



Mull & Iona Ferry Committee Meeting

Tuesday 31st January 2023

7pm An Roth

Members in attendance:

Joe Reade (Chair), David Galbraith, Dave Currie, Douglas Wilson, Ben Wilson, Billy McClymont and Moray Finch

Members joined via video conference:

Finlay MacDonald (Vice Chair), Donna Lockhart (CalMac Area Ops Manager), Andy Knight, Keith Robbie, Heather Hill and Hal Briggs (note taker)

JR opened the meeting at 7pm.

1. Apologies received

Claire Simonetta, Celia Compton, Stewart MacDougall and Pete Pinnington

2. Donna Lockhart, Area Ops Manager CalMac

JR welcomed DL to the meeting.

2.1 Winter dry dock schedule delays and Mull Impact

DL informed the Members that the dry dock schedule is still currently delayed and likely that the period of Loch Frisa-only service will be extended. Details yet to be confirmed. DL expects to be updated within the next week.

DL confirmed that West Coast Motors and Iona have been notified of this and are being kept updated.

It was noted that until after the 16th February DL could not confirm 100% that the Isle of Mull will be back in full service, there are “massive” issues with Cale Isles and a large scope of works will need to be undertaken. This will add further delays of up to 4 weeks.

FM asked DL to look into the issue of the lack of seating on the Friday afternoon crossing, School children are regularly being left without seats due to the lack of capacity for passengers on the Loch Frisa. DL confirmed that she would look into this issue and report back on this to FM.

Some discussion took place around whether the Pentalina could potentially join the fleet, DL confirmed that we could see the possible introduction within the next 3 weeks, but she could not confirm to where or when.

2.2 “10-minute rule” for foot passenger and public transport connections

The “rule” continues to cause significant issues and has been particularly worse during the winter months. It was noted that ferries are routinely now departing 5 minutes earlier than scheduled leaving passengers stranded after being denied boarding. There is no consistency around the decision to depart early and justifiable reason for them to do so. They must work on the proviso that there will be passengers arriving by public transport that may have had delays on those journeys.

DL was asked to discuss the mechanism of connection notifications between Scot Rail and CalMac with the Port Manager and confirm the processes followed, DL will report back on those findings to JR and FM.

The Members all agreed that the rule must be changed, and common sense applied. DL agreed to discuss this as a matter of urgency with the Marine Managers and will request that someone from Marine Management attends the next meeting.

2.3 Other operational business

The Members discussed the lack of capacity for commercial and dangerous goods vehicles on the Loch Frisa, AK stated that space continues to be very limited, and it is very troublesome for businesses.

DL left the meeting.

3. Winter timetable 2023/24

The Members reviewed the proposed timetable, FM offered to relook at the schedule and timings and send suggested changes to JF.

4. Samsø System update

JR informed the Members that Chris Wilcock (Transport Scotland) has requested a meeting to explore options and to reach a shared understanding of what is involved and can be considered and agreed with CalMac for how the system will work for residents in particular. The Members all agreed that local residents should remain the priority for either travelling home or off island trips. A recent poll on this matter issued to residents confirmed that even accommodation and hotel owners agreed that residents should take priority.

JR informed the Members that improvements to the medical appointment protocol have been made following our request for changes.

5. Commercial Fares

JR informed the Members that he has written to the Minister about how unfair the commercial rates are compared to domestic rates, the Minister responded to say that all fares are being reviewed as part of the wider Islands Connectivity Plan. FM recommended conducting some analysis around how much “we” personally spend in 12 months to give a real indication and in support of lower prices for residents versus visitors.

Some discussion took place around a fixed link option for the Corran Narrows, a recent survey responded to by approximately 300 people evidenced that 80% of people voted in favour of a fixed link. JR plans to discuss this further with the Community Council and will reiterate the survey findings.

6. Small Vessel Replacement Programme

JR stated that this remains a very important matter to lobby on. JR and FM have agreed a 1-hour meeting with Jenny Gilruth on the 22nd March, to discuss the community ferry company and all matters related to improvements in the service.

JR will continue to email copy in the Members on this matter as he does not want to wait until March.

7. Community Ferry Co update

7.1 Feasibility study progress

JR informed the Members that he has recently met with Martin Bignell who is undertaking the study, JR stated that he feels Martin is absolutely the right person to be undertaking it, he completely understands the pros and cons, the study is progressing well and is expected to complete by the end of March 23.

7.2 Fundraising

It was noted that there is a shortfall of £1600 for the feasibility study, JR will look to make a request to the Waterfall Fund for support.

The Members discussed a Crowdfunder and agreed that for this purpose it would not be appropriate, JR will seek to raise funds to support the administrative costs associated with the committee meetings.

8. Long term plan for vessels and ports

JR confirmed that he intends to submit a consultation response, JR will circulate the response ahead of submission.

9. NZET Committee enquiry

JF informed the Members that he has not yet submitted a response, the response is still being considered.

10. AOB

10.1 Marine Infrastructure and Transport Liaison Group

JR and MF attended the inaugural meeting in early January 23. The meeting was well attended. Following the meeting JR and MF wrote to the Chair to feedback on the remit and involvement of the Mull and Iona Ferry Committee. The Members all agreed that attendance at these meetings should continue.

10.2 Committee Membership

The Members agreed that an annual review of the Groups constitution is required. JR was asked to conduct the review; JR will circulate the review findings and recommendations.

The meeting closed at 9:50pm