



**Minute of Argyll Ferry Users Group Meeting (FUG)  
(Oban, Colonsay, Iona, Lismore, Coll, Tiree, Barra, South Uist)**

**Held at CFL Ferry Terminal, Oban  
10:00 16 January 2008**

**IN ATTENDANCE**

**HITRANS**

Councillor Duncan MacIntyre, Chair  
Mr Randal Robertson, Programme Manager

**ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL (A&B)**

Mr Blair Fletcher, Transportation Manager

**HIGHLAND COUNCIL (HC)**

Councillor Michael Foxley  
Cameron Kemp, Integrated Transport Manager

**COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR (CNES)**

Murdo Gray, Head of Transport, CNES

**CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE**

Mr Lawrie Sinclair, Managing Director  
Mr Hugh Dan MacLennan, Communications Director  
Mr Phil Preston, Operations Director  
Mr Ian Fox, Regional Manager (Oban)  
Mr David Taylor, Regional Manager (Fort William)

**CALEDONIAN MARITIME ASSETS LTD (CMAL)**

Mr Guy Platten, Managing Director  
Mr Andrew Flockhart, Business Planning Manager

**ARGYLL & THE ISLES ENTERPRISE (AIE)**

Mrs Jane MacLeod

**CONFEDERATION OF TRANSPORT (CPT)**

Mr Mike Dean

**FIRSTSCOTRAIL**

Mr Patrick Nyamurundira, Integration & Access Manager

**APOLOGIES:** Mr Dave Duthie, HITRANS  
Councillor Gerry MacLeod, CNES  
Mr Sam MacNaughton, HC  
Ms Lorna Spencer, CMAL  
Mr Donald McLean, Road Haulage Association (RHA)

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### **INTRODUCTIONS**

Cllr Duncan MacIntyre, Chair welcomed all to the meeting, advising that meetings were to be administered by HITRANS.

Jane MacLeod explained AIE are no longer in existence from March and she is unsure whether she should attend future meetings. The Chair responded, that as Jane also represents business interests at meetings, she should continue to attend.

### **ITEM 2: Minute of Meeting 27 June 2007**

The Minute was approved as correct.

Cllr Michael Foxley sought clarification on how much input he could have and that the Chair confirmed he was happy for him to raise issues on behalf of his area at the meeting.

### **ITEM 3: Matters Arising**

Cllr Michael Foxley asked for clarification on the position with regard to how communities can raise issues and seek timetable alterations. Michael Foxley asked for an update on the Ferry Route Development Fund (RDF).

Lawrie Sinclair confirmed there was no RDF for ferries and explained the situation with external funding of ferry services and process whereby any additional funding for service enhancements from local authorities would lead to a reduction in Scottish Government funding making it impossible to achieve an enhancement without going through the full process with Scottish Government. Caledonian MacBrayne would be making a case to the Scottish Government for service enhancement and the important role the FUGs could play in this. Mike Dean emphasised the need to pay attention to mainland connections when making any timetable changes.

### **ITEM 4: CFL Operational Update for the Period from 1 October 2007**

Ian Fox provided the group with a performance report for the period ending 31/10/2007. This report included information on reliability and punctuality of routes covered within the area covered by the FUG.

**ITEM 4.1:** Michael Foxley asked if summer timetables could be extended to the end of October, to capitalise on English, Argyll & Highland school holidays, which this year end on 24 October. Phil Preston agreed to look at this.

### **ITEM 5: Infrastructure – Argyll Services**

Blair Fletcher confirmed negotiations are underway with the contractor to carry out remedial works on the slipway at Iona

Phil Preston responded that it is important this work is carried out as one ship has been damaged as a result of the issues with the slipway and it may

need to be removed from service. Blair Fletcher to report this back to the Council to see if it can help accelerate the works.

- ITEM 5.1** The Chairman asked Ian Fox if any requests had been made to him for a Waiting Room with Facilities to be provided in Iona.  
Ian Fox responded that residents of Mull have requested a bus shelter type facility on Iona and that such a facility is desperately needed. Blair Fletcher suggested that before any facilities are provided it would be important to consult the Community Council as a previous offer by HITRANS and the Council for a waiting room and public toilets at the Iona slip were rejected by the community.
- Item 5.2** The Chairman asked whether there would be any plans for a café in the Oban Terminal and if progress had been made on covered walkways for access to the ships from the Terminal Building.  
Ian explained that the café on the first floor will mean a change of use and that this is on hold until the walkway issues are resolved. It is still Caledonian MacBrayne's intention to pursue the café at the earliest possible opportunity
- Action:** Caledonian MacBrayne and Argyll & Bute Council building control to meet to resolve issues between building and access to ship/stairwells, this should be a priority to resolve the issue before the summer.
- ITEM 6:** **Argyll & Bute Council Report on Oban Interchange Proposals**  
Blair Fletcher reported that the Interchange Group is currently looking at how to develop proposals for a multimodal facility centred on the Oban Ferry Terminal.  
Guy Platten confirmed that CMAL are very supportive of such a project being developed and that the project had buy in from all key stakeholders.
- ITEM 7:** **Local Authority Report on Timetable and Service Issues**  
Cameron Kemp reported that Highland Council are to wait and see how connections work out on Oban – Mull
- ITEM 7.1:** Hugh Dan reported that Caledonian MacBrayne were that day to issue a press release regarding the company's response to the invitation to tender on the Mallaig – Lochboisdale route and the company's optional variant bid. The reason for the press release is in response to the considerable speculation in the media and the communities affected, it is not in anyone's interests to allow the current speculation about their proposals to continue and it was deemed the best option was for the company to fully explain their proposals.
- ITEM 8:** **Road Equivalent Tariff**  
Phil Preston advised that the consultants are still finalising their report prior to consultation with stakeholders. Caledonian MacBrayne do not know what this is likely to recommend but expects any pilot to involve some or all Western Isles routes. Caledonian MacBrayne have given existing figures for comparison and have been asked to come up with proposals, but need to know the scheme objectives, and how success/failure will be measured, this may take a substantial length of time.

Michael Foxley suggested a good first step would be a reduced rate for empty CV loads and this could start with specialist one way loads such as timber and refrigerated units where the opportunities for a back load are very limited.

**ITEM 8: Cearcall na Gaidhlig (Gaelic Rings)**

Hugh Dan gave a presentation on the latest position on the Cearcall na Gaidhlig. A project steering group meeting the previous Friday to finalise arrangement for the extension of the scheme to include five new rings. The launch of these is scheduled to take place at Queen Street railway station, Glasgow on 14 March, with the event presided over by Jim Mather, Minister for Tourism. The website is being updated and will be live this week in both Gaelic and English.

**ITEM 9: HITRANS Relationship with Passengers' View**

Ranald Robertson reported some background on Passengers' View Scotland, which was set up by Ministers primarily to deal with bus issues. Hugh Dan MacLennan advised that Caledonian MacBrayne are concerned that PVS are seeking to extend their remit beyond that which they were established to deal with and that this may cause confusion. Hugh Dan added that Caledonian MacBrayne have been concentrating on promoting the consultation/complaints process with posters on board ships and at outports. These confirm that in the first instance contact should be directly with the operator, then through the RTPs to the Ferry User Group process.

**ACTION:** HITRANS to write to convenor of Passengers' View and request meeting to highlight/clarify the role of the Ferry User Groups as a point of contact to raise issues that remain unresolved by the company.

**ITEM 10: HITRANS TIER 2 Update**

Ranald Robertson advised that no date has been set yet for the first Clyde and Hebrides Tier 2 Ferry Committee meeting. It is hoped to hold this in the summer.

**ITEM 11: AOCB**

Patrick Nyamurundira, reported that essential track maintenance works would cause disruption to some rail services in February and that advance warning information of this disruption will be posted on the First ScotRail website.

**ACTION:** Patrick agreed to email details of the impact on services of the engineering works to Blair Fletcher, Cameron Kemp and Hugh Dan MacLennan to allow them to communicate this message too.

**Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held in Oban Ferry Terminal on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2008.