COMMUNITY TRANSPORT INQUIRY
MR IAN MACKENZIE (INDIVIDUAL)
WRITTEN SUBMISSION

On Wednesday 20 March 2013, I was at the Killearn Community Council meeting when the Chairman made us aware of a forthcoming inquiry concerning community transport.

Several members of the public made general comments about the overall very poor state of our local buses, along with issues such as frequency, availability of boarding to disabled and elderly, the size of the buses and availability to travel to, and link up with other transport to Glasgow, Stirling, Milngavie Train Station and Larbert Hospital. The main issue for residents is the availability of public transport for everyone, the fares charged and the condition of the transport provided.

As an example I have just advised the Managing Director of First Scotland East that if anyone from Killearn wanted to visit a patient in Larbert Royal Hospital in the evening, they would require to get the 5 pm bus to Balfron, change there, and arrive in Stirling around 6.10 pm. Admirably a service then runs every 10 minutes to the Hospital, but a return bus to Killearn leaves at 8.30 pm, but does not connect directly to Killearn and nothing leaves Balfron until after 10 pm. Hence you get back in the house about 10.45 pm. A 6 hour journey for a 30 minute visit. Surely we can do better in the 21st Century.

I am now aware that Bruce Crawford MSP, Councillor Graham Lambie and other local councillors, along with David Brown at Stirlings Transport Co - ordination Centre and others are involved in the question of the provision of reliable rural public transport.

From what I can see travelling into Glasgow, it is the residents of Glasgow who benefit from the rural services, as they have the choice of those and the City’s buses. Why don’t we have a direct service running between Glasgow and Stirling, via our rural areas in the East Dunbartonshire and Stirlingshire routes?

Could I suggest that there is some joined up thinking in this matter, with all concerned, and a beneficial solution might be found using both "non - commercial transport provision" and "commercial public transport provision." The elderly and disabled want access to all forms of Transport and I am sure it is not impossible for the Scottish Government, community transport groups and commercial companies to agree a way forward that is acceptable to all.

Members of the public I have listened to are of the opinion, that with more regular services, a mixture of larger and smaller buses, competitive fares, availability of services and some comfort on the journey, then more passengers would use the transport system.
I wish the committee every success and hope that they can improve the overall provision of community transport for the rural areas. Why should our passengers not travel in the same comfort as city dwellers.

Ian MacKenzie
26 April 2013