

Lochaber Transport Forum

Co-chruinneachadh mu ghoireasan - siubhail Lochabair

Bus User's Group

Minutes of meeting

11.30, Friday 14th September 2018

Duncansburgh MacIntosh Church Hall, Fort William

Present;

Brian Murphy – Chairperson	BM
Benny MacDonald – Lochaber Transport Forum	BMcD
Arthur Cowie – Lochaber Transport Forum	AC
Peter Knight – Scottish Citylink	PK
Greig MacKay – Bus User's Scotland	GMcK
Stewart Grant – bus user	SG
Julie McDonald – bus user	JMcD
David MacGillivray – Shiel Buses	DaMcG
Donald Stewart – bus user	DSt
Ian Langley – West Highland CRP & bus user	IL
W MacPhee – bus user	WMcPh
Mike Cooper – Highland Council	MC
Kath Small – Ballachulish Community Council	KS
Councillor Niall McLean – Highland Council	NMcL
Maryrose Hall	MH
Sheila MacKinnon	SMcK
Collen Chisholm	CC
Lesley Stewart	LS
N Finlayson – Lochaber Times	NF
Tony Dobson – Headway Highland	TB

1. Welcome

The Chairperson opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. He asked for introductions around the room.

2. Apologies;

Councillor Allan Henderson – Highland Council
Flora McKee – Voluntary Action Lochaber
Kate Forbes, MSP
Chris Hoon – West Coast Motors
John Barnes – Friends of the West Highland Lines/Lochaber Transport Forum
Christine Hutchison – Kilmallie CC
John Fotheringham – Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge & Achnacarry CC

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Sally Morris – Bus user, Kentallen
Chris Evans – Strontian resident
Councillor Andrew Baxter – Highland Council
Councillor Denis Rixson – Highland Council
Laura Cheetham – Lochaber Action on Disability
Sarah Kennedy – Fort William Marina & Shoreline Company
Councillor Ben Thompson – Highland Council

3. Confirmation of previous minutes

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 22nd June 2018 were approved by Ian Langley and seconded by W. MacPhee. There were no amendments.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

At No 5, Highland Council re-contracted services. Regarding public transport along the A828, the conclusion was Highland Council and Argyll & Bute Council would discuss with each other when there was a retendering for the AB13448 contract and explore to establish if there were any possible options for the route.

Also at No 5, DaMcG said the issues raised with coaches and buses stopping in Spean Bridge have been dealt with.

At No 6, Stagecoach. PK looked into older coaches being used on the Inverness route and there are no further issues.

At No 6, Shiel Buses. DMcG will remove the timetable at the Police Station (Old) showing notice of the 918 stopping.

5. Highland Council re-contracted service;

- **Roy Bridge N41 Service**

MC - There have been no changes to the N41 with new contracts starting on 20th August.

IL – timetables are not showing the last service from Roy Bridge at 18.20.

Action – DMcG will look into this.

- **Upper Achintore/Corpach, N46 & N47 services**

MC – Shiel Buses will provide the evening service commercially.

- **Kinlochleven N44 service**

There was a lot of discussion over the new timetable which started on 20th August. The re-arranged evening service from Fort William at 20.00 was not suitable for many workers and was discussed at a meeting with Councillors and the operator. It was agreed to make this later and as a press article said it will be 20.40 this was agreed. This removes the connection at Glencoe with the 18.00 coach from Glasgow.

JMcD gave details of problems for passengers arriving from the south, connections in Glasgow and at Glencoe crossroads. The new timetable show buses to Kinlochleven miss some coaches from Glasgow. DMcG – drivers are aware of the timings and will wait a few minutes on coaches from Glasgow.

DS gave thanks to Councillor McLean for help in looking into the new timetable which Highland Council didn't fully consult on. He attended the recent FW2040 Workshops and heard the plans for the future of the area. Surely there will be benefits with more evening buses. Who should look into this and drive it forward?

BM – it's a very valid point but HC do not have resources to do this.

GMcK – it may require help locally with Community Transport providing specific journeys.

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NMcL – HC don't have funds but we can't afford not to have a bus service. Money has been invested in Kinlochleven. We must have proper consultations before implementing services. Most passengers got five days notice of changes. Tourist businesses set their times to suit the timetables and weren't aware of changes.

IL – there is planning for more houses in Roy Bridge and Spean Bridge. There are no evening bus services so people use cars which causes more congestion.

JMcD – I've been to several public meetings, workshops, etc. looking at the future of the area, I've also spoken to passengers when I travel on buses. I'd be happy to help with any local consultation.

GMcK – there is also no money available from the new Scottish Bus Bill. The Bus Service Improvement Partnerships may be a way to help.

NMcL - I've travelled on buses to speak to passengers. Should we get something done?

IL – we need to speak to the people still using cars to encourage a change.

DS – we also need to speak to businesses and ask if better public transport will help them. There are also a lot of visitors travelling by bus. The Chamber of Commerce should be attending meetings.

There was further discussion on a local survey with the Transport Forum and Greig MacKay offering to help.

The current timetable has to operate for 90 days before any changes can be made which will take to 19th November. Changes need 42 days notice with the Traffic Commissioner which therefore has to be done within 10 days.

6. Bus Services;

- **Shiel Buses**

DMcG - As Mike mentioned earlier we will continue with the Upper Achintore evening service commercially.

DS asked how passenger numbers are looking since taking on the extra services.

DMcG – it's difficult to compare anything as we don't have figures from commercial services operated by Stagecoach. The late 44 service wasn't viable so had to stop.

MH gave details of difficulties she's had getting on buses. There can be a lot of child buggies taking up space so wheelchair users can't get on. Other times there's not sufficient time to board, some drivers are more helpful than others.

DMcG – we try to accommodate wheelchair users but drivers cannot control the number of buggies on a bus.

AC – is it possible to use an out of service bus to test accessibility?

Action – DMcG will monitor services.

IL – there are problems at some bus stops with overhanging trees/branches and hedges, the stop at Glen Nevis Estate is particularly poor for seeing buses arriving from town. I thought buses should automatically pull in at stops but many don't.

BM – it may be BEAR who are responsible for this.

SMcK – there are similar problems at Drumfada Terrace.

Action – DMcG will ask drivers to check at stops more carefully.

Action – MC has a contact for BEAR.

- **Citylink**

PK gave out winter timetables for the Glasgow/Fort William/Skye and Inverness /Fort William/Oban routes. Business has been good over the summer with many full coaches but congestion has caused delays.

CC thanked Citylink for adding in the 15.00 from Inverness. There are issues with accessing Raigmore Hospital and an issue with toilet stops as not every driver will provide this.

WMcPh said the 919 service is much improved.

PK I'm pleased to hear the positive feedback. Timetables should be followed for Raigmore. Toilet stops are not fitted into timetables but you should be able to speak to the driver about stopping. Issues can be dealt with if reported quickly along with details of the journey.

Action – PK to look into problems in Inverness. PK will also look into previous accessible issues raised by MH.

DS asked about a later evening service from Glasgow to encourage passengers to attend evening events.

PK – we have tried previously and there's not a market for this.

7. AOCB

MH had a problem with using a Citylink Explorer Pass at Fort William Bus Station.

Action - PK will look into this.

NMcL would like to see larger timetables at Ballachulish stops, A4 have very small print.

Action – MC will provide larger copies.

BMcD gave notice of an event being held locally by Age Scotland and Highland Senior Citizen's Network on 10th October in Kilmallie Free Church, Caol. There's a wider discussion of topics from 11.00 including updates, time to network with other groups and Lochaber Health & Social Care Redesign Update (including the new Belford Hospital). Lunch is provided and the session in the afternoon is around transport to look further at Transport Scotland's National Transport Strategy.

For further information contact Charlie Murphy, Age Scotland

charlie.murphy@agescotland.org.uk, 0141 427 5145. Also Jo Cowan, Highland Senior Citizens Network jo-hscn@outlook.com, 01855 821147.

Update

The Transport Forum received apologies from Chris Hoon, West Coast Motors on the morning of the meeting. Due to unforeseen matters he was unable to attend the meeting. He's aware there's been problems with the times on the 918 service and is looking into this.

8. Dates for future Forum Meetings.

The next Bus User's Group Meeting is on **Friday 14th December at 11.30.**

Before this there is a full Transport Forum Meeting on **Friday 26th October at 11.20. This will include our AGM at 11.00.**

Both meetings will be held in the Duncansburgh Church Hall.

From meeting 14th December 2018

Confirmation of previous minutes

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 14th September 2018 were approved by Ian Langley and seconded by Greig MacKay. There were no amendments.

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Contact details


Complaints to Highland Council, telephone; 01349 886606, email; public.transport@highland.gov.uk

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Email: transportforum@carelochaber.org

Web Site www.lochabertransport.org.uk

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Scottish Citylink have a call centre operating 24/7 365 days a year call centre which also deals with complaints, telephone; 0141 352 4444 or email, info@citylink.co.uk. It's useful to have the coach service number. They work with many operators and pass on complaints to them. Peter Knight can also be contacted directly, email; p.knight2@citylink.co.uk

Shiel Buses can be contacted by telephone in Acharacle – 01967 431272, Fort William – 01397 700700, email – info@shielbuses.co.uk.

Complaints to West Coast Motors go to head office in Campbeltown by telephone – 01586 552319, email – enquiries@westcoastmotors.co.uk.

Complaints can be taken further by contacting Bus Users Scotland, the link to their website is; <http://www.bususers.org/scotland/about-us>. They can also be contacted through Greig Mackay, Deputy Director, Bus Users Group Scotland, Hopetoun Gate, 8b MacDonald Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4LZ. Greig Mackay greig.mackay@bususers.org The telephone no. is: 0300 111 0001.

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