

MINUTES of the FERRIES COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING
Session 1 - held on Thursday 1 September 2022 at 1600 hrs
in Lewis Meeting Room, Ferry Terminal Gourock and by video/audio conference

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

- Present:** Angus Campbell (AC) - (Chairman)
Bill Calderwood (BC)
David Herriot (DH)
Gail Robertson (GR)
Donnie Macinnes (DM)
Angus Campbell (AC2)
Rhoda Campbell (RC)
Kirsty MacFarlane (KMacF)
Joanna Peteranna (JoP)
Jim Porteous (JP)
- In attendance:** Robbie Drummond (RD) – Managing Director, CalMac
Louis de Wolff (LdW) – Director of HSQE, CalMac
Andrina McCrae (AMcC) – Executive Assistant, CalMac
- Apologies:** Ian Macfarlane (IM)
Eoin MacNeill (EMacN)
Camille Dressler (CD)
Ida Holmstrom (IH)
Murdo MacLean (MMacL)
Kevin Peach (KP)

ITEM

1 LEGISLATION CHANGES

LdW introduced himself and took the meeting through his presentation. RD commented that there is a whole green energy cycle strategy that should be being discussed, however, there is no indication this is being done. Things are being discussed on an ad hoc basis but there is no strategy.

LdW compared our system with that of Scandinavia where they have vast charging units. LdW has been told it would be difficult for us to do this because the vessels operate to slips.

DMacL asked if fitting scrubbers would help. LdW thought this would work in the short term.

KMacF congratulated CalMac for keeping the Board informed on this matter and thought this should be coming from CMAL or TS.

The view was expressed that the first priority is to get a ferry that is reliable and the green agenda should not be allowed to take away from the need for an efficient service. It was suggested the Board should highlight their concerns about these plans and their need to see some detail about how this is going to be achieved. Capacity and reliability remain the priorities.

ACTION

2 GOVERNANCE

AC welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Noted above.

2.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2.3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 MAY 2022

It was agreed that these minutes were an accurate record of discussions.

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KMacF queried the comments about dealing with islander prioritisation on a route-by-route basis. AC replied that the Board's view is that there is room within the network for route specific answers to this issue. Islands will have different options and they should be allowed to deal that these in their own way.

With regard to item 6 on page 11 of the notes of the previous meeting, relating to a comment made by Diane Burke with regard to block bookings utilisation, JP commented that block bookings utilisation had reduced from 81% in January to 79% in April and have since dropped to 73% and then again to 63%. This is a very serious problem for Islay which has been raised with the Minister and TS. Whilst the notes of the meeting reflected what had been at the time, in JP's opinion, the response given to the point he had raised at the last meeting was not factually accurate.

It was agreed that a new item "Matters Arising" should be added to the agenda for future meetings.

2.4 ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Before moving on to progress on previous actions, it was noted that RD had offered to share the options paper sent to TS, but this had not been done to date. This will be added to the action list.

Online Presence of the Board

It was agreed the Facebook page should be launched. Comments will be switched off, but direct messages will be permitted.

Route Performance Data

BC offered to contact CFL on KMacF's behalf to ask for data for Coll & Tiree to be broken out. BC

Joint Meeting – FCB/CFL/TS/CMAL

Efforts continue to find a suitable date for this meeting. AC

Due to time constraints, AC suggested starting to discuss Communities Reporting issues, on the understanding that this would continue at tomorrow's session.

3 COMMUNITIES REPORTING

Coll

KMcF advised that a survey had been carried out on Coll and an overwhelming percentage of people want some form of islander prioritisation. Reliability of the service is key, particularly for the agricultural sector which gets hit hardest by cancellations. There is a conflict between regulations around crew hours and the ability to provide a lifeline service.

DH commented that NFU talk to CFL regularly and BC added that there are discussions ongoing at local and national level with regard to the carriage of livestock.

With regard to the summer timetable, serious consideration is being given to asking CFL if they will ask for proof of a campsite booking before selling tickets to those travelling in campervans. DM outlined the system used on Tiree for campervans which works very well.

JP commented on crew hours and the issue of a relief crew which they had raised with the company through their MSP. JP read an email from RD regarding relief crewing

Cumbræ

AC2 advised there are still concerns around season tickets and SPT.

Generally, the service over the summer has been okay. There is still a lot of interest in the SVRP.

CMAL were due to refurbish Cumbræ slip, but it is not in their records.

Tiree

DM advised that Tiree had had a very good service over the summer. The main issue is locals not being able to get a booking, or being told they cannot get a booking but, if they turn up, the car deck has capacity. It had been suggested that perhaps 10 spaces should be reserved for locals.

Benbecula

JoP updated attendees on a meeting held by the Deputy First Minister which she had attended. He was very well briefed and spoke very positively about negotiations relating to additional tonnage.

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He said he would take away the message that there was a need for business support and that he would use his time as Finance Secretary to the best of his ability. He talked about the linkspan closures and commented that there was no choice – this work had to be carried out.

It is understood that LOTI will be carrying out trials at Lochmaddy tomorrow. A "Plan B" may be required for additional Uig-Lochmaddy sailing because the current plan covers the period of the equinox.

Uist

GR reported that the winter timetable is not out across the whole network because of the uncertainty over the Uig closure. The closure is a big issue. Local people and businesses have a total lack of trust and confidence in the service. Morale is low and there seems to be a lack of honesty from all parties involved. There is no evidence of communications improving when there is a disruption. No information was given about the Lochboisdale closure, but people heard about it on Heb News. A weight restriction at Lochboisdale and Uig means that heavy vehicles will have to travel via Ullapool/Stornoway.

The meeting closed at 1805 hrs.