

**HEBRIDES FERRY STAKEHOLDER GROUP
(Barra, the Uists, Lewis and Harris)**

Minute of Meeting held through Microsoft Teams, on 3 December 2020 at 11.00am.

<p>IN ATTENDANCE</p>	<p>COMHAIRLE NAN EILAN SIAR Cllr Uisdean Robertson (Chairman) Cllr Kenny Macleod (CNES) Cllr Iain MacNeil Miss Mairi Sine Macdonald (Clerk) Mr Angus Murray</p> <p>TRANSPORT SCOTLAND Mr David Caulfield Mr Alan McCabe Mr Laurence Kenney Mr Richard Hadfield Mr Brian Gordon Ms Caroline Connelly Ms Athena Avratidis Mr Mark Hoskins</p> <p>CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE LTD (CALMAC) Mr Finlay Macrae Mr Don McKillop</p> <p>CALMAC COMMUNITIES BOARD Mr Eoin MacNeil Angus Campbell</p> <p>CALEDONIAN MARITIME ASSETS LTD. (CMAL) Mr Kevin Hobbs</p> <p>HITRANS Mr Neil Macrae Mr Ranald Robertson</p> <p>HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS ENTERPRISE (HIE) Nicky Sobey</p> <p>OUTER HEBRIDES COMMERCE GROUP Ms Gail Robertson</p> <p>OUTER HEBRIDES TOURISM Mr Rob Mackinnon Mr Alan Graham</p> <p>ROAD HAULIERS ASSOCIATION Mr D.R. Macleod</p> <p>ULLAPOOL HARBOUR TRUST Mr Kevin Peach</p> <p>STORNOWAY PORT AUTHORITY Mr Alex MacLeod</p>
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	SCOTTISH CITYLINK Mr Ker Corbett
APOLOGIES	Cllr John Mackay (CnES) Cllr Iain Macleod (CnES) Mr Alistair Maclennan (FSB) Ms Joanna Peteranna (HIE)

1	Minute of Meeting held on 4 June 2020	The Minute of Meeting of 4 June 2020 was approved .
2	Matters Arising	There were no matters arising. Rnald Robertson, HITRANS confirmed that all actions had been addressed in the Action Tracker.
3	CMAL Update	<p>Kevin Hobbs referred to the CMAL report which provided details of future ferries migration towards “Net Zero”, the Ferry Replacement Programme and an update on Ferguson Marine Port Glasgow and Port Infrastructure.</p> <p>The Report stated that the clear direction of travel, in line with the Scottish Government is to ensure that future ferries are migrating towards “Net Zero” and all efforts will be made to reduce, if not eliminate carbon footprint and also reduce emissions (NOx, SOx and Particulate matter). The fleet engines are coming to end of life and alternative technologies are being considered. LNG is seen as a transition fuel However the only UK plant is in Surrey and conversations continue regarding a Scottish location around the ‘load to truck’ equipment required which is extremely expensive. Hydrogen fuel is a longer term aspiration for the CHIFS network estimated mid, to end of the decade. Diesel/Electric or fully Electric Ferries are under full consideration and CMAL have re-joined the HYSEAS III Consortium and will design a car/freight Hydrogen powered ferry.</p> <p>Regarding the Ferry Replacement Programmes, the Small Vessel Replacement Programme (SVRP) is underway and a tender for naval architect to assist with concept design will be issued in Q1 2021. A second phase of the SVRP will then look at the 3 Sound Route Vessels (Harris/Barra and Iona). The challenge here is the design of vessels that meet the Euro B criteria as a result of the recategorization of the waters around the islands that they serve.</p> <p>Future work programmes for major vessels will be underway in Q1 2021 initially with Transport Scotland. Ferguson Marine Port Glasgow (FMPG) FMPG is now operating within the current Manufacturing Facility Guidelines and operating a five shift system, including two night shifts. The repairs and maintenance regime are back on track, there were less impacts due a reduced Summer timetable, resulting in a reduction in berthing, passenger and car numbers. A review of delivery dates was undertaken by the management team and the Glen Sannox is April 2022-June 2022 and H802 (on the slipway) December 2022-February 2023. In addition crew training and familiarisation period of 8 weeks post-delivery of the vessels prior to entering services. Kevin Hobbs was confident that the timelines were achievable and that Q1, 2021, with one year to go would be the time to make a clear judgement on delivery.</p> <p>In reference to Port Infrastructure the areas of concerns to the Outer Hebrides Group are:</p> <p>Tarbert (Harris) is back in full construction (post lockdown) with the Contractors R.J. Macleod making good progress with a completion date for this phase in August 2021 and a follow on project to replace the terminal building.</p> <p>Lochboisdale (Gasay) replacement ferry terminal is being tendered regarding consultants. In the meantime, contractors mobilising to the existing ferry</p>

		<p>terminal to carry out fender replacement and pier deck strengthening works to life extend pending new terminal completion.</p> <p>Lochmaddy, Contractor Keatings went into Administration and a retendering exercise is to commence in the New Year which will cause a significant delay.</p> <p>Uig Harbour Development Project - The Highland Council is reviewing the risk profile of the tender document to attract other contractors.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the CMAL Update.</p>
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4	<p>Caledonian Operational and Performance covering (CFL)</p> <p>MacBrayne and Presentation</p>	<p>The CalMac operational and performance report covered the following relative to the Outer Hebrides region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hebrides Region Update • Commercial Update, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Developing new Web ➢ Community Fund ➢ Youth and Philanthropy ➢ Sponsorship • CHIFS Contract Commitments • Timetable Integration and Consultation Update • FSG Report Summer 2020 on the various Hebrides routes; and • FSG Action tracker <p>The Report stated that from June to October 2020 CalMac operated a winter plus level of service on most of the Hebrides area routes. Car deck capacity was restored to normal levels, but maximum passenger numbers continued to be constrained by Covid. Demand for services proved greater than expected but generally all volumes were managed. The annual overhaul programme began in September and is on track and the fleet continues to be constrained by absence of new tonnage, so vessel deployments are similar to the previous winter deployment plan.</p> <p>The Stornoway-Ullapool Service has been operating normal timetable since June 2020. MV Isle of Lewis and MV Hebridean Isles provided drydock cover and some services were lost due to weather. Uig-Tarbert-Lochmaddy Service was impacted by high demand and turnarounds at ports were longer due to Covid protocols, and the service frequently ran late, but this has been recovered with the winter timetable and lower demand. The Sounds and the Lochboisdale – Oban/Mallaig Service have been operating without issues and subsequent to technical disruption with MV Isle of Arran, the Barra-Oban service is operating without issues.</p> <p>Finlay Macrae, Head of Operations indicated that his previous post of Area Manager Hebrides has been filled with a start date anticipated in February 2021. In reference to consultation on the Summer 2021 timetable, he gave assurances that all sectors including aquaculture and tourism are to be included in the consultation process. Finlay Macrae further referred to the following route timetable proposals for 2021 with the continuation of Covid-19 protocols:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oban/Castlebay – no change (minor change at Oban) • Mallaig/Lochboisdale – no change • Sounds – no change • Stornoway/Ullapool – no change • Triangle – turnaround tight, take out mezzanine which will affect capacity (14-16 vehicles), and if Covid is lifted capacity can be added without disruption
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5	Transport Scotland Update	<p>The Transport Scotland update report provided details on several of issues some of which were discussed at previous items on the agenda. The following points were highlighted:</p> <p><u>Covid-19 Response</u> There were no plans to reduce Winter 2020 timetables below the current timetable level.</p> <p><u>Summer 2021 Timetables</u> CalMac were planning to introduce as close to the full normal Summer timetable as possible in 2021 including the enhancements planned for summer 2020 which were not introduced due to Covid-19 restrictions. The situation would continue to be reviewed regularly.</p> <p><u>Fares</u> The annual fares increase planned for March at the start of the Summer 2020 timetable was postponed due to Covid-19 and will be delayed until the start of the Summer 2021 timetable and combined with next year's annual increase.</p> <p><u>RET Evaluation and Outer Hebrides STAG Study</u> The publication of both has been delayed by Covid-19 but arrangements were now being made for them to be published. The RET Evaluation had been shared with the Reference Group and was being finalised for publication.</p> <p><u>Skye Triangle Infrastructure Programme</u> Lochmaddy - CnES in collaboration with Transport Scotland are exploring options for commissioning and organising delivery of the works.</p> <p>Uig – The Highland Council will continue to work closely with Transport Scotland and other members of the multi-agency Skye Triangle Steering Group to progress the project to meet the needs of all programme stakeholders and communities.</p>

		The Vessel Replacement and Deployment Plan (VRDP) 2020 and the Small Vessel Replacement Programme are considered at item 8 on the Agenda.
6	Infrastructure Update	<p>Alex MacLeod Chief Executive, Stornoway Port Authority provided a presentation on the ambitious proposals for a new Deep Water Port in Stornoway. The project includes a facility for berthing for cruise ships up to 360 metres long, a new deep water berth to cater for larger cargo vessels, and a freight ferry berth; berthing and unloading facilities for renewable energy components and development land for a range of uses such as industrial processes and decommissioning. The project will create new marine-related opportunities, not only for Stornoway, but the whole of the Outer Hebrides.</p> <p>This is a transformational project and the culmination of dedicated partnership working between local partners, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and the Scottish Government to create a development of real value to communities.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the Stornoway Port Authority Update</p>
7	Communities Board Update	<p>Eoin MacNeil, Member for Barra and Vatersay provided an update on behalf of the Community Board indicating that the Board are engaged in all the areas discussed and meet regularly with the David MacBrayne Board, Transport Scotland and CMAL. Points of note included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board had been unsuccessful in its campaign to introduce free travel for school/community buses for young people on CalMac vessels. Mr Angus Campbell would revisit the business proposal around free school/community transport on CalMac vessels with Transport Scotland and CalMac representatives and the Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands seeking approval to run a pilot. • Further disappointment on the refusal of an entitlement card. • Socio Economic Report – the Board continued to work with CalMac and a contract has been awarded with a view to commence in Spring. • Disappointed with the new booking system and will continue to pursue to highlight the need to capture unmet demand and identifying opportunities for growth across island communities. <p>Ranald Robertson, HITRANS made the point that the Socio-Economic Study should focus on ferries for all islands and should concentrate on the economic benefits rather than the costs of lifeline services. It is important that the local community and tourists are engaged in the consultation process and that the measure of ‘unmet demand’ is essential where current timetables act as a barrier to releasing potential markets that could bring increased economic activity. The example of this was the inability to offer a day trip market from Skye to Uist or Harris / Lewis due to the shared ferry deployment on both Little Minch routes.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the Community Board Update.</p>
8	VRDP – Transport Scotland	<p>Richard Hadfield, Transport Scotland provided an update on the Vessel Replacement and Deployment Plan 2020. He stated that the Programme for Government (PFG) had been published in September 2020 and had six key objectives: to improve resilience, reliability, capacity, and accessibility, increase standardisation, and reduce emissions to meet the needs of island communities.</p> <p>He indicated that the Scottish Government draft Infrastructure Investment Plan proposes spend of “<i>at least £580 million</i>” on ferries over 5 years with</p>

		the intention to fulfil the PFG commitment in full, and for all ferry services for which Scottish Government is responsible, by producing a long-term plan and investment programme for vessels and ports as part of the Island Connectivity Plan by end 2022.
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9	STPR2	<p>Richard Hadfield indicated that publication of a Phase 1 report was anticipated for mid-January 2021 with a commitment to circulate the 'Case for Change' Reports. All stakeholder Group members would be encouraged to provide feedback and that work on the Islands Connectivity Plan would continue alongside.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the STPR2 update.</p>

10	AOB	<p><u>Drydock Replacement Vessel – MV Loch Seaforth</u></p> <p>D.R. Macleod representing the Hauliers raised his frustration at the lack of capacity experienced over the last three years with the replacement vessel for the Loch Seaforth whilst in in drydock and called for Transport Scotland to ensure that a suitable alternative be in place for 2021. He stated that at a peak time there had been 53 trailers waiting to be shipped and that it had taken three weeks for business to return to normal. In view that the Scottish Government were two years behind on the delivery of the 801 and 802 he called for replacement tonnage for the short term.</p> <p>Cllr. Uisdean Robertson concurred and stated that there had been much correspondence on this subject and there needed to be forward planning to avoid similar circumstances next year.</p> <p>Angus Campbell, Chair of the Community Board asked Transport Scotland representatives if there was funding to address additional tonnage for freight/vehicles. The response from Laurence Kinney, Head of Ferries Policy was that funding was challenging and there were the additional impacts of Covid 19 to consider regarding the capital budget allocation for the next five years. He indicated there are concerns from all communities and a requirement to balance the needs across the CHIFS network and that a business case would be required in order to progress.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Chair, Cllr Uisdean Robertson and Ranald Robertson, HITRANS would write a joint letter to CalMac and Transport Scotland.</p>
11	Confirm pre-agreed Date of Next Meeting	It was agreed that the next meeting of the Hebrides Ferry Stakeholder Group would be at 11.00am on Thursday 3 June 2021.