



THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

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

**Held at the Brisbane House Hotel, Largs
11:00 on 19 February 2016**

IN ATTENDANCE

HITRANS

Julie Cromarty

INVERCLYDE COUNCIL

Cllr Chris McEleny (Chair)

ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL (A&B)

Cllr Bruce Marshall

Cllr Robert E MacIntyre

Cllr Robert G MacIntyre

Fergus Murray

Stewart Clark

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Cllr John Bruce

STRATHCLYDE PARTNERSHIP FOR TRANSPORT (SPT)

Alex Scott

CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE (CaIMac)

Andrew Collier

Eric Smith

David Cannon

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

Graham Laidlaw

Paul Linhart - MacAskill

CALEDONIAN MARITIME ASSETS LTD (CMAL)

Lorna Spencer

Tom Docherty

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Bill Calderwood

SCOTRAIL

Des Bradley

FREIGHT TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION (FTA)

Ninian McAllister

APOLOGIES: Cllr Ronnie Ahlfeld
Sue Gledhill
Donald Bannatyne
Alistair Dobson
Ranald Robertson

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting

ITEM 1: Minute of Meeting

The minute of meeting of 20 February 2015 was approved as a correct reflection of the meeting by Robert Macintyre.

ITEM 2: Matters Arising

Bill Calderwood requested an update on the introduction of Wi-Fi on the Arran service. Eric Smith stated this was one of several ongoing IT projects and they were waiting on support from BT. IT should be in place this later this year but reliant on BT. Bill Calderwood asked if he could offer any support.

Timetable connections with McGills - Eric Smith reported that he understood that these were now resolved.

Item 8, Wemyss Bay - Deadline was January but now March 2016. Lorna Spencer provided an update; Contractors should be on schedule as long as no more stormy weather. Pier works ongoing. 5 weeks today a decision will be made as to whether programme can be completed on schedule. Eric Smith asked for confirmation of what should be done in respect of a start date for the summer timetable since CFL couldn't confirm if pier will be ready. Councillor MacIntyre highlighted the considerable local concern especially for those that commute.

Cllr John Bruce suggested that the public position should be for 25th March weather permitting. Ninian McAlister suggested using the Coruisk as back up however Eric Smith said Coruisk not available as it is committed to another route starting that day. Eric Smith stated that starting berthing trials was dependent on Pier Work. Lorna Spencer said that she would soon have a much better overview of where they are with delivery of the pier and link-span.

Item 4, Smart ticketing – Cllr John Bruce requested update from Cal Mac. Eric Smith stated that Smart Ticketing / Project Titan currently subject to litigation after issues surrounding the project. CFL engaged with existing contractor to try and deliver some aspects of Smart ticketing. Hope is for these to be introduced 2016.

Item 8, Explore Magazine – Cllr Bruce Marshall requested an update. Eric Smith said that they had extended publication but wanted to confirm distribution for next issue.

Item 11, update on Ferry User Group Review. Graham Laidlaw provided an update.

Action - HITRANS to confirm if invitation to invite Visit Scotland to Clyde FUG had been actioned.

ITEM 3: CHFS Procurement update from Transport Scotland

Graham Laidlaw gave an update on procurement process. Contract commences 01/10/16. Fares are frozen this year.

ITEM 4: Caledonian MacBrayne Operational and Performance Update

Eric Smith reported on the performance statistics circulated prior to meeting and providing the group with update on reliability and punctuality of routes covered within the group area for the period.

5% percent of sailings lost. Mainly due to weather. Gourock to Dunoon shouldn't really be included as they have a different contractual performance regime. Argyll Flyer problem on Gourock - Dunoon. Increase in Ardrossan –Brodick by 8%.

Cllr Robert MacIntyre asked about reports of the Brodick ferry only sailing when it was daylight.

Action - Ross Moran said he would take this away as an action to investigate.

Ninian McAllister asked if in the event of Rothesay – Wemyss Bay being disrupted whether the Western connection would be able to assist. Eric Smith said CalMac could operate the Rothesay – Gourock service. Ninian felt this would be good from a public relations aspect for the company.

Bill Calderwood requested that the utilisation of vessels can be included in the statistics rather than pax load and cancellations. Issues relating to performance in inclement weather was also raised. Eric Smith reported on the impact of the RET and how cars and motor homes are getting larger which makes it difficult to analyse utilisation. Bill Calderwood raised

concern that customers can phone up and ferry showing is full however on the day there is capacity. Ross Moran stated there is an ongoing project to improve utilisation but there is currently no date for when this to be implemented.

Lorna Spencer reported that there was a taskforce considering the size of new vessel and this was going to complete a scoping survey.

Cllr Bruce requested that he would like to see new tender stating a higher spec of vessel for the Gourock – Dunoon Service.

Graham Laidlaw provided update. Cllr Bruce Marshall states huge concerns re berthing charge from CMAL of £3m. Lorna Spencer stated Gourock operates as a standalone port and needs to cover its costs with all operators needing to be treated the same. CMAL has undertaken several modelling exercises to consider options and a report will go to the CMAL Board.

Cllr Robert MacIntyre said that pax load down Rothesay – Wemyss Bay was likely to be a result of de-population. While Mull has shown an increase in population the population in Tiree (10%) and Bute (6%) was down. Graham Laidlaw highlighted that reduced fares should encourage uptake.

Action: CalMac to report back performance of Arran service during hours of darkness.

ITEM 5: CalMac Winter 2016 Timetable proposals

Eric Smith stated that the Winter 2016/17 weren't circulated in advance as they are still subject to discussion with TS but they will be the same as last year. There have also been requests from groups for alterations. Cllr John Bruce raised connectivity issues with other modes.

ITEM 6: Ferry User Group Meetings 2016

Members felt Largs was a good venue for all meetings as it involved only one ferry journey. Dates for future meetings will need to be reviewed from those presented in the report as subsequent to the report being prepared CFL have advised the dates will need to be changed to allow better timing for Summer 2017 consultation on the draft timetables.

Cllr John Bruce highlighted importance of FUG to discuss wider issues and timings of future meetings were important, especially in relation to the

upcoming procurement process but also with regard to feedback and consultation on timetables & service.

Action: Eric Smith to discuss with colleagues before suitable dates for future FUG meetings are agreed with HITRANS and Transport Scotland.

ITEM 7: Public Transport Update

Des Bradley provided an update on ScotRail services noting that there were no major timetable changes. ScotRail summer timetable starting in March not May this year due to Queen Street tunnel closure.

ScotRail had contact with CalMac re Wemyss Bay pier opening and would be keeping public updated.

Ross Moran stated that he had previously been with network rail so had a strong relationship with ScotRail.

Bill Calderwood made request for staff training at peak travel times where concessionary travelers do not need to pay full charge. Des confirmed staff had had awareness training after this was raised about a year ago but would raise again.

Bruce Marshall raised issue with Gourock connections where he felt trains were leaving before elderly can get from ferry to train. Des felt connections were good at Gourock with a high frequency to Glasgow ensuring delays were kept to a minimum.

ITEM 8: AOCB

Cllr John Bruce raised concern about unsatisfied demand and need for a way of improving / accuracy of statistics for demand and reflect this in vessel deployment in respect utilisation etc. Graham Laidlaw responded that with a more sophisticated system this should be possible.

Eric Smith stated that 33 vessels were dry docked throughout the winter with CFL needing to constantly move fleet around to provide cover. Graham Laidlaw said he was happy for a second vessel to go to Arran when it is available.