

Isle of Arran Ferry Committee Meeting held via Zoom on Monday 10 May 2021 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
D Lockhart, CalMac
F MacRae, CalMac

1. Welcome and Apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from T Gore and C McCort.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

- 2.1 The adoption of the minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2021 was proposed by DH and seconded by SG.

3. Open Actions and Updates

As before, these had been previously circulated. Updates were noted. The first two issues have been open for several years and it was highlighted that we needed some attention to identify agreeable solutions.

3.1 Carriage of livestock

The solution to this problem is unsure but efforts should be made to find a resolution. DH stated that the NFU had requested another meeting. This item will remain on the Actions list.

3.2 Repositioning

As experienced recently with respect to weather related cancellations, it was asked if there was a protocol in place to allow for additional sailings to satisfy customer demand. It was questioned if the protocol could require skippers to consider delay rather than cancel which would provide customer service. FM indicated there was flexibility dependent on circumstances.

3.3 Drydocking schedule

Confirmation is needed what duration this year's programme will require.

3.4 Gourock linkspan

As trials for the CI and IoA have successfully taken place, a confirmation email to affirm that Gourock will be the port of refuge is requested.

3.5 Resilience for displaced visitors

This item is regarding visitors who may be stranded on the island as a result of ferry cancellations. This is being discussed at ARG. Police involvement was mooted. However, they have stated that only in exceptional circumstances would they become involved. VisitArran have offered their services to provide contact details for accommodation if appropriate.

3.6 Turn up and go

Again, this provoked much discussion. At last month's AFC meeting there was a consensus that this be reduced from 80/20 to 90/10. However, without any prior consultation Transport Scotland together with CalMac had decided on a figure of 8 foot passengers for the CI and 4 on the loA per sailing. They had based this number on the previous year's usage figures. AFC considered that the use of an average was inappropriate due to the different demand for early and late sailings. FM stated that CalMac had been holding back space that was not being utilised. However, FM had agreed to review the situation with respect to Arran.

Action: FM to report to AFC before next meeting.

3.7 The meetings with Transport Scotland resulted in the following:

3.7.1 There was a little progress made in terms of communications. The communications board at Claonaig will be improved to show next sailing time. It was noted that no-one from CalMac comms group attended the recent meeting. There will be a further update next week.

3.7.2 The current dates for the return of the Loch Seaforth were on schedule. This would enable the lofA to take up service on the Arran route, ie 17 May.

3.7.3 It was highlighted that there appeared to be an inconsistency in accepting bookings from other forms of transport. For example, a booking for a coach containing 35 passengers had been refused as the limit was 25. This resulted in a local business losing tens of thousands of pounds. BC stated that this, once again, appeared to be a network-wide decision applied without considering individual routes.

Action: FM will check.

3.8 Passengers with dogs will now need to obtain a ticket for them. This is free. The methodology by CalMac is to restrict the numbers within the passenger areas. For the CI, this is limited to 10 dogs per sailing. This needs further discussion with AOM.

3.9 The timetable for the Campbeltown sailing to sail via Brodick is still to be confirmed with CalMac and TS.

3.10 The design and plans for toilet facilities at Claonaig have been submitted. SEPA have raised a concern regarding human waste affecting nearby fish farms. CMAL are undertaking an assessment of waste management.

3.11 Request for costs associated to maintenance of Brodick PAS has been submitted. CMAL are working on it. However, as some items are still under warranty this is not a simple exercise.

3.12 CMAL were asked if the winter works at Claonaig would resolve the tidal problems. They have advised that divers had completed an inspection and further investigations are planned.

3.13 There appears to be confusion regarding preferential ferry travel for those with medical appointments. RB stated that the system introduced three years ago for emergencies is still in effect and is working well. For those with routine appointments who cannot get their car booked, CalMac will reimburse taxi fares. It was agreed that this be better communicated by CalMac. The scope of this reimbursement was also queried, ie within what boundary and for what purpose, ie dentists. NA suggested that this should only be for appointments within the local health board area or as specifically arranged by medical professionals. BC had raised this with the CCB but will raise again at the next meeting.

Action: FM to clarify regarding communications.

Action: BC to raise at CCB meeting

3.11 SG asked that, if someone on the ferry proved positive for Covid, could they travel in their car. RB stated that circumstances are unchanged and transport in these instances is only by ambulance.

4. Correspondence

4.1 RB confirmed that she had established a link with ArCas to represent their views to the AFC. They had voiced their concerns regarding capacity issues concerning medical appointments.

5. Treasurer's Report

5.1 Per SG the current balance was £707.54.

6. Port Manager's Report

6.1 All items of interest had been discussed previously.

6.2 SG asked regarding the timescale for opening both sides of the kiosk at Brodick. FM unsure but will come back.

Action: FM.

7. Date of Next Meeting

7.1 The date of the next meeting will be held on 14 June at 7.00pm via Zoom. It was proposed that the AGM be postponed until Sept/Oct when it is hoped that the relaxation of Covid rules would allow for physical participation.

8. Any Other Business


8.1 BC will give an overview of the meeting to the Arran Banner together with the proposed postponement of the AGM.

8.2 AD raised serious concerns regarding the financial losses incurred by businesses related to ferry issues. The amounts lost had been quantified through the Fraser of Allander Institute report. He proposed that the AFC make strong representation to the Scottish Government. IT said this will be done when the new Minister is appointed as previously agreed.

8.3 AD also suggested that both CalMac and CMAL be invited to the AFC meeting on a quarterly basis.

9. Close

9.1 The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

Signed  Date 18th June 2021
Iain Thomson,
Chair, Isle of Arran Ferry Committee