



**Draft Minute of Ferry Users Group Meeting
Skye and Lochaber**

**Held at The Moorings Hotel, Banavie
14:00 19 April 2011**

IN ATTENDANCE

HITRANS

Mr Ranald Robertson
Mrs Katy Cunningham

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Councillor Allan Henderson

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND (FERRIES DIVISION)

Mr Douglas Ellis

CALEDONIAN FERRIES LTD (CFL)

Mr Phil Preston
Mr David Cannon
Mr David Taylor
Mr Ian Fox

CALEDONIAN MARITIME ASSETS LTD (CMAL)

Ms Lorna Spencer

APOLOGIES:

Councillor John Laing
Mr Phil Preston
Mr Phil Flanders
Mr Douglas Blades
Mr Scott Dingwall
Mr Mike Dean
Mr Donnie Oliphant

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

ITEM 1:

Minute of Meeting 28 July 2010

The minute was approved as a correct reflection of the meeting.

ITEM 2: Matters Arising

No items raised under matters arising

ITEM 3: Assessment of the Impacts of Road Equivalent Tariff

Ranald Robertson presented the draft report for the group's information, reporting that the Scottish Government published the Halcrow draft report in March. Ranald outlined the stance taken in the various party manifestos on RET. The Group considered the estimated cost section in the report on how much rolling out RET to new routes will cost.

David Taylor responded there has been a reduction in numbers and loss of demand for small isles, this negative impact may be linked to RET. However severe weather has affected all routes not only Small Isles.

Ian Fox added Oban to Colonsay and Craignure are both up and these are not routes covered by RET. RET is only part of the mix in loss of demand. It is worth using the Ferry User Groups to ask the view of communities on RET and whether it should extend to their routes. It is also important to make people across the network aware that this report is there to be accessed.

ITEM 4: Raasay ferry terminal - lighting and heating issues

This item was raised by Donnie Oliphant, Raasay Community Council who fully intended to attend meeting but had taken ill. Ranald presented an email as received from Donnie:

Raasay ferry terminal - for months lights have been on 24/7 without any obvious action at repair. Recent work resulted on lights going out at unsuitable times and on a number of occasions the late Saturday ferry has been operating in total darkness. Ferry users were greatly inconvenienced by this and placed in danger. Now as a result of an excessive electricity account Highland Council have switched off the water heaters and removed the heaters from the waiting room walls leaving damage to the fabric of the building. We now have no heating whatsoever in the waiting room and only cold water for use of passengers. There will also be long term effect on the building if it remains unheated. This is an unacceptable method of cost cutting by Highland Council and totally the wrong way to treat ferry users to Raasay.

Cllr Henderson agreed to raise the matters outlined in the email with Highland Council officials.

ITEM 5: Emergency medical evacuations from Raasay by ferry

This item also raised by Donnie Oliphant, Raasay Community Council, Randal Robertson presented email as received from Donnie:

Emergency medical evacuations from Raasay - M.C.A. have authorised Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services to operate emergency sailings to Raasay and this is how we deal with medical evacuations where possible. Unfortunately, at present, after a certain, hour to respond to such emergency call-outs would result in knock-on effect to the following morning sailings as :hours of rest: required by crews as laid down in the appropriate regulations would be compromised. There appears to be exceptions allowed in the regulations provided there is agreement between an employer and workers. Such exceptions are authorised on written application to M.C.A. This is a very simplistic explanation of situation but this community feels that solution needs to be found at high level and maybe HITRANS have that clout.

David Taylor confirmed that Calmac were aware of the issues raised in the email but that there was little Calmac could do. Ultimately the concerns must first be dealt with by the Scottish Ambulance Service. Calmac will continue to take part in discussions on this matter.

ITEM 6: Passenger Rights – EU Compensation Arrangements

Randal Robertson introduced the report to provide members with information on the European Parliament Passenger Rights Legislation that will increase passengers' rights when using public transport, and summarised the new consumer protection as it will apply to passengers travelling by maritime and inland waterway transport with 12 or more passengers, very low numbers, and not clear on how this will impact on UK in 2012.

Douglas Ellis responded that there is likely to be a working group established to look at this and the Scottish Government will be represented on this group.

The group were asked to note the report

ITEM 7: Caledonian MacBrayne Operational Update

Regional managers David Taylor and Ian Fox reported on routes within their areas and provided the group with performance reports providing information on reliability and punctuality of routes covered within the group area for the period October-March 2011. Performance reports and statistics were issued prior to meeting.

David Taylor reported:

Rassay terminal problem flagged up and hoping for some enhancements at Sconser, significant downturn generally caused by lack of process with Rassay house, pretty poor over the winter.

Small isles day tours proving reasonably popular already, and will report back end of summer how successful they have been

Loch Nevis is likely to be away for the last two weeks of summer timetable but will be covered by the Loch Bhruasda, will review this and possibly use a back up service when necessary.

Ian Fox reported:

Very high standard of reliability and punctuality, CVs down, issue Scottish mainland being hit with bad weather, raised the issue of running empty vessels, but contract would need to change.

Ardnamurchan asked for bus shelter, and request to extend summer timetable to the end of October, this would impact on vessels and unable to implement this.

Decrease, partially with use of Corran ferry and limited capacity.

David asked Lorna for up-date Fishnish – Lochaline

Lorna advised patching and repairing underway and shouldn't affect ferries, no impact on ferry operations.

Kilchoan - damage to slipway, should be repaired within the next month, again no impact on ferries.

ITEM 8: Public Transport Operational Update

Ranald advised the group that Mike Dean, CPT could not attend the meeting as he was on annual leave. Mike provided the following update on bus service development:

Citylink have improved frequency and timetabling on services to Oban.

Stagecoach have reviewed their summer timetable for summer 2011 in Skye and this had resulted in a more extensive service on the island.

David Taylor added he has had meetings with Steve Walker, Managing Director of Stagecoach in the Highlands and these have helped focus service planning to achieve good integration of services

ITEM 9: AOCB

David Cannon informed the group he attended Comhairle meetings on the Mallaig –Lochboisdale route. He attended meetings over 3 nights which he found useful in helping to understand the aspirations of the communities. Barra continue to favour Oban as the mainland port

while the South Uist meeting was strongly in favour of a service to Mallaig.

David Cannon added that Caledonian MacBrayne has received two transport awards recently for Best Public Transport Operator at the Transport Times Scottish Transport Awards, and the Guardian & Observer Best Ferry Operator award.

ITEM 10: Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 15 November, with a suggested venue of Ballachuilish

