

Islay Community Council Ferry Committee

11th December 2019, Service Point, 6.45pm

1. Present: Islay McEachern (IMcE) – Chair, Jim Porteous (JP) – Secretary, Brian Abbot (BA), Colin Fraser (CF), Jack Fleming (JF), Andrew Campbell (AC), Mike Senior (MS), Jean Knowles (JMK) – Minutes.

Apologies: Garry MacLean (GMacL), Don McKillop (DMcK) & Angela Herd (AH).

Welcome & Introduction

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and the above apologies were noted.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes for this meeting were proposed by MS and seconded JP.

4. Action Points & Matters Arising

Dashboard

No password yet for dashboard, but dashboard forwarded on.

Block Bookings

Further communications have taken place with CalMac and MSP Mike Russell re the 'manifesto'.

Re-tarring

Provisionally booked from 19/4/20 for pier at Port Askaig & other island works the following week. ICCFC expressed on-going concern regarding Port Ellen's ability to cope with all the traffic at this time.

HIAL Airport will be re-tarred in 2021 bringing in tar plant & done overnight.

NB: No councillors present at meeting today.

Action Point: Enquire of A&BC about tar plans at airport i.e. can road works be coordinated elsewhere on island.

Ileach sales – CalMac gain 12.5% copy of sale price i.e. 17p per copy.

Action Point: Proposal to be sent back to CalMac regarding possible sale of Ileach Newspaper at Kennacraig.

School Buses & Fares

Proposal still bouncing around between CalMac and TS after more than 1 year. If school bus fare decreased to same as camper vans, total cost not expected to exceed £800 for Islay and may even be neutral.

Local Produce on Ships

Sales on ship are going very well - other suppliers applications in process.

Catering at Kennacraig

- Again "bouncing around".
- CMAL officials have visited Kennacraig but have not so far identified a suitable site.
- Local operator identified from Tarbert.

However, there may be plans for new office at Kennacraig, which could include a catering space.

Matters arising will be dealt with through agenda.

4. CalMac Operational Update

Concern about ground area at Port Ellen for vehicles.

WAC – Some work going to enlarge sub-station beside grain silo in Port Ellen. Groundworks should finish before Christmas.

How will Port Ellen cope if Port Askaig shut?
Some marshalling in public road.

BA – When new boat comes, more marshalling needed.
There is an infrastructure grant for ports & harbours since summer 2019 from TS.
Have CalMac considered this?

Action Point: Enquire of TS about details for pier infrastructure.

JP – CMAL have a list of shore infrastructure projects - Islay not currently a priority.

JP – Increase of 16.6% Oct19 in CV lane metres.
Increase of 7.8% Oct 19 in cars.
Increase of 2.38% in coaches.
Increase of 7.37% in passengers.

These figures have been rising Aug/Sept19 as well, therefore current growth may be exceeding forecast.

Unless action is taken, there is likely to be a capacity deficit based on the Summer 2020 timetable requiring “choices” between freight/tourists/locals.

JP & IMcE – have spoken with SWA last week.

- Agree with projections.
- Advising Scottish Government of heightening issues, even since Summit Sept 19.
- Suggestions:
 - Additional vessel.
 - Night freight sailings.
 - Incl. all freight in block bookings.
 - Altering which vessel calls where targeting Finlaggan to Port Askaig & Heb Isles to Port Ellen.
 - Removal of side ramps from Heb Isles to improve weight carried.

BA – Has looked at dashboard for past 12 months:

- Average length of CV is 13.6m.
- Max length is 16.5m.

Therefore majority has to be artics.

EU car stats from Oct19.

40% of cars are SUV's – longer/wider/heavier – this further highlights the challenges.

BA – When Pioneer had side ramps added it lost 90 tonnes of deadweight i.e. equal to 2 max loaded HGV's.

BA – There is some consideration of chartering vessel.

IMcE – This has been overblown and simply relates to bringing tar in for Machrie Hotel.

Winter timetable proposals 2020-21 were to be returned this week – submission sent inc. proposals to enhance service.

Request was for extra sailings.

- E.g. Sat sailing via Colonsay using Oban based vessel.
- E.g. Target Finlaggan to Port Askaig & Heb Isles to Port Ellen.
- E.g. Allow leeway of at least 10 days between return from dry dock and Easter i.e. start of summer.

5. Current Timetable

JP – MV Hebridean Isles had to return to dock immediately after leaving dry dock but had to go to different dock at Troon (displacing another CalMac vessel) then a new engine problem was found.

WAC – Sea trial could not be done today. Pilot will be required to be dropped tomorrow. Current master will be required to gain certificate of exemption from pilotage at Ardrossan. MV Hebridean Isles will be back to Kennacraig 9pm tomorrow if sea trials okay tomorrow.

During this week some sailings have been closed to bookings whilst changes were being made, problem greater if using central reservations than contacting local office.

BA explained how this impacted family funeral.

JP & IMcE – Brian Scothorne – new IT with CalMac.

Have spoken - raised issue of “block transfer” when transfer required due to deficiency of sailings.

JP – “Un-met demand” also raised at IJTG. Loganair monitor advance booking & may consider scheduling extra flights where this indicates problem.

7. Campervan Proposal

CalMac looking at properly recording campervans as they also tend to be wider as well as higher.

8. MV Hebridean Isles Deck Configuration

Already considered.

9. Ferry Summit 2019

Pauline Blackshaw is person replying from CalMac.

Ferry Summit Manifesto published in Ilead, may seek wider publication.

MSP Mike Russell is assisting with following this up.

10. Community Board Update

This is being ‘refreshed’; 3 members were selected to leave. A further 2 members resigned. Others to be recruited.

11. AOCB

JF – Expressed thanks to committee members for their efforts.

JMK – Donald Gillies has requested incl. in copies of minutes.

Action Point: Minutes to be sent to Donald Gillies once adopted.

Also to be forwarded from August & September 2019.

12. Date of Next Meeting

15th or 16th January 2020, venue to be confirmed (dependent upon ICC meeting).

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