



**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 Friday 13 January 2023 at 13.00pm.

<p>IN ATTENDANCE</p>	<p>ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL Cllr. John Armour (Chair) Cllr. Alan Reid Cllr. Dougie McFadzen Cllr. Liz McCabe</p> <p>NORTH Ayrshire Council Cllr Timothy Billings Cllr Alan Hill Ms Claire Fitzsimmons</p> <p>INVERCLYDE COUNCIL Cllr Sandra Reynolds</p> <p>TRANSPORT SCOTLAND Ms Alison Wills Mr Liam Seaton Mr Michael Kean Mr Brian Gordon</p> <p>CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE LTD (CALMAC) Mr Tommy Gore Mr Finlay Macrae Mr Donna Lockhart Mr Andrew MacNair</p> <p>FERRIES COMMUNITIES BOARD Mr Angus Campbell</p> <p>CALEDONIAN MARITIME ASSETS LTD. (CMAL) Mr Brian Fulton Mr Chris Fisher</p> <p>HITRANS Mr Ranald Robertson</p> <p>SPT Mr Allan Comrie</p> <p>SCOTTISH CITYLINK Mr Ker Corbett</p> <p>SCOTRAIL Mr Des Bradley</p> <p>COWAL TRANSPORT FORUM Ms Kirstie Reid</p> <p>KILCREGGAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL Rev. Christine Murdoch</p>
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	<p>Mr Alastair Lamont</p> <p>BUTE FERRY COMMITTEE Ms Jean Moffat</p> <p>CUMBRAE FERRY COMMITTEE Mr Angus Campbell</p> <p>ISLAY FERRY COMMITTEE Mr Jim Porteous</p> <p>ARRAN FERRY COMMITTEE Mr Bill Calderwood</p> <p>NFU Ms Rhianna Montgomery</p> <p>VISIT SCOTLAND Mr Gordon Smith</p> <p>WESTERN FERRIES Mr Gordon Ross</p>
APOLOGIES	<p>Cllr Martin McLuskey, Inverclyde Council; Mr Laurence Kenney (Transport Scotland); Mr Richard Hadfield (Transport Scotland); Mr Kevin Hobbs (CMAL); Mr Alastair Dobson, Arran Economic Group; Cllr Robin Currie, Argyll and Bute Council; Ms Karen Furey, Transport Scotland; Ms Kirstie Reid, Cowal Transport Forum</p>

1	Minute of Meeting held on 21 June 2022	The Minute of Meeting of 21 June 2022 was approved with no changes noted.
2	Matters Arising – Action Tracker	<p>With reference to item 2 of the Minute of Meeting of 21 June 2022, HITRANS submitted the Action Tracker detailing updates on the action points for all the Ferry Stakeholder Groups. There were currently 5 actions for the Clyde, Kintyre and Islands FSG, all of which had been completed.</p> <p>Finlay Macrae of CalMac, provided an update on all the actions.</p> <p>It was agreed:</p> <p>(1) to note the Action Tracker update;</p>
3(a.)	Caledonian MacBrayne Operational, Commercial and Performance Update covering (CFL)	<p>With reference to item 4 of the Minute of Meeting of 15 June 2022, CalMac, submitted an operational and performance report which addressed the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Marketing 2. Timetable Integration and Consultation Update 3. Socio-Economic Report 4. Ar Turas Update 5. Route updates <p>The update on the marketing and commercial side of the business highlighted the Digital Refresh project stating that work continued with the new Ar Turas e-booking system creating a much-improved online experience for customers. Work also continued with the repositioning of the CalMac brand and the delivery of the new brand guidelines which had been signed off from the Court of Lord Lyon.</p>

There was currently a recruitment campaign running to fill over 500 vacancies that was specifically targeting job seekers in the local communities served. James Bailey had been newly appointed as Head of Retail and a key focus would be to work proactively to support local suppliers across the network.

The Report intimated that CFL were currently at 97% CHFS contracts commitments complete.

In reference to timetabling the Report intimated that the summer 2023 timetable would be published in late January and bookings would open on a phased approach with phase 1 covering the period 31 March – 4 June. Winter consultation forms had been issued on 20 December 2022 with a deadline for responses of 1 February 2023.

Further updates were also provided on the CalMac Community Fund, Sponsorship Programme and Youth and Philanthropy Initiative.

A further update was provided on each of the Clyde and Kintyre area routes.

Donna Lockhart of CalMac provided information on outage percentages since June 2022 on the Argyll operational area with explanations given around some of the routes.

Jim Porteous noted that there is a serious capacity issue on the Islay route driven by increasing whisky production. This is impacting throughout the year. A working group is in place looking at deck space utilisation and seeking to build collaboration between operator, local community, business and Council.

Dougie McFadzean expressed concern on the resilience of the Islay service as the Finlaggan will be covering other routes leaving Islay relying on MVs Heb Isles and IOA. These older vessels will be susceptible to technical issues and there is concern in Islay that the island will be left with an unreliable service with insufficient capacity.

Finlay Macrae answered to explain the wider picture in managing the dry dock and Uig closure fleet deployment but assured that in the event of an issue on any route the normal vessel re-deployment measures would apply. Finlay offered to provide more information on what this might involve to Cllr McFadzean.

Action – Finlay Macrae to share detail on the Resilience Response Plan in the event of any vessel failure impacting on Islay.

Angus Campbell (Cumbrae) noted that the data provided to the group is limited particularly as we consider the performance at individual vessel level and how the annual overhaul programme has worked. This group would benefit from more detailed information.

Finlay Macrae agreed that it was time to change, and they are in the process of developing a new programme which would enable figures to be adapted to what is required. The new reporting package can ensure a better set of results to be shared.

Action – Finlay Macrae to meet stakeholders to develop better reporting packs for the FSG meetings.

Jim Porteous asked if there was any update on the request to charter MV Pentalina.

Finlay Macrae noted that the proposal to charter MV Pentalina remains on the table and Brian Gordon confirmed that discussion continues with a view to looking to secure the vessel on charter to add resilience across the network.

Bill Calderwood noted that this year Arran supply chains have been badly affected with only 2 days where service levels were unaffected in January causing a real social and economic impact on Arran's economy.

Action - Finlay Macrae agreed to include information on winter maintenance programming and management as a detailed item in the CFL reporting to the Summer 2023 FSG series.

Timothy Billings raised concern on the very late publishing of the summer timetables and around the knock-on effect for local tourist businesses who had reported that bookings for the summer were down on the previous year. Assurance was given by Brian Gordon that Transport Scotland were in communication with the transport minister, to ensure the timetables for the period end March to 4th June 2023 were released by the end of January 2023 with the issue of the timetable for the rest of the summer months being released as soon as possible after that. Ministers still to agree this.

Timothy Billings asked for an update on the well publicised recruitment that CFL had embarked on for 500 vacancies.

Andrew MacNair confirmed that CFL had a good response to the recent vacancies with recruitment progressing well.

Christine Murdoch noted that the 10 journey ticket book appears to have been reduced from a previous validity period of 12 months. The Kilcreggan service has also been re-timed with the impact being missed rail connections at Gourock. Could both these issues be reviewed? Angus Campbell (Cumbrae) supported the point on 10 journey tickets.

Brian Gordon confirmed that the issue on 10 journey tickets is also impacting in Cumbrae. The Minister is aware of the concern and is keen that this is paused and looked at again. Timetables will be looked at again as part of the Islands Connectivity Plan.

Action – TS / CFL to provide an update on the 10 journey ticket issue.

Jean Moffat noted that the lack of flexibility in how MV Bute and MV Argyle were built only able to operate one route due to their certification / build represents very poor decision making. Vessels should be interoperable. Turnaround times are being extended and the impact of this will be lost sailings on the Rothesay service.

Brian Gordon responded to say the Minister takes these issues seriously. N the standardisation of vessels point this is a long term aim and underpins the Small Vessel Replacement Programme and was a key consideration in moving to more standardisation of the major vessel fleet with the order of the four vessels to the New Islay Ferry design.

Finlay Macrae will ask the Clyde AOM to contact Jen to discuss the detail of the Turnaround time issue.

Bill Calderwood suggested CFL should look to engage through local schools on the opportunity a career with Calmac offers.

Action – Andrew MacNair took an action to take forward how CalMac can engage younger people and schools on the positive and fulfilling career Calmac can offer.

Jim Porteous noted the point about capturing customer satisfaction and touch points but noted that the 85% customer satisfaction rating published by CFL in the annual accounts has been treated with some scepticism in communities including Islay.

Action – Andrew Macnair offered to share the detail of the report that generates the Calmac Satisfaction Rating so FSG members can see the detail of how this is established.

		<p>Angus Campbell (Cumbrae) noted that a new £30M flood defence scheme is to be constructed in Cumbrae and this might require consideration of a 2 vessel service to operate the Cumbrae service in Winter 2023/24 to enable the movement of construction traffic.</p>
3(b.)	Western Ferries Update	<p>Mr Gordon Ross provided an update for Western Ferries highlighting that of 20,000 sailings timetabled only 29 were weather affected. This represents 100% technical reliability.</p> <p>Western Ferries multi journey tickets are valid until used and have no end date.</p> <p>While an amended timetable reporting is included in the CFL papers for Dunoon this represents 5,000 lost sailings to customers in Dunoon which is what the customer truly cares about.</p> <p>For carryings and travel patterns Western Ferries are tracking against 2019 data as this is the pre Covid period. Western Ferries are keen to gain insight in to changed travel behaviours.</p> <p>Gordon noted that the tracking he has done on CFL services shows that Islay is about 13% down on passenger numbers when 2022 is compared to 2019. Similarly, CFL Gourock – Dunoon is about 39% down on 2019.</p> <p>Western Ferries will be applying a fares increase that seeks to balance inflationary pressures with cost of living pressures on customers.</p>
4	Project Neptune Consultation	<p>A Report was submitted providing background information on Project Neptune and stating that the objective of the review was to provide Ministers with strategic framework of options of the CHFS network. The Report provided a diagram showing the overview of the current structure of the CHFS network which was delivered primarily by three parties: Transport Scotland; CMAL; and CFL. The Report further provided an overview of the report structure, benchmarking, options for consideration, preliminary evaluation and community engagement.</p> <p>The Report stated that Ministers had appointed Angus Campbell, Chair of the Ferries Community Board to lead engagement with local communities on Project Neptune to allow communities to provide input to the future direction of the governance and delivery of lifeline ferry services. The Report details the aims of engagement and the scope of the consultation.</p> <p>Angus Campbell, Chair of the Ferries Community Board provided an update on Community Engagement Process and how this would work in practice. From the end of January 2023, he would be conducting face-to-face engagement meetings, starting in Arran, Cumbrae and Bute. The whole network would be covered, and he would spend two days in each location. If required, he could also conduct online meetings, but these would be in addition to the face-to-face option, not in isolation. He was keen to request the need for full encouragement of local communities to put their views across.</p> <p>Angus Campbell opened the floor to questions. Randal Robertson of HITRANS offered the assistance of the Ferry Stakeholder Group to assist with raising awareness and sharing questionnaires from the project with stakeholders. Angus Campbell stated that he had already drafted 5-6 key questions which would form the basis of the community engagement sessions, he was waiting for approval of these from Transport Scotland.</p> <p>Angus Campbell finished by giving a timeline of events for the project. The aim was to have all feedback in by the end of March 2023 with a report being produced by end of April 2023 which would be presented to Scottish Ministers.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the update.</p>

5	Transport Scotland Update/including ICP Update	<p>With reference to item 9 of the Minute of Meeting of 21 June 2022 an update was provided on the Islands Connectivity Plan (ICP). The Report stated that priority had been given to preparing a draft of the Long Term Plan for Vessels and Ports and an advanced draft had been shared with key stakeholders with a view to undertaking a public consultation in early 2023. The working draft was available to view on the Transport Scotland Website. Following additional staff being sought from across Transport Scotland, the refreshed community needs assessments were commenced in late 2022 with the first community needs assessment contract for Cowal and Rosneath being awarded to Stantec. A programme of subsequent community needs assessments was currently being developed to be carried out during 2023.</p> <p>Several discussions on the ICP with key stakeholders had taken place since March 2022 along side engagement with the Ferries Community Board and ferry committees. The Report detailed the following next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to consult on the long term investment plan in early 2023. • With additional resources now in place, work on other components of ICP could be taken forward and accelerated during 2023. • Internal discussion on how to align work on ICP with other major projects: CHFS3 procurement and the follow-up top Project Neptune. <p>Brian Gordon of Transport Scotland gave an overview of the Islands Connectivity Plan and that full public consultation was due to commence in February 2023.</p> <p>Brian Gordon acknowledged the concerns about the late issue of the summer timetables and intimated that every effort was being made to have these online by the end of January. He also spoke about the default increase of fares due in May 2023, which normally would be at the May CPI rate. Transport Scotland were looking at all options to avoid this. Correspondence had been received from the Deputy First Minister about maintaining rail fares in Scotland at 2022 levels. Members commented that there should be no disparity between any mode of public transport when it came to decisions around increasing fares.</p> <p>Gordon Ross asked what progress has been made on the Community Needs Based Assessment and when will the work on this for Gourock – Dunoon and Kilcreggan recommence?</p> <p>Brian advised that the Rosneath and Cowal work is the priority and will be moving forward soon. The procurement of the next CHFS contract is being looked at actively at present. There is a team in place within Transport Scotland taking forward the next CHFS contract.</p> <p>Dougie McFadzean asked if the Islay port infrastructure will be complete for the NIF entering service.</p> <p>Brian Fulton confirmed that a meeting is being held on 26 January that will look at options for Port Ellen although the works are not expected to be complete until 2026. The ports of Kennacraig and Port Askaig will be ready for use by the NIF when they enter service.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the Transport Scotland update.</p>
6	CMAL Update (including New Ferries for the Little Minch)	<p>With reference to item 10 of the Minute of Meeting of 21 June 2022, Brian Fulton gave a verbal update on the submitted report providing an overview of the overall vessel projects and port infrastructure projects, including new initiatives.</p> <p>Brian noted that better progress is now being seen with the build of 801 and 802.</p> <p>Brian updated on progress with the New Islay Ferries. Keel laying for NIF 1 and steel cutting has taken place on NIF 2.</p>

		<p>The contract for two replacement vessels for the Little Minch (formerly Uig triangle) route has been signed. These will be built in Turkey by Cemre and will be largely based on the 1092/1093 vessels currently being built for the Islay routes.</p> <p>There is a public meeting on 2nd February on the SVRP and Members are encouraged to join that webinar. The SVRP is progressing well with the CMAL team working closely with NaValue. The 7 vessels in Phase I will be ready to tender by end of Q1 2023 – they will be fully electric with a back up diesel generator which would only be used should there be an overnight power outage.</p> <p>The Gourock/Dunoon/Kilcreggan vessel replacement project is still ongoing and is highly complex. A passenger only catamaran solution is being worked on – we are trying to find an all-electric solution in order to keep up the momentum regarding decarbonisation.</p> <p>Gourock redevelopment: Contractors have been appointed to carry out the detailed design work. Ground investigation works have started and will continue into January 2023. This has caused some disruption to service and we are working carefully with CFL to keep disruption to a minimum.</p> <p>New Islay vessel port enabling works: Ground investigation and early contractor involvement (ECI) contracts have been awarded. Design review workshops have taken place for shore power, fendering, dredging, port fit interfaces etc. Ground investigation is now underway.</p> <p>Cumbrae slipway rebuild: Designers have been appointed and an initial meeting organised with the Cumbrae Ferry Users Group. There will be wider engagement with the Cumbrae community at a later stage. Ongoing dialogue is continuing within this project from key stakeholders CFL and North Ayrshire Council.</p> <p>A number of questions were asked by Members on the topics covered in the CMAL report.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the CMAL Update.</p>
7	Argyll and Bute Council Update	<p>Argyll and Bute Council officers were not present but Scott Reid had offered to follow up his attendance at the Argyll FSG with a written update and HITRANS will ask that this be extended to cover the issues raised in respect to Port Askaig infrastructure. Once received the Secretariat will share the report with Members.</p> <p>Members expressed disappointment at the lack of officer attendance from Argyll and Bute Council.</p> <p>Action: Ranald Robertson to share an update from Argyll and Bute Council.</p>
8.	SPT Update	<p>Mr Allan Comrie provided an update from SPT. SPT have been working with partner to improve integration at both Largs and Cumbrae. They have also been undertaking similar work at Ardrossan.</p> <p>With regard to the Strathclyde Concessionary Fares Scheme SPT have held fares at 2018 levels and it is hoped that any change to these fares will be mindful of the ongoing cost of living crisis. As yet no decision has been made on changes to these fares.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the SPT Update.</p>
9.	Communities Board Update	<p>With reference to item 12 of the Minute of Meeting of 21 June 2022, Angus Campbell, Chair of the Ferries Community Board provided a verbal update.</p> <p>The Board meets every three months and has close communication with Transport Scotland, CMAL and CalMac. It feeds into the Islands Connectivity Plan (ICP), the Small Vessel Replacement Programme (SVRP) and CalMac. It has an emphasis on the criticality of ferries in island life.</p>

		<p>There are current vacancies on the Board, interviews are being held at the end of January 2023. Four members of the Board are assisting with Project Neptune.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the Communities Board Update.</p>
10.	Scottish Islands Passport Update	<p>Sarah Compton-Bishop, Scottish Islands Passport Project Manager submitted a Report providing an update on the Scottish Islands Passport Project. The Report stated that 'Meet the Makers', the first in the series of islands travelogues had been launched in the run up to Christmas 2022 and the next travelogue 'Shaping Our Islands' was due to be released in Spring 2023. The Report provided updates on the digital app and website stating that there continued to be a growth in app activity with over 11,000 app downloads and nearly 65,000 unique sessions as of October 2022. The Report further provided an update on engagement and partnership working, marketing and funding.</p> <p>Ranald Robertson of HITRANS gave a verbal update. Whilst over 11,000 have downloaded the app, the data has not yet been looked at in any detail.</p> <p>It was agreed to note the Report.</p>
11	Confirm Pre-agreed Date of Next Meeting	<p>It was agreed that the next meeting of the Clyde, Kintyre and Islands Ferry Stakeholder Group would take place on 9th June 2023. The meeting would be a hybrid of in person (in Lochgilphead) and MS Teams.</p>