

**MINUTES of MEETING of COWAL TRANSPORT FORUM held in the SANDBANK VILLAGE  
HALL  
on WEDNESDAY, 4 OCTOBER 2017**

**Present:** Councillor Alan Reid (Chair)

Councillor Jim Anderson                      Councillor Audrey Forrest  
Councillor Bobby Good (representing WCM)

**Attending:** Melissa Stewart, Argyll and Bute Council  
Douglas Blades, Argyll and Bute Council  
Stuart Watson, Argyll and Bute Council  
Sgt Paul MacPherson, Police Scotland  
Archie Reid, Strachur Community Council  
Iain McInnes, Lochgoil Community Council  
Gordon Ross, Western Ferries  
Alistair McLundie, Western Ferries  
Iain MacNaughton, Sandbank Community Council  
Jim Wilson, Hunter's Quay Community Council  
Graham Revill, Kilmun Community Council  
Callum Kennedy, Hunter's Quay Community Council

**1. APOLOGIES**

The Chair welcomed everyone to his first meeting of the Cowal Transport Forum.

Apologies were received from:-

Edward McElhinnrey  
Willie Lynch, Chair of Dunoon Community Council  
Councillor Yvonne McNeilly  
Aileen Hoey, Hunters Quay Community Council  
Danielle Clark De-Bisshop, Colintravie & Glendaruel Community Council  
Callum Robertson, Argyll and Bute Council  
Martin Arnold, Argyll and Bute Council  
Stuart Mearns, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park  
Susan Brooks, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park  
Ruaridh McGregor, Scottish Water  
Simon Richmond, CalMac  
George Fiddes, Transport Scotland

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest intimated.

### **3. MINUTES**

The minute of the previous meeting of the Cowal Transport Forum held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2017 was approved as a correct record.

It was noted that Kevin McIntosh, Roads Performance Manager had his apologies recorded twice the previous minute. The Area Governance Officer advised this would be corrected.

At item 6, point 3, Douglas Blades confirmed that agreement had been reached with West Coast Motors to change the timetable of the afternoon bus from Dunoon to Carrick Castle on Fridays to be the same as on other weekdays. The Transport Commissioner would be asked to approve this change. Since the Council would write in support, Mr Blades was confident the Transport Commissioner would agree.

Under this item, the afternoon service from Helensburgh to Carrick Castle was also discussed. The local community had asked for this service to run a little later on non-school days to allow passengers to connect with the Glasgow-Campbeltown service at the Rest & Be Thankful. Douglas Blades reported that there had been initial disagreement from Garelochhead coaches, but he was now confident they would agree to this change. Whilst considering this proposed change, it had been noted that the bus arrives at Lochgoilhead Primary after the school bell. This means that the bus timing will need to be brought forward. After agreement on a revised timetable has been reached with Garelochhead Coaches, it will need to be forwarded to SPT for their approval.

At item 6, point 8 of the previous minute, Douglas Blades confirmed that no progress has been made on the service running from Morrison's along Alexandra Parade as the contact Mr Blades had been dealing with has now left McGills. He assured the Forum that he would keep pushing the matter with the new contact and would report back to the next meeting with an update.

At item 6, point 10, Councillor Good confirmed that all school buses display large yellow signs in the rear window.

At item 7, outcome 2, Stuart Watson agreed to inform Community Councils Chairs and Secretaries of any future temporary road closures.

The Group expressed concerns as to how Scottish Water had provided notification of the works at Kilmun to residents and asked that Scottish Water provide details of their communication strategy for the planned works.

### **4. TRANSPORT SCOTLAND**

Apologies from Transport Scotland had been received for the meeting but they provided a written update as follows:-

#### **(a) VMS signs warning of the A83 being closed or reopened**

Transport Scotland have a temporary arrangement in place for Inveraray when the A83 is closed. When the A83 is closed for long periods, a temporary VMS will be sited in Inveraray advising drivers of the diversion route. Transport Scotland are currently exploring options for a more

permanent solution and will consult with local stakeholders before making any decision.

Stuart Watson, Roads Performance Manager, advised that 2 VMS signs have been refurbished and they are expected on site in Strachur and Kilmun by the end of October.

### **OUTCOME**

The Forum expressed their dismay on the lack of signage proposed for Lochgoil and asked that Mr Watson take this back to the Roads Department in effort to seek confirmation as to whether this related to the fact this was a B Class road.

#### **(b) A83 Unmanned Road Closure**

Transport Scotland advised that they appreciate the frustration this situation and delay must have caused. This was due to a mixture of circumstances including investigations following a serious incident nearby. They acknowledge communication about the diversions could have been better however they reassure those affected that staff were assisting the police.

Discussion took place on the recent road closures and Sgt Paul MacPherson updated the Forum on this. He confirmed that he provided information of the road closures on Twitter and linked this with the Dunoon Observer, Western and Argyll Ferries accounts to alert people that were travelling.

Gordon Ross asked what plans were in place for Strone Point as works were already meant to be in place. Mr Watson advised that he understood this related to funding issues but work was due to start in the next financial year.

### **OUTCOME**

The Group noted the information provided and requested that a letter be sent to Transport Scotland setting out their concerns as regards the handling of the closure and recommending that there ought to be a presence at Tarbet to provide information on the exact location of any incidents.

#### **(c) RET - Dunoon Ferries**

Transport Scotland advised in their written note that the Ferries Plan 2013-22 contains a commitment to fully roll out RET on the Clyde & Hebrides Ferry Services network within the term of the Parliament. This commitment was achieved in October 2015. The Ferries Plan also stated Transport Scotland's intention to roll out RET to all lifeline services.

Introducing RET on the Gourock – Dunoon services now would increase fares for a large number of users. While the published fares are higher than RET, many users currently acquire discounted tickets. Both Argyll Ferries and Western Ferries facilitate these reduced fares through

commercial agents. Consideration of fare levels will be given once the outcome of the Ferry Services Procurement Policy Review is known and the future of Gourock – Dunoon town centre to town centre ferry service is clearer. The ‘Assessment of the Impacts of the Road Equivalent Tariff Pilot’ report by Halcrow Group Limited was published in July 2011. The report sets out indicative RET fares and presented the total revenue impact for Firth of Clyde routes. The report also included the analysis of the benefits of rolling out RET across the network in general. The Ferries Plan 2013-22 stated our intention to roll out RET to all lifeline services.

However, there is no commitment to timing or funding for introducing RET on such ferry services. Further consideration of fare levels on the Gourock – Dunoon ferry service will be given once the outcome of the Ferry Services Procurement Policy Review is known.

Gordon Ross of Western Ferries felt this update from Transport Scotland was contradictory to the position adopted for other routes, as discussed at Holyrood during question time in September.

## **OUTCOME**

The Group:

1. Noted the information provided;
2. Asked that a letter be sent to the Transport Minister, highlighting inconsistency in the roll out of RET noting the benefits associated with this and requested that they introduce this on the Dunoon-Gourock and McInroy’s Point-Hunter’s Quay routes as soon as possible; and
3. Asked the Area Governance Officer to establish if any Councillor can attend the A83 Task Force Group or if only those appointed can attend.

## **5. FERRIES UPDATE**

### **(a) Dunoon - Gourock Tendering Process**

There was no formal update presented but it was noted that an announcement was due in the autumn.

### **(b) Cancelled Sailing Statistics (Argyll Ferries)**

The Group considered a Reliability and Punctuality report which set out the summer performance from this year with last year’s figures being used as a comparator.

## **OUTCOME**

The Group noted the information provided.

### **(c) Improved Port Facilities (CMAL)**

Simon Richmond submitted a written update and advised that CMAL have confirmed scheduled tender upgrade works to the outer lifting dolphin at

Gourock. Works are due to commence on 09/10/17 to 30/10/17. The works are planned and due to be completed as night shifts, however to give the contractor maximum working windows to the timescales proposed, works will be between 2230-0530 hours.

In addition, Simon advised that mobility impaired passengers travelling after 2230 hours who may be unable to embark/disembark vessels via the Boat Steps will be offered a replacement taxi service via Western Ferries during their operational hours.

Discussion took place on the steps that were put in place as they potentially may not meet accessibility requirements.

Gordon Ross updated the Group regarding works on the new link span.

### **OUTCOME**

The Group noted the information provided and asked that a letter be sent to CMAL setting out concerns that these works may not be DDA compliant. They also requested a report on other port improvements for their next meeting.

## **6. PUBLIC TRANSPORT UPDATE**

### **(a) The Connecting Train at Gourock always at Platform 1**

Douglas Blades, Public Transport Officer, confirmed that trains which connect with the ferry are not all currently routed into platform 1 at Gourock Train Station but a solution had been identified to resolve this issue.

### **OUTCOME**

The Group noted the information provided and agreed to write to Network Rail expressing their support but asking for an early introduction of the automatic signalling system.

#### Additional Updates

Mr Blades gave an update on the bus shelter at Fountain Quay advising this is on hold as the Council is selling the land. He confirmed if Bield Housing buy this land, the bus stop will go ahead and there will be no problem.

Mr Blades passed around a new updated Transport map which gives more information on the routes in Argyll and Bute Council.

He advised that there is a daytime closure planned for early November, for approximately a week, to repair the crash barriers on the A82 north of Tarbet, therefore the A82 will be closed to all traffic with exception of coaches between 8am and 7pm on weekdays.

The Group asked that Transport Scotland provide a contingency plan in case of road closure to the diversion route on the A83 and that a letter be sent to this effect.

## **7. ROADS UPDATE**

### **(a) Progress of proposals for mustering at Dunoon Pier**

Stuart Watson, Roads Performance Manager, gave an update on the progress of proposals for mustering at Dunoon Pier. He advised that this is adopted onto a public road and are now applying for a bus lane. He advised the TRO will go out to consultation in November and there will be a 6 week consultation period. He anticipated introduction in 6 months but this could take up to one year.

#### **OUTCOME**

The Group noted the information provided and asked Stuart to confirm with Piers and Harbours where the portacabin would be relocated to.

### **(b) Bus Stop and Turning Circle at Rest and Be Thankful**

An update was given on the current situation with the bus stop and turning circle at the Rest and be Thankful. The Group discussed the TRO process and the suggestion for a monitoring camera to enforce the TRO. It was hoped that the TRO would be in place for 1 March.

#### **OUTCOME**

The Group noted the information provided and that Mr Blades would progress matters related to the camera subject to funds being obtained from SPT in the next financial year.

### **(c) Congestion at Hunter's Quay**

Discussion took place on the congestion of traffic at Hunter's Quay which has caused a lot of traffic issues. Captain McLundie (think this is correct spelling) of Western Ferries confirmed he has been monitoring the traffic when the queue extends past Cammesreinach Brae as he is aware of the concerns. It was noted that when the traffic queue extends past Cammesreinach Brae, the road becomes too narrow for 2-way traffic.

It was noted that a bus stop pole had been left in a different location from the bus stop bay when the bay was moved. It was asked that the pole be moved, noting the bus stop bay was correctly located.

Mr & Mrs Stevenson who are local residents spoke about the danger to the area and advised their wall had been hit 3 times. There are a number of speeding drivers on this stretch of road and they expressed concerns that a fatality will happen if nothing is done to address this issue. It was suggested that speed limit signs are installed, that the parking bays be removed from the bend and that a concealed entrance sign be provided at the bad bend. It was further suggested that, on busy occasions, instead of

queuing from the north, vehicles should queue from the south as used to happen on Cowal Games Saturdays. To enable this, road markings to the south should split the road into 3 lanes to ease the congestion as this would provide a central lane for the ferry, and traffic coming from the north on busy occasions should be directed along Cammesreinach Brae, George Street, James Street and Marine Parade.

### **OUTCOME**

The Group noted the information provided and Mr Watson agreed to take all of the above suggestions away to consider and report back to the next meeting.

#### **(d) Traffic Management at Kirn**

Mr Watson confirmed that two separate road surveys are to be carried out in the next 3 to 4 weeks for the traffic management at Kirn.

### **OUTCOME**

The Group noted the information provided.

## **8. SCOTTISH WATER UPDATE**

Apologies were submitted by Scottish Water for the meeting and no update was available.

## **9. POLICE SCOTLAND**

Sergeant Paul MacPherson of Police Scotland provided an update outlining the ongoing works of the local police unit, which included a Drink Driver Campaign, which was very successful, a motorcyclist safety campaign, speeding campaign, seat belt campaign and an upcoming insurance campaign.

### **OUTCOME**

The Group noted the information provided and it was agreed Mr Watson would raise an issue about an abandoned car in the George Street car park with the wardens and report back whether any action can be taken as this is a private car park.

## **10. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE**

There was no update from Scottish Fire & Rescue.

## **11. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

Councillor Good advised the Group that he had had a number of complaints for the lack of bus stops in Toward and has been asked if the 482 and 483 bus services can be extended to pass through the town. He was also asked if a dial-a-bus service could be put on between Innellan and Toward. Douglas Blades agreed to discuss this with Councillor Good.

Iain MacInnes asked if there is a policy in place for Anti-Social behaviour on buses. Councillor Good confirmed there was a policy which involved drivers ordering disruptive passengers off the bus.

Iain MacInnes asked if the backlog of TROs would be going through together or separately. Stuart Watson confirmed that it depends on each individual TRO. He said that the Council was recruiting a temporary member of staff to assist in the processing of the backlog of TROs.

## **12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Group agreed the dates of the next Cowal Transport Forum meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of December, March, June and September at 10am in the Timber Pier Building, Dunoon:-

- Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017
- Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2018
- Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2018
- Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2018