

# **Isle of Arran Ferry Committee Meeting held via Zoom on Monday 21 December at 7.00pm**

**Present:**

I Thomson, Haulage (Chair)  
A Dobson, Business (Vice Chair)  
B Calderwood, ACC (Secretary)  
S Gilmore, Tourism (Treasurer)  
N Arthur, Independent Traveller  
R Betley, NHS  
S Clark, Stagecoach  
M Currie, ACVS  
D Henderson, NFU

**In Attendance:**

K Gibson, MSP  
T Gore, CalMac  
C McCort, CalMac

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. An apology was received from K Hart, CalMac.

**2. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

- 2.1 The adoption of the minutes of the meeting on 9 November was proposed by SC and seconded by NA.

**3. Medical Update**

- 3.1 RB informed the committee that NHS were still managing staffing levels after the November spike in Covid cases on the island. Also, she reported there had been a couple of new cases in the past week.
- 3.2 Last week "lateral testing" was introduced for NHS personnel.
- 3.3 The Pfizer vaccinations will last for five days in a refrigerator after transportation. This will be used for the first wave as indicated by government guidelines. She is still awaiting information on the AstraZenica vaccine, due soon.

**4. Open Actions and Update**

As before these had been previously circulated. Updates were noted. The key item for discussion was the following:

- 4.1 The transportation of livestock/timber, but especially livestock, has been a great concern for several years. There had been commitments from CalMac to address this over the years without a successful resolution. Mr Drummond had stated he would personally intervene in 2019 to help resolve the inconsistent application of the rulings. It would seem that they have failed in this regard. In fact, the situation has deteriorated even further. DH told of various instances, one recently in particular, which had severely impacted both farmers, transporters and animal welfare issues. The recent failure of the exhaust fans has also highlighted a failure to understand the impact these restrictions have on animal welfare in general and the potential negative impact to the farmers' ability to trade. He derided in the strongest terms the communications from CalMac.  
Action: IT to raise again with RD.
- 4.2 Early Morning sailings were an essential part of the lifeline services and AFC still require a process to be provided which improves the frequency of this sailing.  
Action: TG to follow up.

4.3 New Ticketing system is progressing and further updates expected in new year.

#### **5. Update from Small Freight Discussion**

5.1 Following discussions, the removal of this service has been postponed by CalMac for six months after which an assessment will be initiated to determine the impact. Confirmation was sought that any future assessment would be fact based including costs. This was agreed by TG. NA asked if all affected customers would be informed. TG stated that they would.

#### **6. Port Manager's Update**

6.1 The diving survey at the old pier and link span has been completed, the findings of which will inform the demolition. Work expected to commence in January and will recommence after bird nesting season.

6.2 Carrying numbers had been low.

6.3 The works at Lochranza slipway had been approved. The contractors are hopeful that they will be completed before the commencement of the summer season. Still waiting updates on provision of toilet facilities at Claonaig.

Action: TG

#### **7. ARG Community Survey**

7.1 The major issue to emerge from the recent ARG survey was transport, particularly confusion over the 80/20 split for ferry reservations. It was suggested that CalMac communicate this more clearly. TG agreed to take this forward. The Chair stated that the AFC had attempted to promote this. However, SG proposed that this should be done again.

Action: TG

#### **8. Proposed changes to onboard services - CalMac**

8.1 A paper provided by CalMac had been circulated. As a busy route Arran was selected to pilot the revised procedures. A query was mooted that was this an attempt to reduce staff. The response was that it was not. BC had spoken to KH who stated that the food would still be prepared on board and the galley would be refitted during the "dry dock" procedure. The aim was to improve the user experience. Timing was questioned with everything else crew and customers were asked to handle. Timing is arranged around annual maintenance. KH offered, if any critical issues arose, he would arrange a separate discussion.

#### **9. Feedback from Ministerial Meeting**

9.1 The meeting with P Wheelhouse was attended by Minister, Transport Scotland and AFC members who were available and a summary will be provided by Transport Scotland. It was considered to be a positive exchange and key points highlighted to Minister included Ardrossan and vessel availability and the need for a resilient service as the island looks to recover from the pandemic.

#### **10. Report from recent Ardrossan Task Force Meeting**

10.1 This had been previewed the meeting before last. Hard copies of the information updates will be available through BC or on-line via NAC.

10.2 It is proposed to hold a further task force meeting in early February to review options to ensure any risk associated to work at Ardrossan is minimised and service is provided as effectively as possible.

## 11. RECC Report

- 11.1 The recent report had been viewed by the AFC and the findings were noted. MC appreciated the fact that the report had highlighted that islanders should be given a stronger role in the decision-making process in the future. Our discussions with the Minister had ruled out radical approaches such as relocation of the Glen Sannox to another route, the scrapping of 802 etc.
- 11.2 It was agreed that a letter to the Chair of the RECC and the Transport Minister with a copy to the Arran Banner should be submitted. Action MC / BC.

## 12. Timetable for Summer 2021 and Winter 21/22

- 12.1 The summer '21 timetable had been published and will provide a 2 boat service as normal. However, until government guidelines change, there will continue to be social distancing related capacity constraints.
- 12.2 A request for the IoA to be available at least for Easter is on record. TG stated the availability of the IoA would depend on the fleet maintenance schedule and availability of other vessels. However, this decision is the responsibility of Transport Scotland.
- 12.3 AFC have also raised concerns around publishing the Campbeltown service and have requested this be reviewed if social distancing is still restricting capacity. Arran cannot be disadvantaged because of the commitment to Campbeltown. When asked, KG responded that Campbeltown should have its own service and should keep arguing for this. He supported the Arran service be optimised. CalMac will be undertaking their usual recruitment plans unless government advice changes.

## 13. Treasurer's Report

- 13.1 Per SG, the balance is currently £602.54.

## 14. Date of Next Meeting



- 14.1 The next meeting will be held on 8 February 2021. An interim meeting may be called if circumstances necessitate.

## 15. Any Other Business

- 15.1 TG stated there was currently no alteration to the service. However, this will be dependent on guidance from TS and is under constant review.
- 15.2 IT enquired regarding the ARG's latest statement concerning a Transport Committee, not a Ferry Committee. Was it intended to replace the AFC? SG stated no. However, transport and travel were the main elements to arise from the recently circulated ARG survey.

## 16. Close

- 16.1 The meeting closed at 8.59pm.

Signed .....  ..... Date .....  .....

Iain Thomson,  
Chair, Isle of Arran Ferry Committee