



Lochaber Transport Forum

Co-chruinneachadh mu ghoireasan - siubhail Lochabair

Bus User's Group

Minutes of Meeting

11.30, Friday 14th December 2018

Duncansburgh MacIntosh Church Hall, Fort William

Present;

Brian Murphy – Chairperson	BM
Benny MacDonald – Lochaber Transport Forum	BMcD
Arthur Cowie – LDAP/SATA	AC
John Barnes – Friends of the West Highland Lines/Lochaber Transport Forum	JB
Sandy Stoddart – Duror & Kentallen CC	SS
Councillor Allan Henderson – Highland Council	AH
Greig MacKay – Bus User's Scotland	GMcK
Stewart Grant – bus user	SG
Julie McDonald – bus user	JMcD
Donny MacGillivray – Shiel Buses	DoMcG
Donald Stewart – bus user	DS
Ian Langley – West Highland CRP & bus user	IL
W MacPhee – bus user	WMcPh
Chris Hoon – West Coast Motors	CH
Kath Small – Ballachulish Community Council	KS
Rhona Grant – bus user	RG
Viki Sutherland - Glencoe & Glen Etive CC	VS
Councillor Denis Rixson – Highland Council	DR
Francis Kennedy – Highland Council	FK
Sally Morris – Bus user, Kentallen	SM
Chris Evans – Strontian resident	CE

1. Welcome

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

2. Apologies;

Flora McKee – Voluntary Action Lochaber
Kate Forbes, MSP
Christine Hutchison – Kilmallie CC
John Fotheringham – Spean Bridge, Roy Bridge & Achnacarry CC
Tony Dobson – Headway Highland
Councillor Niall McLean – Highland Council
Mike Cooper – Highland Council

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Ali MacDonald – Highland Council
Councillor Andrew Baxter – Highland Council
Laura Cheetham – Lochaber Action on Disability
Councillor Ben Thompson – Highland Council
Peter Knight – Scottish Citylink

3. 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.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

At No 5, Roy Bridge N41 service; DoMcG was unsure if this had been updated.

The Transport Forum checked the timetable on Shiel Buses website which shows the 18.20 departing Roy Bridge. Hard copies at stops will need to be checked.

At No 6, Bus Services, Shiel Buses; DaMcG wasn't in attendance to confirm this regarding monitoring services.

Mike Cooper had earlier confirmed with the Forum that drivers had been asked to check carefully at stops for passengers, especially stops which are not in clear view.

IL said clearing overgrowth at stops will help drivers and passengers. Action – **Bear to be reminded of this problem.**

At No 6, Citylink; Peter Knight informed the Forum Citylink services don't operate to Raigmore services, it's only the services operated by Shiel Buses under contract to Highland Council.

He was unaware of the previous accessible issues raised.

There was discussion on the difficulty of accessing Raigmore Hospital from South Lochaber, Strontian and other rural areas. It's difficult to get to Fort William for onward travel.

JMcD – I attended a Highland Council meeting on the 20/40 Local Development Plan recently and travel to the new Belford hospital was raised. There was nobody from the Council Transport Unit attending to discuss this. There are also currently problems for anyone needing to see a doctor on Wednesday afternoons in Kinlochleven as the surgery is closed and a reduced bus service to Fort William. With a high number of walkers in the area this may create problems for the NHS.

DS – HC needs to look at connectivity for this area to the new hospital and to Raigmore.

RG – the lack of good bus services is encouraging people to use cars which is leading to congestion.

BM – building for the new hospital is 4/5 years away. There are steering groups active. Design work is required before looking at transport needs.

AH – HC have extended the same funding for Community Transport until March 2020. Future funding applications will then have a better understanding of requirements for the new hospital.

AH explained about a recent previous project, the Lochaber Transport Advice and Booking Service (LTABS), which was set up to help integrate transport provided by HC minibuses, Community Transport, NHS and Patient Transport. This was piloted in Lochaber to connect and expand transport links between the organisations. It was hoped it could extend to Skye and then to the rest of Highland but the NHS declined to share responsibility and costs.

DS asked if this can be resurrected. AH – we can try with the NHS but their money isn't specified or ring-fenced for projects.

JMcD – I'm aware of legal obligations under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in England where companies must provide funds for appropriate transport linked to new developments.

DR – regarding work for the new hospital, there are currently joint meetings with planners. If you have issues or concerns speak to your Community Council.

AC – regarding LTABS, 90% of enquiries was related to health appointments. Patient Transport is still available in all areas for people who qualify to use it.

At No 7, AOCB, regarding a problem using a Citylink Explorer Pass at Fort William Station. **This action is still outstanding.**

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At No 7, AOCB, regarding larger timetables at Ballachulish stops; **this action is still outstanding.**

BM rearranged the agenda to discuss public transport along the A828 first.

5. Bus Services

• West Coast Motors

BM – there's been a lack of public transport along the A828 for a long time. Fort William and Oban are two of the largest towns on the west coast. There is high tourism so surely at least there should be more links during the holiday season.

CH – the service was reduced from three to two recently because of withdrawal of funding. I can report this to our directors. Currently we have set timetables continue to connect with the Inverness coaches in Fort William.

SM raised an issue when there were three coaches per day. I use the buses regularly and on many occasions ticket machines didn't work so passenger numbers couldn't have been accurate. Also, coaches make connections with Inverness but don't allow a reasonable time to visit either Oban or Fort William.

CH – the two very early school buses to Oban and Fort William meet in Duror. Passengers can get to Oban before 9am.

SM – this may not be available during school holidays and not a good time for most passengers in winter. People have just made other arrangements and don't use buses as they aren't suitable.

RG – I use these buses and at times I can be the only passenger.

JMcD had issues with the 15.55 from Oban running late as there are many stops for school children. There needs to be better connections in Ballachulish for Kinlochleven.

CH – this is the first year of operating this way and there have been delays. When the bus was full we provided a second bus. I'm unsure how this will be rescheduled.

DS – South Lochaber workers cannot commute to Oban by bus. The early bus should be advertised more. We need more co-ordination with HITRANS, HC and Argyll & Bute Council.

There was discussion on the best times for bus services along the A828. SM offered to help with any improvements and promoting services.

AH – it's difficult to access funding and both operators here require financial support. I'll keep discussions going within HITRANS.

BM – are there bus grants available?

IL – there is community benefits coming to many areas through renewable energy projects which can be used this way. Also, larger companies should contribute directly for local transport when expanding their workforce.

DR – HC have schedules to support many infrastructures like schools and transport. It's being added to their website. It can also work the other way to give builders incentives to develop in certain areas.

AH emailed after the meeting saying apparently 3million is in the new budget to do with bus transport innovation. HITRANS can look into Fort William to Oban services.

• Shiel Buses

DMcG – we've been noting passenger numbers on the new evening service since it was changed to 21.00. Numbers are very low, three, four, eight, nil and four on various nights since starting on 19th November.

DS asked about the work HITRANS do. What are their outputs and achievements?

AH- they look for grants to support projects. Recent work has included air travel, active travel and they responded to the new Transport Strategy.

DS – they have also done good work for ferries.

BM – we need different ways of operating transport services. The current situation is not working.

DMcG – Shiel Buses have invested £370k in buses for the Kinlochleven route.

VS asked about electric bus grants.

AH – it may be too early in rural areas due to the distances travelled. At present it's more suited to cities and shorter routes.

- **Citylink**

There are no further reports from Citylink. Peter Knight gave his apologies.

6. Date of next meeting

BM – when the most recent Forum minutes were sent out we asked what the preference for meetings was. We've changed to Fridays for a while but Tuesday's still suited some people. There were a few responses and we've decided to hold meetings on Tuesdays next year.

The next Transport Forum is on **Tuesday 12th February at 11.00 in the Duncansburgh Church Hall.**

The next Bus User's Group Meeting is on **Tuesday 26th March at 11.30 in the Duncansburgh Church Hall.**

7. AOCB

There were no AOCB.

From meeting 26th March 2019

8. Confirmation of previous minutes

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 14th December 2018 were approved by Ian Langley and seconded by Arthur Cowie. There were no amendments.

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Contact details

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

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.