

**MINUTES of MEETING of COWAL TRANSPORT FORUM held via MICROSOFT TEAMS  
on TUESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 2021**

**Present:** Councillor Alan Reid (Chair)  
Councillor Bobby Good  
Councillor Audrey Forrest  
Councillor Jim Anderson  
Councillor Gordon Blair  
Stuart McLean Committee Manager  
PI John Forrest Police Scotland  
Alistair McLundie - Western Ferries  
Iain Slorach Calmac  
Tommy Gore Area Operations Manager, Calmac  
Allan Comrie Strathclyde Partnership for Transport  
Iain Catterwell Timber Transport Group  
Jeff McCormick West Coast Motors  
Iain McInnes Lochgoil Community Council  
Michael Breslin South Cowal Community Council  
Willie Lynch Dunoon Community Council  
Ronnie McAlister Bute Community Council  
Sue Wallis Cowal Resident  
Megan Bonar Dunoon Observer

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

Apologies for absence were intimated by:

Murray Rodgers West Coast Motors;  
Martin Arnold Contract Manager; and  
Neil MacFarlane - Transport Scotland.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Bobby Good made a financial declaration of interest in item 7 (a) on the basis he is a part-time employee of West Coast Motors. He remained in the meeting during the discussion.

**3. MINUTES**

The minute of the meeting of the Cowal Transport Forum held on the Friday 20 August 2021 was approved as a correct record subject to the correction of a typo at item 4 (b) Western Ferries, which should have read that:

there were difficulties with replacement bus services dropping people off at undesignated stops between ferry terminals.

**4. FERRIES UPDATE**

**(a) Caledonian MacBrayne**

The Forum noted the update from Kevin Hobbs, Caledonian Maritime Assets

Limited, on the cyclical maintenance of the Gourock linkspan.

The Forum also considered an update from Tommy Gore, Caledonian MacBrayne (Calmac), who advised that the MV Argyll Flyer was back in service and that MV Ali e delayed until Christmas. The two-vessel service would resume when the Coruisk became available which is intended to be on 15 December 2021. Mr Gore reported that Dunoon Community Council had submitted comments regarding evening sailings and in response to this late sailings would be re-introduced from 19 November 2021. Mr Gore highlighted the recent disruption on the Tarbert/Portavadie route due to the removal of the ferry in order to service Cumbrae, assuring partners that Calmac were conducting an internal review to inform how they remove and re-deploy vessels for any future situations.

to the Forum that upcoming dates of planned vessel maintenance were now published on

Scotrail to address ticketing issues and that cash can now be accepted at terminals though card payments are preferred.

In addition the impact of ferry cancellations and reduced services on local residents and businesses was discussed, including the knock on effects on bus services due to cancelled sailings on the Colintraive/Rhubodach route which had resulted in the through bus from Rothesay to Dunoon being unable to complete journeys.

## **Outcome**

The Forum;

1. noted the updates;
2. agreed that Tommy Gore would confirm to the Forum the reason why the MV Ali Cat cannot be utilised in foggy weather;
3. agreed that Tommy Gore would present a progress update on the ticketing system issue to the Foru
4. agreed that Tommy Gore would obtain statistics looking at the number of sailings cancelled on the Colintraive/Rhubodach route over the last 10 years and circulate to the Forum.

## **(b) Western Ferries**

Alistair McLundie, Western Ferries, confirmed that the service was operating as normal with one vessel off for annual dry-docking, the four vessel service would return on 19 November 2021. Mr McLundie advised that Western Ferries are prepared to back up the service with a shuttle service to respond to anticipated increases in demand due to a dancing competition in Hunters Quay on the same day and that aggression towards staff regarding the operation of the reimbursement scheme when the replacement bus service is in use has now been resolved with help from Calmac.

bus service not stopping at undesignated stops. It was noted that the replacement



SPT will review this over the next two months and report back to SCTSJC early next year.

**Outcome**

The Forum noted the updates.

The Ferries representatives and Mr Comrie left the meeting at this point.

**5. POLICE SCOTLAND**

PI John Forrest, Police Scotland, advised that they had been very busy with the ongoing impact of covid-19 on resources with Officer absences affecting stations in Rothesay and Dunoon. PI Forrest advised that Dunoon Sheriff Court was now up and running again with Officers receiving citations to attend and that COP26 saw many officers seconded away for 3- local area but now they can be and would focus on driver behaviour, uninsured and road worthiness of vehicles. It was noted that there were various personnel changes including a new Road and Policing Sergeant who will now be working in the local area.

**Outcome**

The Forum noted the update.

**6. TRANSPORT SCOTLAND**

**(a) VMS and Manual Signs**

Neil MacFarlane, Transport Scotland, having submitted his apologies provided the below update which was read out by the Chair:

By way of written update I can advise that the VMS at Strachur and Kilmun is working correctly. These were checked as part of a wider Winter Readiness check for our operations at the Rest and be Thankful.

**Outcome**

The Forum:

1. noted the update; and
2. agreed that the Chair will write to Transport Scotland highlighting issues that would be caused if the A82 and the A83 were to be out of action at the same time.

The Chair ruled, and the Forum agreed, to take items out of sequence in order to facilitate partner attendance. The items are minuted in the order in which they were discussed.

## **7. TIMBER TRANSPORT GROUP**

### **(a) Update from Timber Transport Group**

Iain Catterwell, Timber Transport Group, updated the Forum on recent activities which included that the A8003 widening was complete with new passing places with re-surfacing to follow soon.

#### **Outcome**

The Forum noted the update.

### **(b) Debris from Timber Lorries in Sandbank**

The Chair advised that Roads had advised that the current schedule for street sweeping in Sandbank is a manual sweep once a fortnight with a mechanical sweep once a month and it was understood that the mechanical sweeper attended for its scheduled clean recently but due to budget reductions over recent years there was no longer the resources and flexibility to increase the frequency of cleansing in this area. Roads further advised that the Timber Transport grant was funded through a competitive bid process

round of funding was for capital improvements to road surfaces which were damaged or suffer stress from timber transport and it was unlikely that they would receive funds in the future for street sweeping. The Forum noted that the Argyll Timber Transport Management Group continue to liaise with the haulage company with regards to the cleaning of the lorries and have made them aware of their responsibilities

The Forum noted the advice received from Police Scotland in relation to Section 95 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 regarding deposit of mud or other material from vehicles on roads and it was noted that the Police had not received any complaints in this regard.

#### **Outcome**

The Forum noted the updates.

## **8. PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

### **(a) Reduced Bus Services**

Jeff McCormick, West Coast Motors, advised the Forum that the bus services were still not back to pre-lockdown levels with mileage at 87% and patronage at 60% and that there had been issues in recruiting drivers.

Discussion focussed on the disappointment in the continued lack of Argyll and Bute Council address issues raised around reduced bus services and lack of communication with Elected Members around bus service changes.

**Outcome**

The Forum noted that the position.

**(b) Bus Stop at Rest and Be Thankful**

The Chair advised that touring coaches parked at the bus stop cause access issues to service buses and Roads are considering a bid for funds to create two parking

plans for the Rest and be Thankful. The Forum further noted that the ramp between the bus stop and the Old Military Road had been completed.

**Outcome**

The Forum noted the position.

**9. ROADS UPDATE**

**(a) Traffic Management in Tighnabruaich, Kames and**