

MINUTES of the FERRIES COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING
held on Friday 6 June at 09:00
at The Studio, Glasgow and on Microsoft Teams.

[FOISA Status – Exemptions under Section 30 (Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs) Section 33 (Commercial interests) and Section 36 (Confidentiality)]

Present:

Angus Campbell - Chair (AC)
Angus Campbell (AC2)
Bill Calderwood (BC)
David Herriot (DH)
Gail Robertson (GR)
Jim Porteous (JP)
Joanna Peteranna (JoP)
Kirsty MacFarlane (KMacF)
Murdo MacLean (MM)

In attendance:

Morag McNeil (MMcN) - CMAL
Blair Moglia (BM) - CMAL
Kevin Hobbs (KH) - CMAL
Duncan Mackison (DM) – Chief Executive, CalMac
Robert Morrison (RM) – CalMac
Ailsa Stephen (AS) – CalMac
Michael Scobbie (MS) - CalMac
Chris Wilcock (CW) – Transport Scotland
Laurence Kenney (LK) - Transport Scotland
'Mac' MacArthur (Mac) – Young Islanders Network
Terry Williams (TW) – CalMac
Donna Lockhart (DL) – CalMac
Victoria Shaw (VS) – CalMac

Apologies:

Brian Fulton (BF), Trevor McIlhatton (TMcl)

1 GOVERNANCE

1.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies from Brian Fulton of CMAL and Trevor McIlhatton of TS.

1.2 Declarations of Interest

GR declared an interest as a haulier and AC2 declared interest as working in consultancy for CMAL for electric ferry supplies.

1.3 Minutes of meetings held on 7 March and Matters Arising

The minutes were approved and there were no matters arising.

1.4 Actions from previous meeting

Matters marked as closed to be removed from the list.

2 CMAL Update

2.1 General Update

2.2 Expected Changes from CHFS3

AC welcomed CMAL to the call.

KH began by covering the report that was previously circulated, but there are some updates since the time of writing. The MV Isle of Islay spent 10 days at sea last week and had a positive outcome. There are a few things that need to be looked at in detail, but broadly, all builders' trials were successful, and they managed to do several acceptance trials (dropping and recovering anchors, etc). The actual

acceptance trials will not happen until batteries are installed, and those are on a significant lead time. Batteries are now on site and will be installed in the coming weeks. Overall, pleased with the speed of the vessel and manoeuvring.

MV Loch Indaal continues to be built and the two Uig service vessels will be launched over the course of this summer and autumn. There has been another ship in the nearest berth, so better to keep them on the slipway for now, than to keep them in the water. We wrote to NZETs and indicated that we felt that there would be a 6-month gap between ships, but this has now been revised. We expect the first vessel to be delivered in Q3 of 2025 (not financial year) and the second ship in December or January. Subject to change, this time next year we should have all four vessels in Scotland – or shortly thereafter.

MV Glen Sannox is performing well from Troon. An NZETs letter was sent by Ferguson's regarding MV Glen Rosa, which sees further delays which is very unhelpful to the people of Arran. There was a price increase also. We expect this one to be delivered Q2 of 2026.

He continued, we signed a contract for the seven small vessel replacements which is Phase 1. There is a Phase 2, but we are working at pace to do the detailed design. First steel-cutting should take place in November this year. We are anticipating the first of these to arrive by the middle of 2027, and then on at 3-month intervals. Currently working on SVRP Phase 2, which is for the two sound routes of Barra and Harris. When concept design is complete in early Autumn, we should be ready, pending acceptance from Scottish Government, to build the vessels. We have been working with the Highland Council also for assisting them with site supervision at the Corran ferry. We will continue to help with shore infrastructure and the vessels.

For Mallaig – Lochboisdale replacement for the LOTI, we are waiting for final sign-off to proceed to tender. We continue to scour the world for second-hand tonnage. In 3 or 4 years, the search for second-hand tonnage should abate somewhat with new vessels introduced to our fleet by then.

KH updated on port infrastructure – all tender returns received for ground investigations at Gasaigh and for small vessel replacement programme. The key is to keep out the way of the ferries to work uninterrupted through the summer period. For Cumbrae slip, there will be a better marshalling facility. This is out to tender and we expect it to come back by the end of the month. It should not take long to assess. Hope to be on site in Autumn of this year.

JoP said that it was positive to hear about procurement for freight vessels for the Northern Isles. There are large scale energy related projects in the Northern Isles and the Hebrides. Have you engaged in any discussion with TS about freight requirements across to Stornoway?

KH confirmed yes, but only belatedly. We have known about this project but were not formally approached until the beginning of 2025. We are dealing with SSEN along with CalMac now and they say the project will start in 2026, but we do not have a solution for 2026. We are also looking for purely freight vessels in the second-hand market. We are not cited on what the build-up of traffic will be. We expect a classic bell-curve in what freight is required, but we are trying to engage on when the genuine start date will be, and how quickly the freight requirement will come along. The only things we have in our control just now are the Helliier and the Hildasay. They cannot be taken away until the new freight flexes arrive. We need a solution before then, but we do not have one. Regular meetings are beginning to happen, but simple questions have not yet been answered.

JoP suggested catching up with KH separately to reassure him that a lot of work had been done. TS told all developers that there was no challenge with freight capacity across the route. This might be where the challenge lies.

KH said that MV Loch Seaforth is not always full when used for freight. We are not far away from the Uig ships emerging. It is possible to have three trips to Tarbert Harris, but that shared service will be a single vessel for Lochmaddy and a single vessel for Tarbert Harris. It should create some capacity, but the view from CFL and TS is that three is probably overkill initially. If you layer in that freight capacity might be needed, it can be ramped up. That will be helpful, but it is not the answer, when we understand the number of lorries to be accommodated daily.

AC noted that it was more than two years ago since TS learned that 200 artics per month would travel across that route. Housing for 200 people being built and all that equipment will be going across. There's no way the present system will cope.

Mac asked about the Tiree waiting room at the pier. Could the location be changed, as it is not widely used because of the distance to the pier.

KH replied, I will ask our team what can be done. We did consult extensively on it when the waiting room was placed there. We were going to introduce electric vehicles to take people down to the ferry, but we will return to this.

Mac thanked KH for his response.

JP asked about Port Askaig – we know it is an Argyll and Bute Council port, but CalMac has employed consultants to look at the marshalling and layout on the shoreside to ensure it is ok before the new ship arrives. When do we expect the consultants to report back, and are you working with CFL on that or only concentrating on the port side?

KH replied that he is not aware of that piece of work. I will find out from Morven if anyone from CMAL is involved. If CFL have commissioned it, we may not be involved at all, particularly as it is a 3rd party port. We've been involved in the upgrade and the mooring device, but as far as marshalling, I am not aware.

JP asked if RM could offer any answer?

RM said he is not aware.

JP said that this news came from our Area Manager. There are concerns on the shoreside about layout, capacity and health and safety. These aspects are being looked at, but there is limited time to get this right.

KH agreed to contact Fraser Wallace of CFL to come back to JP with an answer [Action].

BC asked about ongoing work to add to the portfolio of ports.

KH said that this is sensitive and can speak to BC offline. [Action]. The project is not dead, but it is tricky to deal with other organisations.

KMacF asked about community engagement for the works proposed at no.1 berth in Oban. Will that include all users of the port? Not just Oban and Mull.

KH said that this is under discussion now. We cannot consult with every island, but if we conduct stakeholder engagement on Teams, we would like to do that. It's not a good use of time to go out to all the places. We will come up with a solution, but it won't be the face-to-face engagement you might be used to after Covid times.

KMacF said that this is fine, its just good to be involved from an early stage.

AC thanked KH and MMcN from joining online, and to BM for attending.

3 TS Update

AC welcomed CW and LK to the meeting.

Discussion on TS actions – AS to share actions with CW for an update.

CW updated on current works and wider news about ferries in Scotland. In terms of the contract - we are working on 3 strands to this piece of work. The grant agreement, which is the annual funding mechanism to CalMac, the Teckal agreement and the third piece is specification which we are working through with CFL – new KPIs, etc. We are on track to have all this work completed in advance of the end of September. These pieces of work all interact with each other.

AC raised the point of lack of engagement with TS – CW agreed to check on this with his team. [Action – CW agreed to get this back on track if no engagement has been had].

Discussion began around on how KPIs are being measured and that they are useful.

JoP asked if there was a qualitative part of what we capture around user experience. Customer feedback generated through CalMac's questionnaire – there is a danger that this is mainly completed by holiday makers. Survey fatigue among islanders. Is there something on a semi-regular basis we could do to capture island sentiment?

CW said that this is attractive – we need to be sure we are asking the right questions. Are you thinking of using the current mechanism, but distinguishing between customers e.g. post code? Do we have examples from Scotrail or other focus groups? Let us take that away to investigate [Action].

AC agreed that a focus group would be a good idea. It is easier to attract people to take part. How do we reach different island communities - because perhaps we do not tap into everything.

JP said that small businesses and shops rely on good service for commercial reasons. Their view is important in surveys, but we concentrate on tourists a lot. There is a prioritisation system in the event of disruption and commercial business often falls foul of that.

CW spoke of engagement with haulage associations and RHA, who are looking for a more island-focussed sub-group.

DH asked about service status in the winter months. You might get a truer reflection of local view then.

AC2 said that this feedback from communities is important to collect. The lived experience of not being able to be where you need to be, these things are not asked about currently and that's the islander experience.

CW added about the Northern Isles – a similar drive around satisfaction surveys. The island view is skewed significantly by tourism, so they are undertaking to separate the two.

KMacF asked where the contract is heading, regarding crewing considerations. CalMac will be closer to Government. This information was all redacted from the contract that is running out. People are interested to know what the working conditions and limitations are. In practice, it is difficult to reconcile if ferries can sit in port stormbound for 2 or 3 days and one additional sailing is not possible because the crew have been working that whole time. I appreciate the workings of this, but for a dynamic transport system, it raises constant questions. With all the backlog of traffic, how can we not manage a single sailing. This is the lay persons' view. Do you think this will improve in CHFS3?

CW discussed some worked examples of when this happens in practice. This cannot be altered by the contract, so it is unlikely to change on that basis. CalMac could bring some examples to see if these are being applied correctly – for a better explanation on why it cannot happen. We are hoping soon that we will have a resilience vessel. We need to come back to the FCB to ask how we use this vessel most effectively in those circumstances.

AC said that you would think that this would be time to recuperate some hours if not in service. Why is it different with CalMac than with other industries?

AC2 said there must be some innovation for scheduling people, to produce a better service for the community.

CW: or assurances that these innovative solutions have been thought through. How does this benchmark to other operators?

KMacF: these conditions can be altered by mutual consent.

CW; let's remind CalMac of that action.

BC asked if weather patterns change, that schedules can be flexible, based on skills required.

The Board spoke about consistency and flexibility allowed. There needs to be an understanding of what is possible on different routes.

4 Joint Discussion

4.1. Place of the Ferries Community Board

AC asked who is going to determine the role of the Board.

CW commented that this is something that is iterative between the tri-partite to coalesce between and agree. This is something that we can form a view on. There are perhaps some other models we have not looked at yet – MACs for example. There are some parts of the framework agreement that might be useful for this Board, but also for the Tripartite and how we engage with the Board.

AC asked about funding.

CW suggested perhaps looking at a budget for this space and planning that for any activity.

DM commented; for CHFS3, I must be accountable for all expenditure. There are two parts of it – the first is what the requirement is in terms of resources, and secondly, what entity are those resources being pushed into, which comes back to governance and rules.

AC said it also depends on what the FCB are asked to do.

CW commented on scope and remit of the organisation. What is the forward work plan of this group for the coming months? Not to dictate it, but to understand where the Board fits into the large pieces of work that the tripartite work on.

AC said we want to step up and be more visible in communities. This will take more expense.

DM said that the numbers and costs reflect the activity. The budget would be driven by how many board meetings and members. From there, work out travel and build a budget that way.

AC asked about permission; what have we got built in to do. It cannot be totally open-ended and must have some remit.

RM added, the role of the Board has changed since 2017. We need to review how it has changed.

LK spoke about the idea of a secretariat role or Deputy Chair. Practically, there will be an annual financial discussion between TS, Ministers and CalMac. It will feed into that process.

JoP suggested writing into the scope that there is an annual budget setting process for the FCB. The Chair needs to be involved in the setting of that budget.

Agreement from around the room.

DM agreed, it comes down to the basics, board members, travel etc.

CW said there are ways to apply flexibility. We do need a starting point though.

BC spoke about planning yearly activities and required resources. The skills we have differ and we may need more or less of certain skills. Equally, if we are trying to organise something far away, how can we proactively do that without everyone having different requirements.

CW asked about KPIs and FCB involvement.

DM commented on a Board taking on an audit role. We have committees and a Board who oversee this.

AC argued that this is all internal. It is a public service, and the public know more about what is expected of CalMac. Public accountability needs something more to it.

DM explained that the CalMac Board will have Islander representation on the Board. That will take place through that route too.

CW said that KPIs, for TS, have been in a contractual space but as we move out of that, they can be different and a key mechanism that we all collectively measure against the contract. All the things we already do will form part of that too, customer feedback etc.

AC2 asked what forum the FCB can be heard on. Is our role to get involved or someone else's?

CW said the Board's role is to inform that. There are multiple roles for the Board. It provides strategic view of strategic matters across the network. Resilience vessel, vessel projects etc. If there is a network wide decision to be made, that is the sort of thing we would engage with the FCB on for informing. I do not see the Board getting involved in day-to-day decisions, as this is not the role of any Board. We are still thinking about how we use KPIs and other measures.

AC agreed it is not the Board's role to get involved with day-to-day in the company. We are moving towards a different type of accountability, allowing the Board to put their views into the mix. Going out and garnering more information in a way we have not done before.

CW asked how the Board can best be utilised to gather certain information.

DM said that there is a difference between seeing KPIs and getting into the nuts and bolts of how things are addressed. This gets into a lower level than a Board should be.

AC2 asked where the structures are that have the FCB.

DM said that this is the job of the Board, and there will be an islander on there.

AC said that we want to see the island voice on a Board. When we meet with the DML Board, they seem to have very little vision of what communities' need for life on the islands. This might be wrong, but this is the impression we get.

CW commented that his somewhere in-between. We, as TS, will be looking for assurance from the operator that KPIs are manageable. E.g. consistent failure of a vessel, this goes beyond CalMac and perhaps moves to TS or CMAL to action. KPIs come to TS, and we track this against previous, review the reasons and then ask if we need to do something differently to improve.

RM suggested that through the reporting to TS, perhaps some of this can feed into community board discussion which would be of more use for the FCB.

BC said that the intention is not to be right in the middle. We want to represent the community view. How are we going to adjust to a new approach?

CW said that the big takeaway from the new KPIs (which the FCB fed into), it is about recording the lived experience. CalMac do publish actuals vs. exceptions. The public or media focus can vary though – on a route-by-route basis, figures can be far different.

LK took an action to try to flesh out how we see this looking going forward to get an agreed position. On a practical

AC said we need to know where we sit and how people will regard us. I sense CFL have a different view to the FCB and TS lies in the middle. In the long-term we need to consider the needs of the community. How will this be delivered and where do we sit in that landscape.

CW said there may be difficult choices around that. It may be an affordability or practicality piece. We are working our own way through what will be a different world, contractually, between ourselves and CFL. It is not a containment exercise; the Board has evolved in its role, and we have welcomed input. We do need to formalise the structure though in our collective interest. We will take your feedback away and see what we can do. We are still working out everyone's role in the new contract.

AC2 added, for local issues, what is seen as the process for escalation in local issues – through ferry committees? Where do you go next? FSGs are not particularly effective in resolving issues so they tend to go to the transport minister. There needs to be a route for that.

CW said that this might work through CalMac's new structure.

AC2 asked what happens if an issue is not resolved at that point, however. What is the most effective way to deal with these issues that are not resolved satisfactorily at a local area.

RM said that the new operational structure would help with escalation beyond a committee.

DM said that this is all in the definition and design of the Board. You have committees that represent the community at a local level. Sometimes things are resolved locally but there will always be things unresolved at this stage. In the design of the FCB, this is a discussion we need to have. Think of it in the context of the ferry committees and how do they interact? There's as whole system that needs to be thought about.

CW said that the new CalMac operations system should be the route to go down. Those individuals are empowered to make decisions in ways you may not have seen in the past. There will always be a route to Ministers.

AC2 said if the intent of this contract is to put community voice first, you would think that the structure would reflect that voice at lower, strategic and network levels.

AC said it is important not to get tied into that. The FCB should take large issues from different communities, i.e. a pattern of things not solved. Then the FCB has a role to say at the top table, with the tripartite that these individual things are not being solved.

RM: it is in our thoughts to look at the FSG structure and how useful it is.

CW asked if there was anything to pick up on, in terms of practicalities with the contract?

AC referred to the FCB feedback document. Discussed membership of FCB being exclusive to that group, and membership timelines – 3 years, review, then a further 3 years.

RM commented that it can be difficult to distinguish between membership and be strict about roles as representing the full network and not local areas with a separate committee.

DM expressed that he is relaxed about members having affiliations with other committees.

JP recognised that CFL is doing a lot to strengthen local management and to restructure. Putting more responsibility onto these roles is helping ferry committees. If there is something to be fed back between the two roles, I play on community Board and local committee. It comes down to credibility. When we, the FCB are out in public, we try to see if there are views that could change things at a particular level. There is a trade-off for the contract not going out to tender – the rules are changing, and it is more community focussed. We are asked how we monitor this or ensure that it works properly. Firstly, CalMac is taking a lot of actions internally to help, but secondly, what is the transparency and accountability? JP said that there is a way that the FCB can take some of the 'heat' and answer questions for people. CalMac have been doing a good job.

DM thanked JP for his comments. That sounds entirely appropriate, for the Board to have a standard pack, that is data-led, with issues as part of it, and you track as we go.

AC said that we must take news back into communities. That is a question we ask, are you prepared to take bad news back into the community?

LK asked to what extent individual members represent specific communities. Is it general feedback back into communities that the FCB do?

AC replied, we have been against that direct correlation because we are not a geographical body.

BM spoke of ferry user groups being a conduit for information and getting news out into communities. Could HiTrans help to get disseminate out there? A newsletter perhaps, of what has been achieved.

BC commented that FSG role needs to be defined.

JoP asked about FCB annual reports. How do we keep the cycle of information from FCB into the tripartite. As KPIs are being defined, I wonder if it might be possible to have a mini-report from CFL – a very accessible version that reports clearly on the customer focussed KPIs for those who are not too interested in audits or finances.

MS said that his team do write the report. In the 3rd section, this would then be extracted into a 10-page report. We are actively looking to do this year.

CW said we are now moving into an annual budgeting process. CFL will provide us with their business case for the year ahead. We might want to think about the timing of an FCB report, in relation to this.

LK asked about practical thoughts of recruitment of the Chair for FCB.

Discussion continued around appointment of Chair – regularity, recruitment.

KH commented on 2/3-year cycles. At CMAL, the Chair is required to do an assessment on individual Board members which is shared with TS. This still lies with the Chair to make recommendations, but it depends how people are appointed.

JoP asked about transitional arrangements. If we move to a 3-year appointment / 3-year extension agreement – we need a managed process because the current length of membership we have on the Board.

DM added, collectively if we lock into 1 October as our date to have this all designed. We should look at the wider ecosystem of Board and push ourselves to meet this date. Then we are talking about the transition, collectively and individually. Perhaps we can draft some work on this.

LK agreed to take the document with tracked changes and combine with the FCB feedback paper. Action to flesh out the contract management process [Action].

4.3 Deck Space Pilot

KMacF opened this item. This has ramifications across many routes, and it is an example of a community led desire for change which is taking some time to achieve and in the last few months that there had been a period of silence on this issue. Several routes – e.g. Mull, Iona, Coll, Tiree. KMacF shared history of Deck Space Pilots taking place and commented that tourists and commercials use this in the majority and islanders only utilise about 20% of space. There is frustration over the length of time this is taking.

CW said that it is not just the contract stopping us from taking this forward but asking what value this has for communities. This is a difficult space, and we are rolling out the pilot. If it doesn't work for some communities then it isn't something we need to take forward.

Discussion continued around the different needs for different routes and the different economies of the islands.

TS and CFL agreed to take this away to develop further and explore options [Action].

5 Young Islanders Network

Mac updated from the young islander's Transport Report.

JP asked Mac about the bus service – does it coincide with school times?

Mac replied that the buses we would use from school are organised school buses.

RM asked about integrating travel and buses. We now have a transport integration manager in CalMac. It used to be difficult to work with other companies, such as Citylink – where changes had to be signed off. But they are more flexible now, and so too are rail. It might help us to improve and match services together. If a service gets cancelled and people get stuck, Victoria Shaw done a lot of work about what happens when a ferry cancels. We are trying to have a standard of how these issues are dealt with, when they happen.

BC raised the point that this is on-island connections. If you have a car, you can be diverted but nobody seems to be picking up that most of the islands are only provided with public transport on the premise of getting students back and forth from school. Is there something in the new arrangement where community needs for connectivity will come onto the service provider's radar?

RM replied, we will have to check if this is captured - on-island transport.

AC said that this should come from government downwards. CalMac can do what they can within their own parameters, and rail and bus also. But direction from the government is required.

KMacF: it's not just about being stuck on an island but trying to get home from the mainland.

DH asked about unaccompanied children. MS gave an example of four individuals who were stuck in Armadale whose parents needed to be contacted. The police must be involved in these situations.

BC said that Arran has something in place that if people become stuck, where do they get put up. Who has responsibility for those stuck on the mainland? Young people won't have enough money to book a B&B if we need one. There does not seem to be responsibility identified for where it breaks down.

AC we have situations with people stuck in cars when the ferry cannot come in for weather. One of the asks we had before was to have one clear contingency plan in place for these circumstances – particularly when it is a remote place.

RM agreed, it's a subject area of its own. A lot of work has been done by Victoria – local resilience partnerships. It can be an effective thing to call upon when required.

AC agreed, it must be political also. There is a system to it.

GR questioned the age of travellers. If a parent is comfortable sending their child on a bus from Glasgow to Stirling, why can't they go from Lochboisdale to Oban?

BC said that this is a much wider topic and well-highlighted by the report prepared.

GR asked who has the duty of care for a young person who gets stranded. Some onus must come back onto the parent.

Mac presented a survey on safety onboard CalMac ferries.

- 61 people surveyed.
- 34 young people, 26 people over the age of 25.
- Most respondents from Shetland.
- Question asked:
 - o Have you ever felt unsafe? 50% yes, 50% no. Of the 30 people who answered no, 17 were young people. For the young people who answered, it was drunk behaviour that stood out as the most common reason for feeling unsafe. Potential solution for this would be staff training, or close bar early.
 - o RM answered, retail staff are trained on managing disruptive passengers. A lot of the numbers in the survey come from Shetland, and the boat is overnight. It would be interesting to know if there is a split for the CHF.
- AC added; on the Seaforth, the bar is right beside the children's play area. They sit in that area, right next to people having drinks. Could there be more of a separation where these functions are – perhaps for future design of ships.

6 CalMac Update

AC welcomed the Area Managers to the meeting – TW, DL and VS. Introductions to the Board were made.

RM opened – It's been a journey to have our Area Managers in place and we now have 6. Three here today and the others will be introduced later.

VS (Clyde North) – joined CFL around 3 years ago as port manager for Wemyss Bay and Gourock, before moving on to resilience and standards. It will remain part of my role. Going forward, I want to build stronger teams, engage with Angus and David. Making sure that the community voice is heard internally in terms of the impact it has on people. Building transparency going forward. My deputy is Kirsty Taylor-Walsh. She will be supporting ports with a safety and staff point of view, enhancing the customer experience and fulfilling needs.

DL (Clyde South) – been with CalMac for 17 years, starting as port assistant at Ardrossan. Seconded to Argyll as area manager before returning to Clyde South, focussing on Arran. Kevin Eardley is my deputy, with experience in Operations and customer facing. The deputies will be more inward facing, allowing me to be out in the community, liaising with local businesses, every sector possibly. Biggest focus for me is to bring community needs to the table. I.e. vessel redeployments so that we can express what is important for our communities. What might feel minor to others, has a massive impact on some of our communities.

TW (Kintyre & Argyll – shortly to be Kintyre) – Stephen Wood will take over for Argyll. Joined CalMac a year ago. Background in retail. This role is about serving the community. I'm passionate about making sure people are heard and that we have a seat at the table internally on things that have a major effect. I have George Brown (Deputy for Argyll) and Amanda Taylor-Walsh (Deputy for Kintyre). Deputies are predominantly looking at procedures, compliance and ports. Our focus is external.

AC said that as a Board, we have campaigned strongly over more devolved decision making within CalMac's structure. Very pleased to hear this.

RM thanked the Area Managers for joining. It would be easy to look at this and not see the benefits quite yet. There are now 6 and there used to just be two. In the past, this has been a real point of frustration.

BC added; a lot of the conversations today have been leading into a new CHFS3 environment, meeting customer needs. I am interested to hear that you have the autonomy to make decisions and how we can progress this.

RM said that if we end up in that situation we have failed. We must put trust in our area managers. I am confident that this will be the case, and we will be judged by results.

TW added that it is around trust. There is a new era of there being 6 AMs. The business needs to learn to trust us with those decisions. Are we there yet, possibly not but are we moving in that direction? 100%.

AC2 said that empowerment is key and there is nervousness in communities that Area Managers are empowered to make things happen. We are not seeing this right now, in terms of decisions.

VS added about the benefit of being in frequent communication. Being the advocate is very important to me.

KMacF spoke about ferry stakeholder groups. We have tried to promote, between Coll, Tiree and Colonsay, the idea of getting groups together. It would be nice if the initiative to do this came from CFL.

TW said that there were two tripartite meetings. We got a lot from it. In this world, moving into the 6 AMs, it will be a lot easier. There is a keenness within the business to do this.

AC said that communities want to be involved in discussions where there are knock-on effects. E.g. if one service is down, it impacts another. Instead of having several conversations, have one so that we can understand the decision making better.

MS commented that we want to bring Area Managers together when we make these decisions to see the impact it has. They are informed enough to debate on the impact it will have on each route.

JP raised the point of port staff. Good staff left in recent years and the other side of this is that port staff will be encouraged and developed. The Area Operations managers need full support from other departments within CalMac. To help with credibility, they need that support.

MS said that there is a dependence on individuals too. We want information to be available for the Area Managers.

Mac raised safety onboard, as previously discussed. Are there any initiatives we can do to make young people feel safer onboard?

VS said there had been some trials, but DL and I want to introduce bodycams for crew and port staff to support with evidence gathering and customer complaints. We need to ensure that we're supportive of our staff using it. We hope to have something in place soon, which should help to bring down disruptive behaviour. It does de-escalate situations.

BC said that communications are important, and the grapevine is very active. It must be frustrating for staff when news doesn't line up. A northern newspaper producing information about the south. This must impact area managers.

MS replied, during disruption, we use a template for planning comms – stakeholder, media, internal. We put a timeline in there and it is always staggered in such a way that stakeholder comms go out before media comms. If this has not happened, we can take this up offline to find out what has happened. We would love to be able to give our own staff, stakeholders plenty of notice. For us, the media are not our priority.

AC2 asked if the expectation was for Area Managers to push out communications?

MS answered, yes. We did the stakeholder engagement workshop and area managers were there. We spoke about newsletters for areas that can be disseminated to the areas served. When the 6 managers are in place, and as confidence grows, we can run with that.

AC suggested sharing the information stream, perhaps there are issues that the Board could contribute on or be a supporting voice for.

MM raised temporarily unbookable – has anything been done from a CalMac perspective to find out how or why. It was being treated as anecdotal. [Joint DML Board Action].

MS replied that it is recognised it is not anecdotal. The system is causing it, and it's raised further issues about how bookings are managed. I cannot say how we can unpack it, but it has been recognised and the DML Board are treating this as a priority.

AC emphasised that the ticketing system was to better manage capacity, and it needs to do this.

GR said that it is good to have this recognised.

RM said that coordinates have always been challenging. The issue of a vessel leaving with space, wasn't a success. A success would have been selling the space rather than having people waiting.

AC2 said it's disappointing that after 2 years we have no visibility of a plan to fix this. This is a top of the list thing to fix with eBooking.

MM spoke about 'standby'. Sometimes the standby queue can be longer than the actual 'booked' queue. Tourism impacts it a lot.

JoP said, given that there are still outstanding issues on Ar Turas, are the Board receiving updates on this or is there anything on the corporate risk register around it?

RM said that it is reported in a different way. The Ar Turas phase is now looking more at the actual fixes within the product and advancements. This must be seen as a separate piece, for coordinates.

MS confirmed it is on the Corporate Risk Register at executive level.

AC thanked the Area Managers for coming along to the meeting. AC suggested when the Board are out visiting, that an area manager come to be present.

6.2 Ticketing System

MS agreed to prepare report on fixes as per actions.

RM mentioned the centre of excellence too – new recruits being completely immersed and fully acquainted will help.

KMacF said that both locally and on the website, people tend just to go to the port office for help. When people are booking through the online system, a message to say, 'if you do not succeed this way, please call local port number'. The local port numbers used to be under each timetable. Quite often, when you ring up and speak to someone, it can help a lot.

JoP raised the glitchy app she had shown RM during the lunch break. JoP further added about user friendliness and abandoning attempts to book. There are lots of websites where you put something in your basket, you get a pop-up 'did you forget something?'. I would also like to request the opening when you call the CEC. It is very long, and when you are a regular customer, it can be too long [Action].

BC added further that when booking online, and there are technology changes, clear messaging. When the system is undergoing maintenance. You can find it when you go onto the website Q&A. A network message to say system is down would be good.

KMacF asked if when it was route specific, could it go out like a status update?

MS said you could send a message to say this if people are subscribed, but a pop-up on the website should be possible.

7 Recruitment

AC updated on the interviews taking place on 4 and 5 June. We have the 18th and 25th of June reserved for the rest of the interviews to take place.

9 Review of Actions and Next Steps

The Board discussed meeting with each of the tri-partite individually about the position of the Board in CHFS3. AC2 asked about membership terms – we need to all be clear on this. Perhaps another meeting on this.

Meeting concluded with thanks to all for their contribution.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Friday 5 September 2025 – Isle of Mull (TBC)

2025 MEETING DATES

Friday 5 December (Glasgow Area – TBC)

#	Action	Owner	Status	Date Originated
1	FAIR FARES ENGAGEMENT CW took action to go back to TS colleagues for an update on what the engagement there would be for the public on the fair fares piece of work.	CW		<i>December 2023</i>
2	EBOOKING FIXES & AR TURAS MEETING CFL agreed to share a list of fixes [eBooking] with the FCB.	CFL	06/06/2025: RM offered to make update from IT Director available - summary of what has been done, and what remains to be done.	<i>December 2023</i>
3	CHFS2 RECONCILIATION EXERCISE CW agreed that CHFS2 has not been scrutinised or audited to the degree it should have. Before the end of the contract, it should be reconciled. CW agreed to pick up on this and take it away. A reconciliation and reflection on management of the contract, to cover resourcing levels, structure, etc.	CW		<i>September 2024</i>
4	TEMPORARILY UNBOOKABLE MESSAGING – ONLINE JP offered feedback on when booking is temporarily unavailable. Messaging to say that transfers are being made, and it is worth trying again later. This may prevent people from giving up entirely when unable to book. DB agreed to take this away and explore how this can be done.	BC	06/06/2025: BC set to meet with Graeme Elliott of CFL, as part of a CSG action. Can report back to FCB.	<i>September 2024</i>
5	THIRD PARTY & LOCAL AUTHORITY NEEDS BC asked if there was a resource that showed third party and local authority needs in one place. TS may have a comprehensive list.	TS	07/03/25 - ongoing.	<i>December 2024</i>
6	FEEDBACK FROM CEO VISITS KMacF asked if there was a collation of feedback received from the combined CMAL, TS and CalMac visits around the network. DM offered to take this offline and explore what an update on this might look like.	MS	06/06/2025 – MS explained that from now, the tripartite will be represented on these visits. Action to be closed, subject to one-pager provided on outcome of visits and what has been learned. This links to the CRM project. BM asked, if possible, to collaborate on this, as it is a tripartite visit.	<i>December 2024</i>
7	FACILITATED WORKSHOP WITH TRIPARTITE AND SCOTTISH FUTURES TRUST After agreement from all parties, it was agreed that a workshop should take place to workshop what the future of the FCB should be – structure, appointments, remit. JoP agreed to approach TS to propose this, as it aligns with the CHFS3 strategy.	JoP / Transport Scotland	06/06/25 JoP made introduction with Scottish Futures Trust.	<i>December 2024</i>
8	COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS CW offered to speak about how community needs assessments will work at a future FCB meeting. Action was taken to add this	CW	07/03/25 - ongoing.	<i>December 2024</i>

	to forward agenda. CW suggested someone from his team come along to present to the Board.			
9	INTERISLAND TRAVEL KMacF asked if inter-island travel was now available everywhere, as she had only read of the 'Western Isles' now having this.	KMacF / CW	<u>06/06/25</u> – Ongoing	<i>December 2024</i>
10	FCB CONTACT DETAILS AS to liaise with RM and colleagues at CFL on purchase of domain for @FCB, or similar, email addresses. AS to liaise with GR and JoP on progress. Combined with previous action for FCB contact posters to be displayed on vessels with new contact information.	RM	<u>02/06/2025</u> - AS to collect existing Gmail addresses from FCB members. This will allow access to FCB Gmail inbox. For access, members must have a Gmail account. MS has drafted FCB contact posters.	<i>December 2024</i>
11	ROUTE FLEXIBILITY After discussion around restrictions to change timetables and extend services, considering hours of rest etc. The Board agreed that there would be value to having a discussion on what is possible on a route-by-route basis. RM agreed to investigate the opportunity for future discussion on this.	RM	Ongoing.	<i>March 2025</i>
12	PORT ASKAIG – MARSHALLING AND LAYOUT CONSULTATION KH agreed to contact Fraser Wallace of CFL to come back to JP with an answer about a consultation underway to review marshalling and layout at Port Askaig.	FW/DB		<i>June 2025</i>
13	PORTFOLIO OF PORTS ON THE CLYDE BC asked about ongoing work to add to the portfolio of ports on the Clyde. KH agreed to contact BC directly about this.	BC/KH		<i>June 2025</i>
14	FCB X TS ENGAGEMENT AC raised the point of lack of engagement with TS – CW agreed to check on this with his team and if TS have not been forthcoming in answering FCB requests, to get back on track with this.	CW		<i>June 2025</i>
15	QUALITATIVE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE INSIGHT JoP highlighted concern that customer satisfaction surveys may be mainly completed by holiday makers. there something on a semi-regular basis we could do to capture island resident sentiment. CW agreed to take this away and investigate – do we distinguish between customers by post code – do we host focus groups? Check what other organisations do, such a Scotrail.	CW		<i>June 2025</i>
16	ROLE OF THE FCB PAPER LK agreed to take the document with tracked changes and combine with the FCB feedback paper to add detail around the contract management process.	LK		<i>June 2025</i>

17	DECK SPACE PILOT Discussion took place about the different needs for different routes and the varied economies of the islands. TS and CFL agreed to take this away to develop further and explore options.	CFL/TS		<i>June 2025</i>
18	ON-ISLAND TRANSPORT CONNECTIONS BC raised the point of connections. If you have a car, you can be diverted but most of the islands are only provided with public transport on the premise of getting students back and forth from school. Is there something in the new arrangement where community needs for connectivity will come onto the service provider's radar? RM agreed to check in relation to on-island connections.	RM		<i>June 2025</i>
19	CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT CENTRE OPENING MESSAGE JoP asked if it might be possible to reduce the opening message when you call the CEC. It is very long, and when you are a regular customer, it can be frustrating to listen to the full narrative every time.	RM		<i>June 2025</i>