

**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 virtually through Microsoft Teams, on Thursday 5 December 2024 at 10.00am.

IN ATTENDANCE	ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL Cllr Julie McKenzie Cllr Andrew Kain Mr Scott Reid COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR Cllr. Iain A MacNeil THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL Cllr Kate Willis Cllr Drew Millar Mr David Summers Mr Richard Porteous Mr Murray Bain TRANSPORT SCOTLAND Mr Liam Seaton Mr Paul Flynn Mr Mark Hoskins Mr Graham Patrick Ms Isabella Monteith Ms Liz Jack Ms Alison Wills Ms Caitlin Allison Mr Andrew Boyd Mr John Harvey CALMAC FERRIES LIMITED Mr Finlay Macrae Ms Elaine Crossan Mr David Hamill Dr Murray Doyle Mr Terry Williams FERRIES COMMUNITIES BOARD Mr Angus Campbell Ms Kirsty MacFarlane CALEDONIAN MARITIME ASSETS LTD. (CMAL) Ms Blair Moglia Mr Chris Fisher HITRANS Mr Neil MacRae Mr Ranald Robertson Ms Clare Harper MALLAIG HARBOUR
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	Ms Jacqueline McDonell SLEAT COMMUNITY COUNCIL Mr Rob Ware RAASAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL Ms Elizabeth Taggart MULL AND IONA FERRY COMMITTEE Mr Joe Reade COLL COMMUNITY COUNCIL Mr John Angus Morrison TIREE COMMUNITY COUNCIL Mr John MacCaskill COLONSAY FERRY COMMITTEE Mr David Hobhouse NATIONAL FARMERS UNION (NFU Scotland) Lucy Sumsion CONFEDERATION OF PASSENGER TRANSPORT Mr Ker Corbett (Scottish Citylink) Mr Jeff McCormick, West Coast Motors
APOLOGIES	Cllr Calum Munro (Highland Council); Cllr Iain MacLeod (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar); Kevin Hobbs (CMAL); Des Bradley (ScotRail); Laurence Kenney (Transport Scotland); Jane MacLeod (Business Rep); Nicky Sobey (HIE); Des Bradley (ScotRail);

1	Minute of Meeting held on 5 June 2024	The Minute of Meeting of 5 June 2024 was approved subject to minor errors on attendee list being corrected in the final version.
2	Matters Arising – Action Tracker	Following a discussion on the Action Tracker it was agreed that a letter would be sent to the Cabinet Secretary to express dissatisfaction of the Group at the way communities and stakeholders are being consulted on CHFS 3. It was agreed to note the updated Action Tracker.
3	Caledonian MacBrayne Operational, Commercial and Performance Update covering (CFL)	With reference to item 3 of the Minute of Meeting of 5 June 2024, CalMac, submitted an operational report which addressed the following: 1. Marketing 2. Improving Every Journey / Customer Insight and Experience 3. Route Performance 4. Block Booking Terms and Conditions 5. Enhanced Engagement Programme / area Management Structure 6. Vessel Deployments Winter 2024-25 / New Vessels and Cascade Effect 7. Ar Turas / eBooking Update Discussion covered detail on the Customer Insight and Experience process setting out how this programme works. Concerns were noted at the aggregate data shown in the paper pack as it was felt to be distorted by including response from visitor / tourist travellers. Ms Crossan offered to provide a more detailed breakdown of how these processes work. Action – Elaine Crossan to provide a more detailed breakdown of how the Customer Insight processes work as a presentation to the next meeting. Kirsty MacFarlane and David Summers asked for an update on Area Manager recruitment.

		Finlay MacRae confirmed Area Manager arrangements for the Argyll and Highland Areas noting the table in the report would need to be updated. David Hobhouse raised some concerns with the new Calmac website and Elaine Crossan agreed to take these back as feedback to the Website team. David Hobhouse and Rob Ware each expressed concern at the Route Prioritisation Framework and asked if there were any plans to review the Framework. Finlay MacRae advised that the Route Prioritisation Framework will remain under constant review. Members thanked Mr Macrae and Ms Crossan for the update, and it was agreed to note the report.
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4	Transport Scotland Updates	With reference to item 4 of the Minute of Meeting of 5 June, Transport Scotland (TS) submitted a report updating members on the following Initiatives: • Island Connectivity Plan - Consultation Responses - Community Needs Assessments and call for information on any known developments that could be relevant to the routes in the network particularly those routes served through Oban. • Ferry Fares Policy • Onward and Connecting Travel • Low Carbon • Investment in New Vessels • Little Minch Infrastructure Programme Mr Joe Reade noted that no information request has been received by Mull and Iona Ferry Committee and asked that this now be sent to them. Ms Jack agreed to take Mr Reade's email address and follow up on this. Mr Hoskins also provided a verbal update on CHFS3. This included: • Detail on the level of Consultation Responses received following the public engagement exercise. • CHFS 2 Extension and Improvements Required Through the Extension Period • Teckal Governance Work moving forward with the Operator • Competition Markets Authority Subsidy Control • Trade Union Meeting on 30 October • All In Person Stakeholder Event Proposed Early in the New Year Joe Reade asked for an update on Project Neptune. Mark Hoskins confirmed that the priority is CHFS3 and once this is sorted there will be an opportunity to move on to Governance Arrangements. Members thanked Ms Jack and Mr Hoskins for the update.
5	CMAL Update	With reference to item 5 of the Minute of Meeting of 5 June 2024 Blair Moglia of CMAL submitted a report updating members regarding the overall activities and projects underway for both Vessels and Port Infrastructure. The following items were highlighted: • Vessels – including engagement on LOTI Replacement Consultation Event • Port Infrastructure • General update Mr Rob Ware asked if there was any update available on Armadale – Mallaig vessel planning? Ms Moglia and Mark Hoskins committed to providing an update on this to the Group. Action – CMAL / TS to provide an update on the Armadale – Mallaig Vessel Future Planning. Ms Kirsty MacFarlane noted that positive progress has been made on vessel replacement but there remain concerns on the reliance of ageing vessels with MV Hebrides and MV Clansman being relied upon for Barra, Coll and Tiree but the vessels are already 24 and 26 years old. LOTI replacement needs to move forward and new vessels to replace MV Isle of Mull are being looked at but not committed to yet. Members thanked Ms Moglia for the update.

6	Other Ports and Infrastructure Updates	With reference to item 6 of the Minute of Meeting of 5 June 2024, updates were provided as follows: Argyll and Bute Council Scott Reid provided a late report in advance of the meeting and spoke to this at the meeting. The report covered the following items relevant to the Group area: • Oban Harbour Revision Order • Craginure Terminal • Craginure PAS • Iona Breakwater • Fionnphort • Port Askaig Joe Reade noted that a berthing speed restriction has been applied to all vessels with the exception of the 2 core vessels deployed to the route. This risks undermining the service when other vessels such as MV Hebrides are deployed to support the route. This is the result of chronic neglect of the existing Ferry Terminal and while progress is being made towards a new Terminal there needs to be investment in the current Ferry Terminal to ensure it remains fit for purpose. Scott Reid noted Joe's point and underlined that the Council will continue to maintain the existing Terminal. Joe Reade by follow up asked if an Inspection Report has taken place at Craginure and asked if so could this be shared with MIFC. Action – Scott Reid agreed to share the most recent Inspection Report with MIFC. Highland Council Murray Bain updated on progress being made in delivering the Corran Infrastructure Improvement Programme being funded following the re-allocation of Inverness and Highland City Region Deal Funding provided by UK Government Tender due to go out early in 2025 with construction to commence in August 2025 and completion in 2027. In further good news Members will have seen the recent announcement by the Scottish Government of approval of the re-allocation of a further £28m of Inverness and Highland City Region Deal to support the procurement of a new 32 PCU capacity electric ferry which will become the primary vessel on the route with MV Corran retained as the back up vessel. Neil MacRae also offered to circulate the Uig Harbour update produced by Highland Council for the Hebrides FSG for awareness of Members on this Group. Mallaig Port Authority Jacqueline McDonell submitted a report that was circulated with the meeting papers. The report noted the Business Case for the overnight ferry berth had been submitted to Transport Scotland, but following issues with the procurement process, this has been paused until a resolution is implemented. As a result, works will be postponed to Autumn 2025 to minimise any disruption to the Summer Timetable. Wallace Stone continue to work with CMAL on the project to determine the required fendering works for the linkspan berth to accommodate any replacement for the Lord of the Isles, as this will require to be incorporated into the business case for the new vessel. We continue to work with CalMac locally to identify any improvements that can be made in the short term, and this includes consideration of temporary new freight and staff facilities behind the existing port office.
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		Rob Ware addressed concern to Transport Scotland at the lack of funding being provided for the overnight berth project and that consideration be given to ensuring any works be facilitated at a time of year where the Harbour is less congested. Mark Hoskins apologised that no update could be provided but asked Rob Ware to send the question in to the CHFS 3 email account and Mark would ensure a response would be provided. Members thanked all representatives for their updates.
7	Ferries Community Board Update	Mrs Kirsty MacFarlane from the Ferries Communities Board updated members on the activities of the Board since the last meeting. Members thanked Mrs MacFarlane for her update.
10	Confirm Pre-agreed Date of Next Meeting	It was agreed that the next meeting of the Argyll, Lochaber, Skye and Small Isles Ferry Stakeholder Group would take place virtually through MS Teams Thursday 5 June 2025 at 1000.