

**MINUTES of MEETING of COWAL TRANSPORT FORUM held BY MICROSOFT TEAMS
on TUESDAY, 18 JUNE 2024**

Present: Councillor Daniel Hampsey (Chair)
Councillor William Sinclair
Councillor Audrey Forrest
Councillor Gordon Blair
Stuart McLean, Committee Manager, Argyll and Bute Council
Gordon Ross, Western Ferries
Jeff McCormick, West Coast Motors
Alan Comrie, Strathclyde Passenger Transport (SPT)
Inspector Bart Simonis, Police Scotland
PC Sophie Marshall, Police Scotland
Simon Stuart, Timber Transport Group
David Clough, Dunoon Community Council
Kirstie Reid, Strachur Community Council
Kerris Bone, Kilmun Community Council

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that he was delighted to be returning as Chair to the Forum, following the recent change in the administration in the Council, and he will continue the ongoing good work of the Forum. The Chair also stated that he wished to pursue a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and that he would be providing rolling updates to the Forum going forward.

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Ross Moreland
Ronald McAlister, Bute Ferry Group
Neil Stewart, West Coast Motors
Ian Woodcock, Transport Scotland

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Cowal Transport Forum held on Monday 18 March 2024 were approved as a correct record.

4. POLICE SCOTLAND

Inspector Bart Simonis gave a brief update on behalf of Police Scotland, advising that road priorities are being up scaled with officers receiving more training on hand held speeding monitors. Inspector Simonis advised that the Service are continuing to respond to concerns raised by the local community councils on the Cowal Peninsula and provided updates on road traffic and preventative road safety measures and pop up events, confirming that the next event is scheduled to take place in Lochgilphead Fire Station on 28th June.

Gordon Ross asked Inspector Simonis to confirm if the A83 cameras had been reinstalled. Inspector Simonis confirmed that he would investigate and confirm with Mr Ross at the conclusion of the meeting.

Kirstie Reid, Strachur Community Council, raised the issue of adults cycling on the pavements in Dunoon Town Centre which she felt was of a serious concern to pedestrians. Inspector Simonis agreed to highlight that this was not acceptable on social media platforms and contact the Dunoon Advertiser to reinforce this message.

Councillor Hampsey advised that he would liaise with the Council's Roads Department to explore what can be done to discourage cyclists from using footways.

Councillor Sinclair raised concerns over the motor bike season starting again, and that they push on up to the front of queuing traffic when stopped at lights.

Inspector Simonis advised that motor cyclists are the highest risk factors on the roads and there will be a safety event taking place at Inveraray specifically for motor cyclists.

Kerris Bone, Kilmun Community Council asked for information concerning the Speed Gun Initiative and community engagement around this.

Inspector Simonis advised that Inspector Roddy MacNeill was leading on this initiative and that all community volunteers would have to go through the Police Vetting Scheme and trained on how to use the speed guns. Inspector Simonis further advised that policies and procedures would have to be put in place and the powers that volunteers would have and how they would report their findings to the police, before proceeding to the courts.

Councillor Gordon Blair raised concerns over the change in speed limits on local roads going, from 60 down to 40 and on to 30 within a short distance. Councillor Blair highlighted that some motorists were not paying attention to the associated signs and asked Inspector Simonis what can be done about speeding, specifically within the Sandbank area.

Councillor Hampsey agreed to liaise with Police Scotland and the Councils Road Department around speeding and to organise a discussion on this issue for interested parties out with the Cowal Transport Forum.

Outcome

The Cowal Transport Forum noted the information provided by Police Scotland.

5. FERRIES UPDATE

(a) **Dunoon Community Council - Impact of Service Changes**

David Clough, Dunoon Community Council stated that the ScotRail change in timetable from 1st June had not resulted in any advantage to users of public transport as it has caused longer waiting times at Gourrock of up to 27 minutes on a ferry. Mr Clough added that there had been a lack of co-ordination between the partners including Calmac, Western Ferries and West Coast Motors.

Mr Clough advised that last minute ferry cancellations, by Calmac, were often as a result of the working hours of staff and he had sought clarification on this from Calmac, with the response outstanding.

Mr Clough highlighted that Argyll and Bute Council had sanctioned work at Rothesay Pier which had resulted in Dunoon Ferries being displaced as the Bute Ferry had to use Dunoon Harbour for berthing. Mr Clough registered his frustration at the lack of coordination between partners as they would have known the negative consequences of this change in service well in advance of the public.

Councillor Hampsey advised that he would liaise with the officers responsible to ensure that any future works are relayed to the public in advance and that he would look to organise a meeting between ScotRail, Calmac, Western Ferries and West Coast Motors to discuss the concerns surrounding timetables. Councillor Hampsey further advised that he would also be keen to ensure that ScotRail were represented at future meetings of the Forum.

Jeff McCormick of West Coast Motors agreed that any opportunity to get partners together would be welcomed. Mr McCormick advised that he would look at connection issues and would make improvements if at all possible.

Councillor Sinclair stated that he would make a point of raising this at the next administration meeting and write to Councillor Moreland, as Chair of the Harbour Board. David Clough advised that Councillor Moreland had emailed Dunoon Community Council and he would forward it to Councillor Sinclair for information.

Kerris Bone, Kilmun Community Council read out an email that was sent to the Community Council raising concerns over the changed timetable and how chaotic it was as there was no coordinated approach. Miss Bone also advised that there are no paper copies of the timetables available for users and that these would help those who do not have smart phones or internet access.

Outcome

To note the update and concerns raised by Dunoon Community Council

regarding recent changes to timetables.

(Reference: Update by Dunoon Community Council, submitted)

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

Gordon Ross highlighted that Western Ferries were working well, with additional sailings being put on for the weekend of the Argyll Rally which is being held in Dunoon and the surrounding area.

Mr Ross stated that there was a recent question and answer session organised by the Scottish Government on methodology of island connectivity, he asked that as Argyll and Bute Council were listed as Stakeholders, who from the Council was the representative and can we have feedback on this session?

No-one within the Forum was aware of the consultation, Mr Ross advised that he would send the Committee Manager the link by email.

Outcome

The Forum noted the update from Western Ferries.

6. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

(a) **Kilmun Community Council bus service survey**

Kerris Bone of Kilmun Community Council highlighted their disappointment regarding the lack of a late night bus service to the locality and that a Community Council supported consultation exercise had demonstrated there was a clear demand for it. Miss Bone advised that the reintroduction of such a service would make a big difference to the people living in rural areas and asked what West Coast Motors was going to do about it?

Jeff McCormick of West Coast Motors (WCM) advised that he was not aware of any feedback, but would be willing to revisit the timetable with the Council and seek to make improvements where possible.

Councillor Sinclair supported Kilmun Community Council position and encouraged West Coast Motors to explore options for introducing a late night bus.

Kirstie Reid, Strachur Community Council stated that Kerris had done some good work with the consultation but that it had been undermined by ScotRail changing their timetable. Kirstie also advised that she had received an email from Mr Arnold, Argyll and Bute Council, explaining that the bus service was cut due to the number of users being down 38%. On studying this further she stated that the bus route was cut by 50%. She also requested that WCM consider reinstating the 5.50pm bus service and

the Saturday morning service, adding that not having these services were impeding school kids taking on a job.

David Clough asked if there was a problem with the West Coast Motors app, as the drivers were not stopping at bus stops identified on it. Mr McCormick advised that the app is accurate and the Council are responsible for the bus stops, however a new member of staff has recently started with the Council and hopefully the timetables and bus stops will be brought up to date and co-ordinated.

Outcome

The Forum noted the Kilmun Community Council Bus Service Survey.

(Reference: Kilmun Community Council Bus Service Survey, submitted)

(b) **Opportunity for verbal updates by Cowal Transport Forum Members**
Strathclyde Passenger Transport (SPT)

Alan Comrie advised that there was no change to services, supported bus service or concessions and that within Cowal there were no changes other than School times. Discussion took place on the reimbursement of Road Equivalent Tariff Subsidies to Calmac, Western Ferries and ScotRail and the possible raise in fares. Mr Comrie advised that the next meeting to discuss fares would take place in September and he would update the Forum on the outcome.

Outcome

The Forum noted the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Update.

7. ROADS UPDATE

The Committee Manager advised that there was no-one in attendance from the Roads Department and would be happy to take away any questions.

Kirstie Reid advised that the Strachur Community Council had raised the issue of Timber Lorries in the ditches along Loch Eck, she noticed that the lorries and the buses' wheels did not fit the width of the road and as a consequence the verges are becoming unstable. Miss Reid also advised that there is also a flood sign which has been at the side of the road for over a year and is now hidden by the long grass.

Simon Stuart of the Timber Transport Group advised that agricultural vehicles are also guilty of this and it is important that the damage is attributed to the right party and that local knowledge is helpful in this regard. Mr Stuart advised that he would contact the Councils Roads Department on his return to work to get an update on timber related transport damage to verges.

Outcome

The Committee Manager to take Kirstie's comments back to the Roads Department.

8. TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

Apologies had been received from Ian Woodcock but he had sent a written update, which was read out by the Committee Manager, as follows:-

A brief report as regards to A83 & R&BT etc. which affects your local;

1. A83 Works completed through May/June 2024 include resurfacing between Cossack to Colchester as well as refurbished street lighting within Tarbert & temporary barrier along with other remedial works at Glen Kinglas which provides further protection from landslide at this location.
2. Schemes to commence include new junction signage at Cairndow as well as the annual road safety investigations to be carried out over the next 3 months.
3. Rest and be Thankful, we have many schemes planned for this location with a view to mitigate closures due to landslides as well as maintain safety of the travelling public. I will summarise when I get full sight of the approved works, however, schemes include new bunds/barriers, ongoing assessments/monitoring, drainage & culvert works as well as new fence install at various locations

I would add that as I am new to this role/position, I am not fully up to speed with current issues/works etc., but will endeavour to provide a more robust statement for the next meeting & going forward.

Councillor Sinclair stated that a substantial amount of Cowal residents use the Rest and be Thankful and noted that the traffic light system is back again and that in excess of £70m had been spent on this section of road and there is still a trailer and cage sitting there. Councillor Hampsey agreed with Councillor Sinclair and agreed he would raise these issues with Transport Scotland and report back to Forum members.

Outcome

The Forum noted the verbal update from Transport Scotland.

9. TIMBER TRANSPORT GROUP

Simon Stuart introduced himself as taking on the representative role for Argyll with the Timber Transport Group, all his contact details are on the website if anyone needs to get in touch.

Outcome

The Forum welcomed Simon to the Group.

10. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

There was no other competent business.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair thanked everyone in attendance at the meeting and the Forum noted that the Committee Manager would circulate a calendar invite for a meeting, week commencing 16 September 2024.