

MINUTES of the FERRIES COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING
held on Friday 5 September at 09:00
at Transport Scotland, 177 Bothwell St, 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)
Mackenzie MacArthur (Mack)
Kenny MacLean (KMacL)
Christine Murdoch (CM)
Colin Smith (CS)
Richard Bentley (RB)

In attendance:

Morag McNeil (MMcN) - CMAL
Blair Moglia (BM) - CMAL
Brian Fulton (BF) - CMAL
Kevin Hobbs (KH) - CMAL
Edward Dowds (ED) - CMAL
Robert Morrison (RM) – CalMac
Ailsa Stephen (AS) – CalMac
Michael Scobbie (MS) - CalMac
David Gammie (DG) - CalMac
Alex Cross (AC) - CalMac
Stephen Wood (SW) - CalMac
David Hamill (DH) - CalMac
Ian Graham (IG) - CalMac
Chris Wilcock (CW) – Transport Scotland
Laurence Kenney (LK) - Transport Scotland
Anne MacLeod (AMac) - MACS

Apologies: Murdo MacLean (MMacL)

1 GOVERNANCE

1.1 Apologies for Absence
Apologies from Murdo MacLean.

Introductions

Introductions were made for new members, Christine Murdoch, Colin Smith, Richard Bentley and Kenny MacLean.

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. Other members declared membership of various community councils. Action taken for all declarations of interest to be submitted to AS for the record. [Action].

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**

General Update

KH covered paper, which was shared in advance, adding some further detail on the contracts for the all-electric ferries from Poland. Refund guarantees have been received, and we await one more which has until December to complete.

AC2 asked what the delivery dates were for the small vessels phase 1.

KH replied, the end of 2027- all going to plan. The detailed design phase has gone extremely well and there is a proposal to start work this year. They are two months ahead, but we do not know if all the machinery will be there in time to start early. Contractually we are looking at 4 months between vessels 1 and 2 and then a 3–4-month rhythm thereafter.

BF added that CMAL are in close discussions with SSEN. The plan they have in place means that the network power is likely to be in place for their arrival. We will minimise the gap as much as possible. There are backup generators, but it is looking positive.

KH explained the electric hybrid difference with new boats. There is concern from associates in Norway that making vessels completely electric is a risk. If there was a power outage, or a long distance to overhaul, we need the ability to run on diesel. The vessels can operate for up to 7 days with diesel. The diesel generator will generate electric which replaces a battery.

RB Asked about the Caledonian Isles repairs taking as long and the impacts of it.

KH said that there is an issue with the control pitch propellor system. Unprecedented time for repairs. He explained the technical issues of the vessel and the work which sees its critical components stripped and refurbished.

KMacF asked about the planned works for Oban and the consultation around this. We are aware of a lot of port users in Oban – are there any public meetings anticipated? It would be useful to accommodate anyone who wished to join online.

KH confirmed that they have not started – there will be an online way of joining. It tends to be more of a drop-in, but we can have an online version too.

BC asked about Ardrossan. The announcement this week was very welcome, and we look forward to progress. Requested a meeting on how to progress tender process. There is a desire to reach this point before parliament rises.

KH said that this is unlikely to reach this in time. It is an ongoing piece of work and there is some energy behind it now. The amount of money involved is eye-watering. The quicker we can have data on ground investigations the better. You cannot do detailed design without this, and therefore you cannot go out to tender.

MMcN said there is also a statutory process with the harbour authority. This is a lengthy process.

CW added that there is a strong Ministerial push for us to progress with this and take the project forward. Securing ownership is the priority now.

RM updated that there is an ongoing legal case for the Caledonian Isles with the shipyard on the Mersey.

AC2 asked about Cumbrae slip and modifications to the design. He thanked KH for the work on this.

KH updated that CMAL wrote to NZET committee. There is hope that MV Glen Rosa will be a matter of weeks.

3 **TS Update**

The Board welcomed Laurence Kenney.

CW updated; we are focussed on Ardrossan and supporting CMAL. We are also looking at final arrangements in the run-up to CHFS3, working closely with CFL, CMAL and others. Also, we are looking at the wider governance around this, which is continually evolving. Trevor [McIlhatton]'s team is now driving forward the northern isles new contract which begins 2028.

LOTI procurement and a few other procurements are currently being worked through with CMAL. Port Ellen is our next big port programme, also working through Cumbrae plans.

AC2 asked about tender for NIFS. CW confirmed market testing has been done – this will go to open procurement now.

CW: The team is working on Isle of Mull replacement(s) and we are working with the tripartite and community on what this might look like. We are starting to think about the Hebrides and the Clansman as well.

AC said that there is a real question around how the new vessels are used. Are we going to maximise the service? The islands community impact assessment discussion is upcoming, but are you satisfied that this has been done to capture the best possible information?

CW answered, it is an evolving picture to capture information and data. We want consultants onboard to drive this forward. This is only part of the overall process.

AC raised the concern that companies employed to engage have been anonymous to communities. There is an importance to the FCB, with its ability to reach into communities.

CW said that the opportunity to have feedback through the FCB will absolutely be grasped. We learned a lot from Gourock-Dunoon community needs assessments. I got most value from the public engagement sessions. They were done in a drop-in format where we got a lot of input from people and different organisations. They were well attended in Kilcreggan and Dunoon.

KMacF added, the timeline several years ago was that the community needs assessments would be completed January 2024. Community views would be established and fed into the new contract by then. Assume that this information is not there or forming the bedrock of the new contract. It is a question of process that some of us are concerned about. The drop-in session on the community needs assessment lacked engagement in a lot of places.

CW replied, the timeline for community needs assessments has absolutely slipped, and we would have liked them completed long before. It seems there are mixed views on the drop-in sessions. This helps us understand the service levels needed, but CHFS3 is a more flexible space that changes what we can adapt in the contract space.

AC2 asked when the timetables run by CalMac will be set for the community rather than for cost. The previous model didn't allow community needs to be brought in. There is an expectation that the new contract will allow for this. How do you see this working out?

CW said that there was never an embargo, but we had to consider cost neutrality, connecting travel and impacting other islands. I think that what will be helpful in the new contract is CFL having an annual business plan to deliver current spec, and how changes (such as new vessel introductions) will impact. This might be something that the FCB can contribute to as well.

JoP highlighted that community needs do change. Communities know what their needs are today, but not what they will be in the future. Are you well connected to large economic changes planned for regions?

CW said that there is a TS-wide piece of work looking at the impact of renewables across all our network – the ferry network, the road network, and particularly the bridge infrastructure. What do these big developments mean in terms of logistics? Discussions are taking place on this.

RB highlighted that the FCB raised a concern that the fundamental brief is that the contractors must get out to the islands and engage face to face. We got reassurances that this will be added to the brief. Has this been done? Do we have a say on the contractors work when it is completed? To comment and assess that. Will there be an opportunity to do that?

LK confirmed that consultation is happening around Oban, and we can check that the brief is updated. There are a few stages for community engagement. The FCB will have a view on this. LK agreed to share the methodology with the FCB [Action].

CW agreed – it would all be tested by those we work with, to check that it feels instinctively correct. This would happen before any changes.

Islands Community Impact Assessment

RET Pricing Policy

CW confirmed that the first minister has been clear in parliament and reiterated that RET is not changing and will continue to be the basis of fares.

CM added that Kilcreggan service remains is the most expensive per mile on the network.

BC asked about current inflation levels and if this will be more regimented in CHFS3 – the 10% uplift.

CW said that the contract is straightforward on the fares structure. There is a marker of CPI in May, operators write to us formally in June and we have a time frame to return to them with an answer.

BC asked about under-22 travel. It is appropriate for almost every other mode of transport, so who can influence this consistently for ferries? TS? The operator?

CW said that Ministers understand the call for this. For us, we have Ministers who have moved this forward in recent announcements, extending the under 22 voucher scheme to a greater degree.

RM expressed that CalMac are agnostic on this issue and that the FCB would do well to continue to push for this.

KMacF asked about the process over the decision of RET. There are a range of views on the removal of RET or otherwise, but the process is concerning. The government is foregoing millions of revenue by keeping RET for all traffic. We are concerned about the implication that prices and fares can have. The process is not perceived well.

CW noted this point and said that the First Minister made a straightforward statement on this policy. There are other mechanisms to look at how we can prioritise islanders, etc which might answer this concern, and we continue to work on these areas.

KmacL reiterated concern of the under-22 ferry travel. There should be growth on the islands. Now, it's more about survival than growth. For the under22s to be able to move is important. This is critical. Is that conversation happening at government level to say is this going to help growth.

CW confirmed that the ICP did capture under22s feedback. The buses' equivalent on ferries was what was asked for.

DH raised the point of inconsistency between islands. Mack, for example, cannot go to Coll with the same ease that people can go from Eriskay to Barra.

BC agreed, when you look at some of the volumes involved, it would be good to see consistency.

4 Joint Discussion

AC opened the topic of CHFS3 contract and the position of the Ferries Community Board.

Raised a concern that the transparency and energy towards this has not been seen. We acknowledge the work on new vessel builds, however today we hope to have a discussion to see where things might change and where the community voice sits. The role of the Ferries Community Board is critical as a means for the community voice to influence the direction of travel. AC spoke of his work engaging with the network and challenged as to why more of the outcome of this hasn't been taken into consideration.

CW reflected on the Ministerial view, aware that AC had spoken to the Cabinet secretary several times. Ministers are clear that there is a role for the FCB and that there is a collective voice which is valued. There is a place and a requirement for the FCB in the new contract. We are trying to strike a balance in allowing the voice to be heard and to grow. There are key areas around this for KPIs. There is still scope for change and as we go through the contract, we'd like to see the FCB as a player.

AC said that the FCB have no outcomes or view of the KPIs which is frustrating given the work that has taken place. For us, when asked what the 80% means, nobody knows for sure.

BC said that the majority view is that KPI reports are structured to confuse, not to inform. We are trying to be constructive and drive change. How will this move forward constructively?

CW agreed to share KPIs if they had not already been shared. We have tried to put a lot into those, and we need to make sure that this can (a) be recorded and (b) helpful to drive the service. We have had feedback on the gateway review process which showed that the KPIs are system wide and not necessarily operator only and I think that's where we need to be.

BC cautioned over having too many KPIs. It's in the title – 'Key' indicators.

AC said that this is about communities. Communities cannot see progress and measure things for themselves.

RM echoed CW's point. The future of the FCB is massively important and a large role in the next contract. I think we can improve things in that the FCB are left to their own devices and going forward we need more collaboration between the tripartite and yourself, more support.

AC asked where the FCB tie into the tripartite, rather than the operator.

CW said that in terms of payments and support, it would be the operator. It is for us to 'agree' the work programme for the Board going forward. I would see the tripartite supporting this and providing access to what you need. The FCB should be able to seek assurance, and test. I expect that you will continue to lobby and campaign and drive for change on topics such as under-22s. We will help to support you, but it will be driven by the FCB.

AC said that our starting point is representing the needs and feeling of the community. For too long, nothing has changed. We do not get feedback on plans going forward, so we have no assurance.

LK referred to a service enhancement plan which the operator will be obliged to prepare in the new contract and the FCB will be involved in this.

CW said we are still getting technical agreement with CalMac to get this over the line. We can share sections of it and our view. The other thing I would like to do is reflect where we have taken onboard changes from the FCB. Some feel small but are not trivial. For example, the system being unable to distinguish between two different kinds of customer.

RM commented on the recent discussions with FCB being more productive now than they have been previously. The idea that we move the Board forward in the tripartite will work well.

BF added that it is about working collaboratively. The role of the FCB is not to mark homework. CalMac are accountable to Transport Scotland. CMAL too. For the communities, where it becomes problematic is that you are bringing community views to a Board – how do you see the tangible output of that. CFL will not be accountable to this Board, but in a collaborative way, see the output.

AC said that communities are asking for knowledge on the direction of travel. This is an organisation that is coming into government, and the views should be more influential.

CW cautioned not to get hung up on the language. The FCB have influence and are bringing community voice to the table. The role around shaping KPIs is something we can do with those voices at the table.

KMacF added support for AC's statements. The creation of the board came when CalMac was given the contract in 2016. It was one of the elements that swung the contract in CalMac's favour. The Minister made a statement and raised expectations of the new contract. There are other interest groups out there who are putting forward views. As we approach 1 October there are lots of questions about what the new contract will change.

AC reflected that the last contract had many KPIs. We want an easily identifiable set of KPIs or targets and sensibly go through the contract period to measure. We don't want complex matrixes, just measurable KPIs.

CW said that the contract is a commercial contract. In the new contract, that layer of performance deduction goes. Therefore, it is very much a case of what are the performance indicators and service levels we want to see. What is dropping off and why? This will be a change for us and how we deal with that.

BC said that we are 4-5 weeks away from the new contract. At this stage before CHFS2 we knew a lot more at this stage than we do now. Until you have a measurement and understand the performance,

we understood that this contract would be to deliver the needs of communities. What can be delivered, when, and how are we performing towards that? Every KPI should have an improvement plan.

CW said that there are a few requirements to be developed, and various plans being worked on to work with communities. Allow us to capture the KPIs piece and share this with you. We will draw out some of these other improvements, but it will not all be on day1.

JP spoke about KPIs and that if FCB members are feeding back to communities about KPIs then they need to have seen them and understood them. If communities are aware of performance, they should also be aware of actions taken as a result. CalMac is indirectly accountable to communities and communities must know how performance is being monitored relative, and know what actions and timescales are in place to address anything that needs to be addressed.

CW said that CMAL and TS are equally accountable to communities as CFL. I do not disagree with anything you said and that is where we want to move toward.

RM agreed about the point of accountability and added that the annual work plan could be a lot better. Working collaboratively to build and agree an annual workplan for the FCB to work towards during the year. Areas where the FCB can be accountable. If we agree the workplan we all agree what we are each responsible for.

KMacL said that he can see a way forward to work together – that's why we are all here. I am here to offer insight to help the projects move forward. Communities will not be interested in some KPIs – HR etc. Capacity and timetables are good for communities to know about. From there we should have an improvement plan agreed. What does the Scottish government expect of the Board if we are not content with an improvement plan? Do we go back to our elected representatives, or do we report to them every quarter?

CW if an improvement plan ever comes forward, we should collectively stand behind it – I would hope we could do that. IF that doesn't work, then we bring it back round the table. If the Board is not aligned with proposals, then the Board will have a regular engagement directly with the Minister, in ways which you've probably had in recent years, but it would be good to formalise this.

CS added that we should not confuse accountability in this discussion with accountability in the contract. I like the idea of the workplan, but a lot of things can change within that and operational/strategic issues need to be discussed. There needs to be a mechanism to discuss these things, as everything changes.

RM agreed, there must be provision to account for changes as we go.

MMcN noted that there is a feeling of 'here we go again, same old'. And the second point is around communication and how we improve this. For the first one, we will not know until we try. This is incumbent on all of us to improve this. The communication piece needs to be far more formalised because it gets shuffled, deferred, and nothing happens. Then the feeling is that nothing comes back. There is a real distinction between CHFS. This could be clearer in the document. What is the strategic role of the Board, and what is the role in terms of looking, monitoring and having input into the contract.

BC added that something must take place quarterly or monthly to draw this together. It cannot be annual. Area managers will be critical to deliver performance and service improvements that drive the KPIs.

AC2 wording around accountability – communities are looking for us to reflect their views. The number on the board is the other point – we are volunteers and welcomes engagement with the contract, but I think we should be able to review and comment on issues and flex our numbers with the workload expected of a voluntary board. Other public sector committees tend to be remunerated.

CW said that he sees the tripartite as helping to shape communications. The work plan is not just actions for the FCB but will include pieces of work you can expect from TS, for example. Up to 12 members with potential to flex if required. There is a cost associated with managing a Board.

MMcN commented that large Boards, from experience are difficult to work with – 25 people was difficult to work with.

AC questioned why the Board can't be left to manage numbers.

KMacF raised the point of how communities will perceive the new contract. From memory, we have already had a timetable consultation which takes us into this winter. That 'sameness' has been noted. The Area Operations Managers (AOMs) has been welcomed and has led to quicker communications

but it's not clear what happens to the feedback that we give to them. It is not obvious that it generates change, modification or anything different. It centres on credibility. There are a lot of expectations about what is going to come in on 1 October and the expectation that it will be better and make a difference. Is it unreasonable to ask if we should have seen some changes filtering in already? The credibility of the Board lies with the communities that we serve and represent. If this doesn't work, ultimately it reflects on the new contract.

GR echoed Morag's point of 'same old'. If CFL are accountable to TS, why are you not accountable to the other customer, which is communities? This comes from my community. There is a feeling of no accountability.

BF agreed – it's contractual accountability. Offered a general statement before having to leave. It's challenging to get right – a positive reflection. If you go back to the beginning of the FCB, this is a completely different thing. It has changed dramatically and there is a lot of positive conversation coming out and varied opinions.

RB asked Chris about the words 'commercial contract'. The transport secretary's statement said it's a fundamental change by shifting from a commercial contract to one that is more focussed on communities. How will this new contract reflect that it will shift focus to communities. Is there something in the contracts that will echo that sentiment, an example or a synopsis?

CW replied, the key driver for the direct award and one of the key benefits was flexibility that we have not seen in previous contracts. We have had to be very cautious in the past to agreeing to substantive changes because it might have impacted the original contract and bid process. We have flexibility to make changes to the contract in a way that we could not do before. Our ability to make timetable changes and bring in additional costs and funding is better too. There is flexibility here. Other changes to make it more community focussed came through in the contract year 9 extension. CalMac brought forward enhancement and change plan. The area network structure was part of this. My hope in this is that it should drive a more direct voice and ear for communities. I would hope there would be more autonomy in local decision making also.

RM agreed that there is a great difference in the Monday morning operations update. Engagement is ramping up and there have been great improvements. It's notable that we are seeing more engagement from the managers as they settle in, but they're moving in a good direction.

MS added that area managers can get frustrated as they may feel like messengers now. However, the general sentiment is that communication and accessibility has improved. We have asked AOMs to go and look at what more autonomy they could have. The feedback point has come up. We could do a lot of things proactively.

RB said that the government wants a more community focussed approach which is great. Giving your contractor flexibility to enable that is a good way. If you give them flexibility to change and do things, this will cost. Has the government committed more money to allow this flexibility to happen?

CW explained that CFL will now have an annual budget to manage from the start of the year. We will work with CalMac regularly to monitor this. If there are asks that come up within the year, we will look for CalMac to accommodate that with what they have, or request more depending on needs.

AC said it is a culture of making decisions that we would like to see changed also. The structure change with AOMs is still not understood – keen to see examples in time of where the decision-making process has in fact changed for different outputs in different parts of the network.

DH said that the first opportunity to show change is the consultation for next summer's timetables. It would be good to have more collaboration with the operator. For communities to see change at that first opportunity would be good.

BC raised the point of statistics being audited before made available.

CW said that this may be something to do with performance reduction scheme. My team are working on a set of legal agreements between CalMac.

RM confirmed the data being late is to do with this scheme. Is there an opportunity to fast track this? Perhaps.

AC2 commented on summer timetable consultation. What is the timescale for CalMac's business plan being submitted annually. Where does this fit?

CW said that they could be out of sync, and we need to think about how to align that.

MS suggested that we would like to come out and do the consultation in the spirit of how we want the contract to be.

AC2 raised the point about community benefit. What we are looking for is whether there is an economic benefit to communities, and this is part of the case we want to take forward.

MMcN added that what is likely driving the focus on CHFS3 during this meeting is that the terms of reference are vague. What is the flow of information between parties and what is expected of the FCB in response to that. What are the key areas of the contract that the FCB are going to be asked to go with. We need something that sits behind this and is more granular, not to clutter the terms of reference we have here. It must be written and signed so that all parties agree to it and know what they are working with.

CM spoke of Kilcreggan service being improved after speaking with CalMac. Our timetable was radically changed, and we can now go to Glasgow in good time so thank you.

6 CalMac Update

Alex Cross introduced.

AC presented slides on screen.

CS commented on not seeing a difference in loading with electric vehicles but certainly noticing them loaded on next to the firefighting equipment.

JP added that a reconditioned battery is more susceptible to fires than a new one. Is there any warning that a damaged EV needs to make a special booking or make notice – is there something highlighted there as a safeguard to prevent them getting on? Some shipping companies have banned them due to concerns. That also raises questions in the public perception here. When considering buying a new car, is an EV worth the risk that if something goes wrong, they may be banned from ferry travel.

AC replied, reconditioned batteries do not appear to be any more risk than a new one. They test the cells closely when they recondition them. The point about banning vehicles – we have worked closely with the chamber of shipping on this and do not believe them to be more dangerous than a conventional car. If we introduced a ban, we would effectively be stopping people from having an EV on the islands. No indication that a ban would be enforced, and we do not anticipate ever doing it in the future. We are looking at the booking system, which does not currently identify EVs or prompt owners of damaged vehicles to note this.

GR asked if there was a concern with more commercial vehicles?

AC answered no, they are no more concern than other vehicles because of the battery.

KMacF asked about the under-car drencher. The car deck becomes clogged; how do crews manoeuvre this equipment when the car deck is full?

AC crews are trained to manage fires on the car deck. Identify the fire early, CCTV, fire patrols and sensors. Then use the drencher system to suppress the fire. We try to avoid the crew going into the fire. They have the equipment if they feel it is safe to do so.

CM asked about hybrids. Are they at higher risk than conventional or electric?

AC confirmed no, no greater risk, but they have fuel and a battery, so they become similarly risky. The fire fighting and systems remain the same.

BC thanked Alex – is this available on CalMac's website? If you book, being asked about it. Some routes are unbookable so how to people planning to tour know?

AC agreed to take this away [Action – MS].

Area Manager Introductions

David Hamill, Interim Area Manager for North Hebrides
Ian Graham, Area Manager for South Hebrides
Stephen Wood, Area Manager for Argyll

BC raised that there is perhaps an opportunity to define the roles of DAM and AOM for communities. [Action – CFL].

GR raised the question about what happens if an Area Manager is away for whatever reason – it should be robust enough that when you need them, their phone will be transferred through to someone else who can respond.

RM suggested inviting Finlay MacRae along to the next meeting to talk about the structure and what is in place to ensure communities have that contact. He can discuss the hierarchy and recording actions across the network. [Action – CFL].

MS agreed – we are working on something that shows what communities are asking on and what we are doing in response. How to translate this into a system, we are not yet sure, but we can invite Finlay to talk about the 'on-call' piece.

eBooking Issues – David Gammie [DG]

DG updated on eBooking, sharing presentation on screen.

He summarised, volume of incidents is falling year on year, and they are categorised based on severity. These then have a priority level set. We are having more stability now, but issues remain to be fixed. Ebooking is 7 different technologies working together, so one element can be down, and this will impact the other parts. Google and Apple pay now exist and by the end of the year we will have digital wallet.

He continued, a full test cycle is 144 days' worth of effort. However, I reviewed the regression testing and automated 87% of this. This reduces the cycle down to 2 days. We want to get improvements out faster for customers. The quality needs to be good. At a platform level we haven't had any issues in the last few months. We want any incident to be recovered in an hour and we prepare for this.

Finally, DG showed the IT roadmap on screen. Priorities for the team.

1. Capacity – amending capacity coefficients of the vessels. We are testing now, and 10/16 vessels testing can accommodate more. The others went the other way.
2. Integration – we want closer integration with rail and sail and from a bus perspective as well.
3. B2B portal for self service for national account customers.

7 Anne Macleod Update – MACS

AC welcomed AMac from MACS.

AMac updated on recent visit with TS intern to experience travel for disabled passengers. She expressed a desire to get out onto the network to work on a disability standard. As an able-bodied person, the travel experience will be very different than for a disabled passenger. There was a tour with the vessel's Chief Steward. There are disabled toilets on deck 6, which we never knew about, and it is near the lift which is better than the toilet on deck 5.

She continued, the dog seating area has expanded, and accommodations have been made very well for people who travel with their dog. However, the same service does not exist for disabled passengers – there is no signposting on where to go etc as there is for pet owners. We usually do not take the wheelchair onboard because it is so heavy, but I decided to ask for assistance. That was no problem and everything went smoothly. I am looking forward to the TS intern's report. Hopefully something will come from it, and it's good to have different organisations working on this together.

AMac said that MACS have had input into the design stage of the new freight-flex vessels. It is great to be involved at this stage. Finally, the ferries accessibility fund has re-opened but now includes aviation to and from the islands. My concern towards the budget is what it will be. We hope it will be increased to consider additional demands from aviation, but MACS are well involved in the application process before the decision making takes place. She also mentioned seeking members for the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland.

AC thanked AMac for her update and asked about the online ticketing system. Is it worth connecting MACs to David Gammie to give firsthand feedback on that?

AMac said that Demi Wylie from CalMac meets quite regularly, and she is aware of all issues. She is keen to sort this out and is already on the case.

MS offered to share the recruitment for the Mobility and Access Committee to CalMac's followers to spread the word. [Action].

AMac agreed that this would be greatly appreciated.

AC thanked AMac once again and mentioned that Murdo (Maclean) had been involved with conversations recently.

Block Bookings

GR stepped out of the meeting for this item due to earlier declaration of interest as a haulier.

MS presented on block bookings. We are on track for introducing a no-show charge and a late cancellation charge as of the start of the winter timetable. There has been robust consultation, and this is a case of enforcing existing terms and conditions – there are no real changes. We have 113 block booking customers, and they have a 2-week window on bookable routes to say if they need space. This is then held for them, but there is a penalty for not using the space. This has not been enforced, when it should have been.

He continued, that some FCB members gave their experience and helped to understand what drives unused deck space. The second most contributing factor was commercial vehicles. We also found that generally, a high number of sailings have HGVs not turning up and the space left is very noticeable when 4 or 5 car spaces could be freed up.

He continued to discuss the outcomes from the work on this, including a move from the national accounts teams to the operations team.

KMacF said that she had hopes of the 24hr cancellation window being pushed back to two days to allow people more options to book. This can lead to quite a bit impact in these situations. Have you already modified what can be block booked?

RM replied that the view would be that this will be much more closely managed than in previous years. They will be able to react much more swiftly, which we haven't been able to do in the past as robustly as we would like. Monitoring booking use versus what occurs will be much more closely monitored.

MS added that it is in our terms and conditions to be able to remove any haulier who consistently does not follow the requirements.

AC2 asked specifically how it will be monitored.

MS replied that he does not know the specific KPIs that the team will be following but can certainly find out and provide more detail.

JP welcomed the changes but acknowledged that there is probably a lot more to do to enforce these behaviours. There are huge benefits to be derived from applying these terms and we thank Neil Hunter for a lot of good work on this and he has a good understanding of what the situation is.

MS thanked JP for his comments. We are expediting the waitlist piece.

BC reported that he and GR had written to Alan Hood several times now with no response to confirm information.

RB added his experience from Colonsay. 24hrs is concerning – hauliers plan things way in advance and 24 hours could be longer. Will you act against the hauliers, because there is still space for the system to be exploited. What is your next step if people consistently break this?

MS agreed – service disruption has been blamed for not enforcing this but that is not fair. We will now be able to real-time monitor how commercial customers behave. A lot of the feedback from customers was that they don't plan that far in advance, but we will have more control over this now. Thanks all for your candidness.

BC added a final comment; 24hrs is a start. Is this only for commercial or can it be applied to all traffic? We know that people double book to be sure and then cancel space.

MS did not know. It is only block booking for now, but I wonder if there is something we can implement to stop customers doing that.

AC concluded this item and thanked MS for the information.

9 YIN Update

Mack provided an update from the Young Islands Network.

- Louise McQuade has taken over from Naomi MacDonald
- We had a Transport Challenge 2023. We are basing this on ferries and connectivity. Transport and Integration manager at CalMac was being recruited – is there now someone responsible for this at CalMac? [RM agreed to find out and get contact details – for now, Victoria Shaw, Area Manager picks up aspects of this while we recruit – Action].
- National Islands Plan – YIN involved in discussions here for under 22 travel. A draft will be sent at the end of the year, and I can share this with the Board.
- Chris Wilcock sent out a letter regarding an extension of the under-22 travel and the introduction of free ferry travel. There are two schemes for 16–21-year-olds, inter-island. I'm not sure if this has yet been initiated.
- A safety report has been shared – Mack asked for Victoria's contact details. [Action].

CS commented on ferry travel seeming relatively safe compared to onward modes of transport.

KMacL asked what age islanders tend to travel on their own?

Mack said that at 13, he takes the ferry to Oban regularly and feels quite confident making his way.

KMacL was glad to hear this, as it is important young islanders feel that they can go where they need to go, as freely as mainland people of the same age.

KMacF thanked Mack for his update. When the new booking system came in, did you have to have an adult to buy a ticket?

Mack confirmed – yes.

AC2 said that this is still the case – an adult needs to purchase the ticket online.

Review of Actions and Next Steps

AC began a discussion on next steps.

- We need visibility of the operating contract and the KPIs. We need them to be crucial to the operation and meeting community needs.
- Action – the Board are to write to Cabinet Secretary of Transport to invite a discussion on the concerns. Tie it to the work promised by TS.

Meeting concluded with thanks to all for their contribution.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 2026 Meeting dates to be determined.

#	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	Closed.	<i>December 2023</i>
2	EBOOKING FIXES & AR TURAS MEETING CFL agreed to share a list of fixes [eBooking] with the FCB.	CFL	29/08/2025 - IT Director, David Gammie attended FCB Meeting on 5 September to update members. Closed.	<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	This item was covered in eBooking agenda item on 5 September. Closed.	<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	<u>07/03/25</u> - 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	<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. 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	Work on the remit of the FCB is ongoing, and this support was not required, though TS did pick up with SFT at an early stage. Closed.	<i>December 2024</i>
8	COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS	CW	<u>06/09/25</u> - CW suggested inviting a member of his team to join the FCB meeting in December. Richard Hadfield to be invited	<i>December 2024</i>

	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.		to the next board to cover the granular detail of where this project is.	
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	Brian Gordon in touch with KMacF and position is now understood. Closed.	<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>29/08/2025</u> - ferrycommunityboard@gmail.com now live. Please request access. Contact posters drafted. <u>05/09/2025</u> - Update required for CFL website on contact. Members to volunteer Gmail access.	<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	<u>29/08/2025</u> - Moving forward, this should be a natural discussion point for new area management. Closed.	<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	<u>02/07/2025</u> - KH contacted BC with an update. Closed.	<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	CW shared an update in advance of the September meeting. Closed.	<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	CW		<i>June 2025</i>

	distinguish between customers by post code – do we host focus groups? Check what other organisations do, such as Scotrail.			
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	This has been shared with the Board. Closed.	<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	<u>29/08/2025</u> - Bus interconnect options will fall to the new CalMac Transport Integration Manager. This will require coordination with island-based bus services. Update to be provided post 5 September from CalMac's IOCC department due to main POC being on leave currently.	<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	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.	<i>June 2025</i>
20	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST Board members agreed to submit all declarations of interest and involvement in other community groups to AS for the record.	All		<i>September 2025</i>
21	Community Feedback Consultancy Work RB asked about community needs assessments, particularly the brief given to consultants carrying out the work. Will the FCB and communities see the output of this and have an opportunity to comment? LK confirmed that the brief has been updated and he offered to share the methodology.	LK		<i>September 2025'</i>
22	Electric Vehicle Bookings	AC/MS		<i>September 2025</i>

	BC asked if there was information available on the CalMac website relating to electric vehicle bookings. Having the information on the website would be useful for customers.			
23	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.	RM		<i>September 2025</i>
24	Recruitment for Mobility and Access Committee Scotland MS offered to share recruitment for the Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland	MS		<i>September 2025</i>
25	Young Islander Contact Details RM promised to provide contact details for Victoria Shaw to Mack receive the safety report from Young Islander's network. Also to share contact details of the transport integration manager.	RM		<i>September 2025</i>