



THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

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

**Held at the Tontine Hotel, Greenock
11:00 on 27 March 2013**

IN ATTENDANCE

HITRANS

Mr Ranald Robertson
Mrs Katy Cunningham

INVERCLYDE COUNCIL

Councillor Christopher McEleny

ARGYLL & BUTE COUNCIL

Councillor Robert MacIntyre
Mr Martin Gorringe

TRANSPORT SCOTLAND (Ferries Division)

Mr Brian Gordon

CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE (CalMac)

Mr Martin Dorchester
Mr David Cannon
Mr Robbie Brown

NATIONAL FARMERS UNION (NFU)

Mr Ninian McAllister

APOLOGIES:

Councillor John Semple
Councillor Ronnie Ahlfeld
Councillor John Bruce
Councillor Denis McKenna
Mr Andrew Flockhart
Mr Mike Dean
Mr Bruce Kiloh
Mr Allan Scott

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting

ITEM 1: Minute of Meeting

The minute of meeting of 28 November 2012 was approved as a correct reflection of the meeting

ITEM 2: Matters Arising

No items raised.

ITEM 3: Scottish Government Ferries Plan

Brian Gordon advised the group he has been with Transport Scotland Ferries Division only a short time and will try to answer all questions but happy take back any he is unable to answer.

Brian circulated a handout on the plan to the group and provided background, summary, and overview and of the Ferries Plan, highlighting impacts and enhancements to services within this group's area.

Brian outlined results by community

- enhanced timetables.
- funding to ensure strong competition and longer contract periods.
- working with Local Authorities to consider transfer of responsibility for lifeline ferry services, port and harbours.
- Lochranza service to be retained at current levels
- strengthening of Campbeltown service subject to outcome of pilot
- Bute upgrade considered expensive this time but will be considered for next CHFS contract period.
- Colintrave - Rhubodach- not consider improvements to extent suggested
- Cumbrae – ongoing engagement with communities on Cumbrae
- Fares – RET Rolled out to Islay, Colonsay and Gigha
- Remaining Clyde and West Coast islands services within term of this parliament.
- Independent figures used for formula and this will update each year in line with cost of travel and will be competitive.
- Commercial Vehicles – further review of CV fares policy to deliver new fares structure. A new working group to be set up to support this review and is likely to include HITRANS, HIE, for transitional arrangements and study to assess impact.

Cllr Robert MacIntyre advised that a Bute delegation at recent meeting pointed out to the Minister a lack of date for RET roll out for Bute beyond the original statement that this will happen in the lifetime of this government. When RET in place return journey will reduce cost to routes within RET but not the this route and this seems unfair. Councillor MacIntyre suggests if insufficient finance, a discount to both Arran and Bute split 50/50 could be a better solution.

Brian Gordon was aware of this meeting. Transport Scotland will look carefully at fare structures on routes to Bute and the point is valid.

Ninian McAllister added his opinion that it is unfair that regular users are not getting benefits of reduction for multi-journeys and will now pay the same as those who use the service less frequently. Bute is different from other islands that don't have such a good output and Bute will be disadvantaged.

ITEM 4: Milk Transportation from Bute Creamery

Cllr Robert MacIntyre - not much to report at this time.

Action – It was agreed that updates would be provided to the group in the future where there is news and it was not necessary to keep this as a standing item on the Clyde FUG agenda.

ITEM 5: Caledonian MacBrayne Operational Update

Regional Manager Robbie Brown reported on routes within the area and provided the group with performance reports providing information on reliability and punctuality of routes covered within the group area for the period October 2012 to March 2013.

Robbie added living in Arran he can see weather has had a huge impact on the communities. Robbie has never experienced anything like this in his lifetime, the situation was horrendous and life threatening. CalMac stepped in and helped the communities as much as they could. Hotels are busy at the moment with Scottish power workers who need to be there to repair lines.

Ardrossan – Brodick – very busy over the winter months a lot of hard work has been put in by businesses. House building, roads maintenance have all contributed to keeping sailings busy. Arran is now an all year round destination.

Martin Dorchester added that Arran has a good marketing centre and this has produced good results. Bute has a lot to offer. CFL are keen to work with Bute tourism representatives and share their marketing experience.

Tarbert – Lochranza – busy, Robbie continues to work with communities,

Weymss Bay – Rothesay – commercials holding their own

Colintraive – Rhubodach will hopefully have a larger vessel on the route at some point in the future.

Largs – Cumbrae there is also an aspiration for increased tonnage at some point. Currently discussing extra proposed sailing with the community.

ITEM 6: Public Transport Operational Update

No update provided

ITEM 7: AOCB

Cllr Robert MacIntyre asked on behalf of Cllr Marshall how many Argyll Ferries journeys have been disrupted over the winter.

David Cannon – performance reports and statistics published monthly on boats and on the website. There are 140 sailings a day, if performance stats show 47 cancelled this could be on one day only.