



Lochaber Transport Forum

Co-chruinneachadh mu ghoireasan - siubhail Lochabair

Minutes of the Lochaber Transport Forum Meeting

Tuesday 6th February 2018

11.00

The Duncansburgh Church Hall, the Parade, Fort William

Present;

Brian Murphy – Chairperson
Benny MacDonald – Lochaber Transport Forum
John Barnes - Friends of the West Highland Lines/Glenfinnan Station
Tony Dobson – Headway Highland
Ronald Wegner – RMT
W MacPhee - RMT
Graeme Leslie – Stagecoach, North Scotland
John Fotheringham – Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge and Achnacarry CC
Iain Macniven – West Highland Community Rail Partnership/Arisaig & District Community Council
Stewart Grant - Kinlochleven resident
Iona Grant – Glencoe resident
Julie MacDonald – Kinlochleven resident
Peter Knight – Citylink
Shona Acford – CalMac
Jean Ferguson – Bus User
Christine Hutchison - Kilmallie Community Council
Jim Ramsey – Kilmallie Community Council
Donald Stewart – Resident
Councillor Allan Henderson – Highland Council
Mike Cooper – Highland Council
Donny MacGillivray – Shiel Buses
Lee Strachan – Stagecoach
Jim Mooney – Stagecoach
Ian Langley – Station Adopter/West Highland CRP/Friends of the West Highland Lines/CS & bus User

1. Welcome

Brian Murphy chaired the meeting and asked for introductions around the table.

2. Apologies;

Donald Cameron - MSP
Arthur Cowie – Lochaber Disability Access Panel
Gwyn Moses – Member of Public
Finlay MacRae – CalMac Ferries
Sarah Kennedy – Fort William Marina & Shoreline Company
Alister MacLennan – ScotRail
Kath Small – Ballachulish Community Council
Councillor Andrew Baxter – Highland Council
Graeme Leslie – Stagecoach North of Scotland

3. Confirmation of minutes

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 31st October 2017 were approved by John Fotheringham and Tony Dobson.

Lochaber Transport Forum
An Drochaid, Claggan, Fort William, PH33 6PH

Tel: 07789517990

Email: transportforum@carelochaber.org

Web Site www.lochabertransport.org.uk

Funded By



4. Matters Arising

Under No 5, Cycling & Walking on page 2. JF gave an update to the possibility of woodland walks in Killiehonate Estate. Grants have been awarded and work will start soon.

Under no.7, Community Transport on page 4. JMCD gave details of recent changes with the Lochleven Minibus. The group/committee have ceased trading with options of another community group taking over or selling the minibus. There has been a regular shopping trip for 8 to 10 older residents which is now not available.

JF asked if they were receiving Highland Council Funding. BMCD explained we are currently almost two years through a three year grant period and there was no application received from the group. DS suggested Nether Lochaber and Ballachulish might be interested in being involved with operating a minibus. BMCD said the minibus was initially set up to cover the areas around Loch Leven.

5. Cycling & Walking

BMCD has enquired with HITRANS regarding the Active Travel Map for Fort William but there is no further news on availability.

Action - AH offered to look into this.

An email was later received from AH to say the map has not yet been printed.

6. Public Transport

a) Ferries

SA gave an update.

There is now a lot more services. Summer is expected to be the same as last year and very busy. Figures are up on most routes with just commercial vehicles showing a slight drop.

BM asked about the Lochaline- Fishnish service as previous reports had shown a drop in usage.

There was discussion on the Oban route being cheaper as Corran Ferry isn't covered by the Road Equivalent Tarriff (RET).

Action - SA will enquire about figures for the Oban – Mull route.

AH asked about new vessels, 801 and 802 which have been delayed. SH explained there is no certainty yet and it could be into next year before they are operating. They are still testing LPG fuel which is new to the fleet and much greener. There are more meetings due to take place.

TD asked why commercial vehicles figures are down.

SA suggested there are more six metre vans now being carried. The change is due to reduced rates with RET.

AH – there has been emergency work done on the slipway at Corran.

DMcG asked about the long term future of Corran Ferry.

AH – this isn't known. A possibility is a community group taking over. There have been discussions for a bridge. There will be an options appraisal by HITRANS & HC.

AH updated by email later in the day to say a consultant will be appointed very soon for this work.

b) Rail

BM gave details of the meeting the Transport Forum are having with Alex Hynes, MD ScotRail Alliance on 16th February.

There was discussion on what is most important and the need to be concise for a short meeting. Strategic issues need to be addressed first.

JB - it's hoped there will be a better service from April 2019 when there will be dedicated rolling stock on the West Highland Line.

IL – the 158's are better on the line but don't have sufficient space for bikes.

JB – there are more 156's available.

DS – there has been an issue with the sliding doors at Fort William Railway Station, they have been faulty for some time. IL – this may be because Serco are working in the area beside the doors to set up a lounge for the Sleeper Train passengers. The doors are now operating properly.

BM – perhaps we can make a list of smaller issues for the meeting.

DS updated by phone after the meeting to say the doors were stuck open.

The Transport Forum also received a reply from the Manager at Fort William Railway Station regarding the front doors. He emailed to say while the initial fault was being repaired another fault was found. There was then a delay/mix up with spares but the door should be operating properly soon.

RW – ticket prices on the Sleeper Train are getting very expensive and look to increase when the new rolling stock arrives. Will this be an elite train with high prices?

There was discussion on seated passengers having limited access to services on the train, and costs for the new double berths.

WMcPh – it will be next year before new trains are on the West Highland Line, later than The Highland Main Line.

RW – the haulage of timber freight from Rannoch will start overnight.

BM – what plans does Liberty have for hauling alumina to the factory?

IL – there are no plans to change current arrangements.

JF – will the alloy wheels from the new factory be taken away by rail?

IL – part of the problem with this is that rail links don't go near customers so road haulage is more suited. It's a problem with infrastructure.

BMcD gave details of two emails he received showing misleading information with delayed or cancelled trains.

One passenger checked times online prior to travelling from Rannoch to Glasgow and train was on time. On the station the totem information also said it was on time. The departure board showed on time and then the time disappeared as if the train had been and gone. The help point wasn't working. National Rail Enquiries didn't have any further info, it looked on time to them. Staff at Fort William Station were very helpful, they called back to say there had been a tree on the track and the train will arrive about an hour late.

The second problem happened when the Mallaig/Fort William service was derailed due to a landslide last month. The ScotRail website said 'No services affected'. National Rail Enquiries highlighted the Fort William/Mallaig service as disrupted with a bus replacement but Fort William to Banavie (on the same service) noted 'There are currently no reported service disruptions'.

c) Community Rail Partnerships

BMcD gave an update.

ScotRail are currently erecting electronic signs at stations to provide up to date information.

The designs for West Highland CRP station signs have been completed by a local artist. These will show information about the local area.

The January Board Meeting was held in Rannoch Station Tearoom.

To promote community involvement on the line the WHCRP have commissioned a local theatre company to write a play which can be performed in small station cafes/venues along the line. This is based on the Noel Coward film Brief Encounters which started as a short play called Still Life set in

Lochaber Transport Forum
An Drochaid, Claggan, Fort William, PH33 6PH

a railway station. The play will tour in early spring at times to suit rail travel with food available at venues where possible.

The WHCRP are currently looking for a consultant to help with development work. Notice of this was sent to Transport Forum members. The closing date is 12th February.

IL – the website is now live and we'll be updating information soon. The address is - <http://westhighlandcrp.com/> There will be information coming about walks from rail stations fitting in with current timetables.

d) Buses

PK gave an update from Citylink. Summer timetables will begin at the end of May with the addition of a mid-afternoon service.

JB – we seem to have lost the service from Corpach which helped link Mallaig train passengers with the 919 to Inverness at Spean Bridge. This was because the early coach departed Fort William before the train arrived.

BM – I've noticed a rise in the booking fee for tickets to £1.00. PK – this has gone up from 50p and the first rise for 13 years. I remember a fee of £1.50 was set for online bookings when Concessionary Fares were introduced and The Transport Forum lobbied successfully for this to be reduced to 50p Scotland wide. Once again I'd like Citylink to reconsider this rise.

There was discussion around delays with the 919 to Inverness departing Fort William at 8.55. This had been reported at the last meeting. PK – we have looked into this and the driver will start 15 minutes earlier to keep the service on time. It's important the service keeps to time especially when passengers have appointments.

DS – Ballachulish/Oban services need to be looked at by HITRANS to improve services. Oban hospital is closer for residents than Inverness but transport isn't available.

Action – BM- the Transport Forum can contact HITRANS and also raise this with NHS Highland.

IG – it was reported at a previous meeting that there wouldn't be double livery on Citylink coaches but I've seen several on the Glasgow route. DMcG – we are using older vehicles as back up and currently have to make use of all vehicles because of the state of the roads. We are paying thousands for broken windscreens and mirrors. Each day we have 103 journeys on the roads which are affected the most. We have written to Transport Scotland.

DS – Fergus Ewing, Cabinet Secretary for the Economy and Connectivity should be notified and other MSP's.

JF – after lots of writing our community Council has a meeting with Transport Scotland tonight.

JM gave an update from Stagecoach. We've had an upgrade to paying for fares which can now be done by contactless cards.

DS – at the previous Bus User's Group Meeting a lady with a young child explained the difficulty she has with using a pram on coaches. I travelled back on the same coach with her and saw how passengers struggle with shopping or mobility. The 44 service needs an upgrade. There were a lot of complaints at the previous meeting.

JM – we don't have plans to upgrade but if the chance of newer vehicles comes up we will change. All our vehicles are roadworthy. DS – but they aren't suitable.

JF – the issue of using low floor buses or coaches has been discussed a lot. Coaches aren't suitable for many people, vehicles must cater for passengers, this needs to be reported to your managers.

JM – coaches are in place for the school runs and are Highland Council policy. IG – local school coaches aren't full. There was discussion on HC policy being more flexible for each area.

DS – Stagecoach doesn't have a good image locally.

Lochaber Transport Forum
An Drochaid, Claggan, Fort William, PH33 6PH

Tel: 07789517990

Email: transportforum@carelochaber.org

Web Site www.lochabertransport.org.uk

Funded By



JMcD – the matter may get worse with no minibus in Kinlochleven and older people needing suitable transport. There are passengers with injuries when using coaches.

JM – we haven't heard of any injuries. I was at the previous meeting when this was discussed. We will put out low floor buses when available.

SG reported continuing issues with wheelchair travel for his daughter on the 44 service. JM will look into this.

7. Community Transport

MC – we are starting to look into our Community Transport funding which comes up again from April 2019. We will go to our Senior Manager to discuss budgets.

BMcD – the Kilchoan Community Development Company have received a new minibus and I've provided drivers with the Minibus Drivers Awareness Scheme (MiDAS) training with more in March. I've also been asked by Lochaber High School to provide the course for minibus drivers.

MC explained drivers of HC minibuses must be trained up to the MiDAS standard.

The Community Transport Association (CTA) are still looking for experienced drivers to receive training for PCV D1 and teach others to drive as reported at the October Meeting.

The Transport Forum would also like to hear from anyone who wants to become a MiDAS Trainer and provide the course locally.

8. A82 – Update

BM gave an update;

Work on the trunk roads locally has been brought forward because of the urgency needed for repairs.

Morbaine roundabout to Torlundy – Thursday 1st to Friday 2nd of February 7pm to 7am – Convoy working. This advanced phase of work involved planing operations to remove the deteriorated surface course and provide motorists with a safer and smoother running surface in the interim.

Nevis Bridge roundabout to Inverlochty roundabout – Sunday 18th to Monday 19th February, 9pm to 6am – Full road closure. Vehicles will be stacked and escorted through the works at approximately 1 hourly intervals, however, this is subject to on site operations. Motorists should expect delays.

Morbaine roundabout to Lochy Bridge roundabout – Monday 19th to Friday 23rd of February 7pm to 7am – Convoy working.

Lochy Bridge roundabout to Torlundy – Monday 26th February to Friday 3rd of March 7am to 7pm – Convoy working.

JF – the work up to Torlundy is stopping at the bus stop but the most affected area is past this. They have only gone down two inches on the area planed which is not enough. Tax payers money is used for this so the work should be done properly.

DS – why can't they open up the bridge in Inverlochty into An Aird? BM gave details from the letter; "Due to the geographical location of the site there is no practical diversion route and therefore timings on the night of the closure have been adjusted to minimise disruption as far as possible." It may be because they can't control the weights of vehicle which will use it.

BM continued with details of improvements being looked at to help the flow of traffic heading south at Nevis Bridge. A report will be completed soon.

Work will begin soon on a study to identify how best to improve all modes of transport movement in and around Fort William. The study (a Scottish Transport Pre-Appraisal STAG) will identify

opportunities to support local and nationally significant economic developments within the area. The scope of work includes road, railway, marine and active travel infrastructure.

A project steering group will include representatives of Highland Council, HITRANS, Highlands & Islands Enterprise and Transport Scotland. HITRANS, HIE and the Council have all agreed to contribute funding towards the study which will be project managed by the Council. The intention is to have delivery of the draft pre-appraisal report by May.

There will be another meeting to discuss the upgrade along Loch Lomond on 28th February.

9. AOCB

CH – Kilmallie Community Council and Scottish Canals are working on improving an accessible crossing on the bottom lock at Corpach Basin.

IL – large vehicles have been making grooves along the verging of the A82 and A86 which is dangerous for others.

Snow ploughs have not been clearing passing places on single track roads making it very difficult for traffic, especially when the snow freezes.

Action – MC will pass this onto the roads department. BM will pass it onto the A82 Partnership.

JF – there is a new wind farm which will get 54 large lorry loads soon.

CH had an issue with taxis running engines while waiting in queues/ranks.

DS asked if Transport Forum meetings could be moved to Fridays to encourage Councillors and MSP’s to attend.

Action – BM said Tuesdays had been the preferred day for most to attend. We can discuss this at an Executive Committee meeting.

10. Date of next meeting

Current dates for Forum Meetings, 2018

		Venue
20 th March	Bus User’s Group Meeting	Duncansburgh Church Hall
8 th May	Open Forum Meeting	
19 th June	Bus User’s Group Meeting	
7 th August	Open Forum Meeting	
11 th September	Bus User’s Group Meeting	
30 th October	AGM and Open Forum Meeting	
11 th December	Bus User’s Group Meeting	

From Meeting 11th May 2018

11. Confirmation of minutes

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th February 2018 were approved by Willie MacPhee and Stewart Grant.