

Clyde, Kintyre and Islands Ferry Stakeholder Group

Monday 7th June 2021 MS Teams Meeting

Present:

Cllr Ellen McMaster, North Ayrshire Council (Chair)
Cllr John Armour, Argyll and Bute Council (Vice Chair)
Cllr Timothy Billings, North Ayrshire Council
Cllr Robin Currie, Argyll and Bute Council
Cllr Jim Findlay, Argyll and Bute Council
Cllr Anne Horn, Argyll and Bute Council
Cllr Alan Reid, Argyll and Bute Council
Paul Linhart-MacAskill, Transport Scotland
Richard Hadfield, Transport Scotland
Brian Gordon, Transport Scotland
Michael Kean, Transport Scotland
Laurence Kenney, Transport Scotland
Alison Wills, Transport Scotland
Richard Holburn, Transport Scotland
Scott Reid, Argyll and Bute Council
Kevin Hobbs, CMAL
Brian Fulton, CMAL
Don McKillop, Calmac Ferries Limited (CFL)
Robert Morrison, Calmac Ferries Limited (CFL)
Tommy Gore, Calmac Ferries Limited (CFL)
Finlay MacRae, Calmac Ferries Limited (CFL)
Angus Campbell, Community Board – Clyde and Hebrides
Gordon Ross, Western Ferries
Steven Neilson, Argyll & Bute council, Rothesay Harbour
Bill Calderwood, Arran Ferry Committee
Alastair Dobson, Taste of Arran
Gordon Smith, Visit Scotland
Hendrik Wester, Bute Ferry Committee
Jim Porteous, Islay Ferry Committee
Islay McEachern, Islay Community Council
Christine Murdoch, Kilcreggan Ferry Committee
Ker Corbett, Scottish Citylink
Allan Comrie, SPT
Ranald Robertson, HITRANS
Neil MacRae, HITRANS

Apologies: Willie Lynch, Dunoon Community Council
 Jim Martin, Haulage Representative
 Cllr Gordon Blair, Argyll and Bute Council

1. Minute of meeting - 7 December 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. Calmac update Operational and Commercial Update

Finlay MacRae provided the commercial and marketing update on behalf of Calmac Ferries Limited. This touched on work with DMOs and supportive messaging on the Camping, Caravan and Motorhome island access.

Finlay MacRae updated on CHFS contract commitments.

Action – Finlay MacRae agreed to share a report breaking down the status of Contract Commitments at individual commitment level of detail.

Finlay MacRae advised that the consultation for Summer 2022 timetable is moving towards normal practice. Requests have been issued to consulted to bodies.

Bill Calderwood noted that the island economies are severely impacted on by poor performance so this needs to be understood by Calmac and TS in considering proposals to improve services as the cost of not acting is building up at a community level. This point was supported by other Members.

Finlay MacRae confirmed that the Socio Economic report is delayed to 2022.

Finlay MacRae, Don McKillop and Tommy Gore provided the regional route update for the Clyde, Kintyre and Islands FSG area routes.

The route summary is reproduced below:

Variance on Previous Period				
Route Name	Passengers	Cars	Coaches	CVs
Ardrossan - Brodick	-67%	-51%	-95%	5%
Claonaig - Lochranza	-64%	-57%		-14%
Colintraive - Rhubodach	-44%	-36%	-99%	2%
Gourock - Dunoon	-75%			
Gourock - Kilcreggan				
Kennacraig - Islay	-62%	-52%	-97%	-1%
Kennacraig - Islay/C'say/Oban	-71%	-60%	-100%	-40%
Largs - Cumbrae Slip	-41%	-19%	54%	27%
Tarbert LF - Portavadie	-47%	-28%	-100%	-32%
Tayinloan - Gigha	-37%	-19%		17%
Wemyss Bay - Rothesay	-56%	-34%	-97%	2%

Periods
Current Period: 19 October 2020 to 25 March 2021
Previous Period: 19 October 2019 to 25 March 2020

The follow up discussion covered the following items:

Cllr Robin Currie asked for clarification on what is meant by diverted sailings as it is unclear in the data presented for Islay.

Action – CFL agreed to look at clarifying the diverted sailings data which is unclear in the case of Islay services.

Cllr John Armour raised concerns at capacity not being available for booking online from Campbeltown to Ardrossan.

Don McKillop explained the issues around capacity restrictions on the route which are amplified by reduced passenger capacity as a result of 1 metre physical distancing. MV Isle of Arran is limited to 79 passengers (and 57 cars).

Tommy Gore advised that the particular passenger affected in the issue Cllr Armour raised were unable to make a train connection due to RMT industrial action that has seen Ardrossan Harbour trains cancelled.

Action – CFL will add information on the RMT Industrial Action to their website to alert passengers to check the status of the train service they intend to travel on.

Steven Neilson noted that Portavadie – Tarbert services have been disrupted by tidal constraints and asked if there were any plans for dredging to reduce tidal operations.

Action – Don McKillop agreed to check if there were plans or an opportunity to improve tidal performance on this route through dredging.

Christine Murdoch noted that Kilcreggan Service Data is not included in the report and asked if this could be remedied in the future.

Action – Tommy Gore will ensure Kilcreggan is included in future updates and this data will be shared with the Membership retrospectively for the period reported to the meeting.

Western Ferries Update

Gordon Ross provided the Western Ferries update which covered:

Carryings are only slightly down on 2019 and significantly up on 2020
Whit Sunday Weekend Carryings exceeded 2019.

Summer projection is for high demand and WF are enhancing service operations to ensure capacity will be available to meet this.

Robin Currie asked how WF can maintain higher levels of capacity than has been reported by CFL.

Gordon explained the WF passengers largely remain in their cars while travelling which mean they can operate with adequate capacity for passengers and meet normal demand levels. At busy periods WF are able to operate a four vessel service at a faster service speed increasing frequency. WF have 2 x linkspans at each terminal making it easier for them to clear a traffic backlog.

Ranald Robertson asked if Brexit had had an impact on WF operations.

Gordon responded to say that Brexit has impacted on EU visitor numbers but this might owe as much to Covid but there has been a real impact on the supply of spare parts with critical spare parts being held up in Dover on arrival in the UK.

Allan Comrie asked if the recent return to near normal carryings has seen any demographic shift in those travelling.

Gordon felt that all segments of the local market were travelling again but noted there might be increased numbers of people travelling with bikes on their cars.

Ranald Robertson asked if there was anything to update on the proposed Islay freight service.

Gordon Ross confirmed that WF are looking to re-engage with stakeholders on the planned operation and how that might work alongside the CFL service. There could also be conflicts at Troon if Arran services were to be operating into Troon.

Jim Porteous updated on the work of Islay Ferry Committee on capturing measures to improve capacity on the CFL service to meet the increased freight demand to Islay suggesting that it might be possible to meet Islay's freight needs without the additional freight service should Transport Scotland fund these measures for delivery by CFL.

The Chair drew the discussion on the Islay Freight service to a close to allow time to cover subsequent items noting that the opportunity of additional tonnage on congested routes had to be welcome especially if this did not carry a burden for taxpayers and thanked Gordon for his contribution to the meeting.

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4. Ar Turas / New Booking System

Finlay MacRae reported that the activity around Ar Turas has continued and e-DEA SpA have been appointed to deliver the booking system. They are an Italian based provider who have provided systems to ferry companies around the globe. End user testing continues and the planned go live for the system is February 2022 and will be fully live for Summer 2022. The new system will be a much more versatile and user friendly process.

There followed a group discussion.

Action – Finlay MacRae would arrange for the Ar Turas team to get in touch with HITRANS with a view to establishing what would be needed for Calmac ferries to provide an API to the GOHI MaaS platform which will offer multi modal travel planning and booking across a range of modes (and will already include Northlink tickets from late June 2021).

5. Transport Scotland Update including Island Connectivity Plans

Laurence Kenney presented the Transport Scotland report covering:

- Recent disruption and network impacts.
- Actions to increase capacity and maximise existing capacity.
- Appointment of Graeme Dey MSP as Minister for Transport and noted desire of Mr Dey to work with the ferry served communities
- Minister accepts need for new tonnage both new and chartered. MV Pentalina is being actively explored.
- Review of Physical Distancing to be announced imminently.
- Related to the above Covid-19 cleaning regimes also impact on operations.

Richard Hadfield presented the Transport Scotland update. The presentation covered:

- Island Connectivity Plans
 - NTS 2 Delivery Plan / Infrastructure Investment Plan
 - Routes and Services Methodology
 - Community Needs Assessment (Refresh RSM Dependencies + STAG Based)
 - Market Assessment
- Long-term Plan and Investment Programme
 - Details in meeting paper.
 - Strategic context
 - ICP as long term plan
 - VRDP 2020 report – interim 10 year programme for CHFS
 - Asset life = key drive of investment / prioritisation
 - Investment Specification

There followed a group discussion on this item including;

Members enquired about timescales for publication of Island Connectivity Plan and its consideration of the transfer of responsibility for Local Authority Services. Richard Hadfield confirmed that the ICP would be published in 12-18 months.

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

Christine Murdoch asked for comment to clarify rumours that the new vessel for Kilcreggan will have a reduced capacity from the current ferry.

Kevin responded to say that no decision has been taken on vessel capacity yet.

Ranald Robertson asked what the timescale is for the Gourock Masterplan being completed.

Kevin confirmed that the recent linkspan renewal has bought about five years but the aim is to complete the Masterplan in that timescale.

Brian Fulton added that CMAL will be issuing a questionnaire on the Small Vessel Programme and will ask that this be circulated by the Secretariat.

Action – CMAL to share the Small Vessel Programme questionnaire with the Secretariat for circulation to the Membership.

Cllr Timothy Billings asked for an update on the Ardrossan Harbour redevelopment including timescales for when works might be completed.

Action – Paul Linhart-MacAskill offered to share an update on the Ardrossan Harbour programme with the Secretariat to share with the membership.

6.(b) SPT Update

Allan Comrie provided an update from SPT that covered:

- Work underway on public transport interchanges at Largs and Ardrossan.
- Fare Review underway on Strathclyde Concessionary Fares Scheme which will include all the services covered by this FSG.
- Bus services have continued to operate on a reduced basis with support from SPT and Transport Scotland's Covid 19 Support Grant.

6.(c) Argyll and Bute Council Update

Scott Reid reported for Argyll and Bute Council:

- ABC are waiting to see what the vessel and harbour proposals are for Kilcreggan.
- Works ongoing at Rothesay.

7. Communities Board Update

Angus Campbell provided an update on behalf of the Ferries Community Board – Clyde and Hebrides which is the new name of the CCB. The FCB met on Friday and part of the session

included a very positive meeting with the new Transport Minister Graeme Dey MSP. There were separate discussions with Calmac MD, CMAL CEO and TS senior officials. There are four or five vacancies on the FCB which will be advertised shortly.

Action – Angus Campbell to share the FCB Advert with the Secretariat who will circulate to the Membership.

8. Scottish Islands Passport

Neil MacRae presented a report on the Scottish Islands Passport project noting that funding is now secured until the end of 2023 and HITRANS are keen to work with island communities and stakeholders to maximise this opportunity.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was agreed as **Monday 6th December 2021 at 1030**.