



**Minute of Hebrides Ferry Users Group Meeting
(Barra, South and North Uist, Harris, Lewis)**

**Held in Committee Room 1, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Stornoway
10:00 22 June 2010**

IN ATTENDANCE

COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR (CnES)

Councillor Donald Manford (Chairperson)
Councillor Morag Munro
Councillor John Mackay
Mr Murdo Gray
Mr Donald MacRae

HITRANS

Mr Randal Robertson
Mrs Katy Cunningham

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT (FERRIES DIVISION)

Mr Bob Watson

CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE LIMITED (CaIMac)

Mr David Cannon
Ms Mary-Ann Campbell
Mr David Taylor
Mr Ian Fox

STORNOWAY PORT AUTHORITY

Mr Torquil MacLeod
Ms Jane Maciver

OUTER HEBRIDES TOURISM ASSOCIATION (OHTA)

Mr Ian Fordham

ROAD HAULAGE ASSOCIATION (RHA)

Mr D R MacLeod

APOLOGIES:

Councillor John Laing
Mr Sam MacNaughton
Mr Phil Preston
Mr Andrew Flockhart
Mr Mike Dean
Mr Roddy Jardine

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Cllr Manford welcomed members to the meeting

ITEM 1: Minute of Previous Meeting

The minute of the 19 February 2010 meeting was approved

ITEM 2: Matters Arising

Item 4: David Taylor confirmed additional sailings for Hebfest going ahead Sunday 17th July

Item 2: Invergarry interchange - Ranald Robertson confirmed meeting going ahead in July and will update next meeting

ITEM 3: Scottish Ferries Review Presentation by Scottish Government

Bob Watson Scottish Governments Ferries Division presented Ferries Review Power Point presentation. Bob highlighted the key points and objectives of this round of consultation, advising consultation taking place until 30th September.

Bob went on to explain what happens next, comprehensive process with further consultation with island communities planned, and will ensure to involve as many people as possible. The review has been assisted in forming opinions with various sub and steering groups

Bob highlighted questionnaire with 33 questions, with questionnaire available on Scottish Government to be completed and returned. Bob also highlighted contact telephone number if any queries - 0131 244 1539

Murdo Gray raised the question of two vessel service on the Stornoway - Ullapool route, that he has been advised single vessel to do the run and will replace the Muirneag at the same time, that Vessel would have capacity for 22 cars or commercials.

D R MacLeod asked why not two vessels?

Murdo responded operational issues highlighted in study, and felt two smaller vessels would not have been appropriate, but hasn't seen the revised STAG, that no finalised decision has been taken.

Chair asked if this is something this group should take on.

DR responded, as far he was aware that there would be two vessels, and this has changed to one vessel with no further consultation.

Murdo advised consultants view was two vessels, but STAG has been moving toward a single vessel, but again highlighted no decision has been made.

Chair – suggests further consultation/engagement perhaps involvement in establishing the final conclusion.

Action: Bob Watson to take this back to Graham Laidlaw, concerns of members of this group to delay in decision, and outcome.

A general group discussion of the review followed.

ITEM 4: RET – Scottish Government update on pilot scheme and monitoring arrangements

Bob advised he had received update from David Notman, on track to meet timetable with exercise completed by end of year. Onboard survey's taking place in August, telephone survey scheduled for autumn, with Scott Wilson feeding into Scheme scheduled to be completed spring next year.

Murdo reminded of deadline for CalMac Explore magazine.

Bob responded that the Minister is aware, as is Graham Laidlaw timetable for publication of summer timetables.

Murdo advised the group that Graham had provided figures on RET routes, which show May figures up on last year.

A general group discussion of RET followed.

ITEM 5: Caledonian MacBrayne Operational Update

Regional Managers David Taylor, Mary-Ann Campbell and Ian Fox reported on routes within their area and provided the group with performance reports providing information on reliability and punctuality of routes covered within the group area for the period January to May 2010. Performance reports and statistics were issued prior to meeting.

Ian Fordham requested David Taylor to provide numbers for services which are fully booked to be reported back?

David responded can provide this, generally, that routes are at capacity most summer months, but unable to provide numbers once booked out.

In addition Ian Fox advised on the Oban –Castlebay, Lochboisdale service, that rescheduling of the clansman on Wednesday and Fridays have overcome some of problems from last year.

Ian added that delay with issuing blankets when storm sailing delays has been rectified.

ITEM 6: Public Transport Update

Ranald advised Mike Dean, Citylink sends his apologies, that Mike had provided transport update by email.

HITRANS had incident raised with problem at Ullapool, where Stagecoach locker hit loading bike.

ScotRail are running an Edinburgh to Oban service during July and August, but must be pre-booked. Mid –day service but not sure what time. Ian Fox confirmed booking is to resolve issue in the past with crowding, and to manage overcrowding.

ITEM 8:

AOCB

Ranald apologised for late paper, that some are probably aware that HITRANS had contracted team of consultants travel through UIG, really to perform HITRANS input to the review. Ranald advised study now complete and report available on HITRANS website. Ranald highlighted options which have come out of study

Ranald asked if customer services could announce courtesy bus available provided by Highland Council and possibly onboard timetable.

Murdo asked if some images could be provided to brighten up board from CalMac, this would be greatly received.

David confirmed he would provide these.

Chair advised submissions received from Lewis and Harris, requesting later service on Saturday evening from Ullapool, that sailing be moved to 7.30pm instead of 6.30pm, to accommodate sports teams. If this is something can be looked suggested have further meetings to discuss.

Mary-Anne agreed to meet and discuss this further.

ITEM 9:

Date of Next Meeting

No date set for next meeting.