



Argyll Ferry Stakeholder Group Meeting

1300 hrs, 5th December 2017 – Corran Halls, Oban

NAME	ORGANISATION
Cllr Mary Jean-Devon (Chair)	Argyll & Bute Council
Cllr Anne Horn	Argyll & Bute Council
Cllr Elaine Robertson	Argyll & Bute Council
Stephen Neilston	Argyll & Bute Council
Cllr Donald Manford	CnES
Cllr Iain MacNeil	CnES
Douglas Ellis	Transport Scotland
Brian Gordon	Transport Scotland
Alan McCabe	Transport Scotland
Daniel Lafferty	Transport Scotland
Ross Moran	CalMac
Demi Wyllie	CalMac
Lee McDowall	CalMac
Robert Morison	CalMac
Ker Corbett	Citylink/CPT
Catriona MacLennan	RHA
Jim Porteous	Islay Ferry Committee
Islay MacEachern	Islay Community Council
Neal Goldsmith	Argyll & Isles Tourism Co-op
Ranald Robertson	HITRANS
Apologies	
Jane MacLeod	Mid Argyll Chamber of Commerce
Billy Neilson	Scottish Crofting Foundation / NFU
Iain Mackinnon	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
David Smart	HIE
Cllr Roddy McCuish	Argyll & Bute Council
Blair Moglia	CalMac
Kevin Hobbs	CMAL
Lorna Spencer	CMAL
Cllr Robin Currie	Argyll & Bute Council
David Hobhouse	Colonsay Ferry Committee / Community Council
Martin Shields	Kerrera Ferry Committee
Stewart MacLennan	RHA
Des Bradley	ScotRail
Cllr John Armour	Argyll & Bute Council
Ian Gillies	Tiree CC

1. Minute of Ferry User Group meeting on 25 April 2017 and Matters Arising

The minute of the 25 April meeting was agreed as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Matters arising from the minute:

Under item 5 Ross Moran confirmed that CFL will include reporting on the Tarbert – Portavadie, Ardrossan – Campbeltown and Claonaig – Lochranza routes in the reporting packs distributed to Argyll Ferry Stakeholder Groups in the future.

Under item 7 of the previous meeting on Summer timetable consultation the following concern was emailed in by David Hobhouse of Colonsay Ferry Committee asking his concern to be recorded:

We would like to record our unhappiness with both the system of consultation, and the decision made as regards our Colonsay Summer 2018 service.

In the consultation process Islay quite reasonably asked for a timetable change to their (and our) Wednesday service, that has given them, I understand, two extra useful sailings a week. Once this proposal had been investigated we in Colonsay were again “consulted” as to its effect on our community. We understood that no changes to a timetable would be made if it adversely affected another community. This “consultation” was dressed up as having one positive aspect, namely the harmonisation of the timetables for our Saturday and Wednesday services, provided by one of the Islay service vessels.

We replied that this change would be potentially very damaging to our day tripper trade, as they would be arriving back in the later evening to Islay and Kennacraig, and this could potentially put off visitors. There was also the loss of the chance to get to Oban and back in a day, and have a hour ashore to visit the dentist/hospital/bank etc, though we accept that this is not very often used.

*Our representations were ignored, I understand at “ministerial” level, and we have been given a Wednesday timetable that no longer allows time ashore in Oban, that arrives in the afternoon and returns in the evening to Islay, so it is no longer a “day trip”, has **not** harmonised our Saturday and Wednesday timetables, and, perhaps most seriously, we have lost our evening link back to Kennacraig, and hence any day trippers from the mainland. If we had been told that there would be no onward service to Kennacraig on the Wednesday evening, our representations would have been more strongly worded. Wednesday has been the day when a lot of “official” visits used to be made from the mainland, and is the only opportunity that a mainland service provider has of getting to Colonsay without having to spend the night here, (assuming that they cant travel light by plane), and is often used for one off deliveries to avoid excessive downtime. It has also been a useful alternative route off the Island for those who work and could therefore avoid taking a day off.*

The real effects of this change will only be seen in 2018, but in the meantime we feel that we have been sold down the river by the disregard of the views' of the Colonsay community in what has turned out to be a pretty meaningless , and perhaps only "token", consultation process.

2. Finalised Ferry Stakeholder Group Terms of Reference

Ranald Robertson submitted a Report setting out the proposed terms of reference and structures for Ferry Stakeholder Engagement processes developed by HITRANS officers through discussion with Calmac Ferries Limited. The Report stated that an earlier version of the terms of reference had received broad support and endorsement at the Ferry Users Group meeting in Spring 2017. The proposed terms of reference of the Regional Ferry Stakeholder Groups was provided at Appendix A to the Report and highlighted that the most significant changes were:

- A proposal that the Ferry Users Group would be rebranded to Ferry Stakeholder Group (FSG) to clarify their role and membership and underline the role of the Ferry Committee tier as the first point of engagement ferry users would have with their local service.
- A proposal that an independent Chair be appointed who has responsibility for chairing each of the four FSG Meetings. This was proposed to help provide consistency across the FSG Groups, and to integrate with the Communities Boards structure that Calmac Ferries Limited were separately establishing as a Contractual Commitment.
- That every community within the CHFS network would be encouraged to identify a form of Ferry Committee. This function might formally rest with an existing organisation such as a community council but there would be a need to be a formal identification of their role in the ferry consultation process for an island area.

Action – It was agreed to note the report and approve the arrangements set out in Appendix A to the Report subject to finalisation on the detail of future arrangements for Chairing the groups to be agreed by HITRANS with CalMac Ferries Limited.

Neal Goldsmith provided an update on the Community Board in his capacity as a Member of the Board.

Cllr Iain MacNeil recorded the concern that the Uists are not represented on the Community Board.

Cllr Donald Manford recognised the positive of the Community Board but felt it is an opportunity lost that each Community needs to be better represented and identified at a community level by people who are elected or accountable to their communities. The Board should have had a simple link back to the Community Empowerment Act.

Action – it was agreed that CFL would consider the concerns raised by Cllr Manford in relation to how the Communities Board and other aspects of consultation evolve to better reflect the framework for Participation Requests and Community Empowerment as set out in the Act.

Action – Neal Goldsmith agreed to underline the concern raised about the lack of representation for the Uists (Eriskay, South Uist, Benbecula, Grimsay, North Uist and Berneray) on the Communities Board with Angus Campbell the Chair of the Communities Board.

3. Marketing / Commercial Update

Ross Moran reported that the Business to Business Service has been centralised and will see a stronger focus on no shows of commercial vehicles. It is hoped that this will be managed carefully and in partnership with the needs of hauliers.

Catriona MacLennan highlighted that the booking system is flawed and not fit for purpose. This needs to be improved urgently.

Robert Morrison recognised that the booking system is an issue and it is being worked on. The modernisation process is slower than they would like.

4. Ports / Harbours Update

Stephen reported the Argyll and Bute Council harbour update which included:

- positive outcome of a meeting of the Port Askaig Harbour User Group which has helped shape the scope of the planned extension.
- Craignure asset management plans and development is progressing.
- Fionnphort test bores are underway and will determine the answers.
- Tayinloan and Gigha design works being taken forward in house.

Ranald Robertson provided an update on the Kerrera ferry harbour works and new vessel.

5. Audit Scotland Ferry Service Performance Audit

Ranald reported on the Audit Scotland Ferries Audit which looked at Transport Scotland's spending on ferry services to determine whether it is value for money. The Audit examined:

- whether there is clarity around the operation of subsidised ferry services, including the roles and responsibilities of the different bodies involved
- how much is spent on subsidised ferry services, what this achieves and how Transport Scotland demonstrates that its expenditure is value for money
- the extent to which Transport Scotland's procurement arrangements for ferry services are appropriate and helping to obtain best value
- whether Transport Scotland has an evidence-based strategy for the long-term investment in ferry services and assets (that is, vessels and harbours).

The Audit Scotland report makes a series of recommendations. These being:

Transport Scotland should:

- *as part of its Strategic Transport Projects Review, develop a Scotland-wide, long-term strategy for its network of subsidised ferries. This should:*
 - *take into account progress already made against the Ferries Plan and proposed developments to its ferry operations*

- *set out its intended benefits of subsidised ferry services, how these contribute to National Outcomes and how these will be measured, monitored and reported. It should then consider how this information could be used to inform operational and financial decisions and to demonstrate that ferry services are value for money*
- *include an assessment of the long-term affordability of its spending on services and assets. This should take into account the level of service required, the condition of assets and the need for capital investment*
- *set out how its spending will be prioritised across its network*
- *be monitored regularly to ensure it is on time and on budget*
- *be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains relevant and affordable*
- *ensure that it has adequate resources to develop, monitor and report against its long-term ferries strategy*
- *improve the transparency of decision-making for ferry users. This may include streamlining and formalising how it consults with and involves ferry users, by giving specific user groups a formal remit to comment on operational and policy matters*
- *improve its approach to procuring ferry services. This should include:*
 - *ensuring that procurement teams include staff with procurement qualifications and experience of the ferry sector*
 - *applying lessons from previous procurement exercises*
 - *building in sufficient time to prepare important project documentation, such as business cases*
 - *ensuring that contract specifications are accurate, up to date and clear to potential bidders*
 - *providing bidders with clear, good-quality and timely data to allow them to make informed bids*
- *strengthen its contract management arrangements by:*
 - *ensuring there is a sufficient number of people, with the right expertise, to effectively manage ferry contracts*
 - *involving the contract management team in ferry procurement exercises to inform its understanding of contract requirements.*

Transport Scotland, along with Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL) and the ferry operators, should:

- *better communicate their roles, responsibilities and accountabilities to improve customers' and stakeholders' understanding.*

There followed a discussion on the Audit Scotland report and its findings.

Donald Manford asked that it be recorded that in his opinion Audit Scotland are guilty of what they are supposed to be guarding against. They have clearly identified cost but have missed the point on the value these services bring and that without them the very future of the island communities would be undermined. The report correctly states that TS should have undertaken reviews and assessment on their investments and the contribution these services make to the island way of life. However there should have been a clearer understanding of this within the report.

Action – It was agreed that Members would submit comments to HITRANS that could be transmitted on to Audit Scotland.

6. National Transport Strategy

Daniel Lafferty of Transport Scotland's NTS Review Team presented on the development of the development of NTS 2. The presentation covered:

- Scope of NTS Review
- Role of STPR
- Timeline of NTS Review
- Area not in Scope of Review
- Approach of the Review – it is all our Transport Strategy and relies on Partnership working.
- Working Groups – Functional and Thematic Groups
- Output of Research and Evidence Working Group Call for Evidence
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Contact details for the Review – NTSReview@transport.gov.scot

7. Regional Operational Update

Ross Moran presented the performance update covering:

- General Performance Statistics
 - Total operated sailings down by 0.8%
 - Cancelled sailings up 11% (significantly impacted from breakdown of MV Isle of Cumbrae)
 - Total scheduled sailings down 0.1%
 - Total on time sailings down 0.3%
- Islay
 - Traffic up across Passengers (6%), Cars (11%)
 - Performance improved from 2016
- Tarbert – Portavadie
 - Traffic up for passengers and cars but CVs down 27%
- Claonaig to Lochranza
 - Passengers and Cars up 2%. Coaches up 18%
- Colintrave to Rhubodach
 - Cars static and passengers down 3% Coaches down 9%
- Fionnphort to Iona
 - Traffic up 3-4%
- Oban to Craignure
 - Passengers up 5%, Cars up 4%, Coach / CV up 5%
- Tayinloan to Gigha
 - Passengers up 7%, Cars up 12%, CVs down 43%
- Oban to Coll / Tiree
 - Passengers up 5%, Cars up 7%, CV down 23%
- Oban to Colonsay
 - Passengers up 12%, Cars up 10%, CV down 25%
- Oban to Lismore
 - Passengers up 7%, Cars up 23%, CV up 36%
- Ardrossan to Campbeltown
 - Passengers down 3%, Cars up 2%, CV up 17%
- Future Development of Island Specific Pack
 - Requires resource but already in place for Mallaig – Armadale, Arran and Islay.

- To cover – Carrying Numbers and Trends, Reliability and Punctuality by Leg and Route, Block Booking No Show, Demand Management

Robert Morrison reported on the popularity of the Kerrera service which anecdotal evidence suggests is benefitting from the marketing reach of the Calmac website.

Cllr Horn raised the concern felt that reliability on the Campbeltown Service is an issue that suppresses accommodation bookings due to confidence in the service.

Action – CFL will ensure the sailings from Oban to Barra and South Uist are reported to all future meetings of the Argyll FSG.

8. Transport Scotland Update

Brian Gordon reported on the Freight Fares Review. Issues recorded include:

- specific sector discounts and rebates.
- challenges of the Review being on a cost neutral basis.
- Current status is that a Ministerial decision is required.

Catriona MacLennan expressed frustration at the time this process has taken to progress. The impact of current pricing continues to have a serious effect on communities in Argyll including Colonsay and Tiree.

Donald Manford strongly supported this position and suggested that a removal of the designation of 3.5 ton vans from categorisation as a CV would be a useful way of lessening the impact on smaller islands.

Action – It was agreed to ask Transport Scotland to share the concerns of the Argyll Ferry Stakeholder Group that the freight fare Review has not been concluded successfully yet and that current fares policy is having a significant detrimental impact on smaller island communities in particular.

Brian Gordon also reported on discussions between Transport Scotland and Argyll and Bute Council on a transfer of responsibility for the internal ferry services operated on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council.

Douglas Ellis reported on the Procurement Policy Review covering the following:

- Interim report due to be published shortly.
- Teckal test would require some Functional Change to the DML Board.
- State Aid requires further investigation.

Douglas Ellis reported on the Vessel Replacement and Deployment Plan and offered to have the 2016 Annual VRDP circulated to Members via the Secretariat once it has been approved for publication by the Minister.

9. Transport Integration Update

Demi Wyllie presented on her work as Transport Integration lead for CFL setting out the positive work taking place between CalMac and other operators in terms of timetable planning.

Des Bradley was unable to attend the meeting but provided the following update from ScotRail:

There are no significant updates to report from a ScotRail perspective; no major timetable changes for West Highland Line next week, and no planned engineering works in the coming months.

We had one of our regular meetings with CalMac on 22nd November to discuss timetabling and connection issues, to ensure both operators are aware of any future plans (again, no major changes affecting the Argyll FSG area planned in the near future).

Ranald Robertson reported that Caledonian Sleeper have trialled a new bus connection service from Crianlarich in to Oban, helping make journeys from London to Scotland's West Coast more efficient. The connecton operated for an initial 14-week trial period. The Oban bus service operated Monday to Saturday mornings from Crianlarich railway station to Oban reflecting the Caledonian Sleeper timetable. A return service from Oban will run at 19:40 on Sundays and at 20:30 Monday to Friday. HITRANS comment on the Service at the time of its announcement was to welcome it as great news as Oban now features in the list of destinations served by Caledonian Sleepers. It is a good way of testing the potential market for a sleeper train service to Oban, which is endorsed in the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy.

10. Timetables Overview

Demi Wyllie shared the timetable change requests submitted by Ferry Committees. These are subject to discussion with Transport Scotland on 15th December.

Neal Goldsmith reflected that the system is working well now after a difficult initial phase and now affords adequate time for Ferry Committees to engage their wider community.

11. Unresolved Issues from Ferry Committee for Resolution

No unresolved issues were raised.

12. Next Steps, Timescales, Actions

Ranald Robertson summarised the Action points agreed at the meeting to ensure these were accurate and approved by the Membership.

13. Date of Next meeting

Monday 4th June was agreed as the date and Oban was agreed as the location.