

PENTLAND FERRIES NEWS RELEASE

PENTLAND FERRIES WITHDRAWS FROM POTENTIAL CALMAC CONTRACT

Pentland Ferries has today (29 June 2021) announced, with much regret, that it has withdrawn from talks with CalMac Ferries on the potential charter of their vessel MV Pentalina to serve routes on the west coast of Scotland.

Managing director of Pentland Ferries, Andrew Banks, said: “While we were very much looking forward to working with CalMac Ferries to help provide a solution to the challenges being faced by the island communities on the west coast of Scotland, it has become clear that issues outwith our control are likely to arise over the lifespan of the contract to threaten the commercial viability. Unfortunately these issues, which fundamentally stem from the very different status of a public-funded service compared to a small private operator such as ourselves, have given us no alternative but to withdraw from the discussions. “I would like to stress that the talks with CalMac Ferries were positive and constructive and the vessel herself is safe and very suitable for service on the west coast. However, our priority has to be to the continued viability of Pentland Ferries, and to our employees and passengers. We cannot commit to a scenario whereby external factors have the potential to cause severe risk and reputational damage to the business that we have worked so hard to build, and unfortunately we have therefore let CalMac know of our decision.”

The MV Pentalina, which is currently in Kirkwall harbour, has held a Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA) approved Passenger Ship Safety Certificate and has been Lloyds Register-classed since going into service in 2009. The vessel has undergone annual surveys and inspections by both authorities throughout this time. She remains available for charter or sale.

CALMAC Press release:

News Release 29 June 2021

MV Pentalina update Robbie Drummond, Managing Director at CalMac, said: “CalMac has been investigating the use of the MV Pentalina to provide additional resilience to our network. “Berthing trials had shown she could successfully operate services to Arran and Mull and we were looking forward to her deployment. “Unfortunately, Pentland Ferries have decided not to enter into a charter agreement for the use of the MV Pentalina on our network. “We are surprised and disappointed by this unexpected news. However, this was entirely a decision for Pentland Ferries in relation to the use of its vessel.

We will continue to work closely with Transport Scotland and Pentland Ferries and should they revisit that decision and make the vessel available to us at a future date, we would consider this option again. “Whilst disappointing, we were able to develop an understanding of where the vessel could be used and where there would be limitations as a result of the berthing trials and operational issues with the vessels single ended design.

“I know this news will also come as a great disappointment to our communities particularly those we had been discussing the detailed options with. I thank them for their patience and support as we continue to search for suitable alternatives available for charter to enhance capacity and resilience within our network.” Notes to editors MV Pentalina can operate the following routes: Ardrossan to Brodick – only from the Irish berth which is in poor condition and not resilient in certain wind conditions. Oban-Craignure – while she could offer an island based service, extended turnaround times from single ended operation means she could not meet summer or winter timetable. Ullapool-Stornoway – MCA wave and wind restriction on the vessel means that services in the winter may be less resilient Oban-Port Askaig – not a scheduled route but would offer additional resilience. This charter with Pentland Ferries was due to be a standard maritime BIMCO timecharter. Pentland Ferries would provide the vessel and the crew to deliver the timetable (with CalMac providing crew to support the onboard retail offering) and would operate the vessel on our behalf.