



Newsletter

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Issue No. 12 *Serving people with limited mobility across South & West Dublin* Autumn 2013

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRPERSON

Dear Members,

As we approach years end, we can look back over the past period with some satisfaction that despite ongoing financial difficulties we still managed to provide a reasonable service for our members.

Last year we implemented a **10% reduction** across the board on all fares to help reduce the cost of the service. We had hoped this would lead to an increase in usage and so avoid a drop in our income. Unfortunately, this has not been the case and we are now dependent on fundraising to plug the gap in our finances caused by this drop in income and the reduction in our grant from government.

Tickets for our **Annual Raffle** are now available and the funds raised are of crucial importance to our finances. We have increased the number and quality of our prizes this year so I appeal to you all to make a very special effort to sell as many tickets as possible.

Finally, I wish to thank all members, friends, and supporters for their continued support and once again urge everyone to get selling the raffle tickets.

Kindest regards **Micheal Fox (Chairperson)**

FROM OUR MANAGER

Life has many twists and turns and this was brought home to me on a personal level last year, when my nephew JP was involved in a serious car accident which left him with a serious spinal injury.

It has been a long road to recovery for JP but thanks to the great staff at the National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH) he is now back home in Co. Meath. While at the NRH, JP travelled on various occasions on our **ACTS** buses.

I could see what it meant to him to be able to get out and about even for a short time from the NRH with his spirits lifted and his sense of independence growing stronger. He is now adjusting to his new home and way of life while waiting for a power chair. I mention this personal story of JP, as I am aware over the 11 years of the existence and growth of **ACTS** and my association with it, that each of you as a member of **ACTS** Travel Club have your own personal story of disability, illness or limited mobility.

Our drivers and office staff are always amazed at the courage and strength many of you display and hopefully the transport service we provide will continue to help improve your quality of life and sense of independence.

Some important items to share with you from the past 12 months

- On 10th April 2013, **ACTS** held its AGM for 2012 and our accounts showed we managed to break even financially. In terms of our operations, we carried out 16,500 passenger trips in 2012 and over 200 Group runs with the bigger 15 Seater minibus, amounting to 2,500 passengers using the service and raising €169,584.

- Up to November 2011, when we purchased a new accessible minibus it was treated by Revenue as an exempt vehicle from VAT and VRT. Since then Revenue has changed the means to qualify for such status for Groups such as **ACTS** and is therefore costing a lot more to purchase and put a new vehicle on the road. We have been raising this issue with An Tánaiste, Mr. Eamon Gilmore TD and are hopeful of a positive result.

- Another setback earlier this year was the announcement by Government of its plan to stop paying the **Mobility Allowance**. In response to protests, a Review Group was set up and at the moment there is a moratorium in place till mid-October. **ACTS** carried out a phone survey of 100 of its most active members and 40% said that they were in receipt of the mobility allowance. 80% of this group said that they would not be able to afford to use **ACTS** if they were to lose the mobility allowance.



Our most recent staff from L: **Alan, (Admin)** with **Des & Tom (Drivers)**

- We have had a number of changes to our driver personnel in the past few months; with both **Anthony Walsh** and **Joe Reynolds** retiring and **Paul Mari** going into fulltime employment. We thank them for their dedicated service and wish our new drivers **Michael Byrne, John Neville** and **Des Collins** every success.

- We have been availing of the **TUS Programme**, the job placement programme administered by Southside Partnership. Up to April 2013 we had **Anita** working in the office and she has been replaced by **Alan** and we have also recruited **Tom** to assist with driving.

- We have made an application National Lottery for funding to purchase a new accessible bus as it is vitally important we keep renewing our aging fleet.

- I would like to remember a number of **ACTS** members who used our service and who have died in the past year. Namely **Teresa Brannick, Myles Clancy, Mai Gannon, Orlaith Humphreys** and **Paul Glover** a former Board member and founder of **ACTS** who worked for Enable Ireland. May they rest in peace.

- Please keep spreading the word about our accessible door to door service, to help us increase our membership and increase the uptake on the service especially in middle of the day, at evenings and weekends.

Gerry (Manager)

Please support our
ANNUAL RAFFLE ~ DEC 6TH 2013

1ST PRIZE:

**2 NIGHTS ACCOMMODATION FOR
2 PEOPLE**

& 1 EVENING MEAL

**IN FITZPATRICK CASTLE HOTEL, KILLINEY
and other great prizes**

TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM ACTS OFFICE.

What ACTS means to me:

I am a university lecturer who uses a large powered wheelchair to get around. I am quadriplegic and need a personal assistant to help me with nearly everything.

My life would be very different without **ACTS**. It provides an essential, life affirming, liberating service. It seems to be responding courageously in a period of economic gloom and literally expanding. These qualities and kinds of services must be recognised, protected, affirmed and of course funded!



Staff and drivers are always helpful, courteous, and on time. Bookings are taken promptly. On the rare occasions where a booking may not be possible I am informed quickly – which is much appreciated when planning!

Accessible transport is vital. It underpins many of the human rights protected by international conventions and treaties to which Ireland is a signatory. It will soon be Ireland's turn to report to some of these treaties – monitoring bodies with an account of the way it has implemented its obligations. If necessary, I can be a witness reporting to such a treaty – monitoring session, accessible transport permitting or not!

Accessible transport is also a smart investment in a struggling economy. Not only is a new company created providing additional employment, but others are enabled to work. If **ACTS** did not exist I could not work. **ACTS** enables me to do my thing. Am I grateful that **ACTS** is here and hopefully to stay! **Alexis Donnelly**

FEEDBACK FROM OUR MEMBERS

A Personal, Safe and Professional Service

I have been a member of ACTS for around 6 years now and am so glad that a local Community Service like this exists for people with mobility problems

The other options in Dublin are sometimes feasible for me such as Dart/ Bus and sometimes taxi but **ACTS** provide a personal, safe and

professional service that is a real godsend for being able to get around.

ACTS also provides a personal touch and has a community spirit which is very different to other taxi companies whose motive is more financial.



The vans are also safer and more accessible than other taxis, people with disabilities are defiantly better off with **ACTS**. **Sarah Meehan**

A1 for Accessibility

I wish to add my voice to the large number of people who benefit so greatly from this Accessible Transport Service by **ACTS**, this service is only partially funded by the government and in the last few years these funds have been reduced.

I cannot stress enough how important this service means for people like me who happens to suffer from MS, I depend immensely on **ACTS** in order to get out and keep up some level of a social life which is vital for my sanity, normal taxis are just too expensive and this is where **ACTS** comes in their fares are only 50% of taxi fares and are A1 for accessibility. They are brilliant, the drivers are courteous and friendly, and although you have to book in advance they will still try to facilitate you when they can.



I would urge government to give more funds and absolutely to keep the mobility allowance in place for many years to come for disabled people. **Kevin Barron**

ACTS Ltd

buses and drivers are available every day, evenings and weekends.

Tel: 292 1573/4

Make your bookings in advance,

Monday to Friday, 9am - 4.30pm to avail of our 7 day service.