



THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

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

**Held at Held CNES Chambers  
18:00 23 January 2008**

**IN ATTENDANCE**

**COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR (CNES)**

Councillor Donald Manford (Chair)  
Councillor Norman MacDonald  
Councillor Morag Munro  
Councillor John Mackay  
Councillor Archie Campbell  
Mr David Smart, Transport Coordination Officer  
Mr Roddy Jardine, Harbourmaster

**HITRANS**

Mr Dave Duthie, Director  
Mr Ranald Robertson, Programme Manager

**HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

Mr Sam MacNaughton, Head of Transport and Infrastructure

**CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE LIMITED**

Mr Lawrie Sinclair, Managing Director  
Mr Hugh Dan MacLennan, Communications Director  
Mr Phil Preston, Operations Director  
Mr David Taylor, Regional Manager  
Mrs Mary Ann Campbell, Regional Manager

**STORNOWAY PORT AUTHORITY**

Mr Torquil MacLeod

**HIE INNSE GALL**

Mr Donnie MacAulay, Area Director

**ROAD HAULAGE ASSOCIATION**

Mr Donald MacLeod, MD, DR MacLeod

**OUTER HEBRIDES TOURISM INDUSTRY**

Mr Neil MacArthur (Visit Scotland)

**APOLOGIES:**

Mr Murdo Gray, CNES  
Mr Mike Dean, Citylink

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## INTRODUCTIONS

**The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.**

**ITEM 1: Minute of Meeting 3 July 2007**

The minute of the 3 July 2007 meeting was agreed to be correct with just a single amendment to show at item 4.1 to change the reference to HIE to HITRANS.

**Minute approved.**

**ITEM 2: Matters Arising**

**2.1** Donnie MacAulay reported there will be no Local Economic Forum (LEF) representative to the group, as the LEF has been discontinued.

**2.2** David Duthie advised the Tier 2 structure has not yet been taken forward but it was hoped to have the inaugural Tier 2 meeting possibly in the late spring or early summer.

Norman MacDonald responded that the Tier 2 meetings will be important as they are needed to help consider unresolved Tier 1 and promote strategic development.

**ITEM 3: CFL Regional post tender update**

Mary Ann Campbell and David Taylor provided the group with the performance report & Statistics for the period ending 31/10/2007.

**ITEM 4: Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Update on Lochmaddy Ferry Terminal Project**

Roddy Jardine reported that work is ongoing with the final stages of the redevelopment of the Lochmaddy Ferry Terminal. Works should be completed towards the end of the summer. Caledonian MacBrayne should liaise directly with the architect who is leading the project on behalf of the Comhairle.

**ITEM 5: Local Authority on Report on Timetable and Service Issues**

David Smart reported on the ongoing Best Value Review of council bus contracts. This has already identified a number of important issues. The review should be completed by the beginning of March. David advised he is working closely with David Taylor on 2008-09 summer proposals for how best to tie in services for tours from Lochmaddy on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays.

Archie Campbell commended CFL on excellent work done on timetables. The Chair agreed with Archie's comments on timetables and integration between bus and ferry.

Morag Munro advised of problem that is being experiencing by passengers required to interchange at Invergarry for onward connections from Uig to Inverness. The lack of a bus shelter and poor interchange facilities is a problem. Randal Robertson responded that he is aware of

the issue and that the problem is difficult to resolve because of space constraints making it difficult to provide suitable bus bays. The issue has been raised with Highland Council with regard to bus shelters in the past and with Transport Scotland as the trunk roads authority. Morag Munro suggested a direct service from Uig would solve the problem. Dave Duthie responded this is a commercially operated bus route and to enhance the service might require additional Council support which may not be possible.

Phil Preston advised the group that any issues can be taken back to CFL, without delaying until the next Ferry User Group meeting cycle.

**Action: HITRANS to raise the issue of poor interchange arrangements at Invergarry with Transport Scotland and the Highland Council.**

**ITEM 6: Road Equivalent Tariff (RET)**

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.

Discussion followed with Chair stating "that the Western Isles economy has been declining due to costs and would 'embrace' an RET pilot study."

**ITEM 7: 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.

The Chair extended his thanks to Joe MacPhee (Economic Development Manager with Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar) and Hugh Dan for their hard work, also to CFL for getting involved.

**ITEM 8: AOCB**

No items were raised under AOCB.

**ITEM 9: Date of Next Meeting**

The meeting will be held on 18 September 2008 in the Council Chamber, Stornoway.