



**Minute of Clyde Ferry Users Group Meeting (FUG)
(Arran, Bute, Cumbrae, Cowal, Dunoon)**

**Held at the Glynhill Hotel, Renfrew
12 February 2010**

IN ATTENDANCE

STRATHCLYDE PARTNERSHIP FOR TRANSPORT (SPT)

Mr Bryan Tennant
Mr Gordon Dickson

HITRANS

Mr Randal Robertson

INVERCLYDE COUNCIL

Councillor George White (Chair)

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Councillor Margie Currie

ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL

Councillor Bruce Marshall
Mr Jonathan Welch

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT (FERRIES DIVISION)

Mr Graham Laidlaw

CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE (CalMac)

Mr David Cannon
Mr Brian Fulton
Mr Robbie Brown

FIRST SCOTRAIL

Mr Des Bradley

CONFEDERATION OF PASSENGER TRANSPORT (CPT)

Mr Mike Dean

APOLOGIES: Councillor Duncan MacIntyre
Councillor Davie McLachlan
Councillor Len Scoullar
Councillor Alex Gallagher
Councillor Ronnie Ahlfeld
Mr Lawrie Sinclair
Mrs Fay Harris
Mr Guy Platten
Ms Moya Ingram
Mr Donald Bannatyne

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

In the absence of SPT/HITRANS Chair, George White was asked to step in and Chair the meeting.

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.

Action: The Group asked that the Issue of Chair to be taken back to the RTPs with a strong view that this issue needs to be resolved permanently and that if necessary the terms of reference should be changed to enable consistent chairing of this meeting as per the original proposal of the Group when it first met.

ITEM 1: Minute of Meeting

The minute of the previous meeting was approved

ITEM 2: Matters Arising

Item 1: Substitute Cover for North Ayrshire Council raised under Welcome and Introductions: Ranald Robertson advised the group he is in discussions with Margie Currie regarding substitute cover or whether North Ayrshire Council would wish to send an officer to attend the meetings in support of members.

ITEM 3: Dunoon – Gourock EC Findings and Tender

Ranald Robertson advised the group that it had been hoped to have a meeting early in December 2009 to discuss the findings of the European Commission's investigation into Scotland's ferry service procurement but it was felt that while the investigation concluded on October 27th there was a time lag in the provision of detailed information and it was better to postpone the meeting to allow more information to be gathered on the implications of the ruling on the future service provision on the Gourock to Dunoon town centre to town centre route.

Ranald introduced Graham Laidlaw, Scottish Government Ferries Division, who had kindly agreed to attend the meeting to update members on the latest position regarding the Gourock to Dunoon service.

Graham Laidlaw updated members on the progress since the EC ruling on Scottish Government ferry procurement and some detail on what was involved in this. Invitations to tender and a PQQ have been issued through Public Contracts Scotland for a return date of 15th February. The aim is to have a contract in place by autumn 2010 if all goes well in terms of submissions. Tenders will be out by the end of March or thereabouts.

Graham explained that the cabotage regulations are how the EU manages the case for permitting the giving of aid to support a transport service. The permission applied to Gourock – Dunoon is a passenger subsidy.

Graham advised that the choice of vessel will be left to the tenderer but CMAL have been asked to explore the availability for vessels available to lease. CMAL have shown that there is available tonnage presently.

Graham explained that the existing vessels operated by CalMac are aging which will be an issue in the long term. The contract length will be six years which will take the existing fleet up to 40 years old.

David Cannon confirmed that CalMac are expressing an interest and completing the PQQ.

A general Group discussion followed on tender process and the implications for those served by the route.

The Chair thanked Graham and invited him to attend the next meeting.

Graham responded that it may not be him who attends, but there would be representation from the Ferries Division.

ITEM 4: Caledonian MacBrayne Operational Update

Brian Fulton and Robbie Brown reported on routes within their area and provided the group with performance reports for the period 1st August 2009 to end of January 2010.

Brian and Robbie each presented their area report providing information on reliability and punctuality of routes covered within the group.

Brian Fulton advised the group he would also provide performance reports on behalf of Fay Harris. Brian added that:

Portavadie: carryings increase is felt to mainly be due to new marina facility

Bute: Community Council have held meetings on the island and mainland which he attended, resulting in new Wemyss Bay timetable to be put to the Community Council and implemented if approved. Timetable will provide better integration with West Coast Motros services on the island.

Rothsay: facilities currently being upgraded

Cumbræ: The Isle of Cumbræ has commissioned consultants to promote Cumbræ and Robbie has attended meetings related to this activity.

Arran: Robbie has been working with hotels over the winter to increase visitor opportunities.

Margie Currie commented she had no issues to raise and that this is an indication that people are satisfied with the service they have. Margie noted that residents of Arran are particularly pleased that they will have the MV Saturn back this summer.

ITEM 5: Public Transport Operational Update

Des Bradley reported First ScotRail performance was badly affected by the bad weather over Christmas and New Year period but this has now improved.

Des advised the group of strike action planned for 20th February and 13th March which will have no impact on most routes relevant to this group.

Des reported that platform works were scheduled to take place at Glasgow Central during February/March. Des will check if any changes might affect timetables on Dunoon/Wemyss Bay service and report back to Brian Fulton.

The Chair advised Des that Inverclyde Council are looking into moving waste by freight, and will be looking for line capacity for this.

Margie Currie commented she appreciates the hourly service to Ardrossan harbour which will mean lesser wait in the summer.

Brian Tennant reported to the group on SPT's study looking at options for fast waterborne transport on the Clyde. This is the subject of a report being undertaken on behalf of SPT by MVA.

Mike Dean reported that citylink don't provide services in this area but having checked with representatives of McGills there are no planned changes up to October this year.

ITEM 6:**AOCB**

Chair put to Graham Laidlaw that the Minister spoke of a 'wish' for a Northern Ireland – Campbeltown service and that this could be bolstered by including an additional route from Ardrossan-Campbeltown?

Graham responded that he would take this back and report back at a future meeting but funding is an issue at the moment. The Minister is still keen for the Kintyre to Northern Ireland service to be realised as the area is undergoing regeneration presently with the focus being renewable energy and tourism.

Margie supported comments, adding that locals are very keen for this, that there are discussions taking place and there enough space and capacity at Ardrossan harbour to service a new route.

Bruce added his support, commenting that Campbeltown is well placed for regeneration, but agreed we are living in difficult financial times.

Robbie Brown advised the group that Lawrie Sinclair is retiring end of June.

ITEM 7:**Date of Next Meeting**

25th June, Isle of Arran