



CLYDE, KINTYRE, AND ISLANDS FERRY STAKEHOLDER GROUP
(Arran, Bute, Campbeltown, Cumbrae, Colonsay, Islay, Jura, Gigha and Cowal)

Minute of Meeting held virtually through Microsoft Teams, on Tuesday 12 December 2023 at 10.00am.

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| IN ATTENDANCE | <p>ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL Cllr John Armour Cllr. Dougie McFadyen Cllr. Liz McCabe Mr Peter Welsh</p> <p>NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL No attendees</p> <p>INVERCLYDE COUNCIL Cllr Sandra Reynolds</p> <p>TRANSPORT SCOTLAND Mr Ewan Swaffield Mr Brian Gordon Ms Alison Wills Ms Jacqueline Trousdale Mr Mark Hoskins Ms Sophie Mackenzie Ms Claire Jones Mr Dominic Calgie Ms Emma Neary</p> <p>CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE LTD (CALMAC) Mr Finlay Macrae Ms Donna Lockhart Ms Katie Denham</p> <p>CALEDONIAN MARITIME ASSETS LTD. (CMAL) Ms Blair Moglia</p> <p>HITRANS Mr Neil Macrae Mr Ranald Robertson</p> <p>HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS ENTERPRISE (HIE) Ms Lucinda Gray Mr Nicky Sobey</p> <p>SPT Mr Allan Comrie</p> <p>SCOTRAIL No attendee</p> <p>SCOTTISH CITYLINK / CPT Mr Ker Corbett</p> |
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| | <p>COWAL TRANSPORT FORUM Ms Kirstie Reid</p> <p>CAMPBELTOWN FERRY COMMITTEE Ewen MacDonald</p> <p>KILCREGGAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL Rev. Christine Murdoch Mr John Auld</p> <p>BUTE FERRY COMMITTEE Ms Jean Moffat</p> <p>CUMBRAE FERRY COMMITTEE / FERRIES COMMUNITY BOARD Mr Angus D Campbell</p> <p>ISLAY FERRY COMMITTEE / FERRIES COMMUNITY BOARD Mr Jim Porteous</p> <p>ISLAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL Mr Islay MacEachern</p> <p>ARRAN FERRY COMMITTEE / FERRIES COMMUNITY BOARD Mr Bill Calderwood</p> <p>NFU Ms Lauren Worrell</p> <p>WESTERN FERRIES Mr Gordon Ross</p> <p>HAULAGE Mr Jim Martin</p> <p>BUSINESS Mrs Jane MacLeod</p> |
| APOLOGIES | <p>Cllr Robin Currie (Argyll and Bute Council); Mr Scott Reid (Argyll and Bute Council); Cllr Timothy Billings (North Ayrshire Council); Mr David Herriot (Bute Ferry Committee / FCB); Mr John Bannatyne (Gigha Community Council); Ms Lynsey Eckford (Visit Scotland); Kevin Hobbs (CMAL); Des Bradley (ScotRail); Mr Brian Fulton (CMAL); Mr Chris Fisher (CMAL); Mr Islay MacEachern (Islay Community Council); Mrs Diane Burke (CalMac)</p> |

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| 1 | Minute of Meeting held on 19 June 2023 | <p>The Minute of Meeting of 20 June 2023 was approved with the following change:</p> <p>Angus Campbell from Cumbrae Ferry Committee advised that the issue with the tenure of 10 journey tickets was unclear in how it was apportioned and whose responsibility this was to address but it was noted that an update on this was included in the Action Tracker.</p> |
| 2 | Matters Arising – Action Tracker | <p>With reference to item 2 of the Minute of Meeting of 20 June 2023, HITRANS submitted the Action Tracker detailing updates on the action points for all the Ferry Stakeholder Groups.</p> <p>On the issue of Ticket Validity, Finlay MacRae noted that the ticket validity approach is not uncommon in transport but recognised that this has attracted comment. CalMac are looking at this issue though and an update will be provided by Calmac once this consideration of this issue has concluded.</p> |

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| | | <p>Action – Finlay MacRae will provide an update through the Secretariat on the issue of multi journey ticket validity.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the updated Action Tracker.</p> |
| 3 | Caledonian MacBrayne Operational, Commercial and Performance Update covering (CFL) | <p>With reference to item 3 of the Minute of Meeting of 20 June 2023, CalMac, submitted an operational report which addressed the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Marketing 2. Timetable Integration and Consultation Update 3. Ar Turas Update 4. Route updates <p>Marketing</p> <p>The update on the marketing and commercial side of the business stated that CalMac were continuing their Digital Refresh project and were working through areas of integration with the new Ar-Turas e-booking system, development of content, new functionality, and working through Digital Scotland assessments to create a much-improved online experience for all their customers. CalMac continue their repositioning of the CalMac brand, have taken delivery of the new brand guidelines and have sign off from the Court of Lord Lyon to use the proposed changes. MV Loch Frisa is the first vessel to bear the new CalMac lettering font on her hull.</p> <p>The report noted that CalMac are currently running a recruitment campaign to fill over five hundred seasonal vacancies, targeting jobseekers in local communities on the West Coast of Scotland and on the islands CalMac serves.</p> <p>Timetable Integration and Consultation Update</p> <p>Work continues on finalising a launch date for the Summer 2024 timetable, but CalMac are waiting on a fare's decision from Transport Scotland before this can be published. It is hoped that an update will be available before the end of the year.</p> <p>Consultation on the Winter 2024/25 timetable will begin shortly and CalMac are urging all ferry committees and community councils to seek feedback from their local communities in anticipation of this.</p> <p>Ar Turas Reservations System Project Update</p> <p>Following the implementation of the new booking and ticketing system earlier in the year, CalMac experienced a challenging period following its release. Since that time, CalMac have worked in conjunction with the supplier, eDea, to prioritise the issues and develop a plan to resolve these. The Report detailed the various stages of a "release plan" which sought to resolve issues in various stages and also included details of ongoing improvements being made to the system.</p> <p>Ranald Robertson of HITRANS noted that CalMac have agreed to share details of the outstanding issues in relation to the Ar Turas booking system in easier to read format in week commencing 11th December.</p> <p>The report also provided members with a current update on each of the Argyll, Lochaber, Skye and Small Isles Ferry Stakeholder Group routes.</p> <p>Finlay Macrae of CalMac stated that the performance figures for the last period were unavailable but once the figures were available, he would forward them onto HITRANS for onward submission to the rest of the group.</p> <p>Members expressed disappointment that carrying figures have not been shared with the Group and asked for an early update on the position with regard to this information so that it can be shared with the Group.</p> <p>Action – Transport Scotland and CalMac to provide details on why performance and carrying statistics have not been shared and when this omission will be addressed.</p> |

Discussions were held about current issues affecting different ports and ferry services around the area namely:

Deployment of MV Alfred and a request that she be considered for deployment to Islay primarily to support freight traffic movements to / from Islay.

Concerns regarding the Ar Turas system where the handsets deployed to pier operatives appear to struggle to maintain comms signal to the frustration of staff and passengers.

Disappointment that there is no detail on a fix to the issue of Livestock trailers not being available to book online. Finlay Macrae confirmed that this is on the development plan for Ar Turas and is expected to be addressed in 2024.

Action - CFL to address issues relating to online booking of Livestock trailers in 2024 update of new ticketing system

Consideration should be given to increasing the winter timetabled service to Lochranza.

Gordon Ross asked if Calmac have any update on their deliberation on the Community Needs Assessment on the Gourock – Dunoon service.

Action – Finlay MacRae agreed to provide an update on the Community Needs Assessment for the Gourock-Dunoon service after the meeting.

It was noted that when the Gourock – Dunoon service is disrupted buses are provided to offer an alternative connection via Western Ferries. Why is this not the case at other ports including those where Western Ferries can offer an alternative (to access Colintraive – Rhubodach when the Rothesay service is disrupted). Members agreed that provision for foot passengers in the event of disruption should be given greater consideration network wide with the Gourock – Dunoon approach representing the way disruption should be managed across the network as a whole.

Complimentary comment was passed on to CFL on the Islands Crossings television show.

MV Loch Fyne is an inadequate replacement vessel when a Major vessel is out of service.

The hourly service on the Kilcreggan service is welcome as it has regularised travel times, but the last ferry back can be challenging for commuters to return on as the last train departure available is now 1719 which can be difficult to achieve for commuters working outside the city centre.

Train connections at Gourock are worse than they used to be meaning end to end journey times have extended. This is exacerbated by trains using platform 3 rather than platform 1 at Gourock extending the walk for people connecting with ferries.

It was noted that rail connections at Wemyss Bay are also an issue for Bute passengers.

Action – CFL to discuss the integration and rail platform issues at Gourock and Wemyss Bay with ScotRail.

SPT noted that ScotRail have a live consultation on the Inverclyde line timetable at the moment and this will have a fundamental impact on connections to Cowal and Bute and suggested FSG members should feed into this consultation. There followed a discussion about rail connections at Ardrossan and on island bus connections with ferries arriving / departing at Brodick.

Members asked for an update on the Route Prioritisation Matrix that can be shared with Communities so they can interrogate the proposals and provide constructive input that ensures this is fit for purpose.

Action – Calmac noted that the Prioritisation Matrix has been shared and consulted on but the long-term loss of MV Hebridean Isles presented a significant challenge and confirmed that this will be shared with the FSG Membership.

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| | <p>Concerns were raised at Arran Ferry Committee around Route Prioritisation Matrix, Vessel Deployment and Summer Timetable planning that a situation has arisen where islands are being pitted against one another. It is understood that other communities have suggested redeployment of one of the Arran vessels in January without reference to the Arran community.</p> <p>Ewen MacDonald asked if a commitment could be given that a vessel will be deployed to service Campbeltown in Summer 2024.</p> <p>Action – Cal Mac to confirm vessel deployment plans for Summer 2024 to the Campbeltown Ferry Committee.</p> <p>Members thanked Mr Macrae for the update, and it was agreed to note the report.</p> |
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| 4 | Western Ferries Update | <p>Gordon Ross introduced the Western Ferries Report which was circulated in the meeting papers. The report covered:</p> <table><tr><td></td><td>April – Sept 2023 (000's)</td><td>April – Sept 2022 (000's)</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Passengers</td><td>718.3</td><td>683.3</td><td>+5.1%</td></tr><tr><td>Cars</td><td>339.0</td><td>331.5</td><td>+2.3%</td></tr><tr><td>CV and Coaches</td><td>14.7</td><td>14.9</td><td>-1.3%</td></tr><tr><td>Sailings</td><td>16.4</td><td>16.4</td><td>+0.0%</td></tr></table> <p>Over the period, only 10 sailings in total were cancelled for weather and technical reasons.</p> <p>However, an additional 132 sailings were provided over the published timetable.</p> <p>Members noted the Western Ferries update.</p> | | April – Sept 2023 (000's) | April – Sept 2022 (000's) | | Passengers | 718.3 | 683.3 | +5.1% | Cars | 339.0 | 331.5 | +2.3% | CV and Coaches | 14.7 | 14.9 | -1.3% | Sailings | 16.4 | 16.4 | +0.0% |
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| 5 | CMAL Update | <p>With reference to item 4 of the Minute of Meeting of 20 June 2023 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:</p> <p>Vessels: All four ferries being built in Cemre; Turkey are on track and the delivery dates were provided in the Report. All four vessels would be broadly identical and would provide resilience to the fleet.</p> <p>The Small Vessel Replacement Programme (SVRP) is progressing well and the seven vessels in phase 1 will be ready to go to procurement in Q1 2024. They will be fully electric vehicles with a back-up diesel generator which would only be used should there be an overnight power outage.</p> <p>Port Infrastructure: CMAL continue to drive de-carbonisation and recently participated on a panel at the Cross-Party Group for Sustainability. CMAL continue to engage with Trust Ports and the Council Owned Port Facilities as required. The naming competition for the two Islay vessels is closed and votes are now being taken for the two most popular names – MV Isle of Islay and MV Loch Indaal, the naming competition for the two Little Minch vessels has just opened.</p> <p>A meeting is scheduled in December to update the Cumbrae Ferry Users Group on the latest option for Cumbrae Slipway.</p> <p>An Award Letter has been provided to George Leslie Ltd in relation to the port enabling works at Kennacraig, Port Askaig and Colonsay. A pre-construction public engagement session was held at Tarbert (Loch Fyne) Village Hall ahead of works at Kennacraig with sessions planned on Islay and Jura in January 2024 and Colonsay in February 2024.</p> <p>Ground investigation work was completed onsite in Port Ellen w/e 17th November 2023, allowing ferry service operations to recommence on 18th November 2023 as planned. Environmental surveys are complete and appropriate applications have been submitted to the Marine Directorate. The Harbour Revision Order consent process has now commenced.</p> <p>We have received tender returns for the design phase of the Small Vessel Replacement Programme Infrastructure Works from several suppliers. We also</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| | | <p>continue to work with SSEN to provide future supply for these all-electric vessels, a challenge given the remote nature of the locations.</p> <p>The pier repairs at Colonsay have recently progressed well following considerable delays over the past 2 years. Only 2 work activities remain prior to demobilisation, due to be completed by December 2023. This does not affect the ferry service as the work is on the north side of the pier.</p> <p>Further to the last update detailed design work is continuing on the Gourock Redevelopment project and working towards a layout design freeze.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the wider development in relation to future services at the port, works are required at Gourock due to the age and condition of the infrastructure.</p> <p>CMAL continue to engage with Trust Ports and the Council Owned Port Facilities as required. Where there is funding in place from TS to support the development of the Ports then CMAL have an oversight or project manager role – the 3 Ports that this applies to currently are Uig, Lochmaddy and Troon. At Troon CMAL continues to progress the permanent drainage works and the temporary building terminal building has received a temporary completion certificate (valid for 6 months).</p> <p>CMAL have recently met with the Isle of Arran Ferry Committee to discuss a number of local issues at Brodick pier and Claonaig amongst other things.</p> <p>CMAL continue to engage with a variety of Community Groups and would welcome input from the Ferry Stakeholder Groups in where they should focus their attention.</p> <p>Members thanked Ms Moglia for the update.</p> |
| 6 | Transport Scotland Updates | <p>With reference to item 6 of the Minute of Meeting of 19 June 2023, Transport Scotland (TS) submitted a report updating members on the following Initiatives:</p> <p>Island Connectivity Plan:</p> <p>The Report gave details of two consultations that would shortly be published:</p> <p>a) Draft Scottish Government's Strategic Approach to Islands Transport Connectivity – over the past year TS have completed a review of previous public consultations and stakeholder engagement, including feedback received from the recent NZET committee's report, and the delivery of the Ferries Plan and Strategic Approach paper have reflected the key issues/themes that have emerged from the reviews.</p> <p>It was noted that eleven draft themes emerged from the reviews and the Strategic Approach paper set out the vision for ferry services underpinned by four priorities, each of which had three associated outcomes addressing the key issues raised.</p> <p>b) Long Term Plan for Vessels and Ports (LTPVP) – the initial draft of the LTPVP was published late last year, comments were then invited from key stakeholders and this informed additional engagement undertaken over the summer period. The Plan for consultation will be published shortly.</p> <p>As well as focusing on a Community Needs Assessment, TS are also looking at their fares policy, onward and connecting travel (OCT), a low carbon plan, and stakeholder engagement.</p> |

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| | <p>Members noted concerns at the delay in publishing the Community Needs Assessment undertaken by Stantec on the services to Cowal and Kilcreggan.</p> <p>Action – Transport Scotland confirmed that the Stantec report on the Community Needs Assessment for Cowal and Kilchreggan will be shared through the Secretariat as soon as possible following the meeting.</p> <p>Fair Fares Review: TS are progressing the Fair Fares Review to ensure a sustainable and integrated approach to public transport fares. The review is considering both the cost and availability of services and the range of discounts and concessionary schemes which are available to ensure the public transport system is more accessible, available, and affordable for all, with the costs of transport more fairly shared across government, business, and society.</p> <p>The Fair Fares Review will recommend a package of measures which can be considered for implementation from 2024-25 onwards. Decisions on 2024/25 fares will be taken as soon as possible to allow bookings to be opened. It is hoped that recommendations will be made by the end of 2023.</p> <p>TS are also looking at the free inter-island travel within the Western Isles and on internal ferries in Orkney and Shetland for the U22 local residents together with a voucher scheme for travelling to the mainland.</p> <p>One of the recommendations that is likely to come from the Fair Fares Review will be the need to have a Freight Fares Review and the need to consult on this, work will then begin on the consultation which is expected to take place in early 2024. It was discussed that it would be important to ensure that all stakeholders are part of the consultation on this. Ewen Swaffield welcomed early engagement with others in the group to ensure that key stakeholders were part of the consultation process.</p> <p>Ranald Robertson noted that services such as Gigha to Tayinloan share more in common with the Orkney Ferries network in terms of utility travel and suggested these should be considered for the extension of unlimited free Under 22 travel. Other Members added that they would support recognition that ferries should be included on all Under 22 free travel, and this is the position supported by the Ferries Community Board.</p> <p>Action – Ewan Swaffield agreed to include the feedback on short crossings such as to Gigha in the consideration of free Under 22 travel.</p> <p>Bill Calderwood asked if the recommendations of the Freight Fares Review will be implemented through the Fair Fares Review. Transport Scotland confirmed that freight fare options will be considered under the Fares Review.</p> <p>Operational Matters MV Alfred – Extension of Charter An agreement has been reached with Pentland Ferries to extend the charter of MV Alfred for a further six months until the end of July 2024. This will help maintain resilience on the CHFS network during the winter and into the summer months.</p> <p>Route Prioritisation Matrix As requested by Ministers’ following disruption to services earlier this year, CalMac have reviewed their Route Prioritisation Matrix for the major vessel fleet. This has been done with support from the Ferry Community Board, who have had</p> |
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| | | <p>input throughout including the format of the consultation which ran from 28 August to 24 September.</p> <p>Full details of the prioritisation approach were provided in the Report.</p> <p>Members thanked Mr Swaffield for the update.</p> |
| 7 | CHFS 3 | <p>On 16 November 2023, the Transport Minister provided a statement to Parliament regarding the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services contract. The current contract expires on 30 September 2024 and as part of a range of measures designed to improve the ferry services, an exploration of a direct award via a Teckal exemption in accordance with the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015 to CalMac Ferries Ltd is the Scottish Ministers' preferred direction for the new contract.</p> <p>Information on the next steps in this process until the final decision on the contract is made was included and also information on the public consultation which launches in December 2023. Transport Scotland (TS) have also launched a dedicated webpage to provide regular updates.</p> <p>Mark Hoskins of Transport Scotland summarised the Report. TS start a 12-week public consultation on week commencing 18 December 2023. During that time, they are keen to get out to as many islands as possible as part of an engagement exercise. Updates from the consultation and engagement events will be uploaded to the webpage.</p> <p>Action – the consultation link for the CHFS consultation will be shared with the FSG Membership by Transport Scotland through the Secretariat.</p> <p>Members asked for an update on how the Teckal Requirement will be met in relation to a direct award? Transport Scotland explained this will be subject to due diligence and should this exercise find that this is not the best course of action the process will revert to an open tender.</p> <p>Members thanked Mr Hoskins for his update.</p> |
| 8 | Communities Board Update | <p>Mr Angus Campbell from the Ferries Communities Board updated members on the activities of the Board since the last meeting. The Board have had two main Board meetings in the past six months, the first one in Uist in September and one in Clyde on 1 December. The Board have also met with Young Islanders Network, this was successful, and the Board were impressed at how well the youngsters were able to articulate themselves on their needs and requirements from the ferry network.</p> <p>The Board have also met with the new Transport Minister on two occasions. The new CHFS3 contract is the Board's main focus and they have engaged with officials on this over the past few months and will continue to raise the main concerns that came from the recent Project Neptune Consultation.</p> <p>Over the next two weeks the Board have a meeting with the Board of DML and on Wednesday 20 December they will be in the Scottish Parliament to give evidence on the Citizens Petition campaigning for an island presence on the various ferry boards.</p> <p>Members thanked Mr Campbell for his update.</p> |
| 9 | Argyll and Bute Council | <p>Peter Welsh presented the Argyll and Bute Council report covering the following updates relevant to the FSG area:</p> |

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| | Infrastructure Update | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Port Askaig – Marshalling area development for new CalMac vessels. • Campbeltown Harbour • Rothesay Harbour • Dunoon Harbour • Kilcreggan Pier • CAT 5 Water upgrades • Shore side electrical power upgrades for charging capabilities. • Port Marine Safety Code - Marine Safety Management Plan • Argyll & Bute Council Ferry Services <p>Members thanked Mr Welsh for the update.</p> |
| 10 | Confirm Pre-agreed Date of Next Meeting | It was agreed that the next meeting of the Clyde, Kintyre and Islands Isles Ferry Stakeholder Group would take place in SPT, Glasgow (unless Members express a preference for MS Teams only) on Thursday 6 June 2024, time to be agreed. |