



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

**Held at the McCaig Suite, Regent Hotel, Oban,  
10:30am on 13 March 2012**

**IN ATTENDANCE**

**HITRANS**

Councillor Duncan MacIntyre (Chairperson)  
Mr Ranald Robertson (RR)  
Mrs Katy Cunningham (KC)

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

Mr Jonathan Welch (JW)  
Sandy Taggart (ST)

**COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR**

Councillor Gerry McLeod (GMcL)

**HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

Mr Sam MacNaughton (SMcN)

**CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE (CaIMac)**

Mr Gary Robertson (GR)  
Mr David Cannon (DC)

**CALEDONIAN MARITIME ASSETS LTD (CMAL)**

Mr Guy Platton (GP)

**CONFEDERATION OF TRANSPORT (CPT)**

Mr Mike Dean (MD)

**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (MID ARGYLL)**

Mrs Jane MacLeod (JMCL)

**SCOTTISH CROFTING FEDERATION/NFUS**

Mr Billy Neilson (BN)

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**APOLOGIES:**

Mr Desmond Bradley  
Mr Andrew Flockhart  
Ms Cheryl Murrie

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## **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**

Cllr MacIntyre welcomed members to the meeting.

### **ITEM 1: Minute of Previous Meeting**

The minute of 22 November 2011 was approved as a correct reflection of the meeting

### **ITEM 2: Scottish Government Consultation on the Draft Ferries Plan**

Ranald Robertson introduced and presented a PowerPoint presentation, providing background on the draft ferries plan.

#### **Funding**

SMcN – pages 4&5, this whole section covering financial difficulties. Government will be constrained, as funding will not be there.

Should look to increase footfall, encourage tourism. There is no mention of tourists in this document

RR – will look to include this in the Argyll FUG consultation response and the HITRANS response.

GP –looks forward to a clear categorising statement to know what funding will actually be available. CMAL have been looking at other sources of finance.

CMAL response will include ports/harbours best value. Balance, more efficient shipping with economies of scale, better value if more than one vessel ordered as shipyards are looking for multiple orders.

Chair – funding balance has got to be key for success. People have to ask what is realistic. Look at fleet, age of fleet, then look at piers and harbours. Government is unable to borrow; RTPS can borrow but this counts towards government borrowing figures.

SMcN - STAG is missing, STAG will put things in place. if Guy is looking to spend money on ports and harbours this will provide jobs and input into economies. Alex McNeill recognises this.

Chair – island communities are dependent on tourism. Focus on economic and social impact. Must look where to put money to generate economies and growth.

SMcN – there are wider issues that need, much wider. Through routes, wouldn't be considered. Hopscotch tickets, round trips etc. This is a concern.

RR – will look to include this in response

Chair – reality is to get mechanism for funding, this would supported across the board

GR – difficulty, when you invest, revenue cost which drives the subsidy, level of subsidy CHF's 55%, how to invest when no assets,

general trend is to bring fares down. When you create a ruler, this creates advantages and disadvantages. People feedback at meetings, rulers miss fundamental issues that are important to communities.

GP asked can you have all this investment and these fares. Ships and ports will fail if no adequate investment. 20 years ago subsidy was 20%, now its 55% which will keep going up and up.

Chair –should request next CHFS tender make it a requirement for ferry operators to work with other transport providers.

### **Responsibilities**

RR – Scottish Government could be responsible for all lifeline ferry services in Scotland,

GP – there needs to be a balance, all or nothing with network of ports. Good and bad, no cherry picking.

### **Ferries Regulator**

RR asked members what role they would see for a regulator and was this a role that requires a Regulator.

SMCN – would regulator cover all ferries, not just tendered services?

Chair – Perhaps the role of Ferry User Groups could be reviewed to strengthen how these groups can tackle issues that matter to communities and take these up with Government?

GMcL – all Ferry User Groups should email to Randal what role regulator can do, if there should be one at all.

### **Environment**

GP – should focus on journey times, not vessel speeds. Can make fuel economies on reducing by 1knot, this would cut fuel emissions and running costs.

RR - Environmental report accompanies the draft ferries plan.

GP – people want more information. Small changes, safety enhancements, to have safety information on video to allow people who can't hear see safety information. At meetings this is what we found people didn't require massive amounts of financial investments, but information, time and again.

### **Ferry Services in Argyll FUG Area**

RR – asked from those from this group to provide him with feedback to feed into response.

SMcN – Highland Council very concerned on Ardnarmurchan, and would like this service to continue, any reduction will have a huge impact on the community.

JMcL – more frequent service is what she would like to see.

Chair – how to promote CalMac routes with visit Scotland Everyone should be working together to promote destinations. Suggest Argyll and Bute Council and CalMac meet to work together on how to take this forward.

DC – happy to work with communities with specific marketing, example Sleat community, a great success

RR – should Arran and Sleat success be highlighted

RR – noted the proposal to scale down operations to and from Port Ellon and sought views on this.

JW – if any change happens it is essential to ensure if vessel departs from Port Ellon it returns there to avoid cars being stranded.

Gigha - currently constructing berthing facility at Ardmish

JW – communities supportive but do not want a reduced service

Campbeltown – Mainland i.e. Troon

GP – two ships going to Arran would allow one to travel to Campbeltown in the middle of the day.

DC – community very supportive, lots going on at Campbeltown at the moment

Chair – serious landslip can cut off the community and looking for an alternative access to the mainland makes this service look attractive.

RR – suggested the suggestion of no changes/investment needed on the Argyll and Bute Council ferry routes does not seem to reflect the views of islanders particularly the residents of Luing.

ST– council would want further debate on Easdale –Kerrera and fixed links options.

### **Hebrides services**

RR explained that the report sees routes defined by Scottish Government as secondary and primary. All routes are to be retained. Barra community does not receive a service that meets community needs and hopes to increase this as funding becomes available.

ST – asked about prioritising on primary/secondary classifications is this important?

GP – very important distinction, secondary would reduced ahead of primary

ST – Argyll and Bute Council response will be confirming this is principle route, and the only direct route

### **Argyll/Clyde area**

GP – two vessels would imply they could carry hazardous substances. **Claonaig – Lochranza** review should not be taken as

reduced, but can't speak for Scottish Government. RR – this needs to be clarified.

**Colintraive – Rhubodach**

JW – community not supportive and would rather see extending to 9pm. CalMac suggested extending Friday/Saturday as wouldn't need a new crew but not over the week as too expensive.

RR – will speak to Jonathon at end of review period for response.

**Action:** Ranald to format this Group's response and circulate to the group for approval

**ITEM 3:**

**Date of Next Meeting**

No date set for next meeting