

**MINUTES of MEETING of COWAL TRANSPORT FORUM held in the SKYPE
on MONDAY, 24 AUGUST 2020**

Present: Councillor Alan Reid (Chair)
Councillor Bobby Good
Councillor Jim Anderson
Councillor Gordon Blair
Councillor Audrey Forrest

Attending: Gordon Ross – Western Ferries
Captain Alistair McLundie – Western Ferries
Iain Slorach – Client Manager, Calmac
Stewart Wohlgemuth – Port Manager, Calmac
Demi Wylie - Transport Integration Manager, Calmac
Iain Catterwell – Timber Transport Group
Chief Inspector Douglas Wilson – Police Scotland
Neil MacFarlane – Transport Scotland
Murray Rogers – West Coast Motors
Cathleen Russell – Colintrave & Glendaruel Community Council
Michael Breslin – South Cowal Community Council
Iain McInnes – Lochgoil Community Council
Graham Revill – Kilmun Community Council
David Sumsion - Cairndow Community Council
Archie Reid - Strachur Community Council
Melissa Stewart – Governance Officer
Martin Arnold – Contract Officer
Marta Zawadzka – Community Transport Officer
Stuart Watson – Assistant Network & Standards Manager
Gill Wollers – Dunoon Observer
Ronnie McAlister – Bute Community Council

Members were asked to suspend Standing Order 5.4 – the Member who is presiding at the meeting must do so from the specified location for the meeting and cannot join by video conferencing.

The requisite two thirds of Members present agreed to suspend Standing Order 5.4 to enable discussion of reports on the Agenda.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

Apologies for absence were intimated by:

Paul Paterson - Kilfinan Community Council;
Iain MacNaughton - Sandbank Community Council;
Tommy Gore – Calmac; and
Willie Lynch – Dunoon Community Council.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bobby Good made a financial declaration of interest in item7 (d) on the basis he is a part-time employee of West Coast Motors. He remained in the call taking no part in the short discussion.

3. MINUTES

The minute of the meeting of the Cowal Transport Forum held on the Monday 16 March 2020 was approved as a correct record.

4. FERRIES UPDATE

(a) Gourock to Dunoon Ferry Service

The Forum were invited to note an update from Paul Wheelhouse MSP, Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands, in response to the Chair's email of 4 May 2020 regarding free ferry travel for young people living on the Cowal Peninsula as part of the proposed free bus travel scheme in Scotland for those aged under nineteen.

Discussion focused on the timetable of 5 years being too long a length of time to wait for a passenger ferry to be available given that the procurement process had already started and especially as businesses were already struggling as a result of covid-19.

As there was no one present from the Ferries Division of Transport Scotland to speak to the issues it was felt no progress could be made on the item in the absence of the decision makers.

Outcome

The Forum noted the position and agreed to continue the item.

(b) Shore Side Infrastructure at Dunoon

The Assistant Network and Standards Manager confirmed that the moratorium on Traffic Road Orders (TROs) was expected to be lifted as soon as the relevant documentation had been approved by the Legal Department, which he anticipated would be in a matter of weeks' time.

In relation to the land based improvements clarity was sought over plans for the pier side buildings with the Forum noting that the current situation with TROs maybe the reason for the delay.

The Forum discussed that dependent on the design, there may need to be major changes made to shore side infrastructure to accommodate the vessel and questions were asked as to the feasibility of having a vessel that was interchangeable for different docks and how the shore side infrastructure at Dunoon could be developed to see how the pontoons and the pier could be integrated should the link span be removed.

Outcome

The Forum;

- 1) noted the position;
- 2) agreed that the Chair would write to CMAL to seek clarification in relation to the

design of vessels; and

- 3) asked the Assistant Network and Standards Manager to confirm to the Forum what the plans were for the pier side buildings.

(c) **Caledonian MacBrayne**

The Forum were invited to consider an update from the Ferries Policy Officer on behalf of the Chief Executive of Transport Scotland, Roy Brannen, in regards to the Claonaig – Lochranza and Tarbert – Portavadie winter services.

The Forum noted that passenger carries were down over the past four and a half months due to covid-19 restrictions, technical issues and weather but uptake was up in August due to restrictions being lifted.

In respect of the proposals to small changes in timetables on the Tarbert/Portavadie route it was confirmed that there was still work to be done in terms of ensuring any changes feed in with bus timetables.

Discussion focused on when late night sailings at weekends on the Colintrave and Dunoon/Gourock route would be reinstated noting the importance of late night timetables to businesses. The Transport Integration Manager, Calmac, stated that late night timetables had been in operation since 13 August 2020 for Colintrave and that they were reviewing the winter timetables whilst working with Transport Scotland and aim to have a normal timetable in place soon whilst being mindful of social distancing and keeping everyone safe using enhanced protocols.

Outcome

The Forum noted the position.

(d) **Western Ferries**

The Forum were invited to note an update from Kirsty Flanagan, Head of Strategic Finance, in response to the Chair's email of the 4 May 2020 regarding Funding of the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme.

Discussion focused on Western Ferries remaining in operation for key workers during covid-19, which was a testament to all staff, with a continued service after lockdown as lifted restrictions which enabled them to increase the level of service and whilst the Rest and be Thankful is closed saw up to 136 sailings per day. They apologised for slight delays at the terminal.

The Chair, on behalf of the Forum thanked Western Ferries for maintaining a service for essential travel during lockdown then having to go to the other extreme with road closures requiring additional sailings.

Questions were asked if Calmac had provided any additional services and Iain Slorach, Client Manager, Calmac agreed to circulate the protocol from Transport Scotland to the Forum.

In relation to congestion issues at Hunters Quay, the Assistant Network Standards Manager stated that they were in the process of arranging temporary signage to be installed, with a review to be conducted thereafter. Police Scotland confirmed that

they would operate on case by case basis but did not intend to martial cars. In addition the Forum noted that there had been complaints raised about congestion having effects on local bus services.

Outcome

The Forum noted the update.

5. POLICE SCOTLAND

Chief Inspector Douglas Wilson, Police Scotland, gave an update on matters he had recently been attending which in addition to congestion issuance at the Western Ferries terminal as already discussed in this minute, included detail on specialised police in Cairndow area in marked and unmarked bikes and cars performing checks to ensure drivers understand the consequences of speeding and options available to seek a community solution with local landowners and the council for additional parking to prevent further damage to verges caused by off road parking.

Motorcycle noise was discussed at length and how the noise is not necessarily related to the speed of the bikes, but some had been adapted to be intentionally loud and if there was a way to enforce legal noise limits. Chief Inspector Wilson advised that even though some exhausts are excessive they did meet legislation noting if the CE mark was present on the exhaust then it was legal. He stated that during lockdown Traffic Police had not been conducting stop checks as much as usual but this is now to increase as well as conducting research with other forces looking for areas of good practice that could be adopted.

Outcome

The Forum;

- 1) noted the update; and
- 2) noted that Police Scotland will feedback results of their research in relation to motorbike noise to Cairndow Community Council and the Forum.

6. TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

(a) VMS and Manual Signs

Neil MacFarlane, Transport Scotland updated the Forum in relation to VMS and manual signs which included that permanent signage was now in place on diversion routes and that semi-permanent solutions were being explored for the B828/B839 junction.

Discussion focussed on the options available for repairing or replacing the VMS in Strachur and Kilmun as they are at their end of life whilst having regard for the contractual issues with suppliers. It was noted that a report was with Transport Scotland and a decision was awaited.

Outcome

The Forum noted the update.

(b) **A83**

Neil MacFarlane, Transport Scotland circulated a list of the schemes proposed to be carried out on the A83 in the next 3 months that are subject to review owing to the ongoing situation at the Rest and Be Thankful. The Forum noted the top two listed below are currently postponed and that Transport Scotland are also consulting on an overnight closure of the A82 subject to review for the same reason;

A83 Oyster Bar Resurfacing
A83 South of Succoth Resurfacing
A83 Clachan Farm Dunderave Drainage
A83 Inveraray Footway Improvements Footway
A83 Tarbet to Arrochar Ph3 Drainage Improvements Drainage
A83 Castleton to Limory (HD28_2017) Resurfacing
A83 Drishaig to Strone Resurfacing
A83 Lochgilphead Footway
A83 North of Strone Point Resurfacing
A83 Goldberry Cottage NWDS_065 Drainage
A83 Butterbridge to Dunoon Jct Resurfacing
A83 Route Priority Signing Improvements Route Signing
A83 Cairndow North Junction Resurfacing

The Forum discussed that there was ongoing issues with hanging branches effecting LGVs and exact details of the issues were to be sent to Neil MacFarlane or BEAR directly.

Outcome

The Forum noted the update.

7. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

(a) **Bus Stop at Rest and Be Thankful**

Following on from the site visit in March, the Forum noted the need to look for a desktop solution prior to exploring funding options and the Assistant Network Manager agreed to look into this, as well as implications for the existing TRO, and report back to the Forum.

Outcome

The Forum noted the position.

(b) **Dial-A-Bus**

The Forum discussed the submitted update in regard to the Cowal booklet aimed at promoting the Dial-a-bus service. The Contract Officer confirmed that there would be no intention to print booklets in order to reduce risks posed by covid-19 but they were looking into options for displaying information on screens in waiting rooms in care homes and doctors surgeries. Discussion focused on those who do not have access to internet and/or do not attend doctors surgeries etc. It was confirmed that this service was based on doctor referrals and individuals can contact West Coast Motors direct to request the service.

Outcome

The Forum;

- 1) noted the position;
- 2) agreed that the Contract Officer would email the booklet to the Forum to be cascaded to community councils; and
- 3) agreed that the Contract Officer would inform the Forum on the locations of the information boards and would accept suggestions based on local knowledge.

(c) Kames Bus Stop

As there was no one present from Kilfinan Community Council to give an update there was no discussion on the item.

Outcome

The Forum noted the position and agreed to continue the item.

(d) 479 Dunoon to Rothesay West Coast Motors Service

The Forum discussed the submitted update in relation to bus service contracts for the 479 Dunoon to Rothesay West Coast Motors Service.

Murray Rodgers, West Coast Motors, advised the Forum that when the vehicle ferry is off and the bus cannot get over to Bute, they were required to put on an additional bus to pick-up foot passengers. The Forum noted that the new timetables for the 479 and 428 service were now in place and the issue was resolved.

The Forum wished to thank West Coast Motors for the help given to the community during covid-19, particularly in delivering goods from Dunoon to rural locations.

Outcome

The Forum noted the position.

(e) Integrated Transport

The Forum discussed the submitted update in relation to a request that future service level agreements include a provision requiring the contractor to respond to queries from the council within a set period. The Chair noted that the issue had appeared to be resolved but as point of principle asked that a provision be included in future contracts.

Outcome

The Forum noted the update.

8. TIMBER TRANSPORT GROUP

Iain Catterwell, Timber Transport Group updated the Forum with the detail on the works of the Group which included that additional passing places had been completed with surfacing works to follow along the B800; the back road had been completed for timber

movements from the Auchenlochan community forest to avoid lorries going through the village; and the barge ramp at West Loch Striven had been completed.

Outcome

The Forum noted the update provided.

9. ROADS UPDATE

(a) Carriageway Roundels and Additional Signage at Colintrave

The Forum discussed the submitted response in relation to carriageway roundels and additional signage at Colintrave.

Discussion focused on the reasons why white lining was taking a long time to be completed which included that white liners are not all based in Argyll and the changeable weather effect this weather based operation. The options available around training up local council workers to use machines in the area was also discussed.

The Forum noted that in Colintrave almost all works were complete other than the sharks teeth traffic calming measure but advised that works remained outstanding at both Glendaruel and Cairndow.

Outcome

The Forum;

- 1) noted the position; and
- 2) agreed that an update would be brought back to the Forum in relation to local options to have council staff trained in using a white lining trailer.

(b) Dunoon Pier

The Forum noted that TROs had already been discussed at item 4b) on the agenda.

(c) Speed Surveys

The Forum discussed the submitted update in relation to data from traffic speed surveys and noted that the project in placing data on the council website was underway and should be live soon with a basic format to then be developed further.

Outcome

The Forum noted the position.

(d) Traffic Management in Tighnabruaich, Kames and Millhouse

As there was no one present from Kilfinan Community Council to give an update there was no discussion on the item.

Outcome

The Forum noted the position and agreed to continue the item.

10. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

Reduced bus services, particularly the absence of late evening services affecting people returning from work was discussed with the option of dropping a service during the day in order to reinstate the evening services to be explored by West Coast Motors as the situation was under review.

Outcome

The Forum noted the position.

(a) Update on Parking Policy Framework

The Forum discussed the submitted update in relation to the Parking Policy Framework.

Outcome

The Forum noted the information.

11. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed that the future meetings of the Cowal Transport Forum would be held;

- Monday 16 November 2020; and
- Monday 1 February 2021