



**Argyll, Lochaber, Skye, and Small Isles Ferry Stakeholder Group
(Oban, Colonsay, Mull, Iona, Lismore, Kerrera, South Uist, Barra, Skye, Small
Isles, Raasay, Coll & Tiree)**

Minute of Meeting held at Corran Halls, Oban and through Microsoft Teams on **19th June 2023 at 14:00**

IN ATTENDANCE	<p>ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL Cllr Andrew Kain</p> <p>THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL Cllr Kate Willis Cllr Drew Millar Cllr Sarah Fanet David Summers Murray Bain Tony Usher</p> <p>TRANSPORT SCOTLAND Brian Gordon Douglas Ellis Karen Furey Alison Wills Graham Patrick Caroline Connelly Ewan Swaffield Mark Hoskins</p> <p>COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR Cllr Iain MacNeil</p> <p>CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE LTD (CALMAC) Finlay MacRae Fiona Galbraith</p> <p>FERRIES COMMUNITIES BOARD Kirsty MacFarlane (Coll representative) Angus Campbell</p> <p>CALEDONIAN MARITIME ASSETS LTD. (CMAL) Brian Fulton</p> <p>HITRANS Neil MacRae Ranald Robertson</p>
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	<p>HIE Ian Philip Morag Goodfellow</p> <p>SLEAT TRANSPORT FORUM Rob Ware</p> <p>SMALL ISLES COMMUNITY COUNCIL Camille Dressler</p> <p>MULL AND IONA FERRY COMMITTEE Joe Reade</p> <p>TIREE COMMUNITY COUNCIL Donnie MacInnes</p> <p>COLONSAY FERRY COMMITTEE David Hobhouse</p> <p>SCOTRAIL Desmond Bradley</p> <p>NATIONAL FARMERS UNION (NFU Scotland) Lauren Worrell</p> <p>CROFTING COMMISSION Billy Neilson</p> <p>Claire Jones William Millar Phyl Meyer</p>
APOLOGIES	<p>Cllr Jim Lynch, Argyll and Bute Council Cllr Iain MacLeod, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Kevin Hobbs, CMAL Ker Corbett, Scottish Citylink Scott Reid, Argyll and Bute Council</p>

1	Minute of Meeting held on 11th January 2023	<p>The Minute of Meeting on 11th January 2023 was approved subject to the following edits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donnie MacInnes to be listed as Tiree Community Council • Kate Wills to be listed as Highland Council • Kirsty MacFarlane to be listed as Coll FCB representative
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2	Matters Arising – Action Tracker	Ranald Robertson, HITRANS drew members attention to the action tracker that was circulated in the meeting pack which updated on actions from the previous meeting.																																																																																					
3	Caledonian MacBrayne Operational and Performance Presentation (CFL)	<p>An update was provided by Finlay MacRae with input from Fiona Galbraith covering updates on routes and services which has been hugely challenging in winter 2022/23. The winter maintenance programme is delayed with two major vessels still out of service through the annual maintenance process.</p> <p>The reliability issues are detailed in the table below:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Argyll, Lochaber, Skye and Small Isles Group - FSG Report - Winter 2022/23 24 October 2022 to 30 March 2023</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="635 667 1011 981"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="5">Variance on Previous Period</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Route Name</th> <th>Passengers</th> <th>Cars</th> <th>Coaches</th> <th>CVs</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Fionnphort - Iona</td><td>-5%</td><td>-15%</td><td></td><td>-31%</td></tr> <tr><td>Fishnish - Lochaline</td><td>-8%</td><td>-6%</td><td>0%</td><td>-13%</td></tr> <tr><td>Gallanach - Kerrera</td><td>12%</td><td>11%</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Kennacraig -Islay/C'say/Oban</td><td>-8%</td><td>-16%</td><td></td><td>23%</td></tr> <tr><td>Mallaig - Armadale</td><td>43%</td><td>40%</td><td></td><td>-31%</td></tr> <tr><td>Mallaig - Eigg/Muck/Rum/Canna</td><td>1%</td><td>-6%</td><td></td><td>49%</td></tr> <tr><td>Oban - Castlebay/Lochboisdale</td><td>35%</td><td>23%</td><td>150%</td><td>23%</td></tr> <tr><td>Oban - Coll/Tiree</td><td>3%</td><td>6%</td><td>0%</td><td>-5%</td></tr> <tr><td>Oban - Coll/Tiree/Castlebay</td><td>-100%</td><td>-100%</td><td></td><td>-100%</td></tr> <tr><td>Oban - Colonsay</td><td>2%</td><td>4%</td><td></td><td>25%</td></tr> <tr><td>Oban - Craignure</td><td>5%</td><td>0%</td><td>44%</td><td>-11%</td></tr> <tr><td>Oban - Lismore</td><td>15%</td><td>7%</td><td>0%</td><td>104%</td></tr> <tr><td>Sconser - Raasay</td><td>-9%</td><td>-4%</td><td>-100%</td><td>66%</td></tr> <tr><td>Tobermory - Kilchoan</td><td>17%</td><td>16%</td><td></td><td>1,900%</td></tr> <tr><td>Uig - Tarbert/Lochmaddy</td><td>-39%</td><td>-39%</td><td>-44%</td><td>-12%</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p style="text-align: right; margin-right: 50px;"> Periods Current Period: 24 October 2022 to 30 March 2023 Previous Period: 24 October 2021 to 30 March 2022 </p> <p>Finlay updated that the website will be refreshed as a follow-on form eBooking.</p> <p>Timetable consultation is still to be complete, but it is hoped to have October timetables available to book from July.</p> <p>In terms of ongoing outages, the MV Hebridean Isles is still out of service and MV Finlaggan is in dry dock. MV Alfred is in service on the Arran route.</p> <p>Kirsty MacFarlane asked about the tracking of customer experience referenced in the CFL report noting that while Calmac communication was raised as a concern at the last meeting but there appears to have been no improvement in this. Kirsty suggested that if Calmac included a tracker that details the frequency with which Calmac meet each Community Council, Local Authority, Ferry Committee etc to help measure the quality of engagement communities are having from the operator.</p> <p>Action – Finlay will look to develop the Community Engagement Tracker and in doing so will engage with the Ferries Community Board.</p> <p>Joe Reade noted that MV Hebridean Isles has been out of service for 5 months and asked if there was detail on the issue and likelihood of her return to service.</p> <p>Finlay confirmed that after extensive work on a range of technical areas Calmac are now satisfied they have identified the issue that has caused the MV Heb Isles pitch issue.</p>	Variance on Previous Period					Route Name	Passengers	Cars	Coaches	CVs	Fionnphort - Iona	-5%	-15%		-31%	Fishnish - Lochaline	-8%	-6%	0%	-13%	Gallanach - Kerrera	12%	11%			Kennacraig -Islay/C'say/Oban	-8%	-16%		23%	Mallaig - Armadale	43%	40%		-31%	Mallaig - Eigg/Muck/Rum/Canna	1%	-6%		49%	Oban - Castlebay/Lochboisdale	35%	23%	150%	23%	Oban - Coll/Tiree	3%	6%	0%	-5%	Oban - Coll/Tiree/Castlebay	-100%	-100%		-100%	Oban - Colonsay	2%	4%		25%	Oban - Craignure	5%	0%	44%	-11%	Oban - Lismore	15%	7%	0%	104%	Sconser - Raasay	-9%	-4%	-100%	66%	Tobermory - Kilchoan	17%	16%		1,900%	Uig - Tarbert/Lochmaddy	-39%	-39%	-44%	-12%
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		<p>Joe Reade noted that MIFC are having to do a lot of work to make people aware of the Medical Appointments Protocol and finding that it is often not well understood by Calmac staff. Action is needed to improve awareness and staff understanding of the process.</p> <p>Finlay confirmed that the Medical Appointment Protocol will be reviewed to ensure it works properly for people.</p>
4	CMAL Update	<p>Brian Fulton introduced the report provided within the meeting papers by CMAL drawing attention to several specific updates including:</p> <p>Vessels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MV Loch Frisa has settled in quite well and is performing on the Oban/Craignure route; introduced in June 2022. The vessel was successfully drydocked at Troon in April/May. • Islay vessels 1 & 2 in Cemre are progressing well. • Little Minch vessels 3 & 4 in Cemre were signed on 11th January 2023 and good progress in line with milestones is being achieved. • To note that the 2 additional Little Minch Vessels is an additional £115m which is added to the IIP 21/22 – 25/26 (£580m) taking the 5-year financial commitment to £695m. • The Small Vessel Replacement Programme (SVRP) is progressing well but has slowed a little as there has been a requirement to engage with MCA regarding final approval. The 7 vessels in Phase I will be ready to tender within Q3/Q4 2023 – they will be fully electric with a backup diesel generator which would only be used should there be an overnight power outage. • Once SVRP Phase 1 is underway the attention will turn to Phase 2 which is an additional 3 vessels. • There is parallel work going on regarding SVRP supporting The Highland Council regarding the Corran Ferry replacement vessels. • The Mallaig/Lochboisdale vessel replacement programme is underway with concept design consultants – LMG Marin of Norway have been appointed. This vessel replacement remains unfunded. • The Gourock/Dunoon/Kilcreggan vessel replacement project is still ongoing and is highly complex. A passenger only catamaran solution is being worked on • We have initiated a project to replace the MV Carvoria (Gallanach/Kerrera) as the current vessel is being overwhelmed during the summer period (12 passengers only + 1 car). • We continue to scour the globe regarding 2nd hand tonnage but as stated it is not bearing fruit – the exception being the MV Loch Frisa. • The MV Alfred has been chartered for 9 months. To note that time charters whether for CHFS or NIFS are the responsibility of the operator. <p>Port Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brodick old pier demolition was paused until Spring. • Brodick old terminal building is due to open in early June as a new pharmacy.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We await the report on the wave analysis for the new Brodick pier. • Castlebay linkspan rope replacement took place 21st May with plan to complete by 26th May. The job was completed one day earlier than scheduled. This work was originally planned for March, avoiding Easter and summer busy periods, but the contractor was called to prioritised work at Uig to ensure Uig was able to reopen. • The pier repairs at Colonsay have been put off until September now due to lack of accommodation during summer for the contractors. This does not affect the ferry service as the work is on the north side of the pier. • CMAL have met with North Ayrshire Council and CalMac with regard to the rebuild of Cumbrae Slip and marshalling works, as well as marshalling works at Largs. A joint public meeting is proposed with NAC and CFL in late June, details still to be finalised. There will be a meeting with the Cumbrae Ferry Users Group in advance of the public meeting. • Works to repair the slipway at Gallanach have started on site and are due to be completed within 3 weeks. • Additional wave, wind and navigation studies are being undertaken at Gasay, along with vessel simulations, to ensure that the proposed development at Gasay provides the most resilient port, especially when compared to the current site at Lochboisdale. • Ground investigation works at Gourock recommenced w/c 22nd May for 4 to 6 weeks. • The tender for Port Askaig, Kennacraig and Colonsay port enabling works was issued at the end of April 2023 and is due back in June. This work is to ensure each port is ready for the arrival of the new Islay ferries. • Works at Lochmaddy are due for completion soon with demobilisation taking place in June 2023. CMAL helped to project manage the development on behalf of Western Isles Council. • The traffic management works at Armadale are now complete with the exception of the installation of the bus shelter. • The Port Ellen works are still to go to tender, still awaiting final comments from CFL before progressing. The Outline Business Case for the longer-term Port Ellen redevelopment has been completed and will go to TS for approval. • The shelter at Tiree has been ordered and will be installed soon. • Minor traffic management changes are being made at Lochaline to better manage the flow of traffic and the order of arrival at the port. <p>Ranald Robertson asked for clarification on what is included in the £585M funding commitment and whether this could be flexed to include MV LOTI replacement.</p> <p>Brian expanded on the detail of the NIFS and port infrastructure commitments (Uig, Ardrrossan, SVRP Infrastructure, NIFS freighters etc plus Ar Turas spend).</p>
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5	Ar Turas Update	<p>Finlay MacRae provided the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eBooking went live on 17 May. • This followed a system outage over the previous weekend. • Issues have emerged and the business continues to work through some of these. • Features of the system do work well and are bringing benefits. • Some Features have not performed as expects. • Questions have been asked on why go live took place in the summer season. • Free text aspects of the old Compass system proved complex to fix and left some account holders needing to set up new accounts. • Issues with email sends with issues of emails from CFL going into SPAM / Junk folders. <p>Joe Reade asked if the issues with eBooking have resulted in staff leaving the business and will Commercial bookings go live soon?</p> <p>Finlay confirmed that the introduction of the new system has had an impact with the scale of change being such that some staff have left the business.</p>

		<p>Lauren Worrell asked about issues encountered by NFU members and details on phasing for future aspects of e-Booking.</p> <p>Finlay confirmed that e-DEA are on this issue.</p> <p>Action – Finlay to provide an update on when commercial bookings go live in eBooking in relation to issues raised by Joe Reade and Lauren Worrell.</p> <p>Joe Reade noted that despite asking within the community the MIFC have not identified any local regular user who was included in the consultation on Ar Turas.</p> <p>Action - CFL will look to ensure real world users are included in the test users for future phases of Ar Turas including representatives of key consultees.</p> <p>Donnie MacInnes noted that even with the new system there seems to be issues with the space available to book online continues to underestimate capacity on the vessels suggesting there may be a coordinates issue in the new system.</p> <p>Finlay advised that the migration of old to new system has seen some changes to coordinates and CFL will make minor adjustments to ensure the system properly reflects real world availability.</p> <p>David Hobhouse asked if the system could distinguish between times when sailings are closed rather than when they may be fully booked.</p>
6	<p>Transport Scotland Update - including Islands Connectivity Plan Update and CHFS 3</p>	<p>Brian Gordon, Transport Scotland introduced the Transport Scotland update covering the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since 2007 Scottish Government support for ferry services across CHFS and NIFS has totalled £2bn which covers the annual revenue support of both contracts across 16 years plus capital investment. • The Scottish Government announced investment of £580m and more recently £115m in services, including ports and vessels, to support and improve Scotland’s ferry routes as part of our wider five-year Infrastructure Investment Plan, in February 2021. <p>The report included the following update on the Islands Connectivity Plan including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure of ICP • Strategic ICP Document • Draft long-term plan for Vessels and Ports • Community Needs Assessments • Fares Policy Review • Carbon Reduction Plan

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Onward and Connecting Travel <p>It is anticipated that the majority of development work, engagement, and consultation on the ICP, including its delivery plans for CHFS and NIFS, will be undertaken during 2023 with the completion of some elements of the Plan continuing into 2024.</p> <p>Brian Gordon updated that winter fares remain under review and Transport Scotland will aim to have these confirmed in July or August.</p> <p>Brian Gordon updated on CHFS 3. Noting that Transport Scotland intends to continue to provide a lifeline ferry service to connect island and remote peninsula communities off the West Coast of Scotland with the mainland when the current Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service (CHFS2) contract ends at midnight on 30th September 2024. Preparatory work by TS for the next CHFS contract, (CHFS3) has begun but remains at early stages.</p> <p>There followed a general discussion on points covered within the report.</p> <p>Rob Ware asked if an Organisation Chart for TS ferries Division could be shared. Likewise, for Calmac.</p> <p>Action – Brian Gordon to circulate a TS Ferries Organisation Chart through the Secretariat.</p> <p>Action – Finlay MacRae to circulate a CFL Organisation Chart through the Secretariat.</p> <p>David Summers asked if the Islands Connectivity Plan will maintain the same position on transfer of responsibility for local authority supported ferry services as set out in the Ferries Plan.</p> <p>Brian confirmed that the ICP does take account of Peninsular ferry services and the Ring Binder approach will ensure consideration of issues around local authority services. The Ferries Plan transfer of responsibilities commitment will carry forward into the ICP.</p> <p>Ranald Robertson asked for a bit more detail on CHFS 3 in terms of what work is ongoing as it feels as if there was more detail at this point prior to CHFS 2 and that many stakeholders would consider they have had concerns throughout CHFS2 that could have been better addressed in the contract.</p> <p>Mark Hoskins updated that the report captures the position on CHFS 3, and TS recognise that a key element needs to be stakeholder engagement recognising the importance of the contract to the communities served.</p> <p>Joe Reade and Rob Ware both questioned the credibility of a new CHFS 3 contract being put in place for October 2024.</p> <p>Mark confirmed that contract extension is being looked at as an option within the legal framework in which the contract sits.</p>
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7	Project Neptune Consultation	<p>Angus Campbell, ferries communities board provided an update on the Project Neptune consultation that covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last consultation event was 8 June. • Report submitted to Transport Scotland on 10 June. • Transport Scotland have committed to publishing the report within a month of its submission. • The report captured common themes raised by the communities. • This included different groups. • 9 recommendations have been suggested. • Common themes are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication and Consultation is not working - Need for clear lines on where responsibility lies - Real appetite within islanders to be more involved in the decision making - Lack of trust in current governance - need for bottom-up design of services - need to look at organizational structures - need to look at culture around sharing information - views around a ferries commissioner - views on how island voice features at the top of the decision-making process - anxiety on the need to ensure the right contract is put in place post current NIFS and CHFS - asset ownership is an area of concern. - Need to recognise what a lifeline service is and ensure a common approach to responsibility is taken by Government. • The report will include a note of the discussion at each consultation event.
8	Other Infrastructure Providers Update	<p>8a) Argyll and Bute Council</p> <p>Scott Reid to issue written report that will be circulated within the minute.</p> <p>8b) The Highland Council</p> <p>Tony Usher provided an update on Highland Council ports. The major £60M project at Uig is more than halfway through. The LNG tank has been removed from the design at Uig.</p> <p>Dredging works are scheduled to take place at Eigg. There is also work ongoing on a piece of rock that will be reduced in size totalling 40 cubic metres of bedrock that are being removed.</p> <p>Rob Ware asked about the cause of the extended phase 1 outage.</p> <p>Caroline Connelly confirmed that the severe weather and piling obstructions delayed the phase 1 works. This extended outage was reviewed by the project partners to learn lessons ahead of the October to December 2023 planned phase 2 works.</p>

		<p>Murray Bain provided an update on the Corran Ferry. THC are continuing to have good engagement with CMAL on SVRP with a view to the replacement of the Corran Ferry.</p> <p>MV Corran remains out of service with no official return date but MV Maid of Glencoul is operating a shuttle service of 100 sailing per day.</p> <p>The OBC for the new vessel and infrastructure has progressed and Highland Council will apply to round 3 of the Levelling Up Fund for the new vessel and enabling infrastructure. Subject to budget and approval the new vessel would be in service in 2026/27.</p> <p>8c) Mallaig Harbour Authority</p> <p>No one was able to attend from Mallaig Harbour so the Secretariat will ask for a written update from them to be circulated to the Membership.</p>
9.	Communities Board Update	<p>Kirsty MacFarlane provided the FCB update. Covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FCB met the Cabinet Secretary Ms McAllan recently. • FCB nominally meets four times per annum but have been meeting much more frequently. • FCB reps cover the area from But of Lewis to Arran. • Credit to Angus Campbell for the way he has consulted so extensively on Project Neptune • Main message FCB are trying to get across is the need for communication and consultation to improve. Some islands feel left out in the current system. • Looking forward to further engagement on Community Needs Assessments and ICP. • An extension to CHFS 2 appears likely to be headed towards over 3 years beyond the initial CHFS2 term despite a number of shortcomings in CHFS 2. Keen to work towards beneficial changes that can be made in the short term before CHFS 3. <p>It was agreed to note the Ferries Community Board update.</p>
10	Confirm Pre-agreed Date of Next Meeting	<p>It was agreed that the next meeting of the Argyll, Lochaber, Skye, and Small Isles Ferry Stakeholder Group will be virtual through MS Teams and take place on the 11th December 2023 at 1400</p>