



**HEBRIDES FERRY STAKEHOLDER GROUP**

(Barra, the Uists, Lewis and Harris)

Minute of Meeting held at the Dark Island Hotel, Balivanich, on 7 June 2018 at 11.00am

<p>IN ATTENDANCE</p>	<p><b>COMHAIRLE NAN EILAN SIAR</b>          Cllr. Uisdean Robertson          Cllr. Paul Steele          Cllr. John Mackay          Cllr. Iain A. Macneil          Cllr. Iain M. MacLeod          Mr Iain Mackinnon          Cllr. Kenny Macleod</p> <p><b>TRANSPORT SCOTLAND</b>          Mr Richard Hadfield          Mr Alan McCabe</p> <p><b>CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE LTD (CALMAC)</b>          Mr Brian Fulton          Mr Finlay MacRae          Mr Robert Morrison          Mr Robbie Drummond          Ms Demi Wylie</p> <p><b>OUTER HEBRIDES TOURISM (OHT)</b>          Mr Robert MacKinnon          Ms Mairi Thompson</p> <p><b>CALEDONIAN MARITIME ASSETS LTD. (CMAL)</b>          Ms Ruth McIntosh</p> <p><b>HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS ENTERPRISE (HIE)</b>          Ms Joanna Peteranna</p> <p><b>HITRANS</b>          Mr Neil MacRae</p> <p><b>ROAD HAULIERS ASSOCIATION</b>          Mr DR MacLeod</p> <p><b>OUTER HEBRIDES COMMERCE GROUP</b>          Ms Gail Robertson</p> <p><b>CALMAC COMMUNITY BOARD</b>          Mr Angus Campbell</p> <p><b>ISLANDS DEAL PROJECT</b>          Mr David Amos</p>
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APOLOGIES	Kevin Hobbs (CMAL) David Summers (Highland Council) Alistair MacIennan (FSB) Alex MacLeod (Stornoway Port Authority) Daniel Lafferty (Transport Scotland) Mr Donald Manford (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar)
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1.	Minute	The Minute of Meeting of 14 December 2017 was <b>approved</b> .
	Matters Arising	<p>In respect of Item 5, Mr Iain Mackinnon advised that he had been in touch with PAPLSC and had invited them to the Western Isles.</p> <p>In respect of Item 6, Mr Uisdean Robertson asked whether workshops would be held in Uist. Mr Neil MacRae said that Transport Scotland had indicated that they would facilitate a workshop in Uist but would confirm.</p> <p>In respect of Item 7, Mr Robert Morrison stated that the Motor homes leaflet was now available. Mr Mackinnon added that there was also an article in 'the 'Events' newspaper.</p> <p>Action – Neil MacRae to ask Transport Scotland to confirm arrangements for a proposed workshop in Uist on the National Transport Strategy.</p>
2.	Appointment of Chair/Vice Chair	<p><b>It was agreed to appoint Mr Uisdean Robertson as Chair of the Hebrides Ferry Stakeholder Group after he was proposed by Cllr Iain M Macleod and seconded by Cllr Kenny Macleod.</b></p> <p><b>It was agreed to appoint Kenny Macleod as the Vice-Chair of the Hebrides Ferry Stakeholder Group after he was proposed by Cllr Uisdean Robertson and seconded by Cllr Iain M Macleod.</b></p> <p><b>Mr Uisdean Robertson took over from Mr Neil MacRae as Chair of the meeting.</b></p>
3.	Communities Board Update from Chair (Angus Campbell)	<p>Mr Angus Campbell provided an update of the work of the Cal Mac Communities Board to date. The closing date for Uist &amp; Benbecula and Bute representatives to apply for a position on the board was tomorrow. Richard Hadfield advised that the Transport Minister was very enthusiastic about the board and gave credit to Cal Mac for establishing it.</p> <p><b>Action – Board to consider holding interviews for new members in their communities. Eg. Uist.</b></p>
4.	Marketing/Commercial Update	<p>Mr Robert Morrison provided an update on the trial block booking release system (B2B). In the two months it had been running it had proved to be relatively successful in releasing an estimated 2880 extra car spaces. Ms Gail Robertson asked why it was based in Gourrock when local ports would often have to deal with bookings in any event. Ms Joanna Peteranna stated that it would be preferable to have those jobs located in the local communities. Ms Robertson also asked why the system was only applied to some haulage operators and not all.</p>

		<p>Mr Morrison explained that it was focused on the larger operators for the purposes of the trial. Mr Iain M. Macleod asked if the released spaces were used. Mr Morrison agreed to obtain this information.</p> <p>Mr Finlay MacRae provided an update on information leaflets being produced by Cal Mac for customers.</p> <p>Mr Robert Mackinnon provided an update on the OHT marketing campaign, discussing growth achieved and targets for the future. The Group also discussed the proposed Islands' Passport scheme. Mr MacKinnon advised there had been progress with communication with Cal Mac however he was unsure as to how OHT could input in respect of longer term planning and objectives.</p> <p>Mr Robbie Drummond reiterated that Cal Mac wished to work with communities to expand the tourist season as had been achieved in Islay and Arran.</p> <p><b>Action – Mr Robert Morrison to take feedback from Ms Gail Robertson back to colleagues involved with the Block Booking pilots. Mr Morrison to find out whether the spaces released under the pilot were used.</b></p>
5.	Ports/Harbours Update	<p><b>Uig/Lochmaddy/Tarbert Infrastructure</b> Ruth McIntosh provided an update on the proposed works at Uig, Lochmaddy and Tarbert.</p> <p><b>Action – It was agreed to note the updates.</b></p> <p><b>Ms Ruth McIntosh to circulate copies of her presentation to Group members.</b></p> <p><b>Mr Iain Mackinnon to provide comments in respect of the impact of the Uig works on the Western Isles in order to influence the decision of Highland Council as to when works would be carried out.</b></p>
6.	Caledonian MacBrayne Operational and Performance Update	<p>Mr Robert Morrison distributed a paper in respect of Cal Mac Operational Performance. Robert Morrison reported slightly higher levels of cancelled sailings in comparison to the same period in the previous year. A growth in passengers and vehicles on Oban to Cattlebay route and in cars on the Lochboisdale to Mallaig routes was reported while there had been reduced passengers and vehicles on both the Uig – Lochmaddy and Tarbert services and the Ullapool to Stornoway service. This was discussed with the Group.</p> <p>Mr Iain M. Macleod stated that it would be helpful to have separate statistics on campervans. Mr Robbie Drummond advised that that was not possible.</p> <p>Mr Uisdean Robertson raised a concern that cancellations contributed to a loss of confidence which in turn would lead to fewer passengers.</p> <p>Ms Gail Robertson stated there were less sailings running on time. The turnaround time was not sufficient. Ms Robertson stated that she had been told every year that it would be looked at.</p> <p>Mr Morrison stated that that was a challenge due to the demanding timetable and crew hours being at capacity.</p> <p>Mr Drummond stated Cal Mac has a timetable it cannot deliver. This</p>

		<p>needs to be looked at and the timetable changed.</p> <p><b>Action</b> – Mr Drummond agreed that problems with the turnaround times this year would be taken into consideration when next year's timetable was being considered.</p>
7.	CHFS Contract Commitments	<p>Mr Neil MacRae provided an overview of the commitments made by Cal Mac in its successful bid to operate the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Services. The Report stated that as part of the £900m contract to operate ferry services on the west coast of Scotland, CalMac identified almost 350 commitments to improve the service, help drive economic growth, improve customer service and make sure the company delivers value for money. Relevant summary tables were included in the Report.</p> <p>Mr Robbie Drummond gave a summary of the difficulties with the current, outmoded booking system. Cal Mac were now waiting for confirmation from Transport Scotland that it would fund the proposals for a new system. Richard Hadfield advised that the matter was not within his remit but that he understood it was currently with the Transport Scotland Investment Board for a decision.</p> <p>In response to a question by Iain Mackinnon, Mr Drummond also advised that there was little that could be done in the meantime to improve on board Wi-Fi. In around 2 years the current managed service contract will have expired and there are likely to be better solutions in the market that could be utilised then.</p> <p><b>Action – Richard Hadfield to ask the relevant section of Transport Scotland for an update on the decision on the booking system.</b></p>
8.	Demand Management	<p>This item was discussed in the context of item 4 above. Richard Hadfield stated that it would be useful for Transport Scotland for OHT to share its findings on visitor profiles.</p> <p>Mr Hadfield added that the onus was on the ferry operator to make proposals in respect of demand management but proposals could come from anywhere. There was a suggestion that prices could be discounted to encourage passengers to use the service at less busy times. Mr Hadfield stated that he had asked this question before and was advised that prices could only be discounted (rather than increased). However no proposals had been put forward as yet.</p> <p>Mr Angus Campbell stated that demand management had been discussed by the Cal Mac Community Board. There was a piece of work to be done as it was an important principal.</p> <p>Ms Joanna Peteranna raised a concern that an inability to meet demand at busy periods could cause bad press for the islands.</p> <p>Ms Gail Robertson stated it was fundamental that Cal Mac had a system to capture statistics on lost bookings before a decision could be made on demand management.</p> <p><b>Action – It was agreed to note the report.</b></p>
9.	Scottish Government Review of Ferry Procurement	<p>Mr Neil MacRae provided an update on the progress of the review being undertaken into procurement processes and state aid requirements for the future funding of Scottish Government ferry services following publication of an Interim Report in December. The Report detailed the Legal Framework, Stakeholder Engagement and Future Operating Models for Ferry Companies Owned by Scottish</p>

		<p>Ministers and Implications for Ferry Services.</p> <p><b>Action – It was agreed to note the report.</b></p>
10	Outer Hebrides STAG Assessment	<p>Mr Richard Hadfield provided an update on matters associated with the Outer Hebrides Ferry Services Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) Assessment. The Report stated that the STAG approach provided a clear framework for assessing evidence-based transport problems and opportunities based on robust, objective-led analysis that would develop options for future investment and service provision. The Report detailed a full description of the scope, methodology and timetable of the appraisal process, including details of the proposed engagement and consultation to be undertaken as part of the process.</p> <p>Ms Mairi Thomson highlighted concerns about the Household Survey being excessive.</p> <p>Mr Hadfield advised that consultation meetings in Barra and Uist were well attended while those for Harris and Lewis were not. Mr DR Macleod stated that this was because consultees were not listened to in respect of the new vessel for Stornoway and therefore would not feel there was value in attending. Mr Hadfield said that he would have a different interpretation on that but felt the next STAG would have tangible options to review and that would likely lead to greater participation.</p> <p>Mr Neil MacRae highlighted that the evidence presented through the consultation identified that despite 5 routes to the Western Isles it was impossible to travel to the islands and back in the same day unless returning on the direct return sailing. This inability to undertake a days business without an overnight stay was a key barrier to economic development. Mr Hadfield said that the STAG ought to establish whether that was an issue.</p> <p><b>Action – It was agreed to note the report.</b>  <b>Mr Richard Hadfield agreed to feed back concerns relating to the form and length of the household survey.</b></p> <p><b>HITRANS and Cal Mac to ensure Meeting participants to be advised on the items they would be speaking to in advance of future FSG meetings.</b></p>
11	Transport Scotland Update including VRDP	<p>Mr Richard Hadfield provided an update in relation to the Transport Scotland Vessel Replacement and Deployment Plan (VRDP).</p> <p>Mr David Amos advised that the proposed Islands Deal aimed to increase population and visitors to the islands and may be a potential source of funding for VRDP and related matters.</p> <p>Angus Campbell advised that connectivity was at the heart of the Islands Deal initiative from the beginning. Mr Campbell also stated that the new Islands (Scotland) Act could help to improve transport links if the tools within the Act were used correctly.</p> <p>Mr Iain Mackinnon provided more information in respect of proposed large scale connectivity proposals including fixed links which had been discussed in the context of the Islands Deal.</p> <p><b>Action – Mr Richard Hadfield and Mr David Amos to discuss the potential of the Islands Deal proposals to assist with VRDP.</b></p>
12	Transport Integration	<p>Ms Demi Wylie provided an update on Transport Integration including</p>

	Updates	<p>in respect of the Active Travel working Group.</p> <p>Mr Neil MacRae advised in relation to the agreement between HITRANS and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar to ensure connection from the Stornoway Ulapool ferry.</p> <p>Mr Uisdean Robertson and Mr Iain M. MacLeod highlighted a problem with connection between Uig and Inverness.</p> <p>There was also a discussion in relation to bicycles on board Cal Mac vessels taking up space and causing a delay in turnaround.</p> <p>Ms Wylie advised that equipment had been purchased for the Arran route which helped to stack bicycles and this would be used for the new vessel.</p> <p><b>Action – Ms Demi Wylie to update on connectivity to Fort William from the Lochboisdale to Mallaig ferry.</b>  <b>Ms Demi Wylie to speak with Kerr Corbett in relation to the connection problems between Uig and Inverness.</b>  <b>Ms Ruth McIntosh to find out whether vessel 802 would have infrastructure to deal with bicycles on board.</b></p>
13	Timetables Overview	<p>Ms Demi Wylie circulated a paper noting Community Timetable Requests.</p> <p>Mr Uisdean Robertson asked why the promise of extending the operation of the late Friday sailing between Uig and Lochmaddy for 18 weeks in Summer 2018 had not been implemented. Ms Wylie stated that this request had not been received as a formal request. Cllr Robertson said that was because they understood it was being implemented this summer but had not featured in the timetable. Ms Wylie said that this would be discussed with Transport Scotland and that the other formal requests would be submitted to Transport Scotland for review on 15 June 2018.</p> <p><b>Action – Cal Mac to clarify status of Friday evening sailings between Uig and Lochmaddy for Summer 2018.</b></p>
14	Unresolved Issues from Ferry Committee for Resolution	None.
15	Next Steps, Timescales, Actions	<b>Action – Actions would be made clear in draft Minutes to be issued within the next week for comment.</b>
16	Confirm Pre-agreed Date of Next Meeting	It was <b>noted</b> that the next Meeting of the Hebrides Ferry Stakeholder Group would be 13 December 2018 (Venue to be confirmed).