

39 Years of Service 1982-2021



TRANSPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH MOBILITY CHALLENGES

ANNUAL REPORT 2020 - 2021

DIAL-A-RIDE DIAL-A-BUS



Scottish Registered Charity No. SC013906 Registered Private Limited Company No. SC079712
Admin & Registered Office: 24/3A Dryden Road, Bilston Glen Industrial Estate, Loanhead EH20 9HX

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

Kenneth Brown

It is a relief to strike a more optimistic note in my report from that of last year. Thankfully, the COVID crisis appears to be abating although certainly not back to normal as we knew it before the pandemic.

Due to the ongoing situation we have decided to conduct our Annual General Meeting on line rather than in person again. This is disappointing but in the present circumstances unavoidable.

It is also for this reason that HcL will not be relaxing its COVID safety precautions. Many of our clients are medically vulnerable and we need to reassure them that it is safe to travel with us, as well as ensure the wellbeing of our staff.

I am also pleased to report that we have survived the financial challenges we experienced during lockdown and HcL is very much open for business! There are many people to thank for this. Kelvin our CEO and the staff have worked tirelessly to achieve this result. We are also indebted to the local authorities, organisations, funders and individuals who have supported us as we faced challenges over the past year. Thanks also for the support of my fellow Board members of the Executive and Finance Committees who have persevered with zoom meetings and a different way of working.

Both Dial-A-Bus and Dial-A-Ride are fully operational again and we are pleased to see a steady increase in our passenger numbers again.

We have also implemented developments to our service this year with more to follow to safeguard the future of HcL. Kelvin will be elaborating on these in his report.

It is with great sadness that I have to report that Janice Thomson, one of our Board members passed away earlier this year. She was a real stalwart who made a huge contribution to HcL. We send our condolences to her family.

My best wishes to everyone and keep safe.

**Dr Kenneth Brown TD MBChB MRCGP AFOM CIH
Chairman**



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Kelvin Cochrane

This is the Charity's 39th Annual Report and covers the period from the last Annual General Meeting held on 12th October 2020 to this year's AGM on 15th November 2021. The Director's Report and Accounts are published separately and cover the Charity's financial year, 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021, however a summary version is contained in this report

This has been a difficult year, not only for HcL, but all Charities and businesses across the globe. I am very proud of the staff who volunteered to keep working through the darkest days of the COVID-19 pandemic taking people with mobility challenges to essential medical appointments. I am proud of all the staff who were furloughed (through no fault of their own) who accepted the short term changes to their Conditions of Employment without quibble. This enabled us to focus on the health and safety of our staff working and those using our service for essential appointments.

All staff have had to quickly adapt to new ways of working and due to their flexibility and commitment, HcL managed to make adjustments and ensure delivery of service.

As restrictions ease, all staff continue to follow HcL revised Policies and Procedures - Physical Distancing in the Work Place (Office) and Physical Distancing in the Work Place (both DAB and DAR Drivers) – Policies. Face coverings will still be mandatory for staff and users (unless exempt) to wear on vehicles and on entering HcL offices.

Charitable Objectives

The objectives of HcL are to provide transport for older people; people with disabilities, additional support needs or with health conditions that affect mobility; and those who are rurally isolated with poor or no accessible transport. We have 22,428 registered users: Dial-A-Ride (13,025) and Dial-A-Bus (9,403), October 2021.

Handicabs Lothian (HcL) operates 2 core services across Edinburgh and the Lothians: Dial-A-Ride and Dial-A-Bus. We also provide longer distance journeys on demand subject to availability. In 2021 we launched a pilot service in West Lothian, in conjunction with West Lothian Council to provide a community bus service for Broxburn and Uphall.

Our 2 operating bases are at Loanhead which covers Edinburgh, East & Midlothian and Bathgate which covers West Lothian. The Administration & Registered Office is also at our Loanhead office.

We believe transport will play a massive part in improving wellbeing and reducing loneliness and isolation for people with mobility challenges post-pandemic. Combined with the growth in population in the Lothians, more and more people will have the need for quality accessible transport.

With this in mind, we created the new position of a Service Development Manager. Our aim is to build on and develop new relationships with other organisations and groups to provide access to our service to more people. Following recruitment, the Service Development Manager came into post in August 2021 and has been a great addition to the team.

HcL Services

HcL aims to provide a quality of service which goes above and beyond providing door-to-door transport by providing a door-through-door service. This ensured our passengers receive the assistance they need at the start and end of their journey, which is often what makes going out possible for them. This may be assisting people with getting their coat, tying a shoe lace, locking a front door or ensuring that they are settled safely in their home after the journey. The profile of our passengers indicates a high level of mobility difficulty, with 25% of our passengers using a wheelchair. Many of our passengers rely on our service and cannot use buses or taxis. Our service is a particular life-line for passengers across the Lothians attending medical and health related appointments, in particular across the different NHS Lothian hospitals.

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Dial-A-Ride operates 7 days a week, 365 days per year, including evenings to provide door-through-door transport for people with various mobility challenges, of whom 25% use wheelchairs. Edinburgh accounted for 47% of Dial-A-Ride trips, West Lothian 24%, Midlothian 12% and East Lothian 17%.

By providing quality transport, our customers are able to be involved in the community by attending medical appointments, day centres, colleges, school and support groups or to go to shopping centres, theatres, visiting friends and family, socialising, day trips or events and to go away for a holiday. In doing so it enables family members and carers to have a much needed break.

“HcL is a reliable service especially for those with mobility challenges. All the drivers and office staff are courteous and polite - very efficient service. I rely on HcL throughout the year, with a wheelchair you feel safe and secure. If this service was not available I would be unable to get out and about.”

“I’m very satisfied with Dial-a-Ride, I can get out and about and meet friends. I would not be able to do these things without it. Staff in the office are excellent, they try to accommodate you every time. The drivers are great and so cheery, help is always given. Thank you all very much.”

Dial-A-Bus provides a Monday-Friday shopping service to local major shopping centres for people who have difficulty shopping using public transport. Passengers are helped in and out of their homes, to and from the bus, and helped to get their shopping inside on return if needed. All areas of the Lothians have at least one and often 2 routes available during the week, either morning or afternoon. Although the service has only been operational since August 2021, we have had 3,645 passengers in 2 months, with 2% of passengers using wheelchairs.

“I cannot over emphasise how very good this service is, especially having shopping taken into the kitchen Office staff and drivers are very helpful and cheery – nothing is too much trouble. A true lifeline.”

“I don’t know how I would manage shopping if it was not for the availability of Dial-A-Bus. The office staff are kind and helpful and the drivers are cheerful and extremely kind in carrying ones shopping into the house.”

We have also been delivering a Community Bus Partnership Pilot with West Lothian Council following customers’ requests for a local town service in the Broxburn and Uphall area. This service started on 5th April 2021 and links the public and people with mobility challenges from residential areas with key services on main streets including shops, health and personal care outlets. It also supports users to connect to existing public transport services in these areas for forward travel. Between April and September, 4,100 passengers travelled with HcL with 3,367 trips using concessionary travel passes.

HcL also operates transport to Day Centres and Adult Learning Centres on behalf of The City of Edinburgh Council - this service was suspended from March 2020 till October 2021.

Impact of COVID

From 23rd March 2020, all HcL services were cancelled except essential travel to hospital and medical appointments.

Funding was secured to install card readers on each vehicle to enable contactless card payments for journeys. Screens were also funded and installed in each vehicle. New procedures were implemented regarding cleaning of vehicles, PPE, numbers on board vehicles, number of staff in offices and reporting procedures. All drivers attended relevant training before working with passengers again.

Dial-A-Bus (DAB)

DAB was suspended from March 2020 till August 2021. The service resumed in Edinburgh, East Lothian and Midlothian on 2nd August 2021.

DAB resumed in West Lothian on 16th August 2021 under the new name of ‘WLcomBus’ (West Lothian Community Bus). This service is operated by HcL (Handicabs Lothian) on behalf of West Lothian Council.

The WLcomBus offers another public transport option for people who are unable to use normal bus services, providing links to The Centre in Livingston and large supermarkets.

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Following a Total Transport Review, West Lothian Council committed to supporting HcL (as a third sector organisation) in obtaining the necessary licence to accept concessionary card holders on DAB services.

The registration of these services allows National Entitlement Card holders to travel on WLcomBus for free. With the added enhancement of the door-through-door support that is the core of HcL's services, users can rebuild their confidence and sense of freedom to return to shopping centres and supermarkets as they did prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other than this development, the WLcomBus service is operating in the same way as DAB.

"It's great to have the Dial-A-Bus back so we can get out for our proper shopping and all go together. People feel better getting to see each other."

"I am 83 years old and do not drive, Dial-A-Bus gets me to the shops and the capable drivers help me get my shopping to the house. Grant, Reg and Steven are first class from pick up to return. I couldn't manage without their help as I have a walking stick."

Dial-A-Ride (DAR)

From 12th March 2020, DAR users started to cancel trips and from Monday, 23rd March all DAR services except essential transport were cancelled due to COVID-19. From July 2020, DAR services resumed.

Between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021 we provided transport for 8,975 users to essential medical appointments and essential shopping trips, expanding to other destinations when Government Guidelines allowed. This is a significant reduction on any previous year which would exceed 80,000 passenger trips.

From 1st April to 30th September 2021, we have provided transport for 11,966 users and whilst still lower than pre-COVID, the numbers of bookings and passengers are increasing again. As lockdown eases, we fully expect demand to start increasing – particularly for the elderly, disabled and those with health challenges as non-essential medical appointments, treatments and procedures are rescheduled.

"The service means a great deal to me as I don't have a car so wouldn't be able to get out without it. As I stay on my own, it is nice to talk to the drivers who are always friendly and helpful."

"It gives me some independence. I don't have to rely on my family to get me to and from church."

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

Partnership Working: To support our local communities, HcL has supported local initiatives during the COVID-19 Pandemic free of charge. In summer 2020 we delivered 7,737 food packages, supporting the great work of SCRAN Academy, Tea J's, Boghall Drop in Centre and The Larder Cook School to provide meals to those shielding, in isolation and the most vulnerable in our communities. Some of whom would be passengers for HcL in other circumstances.

Through ECTOG (Edinburgh Community Transport Organisations Group) we provided 56 Edinburgh Care Homes vaccination transport for nurses and PPE to vaccinate residents. We also provided transport for over 1,000 home visits for nurses to vaccinate people in their own homes.

Free Vaccination Trips: From January 2021 we have offered free transport to vaccine centres to residents in the Lothians who have mobility challenges. We have completed over 1,500 passenger journeys. This initiative has been continued to support the booster vaccine programme. Bookings are subject to availability.

"Thank you so much for taking me for my first vaccine this afternoon. I was so nervous but my driver was lovely and walked me to door of EICC and made sure I was ok. It was so reassuring to see him there afterwards too. This was my first journey to somewhere I don't know without my friends in years!"

"Delighted that HcL have at very short notice arranged transport for me for my vaccine appointment."

Summary of Achievements

1. Developed new services which enhance mobility. New services include school transport for children with complex health needs and a successful pilot project in West Lothian for a Community Bus service (live from April 2021).
2. Partnership working - collaborated with partner organisations in the public, voluntary or private sectors where this advances our strategic aims.
3. Ongoing development of stakeholder relationships and ways we can work with The City of Edinburgh Council; West Lothian Council; Midlothian Council; and East Lothian Council. We are in our third year of a 3 + 1-year Public Social Partnership (ECTO) with The City of Edinburgh Council, Lothian Community Transport Services, Pilton Equality Project, South Edinburgh Amenities Group and The DOVE Centre.
4. Supported roll out of vaccine programme through transporting nurses to care homes and individuals homes who are housebound. Provided over 1,500 free trips for people with mobility challenges to access vaccination appointments.
5. Completed a successful pilot project, funded by the Edinburgh Pact programme, to take passengers with mobility challenges from Edinburgh on day trips, have conversations about the impact of COVID and wellbeing.
6. Reduced carbon footprint - upgraded our fleet from Euro 5 compliance to Euro 6 to reduce emissions. Drivers are trained in fuel efficient driving and member of ECO Stars enabling HcL to monitor annual carbon footprint.
7. Replaced 2 Dial-A-Ride vehicles and one Dial-A-Bus.
8. Implemented contactless payments and installed screens on all vehicles to support passengers and drivers wellbeing.
9. Negotiated and extended 5-year lease till 2025 for our Administration & Registered Office.
10. Reviewed and updated our Staff Conditions of Service with the assistance of Unite the Union and staff.
11. Delivered enhanced training for all staff - re-trained Despatchers on booking and scheduling software; new cleaning procedures implemented to manage risk due to the pandemic; training for drivers provided.
12. Continued development of the organisation:
 - Reviewed and implemented a new 5-year strategy.
 - Secured funding for and recruited a new position of Service Development Manager (p/t) to help diversify services and customers
13. Raised profile of the Charity through the regular updating of the website, Facebook and Twitter; refreshed and updated leaflets; advertised COVID related support with local charities and organisations; advertised free vaccine transport through multiple routes; sought PR opportunities with several magazines, newspapers and radio stations; published bi-yearly newsletter;
14. Submitted 122 applications to funders;
15. Finalist in the Community Transport Association Awards 2021 – HcL have been advised they are a finalist in the CTA Awards held in November in:
 - Partnership of the Year, with SCRAN Academy and PEP; and
 - Photo of the Year, capturing the impact of community transport during the pandemic.

Highlights for the last 12 months

25,971 passengers supported with door-through-door transport.
1,500 passenger trips provided free of charge to vaccine appointments
39 years supporting people with mobility challenges across Edinburgh and the Lothians
Total distance travelled to date of 21.69 million miles.

Support to HcL

Like Ken, our Chair, I would like to extend my thanks to the following, who without, we could not deliver the services we do:

- **Staff** - I would like to thank our professional and committed 38 members of staff who operate our 28 vehicles and 2 despatch centres throughout the year, including evenings and weekends. They each play a key part in our ability to respond to the various travel needs of our passengers
- **Volunteers** - we continue to be grateful for the efforts of volunteers – both operationally, as drivers and despatch; and management, as Trustees of the Charity. The time, skills and experience donated are hugely valuable.
- **Trustees** - I would also like to thank the Chairman and the Executive Committee, past and present, for all their efforts over the years.

We also wish to thank our many suppliers and service centres who have assisted in keeping our services and vehicles going every day of the year.

HcL could not operate without the financial support from:

- **Local Authorities** - HcL are very grateful to The City of Edinburgh Council, West Lothian Council, Midlothian Council and East Lothian Council for their continued financial support which underpins our services and subsidises the trips for passengers.
- **Passengers and Members** – thank you for your support, using the services, donations and trusting HcL in such a difficult year.
- **Funders** - we are grateful to all Funders, Trusts, Charitable Organisations and Local Groups who have supported us this year. Our thanks to:
 - Scottish Government - Adapt + Thrive Fund
 - Scottish Government - Communities Recovery Fund
 - West Lothian Community Development Trust
 - Energy Savings Trust - Transport Retrofit Fund
 - Bank of Scotland Foundation
 - Queensberry Trust
 - Nancie Massey Charitable Trust
 - Skipton Building Society Charitable Foundation
 - M&G Prudential Community Fund
 - Edinburgh Airport Community Fund
 - The Barrack Charitable Trust
 - The Souter Charitable Trust
 - Foundation Scotland - RRR Fund
 - Rotary Club of Edinburgh
 - Arnold Clark - Community Fund
 - Almond Housing Association - Community Soup
 - ELHF Covid-19 Vaccination Support Fund (administered by EVOC)

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- Coop – Local Community Fund
- Swinton Paterson Trust
- Edinburgh Wellbeing Pact: Summer Season Conversations
- The Row Fogo Charitable Trust

We would also like to thank the following West Lothian Councillors for their disbursement donation:

- Councillor Diane Calder;
- Councillor Alison Adamson;
- Councillor Dom McGuire;
- Councillor Moira Shemilt;
- Councillor Damian Timson;
- Councillor Pauline Clark;
- Councillor David Dodds;
- Councillor Kirsteen Sullivan;
- Councillor Harry Cartmill;
- Councillor John McGinty;
- Councillor Sarah King; and
- Councillor Andrew McGuire.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Jaslin Bhagrath CA

This year has been a particularly challenging year for the Charity due to the pandemic. Dial-A-Bus has not been operational, and Dial-A-Ride operated for essential travel only for much of the year. As a result, fare income dropped by 80% to just c£46k. The Charity was grateful for the continued support from local authorities as well relying on the Government Job Retention Scheme and further fundraising which enabled us to keep essential services going, provide additional support to our users and the NHS during this difficult time. Income generated in the year amounted to £1.6m.

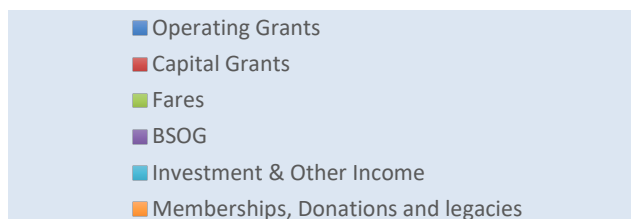
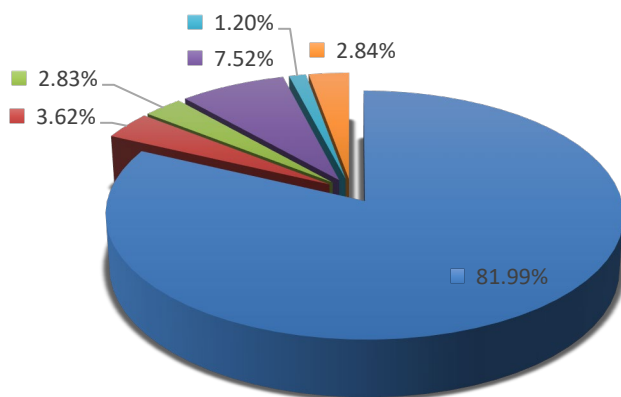
Expenditure for the year was £1.3m, a decrease of 9% on the previous year. During the year we were able to retain both our office staff and drivers. The largest decrease in costs related to the vehicles where running costs were halved as a result of the reduction in use. Our most significant spend was in equipment and cleaning, which included screens, data pads and PPE to ensure our vehicles remained safe for both staff and users.

As a result of the reduction in expenditure and an up-turn in the investment market at the year-end, the Charity has net income of c£350k.

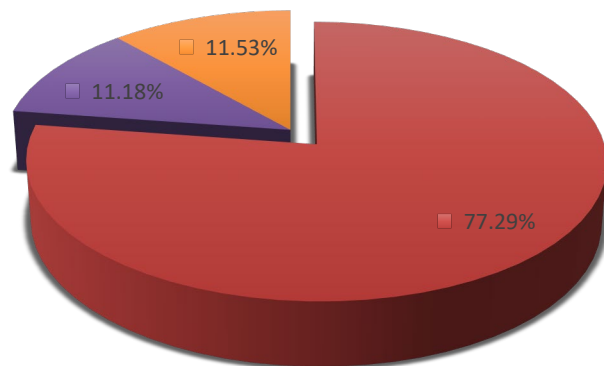
Total funds as at 31 March 2021 were c£1.3m made up of:

- Restricted funds (the capital fund) £137k
- Unrestricted designated funds (towards new vehicles and staff restructure) £474k
- Unrestricted funds (including pension fund) £741k

Incoming Operating Grants
2020/2021 Total: £1,615,379



Expenditure on Charitable Activities
2020/2021 Total: £1,352,879



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DIRECTORS' STATEMENT ON SUMMARISED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The summarised financial statements set out below have been extracted from the full financial statements which were approved on 5th October 2021 and do not constitute the charity's statutory financial statements. The full financial statements have been audited and the auditor's opinion was unqualified. The full financial statements for the year's ended 31 March 2021 and 31 March 2020 can be found at Companies House.

These summarised financial statements may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the Charity. For further information the full financial statements, the auditor's report on these financial statements and the Directors' Report should be consulted. Copies of the full financial statements can be obtained from the Registered Office at 24/3A Dryden Road, Loanhead, Midlothian, EH20 9HX.

Signed on 5th October 2021 on behalf of the directors: Director Dr Kenneth Brown

SUMMARISED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2021

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2021 Total	2020 Total
	£	£	£	£
Income and endowment from:				
Donations and legacies	7,436	37,569	45,005	25,558
Membership	945	-	945	1,050
<i>Charitable activities:</i>				
Operating grants	1,187,988	136,396	1,324,384	956,434
Capital grants	-	58,500	58,500	79,125
Bus Service Operators Grant	121,532	-	121,532	124,434
Fares	45,705	-	45,705	233,723
Investments	6,383	-	6,383	8,508
Other	12,925	-	12,925	1,000
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total income	1,382,914	232,465	1,615,379	1,429,832
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Expenditure on:				
Charitable activities	(1,107,355)	(221,668)	(1,329,023)	(1,458,193)
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total expenditure	(1,107,355)	(221,668)	(1,329,023)	(1,458,193)
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Net (losses)/ gains on investments	64,835	-	64,835	(27,742)
Net (expenditure)/income	340,394	10,797	351,191	(56,103)
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Other recognised gains/(losses):				
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension scheme	49,000	-	49,000	84,000
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Net movement in funds	389,394	10,797	400,191	27,897
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Reconciliation of funds:				
Total funds at 1 April 2020	826,288	126,400	952,688	924,791
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Total funds at 31 March 2021	1,215,682	137,197	1,352,879	952,688
	=====	=====	=====	=====

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH 2021

	2021	2020
	£	£
Fixed assets	631,321	444,840
Current assets	891,330	672,517
Current liabilities	(169,772)	(164,669)
	-----	-----
Net current assets	721,558	507,848
	-----	-----
Net assets	1,352,879	952,688
	=====	=====
Total funds of the charity:		
Restricted funds	137,197	126,400
Unrestricted funds		
Designated	474,481	480,000
General	741,201	346,288
	-----	-----
	1,352,879	952,688
	=====	=====
Approved by the Board on 5th October 2021		

HcL STAFF (38 staff and 3 volunteers at October 2021)

^ denotes 20 or more years' service * denotes 10 or more years' service

Headquarters

Kelvin Cochrane[^] Chief Executive

Core Team (5)

Robert Hutson[^] Operations Manager
 Ian Greig[^] Operations Support Officer
 Alexis Brown* Finance Officer
 Laura Kearney Funding and Marketing Manager
 Elizabeth Campbell Service Development Manager

Edinburgh (17)

Chris Howard*	Operations Supervisor		
Amy Hutson	Despatcher	Kirsty Kinnaird	Despatcher/Finance Assistant
Tony Brice [^]	Senior Driver	Mark McCrindle*	Senior Driver
Julian Ogilvie [^]	Senior Driver	Robert Laing	Driver
David McGill	Driver	Angela Stein	Driver
Cameron McLean	Driver	Scott Pennycook	Driver
Gary Duff	Driver	David Hogarth	Driver
Rino Sacconi	Driver	Darren Wallace	Driver
Neil Young	Driver	Darren Sharpe	Driver

Midlothian & East Lothian (5)

Irene McDonald	Senior Driver	Ged McDonald [^]	Senior Driver
James Hunter [^]	Senior Driver	Russell Scott [^]	Senior Driver
Andrea Battini	Driver		

West Lothian (11)

Gary Toner [^]	Assistant Operations Manager		
Frances McCallum [^]	Despatch Co-Ordinator	Kevin Gibson [^]	Senior Driver
John Watson*	Senior Driver	Mark Toner*	Senior Driver
Grant Gibson	Driver	Robert Kelly	Driver
Steven Pennycook	Driver	David Kilgour	Driver
John Gallagher	Driver	Douglas Campbell	Volunteer Driver
Garry Drysdale	Volunteer Driver	Margaret Comfort	Volunteer Despatcher

HcL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dr Kenneth Brown TD MBChB MRCP AFOM CIH	Chairman
Muriel Williams MStJ	Vice Chairman (Resigned 8 th December 2020)
Dennis Wilson	Vice Chairman (voted in 8 th December 2020)
Jaslin Bhagrath CA	Treasurer
Mike Harrison MSc BA	
John Ballantine	
Joan Cameron	
Marie McDonald	
Patricia Lawson	
Janice Thomson (deceased 6 th April 2021)	
Janette Montgomery (resigned 27 th April 2021)	

Assessors and Observers:

Councillor (To be arranged)	The City of Edinburgh Council
Councillor Tom Conn	West Lothian Council
Councillor Russell Imrie	Midlothian Council
Councillor (To be arranged)	East Lothian Council
Frank Henderson	The City of Edinburgh Council
Nicola Gill	West Lothian Council
Derek Oliver	Midlothian Council
Bruce Moffat	East Lothian Council

Contact Information

Edinburgh, Midlothian and East Lothian:
24/3A Dryden Road, Bilston Glen Industrial Estate
Loanhead, EH20 9HX

Dial-A-Ride Bookings 0131 447 9949

Dial-A-Bus Bookings 0131 447 1718

edinburgh@handicabs.org.uk

West Lothian:
17A Inchmuir Road, Whitehill Industrial Estate,
Bathgate EH48 2EP

Dial-A-Ride Bookings 01506 633953

Dial-A-Bus Bookings 01505 633336

bathgate@handicabs.org.uk

HcL Administration & Registered Office 0131 447 9953

admin@handicabs.org.uk

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Scottish Charity No. SC013906

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