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MINUTES of MEETING of COWAL TRANSPORT FORUM held in the CASTLE HOUSE, DUNOON on FRIDAY, 27 MARCH 2015

Present: Councillor Alex McNaughton (Chair)

Keith Murray, Transport Scotland
Eleanor Stevenson, South Cowal Community Council
Fulton McInnes, Hunters Quay Community Council
Gordon Ross, Western Ferries
Ian McInnes, Lochgoil Community Council
Willie Lynch, Bute and Cowal Caucus of Community Councils
Gordon Forrester, Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park
Graeme Forrester, Area Committee Manager
Graham Revill, Kilmun Community Council
Bobbie Good, West Coast Motors
Anne Gabriel, Cowal Access Panel

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were intimated from:

Eddie McElhinney, Police Scotland
Paul Farrell, Engineer/Technical Officer
Elizabeth McBride, Kilfinan Community Council
Douglas Blades, Public Transport Officer

2. **MINUTES**

The minute of the meeting of the Transport Forum 23rd January 2015 was approved as a correct record subject to changes to Item 3, bullet point two of the minute.

A discussion took place at this point regarding the contents of the previous minute with the following points noted:

- Fulton McInnes raised that the letter that was to be drafted to the police regarding parking at Western ferries had still not been completed. Graeme Forrester informed Fulton that he would require more information on this item and would discuss this with him at the end of the meeting. It was agreed that this matter would be taken forward by the Forum on behalf of Hunter's Quay Community Council.
- Signage – Gordon Ross informed the forum that the sign alerting road users that Western Ferries is an alternative route had still not been delivered as previously promised. Graeme Forrester read out an update from Paul Farrell that informed the group that the sign in question would be erected week commencing the 7th April.

3. TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

Keith Murray from Transport Scotland updated the Forum on the following points:

Rest and Be Thankful Update

- The large boulder at the Rest has now been tied back with the fencing still to be completed.
- Transport Scotland have increased the resilience of the Old Military road and there is now more soil nailing.
- Drainage Work has been carried out on the south end of the old military road, as well as another link road being built to allow convoy traffic to come out quicker.
- To date there has been a half a million spend on the hillside which included, the stabilising of the boulder and updating the monitoring equipment.
- Gulley work has also been carried out on the A83 and there is also now a rock side cage and catch fence below.
- Clear up operations spend to date is £426,000.

Gordon Ross asked Keith Murray if there was any review planned for high sided vehicles during periods of high winds given there has been several incidents involving high sided vehicles on or around the Rest and Be Thankful area.

Keith Murray replied that individual accident cases will be reviewed and any part of the network prone to high winds is reviewed as standard practice.

Ian MacInnes asked about the one way system in Lochgoilhead and whether this could be relaxed during off peak times, to avoid residents having to go through Hell's Glen.

Keith Murray advised that he would speak to BEAR Scotland regarding this and get back to Ian with a response. Ian also raised a point regarding whether Lochgoilhead could have a variable sign. Keith Murray informed him that there was a VMS that required refurbishment and he would enquire about it's ownership and whether Lochgoilhead could have it, a discussion would also need to take place with Argyll and Bute's Roads department as to whether they would be willing to take on the maintenance of the sign.

Gordon Ross raised a point in connection with Transport Scotland's website messages On Thursday 26th March regarding alternative routes. Keith Murray replied that it is always the strategic route that is put on the website. Gordon Ross noted that Western Ferries provide a viable alternative route that takes pressure of the roads which is a good thing.

Councillor McNaughton asked if there were wind monitors already in

place. Keith Murray replied that yes they were situated at the top of the Rest and Be Thankful and were monitored by BEAR Scotland.

Actions

1. Keith Murray to speak to BEAR Scotland regarding the one way system at Lochgoilhead and feed back to Ian MacInnes.
2. Keith Murray to determine the ownership of the VMS that requires refurbishment.
3. Keith Murray to speak to Paul Farrell regarding refurbishing the spare sign.
4. Keith Murray to take the requirement for more signage forward.

4. BUS TURNING CIRCLE

A transport representative was not available at the meeting so Councillor McNaughton provided the Forum with a brief update on the progress of the turning circle. He explained that all funding was now in place and the tendering documentation had been sent out. It is expected that work will commence early summer with an estimated finish date of late summer. It was also noted that the turning circle will also be useful for stacking in the event of a landslide.

5. SIGNAGE

This item was covered under item 3 of the minute.

6. FERRIES UPDATE

Argyll Ferries

A representative from Argyll Ferries was not present at the meeting, so no update was provided.

Western Ferries

Gordon Ross from Western Ferries updated the Forum on the following points:

- Fares will increase by 1.5% from the 1st of April 2015
- Western Ferries will still remain the cheapest option for foot passengers.
- Free foot passenger travel will remain available to Cowal residents with SPT concession cards.
- Western Ferries have now launched the ability to buy tickets online. Bobbie Good asked if this also applied to commercial vehicles. Gordon Ross replied that anyone requiring commercial tickets can phone up and pre order them whether they have an account with Western Ferries or not.

- The Co-Op in Gourock is now selling tickets.

A discussion took place regarding using E Type tickets, Gordon Ross explained that there is currently not the technology in the local area to support this, but if it became available it would certainly be something they would look at.

7. PUBLIC TRANSPORT UPDATE

The Public Transport Officer had submitted apologies to the meeting so therefore no update was provided.

8. POLICE SCOTLAND

The Police Scotland representative had submitted apologies to the meeting so therefore no update was provided.

9. ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Councillor McNaughton took the Forum through the Accessible Transport Strategy explaining that the purpose of the strategy is to promote the social inclusion and the needs and rights of people with disabilities.

Anne Gabriel raised an issue with the Forum regarding the lack of appropriate wheelchair access and unsuitable layout at the Argyll Ferries pier.

Gordon Ross suggested that a possible solution to this would be for Argyll Ferries to install a floating pontoon that will create a flat surface all on one level which would allow easy access for everyone.

A discussion took place between the Forum regarding issues with bus links to the ferries, and it was noted that the Bus companies could be approached to discuss the situation.

Anne Gabriel informed the group that there is a selection of message cards currently in circulation that can be used by passengers to alert Bus drivers of any additional needs, such as requiring the driver to inform them when they have arrived at their destination. The Forum discussed the potential of developing this idea in Bute and Cowal.

Fulton McInnes provided the Forum with examples of hospital transport provision in other areas of Scotland and it was discussed that something similar could be put in place to meet the Dunoon ferries.

Actions

1. The Transport Forum will approach Argyll Ferries to discuss the issues surrounding disabled access to board the ferries.
2. Councillor McNaughton agreed to look at the leaflets regarding hospital transport and make further enquiries into how the process operates.

10. DUNOON CHORD PROJECT UPDATE

The Regeneration Project Manager provided a verbal update on the progress of the Dunoon CHORD project to date, with the following points noted:

- The new design for the Queens Hall was signed off in February 2015.
- Estimated closure date for the Queen's Hall is the end of May 2015.
- There is an estimated date of completion of January or February 2017.
- The tender for phase one of the redevelopment of the Dunoon Pier project will be announced in a week or so from this meeting.
- John Gordon informed the Forum that he is based in the Queen's Hall and anyone is welcome to pop in and discuss any questions or queries with him.

Clarity was provided to the Forum by the Regeneration Project Manager regarding the different stages of the Pier Redevelopment Project, along with a breakdown of the reorganisation of the marshalling area at the pier and the new parking arrangements for the regenerated Queens Hall. It was noted by Gordon Ross that there is a general feeling of dissatisfaction in the local area regarding the local community not currently being able to use the pier. A general discussion took place following on from Gordon Ross's comment surrounding the pier area, current porta cabins and parking areas and how these could be better utilised during the regeneration programme to suit the needs of the local community.

Anne Gabriel asked John Gordon how many disabled parking bays will be available once the Queens Hall is completed. He responded that there will be five disabled parking bays available and it was noted by Anne Gabriel that this is not sufficient to meet the needs of the local community.

John Gordon informed the Group that all proposals, plans and further information is available on the CHORD website.

11. AOCB

Loch Lommond and the Trossachs National Park Update

Gordon Forrester updated the Forum on the following points:

- Tourism – currently bringing together an itinerary pack for a day out in the local area and Gordon Forrester would like to discuss this further with Gordon Ross.
- Cycling routes – The national park are looking to put twelve cycling routes into Argyll and Bute and these will be graded easy, moderate and hard. Two of these routes will be in Cowal. Gordon Ross informed the Group that this is something he had previously

worked on with the National Forrest and it is something he takes a personal interest in. He informed the group that there is a lot of work involved in this and a lot of points to be considered. Gordon Ross also commented that the PA23BID were currently promoting cycle races in the area and that it was good to see potential marketing being looked at.

Action

1. Gordon Forrester will circulate routes and itinerary once they are completed through the Senior Area Committee Assistant.
2. Gordon Forrester to have a discussion with the Cowal Mountain Biking Club.

Other AOCB

Ian McInnes asked when the work would start at the top of the rest. Councillor McNaughton replied that they didn't know yet as the tendering process was still ongoing.

Ian McInnes asked if there was any further information on the landing stage regarding getting wood out from Carrick Castle. Councillor McNaughton replied that he had no information on this.

Graham Revill asked for information on the increased timber traffic through Blairmore. It was suggested the he speak to Stephen Tong, UPM Tillhill regarding this.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Cowal Transport Forum will be held on Friday 19th June 2015 at 10am in Castle House, Dunoon