

Bridge Accessible Transport Limited

Report of the Trustees **for the Year Ended 31 March 2024**

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

In furtherance of our aims, our current strategy is to provide the following services:

- An Accessible Community Transport Service to individual members of the scheme
- A Mobility Equipment hire service (Shopmobility Foyle) to enable members to access the city centre and further afield.
- Training, advice and access information to individuals and local community and voluntary transport groups
- Social events for members as part of our public benefit work.

The company has a wholly owned trading subsidiary, Bridge AT Enterprises Limited, this enterprise was set up on 08/08/2007 to provide contracted Door to Door transport services, training and related services.

We provide a fully guided service, transporting people from their home; places of work; shopping centres; town centre; visiting friends; respite facilities; local technical colleges; garden centres; and to keep medical and health appointments.

Bridge provides accessible transport services for regular social and community activities for members focusing on taking people from the front door of their home to wherever they want to go within our operating area and removing access barriers for people travelling alone.

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OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Significant activities

Bridge Accessible Transport has provided 36,448 services to support people with reduced mobility to stay independent and participate in local community activities; to access vital health care and social appointments; shopping visits; work placements and employment. Our service is often the only means of transport and hire of mobility equipment for many of our members with restricted mobility.

During the reporting period we carried out the following services:

1. Door to Door service (Group transport services)
2. Individual Door to Door service (D.A.T.S)
3. Assisted Travel Service (Western Health & Social Services Trust)
4. Mobility Equipment hire service (Shopmobility Foyle)
5. Our Mobility equipment delivery service (Meet & Greet)
6. Our personal shopper service (Sighted Guiding service)
7. A zero-emission Electric Minibus Pilot -assessing the long-term environmental benefits of using fully electric vehicles as part of our services.

This has been a challenging year in which we continued to provide socially necessary journeys and faced overwhelming demand for community benefit services. We are reviewing a sustainable funding model that accounts for both growing demand and operational costs.

The flexibility and dedication of our Manager, Office staff, Shopmobility Coordinator, driving staff, volunteers and dedicated Management Committee contributed to the success this year in providing accessible transport and mobility equipment hire services to members.

Staff have facilitated 27,230 member requests for transport services for the period 2023-24 and completed 24,297 passenger trips. We completed a membership review of our current database, and we currently have 1,297 registered members and 24 registered groups. We enrolled 58 new members to our Accessible Transport Services during this financial period.

We provided 12,151 mobility equipment hires for the period through our Shopmobility Foyle service, which included 2,193 mobility scooter hires, 8,624 wheelchairs hires, and 1,334 rollator assisted hires to our 1,587 registered members. We enrolled 263 new members during this year.

Our zero emission fully accessible Electric Minibus was launched in October 22. We provided 2,091 accessible trips for members this year, who enjoyed the comfort level, accessibility features and the quiet operation of this new service.

The success of B.A.T services to date is due to the ongoing financial assistance provided from the Department for Infrastructure (DFI) ("Transport Programme for People with Disabilities").

We supply services under Disability Action's Transport scheme (DATS) which operates in and around large towns throughout N.I. and local mobility services by Shopmobility Foyle.

This vital accessible transport and mobility hire service, which are run for social purposes, not for profit, would not be available without this support.

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OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Public benefit

In shaping Bridge Accessible Transport's objectives and planning activities, the management Committee and senior staff have considered the Charity Commission NI guidance on public benefit.

Bridge Accessible Transport provides a door to door affordable and accessible transport service for disabled and older people who have complex high level support requirements who find it unreasonably difficult, or do not have access to mainstream transport modes. We provide mobility equipment hire to increase social participation in the community.

We provide support and pastoral care to people with often high-level complex support requirements. People who benefit from the essential services offered by Bridge Accessible Transport are very marginalised individuals living in our community; older people with mobility and health issues who need to travel to attend health and social appointments, people with disabilities using wheelchairs who cannot transfer to a vehicle seat, young people with learning disabilities attending day opportunities and work placements, people on low income, women; men; people who are blind or partially sighted looking to get out and about in the city; people living on their own with no access to a car. The term accessible transport goes beyond physical features and adaptations but also relates to the care and support required to address the travel needs of our passengers.

Our annual customer review where members reported on the benefits of using our services again reinforced how vital our services are to individual members and their families/carers to enable people to stay independent and access key vital services.

The review outlined key essential services which delivered the greatest level of support to our passengers including.

Individual person-centred support plan to address passenger transport requirements which included risk assessments and safeguarding protocols to protect their health safety and wellbeing.

Strong personal relationships with passengers, personal support networks including families, guardians to ensure that our services are responsive to both passengers and those responsible for their care.

Providing respite for primary carers and family members.

Supervision of passengers who are particularly vulnerable; people with Alzheimer's, Dementia, severe depression, mental health issues, learning disabilities, sight loss and hearing impairments and mobility issues.

Offering referral services to other agencies where additional care and interventions are necessary, for example offering caring support to people in their own homes while they are waiting emergency services or require additional support for a variety of reasons.

Providing mobility aids and equipment to our members as and when the need arises through our partner organisation Shopmobility Foyle.

Working and engaging with other agencies including Health & Social Care Trusts, social workers and GP's, physiotherapists, and Occupational therapists identifying additional care and support requirements that our passengers may have. This is particularly important for passengers who live on their own and have limited or no personal support networks.

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FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial position

The statement of financial activities for the year is presented on page 11 of these financial statements. During the year, incoming resources included £287,754 for Door to Door services from Department for Infrastructure (DfI)/The Disability Action Transport Scheme (DATS) and £28,500 for Shopmobility Foyle services from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), through the Transport Programme for People with Disabilities (TPPD), which has been used solely for the purposes for which it was provided. £38,155 was received from the Western Health and Social Care Trust for the Assisted Travel Scheme.

All grants were used solely for the purposes intended and in accordance with the terms and conditions of grant.

Reserves policy

The charity has conducted a review in relation to its reserves policy. The trustees acknowledge the need for a fund to ensure the financial stability of the charity and have identified several key areas for which reserves should be maintained to cover future costs. These costs would arise in the event of there being a break in the receipt of funding or in the event of cessation of activities of the company. There will also be future capital costs relating to the purchase of new vehicles by the company to update the fleet of vehicles. Considering this, the company has allocated reserves to cover the following costs:

- the estimated running costs of the charity for six months in the event of a delay in the receipt of funding
- to pay employees in the event of the company having to put its employees on notice and pay statutory redundancy
- to enable all creditors to be paid in full in the event of the cessation of the company
- future capital investment in new vehicles

The current fleet of vehicles being operated by the company, comprises eight vehicles and three of these are over eight years old. These vehicles are approaching the end of their operational lives and are expensive to maintain and the company will undertake to update the fleet over the coming years. For this reason, the company has established a capital fund which will be used to replace these older vehicles. The anticipated cost of replacing ageing vehicles is estimated to be £130,000 and the company are allocating reserves towards this fund to facilitate the purchase of new vehicles.

FUTURE PLANS

To maintain the company's good governance and quality assurance standards throughout the organisation to provide the socially necessary and essential transport and mobility hire services to the local community.

Bridge Accessible Transport will continue to provide accessible transport services for social and community activities for members from the front door of their home to wherever they want to go within our operating area and removing access barriers for people travelling alone. We will continue to provide mobility hire equipment to people in the community to support their social and community activities.

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STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The company was incorporated on 02/12/1988, to provide an on-call service for physically disabled people, who are unable to use public or private transport, in association with other charitable groups, and membership is open to any disabled person who is likely to use the service. Our over-arching aim is to promote and deliver high quality accessible transport services in the Derry/Londonderry area. By special resolution of the Company, the name was changed to Bridge Accessible Transport Limited.

Bridge Accessible Transport is a Limited Company and registered as a charity in N.I. in 28/05/1996. It is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association. In the event of the company being wound up liability is limited to £1 per member.

Induction and training of new trustees

New trustees undergo an induction programme to brief them on the range of services provided by Bridge Accessible Transport. They are provided with a copy of the Company's Memorandum and Articles of Association, a profile of current directors/the organisation and copies of all relevant company policies and procedures are also provided.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Company number

NI022203 (Northern Ireland)

Registered Charity number

103646

Registered office

Unit 1 (Ground Floor)
Ballinska Road
Springtown Industrial Estate
Derry
Co. Derry
BT48 0NA

Trustees

Mrs Dolores Hanigan
Ms Angelina Cooper
Mr Terry McNamee
Mr Tony O'Reilly

Company Secretary

Mr Terry McNamee

Auditors

Shaun McAteer & Co. Ltd
5 Northland Road, Derry
BT48 7HX

Bridge Accessible Transport Limited

Report of the Trustees **for the Year Ended 31 March 2024**

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the directors of Bridge Accessible Transport Limited for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

AUDITORS

The auditors, Shaun McAteer & Co. Ltd, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 31 January 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

Ms Angelina Cooper - Trustee