

**MINUTES of MEETING of COWAL TRANSPORT FORUM held by MICROSOFT TEAMS
on WEDNESDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2022**

Present: Councillor Alan Reid (Chair)

Councillor Audrey Forrest
Councillor Jim Anderson
Councillor Gordon Blair
Stuart McLean – Committee Manager
Alistair McLundie - Western Ferries
Gordon Ross – Western Ferries
Stewart Wohlgemuth - CalMac
Ruairidh Campbell - CMAL
Alex Leslie – Technical Officer
Neil MacFarlane – Transport Scotland
Allan Comrie – Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
Iain Catterwell – Timber Transport Group
Paul Bulmer – Colintrave and Glendaruel Community Council
Gordon Revill - Kilmun Community Council
Iain McInnes – Lochgoil Community Council
Kirsty Reid – Strachur Community Council
Ronald McAlister – Bute Community Council

Attending: 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:

Iain Slorach - Client Manager, Calmac;
Cathleen Russell - Colglen Community Council.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

The minute of the meeting of the Cowal Transport Forum held on the Tuesday 16 November 2021 was approved as a correct record.

4. FERRIES UPDATE

(a) Caledonian MacBrayne

The Forum considered a verbal update from Stewart Wohlgemuth, Port Operations Manager, Calmac. Further to the actions in the Minute of the previous meeting Mr Wohlgemuth advised that the reason the MV Ali Cat was not used in foggy weather was due to the skippers having more confidence in the MV Argyll Flyer due to the fact that it is faster and easier to manoeuvre in the water at short notice should an

issue arise. He advised that the MV Coruisk was currently at Gourock awaiting a part for the lift and it was hoped that it would be back in service later in the month.

Kirsty Reid enquired about the use of cash on Calmac ferries as some people had reported an issue with this on the Bute service. She was advised that cash could be used and that Calmac were aware of the issue she referred to and that it had been resolved.

Councillor Reid raised the issue of a 16 seater bus being used by West Coast Motors during ferry cancellations when the contract was for a larger vehicle. He was advised that this had been raised with West Coast Motors.

Outcome

The Forum noted the update.

The Forum –

1. Noted the update.
2. Noted that the Chair would write to Scottish Government highlighting that the Dunoon Gourock / Gourock Kilcreggan routes did not benefit from the current RET scheme.

The Chair noted that the Ferries representatives usually left the meeting at this point. He took the opportunity, with it being the last meeting of the Forum in the life of the current Council, to thank the representatives for their contribution and support over the previous five years of the Forum.

5. POLICE SCOTLAND

It was noted that there was no representative from Police Scotland at the meeting.

Stuart McLean read out an update that had been given to the Bute and Cowal Community Planning Group earlier in the week.

Outcome

The Forum noted the update.

6. TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

(a) VMS and Manual Signs

Neil MacFarlane, Transport Scotland, apologised that he had been unable to attend the meeting in November. He advised that there had been no occasion where the diversion route had been required to be used in Glen Croe and the message had not required to be changed.

Outcome

The Forum noted the update.

(b) A83

Neil MacFarlane, Transport Scotland, advised that there were 4 resurfacing projects planned, one of which was significant to Cowal. He advised that resurfacing works were planned south of Arrochar between 21-29 March 2022 but were subject to change. He advised that formal notification from BEAR would be given nearer the time.

The Chair advised that Iain MacInnes who had left the meeting earlier had requested that the issue of the bus not stopping at the top of the Rest and Be Thankful between the months of November and February be raised, along with the issue of tour operators parking there. Mr MacFarlane advised that these issues could be raised at the Task Force meeting in March.

Outcome

The Forum noted the update.

7. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

(a) Reduced Bus Services

It was noted that there was no representative from West Coast Motors present at the meeting.

The Chair advised that bus services had still not returned to pre-covid levels and that it was causing concerns. He advised that implementation of the decision to split the Dunoon to Rothesay service into two due to Calmac cancellations was causing issues and added half an hour to the journey time between Dunoon and Portavadie. He advised that he intended to write to West Coast Motors in this regard.

Councillor Forrest advised that the early morning bus service from Toward to Dunoon pier was not running and this was causing issues as the only other options were to drive or take a taxi as the Pingo service did not run that early. She asked if this could be included in the letter to West Coast Motors.

Kirstie Reid advised that the Inveraray to Cairndow evening service was no longer running and was causing issues for people who used the service when travelling to and from the Beatson on the Glasgow service bus. She asked if this could be raised as well.

Outcome

The Forum noted that the Chair would write to West Coast Motors highlighting the issues raised.

(b) Bus Stop at Rest and Be Thankful

There was nothing discussed at this item as it had been raised earlier in the agenda.

8. TIMBER TRANSPORT GROUP

Iain Catterwell, Timber Transport Group, updated the Forum on recent activities which included that the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme fund work had gone well and that they were in the process of preparing a bid for 2022/23. He advised that it was the quiet time of the year for timber transport in Cowal. He reported that further to complaints about bark on the road from timber transportation, he had done some informal monitoring and had not seen any issues on the public roads in Sandbank which required to be addressed further than what they were doing already.

Outcome

The Forum noted the update.

9. ROADS UPDATE

(a) Traffic Management in Tighnabruaich, Kames and Millhouse

As there was no one present from Kilfinan Community Council to give an update there was no discussion on the item.

Outcome

The Forum noted the position.

10. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

No issues were raised.

11. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

To be confirmed after the Local Council Elections in May 2022 had taken place.