

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COWAL TRANSPORT FORUM HELD BY MICROSOFT  
TEAMS  
ON TUESDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2023**

**Present:** Councillor Daniel Hampsey (Chair)  
Councillor Ross Moreland  
Stuart McLean, Committee Manager, Argyll and Bute Council  
Captain Alistair McLundie, Western Ferries  
Neil MacFarlane, Transport Scotland  
Neil Stewart, West Coast Motors  
Allan Comrie, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)  
Inspector Bart Simonis, Police Scotland  
David Clough, Dunoon Community Council  
Frauke Thornton, Dunoon Community Council  
Kerris Bone, Kilmun Community Council  
Tom Murray, Lochgoilhead Community Council  
Kirstie Reid, Strachur Community Council  
Gordon Ross, Western Ferries  
Ronald McAlister, Bute Ferry Group  
Tommy Gore, Calmac

**Attending:** Robert Trybis, Dunoon Gourock Ferry Action Group

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Audrey Forrest;  
Councillor William Sinclair;  
Graham Revill, Kilmun Community Council;  
Michael Breslin, South Cowal Community Council; and  
Dave Cooper, Hunters Quay Community Council.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cowal Transport Forum held on Wednesday 13 September 2023 were approved as a correct record.

The Chair passed on his thanks to all Council staff and Partners who responded to the disruption caused by the severe weather events on and around the 7 October and advised of a planned roundtable meeting with Jenni Minto MSP, Scotrail, Calmac and Local

councillors to discuss related transport issues. Councillor Hampsey also advised of the proposed Active Travel route for Dunoon.

#### **4. FERRIES UPDATE**

##### **(a) Travel Subsidies - Discussion led by David Clough, Dunoon Community Council**

David Clough from Dunoon Community highlighted that he had attended the Bute and Cowal Area Community Planning Group in August and that Mr Ross of Western Ferries had attended and had suggested that if Western Ferries had access to the same level of subsidies offered to Calmac, Western Ferries fares could be halved and a direct Dunoon/Glasgow bus introduced.

Mr Clough highlighted that connectivity is crucial for the area with their being a lack of integration between existing ferry services and the rail network. Mr Clough also suggested that Transport Scotland would not be retendering the ferry contract which would likely be awarded to Calmac.

Mr Ross advised that he believes that the current annual subsidy for the Dunoon to Gourock service amounted to around £5 million which equated to around £25 per passenger.

Robert Trybis reported that Harbours fees out weight the operational cost of the ferry and that it is the wish of the Dunoon Gourock Ferry Action Group and 5 Community Councils that Argyll and Bute Council and CMAL agree a long term lease of the Linkspan.

Kerris Bone advised that as a frequent user of Western Ferries she had not seen any more than five foot passengers on the service and that the Dunoon Linkspan is very important.

Kirstie Reid advised she had attended the Clyde, Kintyre and the Islands Ferry Stakeholder Group and had noted some concerns around ferry users onward journeys via Scotrail services being interrupted due to poor timetabling. Alan Comrie advised that timetables had been revised and that the ferries dock at 15 and 45 minutes past the hour with associated rail services departing at 26 and 56 minutes past the hour. The Chair raised a similar concern on behalf of Councillor William Sinclair.

##### **Outcome**

The Forum:

1. noted the information provided; and
2. noted that the Chair would contact relevant stakeholders to explore the possibility of holding a meeting, early in 2024, to discuss the most cost effective way of improving connectivity between Dunoon Town Centre and Gourock Railway Station.

##### **(b) Opportunity for verbal updates by Cowal Transport Forum Members**

## Western Ferries

Gordon Ross advised that Western Ferries had issues with one of their vessels during the early part of December but all four vessels were now back in operation. Mr Ross highlighted that the Christmas timetable was now agreed with limited services over Christmas, Boxing day and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> January with the timetable available on Western Ferries website.

### **Outcome**

The Forum noted the update from Western Ferries.

## Calmac

Tommy Gore advised that the MV Ali Cat had recently been unavailable as it was undergoing an annual overhaul and that the two vessel service has since returned. Mr Gore highlighted that due to three separate technical events the Dunoon Linkspan was unusable and as such a replacement bus service had been provided.

Kerris Bone raised concerns around the way in which ferry disruptions were advertised, adding that older people do not always have access to the website to find this out.

### **Outcome**

The Forum noted the update from Calmac and that further consideration would be given to the way in which ferry disruptions are advertised.

## **5. PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

### **(a) Public Transport Update**

A written update on Public Transport had been provided from the Contract Officer at Argyll and Bute Council. The update provided information on a request from the NHS to provide further bus services serving Cowal Community Hospital; requests from Community interest groups; discussions with West Coast Motors on options for serving North Campbell Road and the possibility of providing a Saturday afternoon service to Strachur; consideration of later bus services from Dunoon to Ardentinnay and the luggage capacity of the Dunoon Grammar School/Hostel bus.

### **Outcome**

The Forum noted the update from the Contract Officer, Argyll and Bute Council.

### **(b) Opportunity for verbal updates by Cowal Transport Forum Members**

#### West Coast Motors

Neil Stewart provided the Forum with an update on the services being delivered by West Coast Motors. Neil advised that there had been a drop in concessionary fare users although there had been an uplift in under 22s travelling. Mr Stewart highlighted that West Coast Motors strive to make the service better for all users however they are limited in the mileage they can provide, consequently if a new

route is added the mileage would have to be removed from another.

Mr Stewart advised 68% of all Pingo users were over 60s, 11% were fair payers and only 21% were 5-15 year olds.

### **Outcome**

The Forum noted the update from West Coast Motors.

## **6. ROADS UPDATE**

### **(a) Opportunity for verbal updates by Cowal Transport Forum Members**

Kirstie Reid advised that the road at Loch Eck recently been flooded on both sides and asked when the white lines would be reinstated on the Hamilton Street/Victoria Road.

Tom Murray asked for an update on the B828 Glenmore road which had been shut since October.

The Committee Manager advised that Dave Cooper had raised the matter of the signage on Marine Parade and advised that it was his understanding that a new local roads officer would be in post shortly and would pick this up.

Frauke Thornton highlighted the new laws for parking on pavements and lowered kerbs had recently been introduced and that, as far as she was aware, Argyll and Bute Council would not be enforcing this. Miss Thornton advised that this is a particular problem at the Queens Hall, Dunoon with people parking on lowered kerbs and in front of the War Memorial.

Kirstie Reid advised that she had heard that all traffic wardens in Argyll and Bute were in a meeting about parking on the pavements and would be issuing tickets.

### **Outcome**

The Forum noted that the Chair would raise these issues with the responsible Council Department and update Partners accordingly.

## **7. POLICE SCOTLAND**

Inspector Bart Simonis had to leave the meeting prior to this agenda item, the Committee Manager provided the following update on his behalf:

I have contacted all of the Speed Watch volunteers and asked for their permission to submit disclosure forms to Police Scotland Disclosure team, I am still waiting on several replies and will send out the disclosure forms after Christmas.

Kirsty Reid, Strachur Community Council advised that people are continuing to cycle along the pavements on Argyll Street, Dunoon which is causing danger for the elderly people.

### **Outcome**

The Forum noted that the information provided by Police Scotland.

## **8. TRANSPORT SCOTLAND**

Neil MacFarlane provided the Forum with a verbal update, advising that the resurfacing along the A83 at various locations from Arrochar to Campbeltown was almost finished and that the resurfacing programme would recommence in February for a further 3 weeks. Mr MacFarlane advised that Bear Scotland were aware of the potholes outside the Loch Long Hotel and that there has been a significant number of flooding issues reported along the A83.

Kerris Bone highlighted that Kilmun is very dangerous due to a significant number of road works and many raised culverts.

### **Outcome**

The Forum:

1. noted the update from Transport Scotland; and
2. noted that the Committee Manager would contact the Roads Department in relation to the culverts reported along Kilmun.

## **9. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

There was no other competent business.

## **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chair thanked everyone in attendance at the meeting and the Group noted that the Committee Manager would circulate a calendar invite for a meeting, week beginning 18 March 2024 in due course.