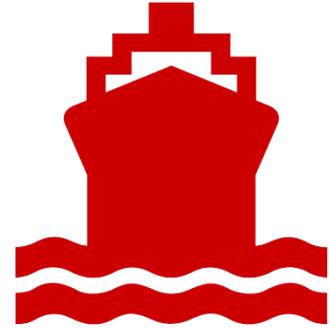


Mull & Iona Ferry Committee

By Email. 27/5/19

To Clelland Sneddon, Chief Executive Argyll & Bute Council.

Copied to key Council officers; local Councillors; Paul Wheelhouse MSP (Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands); Mike Russell MSP; Robbie Drummond (MD, Caledonian MacBrayne Ferries); key Transport Scotland officers; Brendan O'Hara MP; Mull & Iona Community Councils and other community groups.



Dear Mr Sneddon,

I had expected a follow up email from you setting out your next steps to gain *'the support of the local community rather than appear at odds with those we are trying to support'* given that you felt the *'follow on information'* (FOI responses) *will help us towards that goal'*. You and I have had the FOI responses for over 3 weeks, plenty of time for us both to analyse and consider. In the absence of any further communication from you I am left with no choice but to yet again take the initiative. I make no apology for the length of this email – this is a critical issue.

You will recall this correspondence arose following the unprovoked collapse of a section of fendering on Craignure Pier in early April. This collapse, and the subsequent removal of further unsafe timbers give the community significant cause for concern about how Argyll and Bute Council are managing and maintaining the Craignure Pier. It is difficult for us to have faith in, support, and work with an organisation which makes no attempt to respond to our concerns, or provide evidence that our concerns that the pier is being mismanaged, or indeed, not managed at all, are unfounded.

The Mull and Iona Ferry Committee, of which I am chair, focus on facts – not suppositions or assumptions, which is why we have supplemented your FOI response to my letter of 8th April with some Freedom of Information requests of our own. Thanks to this and previous requests, we now have copies of:

- a) Port Weekly Checklists from January 2012 – March 2019
- b) All email correspondence between CalMac and the Council concerning defects and repairs on Craignure Pier over the same time period
- c) Third Party Defect Reports from January 2015 to date
- d) Arch Henderson Principal Inspection Report November 2017
- e) AECOM South Berthing Study January 2018
- f) Various publicly available documents such as the Council's Marine Asset Management Plan and Capital Planning Pack.

You will be familiar with all these documents.

We are also in receipt of detailed financial accounts for Craignure Pier, which show that it generates significant income for the Council.

The **net profit** from pier dues since 2010 alone has amounted to **£8.5 million**.

Since the introduction of RET **annual net profit has reached £1.5 million**.

Despite this significant income we also know that only **£204,757** has been spent in repairs and maintenance for the period of **6 years**, 2012/13 – 2017/18 during which time you took an income of **£7,366,172 gross** (£6,792,816 net)

That is a spend of just 2.8% of the income from the pier over 6 years.

Mr Sneddon, please can you personally explain to me why so little has been spent on basic preventative and ongoing maintenance given the volume of data you have regarding the poor and ever deteriorating condition of this lifeline pier and the copious income stream you enjoy?

After reading through all of the documents, it is impossible not to conclude that the decline and failure of Craignure Pier is a **direct result of poor management and lack of investment** on the part of Argyll and Bute Council. The fender collapse of April 8th is a symptom of the chronic neglect which your previous response on the issue does nothing to address.

Let's get into the detail.

From reading all of the documents referenced above, it seems that there is no Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) system in place; or if there is one it is manifestly failing. Through the seven years of weekly checklist reports and the accompanying emails that CalMac staff have submitted to you, it is clear that the Council's approach to maintenance of the pier is completely reactive, i.e. you rely on CalMac staff telling you when something has broken, rather than having any competent system of inspection and preventative maintenance that would prevent the failures from happening. **Furthermore, it is clear that when these faults are reported, you take an inordinate length of time to take action and remedy the issue.**

Below are simple illustrations of this systematic failure, as it relates to key aspects of the pier – for each of these headings some obvious and basic questions arise. For ease, I have listed the questions at the end of this letter.

1. Proactive inspection and PPM.

There is no evidence in all the documents we have examined that any PPM system worthy of the name is in place. In the FOI response of 2nd May it was stated that there are regular inspections **"...as and when required, but a min of every 2 years. Principle structural inspections every 6 years, last carried out ... Nov 2017"**.

We have 1 question, listed at the end, on this subject.

2. Fendering & Structure.

The Port Weekly Checklists from 2012 to December 2018 report a fender fault of one kind or another for 345 weeks out of 364. ie, **for only 19 weeks out of those 7 years did the weekly checklists report that there were no fender faults.**

Furthermore, when faults have been notified to the Council, they have routinely taken a very long time to be fixed. For example, (the Port Weekly Checklists have each fault/issue detailed separately, for ease we're calling these 'fault lines')

Fault line: **"Horizontal beam – now gone! Threaded rod now missing. Two eyes on gates missing. Lead flashing pulling off top of one fender."** Appears on **SIXTY** consecutive weekly checklists from January 2012 to 24th March 2013. Over that period, further fender faults stack up without being remedied, until prior to eventual repair the fault line reads **"Horizontal beam - now gone! Threaded rod now missing. Two eyes on gates missing. Lead flashing pulling off top of one fender. Suspect a trellex is damaged. 5 facings damaged in high winds. 2 more damaged ... during storms."**

Fault line: **"Vertical beams loose at linkspan end"** appears on **ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-THREE** consecutive weekly checklists before being closed out on 28/02/16. (These would appear to be the same beams that in April this year voluntarily fell off) Again, over that 2/3 year period, additional faults are added until finally just before repair the fault line reads **"vertical beams loose at linkspan end Linkspan front beam damaged. Two fender tops damaged. Rotten horizontal fender knocked off by LOTG"**

The fault line **"Trellex fenders loose at bottom. One thought to be held on by one bolt"** appears on **EIGHTY-FOUR** consecutive weekly checklists before being closed out in January '19. Over that 19 month period, further faults were amassed until finally it read **"trellex fenders loose at bottom (now fallen off). One thought to be held on by one bolt. South side fender damaged by 3rd party vessel x2"**

From the above, it is clear that fender faults are frequently reported, but rarely fixed. Not only do the weekly checklists make the chronically poor condition of the fendering clear, but also from the Arch Henderson report of November 2017, the fendering on the South berth comes in for particular criticism: **"The fendering on the south side is variable, with some of the fender piles in reasonable condition whilst others are in very poor condition to the extent that they would not be effective if berthed against"**

Of the roundhead fendering, it says **"The ... third fender has been ripped from the concrete, shearing the connecting bolts... The first fender is partially detached from the UHMWPE facing. ... It is recommended that the two damaged fenders are repaired as soon as practical, if left as they are, they will continue to deteriorate, possibly leading to loss of the fender, which may affect operations at the terminal."**

This round-head fendering fault is the same referenced in the weekly checklists that went un-repaired for 19 months. Such was the concern from the local CalMac management, that this essential repair was the subject of repeated emails. Obvious exasperation was expressed in an email of 23rd October '18: **"You**

previously advised that ... work would commence on the Trellex fendering at the start of the winter timetable. As we are now into this can you please advise when works will commence? The vessel Masters are expressing concern over these and advise that [it] ... could have an impact on our ability to provide our service"

There are also several instances in the email correspondence and reporting forms where reference has been made not just to damage, but to **decay and rot**. For example, in an email of 20/7/15 from CalMac: *"Boat knocked off one of the horizontal fenders with its inflatable fender. The fender was rotten where the bolt goes through it. There have been issues with a number of these fenders. Could you please arrange to have the rest checked"* However, the fault line that appeared on the weekly checklist at the same time referencing this rot remained on the checklist without being closed out for a further **32 weeks**.

What these examples of slow reactive repairs and lack of spares clearly demonstrate is the absence of any **effective** Planned Preventative Maintenance system. Your marine department appears to be relying on the 'Port Weekly Checklist', a form which is clearly intended just for reporting breakages and accidents, as the sole means of monitoring the condition of the pier. An email that highlights this dysfunctional process from 17/4/18: *"When Coruisk arrived yesterday we noticed that the fender on the east end of the pier still hasn't been repaired and the one next to it is also damaged now. There are bolts sticking out of both fenders and the one next to it is also damaged now.... Which have the potential to puncture/damage our belting... please carry out repairs asap"*

In the FOI response of 2nd May it was stated that there are regular inspections *"...as and when required, but a min of every 2 years. Principle structural inspections every 6 years, last carried out ... Nov 2017"*. If that is the case, then it would be illuminating to read them and whether corrective actions were taken afterward.

Please refer to our 11 questions regarding fendering and structure.

3. **Lighting.**

In the weekly checklists submitted by CalMac between January 2012 and December 2018, lighting faults have been reported on 319 weeks out of 364. **In other words, over that seven year period, the pier lighting was only reported fault-free for just 45 weeks.** Emails from CalMac to the Council repeatedly request lighting improvements and repairs. Lighting faults are a safety issue of considerable concern to CalMac as highlighted by an email of 15/10/15: *"The guys are having great difficulty in seeing the heaving lines being thrown during the hours of darkness. The pierhead LED was swapped for sodium We have repeatedly asked for it to be changed back, but it has never been done."* Also in this email of 28/12/15: *"The lack of lighting, especially at the pump shed/linkspan is causing us serious issues. We had a near miss this morning. Can you please have these addressed as soon as possible?"*

Poor lighting at Craignure pier is repeatedly cited by CalMac as one of the reasons for cancellations in hours of darkness and inclement weather, yet the evidence of the weekly checklist and the email correspondence is that not only is the lighting system very poor, but repairs take a long time to be completed. Improvements seem to be completely absent.

Upgrade of Craignure street lights and pier lighting to LED has been promised for several years, but has yet to materialise. As a fall-back to ensure passenger and staff safety, at the request of CalMac the Council hired in mobile lighting towers (of the sort you'd find on a building site) for the winter of 2017/18. In an email of 22/11/17 a Council officer said *"Our lighting engineer has committed to hiring in tower lights as an interim measure. [We will] re-assess the requirement on completion of the LED project early next year [ie early 2018]"* It is now mid-2019, and the 'LED project' has yet to materialise. Those work-site lights were subsequently needed for a second winter, and there is no clear plan for when the pier lighting will be improved.

The problem is not restricted to the lighting of staff and passenger spaces. The critical navigation lead-light at the head of the pier was reported out of action in the depths of the 2014/15 winter, on November 2nd. The lead light remained dark for **FOUR MONTHS**, not being repaired until March of 2015. During this time, CalMac emailed the Council repeatedly, passing on the safety concerns of Masters.

We have 4 questions regarding lighting listed at the end.

4. Linkspan.

The reliable functioning of the linkspan mechanics is as critical to the maintenance of our lifeline ferry service as the maintenance regimes on the ferries themselves. In contrast to the regimes in place on the ferries however, the maintenance of Craignure linkspan seems chaotic.

According to the weekly checklists, the linkspan hydraulic system has suffered from prolonged periods of faulty behaviour in 2016, 2017 and 2018. From the email correspondence it is clear that there is little if any effective preventative maintenance in place, and instead repairs are (often after a long wait) made only after CalMac reports a problem.

The absence of any preventative measures and competent spare stock-holding is illuminated by the discovery in January 2019, detailed in an email at the time, that **spare hydraulic hoses held in the pump house at Craignure had gone out of date fifteen years previously.**

During repeated failures in 2016, the linkspan levelling fault was traced to a pair of transducers in the automatic levelling system. The replacement transducers had to be manufactured in the USA, which led to considerable lengthening of the persistence of the fault.

The lesson from 2016 (that essential, difficult-to-get spares were not being held) was not learned, and the problems re-appeared in 2017 and at length in 2018. In 2018 the erratic behaviour of the linkspan almost led to the cancellation of services, had it not been for the resourcefulness of CalMac staff – the episode is detailed in numerous emails of the time.

The neglect of the linkspan systems is not confined to the hydraulics – the poor state of the pump house containing the hydraulic equipment has been repeatedly flagged in correspondence and the weekly checklists. As reported in the defect report of 21/08/15, ***“Pump shed roof leaking, water dripping into light fittings. Please deal with as a matter of urgency”***. It seems that this urgent request was not heeded, as the subsequent email of 21/11/16 (**15 months later**) states: ***“As has been advised for some time now, the pump shed roof leaks into a light fitting, which can be seen smoking inside. This has potential for causing a fire. Can you address ASAP”***

The linkspan was installed in 1974, yet little in the way of refurbishment (beyond some essential re-painting and basic maintenance) seems to have been done in those 45 years. The need for refurbishment was planned for in the 2017 Marine Asset Management Plan published by the Council. In that report £600,000 was budgeted for the refurbishment of the linkspan in the financial year 2017/18. From our searches however, it seems that little has been done to advance those plans – it is now mid-2019 and no refurbishment has occurred. However, there is reference in an email from 2019 of appointment of a consulting engineer to review the maintenance of all linkspans, seemingly prompted by the preventable faults of 2018.

We have 5 questions regarding the linkspan.

5. Other issues

There are 24 separate items on the Weekly Checklists, with many repeating faults listed in addition to those key issues described above. Between January 2012 and December 2018, **On average Eight of those 24 items have a fault reported against them.** Over those seven years, there is **not a single week without a fault report.** The least number of faults in any one week is 4, the most is 10. Many of those faults list multiple items.

Some notable recurring faults:

“mesh grill on waiting room has fallen off. Rest are not far behind.” – Weeks before being closed out: **157 (3 years)**

“Windsock needs replaced” – Weeks before being closed out: **37**. (It took this email on 12/9/18 to finally prompt action: ***“We have the MV Isle of Arran on service ...The Master (as with the Masters of the MV Isle of Mull) has immediately asked for the windsock to be replaced. Could this please be treated as a matter of urgency as it is .. a valuable safety tool when berthing”***

“Water Supply leaks – ice risk” – Weeks before being closed out: **269 (Five years)**

In the Defect Report of 26/04/18, local CalMac management requested that rope snap-back zones be marked on the pier – more than one year later, this has still not been actioned.
3 questions arise, listed at the end.

In total, we have 24 questions which arise from our analysis of the FOI and other data we have obtained, and which you ought to be fully aware of as the owner of this major Council asset. I would prefer if you took the trouble to personally respond to these questions, listed below, rather than again choose to spend additional public money and resources treating them as an FOI – your choice.

No-one can deny that the catalogue of systematic failures in respect of the management of Craignure Pier that we have uncovered is truly shocking.

The obvious long-term neglect of the pier has been apparent for a long time. At the minor end, we have witnessed the leaking fresh water supply pouring into the sea as we drive up the linkspan (that fault is evidenced and remains unfixed on the weekly checklists for more than five years); and at the major end of things we are now witnessing large pieces of fendering falling from the pier. Our reading of the documents released through FOI shows that these events are not unfortunate happenstance – they are a result of chronic mismanagement.

Mr Sneddon, however you choose to deal with our 24 questions, I do urge you to **personally** comment on each of the 5 areas we have focussed on, and more generally on the appalling mismanagement of this pier which is failing to provide our lifeline ferry service.

The situation is critical. Running and managing significant piers is NOT the core activity of a local authority. You are clearly not managing this pier in a satisfactory way – for the lifeline operator, for the crews and staff who have to take risks every day on a sub-standard pier, for the users of this lifeline service and the people you represent.

You are well aware that Mull and Iona cannot have the winter service it so desperately needs because CalMac does not consider the pier a safe overnight berth in the winter. You are well aware that the current Vessel Deployment Plan cannot be implemented because the pier cannot take the allocated vessels and as a result this will curtail capacity, impact the local economy, hitting our businesses and locals on a daily basis. Mr Sneddon, please will you explain why, as the Chief Executive of Argyll and Bute Council, you are set on continuing to try to manage this pier, and even build a new one, rather than admit that this non-core activity is spreading your precious resources far too thinly and as a result is impacting your other vital services on which we all depend?

You know it is not acceptable to expect us to wait for the new pier to be built, to wait for you to deliver ‘the biggest single investment this council has ever considered’ as you put it. As the Chief Executive you owe it to Mull and Iona to demonstrate your personal involvement with this project. A first step would be to attend the meeting called by the council on June 4th to set out your timetable and plans to provide the essential required interim solutions the residents of Mull and Iona need to maintain their lifeline service – or to outline the timetable to transfer the pier to a more capable owner without further delay.

You will note I have copied this letter not just to my committee but to other interested parties and stakeholders.

I look forward to receiving a comprehensive and personal response from you shortly.

Regards,
Elizabeth

Elizabeth Ferguson
Chair, Mull and Iona Ferry Committee

Questions arising:

Proactive inspection and PPM

1. Please provide copies of the PPM system in place, together with corrective actions undertaken from 2010 to date.

Fendering and Structure

1. Please provide the bi-annual inspection reports referred to above for the last 10 years, together with details of when recommendations in those reports were actioned.
2. Please provide the principle structural inspection reports for 2011, 2005, 1999 and 1993 (or whenever the previous 4 reports were completed), and detail when the recommendations of those reports were actioned.
3. Please explain why the roundhead fendering fault above which appears on 84 consecutive weekly checklists was not repaired more promptly. If the reason for the delay was due in part to waiting for a replacement fender to be delivered (which we understand it was), can you explain why the long lead time (and criticality of the part) had not been identified, and suitable spares were not kept in stock.
4. Given that in your FOI response the state of the fendering is defended thus: "the fendering system is sacrificial and requires continued monitoring/maintenance all as planned/designed", can you explain why you do not hold spares of essential "sacrificial" parts critical to the function of the pier?
5. Can you please provide details of the "monitoring" referred to above, in addition to the visual weekly checklist submitted by CalMac?
6. Can you detail what remedial works were commissioned in response to the Arch Henderson report of November 2017? In particular, what work was carried out to address the recommendation that ***"If it is planned to berth vessels on the south berth, a detailed survey of the fenders should be carried out and the damaged fenders should be repaired or replaced"*** The MV Coruisk is a regular over-night user of the South Berth, in addition to other non-CalMac vessels. Please note that in the financial reports we have obtained, there appears to have been no expenditure on the South berth since the Arch Henderson report was delivered.
7. In your FOI response the cause of the April fender collapse is stated as "failure of top fixing bolt – report produced". Please forward a copy of that report. Also, please clarify the exact nature of the failure – had the securing nut come free? Had the bolt corroded and parted? Had the timber decayed to such an extent that the bolt pulled through it?
8. Is the April '19 fender failure of the same nature as that reported in the email from CalMac of 20/7/15? - ***"The fender was rotten where the bolt goes through it. There have been issues with a number of these fenders. Could you please arrange to have the rest checked"***.
9. Can you also detail what subsequent checks were performed on the fendering, as was requested by CalMac in their email of 20/7/15?
10. Given that it seems the April '19 fender collapse was the result of material decay or component loss that any competent inspection should have found, can you detail the changes that have been made to your PPM and/or inspection regime that are designed to stop this preventable failure from occurring again?
11. Given that the April '19 fender collapse suggests a failure to identify material decay or component loss, can you detail what subsequent inspection work has been undertaken to assess the extent of decay or missing parts in the remaining fendering? If a report has been produced, please send a copy.

Lighting

1. Please detail the preventative measures undertaken to ensure that lighting remains working through the dark winter months. On what frequency is the lighting inspected (other than by the weekly checklist), and what spares (eg bulbs) are kept?
2. Please provide detail from your PPM (if one exists) of the spares holding and pre-emptive bulb replacement regime in place for the navigation lead light on Craignure Pier.
3. Please detail when the repeated requests for lighting improvement made by CalMac will be responded to?
4. Please detail if any risk assessments of the safety of rope handling in hours of darkness has been undertaken, and what corrective actions have been put in place.

Linkspan

1. Please detail what refurbishment (i.e. equipment renewal, not just ad-hoc repairs) of the linkspan hydraulics and levelling system has been performed since its installation in 1974.
2. Please explain how your parts maintenance system and PPM failed to spot that essential spare parts (hydraulic hoses) had expired for fifteen years.

3. Please detail what changes have been made to your PPM (if one exists), subsequent to the apparent failure of the system to maintain parts within their shelf-life.
4. Please detail the parts list that you hold for the linkspan, how you have identified what the critical spares are and the current stock levels of all of those critical spares.
5. Please detail when the linkspan refurbishment budgeted for in the 2017 Marine Asset Management Plan will be carried out.

Other Issues

1. What was the reason(s) it took 3 years for repairs to the waiting room windows, and why was this symptom of decay not picked up by your monitoring systems or PPM?
2. What was the reason(s) that the replacement and monitoring of the windsack (an essential piece of safety navigation equipment) was not dealt with by your periodic monitoring or PPM system, and instead was picked up by CalMac and subsequently took 9 months to be replaced?
3. Please explain the reason the water supply has been leaking without a permanent fix for five years?

END