

**MINUTES of MEETING of COWAL TRANSPORT FORUM held in the TIMBER PIER
BUILDING, DUNOON
on MONDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2019**

Present: Councillor Alan Reid (Chair)
Councillor Jim Anderson
Councillor Bobby Good
Melissa Stewart, Argyll & Bute Council
Scott MacLean, Calmac
Ian Slorach, Calmac
Simon Richmond, Calmac
Captain Alistair McLundie, Western Ferries
Marta Zawadzka, Argyll & Bute Council
Martin Arnonld, Argyll & Bute Council
Archie Reid, Strachur Community Council
Willie Lynch, Dunoon Community Council
Graham Revill, Kilmun Community Council
Paul Paterson, Kifinan Community Council
Iain MacNaughton, Sandbank Community Council
Neil MacFarlane, Transport Scotland
Michael Breslin, South Cowal Community Council
Chief Inspector Douglas Wilson, Police Scotland
Cathleen Russell, Colintrave & Glendaruel Community Council
Iain Catterwell, Timber Transport Group

The Chair intimated that due to the need for Officers to attend to other business he would take the items relating to Public Transport after item 4 "Ferries Update"

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were intimated by:

Councillor Gordon Blair
Councillor Audrey Forrest
Fulton MacInnes, Hunter's Quay Community Council
Debbie Donald, Cairndow Community Council
Iain McInnes, Lochgoil Community Council
Gordon Ross, Western Ferries
Andy Barron, Road Policing Unit

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Good made a financial declaration of interest in item 5(f) of these minutes on the basis he is a part time employee of West Coast Motors. He remained in the room while the Forum was updated by Martin Arnold, Contract Officer, Argyll and Bute Council, taking no part in the short discussion.

3. MINUTES

The minute of the previous meeting of the Cowal Transport Forum held on the 17th June 2019 was approved as a correct record.

4. FERRIES UPDATE

(a) **Response from P Wheelhouse, Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands**

The Forum were invited to consider an update from Paul Wheelhouse MSP, Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands, in response to the Chair's letter of 14 February 2019 inviting him to attend the March 2019 meeting of the Forum; and a response from the Transport Scotland's Aviation, Maritime, Freight & Canals Team dated 20 September 2019 regarding RET which set out that officials were looking into costs, risks and opportunities of fare reductions on the service.

While apologising for non-attendance due to diary commitments, the Minister took the opportunity to recap on the present situation with the Gourock-Dunoon ferry service advising that with the completion of the service transfer discussions were taking place regarding future vessel and shore side options. While the Clyde Ferry Stakeholder Group is the official forum for consultation of matters pertaining to the Gourock-Dunoon service the Minister confirmed the Forum would be kept informed of progress.

Outcome

The Forum:

1. Noted the update provided by the Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands and expressed disappointment at the time taken to respond;
2. Agreed that the Chair would write to the Minister expressing the Forum's dissatisfaction with the lack of progress towards procuring new ferries and introducing RET fares;
3. Requested that fare prices for website and bucket tickets be sent to Melissa Stewart, Area Governance Officer, for distribution to the Forum;
4. Noted that a report on Infrastructure would be presented to the Bute & Cowal Area Committee in either December 2019 or March 2020; and
5. Noted that the Council may not yet have set out its formal position on the service and agreed to invite officers from the Economic Development Team to attend and hold discussions with the Forum in view of concerns that the higher fare structure may be a deterrent for visitors to the area.

(Ref: Letter from Minister for Energy, Connectivity and the Islands dated 12th September 2019, submitted and letter dated 20th September from the Ferries Policy Officer, tabled)

(b) **Caledonian MacBrayne**

The Forum were invited to consider the submitted update by Simon Richmond, Calmac, in response to the issues raised at their last meeting which included historic carrying figures; arrangements for replacement bus service and details of the contact within the organisation regarding timetable changes.

Mr Richmond then spoke about the drop in passenger figures for Cowal Games, down 15% on previous years, and that there was currently no third vessel available for the route on Games Saturday with the Clyde Clipper in the process of being sold. With the lower figures there was no desperate need for the third boat. He also advised that the Argyll Flyer had recently been in the dry dock and during that spell the Calmac colours had been completed on the vessel, the Ali Cat would be in the dry dock at the end of October for similar treatment.

The Forum then discussed the oil leak at Gourock Linkspan that had caused recent problems and had taken over 2 weeks for replacement parts to be fitted and Scott MacLean, Calmac, spoke regarding a trial of bodycams for crew on the basis of passenger disruption which was unfair on staff. This behaviour generally occurred on the late sailings. Chief Inspector Wilson encouraged Calmac to report any incidences directly to Police Scotland by use of 101 for non-emergency incidents and 999 for emergency situations.

The final point discussed was in relation to the upcoming consultation on the new timetable for Winter 2020. With the need for responses prior to the next scheduled meeting of the Forum discussion took place on suggestions from the members. The Forum rejected any suggestion of withdrawing the late night sailings. Michael Breslin, South Cowal Community Council, made reference to the use of the Coruisk on a 20 past the hour service from Gourock and at 10 to the hour departing from Dunoon using the window of opportunity for the 2 passenger ferries to undergo refits. It was noted this may not be possible due to the fact that dry dock timing is dictated but was worthwhile submitting. It was also suggested that the Coruisk should be requested for an all-day service, with Ian Slorach, Calmac, advising that this would require funding for an additional crew from Transport Scotland.

Outcome

The Forum:

1. Noted the update provided;
2. Agreed to express concerns to CMAL regarding the lack of parts available/in storage for repairs such as those required at Gourock;
3. Agreed to oppose any reduction in late night sailings and make representations regarding the use of the Coruisk during Winter 2020 when Calmac formally consult on the timetable;
4. Thanked Simon Richmond for his contribution to the Forum and wished him well for his retirement; and
5. Noted that the contact details for the new Area Operations

Manager would be sent to Melissa Stewart, Area Governance Officer, to facilitate attendance at future meetings.

(Ref: Update and historic passenger figures from Calmac, submitted and Cowal August Dashboard Figures, tabled)

(c) **Western Ferries**

Captain McLundie, Western Ferries, spoke regarding the opening of the new linkspan at Hunter's Quay, now in full use; the drop in passenger numbers for the Cowal Games, potentially related to the bad weather in the morning; the full utilisation of the car park; plans for the new offices, due for completion in March/April 2020; and upcoming winter timetable.

Archie Reid, Strachur Community Council, made reference to the lack of disabled parking. Captain McLundie advised that the parking was currently being occupied by contractors undertaking works but that he would take away this concern and see what could be arranged to address these.

Outcome

The Forum noted the update and agreed that Captain McLundie would look at the options available for disabled parking.

(d) **Shore Side Infrastructure at Dunoon**

The Chair provided an update to the Group on the arrangements that had been put in place by Transport Scotland to hold a meeting to discuss the shore side infrastructure with previously identified stakeholders on 25th October 2019.

Outcome

The Group noted the update provided.

5. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

(a) **McGills 907 Service to Glasgow**

Martin Arnold, Contract Officer, Argyll and Bute Council gave an update to the Forum on the discussion with McGills which he suggested may have reached a dead end. He advised that the Head of Service who now had responsibility for public transport wanted to look at the contracts in place and suggested that it might be possible to look at the fact that John Street to Kirn Brae area is not now served by any service as part of that process.

Outcome

The Forum noted the update provided.

(b) **Bus Stop at Rest and Be Thankful**

The Forum gave consideration to the response from Roads and Amenity Services regarding patrols of the area by Amenity Wardens and the lack of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued in regard to tour buses parking in the bus stop. It was also highlighted in the response that monitoring by CCTV could not be carried out for legal reasons and prohibiting access by use of a barrier would not be practical due to lack of power sources.

A discussion followed regarding obstruction and whether this was enforceable. In response Chief Inspector Douglas Wilson advised that cases of obstruction raised at the meeting had not been reported to the Police and advised that unless the service bus was attempting to use the bus stop then there was no obstruction. He urged drivers to report incidences to the Police (potentially via their employers), including what companies were parking in the bus stop. Chief Inspector Wilson also advised that when his Officers had challenged anyone parked in the bus stop they had agreed to move. As a way forward the Chief Inspector queried whether some of the car park could be set aside for coach parking which was discussed by the Forum.

Neil MacFarlane, Transport Scotland, advised the Forum that he did not think it would resolve the issues at the Rest and Be Thankful Bus Stop by installing a layby on the Glasgow to Campbeltown side of the A83. This was due to road safety concerns caused by those crossing the carriageway which would require a Road Safety Audit and was unlikely to get consent. Mr MacFarlane indicated that he may be able to suggest some measures which may assist the situation.

Outcome

The Forum:

1. Noted the information provided by Roads and Amenity Services;
2. Agreed to write to West Coast Motors to encourage them, in light of advice received from Chief Inspector Wilson, to turn off the main road and attempt to use the bus stop and then report any driver/company who continued to park in the bus stop to Police Scotland; and
3. Agreed that a site visit be held to explore options for dedicated coach parking with the Chair of the Forum, Police Scotland, the Forestry Commission, Argyll and Bute Council, Transport Scotland, West Coast Motors, Lochgoil Community Council and Citylink.

(Ref: Casebook correspondence re incident 190623-000008, submitted)

(c) **Dial-A-Bus**

Martin Arnold introduced Marta Zawadzka to the Forum. Marta had recently been appointed as the Council's new Community Transport Officer and one of her first tasks would be to put together a Cowal booklet aimed at promoting the Dial-a-bus service.

Outcome

The Forum noted the update and welcomed Marta to the meeting.

(d) Fountain Quay Bus Shelter

Martin Arnold had not received any update from Estates on the sale of Dunclutha House and therefore no further update could be provided.

Outcome

The Forum noted the position.

(e) Kames Bus Stop

The Forum were advised that the bus stop had not yet been progressed despite being due at the end of August.

Outcome

It was agreed that Martin Arnold would chase this matter up.

(f) 479 Dunoon to Rothesay West Coast Motors Service

Martin Arnold spoke about the service reminding the Forum that West Coast Motors had previously agreed to run the service between Dunoon and Colintrave in circumstances where the ferry did not run. Martin made a suggestion that as part of the contract renewal process this condition could be specified.

Outcome

The Forum noted the update and agreed that Martin take this forward in due course as part of the contract renewal process.

(g) Integrated Transport

Murray Rogers, West Coast Motors, submitted a written update setting out that the Council produced timetable for Service 489 is designed to meet with the passenger ferry at present. With a 20-min frequency on the Hunters Quay Ferry he indicated that it shouldn't prove too difficult for bus passengers and that the main prominence will always be with the Dunoon Ferry.

Murray suggested that the main issue with the service is reliability which may be the result of any observed issues and we are currently in dialogue with Martin Arnold to seek a solution.

Willie Lynch, Dunoon Community Council, commented that in his experience he often observed the bus leaving just as the ferry was coming in. This caused issues as although the ferry is every 20 minutes, the bus service is every hour and did not necessarily join up. He asked that the Forum raise this point with West Coast Motors.

Discussion also took place regarding the Cowal Games Saturday night bus to Strachur with Archie Reid, Strachur Community Council, reporting that the community have been advised that there will be a £270 hire charge made when the service has been provided for 12 years with no charge. He did not consider this was appropriate when it would only add 9 miles onto the route.

Outcome

The Forum agreed:

1. To invite Murray Rogers to respond to the point raised regarding the service bus departing when the ferry is approaching Hunter's Quay; and
2. To contact West Coast Motors regarding the Cowal Games Saturday last bus service to Strachur, inviting them to continue to provide the service with the local community continuing to advertise locally.

(Ref: Updated by Murray Rogers, West Coast Motors, submitted)

6. POLICE SCOTLAND

Chief Inspector Wilson, Police Scotland, gave an update on matters he had recently been attending to including speeding motorists, as reported by the community council. He confirmed that speeding would continue to be monitored and that new officers were currently being trained in use of the speed detection equipment.

Chief Inspector Wilson also spoke regarding road closures on the A83 due to fatal accidents. He commented that the nature of delays are necessary to fully investigate the circumstances.

Willie Lynch, Dunoon Community Council, questioned whether the stretch of road between Argyll Street and Sandbank Road was monitored for speeding as it appeared to be used as a speed track on Saturday nights. Mr Lynch commented that HGVs were often observed driving at speed in this area. Chief Inspector Wilson advised that he would look into these concerns.

Cathleen Russell, Colintrave & Glendaruel Community Council, asked about the opportunity for community councils to be trained in use of speed guns and whether if procured the wider area could share the equipment and move it around. Chief Inspector Wilson replied that there are implications in terms of volunteers to do the checks, costs, storage and calibration but that it would merit a new discussion.

The Forum discussed the fact that it is generally locals who are caught speeding and that there is a need for them to accept some responsibility as 30 or 40 mph zones are there for a reason. Iain MacNaughton, Sandbank Community Council, questioned the costs of fixed speed camera and whether these costs could be used to self-fund.

Outcome

The Forum noted the updated provided by Police Scotland and agreed that Chief Inspector Wilson would raise with Paul Farrell, Technical Officer, Argyll and Bute Council about the costs and likelihood of fixed speed cameras being self-funding.

7. TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

(a) VMS and Manual Signs

Neil MacFarlane introduced himself to the Group as the person with responsibility for issues relating to the A83. In regard to the VMS Mr MacFarlane advised that he had understood they had now passed onto the Council. Archie Reid, Strachur Community Council, replied that training hadn't yet been provided and the Chair advised that he was told at the A83 Taskforce meeting in June that there was a fault with power to the signs which required to be addressed before the handover.

The Chair questioned Mr MacFarlane about the manual signs which were not yet available. Mr MacFarlane replied that he had attended a meeting with Argyll and Bute Council around 2 weeks ago when it was suggested that the signs were due to be positioned imminently.

Outcome

The Forum noted that Mr MacFarlane would raise the matter with colleagues and provide an email updating them on the position with the VMS post meeting.

(b) A83

Mr MacFarlane spoke regarding upcoming works in Argyll and Bute which may affect travel plans of those in the Cowal area.

Outcome

1. The Chair thanked Mr MacFarlane for his attendance and suggested that in terms of the order of business, as the meeting generally heard from ferry operatives first to allow them to leave the meeting thereafter, Mr MacFarlane was welcome to attend the meeting from 11am to avoid having to wait for the Transport Scotland items.
2. It was agreed the details of the bridge and road works raised would be forwarded by email to the Forum members.

8. TIMBER TRANSPORT GROUP

Iain Catterwell, Timber Transport Group, spoke about the issues raised at the last meeting commenting that he was struggling to get confirmed reports of the matters previously raised at Kilfinan. He reported that use of the B8000 route had provided over £1m into the South Cowal area as well as updating the Forum that a de-brief was intended with operators after the season ended which would reflect on lessons learned. Mr Catterwell also pointed out that the B8000 would benefit from investment in the road, with match funding being provided by the industry towards improvements. It was suggested that the investment could be used to increase provision of passing places on the route and Mr Catterwell indicated that he would raise with the communities involved to ensure they were had a say in any suggestions that the Timber Transport Group proposed.

Responding to the alleged stockpiling of timber at Kames Golf Course without permission Mr Catterwell advised that the land was owned by the person stacking so he thought it may be possible for discussions. Paul Paterson, Kilfinan Community Council, confirmed that this issue had gone quiet and he therefore assumed matters had been resolved.

Mr Paterson mentioned a planning application which had been submitted that may lead to the road being temporarily being removed with Chief Inspector Wilson and Iain Catterwell commenting that this would leave no suitable route for large vehicles. Mr Paterson was currently looking into this on behalf of the community.

Outcome

The Forum noted the updated provided and it was agreed that Mr Catterwell would work with Kilfinan Community Council to establish what implications the planning permission application may have.

9. ROADS UPDATE

(a) Carriageway Roundels and Additional Signage at Colintraive

In the absence of Roads Officers the Forum were provided with a written update on all matters previously raised and had additional information before them from casebook that roundels and signage had been approved for implementation in Colintraive,

Outcome

The Forum noted that the roundels and signage were still not in place and it was agreed that Chief Inspector Wilson would pursue this directly with Roads.

(Ref: Casebook update re incident 190124-000836, submitted)

(b) **Dunoon Pier**

The Forum considered a written update from Roads and Amenity Services regarding the TRO at the Pier which advised that a set of proposals were being developed to deal with the marshalling area and the bus lane/facility at the pier. This would form the detail of a future TRO to be considered by the Area Committee.

Outcome

The Forum noted the updated provided and that a report would be submitted to the Bute & Cowal Area Committee.

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

Written confirmation was provided by the Roads and Amenity Service that the TRO objection was unlikely to be removed and as such this would need to be a hearing by the Reporter.

Outcome

The Forum noted the update provided.

(d) **Parked Vehicles on Paving Slabs Outside Argyll Hotel**

Councillor Jim Anderson confirmed that the works to install bollards and chains had now been installed.

Outcome

The Forum noted that the outstanding action had been completed and agreed to remove the item from the agenda.

(e) **Road Markings in Cowal - General update**

An update was considered by the Forum regarding white lining at the A8003 T-junction at Glendaruel which was due for completion in August 2019, and on the feasibility of procuring a white lining vehicle. The update advised that the Council does have road marking trailer in the fleet but do not have any trained operatives. Arrangements for training were being progressed but would be dependent on budgets and other training priorities.

Outcome

The Forum noted the update and minuted their dissatisfaction that previous information received indicated that contractors had to be brought in to undertake white lining because the Council did not own a vehicle to undertake this work.

(Ref: Casebook incidents 190701-001003 and 190701-001005, submitted)

(f) **Speed Surveys**

Confirmation was received that the revisits to Cairndow, Oakbank at Sandbank and Kirn had now been undertaken. The Forum were advised that a report would be taken to a future Bute & Cowal Area Committee setting out the findings of the surveys and that the Service had an intention to post speed survey data on the Council's website to enable communities to self-serve.

Outcome

The Forum noted the update provided.

(Note – Councillor Good, Willie Lynch and Archie Reid left the meeting at this point)

(g) **Traffic Management in Tighnabruaich, Kames and Millhouse**

It was raised in the written update that additional details would be required on the specifics at these locations and that monitoring of time transport would be carried out when time is being extracted in significant quantities.

Paul Paterson, Kilfinan Community Council, intimated to the Forum that the community council would be seeking to litigate against the Council if the road traffic issues were not sorted out.

Outcome

The Forum agreed to keep this item on the agenda.

(h) **Grit and detritus Removal Required from Pavements and Channels - Kilmun and Strone**

It was noted that the works requested had now been undertaken.

Outcome

The Forum noted the update provided and agreed that the item could be removed from the agenda.

10. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

Iain MacNaughton, Sandbank Community Council, spoke regarding a recent article in the press about procurement of railings and the costs of repairs in terms of the procurement policy in place.

Paul Paterson, Kilfinan Community Council, thanked Police Scotland for attending at Kilfinan for numerous accidents over the last months, commenting that the service provided was greatly appreciated. Iain MacNaughton, echoed the view and also thanked Police Scotland for their valued attendance at meetings.

Outcome

It was agreed to ask the Procurement Manager to comment on the process for the railings at installed John Street.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - MONDAY 9 DECEMBER 2019

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Cowal Transport Forum would be held on Monday 9th December 2019 and that an agenda item be added to set the March meeting date at the start of the agenda for the next meeting to ensure all partners were in attendance to comment on availability.