

**MINUTES of MEETING of COWAL TRANSPORT FORUM held in the TIMBER PIER BUILDING,
DUNOON on MONDAY, 11 MARCH 2019**

Present: Councillor Alan Reid (Chair)
Councillor Jim Anderson
Melissa Stewart, Argyll and Bute Council
Douglas Wilson, Police Scotland
Alex Smith, Police Scotland
Gordon Ross, Western Ferries
Captain Alistair McLundie, Western Ferries
Murray Rogers, West Coast Motors
Calum Rae, West Coast Motors
Cathleen Russell, Colglen Community Council
Debbie Donald, Cairndow Community Council
Paul Paterson, Kilfinan Community Council
Graeme Revill, Kilmun Community Council
Pauline Seale, Sandbank Community Council
Michael Breslin, South Cowal Community Council
Jimmy Bell, Hunters Quay Community Council
Eleanor Stevenson, South Cowal Community Council
Kirstie Reid, Strachur Community Council

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were intimated by:

Councillor Audrey Forrest
Willie Lynch, Dunoon Community Council
Callum Robertson, Performance Manager Argyll and Bute Council
Stuart Watson, Traffic and Development Manager
Paul Farrell, Technical Officer
Martin Arnold, Community Transport Officer
Archie Reid, Strachur Community Council
Iain MacInnes, Lochgoil Community Council
Simon Richmond, Caledonian MacBrayne
Iain Catterwell, Timber Transport Group

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were intimated.

3. MINUTES

The minute of the previous meeting of the Cowal Transport Forum held on the 17th December 2018 was approved as a correct record.

4. FERRIES UPDATE

Transport Scotland submitted the following written update:

Gourock to Dunoon Ferry Service

- Scottish Ministers announced that effective from 21 January 2019, the Gourock to Dunoon ferry service would be transferred to CalMac Ferries Ltd (CFL) as a passenger-only service. This has ensured the continued provision of a passenger ferry service, under the terms set out in the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service contract.
- Following the transfer, further consideration will be given to future vessel and service requirements. Consideration will also be given to improved harbour-side facilities for passengers. This will ensure that the ferry service is best placed to meet the needs of passengers into the future.

Local Engagement

- Transport Scotland is committed to ensuring that the views of the residents of the Cowal Peninsula are listened to, which is why we attend the Clyde Ferry Stakeholder Group, organised by HITRANS. Following the transfer of the Gourock to Dunoon service to CFL, engagement with the local community will be taken forward as per the Clyde and Hebrides model, which includes six monthly Ferry Stakeholder Group consultation events.
- Transport Scotland also receives feedback on the views of the local community via regular engagement with CFL, which includes monthly contract meetings.

Gourock to Kilcreggan Ferry Service

- Scottish Ministers welcomed SPT's recent award of a contract to operate the Gourock to Kilcreggan ferry service to a new operator. We are aware that this has seen a significant improvement in the service and that more people are now using the service.
- Once we are satisfied that the new contract represents the true cost of providing a reliable service, Scottish Ministers will be in a position to consider a transfer of responsibility further.

Kirstie Reid on behalf of Willie Lynch Dunoon Community Council raised concerns regarding why Community Councils are not invited to the Clyde Ferry Stakeholder Group and the lack of input allowed by the local community.

(a) Caledonian MacBrayne

Simon Richmond, Caledonian MacBrayne submitted apologies for the meeting and therefore provided the following written update:

1. Vessels

M.V. Coruisk will continue on the Gourock - Dunoon Service until Saturday 23rd March. Following which she will be undertaking essential maintenance at Gourock prior to returning to the Mull - Craighure Service - During this time she will be unable to be used in service.

- M.V. Argyll Flyer dry dock will take place in May 2019 during which time a single vessel service will operate.

2. Dunoon

Argyll and Bute have announced that work to improve the ferry passenger experience at Dunoon Breakwater will begin on Monday 11th March. The work will improve safety and provide facilities more suited to a passenger-only service, while any disruption will be kept to a minimum. The first stage of the work will see the toilets and waiting area relocated, which will be undertaken over the course of the week and require those facilities to be closed in that time. Temporary toilet facilities will be provided for the duration of the works and the ferry schedule will not be affected. Shelter for waiting passengers will be available at the existing shelter at the Breakwater and at the existing bus shelters. Works are due for completion by Friday 15th, with the waiting room expected to be operational mid-week.

3. New CHFS 2 Contract

Signage

CalMac have been working closely with an external contractor to develop new way finding signage at both Gourock and Dunoon ports. The signage should be installed within the coming months.

Uniform

All crew onboard MV Ali Cat and MV Argyll Flyer have now received their CalMac branded uniform and can now be visible wearing these.

Waiting Room Refresh

CalMac have received confirmation from CMAL to proceed with refreshing the waiting area at Gourock. CalMac have appointed a contractor to undertake the works which will be completed by the end of March.

Vessel Rebranding

CalMac are currently developing plans to rebrand both MV Ali Cat and MV Argyll Flyer. Once these have been agreed internally, CalMac will share these images with the public to advise what the vessels will look like. Both vessels will be rebranding during their scheduled annual overhaul i.e.

- MV Argyll Flyer - May 2019
- MV Ali Cat - November 2019

Website

CalMac have now included all information regarding the Gourock - Dunoon route on the CalMac website. CalMac are advising all customers to use the CalMac website for information on this service. We are also reviewing the activity on the AFL webpage ensuring this is decreasing before shutting this website down.

A statistical update was also tabled at the meeting.

The Chair updated the Committee on arrangements that are now in place for Elected Members to visit the Scottish Parliament for a meeting with the Minister for Transport and Connectivity on the 12th March 2019 to discuss the future of the Dunoon-Gourock ferry service.

Outcome

1. The Forum requested clarification on why the Dunoon to Gourock service is cancelled in order to facilitate the Rothesay to Wemyss Bay service when it is diverted to Gourock.
2. The Forum agreed to formally oppose the proposed changes to the Portavadie timetable, noting that the cuts would mean an hour delay in getting home by school children who currently use the service and in light of the figures produced by Calmac which indicate the service is growing in usage. This ferry service is also used by people from the Isle of Bute travelling by public transport to and from the Mid Argyll Hospital. It was also suggested that there can be 2 or 3 vessels sidelined during the winter and perhaps those could be deployed rather than cancelling sailings.

(b) Western Ferries

Gordon Ross informed the Group that works are still ongoing at Hunter's Quay but are progressing well and there were no issues to highlight. Western Ferries summer timetable will start on the 25th March 2019 and that it was business as usual with no concerns to raise.

Outcome

It was noted that an extension of the existing timetable could be looked at if there was a viable need but consideration would need to be given to the residential housing at both Hunters Quay and McInroy's Point.

(c) Shore Side Infrastructure at Dunoon

The Marine Operations Manager submitted the following written update:

Dunoon Breakwater – Ferry Passenger Facilities

1. Background

- 1.1 It has been apparent for some time that improvements could be made to the current traffic management arrangements at the vehicle mustering / parking area at Dunoon Breakwater. This issue has been of particular concern to the local bus company who brought their safety-related concerns to Council officers' attention, resulting in the recent Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) being raised.

2. Detail

- 2.1 Following the announcement from the Scottish Government that Calmac will be providing a passenger-only service, we are now in a position to progress the preferred arrangement for the existing mustering area, which meets the objectives of improving safety, in terms of bus/vehicle/pedestrian segregation; this arrangement should address many of the objections raised during the TRO process, which are focussed mainly around drop-off provision.
- 2.2 The preferred layout (attached) is based around the Stages outlined below:-

Stage 1 – Relocation of Portakabins (to area shown hatched red on attached Location Plan).

Stage 2 – Reconfiguration of mustering area road markings to create formalised car park incorporating drop-off area.

Stage 3 – Address the outstanding objections from TRO process and proceed with formal implementation of bus lane.

- 2.3 In terms of Stage 1, plans are in place to relocate the Portakabin units around the middle to second-half of this month. We shall endeavour to undertake as much preparatory works in advance to keep the move/outage to a minimum. Temporary toilets will be provided during the move but there will be no waiting facility – this will be for only a very short duration – around 2 days.

Outcome

The Forum requested clarification on what the improved passenger facilities will be and noted that Transport Scotland would lead a sub-group of the Argyll Ferries Infrastructure Group to look at infrastructure requirements on both sides of the Clyde.

5. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Martin Arnold, Community Transport Officer had submitted apologies to the meeting, he therefore provided the forum with a written update on each item listed on the agenda.

(a) Helensburgh - Carrick Castle Bus Service

No further update on this item was provided.

(b) McGills 907 Service to Glasgow

As indicated earlier to the forum, this service has ceased as of Saturday 2nd March 2019. There are currently no plans from the transport team to replace this.

The Forum held a conversation around the impact the cancellation of the service will have on the local community and the viability of any alternative services that could potentially be put in place.

Outcome

1. West Coast Motors agreed to look at existing bus services to see if additional runs can be put on to encompass the shore road between the town centre and Hunters Quay.
2. The Forum requested a breakdown of the relief bus criteria from Caledonian MacBrayne.

(c) Bus Stop at Rest and Be Thankful

CityLink Coaches are now using this stop again for the Summer. As with previous

years public transport will make representation to CityLink and West Coast Motors to continue using this stop during the winter months. The situation regarding parking at this stop will continue to be monitored.

Outcome

The Forum agreed to request additional gritting by Transport Scotland and Argyll and Bute Council in order for buses to utilise the area better in the winter months, noting the commitment given that safer driving conditions would lead to WCM re-evaluating their current stance on this.

(d) Bus Stops, Toward: Update on Site Visit

This has not been actioned yet, however a team will be in Dunoon area on the week beginning 22nd April and will endeavour to arrange a visit to take stock of this.

Outcome

Having heard from South Cowal Community Council, the Forum suggested that additional stops are not required and this item should not be taken forward. They agreed instead to ask that the Public Transport department speak to West Coast motors to seek extension of the current service to have them terminate at Castle Toward.

(e) Dial-A-Bus

This will be advertised when new booklets for the Cowal area are produced – likely in April/May 2019. Consideration will be given to producing a special leaflet for the Dial-a-Bus service separate to the entry in the Cowal Area Booklet.

Outcome

The Forum requested that all advertising material be circulated to the Group to enable members to promote the service.

(f) Fountain Quay Bus Shelter

As per the last report, this is currently on hold due to the sale of Duncutha House.

(g) Kames Bus Stop

The Community Transport Officer had spoken to the Roads department who advised that due to current commitments the matter cannot be looked at, however the Community Transport Officer will contact them again in April to establish when it would be possible to put a yellow bus stop cage down on the road at the bus shelter. In the meantime West Coast Motors confirmed their drivers will stop at the bus shelter, not the Post Office, however they noted that locals tended to wait at the Post Office for the bus.

Outcome

It was agreed that Kilfinan Community Council will promote the use of the bus shelter with residents.

(h) 479 Dunoon to Rothesay West Coast Motors Service

West Coast Motors have been asked to provide cover for this and ensure even if the

ferry is off that the last bus to Colintrave from Dunoon will still operate.

Outcome

1. Murray Rogers will take this item forward with Argyll and Bute Council for a workable solution going forward.
2. West Coast Motors will ask City Link to look at addressing the gaps in timetable of the 926 service raised by Cairndow Community Council.

6. TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

The Forum raised concerns around the lack of recent attendance by Transport Scotland to the Cowal Transport Forum and the lack of Community Council representation currently on the A83 Taskforce Group.

Outcome

The Forum agreed to write to Transport Scotland asking that Community Councils in the Cowal Area be extended an invite to the A83 Taskforce meeting.

(a) VMS Update

A representative from Transport Scotland was not present at the meeting and no written update was submitted.

Outcome

The Forum requested that Transport Scotland look at utilising the VMS signs to highlight the upcoming night closures on the A83.

(b) A83

A representative from Transport Scotland was not present at the meeting and no written update was submitted.

(c) Butterbridge Car Park

A representative from Transport Scotland was not present at the meeting and no written update was submitted.

Debbie Donald informed the Group that the barrier has been moved to allow more cars to park and it was agreed that this item is now concluded.

7. POLICE SCOTLAND

PC Alex Smith provided the Forum with the following verbal update:

- The issue previously raised regarding deer on the carriageways is currently being looked at by Transport Scotland and the Scottish National Heritage Society.
- No further issues of concern to raise from a policing perspective.
- The Forum held a conversation regarding enforcement on the Bullwood Road. Police Scotland confirmed that enforcement of the speed limit is ongoing in this area and highlighted the need for the community to have shared responsibility in maintaining a legal speed on the road.

Outcome

1. PC Smith agreed to look at concerns raised regarding vehicles parking on the corners in Kirm.
2. PC Smith agreed to investigate the camper van that is currently permanently parked at the foot of Clyde Street, Kirm, blocking sightlines.
3. PC Smith agreed to look at issues regarding cyclists on the pavement in Argyll Street.
4. Debbie Donald, on behalf of Cairndow Community Council, thanked Police Scotland for their increased presence in Cairndow noting that this was working as a deterrent against speeding.

8. TIMBER TRANSPORT GROUP

Iain Catterwell had submitted apologies to the meeting which were received post meeting with the following update- Positive progress was being made on timber companies liaising over the sharing of the allowed numbers and frequencies of loaded timber lorries per day on the B8000.

Outcome

The Forum raised concerns regarding lorries mounting the pavement at Strachur Bay and asked if the Timber Transport Group could look into it.

9. ROADS UPDATE

Roads Representatives had submitted apologies to the meeting and a written update was tabled.

(a) TRO Updates - Dunoon Pier

Pier Rd Dunoon TRO - 10 objections received at least are going to be upheld, this may be forwarded to an independent reporter.

Queen Hall TRO - objections received, these will require to be reviewed and removed if possible otherwise the TRO may have to be passed to an independent reporter.

Outcome

The Forum requested clarification on what constitutes as Pier Road in relation to the TRO.

(b) Parking Restrictions- Bus Bays at Queens Hall; Tudor Rooms and Morrisons

Parking Restrictions- Bus Bays at Queens Hall, Tudor Tearooms & Morrison's. The TRO will require to be amended to "local buses" only, with appropriate signage to stop tour coaches using these bays.

(c) Parked Vehicles on Paving Slabs Outside Argyll Hotel

Bollards etc. have been ordered to stop Vehicles parking within Argyll Gardens..

Operational Services will programme the requirement to erect on site, once delivered.

(d) Road Markings in Cowal - General update

Awaiting sub-contractor to complete previously issued works. As previously stated, this work is highly weather dependent with contractors working to timescales for mobilisation, which are unable to take advantage of short term localised improvements within network wide programmes of outstanding work.

Outcome

1. The Forum expressed concern regarding the length of time it takes for markings to be put in place and the lack of replacing faded and old markings and asked that this be raised with the Roads department.
2. The Forum asked for clarification on what the budget is for road markings in the Cowal area.

(e) Speed Surveys: Kirn, Cairndow, Sandhaven to Cothouse, Millhouse and Colintrave, Sandbank Shore road

Speed Surveys Kirn (2 have been carried out) Cairndow (1 has been carried out opposite Inn) Sandhaven to Cothouse (1 has been carried out) Sandbank Shore Rd (1 has been carried out, second visit not carried out yet.) Colintrave (1 has been carried out) , Millhouse (2 surveys have been carried out, first 1 at hall, unfortunately second survey information was corrupted on file. To be redone.) Only the results at Colintrave have merited any physical improvements. Carriageway roundels and additional signage will be used to enhance the 30MPH “gateway” and will be programme in the new financial year.

Outcome

The Forum requested that their concerns around the type of speed survey used be raised with Roads and Amenity Services. In particular the Forum wished to record dissatisfaction regarding the lack of figures available on the range of speeds recorded following a survey being conducted.

(f) Traffic Management in Tighnabruaich, Kames and Millhouse

Traffic management Tighnabruaich, Kames and Millhouse to be progressed when speed/volume surveys have been carried out.

Outcome

Paul Paterson on behalf of Kilfinan Community Council expressed concerns regarding traffic management and would like Roads and Amenity Services to look at speeding, infrastructure, lights, ditches and road markings in the Tighnabruaich, Kames and Millhouse area.

(g) Winter Maintenance - Kilmun and Strone

Winter Maintenance – Kilmun & Strone, The department is not aware of any issues.

The period of snow and sharp frosts late January were a feature of the whole Argyll and Bute network. However, that apart, all treatment plans have been delivered as per Policy.

Outcome

Graeme Revill on behalf of Kilmun Community Council asked if the large volume of grit remaining on the pavements in Kilmun could be swept.

(h) Road Closure Notifications

Road Closure Notifications. Emergency Services; Public Transport; Chair of Area Committee; local Councillors and local Community are all informed of issues related to Roads Closures in their area. Further to this, any emergency / reactive closures due to incidents are posted on the Council Webpage in the Service Disruption – Roads, section.

(i) Waiving of Parking Charges

Waiving of Parking Charges. This will require permission from Full Council if there is loss or potential loss of income.

(j) Flooding at Cot House Bus Stop

Roads advised that they were unaware of “flooding” at Northbound plinth conceding that Southbound may have some water gathering in channel. An initial inspection may be practicable on Fri 8th March but given the nature of the road embankment arrangement here, water accumulation of any great extent or depth is unlikely.

10. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

Jimmy Bell, on behalf of Hunters Quay Community Council, requested that the Fountain Quay bus stop remain on the agenda due to concerns raised by local residents as to the lack of shelter in place. He advised that he would pass on the update provided at the meeting to residents.

Debbie Donald, on behalf of Cairndow Community Council, advised that enquiries had been made as to whether a sign could be placed to prevent motorhomes parking overnight in the layby near the A83. Roads had advised her that they could purchase their own sign but other attendees had been advised that this would be illegal. It was agreed to check the policy regarding signage with Roads and Amenity Services.

11. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Cowal Transport Forum would be held on:

- Monday 17th June 2019