

**MINUTES of MEETING of COWAL TRANSPORT FORUM held in the CUSTOMER SERVICES
OFFICE, 22 HILL STREET, DUNOON
on FRIDAY, 19 APRIL 2013**

Present: Councillor A McNaughton (Chair)

Councillor J Semple – via Lync Video Call
Gordon Ross, Western Ferries
Callum Rae, West Coast Motors
Fulton McInnes, Hunters Quay Community Council
Eleanor Stevenson, South Cowal Community Council
Archie Reid, Strachur Community Council
Iain MacInnes, Lochgoil Community Council
Ken Barr, Dunoon Community Council
Elizabeth MacBride, Kilfinan Community Council
Anne Gabriel, Dunoon Community Council
Stephen Doogan, Area Governance Officer
Rowan Seddon, Community Transport Officer via Lync

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from the following:-

Douglas Blades, Public Transport Officer
Iain McNaughton, Sandbank Community Council
Alastair Somerville, Transport Scotland

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Cowal Transport Forum of 18th January 2013 were approved as a correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

(a) TURNING AREA AT TOP OF REST AND BE THANKFUL

The Community Transport Officer advised that the price of the land at the Top of the Rest has been accepted and the Legal Department are taking forward the paperwork. SPT have agreed the capital funding will be available for the project this year. Cowal Design and a consultant have been engaged to get the planning application through the National Park. City Link and West Coast Motors have asked for the area to be tarmacked to be increased due to the size of the buses. Iain MacInnes asked if he could get a copy of the plans and it was agreed the Community Transport Officer would send this information to him.

(b) SIGNAGE AT ARDGARTEN BUS STOP (AGENDA ITEM C)

The Area Governance Officer advised that the both the path and bus signage at the Tourist Information in Ardgarten will not be changed until the office has been leased and agreement with any new tenant agreed . The Community Transport Officer advised that there are new flags being put up at the Tourist Information centre and this will more clearly mark the area. Councillor McNaughton asked if the buses could pull into the Ardgarten campsite and the Community Transport Officer said that this was not possible because there was not enough room for a bus to pull in.

It was agreed the Area Governance Officer would contact the Forestry Commission again regarding signage for the bus stop and path.

The Community Transport Officer intimated her apologies and left the meeting at this stage.

(c) MUTUAL TICKET RECOGNITION (AGENDA ITEM D)

Councillor Semple joined the meeting at this point via Lync video call.

Gordon Ross explained that there will be a replacement bus service provided from Dunoon Pier to Gourock Train Station when Argyll Ferries are not operating. He further explained that it will not stop and pick up passengers, because it is to operate as a direct replacement for the ferry.

Archie Reid said this situation would not happen if there was a suitable ferry and was not acceptable.

Gordon Ross asked about getting the bus service to come along the front passing Western Ferries instead of along the High Road.

The Group discussed the ferry service and Councillor Semple spoke on the need for integrated public transport and the need for a simple dependable service for people to commute.

(d) UPDATE REGARDING THE REST AND BE THANKFUL

Councillor Semple updated the Group on the works being carried out on the Rest and Be Thankful. He advised the time for completion had slipped slightly because the helicopter was diverted due to weather conditions (recent heavy Snow) The landslip works are now expected to be completed by the end of April. There are on-going discussions with BEAR the company who will be taking over from Transerv this summer. Councillor Semple said he would be making sure that work on promoting tourism will be progressed with positive publicity so that people know that Argyll and Bute are open for business. And to this end he would be participating in a meeting in

the next week about the use and maintenance of tourist signage in Argyll and Bute (particularly the A83). Gordon Ross agreed to provide further information regarding specific signage.

Gordon Ross spoke on the signage at the road end advertising Benmore Gardens, the Argyll Mausoleum etc and also advised there should be marketing to advise that even if the road is closed there is another route.

Councillor McNaughton spoke on the concerns raised by the Forum regarding the diversion route and enquired as to whether the "green route" was still on the cards. Councillor Semple said the preferred option was the green route but the red route is the one that has been proposed. Cllr Semple advised that he has written to the Minister asking that for an assurance that the green route is not completely withdrawn and that background work is brought forward on the green route in case the red one doesn't work.

Iain MacInnes asked whether in the event of another landslide the road could be opened one way and use the old military road for the other way. Councillor Semple said he didn't think they would open the road for safety reasons if both lanes had not been cleared but would forward the suggestion for discussion.

Iain MacInnes further asked about the signage for Lochgoil and Strachur when the A83 was closed so people know to go to the ferry and asked that these be erected asap. It was agreed Councillor McNaughton would write to Transport Scotland and to the Councils Head of Roads asking for this to happen.

Councillor Semple said if Argyll and Bute were to play a part in the economy then it needs to be well connected; there are a lot of renewables in the west coast and it is time that these started to bring prosperity and generating jobs in Argyll.

(e) BUS DIFFICULTIES IN NEW MUSTERING AREA

Councillor McNaughton advised that the Public Transport Officer is intending to have a discussion with the Marine Operations Manager regarding signage and re-lining at the Argyll Ferries ferry terminal due to the cars parking in the bus lane blocking the bus stops. Callum Rae from West Coast Motors advised that this was an accident waiting to happen.

Gordon Ross asked about what was happening with the CHORD Project asking if the money was still set aside for the Harbour Masters office because the port-a-cabins are an eyesore when you get off the ferry. Ken Barr advised they have to wait for the ferry review. It was agreed the Area Governance Officer would raise this situation at the Forward Dunoon and Cowal Group meeting in the afternoon.

Councillor Semple spoke on the decriminalisation of the parking and when this happens the council will be able to enforce parking, he indicated that a piece of work needs to be done to look at the traffic management in all towns, but this is likely to pass to streetscene with appropriate resource.

4. BUS ISSUES

Councillor McNaughton spoke on the information he had received from the Public Transport Officer.

The council have to make savings as soon as possible following consultation. The amount for service 484, contract 1615J is £13,595 in a full year. This represents 53.92% of the remaining enhancements on this service.

The proposal is that the Saturday service be withdrawn which would save £12,121.09 in a full year. The Public Transport Officer has had representations from Strachur about the potential loss of the first bus on a Saturday morning and he wondered if there was any other way to make the savings and leave a Saturday service on? He has asked West Coast Motors for an examination of the journey totals which might assist so that the most popular journeys are not taken off.

From 29th March there were changes to Service 485 (Ardentenny). The two school time journeys beyond Glenfinart to Sligrachan have been withdrawn as there are no longer any secondary pupils there. From the same date the first 485 from Glenfinart has been set back to 0720 so that it might pick up some of the many foot passengers who come off the 0730 Western ferries sailing from McInroy's Point. Similarly, on its way back out from Dunoon it has been set back to 0820 to give a better connection from the 0750 Argyll Ferries sailing from Gourock which arrives at Dunoon at 0815.

Again from the same date there were changes to the 482/483 Toward service to give a fare paying service to Toward Primary School using existing resources.

These changes are all contained in the new area transport guide booklet which was published recently and which should be available on the buses or the Co-op, library and Tourist Information Centre.

He has started work on joining up services 482/483 with the 485 but as this is not a high priority and he is short staffed it will be a while yet before he can show the forum a timetable.

Councillor McNaughton suggested the savings could be made from the bus service during the week and the Saturday service remains. Archie Reid highlighted that losing the first bus service of the day means increased difficulties for those with Saturday Jobs and suggested that if any service needed to be looked at on the Saturday, it should not be the first or last busses, Archie further asked why the savings always come from the Strachur service.

Councillor Semple spoke on the subsidy for the bus service and the need to look at community transport schemes. He also spoke on the loss of service to rural communities and how to change that in this financial climate. Archie Reid spoke on young people leaving the area because of lack of usable services, citing young people moving to Glasgow to Study at college or University rather than commuting

Eleanor Stevenson asked that the Toward route connects with Argyll Ferries. Callum Rae indicated that service timetables are usually aligned in this way but agreed to verify this.

It was agreed the timetable will be passed by the Forum before it was agreed and this will be circulated by email to the group and a meeting arranged if the chair thinks it necessary.

5. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

Archie Reid asked when the bus stop at Glenbranter would be finished and was advised the second phase should be start soon.

Iain MacInnes asked if there was provision given to the Ambulance service at the closed area of road at the junction for Dumbarton and Bowling and it was agreed the Area Governance Officer would highlight this to West Dunbartonshire Council.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting of the Transport Forum would be the 21st June 2013 in the Hill Street Office.

