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MINUTES of MEETING of COWAL TRANSPORT FORUM held in the TIMBER PIER BUILDING, DUNOON on WEDNESDAY, 6 DECEMBER 2017

Present: Councillor Alan Reid (Chair)
Councillor Jim Anderson Councillor Bobby Good (representing WMC)
Councillor Audrey Forrest

Attending: Melissa Stewart, Argyll and Bute Council
Douglas Blades, Argyll and Bute Council
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
Lee McDowell, Argyll Ferries
George Fiddes, Transport Scotland
Kevin McIntosh, Argyll and Bute Council
Fulton McInnes, Hunter's Quay Community Council
PC Alex Burton, Police Scotland
Cathy Morrison, South Cowal Community Council
Jean Stevenson, Hunter's Quay resident
Ian Stevenson, Hunter's Quay resident
Anne Wilson, Hunter's Quay resident

1. APOLOGIES

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

Apologies were received from:-

Willie Lynch, Chair of Dunoon Community Council
Councillor Yvonne McNeilly
Paul Farrell, Argyll and Bute Council
Ruaridh MacGregor, Scottish Water

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 4th October 2017 was approved as a correct record subject to two changes at page four, paragraphs three and four to reflect there being only one Traffic Commissioner and that it is the timing of the bus that requires to be brought forward.

4. TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

(a) A83 Closure Procedure

George Fiddes provided the Group with the following update:

- A82 Contingency works went to plan and disruptions were kept to a minimum.
- Improvements are in place for the future and they are looking at key nodes on the network to set up storage boxes on the road with traffic signs in association with Argyll and Bute Council.
- Existing arrangements for this winter are in place.
- A location for the A83 VMS sign at Inveraray is being looked at, at the moment.
- Police Scotland had no update on situation but stated that they don't always have the resources and look to BEAR and Argyll and Bute Council to take traffic management forward in certain situations.
- It was noted if it is a serious incident then situation evolves and agencies react as best they can to the situation. Police Scotland's first priority is always to deal with the incident itself, followed by the traffic management.

Kevin MacIntosh informed the Group that:

- They are trying to better identify locations for diversions kits and the purchase of lockable cabinets is in progress.
- Agencies have limited resources across the board and due to geographic nature of the area it takes time to set diversions and alternative routes up.
- Two VMS signs have been refurbished by BEAR and will be positioned shortly on the A815 at the junctions with the A886 and A880, hopefully in place before Christmas.

Iain McInnes requested that signage better reflects where the actual closures are. It was identified that responsibility for the maintenance of the VMS signs would be with Transport Scotland.

Archie Reid expressed disappointment at the length of time it is taking to put the VMS signs in place. George Fiddes and Kevin MacIntosh agreed to chase this up and email the Chair and the Group on when they will be in place.

Iain McInnes asked why a VMS sign couldn't be put up on a B class road. Kevin MacIntosh responded that the cost and responsibility of the sign would limit getting one, what's in place on the whole does work, that there was no identifiable budget to accommodate this and temporary signage would be used to alert road users so not much would be gained from having a VMS.

OUTCOME

The Group noted that the locked boxes containing temporary signage and two refurbished VMS signs will be in situ early next year and that Iain McInnes was dissatisfied that there was no budget for a VMS sign at Lochgoilhead, a matter which he intended to independently pursue with members of the Bute and Cowal Area Committee.

5. FERRIES UPDATE

(a) Dunoon to Gourock Tendering Process

Gordon Ross provided a brief update that there was an interim report to be published by the Transport Minister in December. The Transport Minister had indicated that there preference would be no requirements to tender going forward, however there are still significant obstacles to overcome. For example ownership and financial governance.

Gordon Ross commented that the existing contract with Argyll Ferries could continue for months if not years.

Lee McDowell spoke regarding the additional information requested from Caledonian MacBrayne before the full report would be published and Gordon Ross commented that the contract could continue for months if not years until a final answer was forthcoming.

Current services as they stand will continue and the Transport Minister indicated that there will be no answer on RET until the policy issues are dealt with.

Archie Reid stated that currently this was not good enough for the town. Western Ferries run a great service but he wants a reliable passenger service in the town as people can't be expected to walk to Western Ferries. He also commented that businesses rely on people coming to the town and the current passenger only service is not reliable or acceptable.

OUTCOME

The Group noted that a reliable passenger service is required and requested that George Fiddes invite a suitable representative from Transport Scotland to the next meeting to discuss ferries.

Argyll Ferries

Lee McDowell provided the following update:

- Security is now in place on Fri & Sat evenings and ticket sales are now done on the shore at Gourock.
- Works completed successfully on Gourock roundhead.
- *Ali Cat* DD completed successfully - ran a day late due to tides when going in water.
- *Argyll Flyer* went in for engine repairs prior to that for several days as pre-emptive repairs
- No current timetable changes

- Still waiting on a decision re *Coruisk* over winter - could be from 17th Dec but this is still to be confirmed by Transport Scotland.
- Currently working on improving heating and the impact of removing the vending machines

Western Ferries

Gordon Ross provided the following update:

- The linkspan at McInroy's Point was almost complete but required a week of good weather to ensure the crane could operate.
- Planning permission is being considered by Argyll and Bute Council to replicate the works from McInroy's Point at Hunters Quay which will improve turnaround and less exposure to tidal shifts. Works for this will start spring 2018 and it is hoped that it will improve shuttling and robustness of service and give multiple berthing options.

Iain McNaughton asked if there would be any Improvements to passenger facilities. Gordon responded as they are running a service with no longer than a 15 minute waiting time improvements aren't really required. It was noted that ferry users should check social media for any disruptions to the service due to climactic weather as this is updated regularly.

Caledonian MacBrayne

Lee McDowell provide the following update:

Colintraive Rhubodach:

- Work progressing at Colintraive - temp slip now in service and new traffic management in place to allow refurb of old slip. New slip being built at Rhubodach
- Cancelled sailings in spring owing to exceptional spring tides causing negative tidal predications.

Tarbert to Portavadie:

- Isle of Cumbrae Technical Issue delay on relief vessel caused by simultaneous other breakdowns
- Reduction in cancelled sailings due to using the smaller MV Raasay to cover.

Douglas Blades asked if there was anything that could be done to prevent those parking at Rhubodach from removing the traffic cones which then caused an issue for the bus turning.

OUTCOME

Lee McDowell agreed to raise the issue of bus turning at Rhubodach with his colleagues and request that they keep an eye on the situation.

(b) RET

This item was taken together with item 5 (a), Dunoon to Gourock tendering process, of the minute.

(c) Improved Port Facilities (CMAL)

The Group noted the response letter by CMAL and noted that works are now complete.

(d) **Cancelled Sailing Statistics**

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.

6. PUBLIC TRANSPORT UPDATE

(a) **Dunoon - Carrick Castle Bus**

The application to change the registration for this bus service has been submitted and the change to the service, allowing it to start at Dunoon Grammar School, not stop at the School Hostel, and then continue onto Carrick, will commence on the 5th February 2018.

(b) **Helensburgh - Carrick Castle Bus**

Douglas Blades has chased the operator up about agreeing a revised timetable that he has produced. Once this is agreed then it will be put to put SPT for approval.

OUTCOME

Douglas Blades will provide an update to the Group in the New Year.

(c) **Alexandra Parade Bus**

Douglas Blades informed the Group that he was awaiting a response from McGills so a further update was currently not available.

He advised that the local service can be used with concession cards but he is still trying to get them to introduce a local fare.

Concerns were raised by Jim Wilson on the non-compliance of McGills coaches regarding disabled access.

OUTCOME

Douglas will provide a report on the legal position for next meeting and will chase McGills up for a response.

(d) **Bus Stops, Toward**

Douglas Blades informed the Group that a site meeting will be arranged for early next year and if the 2018/2019 budget has available funds then additional bus stops will be put in place.

(e) **482 and 483 Services**

Douglas Blades informed the Group that the request for these services to be extended to pass through Argyll Street is in progress. He hoped this would be implemented by the 12th February 2018 as the Traffic Commissioner would need to be notified.

(f) **Dial-A-Bus**

Douglas Blades informed the Group that it would not be possible for a service to be put on between Innellan and Toward, but the service is available to be booked by registered users who live in that area. Currently there is a service on a Monday, Wednesday and Thursday in the Innellan /Toward area.

OUTCOME

The Group agreed this item can now be removed from the agenda.

(g) **Camera at Rest & Be Thankful Bus Stop**

A funding bid along with a letter of support from Citylink has been submitted to SPT but there is no further update on this at present.

George Fiddes stated that he has asked BEAR to review and rationalise the signage and see if anything is missing. Iain McInnes felt there should be a sign on the main road to point out that there are vehicles turning into junction and bus stop.

It was expressed by Transport Scotland and Argyll and Bute Council that more signage wouldn't be considered and that there was an issue in terms of responsibility for white lining.

OUTCOME

- Nigel Potts to send George Fiddes the white lining plan of the junction so it can be cross referenced with Transport Scotland's map to ascertain who is responsible for the white lining.
- A letter from the Transport Forum to the Forestry Commission to be drafted to engage them regarding their area of land.

(h) **Fountain Quay Bus Shelter**

Douglas Blades informed the Group that this is currently on hold due to the land being for sale. He has contacted Bield housing association to see if their land could be used but has had no response as of yet.

(i) **Automatic signalling at Gourock**

No update was available and Network rail have not provided a response to the letter from the Transport Forum.

7. ROADS UPDATE

(a) **A83 - VMS Signs**

This item was dealt with at 4. (a) A83 Closure Procedure of the minute.

(b) **Congestion at Hunter's Quay**

The Group held a discussion around the overflow of cars queuing for Western Ferries as well as the current parking arrangements, speeding issues, the re-positioning of the bus stop and the concerns raised regarding the sharp bend in the road.

Kevin McIntosh suggested that this matter be removed from the agenda and pursued directly with those affected. His suggestion was to reconvene a meeting to receive information from Western Ferries about any overspill which they had been asked to monitor. He advised that previous instances seemed to be short lived but it was best to take this away to conduct an appraisal as to how to progress this although in terms of the traffic orders in place there were limited opportunities to do anything.

Gordon Ross confirmed he was happy to meet again and that the situation was monitored by staff. Captain McLundie stated that there have been some unforeseen issues that have caused back up but these situations have been dealt with.

Fulton McInnes stated that having no back up was unacceptable as CC get complaints potential danger and requested that the matter remain on the agenda.

Traffic calming measures were discussed in terms of the potential for a speed restriction and reinstating the central line and an abandoned car a few spaces up from the bus stop was brought to the attention of the Group.

OUTCOME

1. A meeting will be convened in January, during office hours, between Argyll and Bute Council's Roads department, Western Ferries, Hunter's Quay Community Council, Police Scotland and Elected Members. The purpose of the meeting will be to analyse the situation further and try and identify a solution and it was requested that a minute of the meeting be produced, with a request that the Governance and Law team provide a minute taker for the meeting.

It was noted that concerned/ affected residents should feed in their views via local Elected members or their Community Council who should raise any issues on their behalf.

2. Kevin McIntosh would take pursue the relocation of the bus stop and reinstatement of central lining.

3. PC Burton would look into the relevant legislation regarding the abandoned vehicle and report back to the Group.

(c) **Kirn Traffic Management**

Kevin McIntosh held a site meeting with Envirokirn to discuss issues and identify possible solutions. A survey will be carried out to assess if there are speeding issues and traffic calming methods will be looked into and investigated, as well as the parking in the area.

OUTCOME

- Kirn Brae no waiting plate still to be removed – Kevin McIntosh will chase this up.
- PC Burton will look into disabled parking law enforcement and report back to the Group.

(d) **Update on TRO's at Dunoon Pier and Rest & Be Thankful Bus Stop**

Rest and Be Thankful Bus Stop

This is currently in progress with no further update on timescale available at the moment.

Kevin McIntosh reiterated that limited resources is an issue and that the process can take six months. It is hoped that this order will be place by March 2018.

Kevin also informed the Group that the enforcement of the TRO may be sporadic due to limited resources, but if a pattern of abuse is identified then enforcement will be put in place.

Dunoon Pier

A paper containing an update and proposals will be brought to the Bute and Cowal Area committee early 2018 for their consideration.

Iain McInnes raised concerns at the length of time TROs are taking to process.

OUTCOME

Kevin McIntosh to update the Chair by email on the progress of the Rest and Be Thankful TRO.

(e) **Abandoned Car in George Street Car Park**

The Group noted that the car has now been removed and Hunter's Quay Community Council expressed gratitude to Stuart Watson for his assistance in the matter.

8. SCOTTISH WATER

(a) **Kilmun and Strone Update**

The Group noted the written update provided by Scottish Water.

9. POLICE SCOTLAND

No further update was provided.

10. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

Kevin McIntosh provided the Group with the following verbal update:

- Queens Hall works are ongoing with temporary new road layout in place.
- B8000 sea wall repair works ongoing and there may be short periods of lengthy delays
- B836 – proposed works to install fibre for the Clachaig area will start after the 18th Jan 2018.

George Fiddes responded that one sign now working and the other is currently being repaired and temporary signage is in place. He agreed to provide an update to group on completion.

Douglas Blades informed the Group that he had received a request to change the bus time for the late bus that travels from Glen Finart to Toward. This change will facilitate the bus meeting the ferry when Argyll Ferries are undergoing refit works. Cathie Morrison felt that this makes sense, didn't think there would be any issues but agreed to raise this with South Cowal Community council.

Fulton McInnes asked if car parks would be free over the festive period. Councillor Forrest responded this was an ongoing debate and this is being actively pursued by local councillors.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 7th March 2018, 10am, Timber Pier Building, Dunoon.

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