



**Minute of Argyll Ferry Users Group (FUG)
(Oban, Colonsay, Iona, Lismore, Coll, Tiree,
Barra, South Uist, Islay, Kintyre, Jura, Gigha)**

**Held at The Glen Hotel, Soroba, Oban
10:00 on Tuesday 17 November 2015**

IN ATTENDANCE

HITRANS

Neil MacRae
Julie Cromarty

ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL

Cllr Alistair MacDougall
Cllr Iain Angus MacDonald
Stewart Clark

COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

Cllr Donald Manford
Cllr Ronnie MacKinnon

ARGYLL & ISLES TOURISM CO-OP

Neil Goldsmith

FEDERATION OF SMALL BUSINESS

Allan Parker

ISLAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Jim Porteous
William MacFarlane

ROAD ASSOCIATION HAULAGE

Catriona MacLennan
Stewart MacLennan

SCOTTISH CITYLINK

Jim Jackson

CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE

Eric Smith
Robert Morrison
David Cannon

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND (FERRIES DIVISION)

Paul Linhart-MacAskill

Presentation

Transport Scotland Procurement

Callum Grigor

Robert Spratt

Bid Team

Cynthia Spencer – CalMac

Robbie Drummond – CalMac

Finlay Macrae – CalMac

APOLOGIES

Cllr Robin Currie – Argyll & Bute Council

Moya Ingram – Argyll & Bute Council

Robert G MacIntyre – Argyll & Bute Council

Sue Gledhill – HIE

Iain Mackinnon – CnES

David Adams McGilp – Visit Scotland

Des Bradley – ScotRail

Welcome & Introductions

ITEM 1

1000 - 1100 Operational FUG Meeting

a) Vessel Replacement and Deployment Plan

Paul Linhart-MacAskill of TS provided a summary of the VRDP which was enclosed within the papers.

Jim Porteous sought clarification on vessel to be deployed on Kennacraig route beyond 2019. PLM confirmed this information would be finalised in the 2015 update of the report. Neil Goldsmith raised concerns over number of cancellations and ability for MV Isle of Mull to cope over the winter period.

Cllr Donald Manford commended TS for the forward planning approach of the VDRP and Scottish Ferries Plan. He also raised concern for the ability of the Oban terminal and facilities to cope with the additional services from Summer 2016.

Jim Porteous queried the projected reduced utilisation for Islay from 2018. PLM to confirm if this is due to additional capacity on the route from this date rather than a drop in demand.

Jim Porteous cited the VR&DP commitment to consult widely on the preparation of future updates and requested that Community Councils be involved in this process

Action: PLM to provide clarification on matters raised.

b) CalMac Summer 2016 Timetable Discussion

Robert Morrison provided a summary of the proposed timetable changes for Summer 2016 including the deployment of the MV Isle of Lewis on the Barra service; MV Coruisk on Oban-Craignure to support the MV Isle of Mull and MV Clansman and also additional Kennacraig to Islay services. Consultation and engagement with community councils was almost complete. Representatives from each of the islands in attendance praised Robert Morrison for his work on consulting on the proposed changes and the appropriate challenges faced in meeting the anticipated growth in demand following the introduction of RET.

Cllr Iain-Angus MacDonald raised concern about the ability of infrastructure at Oban to cope with increased sailings and if the different modes of transport could be better integrated. Neil MacRae indicated that his colleague Frank Roach was working with operators and the Local Authority to identify what improvements could be made in both the short and longer term. Eric Smith also stated that Cal Mac had met with Transport Scotland, A&B Council and Mull Ferry Group to consider the likely impact. Catriona MacLennan enquired why loading did not start until 10 min before departure. Robert Morrison stated that they were looking at Oban operations and that additional storage was being created by freeing up 60 car parking spaces previously used by crew. Cllr Donald Manford highlighted need for the social and economic impact of RET on islands to be better understood.

c) Performance Reporting

Cllr Donald Manford requested that prioritisation be given for the slowest vessel to depart first. Robert Morrison said he would consider the implications of this approach.

Concern was raised about the impact of lost business as a result of ferry services advertised as fully booked when they sailed on the day with often significant spare capacity. Discussion followed on the challenges of managing block bookings.

Jim Porteous made the request that the cancellation charges should apply at the point when the sailing had reached capacity. Neil MacRae highlighted the roll which the Ferry Availability Study had played in highlighting capacity issues by quantifying the volume of services on key routes which had become unavailable to book online in advance of the sailing and that the work the VRDP was now starting to consider the implications of capacity in the peak months for the future.

Action: HITRANS to circulate 2015 Ferry Availability Study in advance of next Ferry User Group Meeting.

d) Public Transport Update

NM reported on a number of issues raised by Des Bradley specifically on trying to obtain timetable information for Summer 2016.

RM responded had said he had discussed timetable changes with the local station manager and WCM but this was limited until the timetables had been approved by the Minister.

e) Ferry User Group Meetings 2016

Neil MacRae circulated the proposed dates for 2016 Ferry User Group Meetings and requested that members get in touch as soon as possible to advise if any dates were unsuitable.

Presentation

CHFS Procurement update from Transport Scotland

Robert Spratt provided an overview and update on the procurement process for the new Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services Contract which will commence in September 2016.

Bidder Engagement Session

Caledonian MacBrayne Ferries Limited

Representatives of Cal Mac's Bid Team provided a presentation on their CHFS bid followed by a question and answer session

Serco Caledonian Ferries Ltd

Representatives of Serco Caledonian Ltd were also invited to participate in the Bidder Engagement Session but elected not to.