

MINUTES of the FERRIES COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING
held on Friday 5 March at 09:00
at Transport Scotland, 177 Bothwell Street, 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:

Bill Calderwood (BC – Meeting Chair)
Angus Campbell (AC2)
David Herriot (DH)
Gail Robertson (GR)
Jim Porteous (JP)
Kenny MacLean (KMacL)
Colin Smith (CS)
Richard Bentley (RB)

In attendance:

Morag McNeil (MMcN) - CMAL
Blair Moglia (BM) - CMAL
Brian Fulton (BF) - CMAL
Robert Morrison (RM) – CalMac
Ailsa Stephen (AS) – CalMac
Pauline Blackshaw (PB) – CalMac
Michael Scobbie (MS) - CalMac
Fiona Galbraith (FG) - CalMac
Donna Lockhart (DL) - CalMac
Victoria Shaw (VS) - CalMac
Chris Wilcock (CW) – Transport Scotland
Ewan Walker (EW) - Transport Scotland
Katie Calderwood (KC) - Transport Scotland
Mack MacArthur (Mac) - Young Islanders Network

Apologies: Joanna Peteranna (JoP), Kevin Hobbs (KH).

1 GOVERNANCE

1.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies from Joanna Peteranna and Kevin Hobbs.

1.2 Declarations of Interest

Affixed to meeting minute.

1.3 Minutes of meetings held on December 5 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.

Chair began the meeting with an acknowledgement to members who resigned at the last Board meeting and shared sincere thanks on behalf of the Board to Kirsty MacFarlane and Murdo MacLean, as well as to Angus Campbell, former Chair.

2 CMAL Update

BF updated on MV Isle of Islay. The MV Loch Indaal is scheduled for Q3 this year. MV Lochmor will be handed over towards the end of this year and in Q1 2027, we will see the MV Claymore which will complete the set from Turkey.

The Board discussed PR when the vessels come into service as the berthing trials are underway. Mary Morrison, retired port manager at Lochmaddy will be launching MV Claymore.

BF updated on SVRP Phase 1 progress. The vessels are getting on well

GR asked if the new small vessels will be impacted by the new MCA regulations relating to dangerous goods?

BF did not believe so. MS agreed to check with head of technical authority [Action].

There was an announcement this week about SVRP Phase 2 being a direct award to Fergussons. The concept design is under discussion – particularly about how shallow the Sound of Harris is. CW agreed, there is still due diligence and a business case to be completed.

BC asked about community needs assessment for these vessels. CW confirmed that assessments are ongoing, and we expect these to feed into the discussions on this. AC asked for a public timeline on the needs assessments. Action for TS to publish. [Action].

KMaL noted that communities often ask questions such as why aren't there two ferries in Stornoway, or 3 sailings to Harris? Is it possible to have some visibility of how the community needs assessments are put together? Just to allow communities the opportunity see that things are as good as they can be. It would be good to have a place for people to see why decisions were made. This might be a good opportunity to be visible about this.

CW replied, it would be recommended that Richard Hadfield come along to future meetings or a separate for a talk on this. I would be keen for your board to have a view of this.

BF continued, we now have the announcement on a new Lord of the Isles. We are looking at a broader programme of work for the Isle of Mull; we are also looking at an intermediate vessel programme to cover various routes of similar ilk. We will publish the community engagement Q&A on this.

Significant work at Port Ellen will take 30 months to complete. The port will be closed to commercial traffic during this time. BF offered to show the plan at a future meeting or as an update sent to the Board. [Action].

Ardrossan Port – we have a shareholder direction to purchase Ardrossan, and this should be completed in the next couple of weeks. MMcN added that final dates are still required, and it will take a few weeks to do this. Transfer of ownership not expected until end of March.

Cumrae – moving forwards and scheduled for a year of work for a new slipway and marshalling area which will bring significant improvement.

3 Transport Scotland Update

CW updated for Transport Scotland

- A Ministerial statement was made earlier this week. Huge thanks to all partners for getting us to this point.
- LOTI announcement welcomed by TS to push on with procurement.
- SVRP2 intention set out. Business case and design now in progress.
- Ardrossan – there is budget to take this forward and continue working towards a final design whilst engaging with CMAL and CalMac.
- Port Ellen works – significant but worthwhile. Interesting benefits for freight management.
- Community needs assessments – The Cabinet Secretary has been emphasising the importance of these.
- Mull vessels and port projects alongside Argyll and Bute council colleagues.
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CW shared his thoughts for afternoon discussion on FCB Workplan:

- It would be beneficial to engage with new Ministers as early as possible, and TS can help to facilitate and promote this.
- A focus on promoting the role of the Board.
- The Cabinet Secretary said we will push on with the freight fares review. We view the FCB as having an input/function to this.
- We hope to be in a position later this year to have a resilience vessel. The ICP commits us to having that vessel until at least 2030 and collectively, we should consider if this date should be revised and how the vessel is deployed.

There was a brief discussion about use of a resilience vessel; not to timetable the vessel and to retain it for that purpose. Vessels will continue to come and go out of service, and it may not always be available. The pressure of one vessel lost will still have a knock-on effect to other communities. Being too protective over a resilience vessel will leave the fleet in no better a position than present.

RB asked about community needs assessments being delayed due to a pre-election period. CW confirmed that civil servants cannot undertake activities for 6 weeks. This will not delay the community needs assessments.

CM raised a situation in Kilcreggan – new infrastructure is needed for a new boat. It's becoming a larger issue with the community council, and we will be engaging with Argyll and Bute Council. CW agreed that the infrastructure and vessel question must be addressed together. There are accessibility issues, and we are thinking what the best vessel mix would be for these routes. My biggest concern is the substantive cost around this.

CW finally noted some areas where the FCB views would be most beneficial, including on Under 22 travel and on how a resilience vessel might best be used.

BC thanked CW for attending and welcomed any other colleagues from TS to stay for the afternoon's planned workshop.

4 CalMac Update

BC welcomed DM to the meeting.

MS reflected on the main points covered in the CalMac paper distributed to members.

- CHFS3 KPIs – we are working on a system to provide one single source of the truth – a reliable place to access live KPIs for all as per contract deliverables.
- One of the statistic is technical stability. Technical cancellations are 1.8% but the impact of one outage results in a full shuffle of the network which doesn't reflect in the statistic.
- Area Manager model now in place for a year. Keen to build and improve on this, recognising that there are limits to how autonomous they can be.
- Block booking T&Cs have been in place for several months now and from a deck management perspective it is working well.
- Delivery plans as part of CHFS3 are now published on the website. Working on how we make these as accessible as possible and to distil the information to allow quick understanding of it.

BC commented on the loss of dashboards. It would be good to have some say on this before it is introduced. He requested a separate meeting with PB and MS to discuss this specific topic [Action].

GR questioned deck space utilisation statistics; stating that she is working on a 1-1 basis with the accounts team and some utilisation figures are often incorrect. [Action] This is a wider issue with hauliers, not an independent problem.

MS provided an update on the current service and network status. The Board discussed issues with MV Caledonian Isles.

KMacL asked about maintenance schedules and communicating this. RM agreed that CFL can produce communications on this to explain exactly what the time will be used for and the benefits for wider understanding [Action]. GR added that communication needs to include explanation behind decisions too.

The Board discussed Dangerous goods and MCA regulation communications – particularly how they apply to Turn-up-and-go routes and small vessels.

JP asked what can be done to mitigate the restrictions with reference to the two vessels that will service Islay. There is a potential for supply problems, and we would be happy to help as a Board. We understand that this has been sprung upon CalMac, but we should try to resolve it as soon as we can.

MS suggested taking the next steps on Dangerous Goods to a separate discussion with area management and local committees.

DM explained that a well-intentioned member of staff discussed the dangerous goods restrictions without the full brief and so we have found ourselves on the back foot with communication. This is the MCA applying rules which they could have applied some time ago, but derogation was applied. This was as much a function of the lifeline nature of the service but also the frequency of service. In some cases, the frequency or volume of service has changed and as we move forward in discussions with the MCA which immediately touches on new vessels, we need to work carefully and collaboratively to avoid a ripple effect across the network. We should

methodically work together on what we need and what our solution would be. We took the view that the best thing to do is to be open and work at a local level to see if we can make a case to MCA in an ordered fashion.

GR raised the point of electric vehicles (EVs) – do they fit into these restrictions?

MS confirmed that EVs do not figure into these measures.

BC noted that regulations are changing in the USA regarding the carriage of these vehicles.

RM noted that although the Board previously had a presentation delivered by Alex Cross regarding EVs, that if the topic is trending and shifting over time it would make sense to keep discussion open on it.

Digital Update – MS gave a brief update on work taking place in cycles of 3 months to update the system. Acknowledging that there are still areas needing addressed, the next update is in April, and we will be introducing the functionality to keep tickets in your phone wallet.

AC asked if it might be possible to arrange a separate session on digital.

MS agreed – this can be done outside of the usual quarterly meetings, online perhaps. [Action].

DH raised concern over major economic and capacity impact from planned maintenance being implemented. Reductions in service across the peak months of July and August will have significant impact across multiple routes and serious consideration should be given to suspending it during that period at least.

Finally, MS briefly updated on the Accessibility Advisory Board, deck space pilot schemes and CalMac's 175th Anniversary plans. Modern apprenticeship recruitment opened this week, and we look forward to welcoming islanders and giving opportunities to coastal communities.

JP asked about the waitlist pilot. MS promised to check on this with the national accounts team and feedback with a formal update for the Board [Action].

KM asked about recruitment for the new vessels. MS replied that the crew mostly come from other vessels in the fleet.

BC added a note about housekeeping as actions were covered. When minutes are received, it is important to review and feedback in advance of meetings.

5 Workplan Session

Paper for reference: FCB Prepared paper.

BC welcomed Pauline Blackshaw, Victoria Shaw, Fiona Galbraith and Donna Lockhart and introduced the workplan session. We will focus on the principal level of

6 main initiatives. Acknowledging that some of the wording may need to change, we will go through each one and discuss next steps.

1. Strategic

- a) Under 22 Travel – The Board discussed that this is a decision to be taken at Ministerial level. PB suggested that it is within the gift of members here to conduct a feasibility assessment to allow Ministers to decide on this. We may need to do this on a route-by-route basis, but a study should be done on how this can be done in practice. She suggested splitting this for mini busses also.

Owner – Kenny MacLean

- b) Cross party Agreement that all CHFS Ports and Infrastructure will be incorporated into CMAL ownership at the earliest – BF gave a brief overview of port and infrastructure ownership. There have been discussions in the past about the possibility of this before, however, it would require dedicated funding and could not happen quickly. BC agreed and emphasised that this is a strategic principle for this reason. PB supported having this aspiration described in writing, mapped out at a high level.

Owner – Bill Calderwood

2. Transparency

- a) All organisations are required to publicly evidence their decision making – BC emphasised that it is important for communities to know why decisions were made and why particular options were ruled out. BM mentioned that CMAL map decisions around the Islands Community Impact Assessment on the website. We must be clear about the difference between ‘engagement’ and ‘consultation’. Formal consultation will be documented and shared. PB added that CalMac are early in their approach to adopt a more transparent culture across the organisation but as part of CHFS3 are trying to embrace. We should put this on the list and identify what the improvements are. EW shared that Transport Scotland work to agreed strategies. It would be good to link these principles to published strategies and suggested wording such as ‘as in line with CHFS3’ for example.

Owner – Angus Campbell

- b) Public performance reporting should be improved to include key deliverables, targets and visible improvement action plans – BC mentioned the desire to create a working group to ensure that KPIs are appropriate and traceable. PB explained that CHFS3 KPIs are tracked and published on the website. We are also thinking of producing a quarterly report to track progress against the annual plan. A separate meeting to discuss what we have now, what the gaps are and what we

might do to change this. AC reported that it is difficult to find route performance on the website. PB stressed that this is a tripartite issue and should involve input from all parties.

Owner – Angus Campbell

3. Capacity

- a) CalMac publishes accurate lane capacity details – PB said that there is a capacity management plan within one of the requirements for CHFS3. For lane meterage, we have this information and can document it. We do need the plan though to look at ways to optimise capacity. It should be done as part of that with engagement with yourselves to develop the plan and devise initiatives. GR raised the concern of incorrect coordinates. RM asked how often we oversell capacity – is there space to be less risk averse? KM spoke about an improvement plan and asked about probabilities of not being able to book a ferry. JP added that weight is a consideration as well.
- b) Establish procedures to identify unmet demand – PB added that this is a topic we will be coming to the FCB to work on.

Owners – Gail Robertson for a) lane capacity and Kenny MacLean for b) unmet demand.

4. Resilience

- a) Performance reports should reflect gross failures including weather related events to establish action plans – PB shared the performance report [link](#) the meeting Teams chat.
- b) Flexible contingency planning to respond faster to disruptions

Owner – Richard Bentley

5. Customer Service

- a) Process and cultural improvements are put in place within operator organisation to improve routine experience of key stakeholders – BC explained that local adjustments can be made to improve the services, for example – weather windows. RM raised that a lot of cultural concerns may be resolved through improvements to the new Area Management structure. MS added that more can be done on localised disruption plans and build this into the enhanced engagement model. This is a work in progress.
RB questioned how much area management can push back on IOCC decisions.
GR suggested IOCC becoming customer facing and BC endorsed this because of the perception that they work remotely.

Owner – Colin Smith

- b) All partners should demonstrate a plan to improve engagement and feedback with island customers and show actions delivered from engagement – BF shared feedback from a recent Mull drop in to say that they would like to engage with a broader group within the community and we will do more of this. MS explained that a stakeholder engagement strategy is part of the CHFS3 agreement, and this is in the pipeline for us. Consistency of messaging is a large part of this.

Owner – Colin Smith

6. Governance

- a) The tripartite requires to actively support these priorities to enable meaningful progress to be demonstrated to communities

[Action – Review FCB paper and share with attendees with tweaks following today's discussion]. Suggestion for the FCB to meet in two weeks time to see what the changes are and put some more names in to share the work among us.

5. Young Islanders Network Update

The Board welcomed Mack MacArthur who provided an update on YIN Activity:

- The YIN is mentioned in the national islands plan which is worth a read.
- There is a residential for the YIN next week where everyone comes together, and another planned for October.
- A lot of new members have joined, and a few have joined the transport group.
- Collaborations with festivals across the islands such as TMF, HebCelt.
 - o GR said more than welcome to come to EDF also.
- Mack is visiting schools with the YIN Development Officer to get a view on what it is like.

6. MACS Update

A written update was shared with the Board, supplied by Anne MacLeod of MACS.

A.O.B

Chair Recruitment

RM updated on the recruitment of chair. Applications close on 5 March and there are several applications. TS and CMAL will support the interviews and Angus Campbell of Highlands and Islands Enterprise has offered his support.

BC raised the point of Cabinet approval and whether purdah may push the timeline out.

Future Meeting Locations

The Board agreed that June should be Glasgow based given that this will be the first meeting for the newly appointed Chair. September will be held on the CalMac network; to be decided in June and December will once again be held in Glasgow.

Meeting concluded with thanks to all for their contribution. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 5 June 2026: Glasgow**

#	Action	Owner	Status
1	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.	CFL	<u>06/06/2025</u> – 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.
2	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 to forward agenda. CW suggested someone from his team come along to present to the Board.	TS	<u>06/03/2026</u> EW offered to update at June meeting.
3	PORT ASKAIG – MARSHALLING AND LAYOUT CONSULTATION JP mentioned marshalling report that is yet to be provided regarding layout of Port Askaig. It is late in relation to when the new vessel will be entering service.	CFL	<u>06/03/2026</u> After suggestion that this action be closed, it was requested that it remain open pending a marshalling report that is still to be provided.
4	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.	CFL	AM confirmed that it is not possible, however; FCB members suggested that for trusted partners and account holders, there might be a reduction in the opening message to critical information only. MS agreed to speak with Caroline Black and Susan Weston.
5	Definition of Area Manager and Deputy Area Manager Roles The Board suggested that it would be good to have a definition of the roles of AM and DAM for communities to understand that structure. RM suggested inviting FMacR to the next meeting to discuss the structure and the on-call process surrounding it.	CFL	<u>06/03/2026</u> Finlay MacRae invited to FCB meeting scheduled for 5 June 2026 to update on Area Management / Deputy roles and structure.
6	Publication of Minutes & Website Update AS to arrange for latest minutes to be published and past members to be removed from the list on CFL website.	CFL	<u>06/05/2026</u> Minutes updated and membership details renewed. Closed.
7	MCA Regulations on Dangerous Goods – Small Vessels GR asked if the new small vessels will be impacted by the new MCA regulations relating to dangerous goods? MS agreed to check with head of technical authority.	CFL	
8	Public Timeline on Community Needs Assessments	TS	

	CW agreed to publish timeline for ongoing assessments. Recommendation to invite Richard Hadfield to a future meeting to talk about how the assessments are put together and to allow communities to see how decisions are made.		
9	Port Ellen Works BF offered to share further information on the project.	CMAL	BM shared information video with the Board. Closed.
10	Performance Dashboard A separate meeting is to be arranged with the FCB, Pauline Blackshaw and Michael Scobbie to discuss requirements.	CFL	
11	Deck Space Utilisation – Incorrect Statistics Michael Scobbie agreed to investigate this matter and return to GR offline.	CFL	
12	CalMac Maintenance Schedules – Communication Communities need a better understanding of what maintenance schedules will be used for and the benefits of it. The explanation should include rationale behind decisions also.	CFL	
13	Digital Session Separate session to be arranged on digital experience.	CFL	
14	Waitlist Pilot Scheme JP asked about the waitlist pilot. MS agreed to check with National Accounts team and feedback to the Board with formal update.	CFL	
15	CFL, CMAL and TS Contacts All parties agreed to put FCB principle owners in touch with relevant contacts at each organisation to support progress on the outlined priorities.	All	

Declarations of Interest – Ferries Community Board

Gail Robertson

Haulage Contractor in the CHFS3 Area, CalMac Customer Steering Group

Richard Bentley

Colonsay Lifeline Transport Group, Colonsay Community Council

Bill Calderwood

Arran Community and Voluntary Services, Arran Ferry Committee, CalMac Customer Steering Group

Angus Campbell

Chairman of Cumbrae Ferry Committee, Cumbrae Community Council, Consultancy work for CMAL on high voltage electrical supplies for new electric small ferries

Jim Porteous

Islay Community Council Secretary, Islay Community Council Ferry Committee Secretary, Islay RNLi Management Committee Chair, Islay Energy Trust, Ileach Newspaper, South Islay Development Director, Port Askaig Harbour Committee, CalMac Customer Steering Group

David Herriot

Bute Ferry Committee, Fyne Homes Board, Fyne Futures, Fyne Initiatives, Scottish Island Federation, Bute Shinty Club SCIO and Beachwatch Bute SCIO