



THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

**Draft Minute of Ferry Users Group Meeting  
Skye and Lochaber**

**Held at The Moorings Hotel, Banavie  
13:00 17 February 2009**

**IN ATTENDANCE**

**HITRANS**

Cllr Duncan MacIntyre (Chairperson)  
Mr Ranald Robertson

**HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

Cllr Allan Henderson  
Mr Cameron Kemp

**ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL**

Cllr Duncan MacIntyre

**CALEDONIAN FERRIES LTD (CFL)**

Mr David Cannon  
Mr David Taylor  
Mr Alasdair Henderson

**CALEDONIAN MARITIME ASSETS LTD (CMAL)**

Mr Andrew Flockhart

**HIE**

Mr Scott Dingwall

**CONFEDERATION OF TRANSPORT (CPT)**

Mr Mike Dean

**Raasay Community Council**

Donnie Oliphant

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**APOLOGIES:**

Cllr John Laing  
Cllr Michael Foxley  
Ms Judith Ainsley  
Cllr Gordon Chalmers  
Mr Dave Duthie

Mr Lawrie Sinclair  
Mr Phil Preston  
Mr Des Bradley  
Mr Robert Muir

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## **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**

Cllr Duncan MacIntyre welcomed everyone to the meeting, explaining he would Chair the meeting in the absence of Cllr John Laing, the regular chair of this meeting who is recovering from receiving new hip replacement.

**It was Agreed:** best wishes for a speedy recovery be sent to Cllr Laing from the group.

### **ITEM 1: Minute of Meeting 9 September 2008**

The minute was approved as a correct reflection of the meeting.

### **ITEM 2: Matters Arising - no items raised under matters arising**

### **ITEM 3: Scottish Government Ferry Review**

Ranald Robertson advised the group he would present a PowerPoint presentation on behalf of Judith Ainsley of the Scottish Government. Judith is heading up the Scottish Ferries Review and sends her apologies as she had intended to present presentation herself, unfortunately due to a clash of meeting dates this was not possible.

Ranald outlined the objectives of the review. The Government is looking to support sustainable economic development of island communities and recognize the importance of ferry links in supporting this process and enabling island and peninsular communities to thrive.

All publicly funded ferries are being considered in the review and no potential domestic routes will be excluded.

Ranald advised the group that the proposed timetable of the Review has been delayed as a results of the EC investigation. Results are now expected to be produced after the conclusion of this investigation in September. The draft strategy is now expected to be produced towards the end of this year with the final strategy completed by next spring.

Allan Henderson commented that it's now time to look at emissions and improved services, that new vessels might be the answer and would also provide work for Scottish ship yards.

**There followed a general discussion on the review**

#### **3.1 Mallaig-lochboisdale Ferry**

Alasdair Henderson recommends this be handed over to Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar to lead on and that the group should support this. It is unlikely any service would be operational before 2011 and could be seen as an amendment to CHFS contract without taking away any other services but giving people a new option for travel.

The Chair responded that Argyll and Bute Council would also support a new service in addition to the existing network provided through the CHFS.

Ranald Robertson advised that he had received correspondence from residents of the small isles and Highland Council Education Department officers asking that they would welcome the opportunity for any new ferry service from Mallaig to the Western Isles to also service the small isles. Ranald added that this may be something community representatives in the Small Isles wish to raise through the Scottish Ferry Review at this stage.

**ITEM 4: Rassay Ferry Terminal Project Update by Highland Council**

Cameron Kemp advised the group that the Terminal is expected to be completed in September 2009.

Donnie Oliphant commented that the community are happy they have been kept up to date and fully informed by the Contractor.

**ITEM 5: Caledonian MacBrayne Operational Update**

David Taylor provided the operational service update to the end of January 2009. David reported that an additional winter sailing has been provided on the Sconser – Rassay service and this has gone some way to improve the service and relieve capacity problems. The summer timetable has changed slightly.

David hopes to convene a meeting with community to discuss winter timetables.

Donnie Oliphant reported that conditions at Raasay are poor at present and parking requires urgent upgrading. Improvement is needed to the facilities at Sconser as people parking on verges is causing problems. Cameron Kemp confirmed Highland Council is looking at both issues raised by Donnie but could not give a timescale at this stage on when improvements could be made.

David was asked if RET is affecting the routes in the area covered by the group. David responded that a pattern seems to be emerging that the more northerly routes operated by the company seem to be performing better. There is a general trend downward when the network is looked at as a whole but the northern part of the network is faring better. Bookings are indicating a marginal increase on last year, but the system opened earlier this year so it is difficult to draw a good comparison at this early stage.

David reported he met with Small Isles Community Council, regarding getting school children home at weekends and consequently David agreed to take forward and submit to the government timetable amendments that would help facilitate this for the next timetable change winter/summer.

Allan Henderson asked on behalf of Cllr Michael Foxley if winter/summer 2010 could be extended to coincide with school timetables. David responded that he thinks this has been done. Also, an extra winter sailing has been requested by Community Council on the Tobermory-Kilchoan service, with David confirming this has been submitted for consideration by Scottish Government.

**ITEM 6: Public Transport Operational Update**

Mike Dean reported on summer seasonal service improvements including the summer Edinburgh to Fort William Service.

Additional, summer only journeys have been introduced on the Glasgow – Fort William service to give a two hourly frequency northbound and almost two hourly southbound frequency. The last departure Glasgow - Fort William at 1800 is designed to give connections with the Corran Ferry.

Mike also reported on a new direct daily Edinburgh - Oban service departing Edinburgh 0805 and returning from Oban at 1510 with connections at Tyndrum to/from Fort William.

On the Inverness - Portree service an additional journey will again be provided to offer 3 journeys each way, each day, with improved connections at Sconser for ferry connections to/from Raasay.

Mike advised the group that the Fort William – Oban service will be operated wholly by West Coast Motors and will include 2 return journeys on Sundays.

Inverness – Fort William service is now daily, every 2 hours with connections at Fort William to and from Glasgow.

Mike also advised the group that Scottish Citylink is now working with a new advertising agency and hopefully communication will improve and any timetable changes will be well advertised.

Mike Dean asked Randal Robertson what was the outcome of study by Bob Barnes Watts which looked at public transport connections at ferry terminals.

Randal responded that study was nearly complete and would require to be signed off by the HITRANS board and would then be made available for general distribution through the HITRANS website.

Mike advised that he wasn't contacted by Bob during the study development to feed into the study.

Randal agreed to take this back and ask Bob to contact Mike now.

**ITEM 7: AOCB**

Alasdair Henderson advised the group of EU draft legislation on passengers rights, meals for delayed departures etc; CalMac do not think it has been thought through and is not appropriate for ferries and doesn't fit with their service agreement. The draft states there will be a devolved agency for consultation on ferries, but thinks there may a re-draft coming out as some member states have complained.

Alasdair agreed to send a link to the consultation to group members.

**7.1:** Allan Henderson advised the group that Councillor Foxley asked him to raise on his behalf the issue of Highland Council representation on this group

Randal Robertson explained that the Highland Council representation on each of the ferry user groups in their area was supplied to HITRANS by Highland Council and that if Highland Council wished to change this then HITRANS would be happy to comply. In recognition of this and in response to an earlier representation from Councillor Foxley an invitation had already been sent to him for attendance of this meeting.

**ITEM 8: Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on, Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2009