

# Cumrae Ferry Committee

Chairman's Progress Update Report March 2024 : Angus Campbell

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## Headlines

1. Refusal by Calmac to honour winter timetable tickets
  - a. Calmac will not honour winter timetable tickets (or offer refunds) from Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March so people will have to buy new tickets.
  - b. The Cumrae Ferry Committee have been pushing for months on an effective communications and transition plan, however Calmac have just re-entrenched their position (Wed 27<sup>th</sup> March) not to allow a grace period or any refunds for any unused tickets.
  - c. We think that their communications have been woeful, and we are encouraging people to complain if they believe they have been misled and are now being charged again.
2. Easter Ferry Capacity
  - a. We asked for additional capacity over Easter, and suggested several options, however and although they are running the Loch Riddon alongside the single ended Loch Shira they did not accept our other recommendations.
3. Loch Shira Ramp Repairs
  - a. We have no information yet from Calmac on the plan to properly repair the Loch Shira ramps.
  - b. We now understand (28<sup>th</sup> March) that the max gross weight of lorries on the Loch Shira will be reduced from 44 to 28 tonnes. Calmac plan to discuss with the Flood Prevention project the impact of this and for them to consider alternatives.
4. New Contract Consultation
  - a. The Ferry Committee responded to the Transport Scotland consultation on the expected direct award to Calmac for the ferry service from October. There were 19 questions in the consultation.
  - b. This contract is planned to provide a more community focussed "service contract"
5. Islands Connectivity Plan
  - a. Transport Scotland are also taking input to feed into the Strategic "Island Connectivity Plan" and we have identified a number of improved key outcomes which we intend to feed into the consultation (see next page). This consultation is open for the public to feed into until 3<sup>rd</sup> May  
<https://www.transport.gov.scot/public-transport/ferries/islands-connectivity-plan/>
6. Following a set of surveys to gauge opinion the Ferry Committee requested minor changes to next winter (2024-25 winter timetable). This comprises an earlier ferry to connect with the first Glasgow train offset by a gap in the early evening
  - a. We are awaiting feedback from Transport Scotland and Calmac on this request.

7. We are making minimal progress with Calmac and Transport Minister regarding the ticketing issues that Calmac have yet to resolve. These include five main issues
    - a. Restoration of discounted season tickets, multi journey tickets for SPT ticket holders, the ability to buy various ticket types on the island, multi journey tickets for teenagers, making ticket validity a rolling 6 month validity rather than fixed dates.
  8. Calmac remain unable (since April 2023) to produce public figures on ferry usage for this route (and all other routes) from their new E Ticketing system.
  9. As part of the Ferries Community Board I have attended several meetings with Transport Scotland and Calmac on the new contract (from Oct 2024).
    - a. The position of the Ferries Community board has been that the communities do not support a direct award to Calmac.
    - b. However, recognising the direction of travel of the Scottish Government we have been working to feed in community expectations that communities would need to see significant change in the structure, organisation and culture of the management and operation of the ferry services. We would want to see a radical overhaul of the contract itself with revised measures of success and far greater accountabilities to the communities served by the ferry services in Scotland
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#### Additional Information

1. Strategic Review of the Cumbrae Ferry Service : Island Connectivity Plan

The Ferry Committee will be asking Transport Scotland to consider a number of strategic outcomes that we consider as positive for the community

- i. Less Ferry Disruption on Windy (but not extreme stormy) days
- ii. Improve the Resilience of Cumbrae to a single point of failure in the transport network (second crossing route)
- iii. Reverse Depopulation trends
- iv. Reduce the Carbon Footprint of Cumbrae
- v. Encourage more visitors to Cumbrae, but with less cars
- vi. Improve the visitor experience to encourage and grow Active Travel,
- vii. Ensure Islanders can get access to the ferry as required
- viii. Ensure that ferry travel pricing for islanders to travel isn't increased

We are awaiting plans about the consultants engaged by Transport Scotland who will be looking at this work (and other routes across the network). They were supposed to be looking at this over the summer of 2023.