable time. Looking to open the club to passengers from Madderty, Muthill and Gilmerton which hopefully will arrest the decline in passengers' numbers. This will also give the passengers a longer journey which we are hopeful they will enjoy.

*Alastair Petrie*

## Matters Arising

### a) Bertie Bus Golden Anniversary Celebrations

The Chair provided an update on the proposed celebrations marking Bertie Bus's 50th anniversary. Plans include a summer lunch (details to follow), and a Volunteer Céilidh scheduled for 22 August 2025. Initial uptake has been encouraging, with approximately 57 attendees confirmed. A dedicated Golden Anniversary subcommittee will meet in the coming weeks to finalise plans for volunteer engagement. Transport will be arranged for those unable to travel independently, with Sweeney's providing services to Crieff and the Coco Bus transporting volunteers from Comrie.

### b) Bertie Bus Celebratory Graphics

The Chair informed the meeting that Bertie Bus will receive updated celebratory graphics to mark the anniversary year. These designs will reflect the significance of the milestone and visibly recognise the contributions of the community and volunteers to Bertie's ongoing success.

### c) Quiz Night

A Bertie Bus Quiz Night is scheduled to take place at Crieff Golf Club on 25 April at 7:00 pm. Flyers have been produced and distributed. The event can accommodate up to 25 tables, with a strong number already reserved. Interested parties are encouraged to contact Ian Aikman for further information or to book a table. Donations of raffle prizes are welcomed and will be gratefully received.

## Election of Trustees

Alastair Petrie is standing down as Trustee. The Chair thanked Alastair for his contribution over the years with Bertie Bus and noted that he will be missed. However, we are pleased to report that he will remain on in his valued capacity as group leader of the Library Club.

The Board will now comprise of 12 members.

In accordance with the Constitution, one third of the total number of Trustees must stand down at each AGM.

The Secretary will update the register accordingly.

Trustee	Proposed By	Seconded By
Alastair Petrie		
Margaret McPhater	Kathleen Coffey	Ingrid Clayden
Sue Maclean	Louise Pengelley	Kim Mackinnon
Margaret Morrisson	Ingrid Clayden	Sally Stewart
Sally Stewart	Ian Aikman	Chris McDermott

## Election of Office Bearers

Sally Stewart has indicated her intention to stand down as Vice Chair at such time when a suitable replacement has been identified and secured in post as Trustee.

Position	Nominee	Proposed By	Seconded By
Chairman	Ian Aikman	Kathleen Coffey	Sue Maclean
Vice Chairman	Sally Stewart	Ian Aikman	Louise Pengelley
Treasurer	Fred Mason	Sue Maclean	Ingrid Clayden
Secretary	Chris McDermott	Louise Pengelley	Sue Maclean



## Any Other Competent Business

### a) Training

Ian Buchan enquired about current training provision for Bertie Bus volunteers, noting that it has been over two years since a comprehensive training programme was last undertaken.

The Chair confirmed that MiDAS driver training remains an ongoing commitment, delivered throughout the year. First Aid training has also been discussed at Board level, with formalisation anticipated in the coming months.

It was acknowledged that broader volunteer training is due for renewal. The Chair has committed to scheduling this as a priority, with plans to integrate key areas such as Dementia Awareness, safe wheelchair use (including ramp operations and securement), and Passenger Assistant handling procedures.

Recent MiDAS sessions included practical wheelchair training, but as this training is only mandatory every four years, the need for regular refreshers was emphasised.

Margaret McPhater, the current Volunteer Training Coordinator, noted that securing a Dementia Awareness trainer has been difficult due to health issues affecting a previously engaged facilitator. Efforts to identify an alternative provider are ongoing.

With regards to operating the tail lift by the driver. Ian Buchan said that it is unavoidable to have to leave the engine running to properly operate the tail lift, which Ingrid confirmed is best avoided to prevent a drain on the battery. It should be noted that under MiDAS guidelines a driver must switch off the engine and remove the key before leaving the driver's seat. This is to prevent vehicle theft or runaway, to reduce accidental movement, to lower emissions and noise and finally to ensure compliance with Road Traffic Laws. Exceptions are made in specific cases, for example for the safe operation of a wheelchair lift, however this must be risk assessed as part of standard operating procedure and should be clarified in the proposed additional driver training.

The Highway Code (Rule 123) and Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 prohibit leaving a vehicle unattended with the engine running unnecessarily. It might be reasonably suggested the engine be turned off and key removed at all other times by the driver of the bus.

On information-sharing, Margaret Lawson requested clarity on whether Passenger Assistants can be briefed on individual passengers' relevant medical or cognitive / behavioural conditions. While the group agreed on the value of this knowledge, the Secretary advised that legal guidance will be sought to ensure compliance with privacy legislation.

Several Passenger Assistants raised concerns around the physical demands of wheelchair use, particularly with combined wheelchair and occupant weight. Best practice training and assessment of individual capacity to manage such tasks will be incorporated into the updated programme.

Margaret Lawson also noted that timetabling gaps can lead to avoidable stress for both passengers and volunteers. Group Leaders were encouraged to plan with consideration for minimal waiting times. Louise Pengelley shared a successful approach: using WhatsApp to coordinate her team, which significantly improved communication and cohesion. She also noted that allowing new PAs to shadow experienced volunteers has been very effective. Both suggestions were well received and will inform future development of a formal training manual.

### b) Blue Badge

Ingrid Clayden asked for an update on the Blue Badge appeal submitted to Perth and Kinross Council. The original application was declined on the basis that Bertie Bus does not provide personal care. An appeal was lodged by the Secretary on 17 January 2025, with supplementary information submitted on 30 January. A final decision is expected by 10 April 2025.

While individual service users' Blue Badges may be used in certain situations, the associated complexities are acknowledged.

### c) Volunteer Communication

Anne Orchardson raised the need for improved and more consistent communication with volunteers. She noted that relying on word-of-mouth and the Comrie Quair can sometimes result in gaps or inaccuracies, referencing an instance where she was unsure whether a quiz night was taking place.

John Bray, who leads on publicity and communications, clarified that the Quair requires submissions a month in advance, which prevents timely updates. He is currently working with the Chair to launch official social media channels, which will help improve real-time information sharing and support recruitment effort - particularly among younger demographics.

Ian Buchan expressed concern that some volunteers do not read the Quair, use social media, or visit the website, and therefore feel out of the loop. The Secretary proposed the introduction of a periodic volunteer newsletter ("Bertie Bulletin"), which would summarise key Board discussions and decisions alongside general updates. This initiative will be discussed at the next Board meeting and the Secretary commits to sharing relevant updates with the wider group accordingly.

Anne also mentioned difficulty locating the 2024 Board Meeting minutes online. I can advise that there is no constitutional or historical requirement to publish General Meeting minutes publicly. However, the Board will consider proposing a Special Resolution to amend the SCIO Constitution to formally allow wider dissemination of General Meeting minutes, while Board and Subcommittee minutes will remain accessible only to Members.

Ian Buchan enquired about a potential Volunteers' Afternoon Tea in addition to the Golden Cèilidh, noting that some volunteers had expressed a preference for a smaller, more personal thank-you event. Anne echoed this, suggesting that the Afternoon Tea had previously been appreciated as a specific gesture of gratitude. This feedback will be considered in future event planning.

Sue Maclean concluded the discussion by gently reminding all present that Bertie Bus is powered entirely by volunteers, and that while differences of opinion reflect the shared passion for the organisation, maintaining a constructive and solutions-focused approach will best serve the charity and its community.

### d) Quiz Night

The Bertie Bus Quiz Night will take place at Crieff Golf Club on 25 April at 7:00 pm. Flyers have been circulated, and several tables have already been reserved (capacity is 25 tables). Interested parties are encouraged to contact Ian Aikman to book a table. Donations of raffle prizes are welcomed and greatly appreciated.

### e) Strathearn Arts Collaboration

The General Meeting was pleased to welcome Fiona Warrender from Strathearn Arts. Fiona conveyed appreciation on behalf of the Associate Director for the successful collaboration on recent Tea Dances. There is strong mutual interest in exploring further joint initiatives to benefit the community. The Secretary will follow up with Fiona to discuss next steps.

**The Chair closed the General Meeting at 08:19pm.  
We thank all for their valued contribution and attendance.**

[END]