



THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

**Minute of Clyde Ferry Users Group Meeting (FUG)
(Arran, Bute, Cumbrae, Cowal, Dunoon)**

**Held at the Largs Sailing Club, Largs
11:00 on 16 March 2012**

IN ATTENDANCE

HITRANS

Mr Ranald Robertson (RR)
Mrs Katy Cunningham (KC)

INVERCLYDE COUNCIL

Councillor George White (Chair)

STRATHCLYDE PARTNERSHIP FOR TRANSPORT (SPT)

Mr Bruce Kiloh (BK)
Mr Gordon MacLennan (GMaL)

ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL

Councillor Len Scoullar (LS)
Councillor Bruce Marshall (BM)

First ScotRail

Mr Des Bradley (DB)

CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE (CalMac)

Mr Robbie Brown (RB)

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Duncan MacIntyre
Councillor Ronnie Ahlfeld
Councillor Margie Currie
Mr Andrew Flockhart
Mr Mike Dean
Mr Donald Bannatyne

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting

ITEM 1: Minute of Meeting

The minute of meeting of 25 November 2011 was approved as a correct reflection of the meeting

ITEM 2: Scottish Government Consultation on the Draft Ferries Plan

Ranald Robertson introduced and presented PowerPoint presentation, providing background on the draft ferries plan, setting the scene, and the economic scene

Funding

RR - highlighted reduction in budget.- CnES and HITRANS have made Transport Scotland aware of the potential use of the Prudential Borrowing opportunity available through local government that could support essential infrastructure and vessel replacement at attractive rates.

Fares

RR highlighted route specific fare setting is to be replaced with single overarching framework. Loss of commercial RET is a big concern to Western Isles and hauliers.

LS – concerned when RET comes along will lose out on multi-fare discounts and this is discriminatory against Bute. Assurances given by the previous government there would be no increase in fares.

RR – this is something they will take along and highlight. This hasn't actually been applied to short routes and will be interesting to see how things will work out. Will not be more than a single journey fare, rather than single journey in multi fares.

RR – asked group response. Single fares for these routes will not work, single overarching framework not wanted or needed. RET should not be introduced where there will be an increase in fares. Any increase then timescale should be set

Agreed – Group agreed this response.

BM – facility is available for through ticket with ScotRail on Argyll ferries, but this facility is not advertised.

GMacL – what is needed is smart card ticketing. SPT will be introducing this, and trialing out and would like this rolled out on all routes. People will want to join this, especially young people. EFTPOS is also being built in to allow purchasing, with possible automatic download of agreed funds from bank.

DB – tourist card could also be implemented. Lead timetables are quite long now working on December 2012.

Responsibilities

RR - outlined responsibilities, government are willing to be responsible for all lifeline services, advising some groups against lifeline definitions.

Fares Regulator

RR difficult to comment when role is unknown

Agreed - question needs to be asked what role is for and whether there is any need for such an appointment.

Accessibility

RR – what do they mean with accessibility, is it ramps? More detailed needed

Chair – ask what does this mean, who will hold the fund, who will be responsible.

Environment

RR – believes this is not looking at slowing down vehicles, more concerned with Hybrid ferries.

Chair – Clyde do not want ferries slowed down.

GMaL – any buses after May must be euro 6 compliant, emissions difference is minimal but hugely expensive

RR – Hybrid ferries have provided local jobs

Ferry Services in the Clyde FUG Area

RR – read out Cllr Margie Curries comments provided in email to Randal, as follows:-

Agreed -Group response to support Margie's comments

RR – asked for clarification on Claonaig-Lochranza. Larger vessel might be able to take hazardous substances

Agreed – would not support removal of Claonaig- Lochranza

RR – asked if group supportive of Ardrossan – Campbeltown service

Agreed – group would support this.

RR – enhancement to Colintrave to Rhubodach.

LS – community doesn't need this late service enhancement. Community Council said no need for midnight but half past 9, or 10 o'clock with possible weekend a late sailing, with Friday being most popular.

Agreed – group would support this

LS – crew and staff on Colintrave – Rhubodach service have asked Robbie to pass on their thanks for hard work

Chair – Millport happy with service they have

RR – Gourock - Dunoon town centre to town centre, committed to providing service that meets needs of users.

BM – bad start in July, but has improved dramatically. Very good service, huge criticism every weekend but mainly with vessel. Old boat shouldn't have been brought onto new service. Minister has promised to come back to council within a month with proposals, possibly new vessel, and pontoons.

Chair - Length people have to walk to pontoons an extra 250 yards, and people may miss trains. No mention or announcement or consultation.

Agreed – to record concerns with CMAL

Chair – talking to Al Reay and Phil Preston, car and passenger services to Helensburgh – Gourrock, this would work and would like this looked at. Clyde company shuttle service, linking up north part of the Clyde and would like TS to look at this. Vehicles and passenger service.

Agreed – group will support this.

BM - Councillor Watson supported service for Arrochar linking up with train and is going to happen?

BK – we can take suggestions back to government as sure they would be open to suggestions. We must let government know what we would like.

RR – example when Ardrossan had damage, should operator look at services being brought in when there are problems with normal service. Should resilience be built into tender contract?

Agreed – group will support this.

Chair – very concerned on unbundled

Agreed – Clyde routes not to be unbundled.

RR outlined the process of group responses and will return response by next Friday to allow Group members to comment and approve. Changes can be incorporated from email comments.

ITEM 3: Date of Next Meeting

No date set for next meeting

ITEM 4: AOCB

LS – Communication Bute have asked to be put into contact with ScotRail on two/three services there has not enough time to buy tickets before for train arrives. CalMac doesn't give discount. Not getting subsidy on board train due to time constraints.

DB – confirmed this has been raised on other routes and discretionary policy has been put in place in these instances. Des will take back and ask for Weymss Bay to be added.

Action – Des to take back and provide update to next meeting