



Mull & Iona Ferry Committee Meeting

Wednesday 27th July 2022 at 7pm

In attendance: Joe Reade (Chair), Billy McClymont, David Galbraith, Andy Knight, Douglas Wilson, Councillor Andrew Kain, Adrian Fitness, Pete Pinnington and Ben Wilson

Via Video Conference: Finlay MacDonald (Vice Chair), Colin Morrison, Sue Hawkes and Keith Robbie

JR opened the meeting at 7pm.

1. Apologies received

Chris James, Moray Finch, Claire Simonetta, John MacDonald and Councillor Amanda Hampsey.

2. CalMac Communities Board

JR informed the members that Mary-Jean Devon has resigned due to ill health, we will look to apply again to secure representation.

3. Meeting update with Chris Wilcock, Head of Ferries Unit, Transport Scotland

A meeting was recently held with Chris Wilcock with a number of the committee members in attendance, the following 2 items were the main points under discussion:

3.1 The Samsø reservation system

- CW confirmed that the new system has been agreed in principle, They confirmed that they are looking at what technical requirements are required for ticketing etc and indicated that they will run a trial in time for the Summer of 2023.
- The members felt it was a very positive discussion and felt reassured that it is on the Ministers agenda to get the new ticketing system in place by Winter 2022 and fully embedded by Summer 2023.

3.2 Isle of Mull replacement

- JR stated that discussion on this topic covered the issues faced with the Islay ferry plans, and the flawed current process of procuring new vessels. JR and FM asked that the next procurement process be done differently to ensure there is a better result. The members all agreed with the current approach as outlined by JR and FM.
- The positive points noted were that they are looking at our route in isolation and agreed that routes should be treated differently taking into account the specific needs of each location.
- The concept of a 2/3 ferries is still being explored.
- Jenny Gilruth, the Minister for Transport is visiting the island on the 18th August, The members will be holding further discussions on the Isle of Mull replacement at this meeting with Richard Hadfield and Minister for Transport.

JR informed the members that he has received suggestions from other Island representatives that a confederation of the Western and Argyll Isles representatives should consider protesting and lobbying the Scottish Government as a collective. The members all agreed with this, the committee plan to scope out ideas of how this can be done.

4. Winter Timetable

JR informed the members that this is still outstanding despite several requests for release, we have been told that it is currently with the Minister for sign off. We expect to hear shortly, the members expressed their frustrations around the delay.

5. NZET Committee Ferries Inquiry

JR informed the members that he will be submitting written representations when the inquiry resumes after the parliamentary recess. The submission will be circulated to all the members for review and comment ahead of submission.

6. CMAL next steps

Following a meeting and email exchange with the Chair of CMAL, Morag McNeill, little progress has been made in response to the questions raised. The members agreed that CMAL need to be held to account. The members agreed to pause on publishing further comments until after the meeting with Jenny Gilruth.

7. Mull/Coll/Tiree

A meeting is taking place (29.07.22) with Richard Hadfield and island representatives to scope out solutions to reinstate the ferry links between the islands. It's early days in the discussion, further updates on next steps will follow after the meeting.

8. Community Ferry Co

It was confirmed that Highlands and Islands Enterprise have made available £15,000 to hire a consultant to conduct a desk top study looking at the practicalities and opportunities of a community run ferry service. A tender for the consultancy work will go out. Following the study it will then go out for community consultation and feedback.

9. AOB

9.1 Ferry traffic management

JR agreed to write to CALMAC highlighting the issues and lack of staff assistance

The meeting closed at 8:40pm.