

MINUTES of MEETING of CAMPBELTOWN FERRY COMMITTEE held in the CONFERENCE ROOM, AQUALIBRIUM, KINLOCH GREEN, CAMPBELTOWN on WEDNESDAY, 15 JUNE 2016

Present: Councillor John Armour (Chair)
Shona Barton, Area Committee Manager, Argyll and Bute Council
Simon Richmond, Area Operations Manager, Calmac
Angela Herd, Calmac
Mairi Paterson, Explore Campbeltown
Kevin Lewis, Machrihanish Dunes

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Councillor Anne Horn and Ranald Watson of Springbank Distillers.

Having noted that the Chair, Councillor Horn had sent her apologies the Committee agreed that Councillor John Armour assume the role of Chair for the duration of the meeting.

2. MINUTE OF THE CAMPBELTOWN FERRY SUB-GROUP MEETING HELD ON 4 MAY 2016

The Minute of the Campbeltown Ferry Sub-group held on 4 May 2016 was approved as a true record.

3. MEMBERSHIP OF GROUP

The Area Committee Manager thanked members of the Committee for their assistance in identifying appropriate representatives from the groupings on the membership lists. She advised that a letter had been prepared for issue to the individuals identified by the Committee. She advised that she would provide an update on the responses at the next meeting of the group. Discussion took place in respect of identifying someone for the role of independent traveller, with the Area Operations Manager of Calmac outlining the selection process followed by the Isle of Arran Ferry Committee and stressed the importance of a broad cross section membership list. The Area Committee Manager agreed to draft a notice which would be displayed in the Harbour office seeking nominations for this role. Further discussion took place in respect of the membership roles that the current members of the Committee already occupy; the intimation by Colin Craig of West Coast Motors to accept the role of Public Transport Operator on the membership list and the possibility of establishing a contact from the farming sector. Councillor Armour agreed to make contact with the NFU asking them to provide a contact for an appropriate representative to be added to the membership list.

Outcome:

The Committee agreed:-

1. To note the progress to date on the Membership of the group; and
2. Requested that the Area Committee Manager provide an update at the next meeting, outlining the responses to the letter sent to individuals identified by the Committee.

4. FUTURE TIMETABLING

The Area Operations Manager of Calmac outlined the consultation process in relation to timetabling. He advised that the winter timetables had now been sent to Transport Scotland for approval and he hoped to begin the process of consulting on the Summer 2017 timetable at the end of June, beginning of July. He advised that he would write to the Chair of the Committee indicating the start of the consultation process and ask for any representations. Mr Richmond outlined the timescales of the process and advised that it was anticipated that the Summer 2017 timetable would be finalised by December 2016.

Discussion took place in respect of vessel capacity and the vessel replacement strategy with Mr Richmond confirming that there was little scope for spare vessel provision at this stage. He advised that new vessels may cascade capacity across the network. Councillor Armour suggested that one of the most effective changes to the service would be to get an in and out service on a Saturday, allowing day trips for visitors to the area. Mr Richmond agreed to take this suggestion away as a starting point. Further discussion took place in respect of having a special service to leave from Campbeltown on a Monday following a large weekend event such as the Mull of Kintyre Runs or the Music Festival. Mr Richmond advised that it would be unlikely that they could provide a service on the Monday following this year's Music Festival in August, but he would look into the possibility and confirm to the Committee. Mr Richmond suggested that when the Committee were putting together their response to the consultation it would be beneficial to have a diary of planned events, and request that a Monday service be provided at these times. He explained that the more notice given would allow greater consideration of the request.

Outcome:

The Committee agreed to note the information provided by the Area Operations Manager, Calmac.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Armour spoke of the difficulties faced since the start of this year's service. He advised that members of the community were disheartened that the service to Campbeltown had been cancelled due to technical difficulties, but had still sailed to Brodick. Mr Richmond advised that he had been very conscious of the difficulties, and outlined the difficulties encountered by the defective propulsion system. He advised that there had been an operational fix on the system but that a full repair would require to be carried out during dry docking, in October. Mr Richmond further advised that the other issues which had prohibited the service to Campbeltown was the wind direction and the boat's hours of rest. Councillor Armour enquired as to the possibility of the second Isle of Arran vessel coming to Campbeltown when there were difficulties. Mr Richmond advised that all incidents are reviewed on an individual basis and the weather, capacity of the vessel and the boats hours of rest would be taken into consideration. He advised that there was no bias as to how Calmac operate.

Further discussion took place in respect of the difficulties faced by travellers when sailings are cancelled. Ms Herd advised that arrangements are put in place for transporting passengers by road when technical difficulties arise, however there are no alternative provisions in incidents of poor weather.

Mairi Paterson of Explore Campbeltown spoke of the need to get information into the public domain when there were cancellations. Ms Herd advised that it is possible to subscribe to the Calmac website and receive information on services. Ms Herd agreed to email Ms Paterson in the event of cancellations of the service, who in turn would put a notification on public media sites to notify possible travellers.

Further discussion took place in respect of the figures for the year so far, with Mr Richmond handing out a reliability and punctuality report. The Committee agreed that the figures were encouraging despite the number of cancellations experienced in the first weeks of the season.

The Chair thanked both Mr Richmond and Ms Herd for the information provided.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The group agreed that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 10 August 2016, time and venue to be confirmed.