

## **Mull and Iona Ferry Committee**

Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022  
An Roth, 7 pm

***In Attendance:*** Finlay MacDonald, Colin Morrison, Joe Reade, Moray Finch, Sue Hawkes, Heather Hill, Adrian Fitness, Andy Knight, Chris James, Douglas Wilson, Geoff Adams, Ben Wilson

***Apologies:*** Stewart MacDougal, Billy McClymont, Claire Simonetta, Sam, Morven Gibson

### **Loch Frisa Update**

- Loch Frisa will be starting run in June
- JR has repeatedly been asking for a draft of the winter timetable.
- Calmac planning responded that a timetable draft is not available at present.
- They will be looking for community input through consultation.
- Committee will be given draft by 15<sup>th</sup> April.

### **Booking System - ICIA and Samsø example**

- JR stated that the proposed system is sound.
- JR met with Jenny Minto, who showed interest in the system and advocated it in parliament.
- JR has spoken to Margaret Matthew from Iona Community Council about canvassing members on the matter and gauging local opinion.
- FM was in a meeting with Margaret Matthew before the MIFC meeting, and everyone at the meeting favoured the proposed new booking system.
- JR suggested posting the proposal on the website and asking for public feedback and commentary.
- MF suggested running a quick and simple survey.
- This can then be presented as an island consensus.
- FM suggested saying to Calmac that Mull is willing to be a Guinea pig for this system.
- CM stated that the system has to work for the local people before working for the tourists.
- AK stated that TSL has been asked to make a direct phone call to make a booking and can no longer make commercial bookings by e-mail. This is time-consuming as TSL is making multiple bookings per day.
- Feedback given to Calmac on the matter was dismissed.
- JR to contact Calmac to attempt resolution.

### **Community Ferry Company**

- JR feels determined that this is a route that needs to be pursued.
- The contract and route tendering need to be de-bundled.
- This is the key to the change that is needed.
- The service and the company will be run by the community and has the potential to return a financial profit to benefit the community.
- AK stated that the Scottish government's mantra is community control and community empowerment, so they should support that.

- Scottish Government running businesses like this themselves have a terrible track record, so allowing the community to take control would benefit everyone.
- JR stated that Roy Pederson's report has not yet been published and is a valuable document.
- RP has arranged a meeting with the chairman of Transport Scotland and will suggest a caseworker is appointed to help with this process.
- JR stated that an HIE needs to be carried out to prove the benefits of this process.
- JR stated that this would be done in a gradual sequence which would possibly align with vessel replacement.
- Various models would be explored.
- All agree that the process needs to be implemented to see where it goes.

### **Cancellations – Recent Correspondence**

- JR circulated an e-mail sent to Area Manager surrounding recent cancellations.
- Response was sent back stating that Calmac will never discuss cancellations with MIFC.
- FM stated that through Calmacs behaviour, it is clear that our attempts to reset the relationship have been unsuccessful.
- FM reported that in 2 recent public meetings, Calmac has been openly disparaging MIFC.
- Calmac currently get their weather data from a Norwegian Company, and they spend £40K per year on it
- Ferry rep from Tiree contacted Calmac to enquire if their weather data for the West of Scotland was wrong as we get so many cancellations.
- Calmac responded, asking that they are never contacted about weather data and that their data provider should not be contacted either.
- FM stated that the public should be allowed to ask questions about the service, and this issue needs to be raised at future meetings.
- JR stated that the current contract allows Calmac to cancel on the basis of bad weather without penalty.
- AF stated that the operational decisions need to be questioned.
- MF suggested writing to all MSPs with this information to say that MIFC has been blackballed from contacting Calmac and request that they follow this up on our behalf.
- All in agreement.
- FM stated that in a recent meeting, it was suggested that Calmac had an allocated complaints page on their website. It would be an excellent way to manage complaints and gauge data on complaints.
- It may also decrease the number of complaints that come through MIFC.
- HH stated that booked customers do not receive updates if there are changes to their sailings.
- JR to enquire

### **Catamaran presentation May 12th**

- JR was contacted by Professor Dracos Vassalos, Head of the Naval Architecture Department at Strathclyde University.

- Researching the reduction of steelwork in catamarans and filling spaces in the hull with foam.
- Thus, making vessels lighter and cheaper.
- Stewart Ballantyne, Dracos Vassalos, and Alf Baird are making a presentation about 'Catamarans for the Scottish Isles' in Glasgow.
- Representatives from islands and the government have been invited, and it will be live-streamed.
- JR suggested including a demonstration that Catamaran can operate from a slip. If it operates on slip and open water, you have a more versatile vessel for the Hebrides.

### **Craignure Pier Plans**

- JR circulated the most current plans for the pier.
- There are three options.
- Design sub-group has been created from Craignure Marine Infrastructure Marine Liaison Group
- Design sub-group made up of architect Norman Hickson and other residents from Craignure, who are focused on creating a suitable design for the Craignure community.
- Site for new pier has been agreed. North of the current pier.
- MIFC needs to be more involved in designing the terminal, bus areas, etc.
- JR suggested writing from a user's perspective.
- MF stated that the Craignure Group does not represent the whole island, so it is essential for outside influence.
- JR stated that it is unfair to ask the Craignure group to take full responsibility for the design.
- MF shared designs on the screen.
- JR stated that it is essential that the bus terminal should be as close to the pier as possible.
- JR also stated that if we have a three-vessel service in the future, there must be berthing capacity for two boats.
- AF stated that it had been a priority to reduce the terminal's footprint, but with that, the functionality is reduced.
- CJ stated that the current pier is structurally sound, and so it should be utilised by other vessels such as 'Lord of the Glens' and not demolished.
- All in agreement.
- JR stated that there is potential for conflict between the Craignure residents and other users.
- MF stated that all stakeholders should also be consulted about proposals.
- JR suggested formally saying that the design has got to the stage where the focus has to be placed on details for the users.
- AF stated that as a resident of Craignure, he has never been informed about the process.
- JR to contact stating that the process needs to be made more public and be user-orientated.
- JR will draft e-mail and send to committee before sending.

### **Fran Pacitti and Chris Wilcock Visit May 18<sup>th</sup> 2022**

- 2 most senior officials within the ferries units.
- Coming to Mull on 18<sup>th</sup> May and have requested meeting with MIFC.
- Jenny Minto may also attend.
- JR suggested presenting our proposed solutions to current problems.

### **Strategic Transport Policy Review 2 – Response**

- JR asked members to read and suggest responses.
- JR keen to make the point that the road and ferry network need to be looked at as a whole and not separately.

### **AOB**

- Calmac Communities Board has invited Finlay MacDonald to apply as a co-opted member.
- This has come about because we have complained about Mull and Iona not being represented.
- One other person from the island has also been contacted but do not know who.
- JR encouraged every member of MIFC to apply to increase chances of representation.
- DW spotted a CMAL notice on Corran Ferry stating that they have been asked to find a ferry solution for Corran and it appears that they are suggesting one large ferry.
- The current system is very effective so unclear what solution is needed.
- JR to write and enquire.