



**Argyll, Lochaber, Skye and Small Isles Ferry Stakeholder Group
(Oban, Colonsay, Mull, Iona, Lismore, Kerrera, South Uist, Barra, Skye, Small
Isles, Raasay, Coll & Tiree)**

Minute of Meeting held in Charles Kennedy Bdg, Fort William and Microsoft Teams, on 1345, 20 June
2022

IN ATTENDANCE	<p>ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL Cllr Jim Lynch Mr Scott Reid</p> <p>THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL Murray Bain</p> <p>TRANSPORT SCOTLAND Mr Laurence Kenney Mr Richard Hadfield Mr Paul Flynn Mr Pal Linhart-MacAskill Mr Brian Gordon Mr Liam Seaton Ms Laura Smith</p> <p>CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE LTD (CALMAC) Mr Finlay MacRae Mr Andrew McNair Ms Fiona Galbraith</p> <p>FERRIES COMMUNITIES BOARD Ms Kirsty MacFarlane Mr Angus Campbell</p> <p>CALEDONIAN MARITIME ASSETS LTD. (CMAL) Mr Kevin Hobbs Mr Brian Fulton</p> <p>HITRANS Mr Ranald Robertson Mr Neil MacRae</p> <p>HIE Mr Iain Phillip</p> <p>SLEAT TRANSPORT FORUM Mr Rob Ware</p> <p>SMALL ISLES COMMUNITY COUNCIL Ms Camille Dressler Ms Ruth MacEwan</p> <p>MULL AND IONA FERRY COMMITTEE</p>
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	<p>Mr Joe Reade</p> <p>TIREE COMMUNITY COUNCIL Mr John Halliday</p> <p>COLL COMMUNITY COUNCIL Kirsty MacFarlane</p> <p>NFU Ian Wilsson</p>
APOLOGIES	Billy Neilson, Crofting Commission Jane MacLeod

1	Minute of Meeting held on 1 st June 2021	The Minute of Meeting of 20 th June 2022 was approved subject the following edit; List of Attendess: Graeme Patrick - Transport Scotland.
2	Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair	It was agreed to defer the appointment of Chair and Vice-chair until the next meeting of the group when all Local Authorities would have appointed their representatives to the Ferry Stakeholder Group. In the absence of a new Chair / Vice Chair, Neil MacRae, HITRANs chaired the meeting.
3	Matters Arising – Action Tracker	Finlay MacRae, Cal Mac updated members on the outstanding actions contained within the Action Tracker log including the socio-econmoice study which they had commissioned and the presentation of cancellation data over a longer time period so as to make the data more meaningful for members.
4	Caledonian MacBrayne Operational and Performance Presentation covering (CFL)	<p>Finlay MacRae introduced the operational and performance report contained within the meeting papers and which addressed the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Marketing 2. Contract Commitments 3. Timetable Integration and Consultation Update 4. Socio-Economic Report 5. Terms and Conditions Consultation (See Item 5 on the agenda) 6. Ar Turas Update (See item 6 on the agenda) 7. Route updates <p>The update on the marketing and commercial side of business focused on the repositioning the CalMac brand and the delivery of the new brand guidelines. The roll out would be managed in stages across all communications and include vessel, signage and uniforms. MV Loch Frisa being the first vessel to bear the new CalMac lettering font on her hull. Work continued with Digital Scotland on the digital refresh project and new campaigns targeting international customers from German speaking audiences and Travel Trade customers.</p> <p>The Report highlighted further focus on the customer experience with the roll out in the next six months of a new a new platform to measure performance which would identify areas of improvement to increase customer satisfaction. Also work in partnership with an external research agency to measure and track customer experience with commercial customers. Further analysis continued</p>

		<p>of bookings and ticketing data to gain insight on changes in purchase and use of ferry services since the pandemic.</p> <p>In reference to the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services (CHFS) the Report stated that CFL were currently at 97.0% complete or on track with the contract commitments. These include ongoing commitments with revised delivery dates e.g. the ticketing and reservation system now scheduled for October 2022.</p> <p>The Report confirmed that CalMac aimed to publish the Winter 2022/23 timetable by the end of July. The Summer 2023 consultation would also commence then with a view to publishing the timetable by year end.</p> <p>The Report further detailed the Socio-Economic assessment of CalMac's services commissioned by CFL postponed due to the pandemic. As the results would not be representative of 'normal' times, the consultants Cebr had been asked to consider options for delivering the study with an initial phase by the end of 2021 and delivery of the final project report in summer 2022.</p> <p>Further updates were also provided on the CalMac Community Fund, Sponsorship Programme and Youth and Philanthropy Initiative.</p> <p>Members raised a number of points including; Kirsty Macfalane highlighted that there was absence of recognition of challenges from an island perspective. Ian Wilson noted that the challenges facing farming and crofting were particularly severe highlighting the number of no shows Joe Reade enquired about the guidance to help masters decide on the carriage of livestock. He also thanked Cal Mac for the cancellation information provided but wanted to understand what % of cancellations were weather related</p> <p>In responding to the discussion on carrying livestock, Fiona Galbraith, Cal Mac highlighted that there were a number of factors including the condition of the sea with animal welfare at the core of any decision.</p>
5	Terms and Condiitons	<p>An update was provided of the impending consultation of changes to CalMac's current Terms and Conditions in regard to booking changes, cancellation and no-shows. CalMac proposed that these changes would address a significant problem of unused deck space, currently denying other customers the opportunity to travel. It was stated that these proposals had been developed in proportionate and comparable to the policies of other UK ferry operators. The consultation would be undertaken across the eight appointed Ferry Committees/Transport Forums and once concluded a more detailed overview of the proposals would be provide to the Ferry Stakeholder Group.</p> <p>Finlay Macrae stated that the feedback which had been received was being considered. He provided a general overview stating that the main driver was that there were currently no firm rules around CalMac's ability to control the way the car deck spaces is booked, utilised and any changes made at the last minute. This was applicable to both general and commercial customers and referenced that utilisation of car deck space was one of the Commitments under the CHFS2 contract. The consultation on</p>

		<p>Terms and Conditions was being undertaken in layers and currently in a discussion and information gathering phase.</p> <p><u>Options Levy</u></p> <p>29 Days or more before travel 25% of the total vehicle fare 8 to 28 days before travel 50% of the total vehicle fare 24 hours and 7 days before travel 75% of the total vehicle fare Less than 24 hours or no show 100% of the total vehicle fare</p> <p>Kirsty Macfarlane referred to the Ferry Communities Board Response and the concerns of residents. She said there was a recognition of the challenges faced by the operator and the need to be more efficient but that this was the wrong time for changes. Joe Reade said that there needed to be a two way dialogue needed with the communities to solve the challenges rather than a one off consultation.</p> <p>Ranald Robertson highlighted the opportunity presented by the Island Communities Impact Assessment to be used as a positive tool that helps get policy right for islands rather than a tick box exercise. If used pro actively by agencies it should help improve outcomes for all.</p> <p>Finlay Macrae took on board the Groups' comments and indicated that the full impacts of the reservation booking system would take some time. He gave an assurance that based on current feedback there would be a refresh on some of the messaging about what was trying to be achieved.</p>
6	An Ar Turas (Presentation)	<p>A presentation submitted by Marc Stevenson. Customer Experience Lead, provided an update on the Ar Turas programme which aimed to deliver a modern booking, ticketing and travel experience for customers and staff by using market led software to standardise and simplify the process and help make buying CalMac travel easy and efficient. The update on the last quarter highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges with delivering in March - Covid-19 had prevented the team training >700 colleagues face-to-face. • System Stability and Readiness- The wider E-Dea team was now onsite and in the network discussing the change; 1:1 testing and familiarisation with customers was continuing; and there was focus on ensuring the system and setup was stable and ironing out any issues. Many of the team were out in the network demonstrating eBooking in preparation for formal training. • Communications and Engagement - Full re-plan was now in place, including Community Events, Digital Comms (social media, blogs, videos), Traditional Comms (posters, leaflets). The team continued to engage with various Ferry Committees, User Groups, Community Councils and other Partners. Insights had been gathered through various digital and traditional research and it was indicated that 4,502 responses had been received to date. <p>An action plan detailing key dates and actions from May to November 2022 was provided at the conclusion of the presentation and it was highlighted that the following themes would be taken forward between now and October:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication and Engagement • Customer and Booking Migration • Training and Adoption • Cutover and testing

		Action – Finlay MacRae to provide an update on the proposed consultation plan for Ar Turas
7	Fare Fairs Review	<p>Neil MacRae, HITRANS submitted a Report on a Fair Fares Review Scoping Study commissioned by HITRANS. The Report stated that the Scottish Governments Programme for Government 2021/22 outlined a commitment to commission a Fair Fares Review to ensure a sustainable and integrated approach to transport fares. and HITRANS had committed to undertaking early work that would consider a number of issues relating to fair fares in the context of the Highlands and Islands.</p> <p>Following the commissioning of transport consultants Stantec to assist with the review, the report provided a brief analysis of how bus use varied by location, a review of the existing framework in relation to concessionary travel and details of existing concessionary scheme. It also provided considerations for the forthcoming national fares review and the impacts of extending concessionary travel i.e. the benefits and costs of free ferry/rail travel, the financial impacts on islands residents an a very high level estimate of the cost to government of providing free ferry travel to under 22s. The report estimated the cost to extend free travel to ferry services for under 22's would be c£3.7m per annum. This had been developed on conservative assumptions and therefore the true cost could be lower.</p>
8	Transport Scotland Update – Island Connectivity Plan	<p>Richard Hadfield spoke to the Islands Connectivity Plan Update presentation submitted by Transport Scotland. The presentation was based on the previous submission and provided the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICP Overview • Community Needs Assessments/Market Assessments • Long-term Plan and Investment Programme for Vessels/Ports • Fares Policy Review • Engagement and Consultation • Provisional Timings <p>Richard Hadfield referred to the ICP Provisional Programme for 2022/23 which involved bringing forward a suite of documents to full public consultation:</p> <p><u>2022</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Produce draft Ferries Plan implementation report for feedback ➤ End-2022 - full public consultation into Q1 2023 ➤ Draft vessels/ports investment plan ➤ Draft ICP – the overview strategy document ➤ Fares policy options ➤ Engagement Strategy ➤ Impact assessments & Financial Plan <p><u>2023</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Finalise documents following the consultation ➤ Community Needs Assessments ➤ Low Carbon Plan, Onward & Connecting Travel <p>Richard Hadfield indicated that work streams were not as advanced as anticipated and proposed to prioritise the Draft Vessels/Ports Investment Plan and the Draft ICP Overview Strategy Document to full public consultation by the end of the year. In anticipation of this, Transport Scotland would engage with all the organisations represented on the FSG on both these prior to going to the public in December 2022.</p>

9	CMAL Update	<p>Brian Fulton, CMAL submitted an update report. The Report indicated that projects remained on track as reported and Brian Fulton confirmed that ICIA's were being undertaken for each project. Following December's update, positive progress was reported on the following:</p> <p><u>Vessels</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the contract for 2 Islay vessels to the value of £45.5m each had contractual delivery dates of 15 November 2024 and 15 February 2025. • the Mallaig/Lochboisdale project had been formally initiated and a working group formed. The first public meeting had been recorded and was available on the CMAL website project page. • SVRP Phase 1 for 7 vessels in concept design phase with 2 variants for the routes for which they are intended (15 car capacity and 25 car capacity) - intention remained that they are all electric and work had commenced with SSEN in regard to grid capacity at all overnight berths. • SVRP Phase 2 will follow on from Phase 1 to address the replacement of the 'Sound Route' vessels (approx. 2027). <p>In reference to the Dual Fuel Vessels at Fergusons it was noted that a letter had been sent to NZET Committee on 23 March 2022 and Brian Fulton indicated there was more confidence in the delivery dates for MV Glen Sannox (March-May 2023) and H802 (October-December 2023). CMAL had also agreed to second a senior executive to Fergusons as Project Director and the CMAL site team were now assisting with resolution of the Owner's Observation Reports. This was welcomed by the Group.</p> <p>Brian Fulton recapped stating that the overall investment programme was for 22/23 vessels in total i.e. 10 small, 6 major, 3 passenger only and the 2 currently at Ferguson Marine. A total 10 year programme of £1.5 billion of which £580m had been committed for the first 5 years. He indicated that CMAL were keen to accelerate the programme and would have favoured an additional two vessels to the two Islay vessel contracts. However, competing priorities for the funding had made that unrealistic.</p> <p>In reference to the update on the Loch Frisa, Brian Fulton confirmed that the vessel came into service on the Craignure service on 6 June 2022. Out of a total of 600 vessels looked at over a number of years this was the first second hand tonnage to be brought into service. He further confirmed CMAL will continue to look at second hand tonnage and would be doing so over the next 2 weeks specifically to address short term resilience issues.</p> <p>Brian Fulton opened the floor to questions and the following points were highlighted:</p> <p>Kirsty Macfarlane highlighted the constraints faced with the infrastructure in Oban including adjacent parking enquiring if there were any plans to address this. Brian Fulton responded positively but indicated that no changes were imminent.</p> <p>Joe Reade enquired about second hand tonnage and the status of the MV Pentalina. Brian Fulton responded stating there were challenges with the Pentalina. Specifically there was no Passenger Certification and that significant work would be required to bring the vessel up to standard. The vessel was in poor condition and it was not feasible for CMAL to purchase an end of life vessel. He acknowledged that leasing options had been discussed which was</p>
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		<p>a consideration for CalMac and Transport Scotland. He further reiterated the challenges to find additional tonnage i.e. the type of ports, shallow draft, length, condition etc. and stated that there were currently six ship brokers actively searching for vessels on behalf of CMAL.</p> <p>Rob Ware highlighted the work in Mallaig where the infrastructure upgrades required were not something which the Trust port could afford. He credited all involved with the scheduling and noted the local delight at the return of the MV Coruisk.</p>
10	Argyll & Bute Infrastructure Update	<p>Scott Reid provided an update on infrastructure work in relation to work overseen by Argyll and Bute Council including the following:</p> <p>Craignure - Outline Business Case which was considering different options ahead of the detailed business for the preferred option.</p> <p>Fionnphort - Iona – Work to hopefully commence on both piers hopefully later this year following some consultation on the proposed works on at Fionnphort</p>
11	Ferries Community Board Update	<p>Kirsty Macfarlane Chair, introduced the update report for the Ferries Community Board. The Report stated that the Board continued to meet regularly and had met with Erik Ostgaard, the new Chairman of DML at its meeting on 25 February 2022. The most recent meeting had been held on 27 May and with contributions from regular attendees, Transport Scotland, CMAL and CalMac.</p> <p>The following updates were provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased confidence on the delivery of the 801/802 based on information provided by Transport Scotland. Further reassurance had been sought on the budget and the importance of speeding up new tonnage. The Board had discussion around resilience and using relief vessels to do extra runs to free up daytime space and it was recognised that there was a budget to be found around extra crewing. • The Board had a presentation and discussion around the ICP and a working Group had been set up. The fares element was a concern and it was noted that a starting point should be the refreshment of community needs assessment. There should also be a chance to look again at connectivity and the Board continued to campaign for equality on under 22 travel between bus travel and ferry travel. • CMAL had given the Board a comprehensive update on new builds and infrastructure improvements. The Board had requested increasing the existing order for the two Islay vessels to four to deal with reliability issues. Reassurances had been given that the search for second hand tonnage was an ongoing priority. It was noted that the Loch Frisa had been added to the fleet and the work of the Small Vessel Replacement Plan was also noted. • The Board had met with the Minister for Transport, Jenny Gilruth 2 who had expressed a willingness to work with the Board and Island Communities. There had been discussion around accelerating the new tonnage and delivering a better more inventive resilience planning. Direct involvement in recent outage discussions and the recent visits to many of our islands had been welcomed and it was hoped that the Minister would join the September Board meeting.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robbie Drummond had updated the Board on resilience issues and the Board had raised questions in relation to working hours restrictions, cost of additional crews and how to better utilise fleet in times of outage. Age and reliability of the fleet were core issues but the Board urged flexibility and testing of new ideas/ways of working. • In regard to the proposed changes to CalMac Terms and Conditions, the Board were of the opinion that charging for no shows was the wrong approach at this time as many islanders were suffering socially and economically through failures in ferry services. It was felt that a more targeted and refined approach was necessary and it was hoped that the new ticketing system would help with deck space utilisation and persistent offenders. • Project Neptune was due and it was hoped to see a more formal place in the decision making process for island communities and clearer lines or responsibility. • The Socio Economic Report was due to be published by the end of June and should inform ICP and the make case for a fit for purpose ferry system which would drive other policies, including the NET Zero agenda. The Board had contributed to NSet and taken part in discussions with the Cabinet Secretary with a follow on meeting planned in the future.
12	Confirm Pre-agreed Date of Next Meeting	It was agreed that the next meeting of the Argyll, Lochaber, Skye and Small Isles Ferry Stakeholder Group would take place at Tuesday 6th December 2022. (Members agreed to reschedule the next meeting for 1000 on 11th January 2023)