



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

**Held at the Victoria Hotel, Rothesay
28 April 2011**

IN ATTENDANCE

STRATHCLYDE PARTNERSHIP FOR TRANSPORT (SPT)

Mr Bryan Tennant
Councillor Denis McKenna

HITRANS

Councillor Duncan MacIntyre
Mr Randal Robertson
Mrs Katy Cunningham

INVERCLYDE COUNCIL (IC)

Councillor George White (Chair)

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL (NAC)

Councillor Margie Currie

ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL (A&BC)

Councillor Bruce Marshall
Councillor Len Scoullar
Councillor Al Reay

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND (FERRIES DIVISION)

Mr Douglas Ellis
Mr Richard Hadfield

CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE (CalMac)

Mr Robbie Brown
Mr David Cannon
Mr Brian Fulton
Mr Alasdair Henderson

NATIONAL FARMERS UNION (NFU)

Mr Ninian McAllister

APOLOGIES: Councillor Alex Gallagher
Councillor Ronnie Ahlfeld
Mr Andrew Flockhart
Mr Phil Preston
Mrs Fay Harris
Ms Moya Ingram
Mr Mike Dean
Mr Dennis Bradley
Mr Donald Bannatyne

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting

ITEM 1: Minute of Meeting

The minute of the meeting of 28 January 2011 was approved as a true reflection of the meeting.

ITEM 2: Matters Arising

No items were raised under matters arising

ITEM 3: Dunoon – Gourock Tendering Process

Richard Hadfield provided a short update on the Gourock – Dunoon town centre to town centre ferry service contract tender. Advising Judith Ainsley is leading the team that are leading on the procurement of this and the Northern Isles tender and who will also lead on the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services Contract tender in due course.

Documents were issued on 8th February and the process is on track to complete by 30th June in line with the EC timescale. One tenderer (Highland and Universal Securities) has withdrawn. This leaves three tenders submitted, these are:

- Western Ferries
- David MacBrayne
- Clyde Marine

The Preferred bidder will be announced on 25th May. A two week cool down period will follow and all being well the contract documents will be signed on 7th June.

The new operator will commence service operation on 30th June 2011.

Cllr Bruce Marshall expressed disappointment on behalf of the people of Cowal that this process has been undertaken in the middle of the summer season which has meant that Caledonian MacBrayne have only been able to produce timetables running to end June 2011. This has caused uncertainty for the tourism sector.

Richard advised that the timescale has been set by the EC and that the SG commenced the process in November 2009 in response to the EC directive.

A general Group discussion followed on tender process.

Action – Consideration will be given to holding a special meeting of the Clyde Ferry User Group once the contract award process has been completed.

ITEM 4: Milk Transportation from Bute Creamery – update by Argyll and Bute Council

Councillor Scoullar confirmed that the Bute Creamery has now closed. Arrangements have been in place for First milk to relieve additional transport burdens for the Bute dairy industry.

Ninian McAllister added that First Milk have provided island producers with the same price as mainland farmers. This level price has helped but there is still a concern that producing milk in Bute costs about 12% more than on the mainland. Ninian concluded that we need to continue to develop ways of ensuring milk production on Bute remains viable.

Cllr Margie Currie added that food security must be borne in mind, and that in the event that the ability to produce our own foodstuffs is lost it will be very difficult to re-establish the ability to produce.

ITEM 5: Caledonian MacBrayne Operational Update

Brian Fulton and Robbie Brown reported on routes within their area and provided the group with performance reports for the period October 2010 – 24th March 2011.

Brian and Robbie each presented their area report providing information on reliability and punctuality of routes covered within the group.

Robbie added, carryings in general have not been great, with Easter getting off to a great start but this did not last long. The second vessel for Arran has been confirmed and is expected to come on service early in July operating to the middle of August.

CalMac staff were praised for coming to the aid of a lady seriously hurt when she was struck by a bus manoeuvring as she walked through the ferry terminal on Brodick Pier recently. No one is sure exactly what happened at this stage.

The Arran on the Square event takes place on 14/15th May to showcase Isle of Arran produce at George Square, Glasgow.

ITEM 6: Public Transport Operational Update

Brian Tennant advised that the Kilcreggan ferry has seen a drop in passenger numbers of between 15% to 20%. The reasons for this drop are unknown and it is hoped that numbers will pick up with better weather. More new trains are in operation and progress is being made on the infrastructure improvements between Glasgow Central and Paisley.

Brian added that tenders for the Kilcreggan ferry are due next year and 3 options for this are under consideration which include the status quo and 2 development options.

Update as provided by Des Bradley, ScotRail, in email presented by Randal Robertson as follows:-

- The new class 380 trains continue to enter service and are now making regular appearances on both the Ayrshire and Inverclyde routes. 18 trains have now been accepted and the numbers steadily increasing.
- Phase 1 of Network Rail's Gourock station upgrade is now complete, with new station building and bus interchange now in use.
- Phase 2 is now well underway, which will include demolition of redundant buildings, renovation of platforms and seawall, refurbishment of north wall with glazed sections included, and covered walkway to ferry terminal. New cycle parking facilities will also be provided. Completion is expected by December 2011

Des added, if any other information or updates required, members of the group are very welcome to get in touch

Update as provided by Douglas Blades, A&BC, in email presented by Randal Robertson as follows:-

- There have been complaints about poor bus connections between ferry and bus at Rothesay which is surprising given the work done between the Council, CalMac and West Coast Motors to improve matters when the Wemyss Bay ferry went hourly. We are going to investigate this with CalMac but haven't managed to do so yet.
- The seasonal Summer Sunday bus service between Rothesay and Dunoon which crosses on the Rhubodach Colintraive ferry will not operate this year due to the reduction in the Council's transport budget.
- The weekday bus services linking Rothesay and Portavadie and Rothesay and Dunoon which also use the Rhubodach Colintraive ferry are unaffected.

Cllr Duncan MacIntyre asked if the redeployment options of the MV Isle of Arran have been agreed for when the MV Finnlaggan enters service in Islay.

Richard Hadfield confirmed that a decision has not been taken yet on where the MV Isle of Arran will be deployed. The Minister did confirm that the Arran service will have a second vessel for 2 months of summer 2011 but the vessel for this has not been confirmed yet.

ITEM 7: Assessment of the Impacts of Road Equivalent Tariff (RET)

Ranald introduced draft report on RET largely for information and to make the group aware of the publication. This included details of the statements made by the main political parties in their Scottish Parliamentary Election Manifestos.

David Cannon added that a meeting was held recently in Inverness by the Scottish Government with a presentation given by Halcrow. The report is a good even handed document. Further work will be required before any extension of RET.

There followed a general discussion on RET and how this could impact if extended to Clyde routes.

ITEM 8: AOCB

Cllr Margie Currie raised the issue of a new linkspan being needed for Brodick pier. This had been expected to be provided by 2013 at the latest but this has been allowed to slip and we now have no timescale for this. Margie asked that CMAL be asked to provide a definite timescale for this work to be undertaken.

Richard Hadfield confirmed that CMAL do have this on their programme for the next three years and outwith the ongoing works in providing the new Islay infrastructure and the Loch class Hybrid vessel this will be next on the list for CMAL.

Cllr George Whyte asked if Argyll and Bute Council members if they could confirm the commitment that the Dunoon passenger facilities investment will be protected by Argyll and Bute Council to support the town centre to town centre service.

Cllr Bruce Marshall confirmed this will be the case.

ITEM 9:

Date of Next Meeting

No date set for next meeting, but it was anticipated a meeting will be called after announcement on the Gourock-Dunoon tender for a meeting to be held in June 2011.