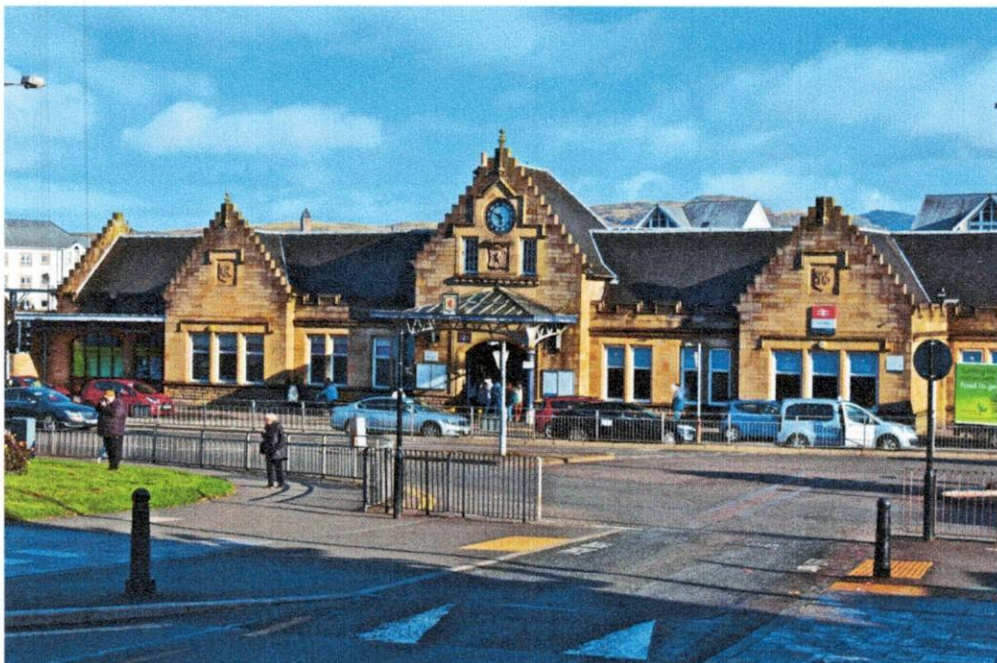


Trustees Annual Report  
for  
Stirling Area Access Panel SCIO  
for the period  
to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022



Scottish Charity No: SC039837

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**Reference & Administrative Information**

**Charity Name:** Stirling Area Access Panel SCIO

**Scottish Charity No:** SC039837

**The Charities Principal Address:** c/o Council on Disability  
Norman MacEwan Centre  
Upper Craigs Cameronian Street  
Stirling  
FK8 2DX

**Website:** [www.stirlingareaaccesspanel.co.uk](http://www.stirlingareaaccesspanel.co.uk)

**Charities Trustees on date of approval including office held:**

[REDACTED]

**Names of other trustees during the period:**

Nil

**Independent Examiner:** [REDACTED]

**Bankers:** [REDACTED]

## **Structure, Governance & Management**

### **Governing Document:**

The Charity is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). It is governed by its constitution which was adopted on 3rd April 2014. SAAP became a SCIO (SC039873) on the 5th August 2013.

### **Trustee Recruitment & Appointment:**

At each AGM, all of the charity trustees elected/appointed shall retire from office, but shall then be eligible for re-election.

Trustees can be elected at any time during the period.

A charity trustee retiring at an AGM will be deemed to have been re-elected unless:

- he/she advises the board prior to the conclusion of the AGM that he/she does not wish to be re-appointed as a charity trustee; or
- an election process was held at the AGM and he/she was not among those elected/re-elected through that process; or
- a resolution for the re-election of that charity trustee was put to the AGM and was not carried.

### **Objectives & Activities**

#### **The Charities Charitable Purpose:**

As set out in the 'Constitution' and 'The Charities and Trustee Investments(Scotland) Act 2005' the purpose(s) of Stirling Area Access Panel SCIO are the following:-

- The advancement of education
- The advancement of citizenship or community development
- The promotion of equality and diversity

Any other purpose that may reasonably be regarded as analogous to any of the preceding purposes.

#### **Summary of the main activities in relation to these objectives:**

The Panel's purposes are: To promote equality and diversity by raising awareness of access inequalities within the public, private and third sector. The advancement of education through the provision of technical and practical guidance on accessibility and related issues to organisations, services and the community. To advance citizenship through participation in decision making in relation to policies and legislation concerning access and equality.

## **Achievement & Performance for 2021-22**

Although the last 12 months has seen a gradual stabilisation in our normal activities following the Corona virus pandemic, we are still seeing long lasting public issues with health delays and rocketing energy costs. Council employees are still not back to work and theatres and cinemas are still not showing audience levels back to pre-Covid levels. Similarly our meetings have all been on-line as infection rates are still a major concern to many vulnerable members. We have met online just twice this year on Zoom. Online meetings do have advantages as it simplifies having to attend meetings physically, but the downside is that they are not social and asking questions is much harder.

As in the last two years, the Panel are still working remotely, but we can still be effective as detailed below, particularly with Planning Applications:

- Our effort in ensuring that the Aberfoyle and Agnes Husband House, Dundee CPT's were designed to Best Practice, with pragmatic benefits for those users.
- Although a small but important gain, the re-opening of Forth Valley Royal Hospital accessible toilets and the CPT in the Atrium, both of which had been closed during Covid-19, was a significant benefit for the rights of people with disabilities.
- The outcome of the Bridge of Allan Co-op Car Park was a pleasant surprise. It was down to the consultants' understanding access issues and being up for change. The final solution was most satisfactory.
- During the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Covid-19, the continued importance of reviewing Planning Applications was very pertinent to us and we completed 20, three more than last year. They ranged from the erection of Wolfcraig Distillery, bollards at the entrance to Viewforth, to cycle storage at the Stirling Municipal Building.
- We had three articles by the Panel published in the Stirling Observer. The most significant was related to a Planning Application for a new car park opposite the Kings Knot. Our objections were published in detail.
- Through two Cross Party Groups (CPG) we participated with other disability groups and MSP's to further the rights of disabled people with general disability issues and promoting and improving Changing Places Toilets.
- The course which we organised about Active Travel/Spaces for People was unique for Scottish Panels. We used an NRAC expert who had many years of designing Active Travel streets in London.

Two primary areas which have taken by far most of our time were the WCLS routes and the Stirling Station developments. As far as we know all our many written suggestions have been ignored by WCLS as the full route details only emerged prior to the road changes being implemented. This is far from correct as any consultation which did occur didn't focus on the actual elements which make up the design. We can only assume that Stirling Council and Sustrans didn't wish any changes to their 'plan', even if funding was entirely through public finance.

The drastic changes to Stirling Station is another example of organizations not consulting correctly. SAAP had to force an initial meeting with ScotRail and Stirling Council after quoting their responsibility under the Disability Equality Duty. Although we had a number of online meetings right up to the start of works beginning, any small changes were hard won and overall we don't think the changes inside and outside of the Station are inclusive, nor will benefit the majority of society.

In conclusion, we have learned much about changes to our streets in the last few years, but also how difficult organisations make fair consultations. They just don't accept or seem to understand the importance of cars for people with disabilities as it allows them the independence and ability to choose to go to locations which ambulant people take for granted. With Active Travel, the opportunity for disabled people to move about, is becoming less easy, not just because of Covid, but the restrictions on car ownership doesn't help given that public transport is so inadequate, particularly in the rural setting of

much of Stirlingshire.

### **Access Surveys**

SAAP haven't undertaken any new Surveys in the last 12 months.

### **Consultations & Public Issues**

#### **Stirling Station**

In early April there was an article in the Stirling Observer (SO) about the refurbishment and changes to the front of the station with the loss of the taxi rank and drop-off facilities. We also received a query from the public, concerned about having to carry luggage to the new taxi location on Murray Place after the refurbishment of the station as part of the WCLS activities. This was surprising as we had asked ScotRail what was happening with the project 3 times over the previous 6 months. The WCLS talks that we had with the council over the past two years had never included changes to the station. We wrote to the senior manager mentioned in the article and also the minister for transport Jenny Gilruth MSP to clarify what was happening.

Since then, we have had 5 online joint meetings with the senior project manager for ScotRail and the council manager responsible for all active travel projects. We covered a multitude of points relating to the flawed EqIA, plus 30 points from the General Arrangement drawings we received (on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June) around the station area, and more. Some changes which we stated should be mandatory were two drop-offs in the car parking area between the railway station and bus station, but within 55m of the railway entrance. Similarly, a small taxi rank with an accessible spot for an accessible taxi on Goosecroft road at a similar distance is another 'reasonable adjustment'. We also asked for the station toilets to be refurbished and a baby changing facility added, which was agreed. At every meeting we also asked for a CPT at either the train or bus station.....with no response. An issue is that there are no public toilets on the public side of the station, but ScotRail won't move on this, even if the station is supposed to be a 'Gateway'.

Discussion is still ongoing; overall there have been some concessions, but people with sensory conditions will certainly find the station frontage or plaza to be challenging due to activity with pedestrians, bikes, scooters and cars.

It was WSP, an engineering company from Edinburgh, who completed the very weak EqIA last August '21 for ScotRail and the Council. SAAP challenged it with extensive detail, but that did not change their views and the EqIA has not been revised. Had there been the necessary participative consultation before the document was compiled, SAAP would have asked for more inclusive improvements.

Construction work has started, and it remains to be seen if the changes we have asked for will be taken-up. Overall, proper consultation to achieve fair access and inclusion for travellers has sadly, not been achieved.

**Parking Consultation Meetings** – Due to staff moving to other councils, the ongoing meetings have temporarily stopped.

#### **PB Meetings**

There are only two which have extended into 2022: one was the Aberfoyle CPT although construction started in May, we were asked to advise on external signage, most of which was excellent and some cycle stands which we advised were too close to the entrance.

The second, we attended in January, a Teams meeting where the Council allocated £60K to be spent on a whin dust short link at the "Smiddy" to improve the safety of the road route from Aberfoyle to Stirling. We don't know if it was completed.

The council now has a statutory duty to extend the PB practice as a normal duty. Groups and residents will participate by invitation only on future projects.

#### **Stirling Uni Bus Hub Ramp**

The Chair rechecked an updated website for 'Justrite Scotland' and they don't advise upon disability issues. No new suggestions were put forward and we know that no safety improvements have been

added. We consider the ramp hazardous for wheelchair users and had asked the Equality and Human Rights Commission (Glasgow) for their advice, but they had responded that they do not take up transport or pedestrian issues.

### **Balfron Active Spaces**

Due to other financial priorities, the next stage of this project is slipping to the third quarter of 2022, or even later.

### **Finnich Glen Visitor Centre**

No update, this project is looking doubtful.

### **Walk, Cycle, Live Stirling**

In August '21 SAAP received notes from SC of the 8 workshop/meetings and consultations which took place covering the College and University routes. The full report is available on request. Two of the meetings were discussing issues around the behaviour of road users. Segments of routes are now appearing on Planning Applications, but we have still to see full details. In March '22, a member of SAAP visited a public "celebration day" of the construction design and phasing plans, but the opportunity to see and discuss any part of the two routes was just not practical.

Details of the actual route from the station to just beyond the old Stirling Bridge went public in June '22 and SAAP commented in detail on these features. It is a cycleway segregated from the main roads, with bus stops which are on islands between the cycleway and roadway, junctions which have been tightened to slow traffic, removal of a substantial number of parking spaces, the inclusion of informal, Zebra and controlled crossings, etc. Some of the sections are fine but others will be challenging for people with disabilities. There are a number of sections still to be released, Causewayhead Road and Airthrey Road to the university, Dumbarton Road and Upper Craigs have still to be viewed

Although we have tabled over 50 points, none have yet been responded to.

### **The City Centre South Project**

The design began in August '21 and is focussing on Net Zero Carbon, Improved Air Quality, Safety for vulnerable road users, etc; an update in December '21 stated that leafletting of properties covering Braehead and Kings Park resulted in a very positive response. A Pollinator Action Plan was also launched. This project departs markedly from WCLS as it is not route based, but covers areas. Changes to roads have not been disclosed. Funding is from Sustrans. Drawings were shown indicating that the plan is to have most of the streets of Braehead and Kings Park cycle and walking friendly. It was not possible to give insightful comment as no detail was available, just broad generalisation of the overall scheme. This contrasts with the concept of WCLS which uses two cycleways. We asked about 'blue light services' and were told that they would be consulted.

The group working for Stirling Community Hospital Greenspace Project has consulted with Stirling Council about including a cycle route through the hospital grounds and potentially joining Burghmuir Road.

### **Hearing System Funding, RRC**

Covid measures don't allow progress.

### **Craigforth Campus**

No known developments.

### **The Peak Steam Room**

It is now open to all.

### **Disabled Parking Murray Place**

SAAP has twice made requests to the council twice for lines to be renewed but it still hasn't been done. To date the line refreshing has not been carried out, perhaps because most staff have left the Roads Dept.

### **Social Security Scotland (SSS) – Zoom Calls**

The chair advised that a SAAP design for the CPT for the Agnes Husband house in Dundee had been submitted and accepted using a Geberit toilet as the solid concrete floor cannot be modified for a shower to drain. There has been extensive discussions on the layout of the Ground Floor, Cafeteria areas, Meeting Room designs, hearing systems, décor, signage, a quiet room and toilets. Other points on the ground floor relating to sensory issues were discussed. Unfortunately accessible parking and a drop-off was out with the control of the project.

Similarly, the Glasgow SSS building is currently used as an office and there wasn't an opportunity to review this building.

### **Co-op Parking, Balfron**

The building refurbishment date is still not known and the second design attempt of the accessible bays was still not compliant as they were on a steep incline.

### **Killearn to Balfron Path Project**

There have been no public meetings for over a year and the consultant hides behind a website which lacks details. We understand that there are major issues with landowners and a route has still not been confirmed. The chair contacted an NRAC consultant on the width of the path and it was suggested that it be 4m wide, this was passed to the consultant with no response. Local Facebook comments suggest that there is a funding issue and the project may not proceed.

### **CPT in Stirling City**

In July last year, we reminded Alyn Smith's Communication manager by asking if the MP had spoken to Stirling Council, but to date we have received no response.

In October '21, we sent a request to Evelyn Tweed MSP whose manager replied that she would write to Stirling Council when further details from the Scottish Government become available.

In January '22, we completed a 'Go Forth Stirling' Business Engagement Survey for the 'Big Ideas' where SAAP is requesting a city centre CPT and public toilets. In June '22 we wrote to Jenny Gilruth MSP Minister for Transport, advocating that a CPT should be part of the Station/WCLSs project: her response was that the ones at the Peak, the Bellfield Centre and the College can be used by traveller at the Station. This merely shows a lack of understanding of the requirement for a CPT, and is completely unacceptable if one arrives at Stirling Station and needs a CPT quickly!

Evelyn Tweed will continue to pursue with Stirling Council the need for a CPT in the area of the rail/bus station.

### **Forth Valley College, Kildean & Non-Binary Signs on Accessible Toilets**

Dialogue with the principal has stretched over 6 months and hasn't resulted in any change to the incorrect signage. After flagging this up to DES, to ask if other Panels have come across similar, the Chair was invited by DES to attend a Cross Party Group (CPG) with MSP's and leading disability groups to discuss this infringement. The Chair, Jeremy Balfour MSP, asked to see all correspondence between SAAP and the Principal. In the end, a letter went to Christina McKelvie MSP where she talked about the rights of the disabled person under the Equality Act 2010, what buildings should have CPT's and the £10M fund available for CPT's – but failed to answer the question about gender neutral toilets. We will ask the question again. It was further discussed at our last meeting that accessible toilets are not the right solution, and it would be more sensible for separate gender neutral toilets to be created from male/female toilets.

### **Sustrans Travel Behaviour Workshop**

SAAP attended a second Teams workshop last August and subjects like the safety of users and extending routes were explored.

### **Millhall Pedestrian Rail Bridge**

In December 2021, SAAP wrote to ask the disability contact at ScotRail if he could give us a reply to concerns about the above location. He did reply and overall we have written 4 emails, but we are no nearer having answers to the issues at Millhall.

### **Membership**

It was agreed that we should write an article for the Stirling Observer.

We welcomed a new member to SAAP and their background in Planning will be useful in access issues.

### **Greenspace at Stirling Community Hospital**

The first Workshop in September focussed on general suggestions, e.g., sensory path, Active Travel Routes, exercise area, food production, green areas, etc and SAAP advised on width of paths, signage, etc for areas. A further meeting in February '22 discussed a sensory garden and sub-groups for projects. The chair advised that a physical mapping activity would be required. The landscape company ERZ is to carry out a feasibility study, etc. A setting up a 'Friends of Group' is in hand. SAAP mentioned the need for an EqlA and one of the NHS managers will contact us to discuss.

### **Stirling Sheriff Court Accessible Parking**

The two accessible parking bays issue has not been resolved yet. If a visitor needs an accessible space, the Scottish Courts think it is a reasonable adjustment for them to call the Sheriff Clerk in advance of going there, so that then a space will be allocated to them in the parking area at the Court.

### **'Back to the Future Lunch'**

The Riverside Resource Centre is still closed to the public, with no plans to re-open.

### **20 Minute Neighbourhoods – Riverside**

SAAP agreed to participate in this project in August '21. A member had a telephone meeting in January '22 and made a number of points about the surrounding streetscape of Riverside Primary School, where it is proposed car parking will be prevented. Our SAAP member, familiar with the area, had given constructive advice on alternative parking. A trial of a car exclusion zone had taken place in May during nice weather, and that a longer trial is to take place later in the year. Enforcement of the new parking arrangements will not be carried out by SC, and concerningly, will be left to the local community. The car parking ban around Riverside Primary School is still in operation and further changes are mooted.

A SAAP member advised that roads are still to be open to emergency vehicles, delivery vehicles, and to disabled drivers. WCLS roadworks are going on at the moment in Riverside, with access difficulties, and the Council want to close Lovers' Lane permanently.

A member has kindly agreed to talk to us in a session on 20 Minute Neighbourhoods as she had completed a thesis on this very subject.

### **Photography in Stirling City & Bridge of Allan**

During August we had an extensive email exchange with a new council transport officer about taking photos of people with disabilities and their walking aids for the WCLS project. We advised of the sensitivity towards tokenism with disability and commented on the problems which 20 minute neighbourhoods bring to personal safety and security, access to shopping, employment, education, hospitals, etc.

### **Strathblane Library**

In August '21, we were kindly asked by Building Controls about a sliding door to a WC, which there were no issues with. Construction has started. In March '22 the architect contacted SAAP regarding the number of colostomy shelves and their placement in an accessible toilet. We advised that the 2nd Shelf should be near the WHB for Diabetic equipment use.

In April '22, the architect contacted SAAP again, regarding a lift and turn tap for the accessible toilets. Our advice based on BS8300, is that they are not acceptable, and they need to be the lever turn type.

### **Repeated Accessible Parking Offender**

In August '21 SAAP received an email from a member of the public about a driver who regularly parked wrongly in an off-street accessible parking bay. We advised to report the person to the council, whose wardens could take action.

### **Alive for Nature Council Policy**

In August '21, a detailed input was submitted by the Chair, but as expected, the council wish to promote walking and cycling on new routes. They wish to join all villages with off-road routes and develop the Kings Highway as a walking route from Stirling to Dumbarton Rock. It is also planned to benchmark the value of all the plant and animal life in the Stirling environment. A Policy was later approved by councillors.

### **Bridge of Allan Co-op**

Unexpectedly we were contacted by a company redeveloping the car park of this shop in September. We had concerns about the disabled bays and access across the car park entrance. After a detailed online meeting it was agreed to move the accessible bays to a safer location and provide a crossing for disabled users.

### **Access Language: Access Audit**

In September DES called for an online debate on what Panels use for defining an Access Audit, or Access Survey, Report, Walkthrough, Lived Experience Assessment, etc.

The meeting was held in October '21 where we discussed qualifications and terminology and came to the conclusion that it was all right to have a variation in description. It was agreed unanimously that the content of findings was more important than a heading for the Report.

### **St Mark's Church, Raploch**

In October '21 we received an email from the architect designing the new church, who wanted to discuss the design. We fully reviewed this by phone, ranging from the closest bus stop to the proposed CPT, and later submitted a design for the CPT for consideration; all toilets will be gender neutral.

We also supported in principle the Planning Application which was submitted in January '22, and was later approved.

### **SAAP Funding Grant from the Council 2022-23**

We have submitted our input.

### **Fairer, Greener Scotland - Programme for Government 2021-2022**

Through a contact with the council, we learned in October '21 that the SG were providing £10M to organisations from April '22, who wish to develop CPT's. We signposted St Marks and Strathfillan CDT (Tyndrum CPT) on the details given by MSP Evelyn Tweed who has local responsibility for the Programme.

### **Tyndrum CPT**

In late October '21 we were contacted by Strathfillan CDT regarding their project, which included assisting a company to prepare a tender for toilets, including a CPT. A Teams meeting with the company took place in December '21 where we gave them advice about a CPT.

We heard in June '22 that the project had stalled as they cannot find a landowner to donate the necessary ground.

### **Bannockburn Enterprise Hub: (21/00269/FUL) - Vacant Royal Bank Of Scotland Unit**

A member of SAAP highlighted in early November '21 that access through the front doors of this project was by ramps. SAAP previously had a document from developers, showing no ramps. An email to the Planning manager and subsequent council employees has not clarified the position. Pictures of the new ramps suggest that they should be wider and we indicated this to the council on the 20th December with 10 points which we would like clarified, but to date there has been no response.

### **Spaces for People Intervention**

On 25th November '21 SAAP participated in a community discussion with Sustrans on promoting Active Travel in a number of locations in the Region. Some of the points discussed were reducing speed limits, cycle gateway treatment, signage, planters, bidirectional cycle lanes, etc. There was not a lot of awareness of disability.

As individuals, we also participated in a survey indicating if we wished Covid activated projects to be made permanent.

### **Falkirk Hospital Parking**

It was highlighted to us in November '21 that patients who live in Stirling have been directed from FVRH to the physiotherapy dept. in Falkirk Hospital. The drop-off and accessible parking and toilets are poorly located and signed for patients. After an email exchange with a FV facilities director, we were promised that these provisions would be better signed and controlled in future.

### **Glamping Pods at Loch Lomond**

In December '21 we were asked by Lomond Leader to provide some information/signposting for a Pod which the owner wished to make accessible by a ramp or lift. We don't know the outcome.

### **Forth Valley Connectivity Commission**

Community Evidence Gathering Workshop – SAAP did not attend the Workshop in December, but did submit a detailed written response based on 3rd Sector travelling issues. We haven't received a copy of the outcome.

### **Adapted Taxis In Stirling City**

In December '21, we asked the council to give us the number of accessible taxis in Stirling as a member had reported that there were not enough of them. Only after reminding the council were we given this answer: Registered Taxis were - 21 Accessible and 79 Ordinary; with Private Hire - 14 Accessible and 113 Ordinary. We did go back to the council, asking if they have a policy on relative numbers of accessible taxis, but have received no response.

### **ScotRail Station Modernisation Consultation**

In January'21, members completed a survey about the restricted opening hours/loss of ticket offices to nearly all stations. Generally for people with disabilities, this change will only make train travel more difficult.

### **Advice on Threshold Ramps**

SAAP received a request in January'22 from a member of the public who wished to install ramps at an elderly person's property. We advised that there was not space to fit a ramp and perhaps it would be worthwhile to speak to the housing agent and social services for individual advice.

### **Strategic Transport Project Review 2 (STPR2) Formal Consultation**

Members submitted inputs to this review in January'22.

### **Tactran Regional Transport Strategy 2023 - 2033 Main Issues Summary**

SAAP submitted a detailed review to the findings in January '22. We also asked why there are so many surveys: some organisations have different responsibilities, some are local, there are regional and nationally based, so there is unfortunately a considerable amount of duplication and misuse of resources.

### **New Student Accommodation in Dumbarton Road.**

We are pleased to note that there are 2 marked disabled parking bays at the front entrance to this new build.

#### **National Planning Framework 4**

SAAP submitted some comments relating to 20-Minute Neighbourhoods, the Green Network, Net 0 and Placemaking. It does seem a pity that Lifetime homes doesn't feature.

#### **Dropped Kerbs in Springkerse**

This is still a problem in the many roads and footways in Stirling, where the upstand height is over the limit of 6mm. Tactile paving is also a problem – ideally it should be flush with the footway surface. Some dropped crossings are so high, a wheelchair user can only cross by reversing up the lip of the dropped upstand. It was agreed that a wheelchair member will take pictures of four problematic areas that he experiences, and we will take this up with the Council.

#### **Tweeddale Access Panel**

DES asked if we would talk to that Panel, who wish to become a SCIO, as currently we are the only Panel with SCIO status. The Chair spoke to their Secretary, and the Trustees agreed to allow Tweeddale, in confidence, to have sight of our Constitution and Financial Policy to assist them with their application. To date the Panel still haven't managed to complete the SCIO accreditation.

#### **Zebra Crossing Research**

In February we were asked by Jacobs, a transport research company with support from the University of Edinburgh, to comment on pedestrian crossings, which we did. The final report is due in September.

#### **Cowie to Fallin Foot & Cyclepath – Article in Stirling Observer 18/2/22**

We contacted the council relating to this 1.8km long path and the fact that there had been no consultation with disability groups. There were a number of issues like the narrow path width, closeness of newly planted shrubs, absolutely no signage that this route was a shared surface, and there is no tapping edge. No EqlA had been done by the developer, Scottish Power Energy Network. We did receive a reply from the Council, but it was far from satisfactory saying that they didn't have a transport engineer or access officer to investigate!

#### **Locality EqlA**

SAAP participated in March '22 in a rural practice primary care EqlA, although we were sorry to say that none of the issues there are new ones!

#### **Albert Halls - Renovation and Redevelopment Project**

In March '22, SAAP members attended an online meeting by the council's senior architect relating to the renovation of the Albert Halls. The two contract architects outlined some overall very impressive proposals to improve this Victorian building. The changes include a different external frontage comprising accessible parking and a drop-off, a ramped front entrance, new and more toilets, a CPT, larger lifts (2) and a much larger café. The building will be fully accessible and appeal to artists and performers as well as a wedding venue. The only downside is that there is no street parking close by.

#### **Changing Places Toilet and Accessible Toilets in the Atrium at FV Royal Hospital**

In April '22, we wrote to the Director of Facilities to request that the closed accessible toilet and CPT in the Atrium be opened again as people were being forced to wait in this area prior to being called to their clinics in 'Outpatients'. We also commented that training should be given to staff as they didn't know what a CPT was, and the single female accessible toilet should be changed to unisex as the accessible toilet at Starbucks was greatly oversubscribed. The Director agreed to open all toilet facilities in the Atrium immediately.

#### **Pistol Factory Museum Proposal, Doune**

In May '22, there was a request to advise a developer who wished to create a museum in an original pistol manufacturing building. Access between buildings on the only entrance route was less than 1m, and there are other troubling elements like a cobbled walking surface. We advised that this was challenging for wheelchair users and Planning would not like it. We advised them to speak to Planning before submitting an Application.

### **Radar Key for all toilets at The Peak**

In May '22, SAAP was advised by a Peak member that all the accessible toilets had been converted to Radar keys without any notification. We emailed the facilities manager who stated that this was necessary due to vandalism. We then said that all members should have been notified of the change and suggested that a small sign on toilet doors should be displayed stating where a Radar Key can be obtained at the Peak. This was all agreed and actioned.

### **Town Centre Accessibility**

DES asked SAAP about our concerns over accessibility of town centres for a meeting that they were having at the Scottish Parliament on the 18th May. We quoted the lack of public transport for rural areas, few public toilets, and the lack of Demand Responsive Transport.

"If town centres are to be accessible, basic needs must be met, and crucially, clean, safe, accessible toilets must be provided in adequate numbers, with clear signage from multiple locations, particularly transport " hubs" and entrances to retail and tourist areas. This is not currently the case in Stirlingshire, regrettably.

Safe, correctly sized footways, free of cyclists and other hazards are vital for all wheelchair users and people with sensory issues, with the necessary dropped kerbs, and blister pavements. Crossings which allow time for safe crossing by those with impaired mobility are important also, but have to be argued strongly for."

DES have offered this presentation which they made to Parliament at the next operational meeting.

### **Aberfoyle Changing Places Toilet**

Construction work began in May '22 and SAAP was contacted by the architect who sent drawings on the detail for the signage. Our feedback involved changing the location of some signs and relocating bike storage hoops further away from the entrance door. We also asked for a shower seat, but this was resisted as the showering trolley bed could be used as a seat too.

### **Access to a Private House in Crianlarich**

We received an enquiry in May from a person with an elderly relation who was having difficulties with two sets of steps to their house. We advised that the position was complicated, as two platform lifts would be required and that it is necessary to approach Social Services for assistance.

### **Stirling Local Rurality Network Meeting**

This online meeting took place at the end of May and it was about exploring the issues of Primary Care and what Service Model is best through public consultation. We were advised that 250 new staff (physiotherapists, ANP's, Health Care Specialists, pharmacists etc) had joined practices. Larger practices were termed 'Locality Hubs' as they had extra resources to call on. SAAP participated in this online meeting, which was similar to the old PPF function in giving the public a voice. From a rural point of view some of the services are not an improvement as ophthalmology for example, is still based at Falkirk Hospital! There will be further meetings.

### **Forthside Bridge Lifts Out of Order**

In early June '22 a SAAP member highlighted that a lift was taped-off without notification. This causes extreme disruption and hardship for wheelchair users and parents with young children in buggies. Another member highlighted the issue to a local councillor and also to the council. Within a few days the lift was back in operation, although our suggestion to have signs at ground level to indicate a breakdown have been referred to the legal dept. of the council and to date it is unknown if this point has been agreed.

### **Cross Party Group (CPG) on CPT's 1st June '22**

SAAP also attended this online meeting in June where there were over 40 different organisations, including Pamis and chaired by Jeremy Balfour MSP. A Disability Commissioner for Scotland was discussed and it was fully agreed that there ought to be one to add political support with disability issues but Parliament have to agree.

There was a presentation by a lady from Euan's Guide on their website which covers UK and abroad: their website attracted criticism from two attendees. Euan's Guide does not include negative reviews on

their website and it is all anecdotal and not a professional review as we know. The speaker agreed to take back feedback for their management.

Other discussions were on a "review" of CPT's by Pamis and a comment on the number of local authority listed CPTs in Scotland.

A lady from Shetland said that CPT's should be 16 sq m to allow for large motorised chairs. The current spec. is 12 sq m.

The chair of SAAP commented on construction issues which added to the cost and how the English Government have been investigating for over a year on how to reduce the size and cost of a CPT so that more can be constructed from their £30m budget. Scotland has £10m for CPTs, but so far no money has been issued. Next meeting is 14th Sept.

### **Cross Party Group (CPG) 6th June '22 Meeting on Disability**

SAAP attended this online meeting where a presentation on MND was given by a lady whose husband had passed away after diagnosis in only 9 months and in that time, they had to fund home improvements themselves.

A brief discussion on Scottish local authority disability stats from 2020 gave Stirling Council employing 3.4% (disclosed) of people with disabilities.

### **Dates and Mates**

At our July meeting two guests gave a description of their organisation, which is to encourage people with disabilities to socialise in a normal way by going to pubs and clubs in Stirling. They started up in Stirling in January '22, and frequently come across barriers to access, so are keen to ensure that any issue is resolved. One pub that they visit is The Crossed Peels, but toilet access is poor. They have also visited the Fubar. The toilets are inadequate at Bob and Bert's, and there is now no café in the Stirling Bus Station as it has been closed for some time. As a minimum requirement, there ought to be a fresh water drinking fountain or bottle filling station – the Chair wrote to the Council about providing one, but Scottish Water had already allocated 8 in Stirlingshire and wished to encourage travel hubs to install them themselves.

We were all in agreement that as a city centre, Stirling is lacking in toilet and other facilities generally for its residents and visitors. We mentioned that The Peak has many accessible toilets.

### **Accessible Cycling**

Go Forth and Cycling without Age were mentioned by Dates and Mates in July '22 as organisations with accessible cycles, bicycles, and trishaws which can be hired and are disabled user-friendly. We later advised the WCLS team of their existence so that examples can be asked along at their next launch, and show inclusivity to projects, as we have requested for their previous open events.

### **CPT Query for Killin**

SAAP received an email from a community councillor in July '22 about how to obtain a CPT. We advised them to look at the detailed design information which is available and also the potential funding source through the Scottish Government via our own MSP. No further info has been received.

### **Planning Issues**

21/00636/FUL - Creation of a new signalised vehicle access into the reconfigured car park from Burghmuir Road Junction | Stirling Railway Station Goosecroft Road Stirling – In August '21, we queried the Roads Dept on changes to pedestrian access, and received a comprehensive answer which stated that there would be new accessible parking bays near the station.

It should be noted that this approved Application will mean no vehicular access to the front of the station and this could cause issues for disabled people.

21/00703/FUL Erection of 60 bed care home at 103 - 105 Henderson St, Bridge of Allan – This was the 2nd time that we had objected to this August '21 Application. There was no outdoor space on the 1st Floor; no facilities for couples living together; no hand washing facilities before handling or eating food. There were multiple issues with the accessible parking and no drop-off.

Planning rejected the Application on 8 counts of local Planning Policy in December'21.

**21/00733/FUL** Formation of 16 car parking spaces, to South of Kings Knot Roundabout, Dumbarton Road – In September we queried this Application with a neutral response to this new car park which removed car parking on the top section of Dumbarton Road, and substituted a cycle track. The drawing was unclear with pedestrian routings to the footway, the uncontrolled crossing over Raploch Road, driving out the car park and also the proximity of trees and leaf litter. We received a very comprehensive response from the council explaining these points. This Application was later approved.

**21/00552/FUL** Erection of Wolfcraig Distillery & Visitor Centre, etc., East of Touch Farm, Cambusbarron – In September '21 we submitted a neutral detailed comment covering parking, drop-off, electric charging, seating, external signage, rotary entrance door, manifestations, acoustic design, reception layout, glazing, need for a CPT, ground floor toilets, baby changing room, circulation space, café and restaurant seating and lift, audible signage to stairs and staff training in inclusive communications. All points were positively addressed. This Application was later rejected on a number of levels by the council.

**21/00847/FUL** Erection of children's nursery. Drip Road, Raploch – Although we supported this Application in October'21, we highlighted the points lacking , e.g. the position and number of accessible parking bays, no drop-off, unsuitable entrance doors, manifestations, baby changing facilities and a lowered reception desk and PEEP. There were plenty of toilets. We did not receive a response from the architect and the project was approved.

**21/00822/FUL** Formation of car park with landscaping at former Council Depot, Doune – We fully supported this Application in October'21 as it was part of the solution for improving parking in Doune. We suggested positioning the accessible bays on the other side of the entrance closest to the village. The project was approved without change.

**21/00894/FUL** - Change of use from vacant shop to hot food takeaway at 78A Raploch Road – This October'21 project had a possible step entrance, very tight counter space, and no seating, all of which could be challenging for a person with disabilities. No response was received and strangely the project was later withdrawn in the same month. In early February, a new Application was received with drawings showing a lowered threshold, additional seating, a lowered serving counter, so the SAAP comments had been worthwhile.

**21/00678/FUL** - Minor reconfiguration of Drive Thru and Car Park, etc, at McDonalds Restaurant, Drip Road – We highlighted an incorrectly marked accessible parking bay during August and undersize bollards. With approval in November'21, all our points were addressed by the architect to Planning.

**21/00946/LBC** - Installation of bollard mounted door entry ....Viewforth, Pitt Terrace – In November,'21, SAAP objected to the proposed arrangement of stainless steel bollards at the front entrance. We felt that they were a hazard to people with visual or sensory impairments.

No response was received and the project was approved in late December without change.

**21/00260/PPP**- Notification of Revision to Application - Mixed use development of offices, retail, gym, drive-thru restaurants, car showroom and associated parking at Cookbridge to south of Wickes – In April '21 we originally commented primarily about parking issues relating to this large shopping development. This Revision in November '21 didn't show any improvement in the issues which we originally highlighted, so we gave it a neutral comment. Since then, there has been significant comment in the Observer where we were quoted as an unnamed contributor. The council has approved the project, but there has been substantial negative comment from contributors on trading and environmental issues. The architect did acknowledge the comments for a 2nd time. There could be further developments with this Application.

**21/00994/FUL** - Change of use of part of existing building from garage to Class1 retail hot food premises etc, at Shearer's Garage, Balfron – We wrote to the architect regarding some access issues relating to the approach and entrance to the shop and he responded positively. The Application was later approved with conditions.

**21/00978/FUL** - Change of use from shop to library at 56 Johnston Avenue, Cornton, FK9 5DJ – In November we supported this Application for a library, but the accessible toilet was undersize and signage could have been better. The recessed entrance door didn't comply with minimum side clearance for wheelchair access. We also asked for an inductive hearing loop at the Reception desk. There was no response from Stirling Council although the Application was approved on 20th Dec. '21.

**21/00792/FUL** - Change of use to form outside eating and drinking area etc, at Old Mill Inn, Killearn, G63 9NJ – We wrote to the architect in December '21 about issues relating to accessible parking, access and seating for a wheelchair user, access to the toilet, signage and dementia symbols. We received a very positive response to every question and the owner is very keen to make their facility as inclusive as possible. This Application was approved.

**21/01064/FUL - 21/01083/LBC** - Change of use of Barbershop (Class 1) to Coffee Shop (Class 3), 67 Port Street – This was a resubmission from 21/00504/FUL which we commented on last July '21 relating to the proposed accessible toilet not being accessible to a wheelchair user due to its abnormal shape. This improved and new proposal still doesn't meet the 1500mm turning circle. No response was received from the architect, although it was later approved with conditions on cooking smells, opening hours and cooking restrictions, but nothing about the undersize accessible toilet.

**21/01066/FUL** - Reconfiguration of 17 No. car parking spaces, construction of cyclepath/footpath and shared use path – This path leads to the Old Stirling Bridge and is part of the route from the Station to the University. In January, we highlighted to the council an incorrect accessible parking bay and shared use paths under Department of Transport regulations. The tree planting close to the cycle and shared footway was unsuitable. Other points like path widths were also tabled. No response has been forthcoming. In March '22 the project was approved with conditions relating to tree preservation, landscaping and written archaeology approval, but no accessibility elements.

**22/00115/FUL** - Construction of two ponds and associated pathways, erection of fernery building and new gate..... Braeport Dunblane.  
SAAP supported this development in March but we made 12 points of potential improvement as the paths are narrow, the entrance gate and accessibility of the buildings were poor, there was no outside seating. Disappointingly there was no response. Planning has approved this project.

**22/00058/FUL** - Installation of single Electric Vehicle Charger (EVC) pedestal to existing car parking area at Sherriff Court, Barnton Street. We asked in March for the two existing accessible bays to be relocated close to the accessible court entrance and for one to have an electric charger. It ended-up that only one accessible bay was located correctly and the double charging bays were installed at a different location. Although the drawing was correct, it appears the installation will need to be corrected by the Council.

**22/00191/FUL** – Erection of new office.....at Plean Precast, Plean – In March we submitted an objection to this Application for a new office block. The drawing showed a step up from the accessible parking and the pillars adjacent to the entrance were not marked with reflective bands. There were various internal issues too: the entrance doors were folding rather than sliding; the reception desk didn't have a lowered section; the entrance to the accessible toilet was too close to a corridor door; the lift looked small; circulation space was also poor at some spots in the building. Overall, we highlighted 17 points. There was an article in the Observer about this development and the Panel was mentioned. Planning approved this project with conditions on the external design only.

**22/00089/FUL** – Use of part of Public House as Restaurant (Class 3) with ancillary Hot Food Takeaway .....Resubmission of 21/00651/FUL – SAAP objected to this complicated arrangement of restaurant and ice cream parlour/takeaway shop. The shop we found 7 access points which could have been better and the restaurant had 3. Do hope that the architect takes cognisance to the points made. To date Planning still hasn't made a decision.

**22/00423/FUL** – Stirling Municipal Building, 22 Cycle Storage – SAAP input a neutral decision as the facility wasn't colour contrasting, there was no lighting or signage and more importantly it should have inclusive capacity for at least one space for an accessible, cargo, or tandem bike. It was later approved.

### **Publicity and Marketing**

The Panel's website, [www.stirlingareaaccesspanel.org](http://www.stirlingareaaccesspanel.org) has been updated, but not on a regular basis.

#### **“Roadside Painted Out”**

This refers to an article in the Stirling Observer about an incorrect pedestrian symbol painted on the road in Riverside. The Roads dept. quickly corrected the markings & in August'21 they responded to our email, stating that the shared surface was correctly marked & is part of a larger Spaces for People project.

#### **Stirling Observer Quotation request November '21**

SAAP were asked to provide a quotation about a disabled vehicle abandoned outside the Post Office in Callander. It was published on 5th November and was a good advertisement for the work of the Access Panel. We were quoted again on 18/2/22.

#### **Stirling Observer Article 19th Jan '22**

The Panel's input to a Planning Application 21/00733/FUL on parking near the Kings Knot was covered in detail, and was good exposure.

**Article in Stirling Observer “Stranded in the Night” 13/05/2022** – Stirling Observer asked SAAP for a quotation in this article about a wheelchair user who couldn't get an accessible taxi after arriving by train in the early hours of Sunday morning at Stirling station. The person was stranded for circa 6 hours before he managed to get an accessible taxi. There are about 18% of accessible taxis in Stirlingshire, and we would like to see a higher percentage as this incident shows that wheelchair users cannot rely on a taxi service on demand.

### **Training and Development**

#### **Active Travel / Spaces for People Training Course**

On the 4th of May 8 people, 5 from SAAP and 3 from Clacks Panel attended a half-day tailored course on the above subject. It was generally felt to have been an interesting and worthwhile course. Feedback of the meeting was positive for the course.

### **Acknowledgments**

Our thanks go to Stirling Council for their financial and helpful support throughout the year.

We also thank Disability Equality Scotland for their support at various meetings.

Our strong thanks to our Independent Examiner for her invaluable and prompt advice and examination of our Report and Financial Information.

Finally, our sincere thanks to our trustee for her substantial effort in arranging to complete our Annual Accounts as we still don't have a permanent treasurer.

As always, the trustees are very grateful for the valuable input of SAAP members who support the Panel's activities, particularly in the present difficult circumstances, and despite having to cope with individual health challenges, possibly with the added complication of shielding.

It would not be possible for the Panel to function without the goodwill and support of our members and of other related organizations.

We find ourselves repeating that people with disabilities face the same, if not more, barriers to access

and inclusion in wider society. There is much scope that we would wish to tackle, and activities continue to increase and become more challenging for us as time goes on. We would therefore welcome more people joining us, which would assist us in our continual endeavours.

### **Future Plans**

As Covid-19 restrictions continue to be lifted we would anticipate lessening our online activities.

We will continue to check and comment on Planning Applications as this can be done remotely, as can other areas of consultation with Standards, Guidance etc. We still are unable to carry out any site visits or surveys of buildings or streets due to restrictions.

For our own members, we will be able to:

1. Carry on with virtual Operational and Governance meetings using Zoom.
2. Begin to have face to face meetings again when suitable premises become available that suit our membership requirements.
3. Continue with online Stirling Council Meetings covering: PB, CPMP, Forums and Walk Cycle Live etc. Also online Parliamentary CPG Meetings.
4. Arrange a further online training course, now that SAAP can demonstrate that it can be done successfully.
5. Participate with DES and Stirling Council discussions.
6. Keep members safe by avoiding unsafe activities.

## **Financial Review**

### **Statement of Reserves Policy:**

Our funding for last year came from a Stirling Council grant for [REDACTED] for which we would like to thank them. We did not receive any restricted grants or donations this year.

Review of the equipment list and the impact of Covid restrictions has resulted in only one large item being purchased this year. A replacement wireless Brother printer capable of printing A3 Planning documents was purchased. This is essential to assist with drawings relating to Planning Applications that we have to comment on for non-compliant building design, access & inclusion issues.

We have been only been able to have virtual meetings this year and one face to face meeting again due to Covid -19 and to difficulty in gaining suitable premises that meet the needs of our members.

This has resulted in no travelling expenses again this year, however our activities have increased with us being able to offer our members a virtual training course leading to an increase in overall spending [REDACTED]

The 120-Day Notice Account has generated a reduction in interest due to the falling interest rate to 0.4% from 30/3/21. Interest for this year from this account was [REDACTED]

### **Reserves Policy**

SAAP has [REDACTED] in reserves. This increase directly reflects the restriction in activities due to ongoing effects of the pandemic. Presently SAAP does not have premises or overheads. A 120 day Notice Account was set up in [REDACTED] with a current balance of [REDACTED]. This fund is only to be used should there be any gaps in funding not currently covered.

The 120-Day Notice Account is not included in the reserves figure.

### **Details of any deficit:**

There was no financial deficit this year.

### **Details of Donated Facilities & Services:**

The Charity benefits from the time given by all the Trustees to the running of the Charity.

### **Statement of Trustees Responsibilities:**

The members of the Charity must prepare financial statements which give sufficient detail to enable an appreciation of the transactions of the Charity during the financial year. The members of the Charity are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which, on request, must reflect the financial position of the Charity at that time. This must be done to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and must take reasonable steps for the prevention and/or detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Robert H Dick  
Chairperson

Dated:

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**Independent Examiner's Report on the Accounts**