



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

**Held at The Board Room, MacLeod Construction, Lochgilhead
14:00 19 February 2009**

IN ATTENDANCE

HITRANS

Mr Ranald Robertson
Mr Dave Duthie
Cllr Duncan MacIntyre

ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL (A&B)

Mrs Nicola Debnam,
Cllr Gordon Chalmers
Cllr Robin Currie

HIGHLAND COUNCIL (HC)

Mr Cameron Kemp

CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE

Mrs Fay Harris
Mr Robbie Brown
Mr Brian Fulton

CALEDONIAN MARITIME ASSETS LTD (CMAL)

Mr Guy Platten

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mrs Jane MacLeod

HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS ENTERPRISE (HIE)

Mrs Sue Gledhill

CONFEDERATION OF TRANSPORT (CPT)

Mr Mike Dean

ROAD HAULAGE ASSOCIATION (RHA)

Mr Ben Mundell

APOLOGIES:

Cllr Roddy McCuish
Cllr Michael Foxley
Cllr Gerry McLeod

Mr Donald McRae
Mr Phil Flanders
Mr Alan MacDonald
Mr Desmond Bradley
Mr Ian Fox
Ms Marie-Ann Brown
Ms Judith Ainsley

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Dave Duthie welcomed members to the meeting and apologised for the absence of Cllr Duncan MacIntyre the regular chair of this meeting who was attending the Scottish Government Ferries Consultation Workshops being held at Oban. Cllr MacIntyre hopes to join the group later in the meeting. In Cllr MacIntyre's absence the meeting was chaired by Dave Duthie.

- ITEM 1:** Dave Duthie explained the minute from both meetings of the Argyll and Kintyre groups are being presented due to amalgamation of the two groups; Dave advised that the reason for merger is to prevent duplication of membership as a significant proportion of the memberships of the groups was made up of the same people attending both. No stakeholders will be excluded from the larger group and this decision to merge was approved by the HITRANS board.

Minute of the Argyll and Kintyre meetings held on 10 September 2008

The Kintyre Group minute was approved subject to the following amendments:

(1) to show apologies from Sue Gledhill

(2) Item 7 delete "carry buses" and insert "carry bikes"

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

- ITEM 2: Matters Arising**
No items were raised under matters arising.

- ITEM 3: Scottish Government Ferry Review**
Dave Duthie advised the group that Guy Platten would give the Scottish Ferry Review presentation on behalf of Judith Ainsley of the Scottish Government. Judith is heading up Scottish Ferries Review and submitted her apologies to the group as it was her intention to attend the meeting and give the presentation herself.

Guy Platten presented advising that the review will be comprehensive with publicly funded ferries being considered in the review and no potential domestic routes will be excluded.

Guy advised the group that the proposed timetable of the Review has been delayed as a result 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.

Robin Currie asked if the overland route to Jura is being considered, Dave Duthie confirmed that all publicly funded ferries are being considered as are possible fixed links.

Robin Curry commented that he did not feel Inveraray is an appropriate venue for the Argyll and Bute Ferry Review open day.

Guy Platten responded that the Councils set the locations of the various Review open days.

Dave Duthie advised councils can arrange other meetings and these will be accommodated by the Review personnel although the costs will have to be borne by local authorities.

Nicola Debnam advised that the Scottish Government is funding the cost of the two events in Argyll (Oban and Inveraray).

Duncan MacIntyre added that with the Scottish Government open to attending additional events there should be no reason not to hold additional meetings in island areas.

After further discussion a suggestion for 2 Island meetings to be held in Tiree and Islay was agreed.

Action: HITRANS to submit the request to the Scottish Government that Review personnel attend the two supplementary events.

ITEM 4: Oban Interchange Study

Ronald Robertson introduced the report to advise the group that a study was underway which aims to identify improvements to the interchange facilities in Oban for bus, rail and ferry passengers. Ronald reported that Faber Maunsell have been commissioned to deliver this study with funding from CMAL, HITRANS and Argyll and Bute Council.

Jane MacLeod asked if the study team could be asked to contact her as they would like to input.

Action – The final report should be included on the agenda of the next Argyll FUG.

ITEM 5: Ferry Service Through The Oban Hub Study,

Ronald Robertson provided background to this study which was commissioned in August 2008. This study will look at the existing network of ferry services from Oban and seeks to identify options for improvement where these can be made.

ITEM 6: Caledonian MacBrayne Operational Update

Brian Fulton provided an operational service update on behalf of Ian Fox who is currently on annual leave. Operational services update covering the period to the end of January 2009. Brian reported that:

Oban – Craignure cars and passenger numbers are down, but commercial vehicle carryings are up.

Oban – Lochboisdale fared better but with significant disruptions in January due to weather.

Robin Currie asked if RET is making a difference. Fay Harris responded that it is early days in the trial but so far RET is not having a huge impact on services from Oban.

Coll – Tiree all traffic types are down.

Oban – Lismore passengers and cars are up and commercials are also up.

Fionnphort – Iona all up with some reliability issues. Iona slipway work now underway,

Fay Harris reported

Kennacraig – Islay carryings are mostly down, 2 vessels in operation all winter with the Lord of the Isles utilised until Saturday 20th December.

Tayinloan - Gigha all carryings are down with significant disruptions due to severe weather in January.

Cloanaig – lochranza

Tarbert – lochranza all carryings are down but not significantly so. Again weather related cancellations in January were a contributory factor.

Fay reported to the group she had spoken with Martin Gorrige of Argyll & Bute Council who advised that the Council are in the process of preparing a tender this year to resolve the issues at Tayinloan. There is a slim chance of work taking place before next year and this could begin with a breakwater being provided by end of the year. Fay also reported that deep dredging has been completed at Tayinloan.

Robin Currie responded saying “it is unacceptable the people of Gigha have to have another winter service like this?”

Dave Duthie offered to write to the Council in support of the work being programmed as soon as possible.

Action: Dave Duthie to write to Argyll and Bute Council and report back to group. Robin to take every opportunity to raise this within the Council.

Dave Duthie asked the stats as reported be passed to Katy Cunningham for distribution ahead of meeting. Fay Harris confirmed this should be possible. Brian Fulton confirmed he will forward statistics to Katy ahead of Clyde FUG meeting.

ITEM 7: Public Transport Operational Update

Mike Dean reported on changes/improvements to services

Robin Currie responded that it would be good to get the information out to the public on the improved services.

Mike advised that all this information has been made available through Traveline Scotland and Scottish Citylink also market their service improvements.

Nicola Debnam advised the group that a bus will be organised again in summer to meet the Jura fast ferry service.

Ranald Robertson advised they group that the West highland line was voted the best railway journey in the world by Wanderlust magazine.

Ranald is working with CalMac, First ScotRail and Flybe / Loganair to promote Gaelic Rings travel and tourism initiative.

ITEM 8: Oban Rail Service Enhancement Economic Appraisal Update
Ranald Robertson advised the group that HITRANS are progressing the case for improving rail journey frequency to Oban and a strong economic case has been established to support this.

ITEM 9: AOCB

Guy Platten updated the group on the latest position with regard to the infrastructure for the Islay service and the new vessel. There is a compelling business case for upgrading Port Ellen and Kennacraig terminals. CMAL is working on detailed design before making the case for funding from the Scottish Government.

Robin Currie indicated that there are rumours that because of the limited funding available to Government that there would only be investment at one or other of the facilities.

Guy Platten responded he cannot comment on these rumours but CMAL is making the case for both ports to be upgraded.

Ben Mundell expressed concerns that the new vessel will not fit the existing infrastructure.

Guy responded that the vessel will fit at Kennacraig, but there is a problem in that an old vessel was sunk near the pier by Western Ferries. This must be salvaged before the new vessel enters service and this alone will cost approximately £500,000.

Date of Next Meeting

August 20th 2009, location Oban