

ISLE OF ARRAN FERRY COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting

Held on

Monday 13th January 2014

At 7.30pm in the

Kinloch Hotel

Present:

Robert Waine (Chair)	Liz Robertson (NFU)
Simon Richmond (Cal Mac)	Jim Henderson (Community Council)
Iain Thomson (Construction/Haulage)	David Cameron (NTS)
Guy Bodie (Stagecoach)	John Bruce (NAC)
Alastair Dobson (Taste of Arran)	Jim Lees (Arran CVS)
Kenneth Gibson (MSP)	Sheila Gilmore (Visit Arran)
David Cannon (Cal Mac)	Guy Dale-Smith (Cal Mac)

Also present: Bobbi Adamson (Minutes) Morven Buckby (Minutes)

1. **Welcome & Apologies:**

The Chairman opened the meeting and wished the committee a good New Year. Welcomed Sheila Gilmore from Visit Arran to the committee to represent the tourism industry on the island. Introduced Bobbi Adamson and Morven Buckby, both from Arran CVS, to the committee, Bobbi will be taking the minutes for the committee from now onwards.

2. **Minute of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th December were adopted as a true record with amendments being made to the date.

Proposed: Liz Robertson Seconded: David Cameron

3. **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising discussed.

4. **Finance**

Copies of the financial statement were distributed at the meeting but not discussed

5. **Correspondence**

None

6. **Port Managers Report**

The port manager was not present, but matters were discussed with representatives from CalMac.

The question was raised as to whether Gourock was still port of refuge for Caledonian Isles in bad weather as the port had not been used by Cal Isles for 2 years now.

GD answered that Gourock is still port of refuge but that they are facing challenges all across the network and Arran is being particularly affected.

6.1 Gourock as Port as Refuge

It was explained that Gourock faces similar challenges and is just as exposed, can only open for Caledonian Isles when the wind is in correct direction. The approach to Gourock is slightly easier.

High waters in the Clyde and surrounding areas has caused difficulties recently for both vessels as the linkspan won't reach for loading and unloading.

Since the beginning of November last year nearly all cancellations have been made due to high winds. In the last 3 months there have been a total of

113 cancellations on the Brodick-Ardrossan route in comparison to 26 last year. There have been 1200 cancellations across the whole network. There are many factors that affect the masters decision on berthing at Gourock, the shelter, the swell, the tide, effect on other services and the hours of rest for the crew as the journey time is significantly longer both ways.

6.2 Ardrossan Issues

GD explained that Ardrossan harbour is extremely exposed to swell and wind making berthing in Ardrossan successfully a very skilful process. He added that in the Irish berth is also exposed to the swell. He also clarified that there is no plan B for masters when berthing at Ardrossan, if something went wrong then you have a heavy landing in the berth. Clyde Port have no plans for improvements to the port, as any improvements to Ardrossan Harbour would be in the tens of millions.

IT questioned the possibility of tugs being used to assist the vessels into Ardrossan. GD said he would look into this.

6.3 Capabilities between Clansman and Caledonian Isles

KG asked if there was a difference in the Clansman and the Caledonian Isles. GD answered that there was no real difference, the abilities and capabilities are much the same, although the Clansman has slightly more power, this does not impact the Caledonian Isles ability at Gourock. The question was then raised about why the Clansman has sailed to Gourock and the Caledonian Isles hasn't sailed for 2 years now. GD explained that the wind has worsened in the last 10yrs.

IT suggested that the change in the propellers has made a change in power. GD explained that the Clansman would have had the same struggle.

IT then asked why we don't have an experienced master with good knowledge of the route, it would be in the best interests of the service and the Island, taking into account the difficulties posed by the ports and the weather. SG requested that the Ferry Committee propose an experienced master for the route to CalMac. GD explained that it is operational necessities that would result in a specific masters being placed on a specific routes, he agreed that this would be fed back and that this option was already being considered by CalMac. CalMac do retain certain master's on certain routes at times with personal preference being taken into account along with other factors when placing master's on routes this will include building experience for masters of all routes allowing for a more flexible service, any inexperienced masters will be accompanied by an experienced mate. All masters have exemption to sail to Gourock. There is no extra costs involved in diverting to Gourock therefor this is not part of the problem.

RW explained that CMal have been invited to the next meeting on the 10th February to discuss the design timescale for the port.

6.4 Alternative port of refuge

The possibilities of using other ports was discussed;

Fairlie – community discounted, poor/no infrastructure

Troon – draught issues, depth.

Wemyss Bay – Pier too short, draught issues, more exposed than Ardrossan, draught a major concern.

Greenock – no linkspan.

Hunterston – No linkspan, no infrastructure.

Campbelltown – not practical for Arran sailings.

RW asked if there were any other alternatives. GD explained that major infrastructure changes would be required. RW then added that Cal Mac must ensure this is addressed with future vessels be made more flexible to use at other ports if necessary, this will be discussed at next Ferry Committee meeting with CMal.

7.

A.O.B

IT asked why there were no sailings at all on Christmas day despite other areas having service, this would have helped credibility.

SR answered that they were unaware of requirement as there was no back log on Christmas day or Boxing Day.

IT asked when the new boats will be in service. GD suggested 2016-17. KG explained that a time-scale and design decision need to be made for public knowledge. SG asked if this could be discussed with the Banner. RW explained that the Committee have been under pressure from the community to give some insight into proposed actions, would be good if feedback and statement could come from CalMac. SG asked why the timetable for additional sailings wasn't brought forward to run over Easter. KG explained that the boat was being utilised elsewhere.

SG then asked about RET and RW explained that CalMac had no further information on this.

JB queried the weight restrictions on small commercial vehicles, SR explained that it is at legal requirements and there is a portable weigh bridge. JB then suggested that the luggage trailer needs advertised more e.g. regular announcements at the terminal.

8.

Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting will be the 10th of February at 7.30pm at the Kinloch Hotel.

The Committee expressed their thanks to all for attending and to Morven and Bobbi for taking the minutes.

With no further business, the Chair closed the meeting.

Signed:

Dated: