

ISLE OF ARRAN FERRY COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held on Monday 9th July 2012 at 7.30pm in Brodick Castle

Present: Ken Thorburn (National Trust) (Chair) Jim Lees (ACVS)
Iain Thomson (Construction/Haulage) Cllr. John Bruce (NAC)
Willie Kelso (Community Council) Liz Robertson (NFU)

In Attendance: Robbie Brown (CalMac) and Helen Ross (Secretary).

1. Welcome & The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed all present, with a special
Apologies: welcome to new NAC representative Cllr. John Bruce.

Apologies were received from Russell Duncan (Independent Traveller), Alastair Dobson (Taste of Arran), Robert Waine (Visit Arran), Colin McCort (Port Manager, CalMac) and Martin Dorchester (MD, CalMac).

2. Minute of Previous Meeting: The Minute of the previous meeting, held on Monday 18th June 2012, was adopted as a true record.
Proposed: Liz Robertson Seconded: Jim Lees

3. Matters Arising:

3.1 Matters Arising From AGM:

3.1.1 9-Day Saver Ticket (Item 8.2)

Robbie Brown reported that the 9-day saver ticket had been introduced on the Mull route for a 4-month trial period.

He added that the ticket would be available on off-peak sailings on the Craignure-Oban route only and would exclude motorhomes, caravans and commercial vehicles.

Jim Lees asked if all Saturday sailings were peak sailings on the route as, if so, this would take away any advantage for self-catering providers. Robbie Brown admitted he was unsure on this point.

The Chair queried the possibility of 9-day saver tickets being available on Arran next year if results from the Mull trial were favourable.

Robbie Brown replied that he was uncertain about how the results could be measured.

Following discussion on recent price increases, Willie Kelso suggested the fare increase on both Brodick and Lochranza routes made Arran a very expensive place to come to. He added that overpricing could result in some destinations becoming inaccessible.

Robbie Brown reported that carrying figures were slightly down on the year to date.

Iain Thomson enquired on whether the Arran routes were profitable and was advised by Robbie Brown that none of the routes on the CalMac service made a profit.

3.1.2 Utilising of Space on Caledonian Isles (Item 8.4)

With regard to people phoning to make vehicle bookings being told that sailings were full, Robbie Brown advised there was no procedure for recording the numbers.

The main cause of space being under-utilised was due to places being block-booked and not subsequently taken up or cancelled.

3.2 Matters Arising from Business Meeting following AGM:

3.2.1 NAC Representation on Ferry Committee (Item 3.1)

The Chair confirmed that John Bruce would be the new North Ayrshire Council representative on the Committee.

3.2.2. CalMac MD's Invitation to FC Meeting (Item 3.2)

The Chair confirmed CalMac MD, Martin Dorchester, would attend the August meeting of the Ferry Committee.

3.2.3 Brodick Pier Upgrade (Item 3.3)

The Chair reported he had written to Kenneth Gibson regarding the timescale for the upgrade work to be carried out at Brodick Pier and had been advised that the work would commence at the end of 2013 and would take 1 year to complete.

He voiced his concern that, should the work run late, it could delay the introduction of RET, which would have serious implications for island businesses.

Iain Thomson felt that RET would not be dependent on the pier upgrade. Jim Lees agreed and mentioned finance as being the most likely reason for the work being delayed.

The Chair agreed to contact Kenneth Gibson regarding a definite date in 2014 for RET. Liz Robertson asked if pressure could also be applied for a decision on an early roll-out of RET on the Lochranza-Claonaig route.

Agreed: Action - Chair

3.2.4 Additional Summer Service (Item 3.4)

Robbie Brown reported that MV Isle of Arran had come on service on 7th July 2012 and all was running smoothly.

Jim Lees asked about the reluctance of commercial traffic to use the Isle of Arran.

Robbie Brown replied that it was early days and vehicle bookings had already been made. He spoke of the difficulty in prioritising between vehicle passengers and foot passengers on freight runs and added this was down to management.

The Chair mentioned some people were unaware that the late Friday sailing from Brodick had been cancelled; Robbie Brown informed him that only 1 person had arrived for the sailing in question.

Discussion took place on the Arran Banner article on the Clydeport Report which it was suggested had seemed critical of the ship's masters.

Robbie Brown said he felt the tone of the report was quite balanced.

Jim Lees suggested an extra breakwater was needed and Iain Thomson gave the opinion that the vessels' lack of power was a factor.

Robbie Brown advised that decisions were dependent on the Master and his experience and added that if the Master was not happy with conditions then he would not sail.

He also confirmed there were no limitations on the use of the Irish berth, which was handy for use as a back-up, though the lack of a gangway was a downside.

4. Finance:

4.1 Bank Balance

The Secretary reported a bank balance of **£343.14**. She informed the meeting that, following payment of ACVS invoice 2012-01 and pay-in of £100 received in membership fees, the actual balance would be £201.73.

4.2 Expenditure Approval

Approval was sought for payment of ACVS invoice no. 2012-01; value £241.41 for secretarial support.

Approved

5. Correspondence: 5.1 Previously dealt with.

6. Port Manager's Report:

Port Manager, Colin McCort had submitted apologies for the meeting.

Robbie Brown gave a report as follows:

- June carrying figures showed an increase in cars, passengers and commercial vehicles, although figures for the year were all down except for those of commercial vehicles which had been boosted by the number of tar lorries travelling back and forth.
- Isle of Arran had come on service on 7th July and would operate until 2nd of September 2012.

Iain Thomson asked when provision of MV Isle of Arran had been confirmed. Robbie Brown advised that confirmation of the additional service had been given two weeks prior to its commencement.

Iain Thomson questioned the delay and referred to commercial users' need to plan ahead. He also maintained the additional service had been required in May and June during the work on the car marshalling area.

7. Earlier Sunday Sailing:

Iain Thomson suggested the earlier Sunday sailing would be better used during winter months and asked Robbie Brown what would have to be done to obtain this.

Robbie Brown explained he had been informed that the success rate would be measured over the summer months and would require to be over 60% for continuation to be considered. He also mentioned the huge cost incurred in carrying out the trial.

8. Date of Next Meeting:

The next meeting of Isle of Arran Ferry Committee will take place on **Monday 13th August 2012 at 7.30pm in Brodick Castle.**

9. Any Other Business:

9.1 Liz Robertson enquired on progress regarding the provision of Wi-Fi on board CalMac ferries. The Chair advised that this was being looked into and was being trialled on the Barra route. He added that provision of Wi-Fi across the board would prove very expensive.

10. Close:

As there was no further business to discuss; the Chair all for attending and closed the meeting at 8.25pm.

Signed:

Dated: