

## Argyll Lochaber, Skye and Small Isles Ferry Stakeholder Group

**Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 MS Teams Meeting  
1000**

### **Present:**

Cllr Mary Jean Devon, Argyll and Bute Council (Chair)

Cllr Allan Henderson, Highland Council (Vice Chair)

Cllr Elaine Robertson, Argyll and Bute Council

Cllr Denis Rixson, Highland Council

Cllr Iain MacNeil, CNES

Joe Reade, Mull and Iona Ferry Committee

Billy Neilson, Crofting Commission

Caroline Connelly, Transport Scotland

Richard Hadfield, Transport Scotland

Laurence Kenney, Transport Scotland

Brian Gordon, Transport Scotland

Marie Garvie, Transport Scotland

Liam Seaton, Transport Scotland

Alison Wills, Transport Scotland

Kevin Hobbs, CMAL

Robert Paton, Argyll and Bute Council

Don McKillop, Calmac Ferries Limited (CFL)

Finlay MacRae, Calmac Ferries Limited (CFL)

Rob Ware, Sleat Transport Forum

Camille Dressler, Small Isles Community Council

Nicky Sobey, HIE

Scott Dingwall, HIE

Lucinda Gray, HIE

Scott Dingwall, HIE

David Summers, Highland Council

Murray Bain, Highland Council

Ranald Robertson, HITRANS

Neil MacRae, HITRANS

Apologies: Jane MacLeod, Business Community Representative

1. Minute of meeting - 1 June 2020

The minute was approved as an accurate reflection of the meeting discussion.

2. Matters Arising

An action tracker was circulated in the meeting pack which updated on actions from the previous meeting.

3. VRDP

Richard Hadfield provided an update on the VRDP process with reference to the relevant section of the Transport Scotland update report that was included in the papers. The update confirmed that the programme for government has confirmed finance for the coming 5 year period of £580M that will have a focus on:

- Existing Infrastructure Commitments
- Islay Vessel  
Small Vessel Programme
- Oban – Craignure Vessel and Infrastructure
- Mallaig – Armadale options

Richard Hadfield confirmed budget included vessels and harbours, budget for 801 / 802 and NIFS and that while budget in place there was still a need to make the case on a project by project basis.

The current VRDP would be the last with it being replaced by the Island Connectivity Plan

#### 4. Transport Scotland Update

Laurence Kenney spoke to the Transport Scotland update report covering the following areas:

- Covid-19 Response
- Summer 2021 Timetables
- Fares
- RET Evaluation and Outer Hebrides STAG
- Major Infrastructure projects at non CMAL ports.
- Small Vessels Programme

There followed a group discussion that covered:

- Confirmation that no ferry services in the current timetable would be dropped due to low demand.
- Capacity concerns in Summer season if capacity is restricted due to physical distancing with 1/3 of Mull services believed to be unable to meet the demand typically expected on those sailings.
- Engagement on Summer 2021 and need to ensure local authorities and tourism organisations are engaged and consulted.
- Opportunity to provide a bus connection at Armadale if the timetable can be adjusted by 5 minutes.

**Action – Finlay MacRae would investigate if the opportunity to optimise Armadale bus connections is feasible and confirm through the Secretariat and to David Summers of Highland Council.**

**Action – Finlay MacRae would provide feedback to the service planning team on consultation with bus operators and local authority public transport units.**

## 5. Calmac update

Don McKillop provided the regional route update for the Argyll, Lochaber and Skye FSG area routes.

The route summary is reproduced below:

### Argyll, Lochaber, Skye and Small Isles Group - FSG Report - Summer 2020 27 March 2020 to 18 October 2020

Route	Operated Sailings		Additional Sailings		Diverted Sailings		Cancelled Sailings		Total Cancelled Sailings After Relief Events		Scheduled Sailings		Total On Time	
	Current	Previous	Current	Previous	Current	Previous	Current	Previous	Current	Previous	Current	Previous	Current	Previous
% of Operated Sailings			12.9%	9.5%	0.3%	0.2%	1.0%	1.9%	0.0%	0.3%			84.8%	88.0%
% of Total Scheduled Sailings			14.7%	10.3%	0.3%	0.2%	1.1%	2.0%	0.0%	0.3%			96.4%	95.3%

#### Variance on Previous Period

Route Name	Passengers	Cars	Coaches	CVs
Fionnphort - Iona	-80%	-35%		-63%
Fishnish - Lochaline	-62%	-52%	-96%	-30%
Gallanach - Kerrera	-56%	14%		
Kennacraig - Islay/C'say/Oban	-86%	-83%	-100%	-72%
Mallaig - Armadale	-84%	-76%	-99%	-80%
Mallaig - Eigg/Muck/Rum/Canna	-87%	32%	-100%	-14%
Oban - Castlebay/Lochboisdale	-67%	-56%	-85%	-19%
Oban - Coll/Tiree	-60%	-49%	-77%	-8%
Oban - Coll/Tiree/Castlebay	-100%	-100%	-100%	-100%
Oban - Colonsay	-42%	-31%	-67%	19%
Oban - Craignure	-70%	-56%	-96%	-29%
Oban - Lismore	-47%	-20%	-62%	-69%
Sconser - Raasay	-67%	-55%	-83%	-40%
Tobermory - Kilchoan	-74%	-71%	-100%	-73%
Uig - Tarbert/Lochmaddy	-63%	-58%	-90%	-6%

#### Periods

Current Period: 27 March 2020 to 18 October 2020

Previous Period: 27 March 2019 to 18 October 2019

The follow up discussion touched on:

- Priority booking system for Kerrera
- Publication of Timetables – 16 December

Ranald Robertson asked if the request from the Uist Community for an earlier departure from Lochboisdale could be looked at again for Summer 2021 on the basis of a no cost option that would see the operating day remain the same as Summer 2019 but with an earlier return to Lochboisdale. Cllr Iain MacNeil confirmed that the Uist community had intended that as the service planning proposal.

**Action – Finlay MacRae would ask the Timetable Planning team to look at the option of a retimed Lochboisdale service with an earlier departure and consequential earlier return to Lochboisdale.**

Ranald Robertson noted the good progress on contract commitments reported and the welcome development of the Ar Turas programme. With continued pandemic impacts Ranald asked Finlay if there might be scope to deliver mTicket / Barcode / QR Code ticketing on mobile devices in lieu of the Smart Ticketing Commitments that should have

been delivered in year 3 of the contract but have presumably been delayed by ArTuras implementation.

**Action – Finlay MacRae would investigate the feasibility of options such as accelerated delivery of mobile ticketing to increase contactless ticketing.**

## 6. Infrastructure update

### 6 (a). CMAL Update

Kevin Hobbs presented the CMAL update that covered:

- Net Zero
- Ferry Replacement Programmes
- Ferguson Marine Port Glasgow
- Port Infrastructure
- Harbours

Cllr Iain MacNeil asked for an update on the Lochboisdale development and if the opportunity to charter MV Pentalina had been considered to improve fleet resilience?

Kevin Hobbs confirmed the status of the Lochboisdale project and some of the issues that have been encountered with the Lochboisdale Development Company.

**Action – Finlay MacRae offered to revert to Cllr MacNeil off line on Pentalina charter and MV Lord of the Isles redeployment in relief events.**

Rob Ware asked for an update on the consideration being given to the Mull and Iona Ferry Committee proposals for a catamaran purchase through Sea Transport Solutions. Kevin Hobbs confirmed that CMAL are continuing to engage on this opportunity and are seeking confirmation that the vessel is considered MCA compliant.

Don Mackillop informed the group that the CalMac Communities Fund was about to close for applications.

Camille Dressler highlighted need for consultation in relation to any changes to arrangements for loose freight on the Small Isles service.

### 6 (b) Argyll and Bute Council Update

Robert Paton provided an update on behalf of Argyll and Bute Council that covered:

- Craignure Infrastructure
- Fionnphort and Iona Wave Screening

Cllr Joe Reed asked what issues had been found by consultants investigating the pier that was preventing the MV Hebrides from being deployed.

**Action – Robert Paton to provide a response to Cllr Reed’s enquiry with regard to MV Hebrides deployment.**

7. Calmac Communities Board Update

Rob Ware provided an update on behalf of the Communities Board. A significant amount of activity has been undertaken in the following areas:

- COVID-19 Community Response
- CB Sub Group Activity
- VRDP Early Engagement
- CMAL Engagement
- Quarterly Meetings
- Loose Freight Charges
- School Transport Cost Reduction Pilot – proposal has been rejected by Transport Scotland.
- CB Membership will remain unchanged until Summer 2021.

8. STPR2

Ranald Robertson provided an update on the Strategic Transport Projects Review which has re-started after resources were diverted to Transport Scotland’s COVID-19 transport transition response. Meetings of the regional transport working groups were held in late October. The next key stage will be publication of updated Case for Change Reports that will include option sifting information which Transport Scotland expect to have a mid-January publication date which will be followed by an eight week period of feedback.

**Action – The FSG Secretariat will update the Membership when the STPR Case for Change reports are published to allow Members to participate in the feedback / consultation.**

9. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Tuesday 1 June 2021.