

# LOCHABER TRANSPORT FORUM

## Minutes of Executive Meeting held

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2019 – 10.00, the Duncansburgh Church Hall, the Parade, Fort William

**Present** - Brian Murphy  
Benny MacDonald  
John Barnes  
Flora McKee

**Apologies** - Allan Henderson  
Tony Dobson  
Arthur Cowie

- **Minutes of last meeting** held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2019 were approved by the Committee.
- **Matters Arising**  
Under AOCB, there was discussion on the 125 years of the West Highland Line. John said Friends of the West Highland Lines have plans for a special excursion in August.
- **Development Worker's Report**  
Benny went through details of his report.  
There was further discussion on the feedback from ScotRail regarding the refurbished 156 carriages. John stated there is generally more space at the airline seats and less space at the tables. Other recently refurbished units (Northern) had been done without using the hard seats with high backs that ScotRail seemed to think are necessary.  
  
Bus timetables are being discussed again as there was a query from HITRANS in response to the minutes from the February Transport Forum Meeting. Benny gave a list of outstanding issues.
- **Correspondence**  
The links for the re-launched Local Rail Development Fund are;  
<https://www.transport.gov.scot/public-transport/rail/rail-policy-and-strategy/local-rail-development-fund/>  
<https://www.transport.gov.scot/news/local-rail-development-fund-re-opens-for-further-applications/>
- **Ferry Consultation**  
Although this was mentioned in Benny's report he wanted to ask if there are any responses to Highland Council's Consultation. This refers to tendering for the renewal of contracts for two ferries in Lochaber from April 2020. Benny had checked with relevant Community Councils and some individuals if they were aware of the consultation. It was agreed there were no concerns which required a response and Benny will pass this on to David Summers
- **Transport Forum Meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May**  
(Rail discussion with Scott Prentice)  
As there had been confirmation from Scott Prentice, Head of Business Development with Abellio that he will attend the next Forum Meeting Benny asked if this should specifically be on the agenda to inform

members with an interest in rail matters. Benny can also highlight this when sending out the minutes from the Bus User's Group Meeting to follow.

- **West Highland Community Rail Partnership**

Benny was unable to attend the March Meeting held in Spean Bridge.

Work has been completed on the improvements to the Viaduct Trail at Glenfinnan and the CRP want to mark this with a formal opening in May. They had hoped to arrange a special train to Glenfinnan which will arrive ahead of the steam train so passengers can cross over the trail to the viaduct and view the steam train crossing. Abellio are unable to provide a special train so other arrangements will be looked at.

The CRP will discuss the future of Corpach Station building with Kilmallie CC and the West Highland Review Group. John added the Station is owned by Network Rail. They won't let it be inspected inside because it's unsafe.

The CRP will be organising competitions as part of the WHL 125 Anniversary. Competitions are for a short story for primary and high school pupils, a poster design for primary and high school pupils and photos for high school pupils and adults. There will be a launch in May, a deadline on 1<sup>st</sup> September and awards on 1<sup>st</sup> October.

- **AOCB**

Brian raised some issues relating to the Transport Forum Meetings and the Bus User's Group Meetings. He has received some verbal complaints about how some discussions dominate proceedings. Brian informed the meeting he has always chaired meetings in a more relaxed style so everyone can have their say and allow as free a flow of questions and discussions as possible. He proposed taking a stronger role in chairing meetings in the future. In order to do this those attending must indicate to the Chairperson when they want to speak. If they receive an answer they will be allowed to respond then move on to the next person who wants to speak. There will be a chance for a final point on each item then the meeting will move on.

Brian also suggested the Bus User's Group can now be disbanded. There have been changes since it started when Highland Council were setting new contracts and there are now much less issues since Stagecoach withdrew all services from the area. It has been stated several times at meetings that Shiel Buses are providing a good service.

The Committee agreed to adopt a stronger chairing of meetings. They felt this would address complaints and ensure everyone remained engaged with the Forum and sub groups. The committee also agreed there was no need to continue with a separate Bus User's Group as issues can be addressed as part of the full Forum Meetings, if further issues arise in the future the Bus Users Group can be re-instated. Brian will inform the Bus Users Group of this change and the reasons behind it at today's meeting to follow.

Benny advised that it was last August when the Committee had last met with Kate Forbes, MSP, to discuss transport problems in the area. It was suggested at the time there could be a six month follow up. He asked if this should be looked at. Kate's office are good at responding to minutes, agendas, etc. and regularly give apologies. It would be easy to enquire about dates for a meeting. It was agreed this can be looked at.

- **Date of next meetings**

There will be an Executive Committee Meetings at 10.00, prior to the next Transport Forum Meeting which will be on **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May at 11.00 in the Duncansburgh Church Hall.**

**From Meeting 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

**Minutes of last meeting** held on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2019 were approved by the Committee.