



**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 through Microsoft Teams on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 10:00

<b>IN ATTENDANCE</b>	<p><b>ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL</b> Cllr Jim Lynch Cllr Kate Willis Scott Reid</p> <p><b>THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL</b> Cllr Drew Miller David Summers Murray Bain Richard Porteous</p> <p><b>TRANSPORT SCOTLAND</b> Laurence Kenney Jaqueline Trousdale Paul Flynn Paul Linhart-MacAskill Douglas Ellis Karen Furey Alison Wills</p> <p><b>COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR</b> Cllr Iain MacNeil</p> <p><b>CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE LTD (CALMAC)</b> Finlay MacRae Andrew MacNair Fiona Galbraith Donna Lockhart</p> <p><b>FERRIES COMMUNITIES BOARD</b> Kirsty MacFarlane Angus Campbell</p> <p><b>CALEDONIAN MARITIME ASSETS LTD. (CMAL)</b> Brian Fulton</p> <p><b>HITRANS</b> Neil MacRae Miss Rebecca Purvis</p>
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	<p><b>HIE</b> Ian Philip</p> <p><b>SLEAT TRANSPORT FORUM</b> Rob Ware</p> <p><b>SMALL ISLES COMMUNITY COUNCIL</b> Camille Dressler</p> <p><b>MULL AND IONA FERRY COMMITTEE</b> Joe Reade</p> <p><b>TIREE COMMUNITY COUNCIL</b> Donnie MacInnes</p> <p><b>TIREE TRANSPORT FORUM</b> John Holliday</p> <p><b>COLONSAY FERRY COMMITTEE</b> David Hobhouse</p> <p><b>SCOTTISH CITYLINK</b> Ker Corbett</p> <p><b>SCOTRAIL</b> Desmond Bradley</p> <p><b>NATIONAL FARMERS UNION (NFU Scotland)</b> Lauren Worrell</p> <p><b>MALLAIG HARBOUR AUTHORITY</b> Jacqueline McDonell</p> <p><b>BUSINESS COMMUNITY REP</b> <b>Jane MacLeod</b></p>
<b>APOLOGIES</b>	<p>Cllr Calum Munro Cllr Ian MacLeod Billy Neilson</p>

1	<b>Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair</b>	<p>Neil MacRae, HITRANS provided a brief overview to the recently updated Terms of Reference included within the meeting papers and invited nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair.</p> <p>Kirsty MacFarlane nominated Cllr Jim Lynch, Joe Reade seconded this.</p> <p>David Summers nominated Cllr Willis. Cllr McNeil seconded this.</p>
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		Cllr Jim Lynch was invited to chair the remainder of the meeting.
2	<b>Minute of Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022</b>	The Minute of Meeting on 20 <sup>th</sup> June 2022 was <b>approved</b> subject to the following edits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David Summers requested to be added to list of apologies.</li> <li>• Kirsty MacFarlane requested to have 'Chair' removed from her name.</li> </ul>
3	<b>Matters Arising – Action Tracker</b>	Neil MacRae, HITRANS drew members attention to the action tracker that was circulated in the meeting pack which updated on actions from the previous meeting.
4	<b>Caledonian MacBrayne Operational and Performance Presentation (CFL)</b>	<p>An update was provided by the respective area manager covering updates on routes and services:</p> <p>Donna Lockhart updated on services within the Argyll area:</p> <p>Craignure and Lochaline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MV Loch Frisa came into service in June 2022 replacing the MV Coruisk as the second vessel on the route all year round as an alternative vessel alongside the MV Isle of Mull.</li> <li>• Additional sailings operated for Mull Rally weekend. MV Lochinvar was assisted with MV Loch Linnhe to provide additional capacity on the route.</li> </ul> <p>Islay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few technical and weather disruptions on the route since August has presented some challenging periods, some additional sailings operated to assist the impact of disruption.</li> </ul> <p>Colonsay, Coll and Tiree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suffered weather disruptions too. Amendments were made to timetables to assist the impact of disruption.</li> </ul> <p><b>Fiona Galbraith updated on Lochboisdale routes:</b></p> <p>Rassay – Sconser</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service operating without issue.</li> </ul> <p>Mallaig – Armadale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some teething issues with the gangway in Armadale and hoped to have this rectified when she comes back in summer months.</li> </ul> <p>Small Isles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summer timetable was amended following the safety at sea audit. MV Loch Bhrusda was drafted in to provide a secondary service along with some charter vessels. Consultation just finished with communities for a solution for next summer.</li> </ul>

		<p>Finlay Macrae gave an update on the performance pack for this forum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An action taken at the Hebrides FSG to revamp and update the numbers provided in terms of performance and vessel activity etc. Technology has allowed a new suite of tools to allow more analytical data to be provided.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action – Cal Mac to revamp the presentation of statistics for next round of FSG meetings.</b></p> <p>A number of points were raised in relation to the Small Isles update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rob Ware highlighted there are still a lot of infrastructure issues including dredging at Eigg and lights and fenders across all 4 small isles ports. Concerned these issues are not being addressed.</li> <li>• Camille Dressler confirmed dredging operations are scheduled to start in February and last 6 weeks. It has been requested to THC that all small isles piers are inspected twice a year but this has not happened yet as far as she is aware.</li> <li>• Fiona Galbraith confirmed infrastructure issues have been reported to THC.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action – David Summers and Murray Bain to report back to colleagues within the THC Harbours team in relation to issues raised relating to Small isles ports.</b></p> <p><b>Ar Turas / New Booking System</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finlay MacRae confirmed that a date had not been set for when e-bookings will come in due to the delay in the introduction of the new timetable. The use of current system and new system might have to be hybrid.</li> <li>• Laurence Kenney, Transport Scotland reported they are waiting on the fare levels to be confirmed before bookings will go live. Delays due to discussion around whether fares would be increased in line with CPI with options for this to be mitigated being explored.</li> </ul> <p>A number of points were raised in relation to issues on Coll and Tiree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kirsty MacFarlane requested more regular communication is required between the committee and CalMac to address issues such as additional deck space and booking/ticket concerns. Kirsty suggested area visits from Donna would be helpful if possible.</li> <li>• Finlay MacRae recognised they have difficult capacity issues to resolve on a number of routes. Andrew MacNair apologised on behalf of CalMac for lack of communication and confirmed CalMac will be working closely with hauliers and key industry stakeholders to understand their needs and future demands.</li> <li>• Donnie MacInnes expressed concerned about number of times ferry misses out second stop in Coll. Donnie also</li> </ul>
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		<p>highlighted that they were still waiting on a shelter at end of Tiree pier. Brian Fulton provided an update on the shelter – location decided and conversation with CalMac about minibus to address issues.</p> <p><b>Action – Cal Mac to split data for Tiree and Coll when reporting at future FSGs</b></p> <p>Joe Reade highlighted issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation processes should be more collaborative so needs of different routes are being met.</li> <li>• An understanding of the management structure within CalMac would be useful to see so direct communication can be made with correct representatives.</li> <li>• Lauren Worrell requested a copy of the email on the Terms and Conditions to which Joe Reade referred.</li> </ul> <p>Rob Ware also highlighted what he saw as an unacceptable delay at delay in publishing tariffs and therefore timetables by now and sought assurance that it wouldn't be repeated next year.</p> <p><b>Action - Andrew MacNair, CalMac to provide structure of management within CalMac.</b></p> <p>Cllr Iain MacNeil highlighted a number of issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MV Isle of Lewis being made to stand off in Oban, resulting in missed connections for customers and seafood businesses.</li> <li>• Used to be a yearly haulier meeting in Glasgow. Andrew MacNair assured this will be returning in 2023.</li> <li>• Finlay MacRae reported timetables have been redesigned to avoid problems in Oban, vessel movements are restricted within Oban bay with Isle of Lewis only able to use one of the berths. New vessels are being designed to provide more flexibility.</li> </ul> <p>David Hobhouse highlighted issues relating to Colonsay stating that there were only 3 sailings in winter and have lost 7 Monday sailings to Oban. Kirsty MacFarlane stated that the increasing number of cancelations were having a material impact on depopulation. Finlay MacRae recognised the challenges but highlighted that a lack of tonnage was impacting on their ability to re-timetable during service disruption.</p>
5	<b>Project Neptune Consultation</b>	<p>Angus Campbell, ferries communities board provided an update on the proposed Project Neptune consultation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ernst and Young report did not set out a definitive preferred option from long-list of strategic options that in future could be implemented to improve delivery on the CHFS network.</li> <li>• Minister took the view that they would like to hear views from the communities about how the current system of structures around ferry services works and how it could be improved.</li> <li>• Angus had been asked to lead this process of gathering information and will visit all parts of the network.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation would look at how the current structures affect decision making and how the operation and satisfaction of services are being projected in performance reporting.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action - Angus Campbell to email Lauren Worrell with timetable of events planned to encourage engagement.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David Summers asked whether or not both Project Neptune and the Islands connectivity plan includes peninsulas.</li> <li>• Angus stated that he had been given no confirmation that Highland Council controlled services will be included within this discussion, only those involved in the CHFS contract.</li> <li>• Similarly, Laurence Kenney’s team will be taking delivery plans forward for the Islands Connectivity Plan.</li> <li>• Camille Dresler enquired if there is any planned consultation for the replacement of the Loch Nevis?</li> <li>• Angus responded that this is an important issue but that vessel replacements is not within the scope of his work.</li> </ul>
6	<p><b>Transport Scotland Update (including Islands Connectivity Plan Update)</b></p>	<p>Laurence Kenney Transport Scotland provided an update on the Islands Connectivity Plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Throughout 2022 Transport Scotland had struggled with resourcing so progress hadn’t been as anticipated. The long term investment plan has been shared on Transport Scotland’s website. Phase 1 looks at replacement of vessel and harbour infrastructure across CHFS network.</li> <li>• More generally, managed to secure additional resourcing to team. Will be an acceleration of plan in 2023 looking at an approach to an overall strategy and a number of elements including investment plan and fares plan.</li> <li>• Currently developing the programme of subsequent community needs assessments to be conducted during 2023.</li> <li>• Will be in a position to provide detail on what 2023 work will look like shortly.</li> </ul> <p>A number of points were raised in relation to the update provided by Transport Scotland with responses provided by Laurence Kenney including:</p> <p><b>Laurence responded to all comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential arrival of the Pentalina – Pentalina is available, CalMac has been working with Pentland Ferries about potential of chartering vessel. Discussions are ongoing.</li> <li>• Secondary route Coll-Tiree - Alternative secondary route Coll – Tiree would need to be discussed under community work, coming out once timetable in place for work.</li> <li>• ICP transfer of responsibilities for local authorities - No plan to change transfer of responsibility principles.</li> </ul>

7	<b>CMAL Update</b>	<p>Brian Fulton introduced the report provided within the meeting papers by CMAL drawing attention to a number of specific updates including:</p> <p><b>Vessels</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loch Frisa came into service and has settled onto Oban - Craignure route. CMAL still seeking to source further second-hand tonnage.</li> <li>• Islay vessels 1 and 2 important as will introduce new tonnage to network and increase resilience. Steel cutting for second vessel happening 3 weeks ahead of schedule.</li> <li>• Preferred bidder for two further vessels confirmed. Contracts were signed for these vessels this morning.</li> <li>• Small vessels replacement programme - there will be a public meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> February to give latest update on 7 phase 1 vessels.</li> <li>• Mallaig – Lochboisale - Lord of the Isles only vessel that can go in there so concept design process underway by consultants.</li> <li>• Initiated a project to replace the MV Carvorra (Gallanach/Kerrera) as the current vessel is being overwhelmed during the summer period (12 passengers only + 1 car) – a better long-term solution is being sought.</li> <li>• HYSEAS 3 project now completed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Port Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oban railway pier CCTV monitoring traffic north of the pier has been completed, now undergoing data analysis.</li> <li>• Colonsay fender and pier repair should have been completed earlier, work is ongoing.</li> <li>• New Islay vessel ports progressing well.</li> </ul> <p><b>Questions raised included:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High cost of vessels 3 and 4 BF stated 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> vessels costs are due to current economic climate and inflation.</li> <li>• Communication and consultation, email questions are now treated as FOI which is difficult – BF said that CMAL were trying to allocate communications more efficiently hence the FOI process.</li> </ul> <p>A further discussion was had around weather monitoring equipment.</p> <p><b>Action – Finlay MacRae to provide information on this to Kirsty and Donnie in relation to Coll.</b></p>
8	<b>Other Infrastructure Providers Update</b>	<p><b>8a) Argyll and Bute Council</b></p> <p>Scott Reid to issue written report that will be circulated within the minute.</p> <p><b>8b) The Highland Council</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Murray Bain reported that progress has been made on replacement vessels and infrastructure for Corran ferry crossing. Project moving from design to construction is still subject to budget.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>David Summers noted work on Uig harbour is also progressing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action - Neil MacRae will share reports relating to updates by Argyll and on Uig.</b></p> <p><b>8c) Mallaig Harbour Authority</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jacqueline McDonnell provided update that the 2016 master plan is being revisited. Works required on outer harbour. Looking at designs for ferry berth but this will take a number of months. Work with CMLA to look at infrastructure constraints for Lochboisbale ferry replacement and what this will mean for infrastructure in Mallaig.</li> </ul>
9.	<b>Communities Board Update</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Angus Campbell updated that the board continues to meet every 3 months with sessions from Transport Scotland, CalMac and CMAL. Last meeting involved a trip to Ferguson's to see the yard and vessels. This helped understand issues facing management.</li> <li>Board members also feed into different groups.</li> <li>Socio economic report for noting. The board are keen to see how this is used. A day was spent in parliament in September speaking to MSP's of all parties to emphasise criticality of ferries to island communities.</li> <li>Issues to push improvement on include need to continue to put new tonnage into the fleet, new ticketing system, deck space, timetable consultation, contingency planning and dry docking process.</li> </ul> <p><b>It was agreed to note the Ferries Community Board update.</b></p>
10	<b>Scottish Islands Passport Update</b>	<p>Neil MacRae, HITRANS submitted a report providing an update on the Scottish Islands Passport Project and progress made since its launch.</p> <p><b>It was agreed to note the Scottish Islands Passport Report.</b></p>
11	<b>Confirm Pre-agreed Date of Next Meeting</b>	<p>It was agreed that the next meeting of the Argyll, Lochaber, Skye and Small Isles Ferry Stakeholder Group will be <b>hybrid</b> and take place <b>on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023*</b>. <b>Venue and time to be confirmed.</b></p> <p><b>*note email relating to revised date for next meeting.</b></p>