



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

**Held at the Corran Halls, Oban  
14:00 20 August 2009**

**IN ATTENDANCE**

**HITRANS**

Cllr Duncan MacIntyre (Chairperson)  
Mr Ranaid Robertson

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

Cllr Roddy McCuish  
Cllr Gordon Chalmers  
Cllr Robin Currie  
Mr Douglas Blades

**COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR**

Cllr Gerry McLeod

**SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT (FERRIES DIVISION)**

Mr Brian Wither

**CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE**

Mrs Fay Harris  
Mr Phil Preston  
Mr David Cannon

**CALEDONIAN MARITIME ASSETS LTD (CMAL)**

Mr Andrew Flockhart

**CONFEDERATION OF TRANSPORT (CPT)**

Mr Mike Dean

---

**APOLOGIES:**

Mr Ian Fox  
Mr Desmond Bradley  
Mr Ben Mundell  
Ms Marie-Ann Brown  
Ms Judith Ainsley  
Mrs Jane MacLeod  
Mrs Sue Gledhill

## **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**

Duncan MacIntyre welcomed members to the meeting

Request received from Robin Currie, delayed due to weather conditions and road closures, "to leave item 3: Scottish Government Ferry Review, until he arrives"

No objections received, it was agreed to request to delay item

### **ITEM 1: Minute of Meeting 19 February 2009**

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

### **ITEM 2: Matters Arising**

**Item 5:** Randal Robertson confirmed that Dave Duthie wrote to Argyll and Bute Council regarding the Tayinloan slipway and breakwater but no reply had been received prior to the meeting.

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

Brian Wither provided an update on the Scottish Ferry Review advising that the first round of consultation has been completed. Various surveys have been completed and are being fed into the comprehensive work packages. Consultants have been engaged to do various pieces of work and the Government are expecting draft reports by 1<sup>st</sup> of September. Whatever conclusions come out of these will be fed into draft strategy which is due to be submitted to officials at the end of the year before going out to consultation early next year. Interim reports will be made available on the Scottish Government website.

Robin Currie asked if the review will be dealing with the RET Pilot Study. Strong arguments exist for a first phase review and Robin felt there was a good case to extend the scheme to Colonsay at this stage.

Brian Wither responded that this is unlikely to happen as there is no funding available for additional routes to be added

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

### **ITEM 4: Oban Interchange Study**

Phil Preston reported to the group in his capacity as Chair of the Interchange Study steering group. Phil advised that the report has now been completed but has yet to be presented to the main group for final sign off

Duncan MacIntyre highlighted that the issue of Network Rail sitting on the sidings has been reported recently in the publication Local Transport Today.

Gordon Chalmers asked if the final report could be made available to all those with a direct interest such as the Mull Transport Committee.

A debate looked at how the Interchange could be taken forward discussion took in the CHORD project and Duncan MacIntyre provided background information on this.

Gerry MacLeod raised the issue of hold ups suffered by the Clansman while the Mull ferry loads and discharges.

Phil Preston responded that the same complaints are also made by Mull residents with their ferry held up by the Clansman.

**ITEM 5: Caledonian MacBrayne Operational Update**

On behalf of Regional Manager, Phil Preston provided the operational service update on Argyll region to the end of July 2009, performance reports and statistics were issued prior to meeting. Phil also reported on a number of service enhancements which are to be introduced with effect in the next winter timetable period.

Fay Harris provided an operational update for services operating in Kintyre and Islay Region to end of July 2009, performance reports and statistics were issued prior to meeting. Fay added details of planned improvements to the Tayinloan-Gigha service from this winter timetable,

After consideration of the statistics there followed some discussion of RET or equivalent tariff options and the potential impact these could have particularly for the Islay service.

Robin Currie raised the issue of the removal of Isle of Arran from the Islay service recently having a negative effect on Islay. He asked if it was still the case that no other short term replacement vessel could be leased in.

Phil Preston responded that ships are not available mainly due to the requirements of any vessel operating in our waters where the sea state is more challenging than other parts of the world and some ports are restricted in the draft and length of ships that can access them. Phil highlighted as an example that the MV Claymore has now been sold and is in operation in Denmark.

Phil confirmed that the company are to visit Islay to discuss these issues with the community, probably early in October.

**ITEM 6: Public Transport Operational Update**

Mike Dean provided a public transport update focused on bus and coach services. The disappointment for Scottish City link this summer is that numbers have been relatively low on the Edinburgh to Oban service. This can be looked at in comparison with the additional

Glasgow service that took about three years to become commercially viable so the company will meet with Argyll and Bute Council to review this at the end of the summer season.

The Chair asked if there could be an extension to the summer timetable to cover the Mod this year.

Mike responded that in the past this has proved difficult and that the company are more likely to provide duplicate coaches for the standard October timetable during Mod week.

Roddy McCuish suggested the direct Edinburgh service would be very attractive if it operated via Edinburgh Airport.

Douglas Blades suggested that the Council may support publicity of the Edinburgh service if it operates in summer 2010.

Roddy McCuish suggested it would also be good if all, or some of the Glasgow buses called at Glasgow Airport.

Mike agreed to consider this but also advised that when tried in the past a number of passengers expressed a preference for the service to operate via Great Western Road with on route drop off / pick up.

**Action:** Mike would consider the opportunity to route some Oban to Glasgow buses via Glasgow Airport.

Phil highlighted some issues being reported by CalMac staff and Passengers regarding bus services in Mull.

Douglas explained some background and agreed he was aware of some disputes on the island.

**Action:** Douglas agreed to send Phil details of the bus services operated under Argyll & Bute Council contract on Mull.

Douglas raised the issue of getting bus timetables stocked at ferry terminals. There is a particular problem with Oban.

Phil agreed to look at this with a view to having bus timetables displayed in all terminals including Oban.

Robin asked for an explanation for the change to waiting list management from a numbered system to first come first served.

Phil responded that this change is partly to have consistency across the network. The key issue is that this system is the only way to ensure swift vessel turn round as the marshalling areas do not permit letting staff pick out particular cars. The booking system does place people in order on the waiting list and in the event of cancelled bookings the system permits people to move forward and off the stand-by list.

**ITEM 7: Oban Rail Service Enhancement Economic Appraisal Update**  
Ranald Robertson presented the briefing note and background to HITRANS case for five return journeys to operate each day between Glasgow and Oban.  
The Chair responded that it would make huge difference to the area if this should get the go ahead, especially to the Islanders.

**ITEM 8: AOCB**

**8.1:** Ranald Robertson provided a presentation on Cearcaill na Gaidhlig  
Ranald advised that the project sponsors are investigating ERDF funding opportunities for the future development and expansion of the project.

**8.2:** Phil Preston advised the group that CalMac were to hold 'Meet the Manager' events during Mod week in Oban, with a bigger presence this year as senior managers will be available

**8.3:** The Chair asked if left luggage facilities could be provided at Oban terminal.

Phil agreed to come back and respond directly with an answer to this as it had been prevented by TRANSEC.

**ITEM 9: Date of Next Meeting**  
It was agreed date of next meeting to be held week beginning 1st February 2009, Islay with venue to be confirmed.