



# Minutes of the Caithness Transport Forum

**Date:** 05/12/2019

**Time:** 10:00

**Location:** Smith Room, Pulteney Centre, Wick

## Present

Trudy Morris	Caithness Chamber of Commerce (chair)
David Swanson	Caithness Chamber of Commerce (minutes)
Allan Tait	Caithness Voluntary Group
Roger Saxon	Dounreay Stakeholder Group
Mike Lunan	Friends of the Far North Line
Bill Mowat	Gills Harbour Ltd
Jonathan Gunn	Highland Council Roads & Transport
Dougie Cook	Highlands & Islands Airports Ltd
Julie McGee	Highlands & Islands Enterprise
Frank Roach	HITRANS
Jennifer Harvey	Local Development Officer (Wick)
Derek Glasgow	ScotRail
Davie Alexander	Thurso & Wick Trade Union Council

## 1. Welcome and apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all present for attending.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from:

Billy Manson	Association of Caithness Community Councils
Peter Faccenda	Caithness & North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership
June Love	Dounreay Site Restoration Ltd

Victoria Ross	Dounreay Site Restoration Ltd
Alex Macmanus	Highland Council
Cllr Matthew Reiss	Highland Council
Cllr Nicola Sinclair	Highland Council
Cllr Struan Mackie	Highland Council
Cllr Willie Mackay	Highland Council
George Farquhar	Highlands & Islands Airports Ltd
Julie Marker	Local Development Officer (Rural)
Joan Lawrie	Local Development Officer (Thurso)
Kathryn Scollie	Pentland Ferries
Gail Ross MSP	Scottish Parliament
Sandy Mackie	Scrabster Harbour Trust
Kris Bevan	Serco NorthLink Ferries
William Mainus	Stagecoach Highlands
Marco Bardelli	Transport Scotland
Paul Linhart-MacAskill	Transport Scotland
Malcolm Bremner	Wick Harbour Authority

## 2. Minutes of last CTF meeting 10.09.2019

2.1 The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the last meeting

## 3. Review of actions from last meeting

**CTF(2018)M001/A005** - *Frank Roach to provide details of station analysis once carried out.* **COMPLETE**

This related to details of passenger numbers at individual stations along the Far North Line. While not received from Frank, David Swanson put together [a summary](#) (link to external PDF file) based on statistics provided by the Office of Rail & Road.

**CTF(2018)M003/A006** – *Brian Gordon to feed back to Forum on RET rollout when more information available*  
**ONGOING**

See Transport Scotland Ferries Unit update in packs.

**CTF(2019)M001/A010** – *David Swanson to coordinate with relevant partners on future rail / bus / ferry connectivity*  
**ONGOING**

See **M002/A004**

**CTF(2019)M001/A013** – *Cllr Nicola Sinclair to feed back to the Forum on discussions around additional roads maintenance budget* **COMPLETE**

Update from Nicola:

*To the best of my memory we elected just to add the extra monies into the revenue budget to use as the Roads team saw fit, rather than earmark it for a particular piece of equipment. I believe that's the case but*

*would need to go back through minutes to double check, as that particular meeting had a lot of to-ing and fro-ing regarding funding, in particular funding capital for the Riverside car park.*

Jonathan Gunn noted that with regards to the car park, the Wick councillors had secured an additional £90K of funding for this and that the Highland Council roads unit contributed a further £21K. Resurfacing is currently underway and plans include a new bus shelter, bike shelter and electric vehicle charging points.

**CTF(2019)M002/A002 – Chamber to collate expressions of support for sleeper & battery train projects COMPLETE**

An email in support was sent to Frank Roach as requested, Cllr Matthew Reiss also provided support which was incorporated.

**CTF(2019)M002/A004 – Stagecoach and Chamber to discuss electric vehicle pilot ONGOING**

David Swanson gave a brief update on this, noting that this has moved into a larger bit of work looking at future priorities for the Forum and for transport in the area. He noted that the Chamber is continuing to investigate the issues to identify gaps and appropriate funding streams prior to progressing any further with this action. He updated the Forum that he had done some initial work analysing gaps in service to Inverness, with particular reference to access to healthcare.

Trudy Morris noted that this work would include areas such as decarbonisation of transport and access to transport in rural areas, and that it would be taken forward through the Caithness & North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership.

Allan Tait noted the work already being done by Caithness Voluntary Group on some of these issues and that they would be keen to be involved in this discussion.

**CTF(2019)M002/A009 – Highland Council to investigate pedestrian access at Harbour Place once works on wall recommence COMPLETE**

A response was received from Jonathan Gunn as follows:

*We have had no update from GMR Henderson as to when he is planning to do any further works. He will need to apply for a scaffolding permit from us and we have to approve it before he can start any works. We will ensure he doesn't have the scaffolding up during the busiest part of the tourist season and maintains pedestrian access along the path this time.*

Jonathan noted that the previous works leading to this issue had taken longer than expected and that the Council would monitor any future works to ensure this does not arise again.

**CTF(2019)M003/A001 – Chamber to write to DRS regarding delays to Georgemas freight trial COMPLETE**

No update was received from DRS and an email was sent to try and secure one, but as of the Forum meeting nothing had been received. It was noted that as well as the Forum, neither the Dounreay Stakeholder Group or HITRANS had received any further update on the progress of this trial.

It was agreed that the Forum and Dounreay Stakeholder Group would write to the relevant executives at DRS and the NDA to raise their concerns over this matter.

**CTF(2019)M004/A001 – Chamber & Dounreay Stakeholder Group to write to DRS & NDA regarding Georgemas freight trial**

**CTF(2019)M003/A002 – Chamber to provide David Beaton's details to Association of Caithness Community Councils COMPLETE**

David Swanson confirmed that this was done.

**CTF(2019)M002/A003 – Chamber to write to ScotRail regarding lack of cover for catering on Wick services**  
**COMPLETE**

A letter was sent to ScotRail (**Appendix A**) but no response had yet been received.

Derek Glasgow noted that recruitment efforts were ongoing to cover these services. Mike Lunan noted the issues with recruiting and retaining staff at this particular level, including the length of shift required, and Frank Roach noted the current staff shortages.

Derek queried whether there was any merit in having the service subcontracted out to a local provider. Frank felt this may result in an industrial relations problem.

Roger Saxon queried whether crews could change at Helmsdale to help with the shift length issue.

Trudy asked Derek to follow up with Steven Milne at ScotRail and seek an answer on the issues raised.

**CTF(2019)M004/A002 – Derek Glasgow to seek answer on issues raised regarding catering on Wick services**

**CTF(2019)M003/A004 – Inspector Goskirk to provide Mike Lunan with further information on definition of dangerous driving / parking** **COMPLETE**

Mike noted that he had not received a response but that he did not feel the matter to be of any urgency. It was agreed to close this action off.

On the matter of parking, Jonathan Gunn noted that it was expected a traffic warden for Wick and Thurso would be in place soon.

**CTF(2019)M003/A005 – Chamber to pass details of Development Officers update to relevant transport providers**  
**COMPLETE**

Relevant details were passed on and Jennifer Harvey was present to give a further update at the meeting.

**CTF(2019)M003/A006 – Sandy Mackie to give breakdown of landing methods for whitefish at Scrabster** **COMPLETE**

Response from Sandy as follows:

*I estimate that over the last three financial years around 30% of landings at Scrabster were from longline fishing*

**CTF(2019)M003/A007 – Kris Bevan to provide details on number from Caithness applying for apprenticeships**  
**COMPLETE**

Update from Kris as follows:

*Applications received from Caithness for Deck and Engine Apprenticeships 2019: 6*

*Applications received from Caithness for Deck and Engine Apprenticeships 2017: 9*

**CTF(2019)M003/A008 – Alex Macmanus to share Highland Council programme of works with the Forum** **COMPLETE**

This was done and shared with the Forum.

**CTF(2019)M003/A009 – David Beaton to investigate issue with Inverness-Gills booking** **COMPLETE**

Response from William Mainus as follows:

*We have asked Citylink to update and re-introduce, in the meantime, tickets can continue to be booked through the website for Gills by booking a fare between Thurso and Inverness, as all fare stages between Thurso and Wick for travel to and from Inverness are the same.*

**CTF(2019)M003/A010 – Forum to write to CAA regarding regulations for offshore wind helicopter operations**  
**COMPLETE**

This was discussed at the Wick John O’Groats Airport Consultative Committee and Dougie Cook agreed to investigate further. Some more detail on the matter has come to light and it is now no longer necessary to write to the CAA on this.

Dougie Cook confirmed that this was an internal matter, rather than one for the CAA.

## 4. Matters Arising

- 4.1 There were no matters arising.

## 5. Development Officers Update

- 5.1 Jennifer Harvey gave an apology on behalf of the other two Local Development Officers. She provided an update to members on the work done by Local Development Officers as it relates to transport issues.
- 5.2 For Thurso, she noted key concerns around the bus services including buses breaking down and that these had been helped by the introduction of smaller buses, but that some accessibility issues remained. She noted concerns with the NHS Hub proposal and potential lack of options for transport to Dunbar Hospital. She also noted that some young mothers from the Ormlie area were finding it difficult to access transport to supermarkets in the town centre. With regards to travelling outwith Thurso, the key concerns were cost of transport, accessibility of the X99, and the condition of Thurso rail station.
- 5.3 For Rural Caithness, she noted that a key issue was access to town centres to attend appointments, and the limits imposed by lack of transport after 7.15pm impacting on e.g. extracurricular activities for pupils. She noted specific issues with the bus shelter at Lidl in Wick, where passengers had been bypassed by buses, and with the length of day faced by students from Dunbeath travelling to North Highland College.
- 5.4 For Wick, she noted very similar issues to those raised in Thurso, with a further point that a number of bus stops seemed to have been removed with no consultation or notice. There were also concerns that services linking the town with rural routes were not available. She further noted some specific issues regarding Dounreay services, confusion over the name “Wick John O’Groats Airport” and access to Inverness.
- 5.5 Frank Roach queried whether this work predated the launch of the Aaron’s of Wick services. Julie noted that this is the case and that while this has helped, many issues remain.
- 5.6 Julie noted a further concern raised with concerns over the interchange between services from Caithness and services from Inverness Bus Station to Raigmore.
- 5.7 Trudy Morris noted that a number of the issues and challenges raised here fit in with the work that the Chamber is doing on the future priorities for the Forum. She noted that due to government priorities, any solution would have to be green.
- 5.8 Allan Tait noted that those with access to private transport do not face many of these issues, and that life in rural areas can be difficult for those reliant on public transport. He updated that Caithness Voluntary Group

is hoping to secure funding to help address some of the issues and the wider problems raised by the work of the Development Officers.

- 5.9 There was some further discussion of this and it was noted that long-term sustainability is key and that the needs of those in rural areas are often best served by on-demand transport which is expensive.
- 5.10 Davie Alexander noted the large number of windfarm community benefit funds in the area and felt that some approaches could be made to the relevant community panels to raise these issues and emphasise the need to support transport provision in the region.
- 5.11 Allan noted that Caithness Voluntary Group had been in discussion with Aaron's of Wick and that they hoped to do some community transport work together. It was agreed that a representative of Aaron's should be invited to attend the Forum.

**CTF(2019)M004/A003** – *David Swanson to invite Aaron's of Wick to attend Forum meetings.*

## 6. Transport Updates

### 6.1 Scrabster Harbour

- 6.1.1 No attendee was present but a written update was provided (**Appendix B**).

### 6.2 Wick Harbour

- 6.2.1 No attendee was present but a written update was provided (**Appendix C**).

### 6.3 Gills Harbour

- 6.3.1 Bill Mowat provided a written update (**Appendix D**). He drew attendees' attention to the commencement of crossings by the *MV Alfred* and to the endorsement by Scottish Government of the Gills Bay Economic Development Zone. He noted that discussions are ongoing with Dounreay and the NDA regarding site contractors doing some community works at Gills. Roger Saxon noted that the Dounreay Stakeholder Group would be happy to take this matter up if needed.
- 6.3.2 Frank Roach noted the legal challenge launched by CalMac against the Northern Isles Ferry Services procurement – Trudy noted that this would be covered under the Serco NorthLink Ferries item.

### 6.4 Pentland Ferries

- 6.4.1 No attendee was present but a written update was provided (**Appendix E**).

## 6.5 Serco NorthLink Ferries

- 6.5.1 No attendee was present and no update was provided.
- 6.5.2 A written update was provided by Transport Scotland Ferries Unit (**Appendix F**).
- 6.5.3 Trudy Morris noted that with regards to the CalMac challenge, the message from Caithness, Orkney and Shetland had been clear that they favoured a procurement process over a direct award of the contract.
- 6.5.4 Roger Saxon noted that the CalMac challenge was on the basis of their being the lowest bidder – Mike Lunan noted that the tenders were assessed 65% on price and 35% on quality.
- 6.5.5 Trudy further noted the section of the update discussing the 2020 dry dock of the *Hamnavoe* and the concerns that the freight vessel usually used to provide cover is not suitable.
- 6.5.5 It was agreed that the Forum would write to Transport Scotland to express frustrations over the continued delays to the award of the Northern Isles Ferry Services contract and the importance of securing a suitable replacement vessel for the *Hamnavoe* dry dock.

**CTF(2019)M004/A004** – *Forum to write to Transport Scotland regarding NIFS contract and Hamnavoe replacement.*

## 6.6 ScotRail Alliance

- 6.6.1 Derek Glasgow provided an update on behalf of the ScotRail Alliance, noting the challenging times for the business in this area. He highlighted two specific problems which have been causing issues for services on the Far North Line – clogging of fuel filters and difficulty connection to RETB at Helmsdale.
- 6.6.2 He noted that Trudy Morris had raised issues regarding recent attempts to travel via rail and updated that the specific cause of the cancellation that day was “rough riding” which transpired to be due to deer strike damaging the horn underneath the train.
- 6.6.3 Derek gave some brief updates on future plans for the line, including plans for customer information systems, linespeed improvements, and a passing loop at Lentrane. He also noted plans for a rail tourism meeting on 11 December.
- 6.6.4 Mike Lunan queried the issues with the fuel filters. Derek noted that work was ongoing to identify the problem and that it may be down to either a change in the quantity of biodiesel or the lack of fuel polishing – a complete disinfection and cleaning of the fuel tank – undertaken this year. He noted that he had requested the return of fuel polishing equipment to Inverness.
- 6.6.5 Trudy noted a number of recent issues with delays and cancellations. Derek noted that on-time departure from Thurso is 96%.
- 6.6.6 Trudy noted that she had earlier discussed with Derek a number of issues and asked him to feed back on these. It was also agreed that the Forum would also write to Alex Hynes regarding issues on the Far North Line, including catering.

**CTF(2019)M004/A005** – *Forum to write to Alex Hynes regarding issues on the Far North Line*



- 6.6.7 David Swanson noted issues with shared pedestrian and vehicular access to the Thurso rail station and the lack of external lighting on the entranceway. Derek noted that if David provided details of this, he would take these back.

**CTF(2019)M004/A006** – *Derek Glasgow to raise issues with pedestrian access to Thurso station*

- 6.6.8 With regards to this, Mike Lunan noted that he had heard of plans for a mini-roundabout at the junction near Thurso station – Jonathan Gunn confirmed that no plans were in place for this.

## 6.7 Direct Rail Services

- 6.7.1 No attendee was present and no update was provided.

## 6.8 HITRANS

- 6.8.1 Frank Roach gave a presentation on the OHM G-PaTRA battery train project (**Appendix G**). Of note:
- The plan is for a Wick-Thurso shuttle – the proposed solution can do both static and on-train charging, and Frank has seen both modes in operation elsewhere.
  - The proposed vehicle would be carbon-neutral at just 13 modal shift journeys from cars per day (by comparison to between 200-300 for a diesel train)
  - Maintenance could be carried out at Wick
  - There is a requirement for around £500K of capital investment to enable the project
  - There may be a requirement to tweak signalling at Thurso to allow interworking
  - The service would be supplementary to and would not interfere with or replace any existing ScotRail services
- 6.8.2 Frank further updated the Forum on the economics of the service, noting that the value of carbon savings could be priced at around £149,000 per year and that the operating costs would be around 30% less than a comparable diesel service. He noted that the cost to lease the trains over a 7-year period would be around double the £1.75m for a diesel-powered Class 158, but that over 15 years the costs would be effectively the same.
- 6.8.3 Frank noted that there was a good case to be made for doing a battery train trial in the region and noted that, in order to meet carbon reduction targets, ScotRail would have to make significant investment in their own fleet by 2035.
- 6.8.5 Trudy Morris enquired whether a formal letter of support from the Forum would be helpful – Frank noted that this would be welcome once the final report on the project is available.
- 6.8.6 Trudy queried whether Frank was seeking any funding support other than from Transport Scotland. Frank noted that other funding sources would be welcome but that there would be a need to ensure these fit in with Scottish Government goals and priorities.
- 6.8.7 Mike Lunan noted that he had heard that the owner of the proposed rolling stock may be willing to lease it at little or no cost – Frank noted that he had been having discussions with the owner and that no official offer of this nature had been made.
- 6.8.8 Trudy noted issues with battery discharge and whether this was an issue with the power cells used for rail – Frank confirmed that this was not an issue.



- 6.8.9 Frank noted that he was due to meet with Denchi Power to discuss details around power cells.
- 6.8.10 Frank provided Forum members with an update on the Midnight Train to Georgemas project. Of note:
- Transport Scotland were not keen on the original proposal to use Mark 3 rolling stock from the Caledonian Sleeper
  - Frank subsequently put forward a proposal to use HSTs instead, but this has also been turned down by Transport Scotland
  - Transport Scotland liked the proposal on principle and felt it had merits, but had concerns about patronage, subsidy requirement and operational risks of using older rolling stock
- 6.8.11 Frank noted that the key question now was whether to shelve the proposal or to seek political support.
- 6.8.12 Frank updated the Forum on the Far North Line Review Group's proposals for the Far North Line, which involve six trains a day to Inverness with some operating on a limited stop basis and some interchanging at Helmsdale.
- 6.8.13 Trudy enquired whether anything had been done to forecast demand on the proposed sleeper service – Frank noted that demand forecasting had been done.
- 6.8.14 Roger Saxon noted his disappointment that the Midnight Train to Georgemas project had been turned down. With regards to the proposed battery train, he noted that this would be a good legacy for the NDA to leave post-Dounreay and queried whether it was worth approaching them for support.
- 6.8.15 Frank noted that this would be welcome and that in the 1990s a Highland Council vision for the area post-Dounreay had mentioned rail transport.
- 6.8.16 It was agreed that, once the final report has been made available for the OHM G-PaTRA project, Trudy Morris and Roger Saxon would invite Frank to present on this to the Caithness & North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership. This would give an opportunity to allow local partners to understand the aims of the project and next steps, and to see what support might be available locally to enable this project to move forward.
- CTF(2019)M004/A007** – *Trudy Morris and Roger Saxon to invite Frank Roach to present to CNSRP on OHM G-PaTRA proposal*
- 6.8.17 Mike Lunan noted his disappointment regarding the Midnight Train to Georgemas project but noted that Transport Scotland's concerns on the use of HST's suggested an increased likelihood of electrification.
- 6.8.18 Frank briefly updated the Forum on his proposals for a timber train in Scotland, noting that he was seeking funding through the Strategic Timber Transport Fund to fund the wagons for this and would then approach a haulier to operate. He noted that the current model includes Georgemas, Kinbrace and Altnabreac, and that there has been a breakthrough agreement regarding the use of red diesel for lineside loading if the same entity does both harvesting and transport.

## 6.9 BEAR Scotland / Berriedale Braes

- 6.9.1 A written update was provided by Marco Bardelli of Transport Scotland (**Appendix H**) on BEAR's programme of works.
- 6.9.2 Trudy Morris noted that the expectation remains that works at Berriedale will be complete in Spring 2020.

- 6.9.3 Davie Alexander noted that a number of recent roadworks on the A9 involved overnight road closures and queried the efficacy of doing works overnight at this time of year. It was agreed that the Forum would ask Marco to feed back on this matter.

**CTF(2019)M004/A008** – *Marco Bardelli to provide feedback on overnight roadworks in winter*

## 6.10 Highland Council

- 6.10.1 Jonathan Gunn gave an update on behalf of Highland Council. Of note:

- About 80% of surfacing works this year have been done in November – these were originally planned for summer but plant issues have led to delays
- Work is ongoing at the riverside car park in Wick and this is expected to be completed before Christmas
- Highland Council is currently tendering for road signage for the North Coast 500

- 6.10.2 Davie Alexander queried what was being done to address potholes on local roads. Jonathan noted that they have a hotbox on order for Wick to enable hot tar patching to be carried out in winter. There was some discussion of the efficacy of different patching methods, and Jonathan noted that emergency patching will still be cold tar.

## 6.11 Stagecoach

- 6.11.1 No attendee was present but a written update was provided (**Appendix I**).

- 6.11.2 Trudy Morris noted that issues with the vehicles used on the X99 continued to be raised locally and that the Chamber would take these back to Stagecoach.

**CTF(2019)M004/A009** – *Chamber to take back issues regarding X99 to Stagecoach*

- 6.11.3 With regards to the action regarding meetings with Community Councils, Bill Mowat noted that Dunnet & Canisbay had taken this offer up and had been initially pleased with the response but that at the last minute Stagecoach had changed the attendee from a member of senior management to the local manager.
- 6.11.4 Trudy noted that the Chamber was no longer running the Caithness Bus Users Group on Stagecoach's behalf, but that they would feed back to them on the need to run local forums.

## 6.12 Wick John O'Groats Airport / HIAL

- 6.12.1 Dougie Cook gave an update on behalf of Wick John O'Groats Airport / HIAL. Of note:

- There have been some recent changes to the HIAL management structure and it is hoped that a number of appointment announcements will be made in the new year
- Industrial action by ATCs has been suspended pending a ballot on an improved offer, with Prospect recommending this offer to members
- Eastern Airways have now reduced their schedule to a single daily flight, meaning Wick now has two flights per day within a three-hour window. HIAL have given assurances that no kneejerk actions will be taken on opening hours and staffing

- HIAL has carried out significant stakeholder engagement regarding Wick John O’Groats Airport
- Air Traffic Management Strategy work continues, with the primary focus currently on infrastructure – a preferred option for a facility in Inverness has now been found.
- BOWL helicopter operations continue to use the main hangar for the immediate future and the planned hangar relocation is on hold for the moment
- Passenger numbers were up slightly in October, but down 10% year-to-date. Aircraft movements are up 2.1% year-to-date, against a backdrop earlier this year of 10% down – Dougie noted the efforts of Far North Aviation here
- Customer feedback has shown 96% approval at Wick John O’Groats Airport
- Security is up to full complement and Dougie has been given the OK to promote to backfill his own position
- A number of improvements are underway or approved, including loop taxiway, phase 3 of drainage replacements, new doors on the terminal building, heating in the terminal, new deicer tanks and installation of electric vehicle charging points

- 6.12.2 Trudy Morris noted that the industrial action had not involved staff at Wick. Dougie noted that while not directly affecting Wick, the work-to-rule elsewhere had an impact by putting strain on the network. He felt that this would lead to wider discussions about resilience and scheduling across the HIAL region.
- 6.12.3 Bill Mowat queried how many helicopter flights BOWL were operating. Dougie noted that this was around 30-40 per month and referred to the previously raised issue regarding the helicopter not operating unless a boat is in the field.
- 6.12.4 Trudy Morris gave an update on the Chamber’s work through CNSRP on air services at Wick John O’Groats Airport, noting that they were seeking a dual PSO to Aberdeen and Edinburgh, with a consultant carrying out final work on a business case for this. She noted that there have been positive discussions with Transport Scotland and strong engagement from local partners.
- 6.12.5 Trudy noted that the decision to impose a PSO would be a political one and that the Chamber was keen to get its bid in before the next Scottish Government budget. She updated the Forum on the need to include sustainability aspects in the bid and that this would include looking at electric aircraft in the medium to long term. She noted that the business community in the area has lined up in support, and that if the bid is successful it will be a gamechanger for the area.
- 6.12.6 On the issue of reductions in Eastern’s schedule, Trudy noted that partners had had discussions with Eastern on this and had looked for a solution, but felt that the proposals put forward by Eastern for support were not suitable and the focus had to be on the long-term sustainability of the airport. She noted that there had been some press comment by both Eastern and the Chamber on this issue.

## 7. Press Communications

- 7.1 Trudy Morris noted the generally positive news including on the OHM G-PaTRA project and the number of investments being made at Wick John O’Groats Airport.

## 8. Any Other Business

- 8.1 Roger Saxon raised the Strategic Transport Projects Review update. Trudy Morris noted that she had raised her concerns with Transport Scotland that, despite good engagement at the first round, no second-round workshops had been scheduled in the North Highlands.

- 8.2 There was some general discussion of this and it was noted that this left stakeholders in the North Highlands feeling sidelined in the discussions – it was noted that the current proposals contain little in the way of mention of remote and rural communities.
- 8.3 Roger queried whether the Forum could take forward a revamp of the Transport Vision for Caithness, last updated in 2009. Trudy felt this was a good idea and agreed to discuss this at the next meeting of the Caithness & North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership Delivery Group.
- CTF(2019)M004/A010** – *Trudy Morris to discuss revamp of Transport Vision for Caithness at CNSRP Delivery Group*
- 8.4 Davie Alexander noted his disappointment at the lack of attendees from transport providers and noted that substitutes should be sent where regular attendees are not able to attend.

## 9. Date of Next Meeting

- 9.1 It was noted that this would be on Tuesday 10 March, with a time and venue to be agreed.

## 10. Actions ongoing from previous meetings

- CTF(2018)M003/A006** – *Brian Gordon to feed back to Forum on RET rollout when more information available*
- CTF(2019)M001/A010** – *David Swanson to coordinate with relevant partners on future rail / bus / ferry connectivity*
- CTF(2019)M002/A004** – *Stagecoach and Chamber to discuss electric vehicle pilot*

## 11. Actions arising from this meeting

- CTF(2019)M004/A001** – *Chamber & Dounreay Stakeholder Group to write to DRS & NDA regarding Georgemas freight trial*
- CTF(2019)M004/A002** – *Derek Glasgow to seek answer on issues raised regarding catering on Wick services*
- CTF(2019)M004/A003** – *David Swanson to invite Aaron's of Wick to attend Forum meetings.*
- CTF(2019)M004/A004** – *Forum to write to Transport Scotland regarding NIFS contract and Hamnavoe replacement.*
- CTF(2019)M004/A005** – *Forum to write to Alex Hynes regarding issues on the Far North Line*
- CTF(2019)M004/A006** – *Derek Glasgow to raise issues with pedestrian access to Thurso station*
- CTF(2019)M004/A007** – *Trudy Morris and Roger Saxon to take OHM G-PaTRA proposal to Caithness & North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership*
- CTF(2019)M004/A008** – *Marco Bardelli to provide feedback on overnight roadworks in winter*
- CTF(2019)M004/A009** – *Chamber to take back issues regarding X99 to Stagecoach*

DRAFT

# Appendix A – Letter to ScotRail

Steven Milne  
Catering Operations Manager  
Abellio ScotRail Ltd  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Culzean Building  
36 Renfield Street  
Glasgow  
G2 1LU



**STRONGER  
TOGETHER**

**Date:** 22/11/2019  
**Our ref:** TM/CTF/2019/SM01

Dear Steven,

I am writing to you today in my capacity as Chair of the Caithness Transport Forum to raise our concerns over the arrangements for provision of catering on the Far North Line. It was raised at a meeting earlier this year that there have been issues with catering provision on some journeys, and our understanding from subsequent contact with ScotRail is that this is due to staff being on annual leave and no cover being available for these periods.

We struggle to see how this can be considered an acceptable policy. While we understand that there will be incidences outwith ScotRail's control e.g. absence due to staff sickness, it seems unacceptable to us that planned staff leave is not covered and that services are simply left to run without any form of catering.

This is particularly the case given that failure to provide catering services puts ScotRail in breach of their franchise commitment.

We would note that this is not the first time we have had to raise the issue of failure to provide proper catering on services on the line. I enclose a copy of correspondence with Transport Scotland in early 2018 on this same issue, with reassurances that this would be addressed.

It would be appreciated if you could provide an update at your earliest convenience on how ScotRail intends to address this issue and ensure that catering is provided on services on the Far North Line in line with the franchise commitment.

Yours sincerely,



Trudy Morris  
Chair, Caithness Transport Forum

**Caithness Chamber of Commerce**  
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# Appendix B – Scrabster Harbour



CAITHNESS TRANSPORT FORUM 5<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2019

## SCRABSTER HARBOUR UPDATE

Scrabster harbour is managed by Scrabster Harbour Trust, established in 1841 and governed by its own legislation. The Trust seeks to serve the local community and all surpluses created are reinvested into the port.

### 1. TRAFFIC STATISTICS

The traffic statistics for the first half of financial year 2019-20, the six-months to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019 were as follows:

- Total vessel arrivals 1,164 compared with 1,257 in 2018-19
- Total vessel tonnage 4.905 million tonnes compared with 4.922 million tonnes in 2018-19
- Ferry Passenger numbers were 120,158 up 6.1% on the previous year. The current ferry contract has been extended to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020.
- Fish box landings 125,931, a decrease of 13.7% on last year.



- Oil and gas vessels tonnage up 17.2% on the same period last year.
- Similarly, the weekly Faroese fish cargo volumes are 39% higher.
- Coastal tanker fuel volumes are 2% down.
- A year long programme of timber shipments is planned from Scrabster beginning November. The projected volumes of timber amounts to 100,000 tonnes.
- There was a disappointing finish to the 2019 cruise season with the final two calls being cancelled due to weather. Fourteen vessels are currently booked for the 2020 season.



## **2. DEVELOPMENTS**

The project to redevelop the existing St Ola Pier continues to progress through the procurement process.

The applications for a Marine Construction licence and a Marine Dredging licence were submitted to Marine Scotland in July. The post submission statutory and public consultation period finished on 17<sup>th</sup> November. It is hoped that applications will be determined by Christmas.



## **3. OTHER**

The Trust held its annual general meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2019. The 2018-19 Trust annual report and 2018-19 annual accounts are available on the Trust's website in the downloads section.

The Scottish Government fisheries statistics for 2018 have been published. The statistics show that 19,508 tonnes of demersal species and shellfish, valued at over £41 million, were landed at Scrabster in 2018.

**1<sup>st</sup> December 2019**

# Appendix C – Wick Harbour



[www.wickharbour.co.uk](http://www.wickharbour.co.uk)

November 2019

Dear Stakeholder

Wick Harbour Authority are pleased to bring you a further update on developments here in the port.

## FISHING

Work to install new energy efficient lighting and improve existing lighting within areas used by the commercial fishermen was successfully completed earlier in the year. This has contributed to safer working practices for the fishermen in their landing areas, where previous lighting had been poor. This project was supported through part grant funding from Highland Moray FLAG. Comments received from the fishermen have been very positive and with the dark nights now here it should prove highly beneficial for their ongoing landing activities.

We continue to see regular landings of white fish boats consigning their catches. Shellfishing has been good this past wee while with landings up and very favourable prices seen for catches. It is hoped that the recent collapse in the Chinese shellfish market is just momentary and that the prices will stabilise and recover.

By the time you read this newsletter one of the most successful white fish boats in the country will have retired from service. The Bremner Fishing Company's "Opportune WK171" made her final trip during November 2019. Skipper David Fraser has decided to retire and the boat has been sold on.



David has spent the last 40 years aboard the same vessel with David Mackay, Engineer aboard for over 30 years.

A great sea boat, she was without doubt a formidable catching machine with a dedicated hard-working crew. Launched in Campbeltown in April 1979 as "Boy Andrew WK171" the crew who sailed her home comprised Skipper Norrie Bremner, Andrew Bremner Snr, David Fraser, Will Young, Sandy Barnie, James Bain, Jimmy Watson, George More. Her final crew were Skipper David Fraser, David Mackay, Keith Macadie, Michael Munro, Alistair Jappy and Magnus Cowie.



Photos courtesy of Andrew Bremner.

#### **BEATRICE OFFSHORE WINDFARM**

29 July 2019 saw the Duke of Rothesay opening the Beatrice Building. SSE opened the building up to the public and it was great to see how they use the building to support their operations.

The final turbine was successfully installed out at the Beatrice Offshore Windfarm on 14 May 2019. Onshore construction began in May 2016, with offshore construction commencing April 2017. The first wind turbine and first power was exported in July 2018. Beatrice now fully operational has the capacity to generate enough green energy to power 450,000 homes.





## **CARGO**

The harbour has had a busy spell with numerous deliveries of pipe cargo for Subsea 7 contracts . From November onwards we will also begin to see the Towhead structures coming in for the various pipeline projects currently underway at the Wester Site. We have also been busy with the usual salt and tanker cargoes. Below are some images from earlier in the year of cargo operations. One of the largest cranes in the UK was deployed to undertake the heavy lift of one of the Subsea 7 towheads earlier in the year. It made an impressive sight on the North River Pier.



## **HARBOUR IMPROVEMENTS**

Due to ongoing problems with the North Cardinal Mark which was fitted in the bay, it was decided to discontinue this mark and instead install a Port Lateral Mark in deeper water which should be more reliable. In addition, we have also installed new Port Closed lights which replace the now redundant visual signals located at the old Coastguard Station at the South Head. The new port closed lights consist of 3 vertical high intensity LED lights which are visible in both day and night. Similar lights are due to be installed shortly within the harbour area to ensure that vessel owners berthed are aware of the Port Closed status. New galvanised kerbing continues to be replaced along the quays. Work to replace the marina decking took place late spring. Great progress has been made with this with only one marina section left to finish.



## MARINA

We had another very successful season welcoming a significant number of visitors from near and far with numbers up well on last year. The trend over the past few years shows more yachts are spending more days in the harbour - crew numbers are also up. Great to see this rise in visitors with folk deciding to stay longer and explore all that Caithness and the north has to offer. During 2019 we welcomed visitors from Norway, Germany, France Poland, Netherlands, Switzerland, Belgium, Finland, Sweden, Faroe, Denmark, Ireland, USA/Canada, Spain, Italy, Australia & Russia as well as those from within the UK. We also welcomed the Hebridean Princess twice over the summer with passengers tendered to the marina from the ship. They spent the day exploring the area and visiting the Pulteney Distillery and Wick Heritage Centre. Another summer visitor was the new cadet ship TS Royalist which was on a training exercise around Britain.



An interesting visitor seen back in May was the Williams II - making her inaugural round Britain trip. Almost 200 years ago Antarctica was discovered from a ship built in the small North East town of Blyth, Northumberland. The Williams was built and owned by Captain William Smith who was born and raised in Blyth. On the anniversary of this British achievement in 2019 it is The Williams Expedition aim to build a modern replica of the Williams in Blyth to recreate the original expedition with a local crew.

Also, a special mention and thanks to the volunteers from Wick Flower Baskets committee who planted up and tended the tubs around the harbour and in town. The flowers looked particularly good this year and really helped to brighten up the harbour area as you can see from the photos below.





#### WICK SEAFARERS MEMORIAL GROUP

A warm invitation was extended by the Seafarers Memorial Group to all harbour users and members of the public to take part in a short service of remembrance which took place on Sunday 18 August 2019 marking the anniversary of Black Saturday. This was a memorable day for all and again showed our great sense of community and strong fishing heritage. Seeing the flotilla of boats in the bay, and the short wreath laying service in Wick Bay which was followed by 2 minutes silence was a moving spectacle. The Seafarers Group have forwarded copies of a letter which can be picked up from the Harbour Office for anyone who wishes more information on their fundraising efforts to erect a permanent memorial to those lost at sea.



#### VISIT OF THE MODERATOR OF CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

We were delighted to welcome the Right Rev Colin Sinclair and his wife to the harbour at the end of September. Malcolm Bremner, Harbourmaster gave them a tour around the area and they were very interested to learn about the harbour's rich history, its recent regeneration and its ongoing business.



### HIGH WATER PROTECTION GATE

In order for the harbour to maximise future business opportunities, the Board are pleased to announce that firms have been invited to Tender for works associated with the High Water Protection Gate.

### OTHER NEWS

4 members of staff now work on rotation to provide weekend and out of hours cover. The 24/7 contact number remains as before **01955 602030** for all enquiries and assistance. A new member of staff Kevin Macalpine joined the harbour as a Port Operative back in August. Kevin is a well know face around the harbour and we are delighted to have him on the team.

Yours faithfully

*Malcolm Bremner*

*Ian Cormack*

**HARBOUR MASTER**

**DEPUTE HARBOUR MASTER**



*Thanks to various photo contributors*

**Wick Harbour Authority, Harbour Office, WICK, KW1 5HA**

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## Appendix D – Gills Harbour

### GILLS HARBOUR REPORT FOR CAITHNESS TRANSPORT FORUM 05.12.19.

1) **ALFRED ARRIVES:** Friday November 1st, 2019, will long be remembered as the latest Red Letter Day for Gills Bay, when Scotland's newest and greenest ROPAX ferry mv *Alfred* commenced her thrice-daily crossings of the Pentland Firth to Orkney.

It ties in with 11.09.1905 when, at the Gills Pier opening ceremony, committee chairman Mr James Shearer .... grandfather of recent Gills Harbour Ltd vice-chairman Gordon Shearer ... talked of plans to connect Gills Bay with Orkney, adding that: 'it always being considered by men of experience as the quickest and safest route across the Pentland Firth'.

This century-old vision was carried forward by the late Alfred Banks (1931-2019) ... after whom the British-designed 85 metre catamaran ship is named ... when his son Andrew converted a long-term dream into reality when his family firm Pentland Ferries Ltd re-opened the historic route with the elderly, second-hand ex. Cal Mac ship *Iona*, re-named *Pentalina B* on 01.05 2001.

Andrew Banks OBE marked another key milestone exactly eight years later on 30.04.09 when *Pentalina*, the first purpose-designed ship for the route, commenced her regular service crossings from Gills on what was soon to become Scotland's most successful 'mainland to islands group' year-round seaway.

This time around *Alfred's* arrival was celebrated for a whole month, with all foot-passengers offered crossings for a discounted price of only £10:00 throughout November, 2019.

**This gesture from Pentland Ferries resulted in a record number of November passengers carried, with the extra numbers of travellers giving the ships' and shore crews' practical experience of the expected passenger loads from Easter 2020 onwards.**

**And there's been a 'wuff-wuff welcome' from man's best friend, with a dog-friendly lounge on board, rather than pets having ... as previously ... being carried separately from their owners in locked vehicles on *Pentalina's* car-deck.**

**Mr Banks says that customers seem to be very happy with the improved facilities on board the £14 million vessel, with *Alfred's* officers and crew also reporting satisfaction with the performance of the ship on the 15 n. mile, hour-long route.**

**Power to get security lighting and heating to the vessel when berthed over-night at her home-port of St. Margaret's Hope is supplied from a local aero-generator, whilst Mr Banks drives a British-made e-car from Jaguar Land Rover.**

**2) BERTHING FENDERS:** The 85 metre new vessel with broadly the same carrying capacity as *Hamnavoe*, on the subsidised competing route, has a higher freeboard than her 70-metre *Pentalina* predecessor.

**The meant that alterations to berthing 'fenders' had to be conducted at Gills, while some relatively minor modifications also were done to its main hydraulic 'link-span ... the bridge between the berthed ship and the shore.**

**Those works were undertaken by members of Pentland Ferries' Gills-based direct labour squad. Three or four men have been continuously employed ... mainly at Gills ... by Pentland Ferries since 1999 on such construction-related tasks.**

**3) GILLS-BASED STAFF TASKS;** Earlier in 2019, their efforts were concentrated on fabricating large 10-tonne mass-concrete

structures on site and emplacing those blocks to the Westward of the longest component of the recycled 250 metre ferry pier to provide it with extra bad-weather protection. The prevailing gales and swells emanate from the open North Atlantic Ocean, only 10 miles West of Gills.

**4) INNER BASIN CONTRACT COMMENCES;** A start is being made on a 'small-works' contract that community-owned Gills Harbour Ltd (GHL) has awarded to Canisbay Parish's Vauldale Engineering.

These coated steelworks involve improving the access to/from small boats in the harbour on to the original 450' (150 m) long 1905-built Gills Pier.

Also involved in the current project is upgrading and extending the electricity supply to the harbour area.

Electrical engineers from the local electricity distribution 'arm' of Scottish Hydro (SSE) have been on site doing necessary inspections prior to works commencing, anticipated within the next week or two.

The volunteer GHL directors of are very grateful to the Moray & Highland FLAG group for their financial contribution towards the project that will add to safety and convenience for small-boat users of Gills Harbour's Inner Basin.

**5) TIDAL STREAM ELECTRICITY.** This sector of 'marine renewables' remains one of three components of Gills Harbour Ltd's policy for the upgrading of its Inner Basin to meet modern needs and standards and be compliant with those for the foreseeable future.

Work is scheduled to start soon on Phase 1B of the MeyGen 'demonstration' site development whereby two new Atlantis 2000 turbines ... linked to the Ness of Quoy's shore base, by a single power-line from a new-style sub-sea hub are due to be installed and commissioned over the coming year.

**This nascent sector may have been overshadowed in recent months by the very rapid roll-out of offshore wind power-stations, such as the Beatrice development off SE Caithness, but it remains important in the context of achieving the UK's climate-change goals.**

**During October, a national tidal stream electricity study titled 'Energy Innovation Needs Assessment' that had been commissioned by the UK's Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, was published for the first time.**

**A strength of the sector lies its relatively high UK-origin content in its systems, not least due to the R & D activities of SIMEC Atlantis Energy.**

**GHL is a member of the Marine Energy Council and could possibly be in a position to have some influence on future policy matters.**

## **6) ENDORSEMENT BY SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT.**

**Just over one year (09.18) has passed since the Scottish Government endorsed Gills Harbour as being the hub of its new Gills Bay Economic Development Zone, the only one identified in NE Caithness.**

**This status was developed out of representations involving the Highland Council's now-adopted CaSPlan which runs to the middle of the 2030s and suggests responsibilities on other public bodies operating locally.**

**GHL remains confident that detailed design works on its tri-purpose Inner Basin involving contractors to the NDA and DSRL will be able to get under way in the early 2020 New Year. Its directors are conscious that some local residents had anticipated more activity by now on the ground. but GHL's directors remains confident that progress will become apparent early in 2020.**

# Appendix E – Pentland Ferries

## Pentland Ferries Update

### MV ALFRED

After a long build process the Alfred departed Vietnam on 29<sup>th</sup> August and arrived in Orkney on 9<sup>th</sup> October with her 9 Scottish crew - 6 of which were Orcadian, 1 from Durness, 1 from Alness and 1 from Newtonmore. The journey home went better than we could have hoped for with planned stops for fuel and stores in Galle, Suez and Algeciras.

The ship entered into operation on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November and has exceeded our expectations with customers thoroughly singing her praises. The ship can carry 430 passengers, 12 articulated lorries with 54 cars or a full deck of 98 cars. Bookings are now open for 2020 and we have frozen fares for the upcoming year which will remain at £16 per adult and £38 per car.

We have recently been awarded a green tourism badge and are working hard to push our environmentally friendly credentials.

Local Professor, Alf Baird, has completed an emissions comparison for the Alfred and the results are clear.

‘The recent CO<sub>2</sub> analysis suggests Pentland Ferries technological innovation and investment in MV Alfred already today exceeds the IMO 40% saving by 2030 ambition when compared with similar capacity CalMac/NorthLink ferries operating in Scotland.’

<b>Fuel Consumption per hour (lph)</b>
Alfred – 700 lph
Clansman – 1311 lph
Finlaggen – 1349 lph
Hamnavoe – 1772 lph
Hjatland – 3625 lph

<b>Co<sub>2</sub> per car space (kg)</b>
Alfred – 19kg
Clansman – 35kg
Finlaggen – 42kg
Hamnavoe – 75kg
Hjatland (Aberdeen-Kirkwall) – 426kg

<b>Power per car (kW)</b>
Alfred – 31kW
Clansman – 80kW

Finlaggen – 94kw
Hamnavoe – 91kW
Hjatland – 173kW

DRAFT

# Appendix F – Transport Scotland Ferries

## TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

### **Caithness Transport Forum – 5 December 2019**

#### **Transport Scotland Ferries Unit - Update**

##### **RET on Northern Isles Ferry Service**

- ☐ The Scottish Government is engaging positively with the European Commission following a complaint made by Pentland Ferries about our proposals introduce RET on Northern Isles ferry services.
- ☐ We need to wait until we have a clear and agreed way forward before making any reductions to fares on Pentland Firth routes, however we are engaging positively with the European Commission in this regard.
- ☐ Ministers remain committed to pursuing all avenues to deliver RET for the Northern Isles.
- ☐ As an interim measure, passenger and car fares on routes to Shetland were reduced by 20% in June 2018.
- ☐ On 20 September 2019 the Minister also announced that cabin fares on Aberdeen-Kirkwall-Lerwick routes will be reduced by 20% for islanders as well as a three-year islander fares freeze for passengers, non-commercial vehicles and cabins on those routes, coming into effect on 1 January 2020.
- ☐ These build on the 30% discount for passenger and vehicle fares already enjoyed by islanders.
- ☐ These are benefits the Scottish Government has introduced separate to those set out in the bid from Serco and are not affected by the contract extension.

##### **Northern Isles Ferry Service Tender**

- ☐ Serco was chosen as the preferred bidder following a fair, open and transparent tendering exercise.
- ☐ The tender was structured to attract the Most Economically Advantageous operator. Given the essential lifeline nature of these services, the contract bids were assessed on the basis of an assessment ratio of 65% price and 35% quality.
- ☐ A commitment to the Scottish Government's fair work policy was a condition of the tender and formed part of the evaluation process. The contract will deliver pension protections, a no-compulsory redundancy guarantee and closer working relationships with the unions.
- ☐ Until the contract is awarded, we are constrained in respect of what we can say regarding details of either bidders' submission.
- ☐ Once the new contract is awarded, Transport Scotland will publish a non-sensitive version of the contract on its website.

##### **Northern Isles Ferry Service Tender – Legal Proceedings**

- ☐ We have been formally notified that CalMac Ferries Limited have raised legal proceedings to set aside the decision to appoint Serco Limited as the preferred bidder to provide the Northern Isles Ferry Services.
- ☐ Given the ongoing legal proceedings, Scottish Ministers are limited in what we can say at this stage, so as not to prejudice the outcome of those proceedings.
- ☐ However, Scottish Ministers remain fully committed to the provision of safe, effective and reliable ferry services to the Northern Isles.
- ☐ On behalf of Ministers, Transport Scotland are liaising with the current operator, Serco Limited, to make arrangements for the extension of the current contract to maintain continuity of service and to ensure full connectivity to and from the Northern Isles.
- ☐ This will mean that the local communities, passengers and businesses who rely on the services, and the staff who work on them, will not be affected by the legal proceedings and services will be run as normal throughout this period.
- ☐ The legal proceedings will not affect our recent commitment to fare reductions on the Shetland routes for islanders, including a 20% discount on cabin fares and a three year fares freeze from January 2020 on the Northern Isles ferry services that builds on the existing 30% discount for passenger and vehicle fares already enjoyed by islanders.
- ☐ We will take any necessary steps to ensure the continuity of the Northern Isles Ferry Service beyond 31 January 2020.
- ☐ Scottish Ministers will also deliver fare reductions for islanders, including a 20% reduction on cabins and a three year fares freeze from January 2020 on the Northern Isles ferry services.



- These build on the 30% discount for passenger and vehicle fares already enjoyed by islanders.

### **MV Hamnavoe Dry Dock 2020**

- The MV Hamnavoe is scheduled to complete her essential dry dock for a period of around 14 days in January 2020.
- The vessel must complete her mandatory dry dock to ensure her continued operation for the remaining 50 weeks of the year.
- We have asked Serco NorthLink Ferries (SNF) to minimise the impact of the MV Hamnavoe's maintenance programme on passengers.
- SNF continue to search the market for a suitable replacement vessel. This will continue to ensure all potential options are investigated.
- In previous years a freight vessel has been utilised to provide cover. While not ideal, we have to work within the limits imposed by vessel availability given the specific nature of the ports and crossing served.
- Transport Scotland officials have already explored the potential of a vessel from the Clyde and Hebrides Ferry Service (CHFS) fleet being reassigned to provide cover in January 2020.
- Due to CalMac's own intensive dry dock schedule and redeployment plans to cover their own fleet relief, no viable vessel from the CHFS fleet is currently available.
- We understand the frustration felt by the communities affected. However if no suitable passenger vessel can be sourced then we may again redeploy a freight vessel to serve the route to ensure the lifeline connection is maintained.
- If this is the case then SNF will again ensure there are increased calls to Kirkwall by both the MV Hjaltland and MV Hrossey to ensure minimal impact on travellers, along with transfers for those wishing to cross the Pentland Firth via Pentland Ferries.

### **Freight Fares Review**

- Following a commitment in the Ferries Plan 2013-2022, Transport Scotland, under guidance of a Working Group of key stakeholders, is currently conducting a comprehensive review of ferry freight fares.
- The existing ferry freight fares structure is extremely complex, with differences in, for example, rates per mile, categories of freight, rules of carriage and discounts, across the various ferry networks.
- Much work has been done to assess the existing freight fares structure, generate options for a future structure, and assess the impacts of any potential changes.
- The Working Group agreed on a preferred freight fares structure, which is on a cost neutral basis, at a meeting in March 2017. Since then, officials have been conducting further analysis to assess the impact of any potential changes on individual fares, hauliers and sectors, with regular discussions with Ministers.
- Further details will be made available once conclusions have been reached and decisions made.
- Fares policy, including freight and non-freight, will be reviewed as part of the work on the next Ferries Plan, so there is the opportunity to consider a holistic solution to bring the Freight Fares Review to a conclusion.

**END**

# Appendix G – HITRANS

## OHM GPaTRA– Wick Thurso Feasibility

- ▶ 2035 Rail Decarbonisation
- ▶ Need for Scottish Trial
- ▶ Vivarail Class 230 spec ideal for Wick–Thurso:
  - 60-mile range
  - 10-minute static recharge
  - Modular construction, minimal maintenance



## Case for battery train implementation

- ▶ National trial site for autonomous zero carbon transportation mode, based on availability of renewable energy- rail decarb 2035 target
- ▶ 30% lower operating costs than diesel equivalent
- ▶ Carbon-positive with 13 car journeys per day modal shift
- ▶ Benefits to local economy from connectivity and maintenance activity
- ▶ Technology available and appropriate
- ▶ but; significant grant funding required for provision of train and infrastructure
- ▶ Provides springboard for comprehensive decarbonisation of rail transport in Highland region

- ▶ Captive battery train will provide additional local services during trial
- ▶ Maintained at Wick – new facilities created
- ▶ Charged at buffer-ends – 3<sup>rd</sup>-rail only energised when train present
- ▶ Extension of permissive working required to interwork with existing service
- ▶ Four new daytime trips, up to three evenings and two connecting shuttles

Wick - Inverness	Wick	Dep	06:18	07:30	08:02	09:23	10:32	12:34	13:56	15:15	16:00	17:39	18:45	19:44	20:53
	Georgemas in	Arr	06:35	07:45	08:19	09:38	10:47	12:51	13:31	15:05	16:17	17:34	18:50	19:59	21:08
	Georgemas in	Dep	06:36	07:46	08:20	09:39		12:52	13:32	15:11	16:18		18:51	20:00	21:09
	Thurso	Arr	06:46	07:55	08:30	09:48		13:02	13:41	15:40	16:38		19:00	20:09	21:18
	Thurso	Dep	06:50		08:34			13:06			16:32				
	Georgemas in	Arr	07:00		08:44			13:16			16:42				
	Georgemas in	Dep	07:03		08:47			13:19			16:45				
Inverness - Wick	Georgemas in	Arr				10:45		14:10			17:36				22:06
	Georgemas in	Dep				10:49		14:14			17:40				22:10
	Thurso	Arr				10:58		14:24			17:50				22:20
	Thurso	Dep	08:44	09:53		11:02	13:46	14:27	16:45		17:53	19:05	20:14	21:23	22:33
	Georgemas in	Arr	08:52	10:01		11:12	13:54	14:37	16:53		18:03	19:13	20:22	21:31	22:33
	Georgemas in	Dep	08:53	10:02	10:50	11:14	13:55	14:39	16:54	17:42	18:05	19:14	20:23	21:32	22:35
	Wick	Arr	09:08	10:17	11:05	11:31	14:10	14:56	17:09	17:57	18:22	19:29	20:38	21:47	22:52

  

KEY
Existing service
Battery Train Low scenario
Battery Train High scenario



# Appendix H – Transport Scotland Roads

I have no actions or matters arising to report back on from the minutes.

Looking forward I can report that all BEAR Scotland's works programme for the year is complete except for ongoing footway improvements in Thurso and following that similar footway work on the A9 in Wick. These works are primarily aimed at improving access at junctions and road crossings in accordance with the aims of the Equalities Act.

Also outstanding are some white lining works in the Latheron and Latheronwheel areas to complete the resurfacing schemes recently carried out. This work is highly weather dependent.

Further traffic monitoring work is being planned at these locations as part of the continuing investigation into traffic flows, speeds and safety.

We are currently looking at the draft programme for next year starting in April 2020 which will be finalised as usual following our post winter route tours with BEAR.

Please pass on my best wishes for the festive season to all.

Kind regards

Marco

**Marco Bardelli**

Area Manager

Network Maintenance (North)

# Appendix I – Stagecoach

## Caithness Area Update

### Management Changes

In October, the Stagecoach North Scotland operation was split into two separate businesses each with you own senior Management team. The Highland operation, with depots in Inverness, Aviemore, Tain, Skye, Caithness and Orkney will be lead by David Beaton, taking on the role as Managing Director, also joining in the senior team, Andy Peebles, Chief Engineer, Jamie Reid, Traffic Manager and William Mainus, Commercial Manager.

The local Management structure will be unchanged, with Ali Jack, continuing his role as Caithness Depot Engineer and John Gunn in his role as Caithness Operations Manager.

The new structure will allow a senior team to be based within the Highlands and concentrate fully on the Highland operation.

### Service Revisions

A number of service revisions took place in August after the Summer School holidays, the majority of these were minor and done to improve reliability and following feedback from Customers.

These changes included:

**Service X98:** Revised Monday to Friday timetable to improve service punctuality and to balance available journeys with service X99. The 0850 from Inverness and the 1000 from Thurso will no longer serve Kildary, Milton, Barbraville or Saltburn.

**Service 73:** Minor timetable changes.

**Service 74/274:** Minor timetable changes.

**Service 76:** Revised timetable to improve service punctuality.

**Service 77:** Revised timetable and route following customer feedback. Services now operate twice per day directly to Gills Bay to connect with sailings to/from St Margarets Hope.

**Service 78A/C:** Revised route and timetable to improve service punctuality. Following customer feedback, Mount Pleasant will be reintroduced to this service.

**Service 80:** Revised timetable to improve service punctuality.

**Service 81:** Revised timetable to improve service punctuality. School buses between Wick and Berriedale will be incorporated into this service.

**Service 82:** Revised timetable to improve service punctuality

**Service X98/X99:** Following customer and stakeholder feedback, minor time changes will be made to the timetable to improve service punctuality. Additionally, following customer requests, a comfort break will be introduced at Dornoch.

The X98 on Saturday at 1045 will start from Scrabster ferry terminal.

At present we have no immediate plans to make any further changes with the exception of Service X98 that may have some very minor changes on the back of some timetable changes in February 2020 in Ross-shire, but will continue to review any local requests within the Caithness area.

On Service X99 in addition to being able to purchase tickets through the Scottish Citylink website, you are now also able to book seats using the Megabus website.

### Gills Bay fares and ticket sales Citylink website

We have asked Citylink to reintroduce fares to and from Gills Bay for Inverness, the meantime, tickets can be book from Thurso to Inverness as all fares between Wick and Thurso to and from Inverness are the same price.