

## **Mull and Iona Ferry committee Meeting**

26<sup>th</sup> May, 2021 7pm, Via zoom

**Present:** Joe Reade, Keith Robbie, Colin Morrison, David Galbraith, Claire Simonetta, Ben Wilson, Douglas Wilson, Colin Morrison, Andy Knight, Moray Finch, Morven Gibson, Heather Hill, Jim Lynch

**Apologies:** Stewart MacDougal, Morvern Gibson

**In attendance:** Don MacKillop, Roy Pedersen, Kirsty Renton

### **Operational Questions – Don MacKillop**

- Operational challenges of network due to absence of Loch Seaforth for significant number of weeks,
- Mull is comparatively shielded from these operational changes
- Loch Seaforth should leave Greenock on Friday afternoon and re-enter service on Monday evening after series of trials.
- Loads are increasing network wide.
- Number of campervans has increased significantly displaying volumes never seen before.
- Mainland has moved to level 2 which has increased volume of vehicle and passenger traffic.
- Current social distancing guidelines are placing considerable stress on booking capacity.
- ‘Turn up and go’ availability has been slightly modified this year due to Covid limitation.
- Craignure passenger access is being worked on this week by CMAL and will hopefully be back in service by Friday.
- Craignure car marshalling area has been extended.
- Booking in advance is essential for passengers on a network wide basis.
- F.M enquired as to whether or not campervan data is available for Mull
- D.M to get figures for F.M Campervans are being measured separately this year.
- F.M asked if any indication has been given as to when social distancing restrictions will be modified on ferries.
- D.M there has been no indication yet, though Transport Scotland knows that this is an issue across all transport networks. The issue remains high on the agenda.
- F.M have there been any sailings which have run late this year as a result of extended 29-minute turn-around periods.
- D.M doesn’t think there have been any operational issues due to 29 minutes turn-around.
- Operationally on a long-term basis, turn arounds should be made appropriate to what is required for the specific services and will likely be reduced.
- B.W enquired if anything is currently being done to investigate the problems with the Coruisk.
- D.M stated that this issue has come up intermittently throughout the last year while the vessel was on the Clyde. Technical issue which re-manifested late last year.
- The problem cannot be replicated, and there has been an exhaustive process of trying to locate the issue.

- Likelihood of the issue re-occurring is low but the impact is high and so the MCA want to see evidence that the issue does not re-occur for a significant period of time before they will be satisfied that the issue has passed which will be end of Summer. This 6-month period coincided with the beginning of the Summer season.
- Working within the constraints of the safety case and through the passage of time, the MCA will lift the safety case which is currently in place.
- J.R enquired as to whether it is vehicle capacity or passenger capacity which are maxed out on bookings.
- D.M stated that it varies from sailing to sailing.
- D.M stated that Calmac are not selling tour tickets as a result of this as coaches can absorb 80-100 passenger spaces.
- A.K stated that having the 8am sailing removed from the service is proving extremely problematic for businesses and individuals who need to be in the Oban area for work.
- Companies are having to put staff in accommodation to allow them to fulfil their jobs off-island.
- It has had a significant impact on those who commute.
- D.M understands the frustration felt by those affected by the service changes and can only relay the advice and information that the MCA have given.
- A.K suggested having an additional skipper on board for each sailing.
- D.M stated that this has been looked into and it was found that there are no additional resources available for that.
- D.W stated that he is surprised that the ships control system has not been replaced. This would have been an obvious solution.
- D.M is not sure whether the problem lies specifically within the control system but can get information for Ferry Committee. Significant efforts have been made to resolve this issue.
- The alternative would have been to remove the ship from service completely.

### **Summer timetable 2022**

- J.R received e-mail yesterday asking for proposals for changes. Reply to be submitted by 14<sup>th</sup> June 2021.
- J.R suggested putting it to the community to submit opinion to ferry committee.
- Best case would be 2019 timetable.
- Isle of Mull is currently operating 21 minutes more each day in current Covid time-table.
- J.M stated that the 29-minute turn-around seems excessive, but it does seem to help vessels keep to time-table.
- The 11:10am and 4pm ferry should be untouchable.
- J.R to draw plan which proposes the current time-table for the Isle of Mull and 5 returns for the Coruisk and circulate to members.
- The community must be consulted with when this is drawn up.

### **Catamaran Update**

- J.R has written to Minister for Transport.
- No reply as of yet.

- J.R to write again.
- Jenny Minto and 2 other MSP's are to have a meeting with Graeme Dey on the current ferry situation.
- J.L stated that Jenny Minto released a press release today. J.L to send to J.R
- Isle of Mull replacement survey has gone out for consultation and there have been approximately 380 responses so far.

#### **A.O.B**

- J.R has updated the weather cancellation statistics
- Money left over from fundraising for Strathclyde Study and so J.R used this to buy the Met Office data for this year.
- J.R read members press release from Jenny Minto.