

Argyll Lochaber, Skye and Small Isles Ferry Stakeholder Group

Tuesday 1st June 2021 MS Teams Meeting

Present:

Cllr Allan Henderson, Highland Council (Chair)
Cllr Elaine Robertson, Argyll and Bute Council
Cllr Denis Rixson, Highland Council
Cllr Uisdean Robertson, CNES
Joe Reade, Mull and Iona Ferry Committee
Caroline Connelly, Transport Scotland
Richard Hadfield, Transport Scotland
Laurence Kenney, Transport Scotland
Paul Linhart-MacAskill, Transport Scotland
Paul Flynn, Transport Scotland
Liam Seaton, Transport Scotland
Alison Wills, Transport Scotland
Richard Holburn, Transport Scotland
Gerard McGoogan, Tiree Community Council
Scott Reid, Argyll and Bute Council
Kevin Hobbs, CMAL
Brian Fulton, CMAL
Don McKillop, Calmac Ferries Limited (CFL)
Robert Morrison, Calmac Ferries Limited (CFL)
Fiona Galbraith, Calmac Ferries Limited (CFL)
Finlay MacRae, Calmac Ferries Limited (CFL)
Rob Ware, Sleat Transport Forum
John Holliday, Tiree Community Council
Nicky Sobey, HIE
Scott Dingwall, HIE
Ker Corbett, Scottish Citylink
David Summers, Highland Council
Murray Bain, Highland Council
Ranald Robertson, HITRANS
Neil MacRae, HITRANS
Sarah Compton-Bishop, HITRANS

Apologies: Billy Neilson, Farming Representative
Gary Adams, Kerrera Ferry Committee
Cllr Iain MacNeil, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Cllr Mary Jean Devon, Argyll and Bute Council

Due to IT difficulties for Cllr Devon the meeting was chaired by Cllr Henderson.

1. Minute of meeting - 1 December 2020

The minute was approved as an accurate reflection of the meeting discussion.

2. Matters Arising

An action tracker was circulated in the meeting pack which updated on actions from the previous meeting.

3. Calmac update

Finlay MacRae provided the commercial and marketing update on behalf of Calmac Ferries Limited. This touched on work with DMOs and supportive messaging on the Camping, Caravan and Motorhome island access.

Finlay MacRae updated on CHFS contract commitments.

Finlay MacRae advised that the consultation for Summer 2022 timetable is moving towards normal practice. Requests have been issued to consulted bodies.

Members noted that the consultation should be completed to allow escalation through FSG. Members also asked for the list of consulted bodies to be shared so there is awareness of who is being asked to comment on behalf of stakeholders.

David Summers reported that bus contracts in THC area were being extended for 12 months working to a November 21 deadline for new contracts commencing April 22.

Action – CFL will share the list of consulted bodies.

Finlay MacRae confirmed that the Socio-Economic report is delayed to 2022 but that an update would be provided December meeting.

Action – CFL to update on scope and timescales for socio-economic report next FSG.

Don McKillop and Finlay MacRae provided the regional route update for the Argyll, Lochaber and Skye FSG area routes.

The route summary is reproduced below:

Variance on Previous Period

Route Name	Passengers	Cars	Coaches	CVs
Fionnphort - Iona	-54%	-23%		-36%
Fishnish - Lochaline	0%	15%	9%	82%
Gallanach - Kerrera	-12%	33%		
Kennacraig -Islay/C'say/Oban	-71%	-60%	-100%	-40%
Mallaig - Armadale	-79%	-73%	-100%	-48%
Mallaig - Eigg/Muck/Rum/Canna	-63%	10%		4%
Oban - Castlebay/Lochboisdale	-63%	-49%		-1%
Oban - Coll/Tiree	-42%	-15%	-100%	24%
Oban - Colonsay	-32%	-10%	0%	114%
Oban - Craignure	-58%	-46%	-84%	4%
Oban - Lismore	-13%	18%	50%	32%
Sconser - Raasay	-42%	-30%	-100%	26%
Tobermory - Kilchoan	-56%	-46%	-100%	-84%
Uig - Tarbert/Lochmaddy	-51%	-42%	-63%	13%

Periods

Current Period: 19 October 2020 to 25 March 2021

Previous Period: 19 October 2019 to 25 March 2020

The follow up discussion touched on:

Joe Reade asked if CFL could produce a long term trend on cancellations events with detail on where weather is the determining factor on the cancellation.

Action – CFL agreed to look at presenting cancellation data over a long term period by cause.

Uisdean Robertson asked if there has been any progress on sharing the dry docking schedule with stakeholders and whether there will be any change to the approach to move away from overlapping major vessel docking periods. Robert Morrison confirmed that it was intended not to remove two major vessels from any geographic area.

Action – CFL to update on plans to share dry dock scheduling in advance.

Rob Ware asked for an update on the Docking issues at Muck and Eigg. Finlay MacRae confirmed that CFL are working with Highland Council (Harbour Authority) on both these issues. Dredging is being looked at for Eigg as is removing a rock outcrop.

Cllr Henderson asked if there is any update on reducing the physical distancing requirements on vessels. Finlay MacRae confirmed this is a network wide concern. There is no update on Government guidelines which are currently under review.

Laurence Kenney confirmed that the Scottish Government Review of Physical Distancing has been announced by the First Minister and it is understood that an announcement on the detail will be made soon. Robert Morrison confirmed that consideration of the impacts of any changes was already underway.

4. Ar Turas / New Booking System

Finlay MacRae reported that the activity around Ar Turas has continued and e-DEA SpA have been appointed to deliver the booking system. They are an Italian based provider who have provided systems to ferry companies around the globe. End user testing continues and the planned go live for the system is February 2022 and will be fully live for Summer 2022. The new system will be a much more versatile and user friendly process.

5. CnES Strategic Direction Proposal

Cllr Uisdean Robertson presented the report that has been produced by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar to find a way forward on the current challenging situation with regard to fleet resilience and network capacity.

6. Transport Scotland Update including Island Connectivity Plans

Richard Hadfield presented the Transport Scotland update. The presentation covered:

- Island Connectivity Plans
 - NTS 2 Delivery Plan / Infrastructure Investment Plan
 - Routes and Services Methodology

- Community Needs Assessment (Refresh RSM Dependencies + STAG Based)
- Market Assessment
- Long-term Plan and Investment Programme
 - Details in meeting paper.
 - Strategic context
 - ICP as long term plan
 - VRDP 2020 report – interim 10 year programme for CHFS
 - Asset life = key drive of investment / prioritisation
 - Investment Specification

There followed a group discussion on this item including the following issues;

Joe Reade highlighted that 2024 plans for Mull were dependent on a pier extension but what assessment of options with existing pier.

Fares review as part of the ICP.

Cllr Rixon highlighted importance of anticipating future as well as current demand and called for a more dynamic process.

Murray Bain enquired if review would include ferry services operated by Local Authorities with the potential transfer of responsibilities considered?

Timescales – December 2022 when current Ferries Plan expires.

7. Infrastructure Update

7 (a). CMAL Update

Kevin Hobbs presented the CMAL update that covered:

- Net Zero
- Ferry Replacement Programmes
- Ferguson Marine Port Glasgow
- Port Infrastructure
- Harbours

Brian Fulton requested if information on the Small Vessel Replacement Programme could be circulated to Membership

(b) Argyll and Bute Council Update

No update was presented.

8. Calmac Communities Board Update

David Heriot provided an update on behalf of the Ferries Community Board – Clyde and Hebrides which is the new name of the CCB. The FCB met on Friday and part of the session included a very positive meeting with the new Transport Minister Graeme Dey MSP. There were separate discussions with Calmac MD, CMAL CEO and

TS senior officials. There are two vacancies on the FCB which will be advertised shortly.

Members enquired if the change from CCB to FCB (C&H) is simply a name change and will funding and secretariat still be provided by CalMac with appointments to the Board being made by Calmac or would the Board operate completely independently with Terms of Reference revised accordingly?

David Heriot responded to say that the Board would be independent of Calmac but these other points would be subject to further consideration.

9. Scottish Islands Passport

Sarah Compton-Bishop presented a report on the Scottish Islands Passport project noting that funding is now secured until the end of 2023 and HITRANS are keen to work with island communities and stakeholders to maximise this opportunity. Below are links to download the new Scottish Islands Passport App.

The link for Google play is

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.whereverly.sip.android>

And for iOS it is <https://apps.apple.com/pk/app/scottish-islandspassport/id1530092084>

Or <https://islands.scot/the-passport/> which has links to both.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was agreed as **Tuesday 7th December 2021 at 1300.**