

**Islay Community Council Meeting
Draft Minutes
Service Point, Bowmore – 16th January 2025 at 18:30**

Item Number		Action
1	<p>Present & Apologies</p> <p>Present: Islay McEachern (IME), Convenor Jim Porteous (JP), Secretary Colin Fraser (CF), Joint Treasurer Sandy Taylor (ST) Chris Abell (CA) – Scott Currie (SC) Frazer Campbell (FWC) - Video link Councillor Anne Horn – Video Link Councillor Dougie McFadzean (DMF) – Video Link Tom Skinner - Carbon Neutral Islands (TS) Lucy Schwind (LS) Minute Taker</p> <p>Apologies: Councillor Alastair Redman Garry MacLean (GML), Vice Convenor Billy Sinclair (BS), Joint Treasurer Jim MacCalman (JMC) Police Scotland</p>	
2	<p>Declarations of Interest None</p>	
3	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting – 20th November 2024</p> <p>The minutes were proposed as a true record of the meeting by JP and seconded by SC.</p>	
4	<p>Matters Arising/Action Points</p> <p>Laphroaig expansion plans – ICAP Phase 1 report. Update November 2024: format has now been agreed and can now be circulated. GML to provide copy to Beam Suntory and JP. <i>Update January: Now been actioned and JP & IME have scheduled a meeting with Christy McFarlane in a couple of weeks.</i></p> <p>Waste bin at Uiskentuie – the issue is still not resolved and now needs to be escalated within A&B Council. AR will see if can assist to resolve. IME will approach the estate owners to clarify their position. IME has a meeting scheduled with Islay Estates next week. IME will schedule a further meeting with Islay Estates Action carried forward to next meeting. <i>Update January: Awaiting a response from Islay Estates. Carried forward.</i></p> <p>CA has written to Stuart Watson on 26th June 2024, requesting the co-operation of the roads department and expressing frustrations at the lack of response and action. A response was received on 26th July 2024 confirming that A&B Council was supportive of the proposal and would respond as soon as they were able. CA to contact Julian Green</p>	IME

<p><i>Update January: JG has been in touch with CA, offered apologies that unable to attend next ICC meeting but is proposing to attend the next meeting. JG advised there have been changes in personnel in the roads department which he believes will impact/improve communications.</i></p> <p>Machair Wind Project: DMF questioned skills training, both for the initial installation and the ongoing care and maintenance of the turbines once erected. DMF advised he has had a conversation with a local education establishment, UHI, regarding the creation of suitable training courses for local people. UHI tutors should have been in touch with DB who advised that she has not heard from him. DMF will chase this up with UHI. <i>Update January: DMF has spoken to Programme Lead at UHI regarding developing a skills training programme for local people for this project. UHI will now develop courses to support this.</i></p> <p>Treasurer's Report: CF requested ICC should review moving bank account to RBS. <i>Update January: CF requires another ICC member to assist in organising the move to RBS. Action carried forward.</i></p> <p>ICC Ferry Committee: Meeting 25/11/2025 with CalMac's Transport Planning Department. GML will see if this will be possible to set up a video link for those that cannot attend in person. <i>Update January: Completed</i></p> <p>Rate increase of 10% on ferry services. If ICC want to write a letter AR will support this/sign it. AH would be happy to support a letter DMF happy to support any letters regarding the fare increase and would like to see the calculations behind the 10% increase. <i>Update January: Letter expressing concerns has been issued and a response received, which did not provide a satisfactory justification.</i></p> <p>Would be helpful if Jura would also support this. DMF will email Jura Community Council. <i>Update January: Action completed.</i></p> <p>FC will re-share on Facebook the post regarding timetable changes and requesting community feedback. <i>Update January: Action Completed</i></p> <p>Planning Reports: Consultation is now live which is requesting people's experiences of the planning department. FC will post on Facebook page. <i>Update January: Action completed</i></p> <p>Roads: Julian Green did offer to attend an ICC meeting if invited. Agreed that CA will invite to next ICC meeting. <i>Update January: See previous action, completed.</i></p> <p>GML correspondence with Julian Green regarding overgrown vegetation on the road between Ardbeg and Ardtalla where foliage has blocked the roadway, causing damage to vehicles. Some work has been done to remedy this but there are still some obstacles in place which have not been addressed. No response from the council. AR will see if he can assist <i>Update January: This has been actioned.</i></p>	<p>CF</p>
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	<p>FC – had someone approach him as an ICC member regarding the road condition by the monument and pier, he will take a look at this and take photos for potential submission. <i>Update January: FC took photos, there is a concern as there is a septic tank in the area and there are concerns with lorries stopping/parking in this area. CMALs responsibility goes up to the crossing area. To be raised at meeting with JG.</i></p> <p>CNI: Virtual meeting on Thursday, 21st November, which SC is attending on behalf of ICC with the CNI steering group. Scott will send an update to the ICC. <i>Update January: CNI will be updating in the meeting.</i></p> <p>AOCB: GML received a complaint regarding disability/accessibility surveys undertaken by the council for adaptations to homes due to illness or injury. A household needed to make adjustments to their bathroom due to severe illness but did not get any assistance from the council and this ultimately resulted in the requirement to pay for their own adjustments. GML to email DMF or ask the individual concerned to email him directly. AH also happy to assist in taking this forward. <i>Update January: DMF did get the details, reached out to the family a few times with no response. There is currently a freeze on local council adaptations budget which is adding further complications.</i></p>	
5	<p>Police Report</p> <p>Apologies were received from the police, who were called out and unable to attend.</p> <p>JP had requested that Sgt Shaw, who sends out the data/reports, break it down into the amount of crimes/type of crime and where they took place/different wards, as per the old style of report that was issued.</p> <p>Sgt Shaw informed JP that the local police who had been planning to attend the meeting, should be able to provide this information. (C/F to next meeting)</p> <p>Sgt Shaw had recently asked ICC to comment on a housing issue whereby the police who work on the island are now being charged for housing which is impacting on the ability to recruit individuals to fill vacancies. ICC have provided strong support for the Police force on this issue, highlighting the detrimental effect it has on policing for Islay.</p>	
6	<p>Machair Wind Project Update</p> <p>TS informed ICC that he has been in talks with SSEN who are submitting an application to Ofgem concerning an expansion to the grid. If this is successful it will potentially double the cable capacity to Islay (but not until 2028). TS has heard that some of the new distilleries will be operating on diesel until 2028/29 due to the lack of capacity in the grid. If this proposed expansion takes place, it should provide additional capacity sufficient to service the current new housing developments and the new distilleries.</p>	
7	<p>Councillor A Horn Activities since the last meeting include:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potholes and footpaths are constant issue raised by residents • Support two families who needed information and advice regarding pensions • Housing enquiries on Islay/Jura – applications to Home Argyl • Disability Adaptations which will hopefully be resolved soon • Employment dispute liaison 	
8	<p>Councillor D McFadzean</p> <p>Activities since the last meeting include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council budget and processes are being implemented as Argyll & Bute Council have now received their financial settlement from the Scottish government • The budget for 2025 will be decided by end of February • Health & Social Care Partnership budget process reviews – savings will be needed across the board in 2025. A significant impact on this budget has been the change in national insurance contributions. • There have been a lot of local planning requests, and the planning system appears to be slowing down again. DMF has been trying to help speed things up with planning department. • Dealing with housing issues regarding conditions such as heating and people struggling with costs • Roads – Shore Street in particular, quality of work in Bowmore • Parked cars causing traffic issues • Coastal erosion on Islay and Jura – which is affecting infrastructure. Mapping hotspots for coastal erosion. Flooding at Frederick Crescent. • Interviewing for the head of primary care, which should be completed by end of the week. This will affect Islay. • Complaints about Loganair and their inflexibility in taking patients on board with certain medical conditions. In some instances, they have insisted that the passenger book 2 seats, which means they can't then take a companion with them, as won't be funded for 3 seats. This has been evident for passengers with leg injuries or mobility issues. • The 12-week minimum visitor levy consultation started today and is now live for people to have their say. Would encourage all to participate <p>CA asked the question regarding how this new visitor levy would support basic services for the island? DMF informed the group that any monies received from the levy would be used to the support the facilities/infrastructure used by visitors such as public toilets, roads, footpaths, street lighting etc... The consultation is to help model how the money would be spent.</p> <p>JP noted that the increase in ferry costs, combined with a new tourist tax and the additional NI contributions paid by employers, will lead to increased costs for islanders and visitors. The ferry fares increase, cumulatively more than 19.5% in just over a year, will have a significant impact on people as well as the costs of getting essential goods and materials to the island.</p> <p>Questions were raised regarding the coastal erosion situation, reference a meeting regarding coastal change application funding. A query was raised as to how the priority locations were identified. ICC have previously expressed concerns in writing, particularly regarding</p>	

	<p>flooding in Port Askaig and erosion at Uiskentuie areas. A further question was raised regarding the removal of hard core from Islay beaches and the impact of this on erosion. Argyll & Bute Council did not respond. If DMF has the opportunity, could he raise these questions please. The last survey on Islay was said to have been completed in 2015.</p>	
9	<p>Councillor A Redman</p> <p>AR was unable to attend the meeting and sent apologies. Full report in Appendix A</p>	
10	<p>Treasurer's Report</p> <p>CF, balance as of 10/12/2024 £4515.11</p> <p>Still waiting for £700 from the council, need to sign off last year's account for this to be issued. Accounts are ready for auditing and have been passed to IME.</p>	
11	<p>ICC Ferry Committee</p> <p>See Appendix B for the report.</p> <p>JP summarised the main points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The booking system is continuing to cause problems and ICCFC are pushing for improvements. There is still differentiation between Port Askaig and Port Ellen. ICCFC have a further round table meeting with Jenni Minto scheduled for 27/1/25 at which this will be raised again. 2) Summer timetable: when the two new ferries are in operation ICCFC have been given two timetable options for their maintenance schedule. Both will impact the timetable differently, significantly affecting commercial and non-commercial vehicles. 3) New vessels: The first vessel is not now due until the end of March. Work at Port Ellen to enable suitable access for new vessels is awaiting consents and tendering. Once this is complete, work is not likely to start until Autumn 2025. Neither of the two new vessels can use PE until the work is completed. ICCFC have proposed to keep MV Finlaggan operating via PE (in conjunction with Isle of Islay via Port Askaig) until Port Ellen becomes unusable when work starts. CalMac have agreed in principle. It is not yet certain whether funding will be approved for works at PE. 4) MV Finlaggan is due to go to dry dock on 22nd April for 3 weeks. The new ship is not expected to be trialled and in service by this time. CalMac says there is no replacement ship available, despite 2 ships being needed. They have timetabled MV Isle of Arran on single vessel service for the duration. This vessel has much lower vehicle capacity than Finlaggan alone and ICCFC have notified CalMac that it does not come close to what is required. An urgent request has been made for either a replacement ship of similar capacity to Finlaggan to work with Isle of Arran, or to defer Finlaggan's dry dock for a further month, by which time Isle of Islay is likely to be available. The Caledonian Isles is also expected to be back on duty by then. <p>TS questioned why maintenance has to take place during the ferries running time, could this not take place overnight? CalMac have said</p>	

	<p>no, as in the morning the engines are cold, and this is therefore the most suitable time. Additionally, they don't have sufficient crew or accommodation to work night shifts.</p> <p>CalMac have published a new summer timetable which has incorporated reduced sailings to allow for maintenance, although this has not yet been agreed by ICCFC.</p>	
12	<p>Islay Community Action Plan (ICAP)</p> <p>CA/ST after the phase one report had been published ICAP wrote to the officers of our representatives to make them aware that it was available. An email was received from Jenni Minto's office requesting to meet with the community council on 10/2/2025 at 3pm at the Gaelic Centre. Both considered it positive that the action plan has resulted in interest at this level.</p> <p>CA and ST will be able to attend and requested other members of ICC to attend if they can.</p> <p>JP expressed disappointment with lack of attendance at recent ICAP meeting. IME can circulate an email and see if we can agree date and time to accommodate more members.</p> <p>CA has spoken to Lynn Mitchell new Head Mistress of the high school and ICAP now have two dates to visit and speak to the students and staff about the action plan. This will be on 27 and 29th January in the afternoon. During each afternoon, they will speak to 3 groups of students. If any ICC members would also like to attend, please let CA know.</p> <p>ICAP applied for the supporting communities fund grant and have now reached the end of this grant period, although not all funds have been spent. CA will complete a project monitoring form and feels there is a good case to have an extension on this funding. Particularly with community meetings taking place, CA will put a supporting case together including plans and expenditure forecast.</p> <p>ICAP report is available on the website. CA proposed that some physical copies of the report are created which can use in group workshops and the consultation process.</p> <p>During the Monday meeting, there was a constructive discussion regarding the feedback forms which will be used to record all feedback and suggestions from the schools. If anyone has any comment on the forms, please let CA/ST know.</p> <p>CA to write article for Ilead, which will include a link to the online report.</p> <p>Date of next ICAP meeting 10th February, 6:30, Service Point</p>	<p>IME</p> <p>CA</p>
13	<p>Planning Reports</p> <p>SC very little received in the last 6 weeks. A few individual houses.</p> <p>JP waiting to see if Elixir have submitted their planning request for the employee housing.</p>	

	<p>FC – there was a mention in the Campbeltown Courier of planning permission being declined for a for a caravan park in Port Ellen as it was against the character of the area.</p>	
14	<p>Roads</p> <p>TS raised a concern regarding the disabled parking spaces in Bowmore by the Co-Op. Previously there was clear signage and road markings as well as a camera (it was established that this was the property of the Co-op and not used for monitoring use of the parking spaces). Currently these spaces used frequently by cars who do not display a disabled badge, thus reducing the availability for disabled drivers. Enforcement of these parking spaces is not the responsibility of the police. DMF advised that it is the role of an Environmental Enforcement Warden to enforce parking offences and issue tickets. There will be someone in the position soon.</p> <p>CA to contact Argyll & Bute council regarding this.</p> <p>CF raised the question as to whether A&B Council still conduct route inspections of all the roads on Islay as this appears to have stopped. Will it be recommenced? Also questioned the current work being undertaken by utility companies and the re-instatement works. What are the criteria for when these fail/who is responsible for any rectification works.</p>	CA
15	<p>CNI (Carbon Neutral Islands) Project</p> <p>TS informed ICC that the solar array project is complete and has already started providing power to the grid. The project should be in a position to sign over to community benefit fund in the next month or so.</p> <p>CNI finally have the grant letters through and approved 'in principle' for the projects this year – forestry at Cornabus, solar panels, heating upgrades for local community buildings. Awaiting final sign off. Hopefully this will enable CNI to engage contractors by the end of February and have work started before the end of the financial year.</p> <p>CNI are now looking at new capital projects for 2026.</p>	
16	<p>Bowmore Hall Update</p> <p>DMF feels there is a lack of focus in solving this and no further work has taken place on the hall.</p> <p>IME advised that ICC have received conflicting information regarding the project and further information is required. For example, the full extent of work that has already taken place, the costs and what stage is the restoration now at. He reminded the meeting that CC members and a councillor had met with IDI representatives on several occasions.</p> <p>CF expressed serious concerns about the quality of the work, safety aspects, the use of the very sizeable funding that had already been provided, the time being taken and the question of accountability.</p> <p>JP suggested that a request for a public meeting should come from local councillors/community elected representatives. This meeting should aim to establish exactly what work has been done to date,</p>	

	<p>including costs and what remains to be done, with timetables and costings.</p> <p>DMF would support a public meeting and is happy to write, requesting that IDI arrange a public meeting. DMF and AH will also request that the local building control manager, Tony Casci, complete a formal examination of the hall and provide an independent risk report.</p>	<p>JP DMF AH</p>
17	<p>Correspondence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart meters – correspondence received from Mull Community Council and was referred to Islay Energy Trust, who said they may carry out a survey to help with this • A83 public exhibitions 15-21 January, on the mainland • Argyll & Bute Health Social Care Partnership draft island strategy report circulated 1st December for comments • Cross party group on islands 11th December – predominantly to do with housing – does anyone want to represent the community council on this group • National speed management regulations – Transport Scotland are looking at reducing road speeds in certain areas. There is a plan to host an event, but no date has been agreed • A member of public contacted ICC regarding the amount of grit the council has available for gritting the roads. An assurance was obtained from the council that there is sufficient. • A member of the public requested that the ICC minutes, which previously mentioned the area where they were based as a correspondent but didn't include their name, should not in future include the area. This was agreed. 	
18	<p>AOCB</p> <p>CF – thanks to DMF and AH for their assistance in progressing enquiries on Bowmore Hall.</p>	
19	<p>Date/venue for Next Meeting 20th February 2025, 18:30 at Service Point</p>	

Appendix A – Councillor A Redman

Report for Islay Community Council Meeting – 16th January 2025

Subject: Community Concerns and Updates

1. Urgent Issues Highlighted with Roads and Infrastructure Department

- **Public Bin Collection in Port Ellen, Bowmore, and Port Charlotte:**

Residents have reported significant delays in the emptying of public bins along Distillery Road in Port Ellen, as well as in Bowmore and Port Charlotte. Public bins in these areas have reportedly not been emptied for extended periods, leading to unsightly and unhygienic conditions.

Missed recycling collections have also been an ongoing issue across these communities. Constituents report that collections have been disrupted due to icy weather, with no rescheduled pickups provided. In some cases, residents have been left waiting up to four weeks instead of the usual two-week interval.

These delays in public bin servicing and recycling collection have caused frustration and inconvenience, highlighting the need for better coordination and contingency planning from the Roads and Infrastructure Department to ensure timely and reliable waste management services.

- **Update from Argyll & Bute Council on Recycling collections**

Due to our recycling refuse collection vehicle going to the mainland for an MOT, we are currently running behind schedule for uplifts in all areas. We are working as hard as we can to catch up these collections and will be working tomorrow Friday 17/01/2025 to catch up as many as we can and if needed, we will provide a collection on Saturday 18/01/2025 also if we do not manage everything tomorrow. Please can customers leave their bins out for collection if they have not yet been collected. We are sorry for the inconvenience this has caused. Note: We are using the small green refuse vehicle to service these collections, unfortunately this will affect the collections for this vehicle in all areas i.e. the Oa, Port Ellen, Bruichladdich, Portnahaven, and Jura. We will start collections tomorrow again on these runs starting with the Oa. Could customers please leave the bins out for collection. Our apologies for any inconvenience caused.

- **Speeding Near Port Ellen Primary School:**

There are growing concerns about vehicles speeding near Port Ellen Primary School, with some cars reported to be travelling over 45mph. Despite efforts from the school to raise awareness, many residents feel that physical traffic-calming measures, such as speed bumps, are necessary to ensure the safety of children and pedestrians.

- **Road Gritting and Maintenance Across Islay:**

Concerns about road gritting remain a significant issue across Islay. Constituents have reported that many roads, particularly in remote areas, are inadequately gritted during icy weather, leaving residents and drivers at risk. Empty or missing grit bins have also been a recurring problem, making it difficult for residents to treat icy roads themselves.

I have raised these concerns with the Roads and Infrastructure Department, emphasising the need for improved winter preparation and more consistent replenishment of grit bins. Gritting services are essential for maintaining safety, especially during prolonged cold spells, and require immediate attention.

- **Deteriorating Road Conditions in Port Ellen, Bowmore, Port Charlotte, and Portnahaven:**

I have received numerous complaints about deteriorating road conditions across Islay, including severe potholes and poor maintenance in Port Ellen, Bowmore, Port Charlotte, and Portnahaven. These roads are vital for daily transportation and community access, yet they remain in an unacceptable state of disrepair.

In particular, I have contacted the Roads and Infrastructure Department about the road from Cnoc-na-Faire road end up to Livingstone Way in Port Ellen, which has severe potholes that were reported months ago but remain unaddressed. Similar concerns have been raised about key routes in Bowmore, Port Charlotte, and Portnahaven, where potholes and poor road surfaces pose significant risks to both residents and visitors. I have requested urgent inspections and necessary repairs for all these areas and will provide updates as responses are received.

2. Benefit and Housing Inquiries

Over the past weeks, I have addressed a number of constituent inquiries related to benefits and housing issues. These included requests for clarity on available support, assistance with applications, and follow-ups on delayed responses. I continue to work closely with relevant departments to ensure that these matters are resolved promptly and that constituents receive the support they need.

3. Letter to Councillor John Armour on Roads, Pavements, and Bridges

I recently wrote to Councillor John Armour, Policy Lead for Roads, Transport, and Amenity Services, to raise critical concerns about the state of local roads, pavements, and bridges. These issues, reported by numerous constituents across the Kintyre and the Islands ward, continue to affect daily life and safety.

In my letter, I emphasised the importance of prioritising long-term, sustainable repairs over quick fixes that fail to address underlying issues and do not last. While temporary solutions may provide short-term relief, they often result in recurring problems that cost more to resolve in the long run. I urged Councillor Armour to advocate for comprehensive maintenance plans that ensure infrastructure remains safe, reliable, and fit for purpose for years to come.

Particularly in rural and island communities like ours, where infrastructure plays a vital role in connectivity and safety, well-planned, durable repairs are essential. I will follow up on this matter to ensure that these concerns are addressed effectively and in a timely manner.

4. Rewilding Concerns: Featured in the Farmers Guardian and BBC Radio

This month, I was featured in the *Farmers Guardian* and spoke on BBC Radio regarding the illegal release of lynx wildcats in the Cairngorms National Park. The tragic death of one of these wildcats highlights the dangers of such reckless rewilding policies, which put rural livelihoods and farmers under unnecessary risk.

I emphasised the importance of moving away from ideologically driven agendas and focusing on practical solutions that genuinely support Scotland's rural communities. These policies not only endanger livelihoods but also threaten the safety and security of those who live and work in rural areas.

5. PETD Reference Group Meeting – 14th January 2025

I attended the PETD Reference Group meeting on 14th January 2025, where key updates on the Port Ellen Terminal Development were discussed. I raised several points on behalf of constituents, including the importance of grouping affected parties by location to better appraise feedback, ensuring future proofing of the works, and addressing concerns about ferry service reductions and delays during the construction phase.

Local Community Council members, including Jim Porteous, Frazer Campbell, and Islay McEachern, also attended and raised important concerns. Their contributions, such as questions about noise control, traffic impacts, and car marshalling capacity, were critical in ensuring that local voices were heard. I want to thank them for their proactive participation and for representing community interests effectively.

Other key points discussed include:

- **Traffic and Roads:** Concerns about the interface between port roads and Council-managed roads were addressed. CMAL confirmed that their responsibility ends at the pedestrian crossing at the war memorial. However, I will continue to press for funding solutions to improve local road networks, which are likely to see increased traffic due to the development.
- **Passenger Comfort:** Discussions included the potential for covered walkways to protect passengers during adverse weather, which is still under consideration.
- **Noise and Disturbance:** Noise and operational impacts on the Port Ellen community were discussed, with commitments made to mitigate these issues during construction.

This meeting showcased strong collaboration among stakeholders and provided an opportunity to ensure that local concerns remain at the forefront of planning decisions.

6. Letter to Shona Robison MSP: Need for Adequate Funding for Argyll and Bute Council

I have sent a letter to Shona Robison MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government, to highlight the critical need for fair and adequate funding for Argyll and Bute Council. Our rural and island communities face unique challenges that require equitable financial support across key areas, including transportation, infrastructure, health, education, and housing.

I emphasised that without appropriate resources, it becomes increasingly difficult to deliver vital services that our residents rely on. I will continue to advocate strongly to ensure that the voices of our residents are heard and that our council receives the necessary funding to address the distinct challenges we face in our region.

Closing Remarks

I remain committed to addressing the issues raised by residents and ensuring that their concerns are heard at every level. From roads and infrastructure to benefits, housing, and ferry services, my focus is on advocating for the needs of our communities and driving meaningful change.

Thank you to the Islay Community Council and other local stakeholders for their continued collaboration and efforts in representing our shared interests. Together, we can achieve the outcomes our communities deserve.

Contact Information

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Appendix B – ICC Ferry Committee

ICCFC - last regular meetings Tue 26th Nov and Tue 7th Jan, next Wed 12th Feb. Draft Minutes to be posted in CC website.

Sub meetings: Mon 25th Nov with CalMac Transport Planning re timetables (Teams), Wed 4th Dec with Scott Reid re Port Askaig (Teams), Tue 14th Jan with Port Ellen Terminal Development Reference Group (Teams). Minutes of these various meetings have been circulated and summer timetable options published in the Ileaf.

A working group meeting is due with CalMac on 20th January re ongoing discussion on items such as block bookings, drop trailers, haulier incentivisation, booking system, CalMac stats and timetable options. A roundtable virtual meeting (previous meeting 18th November) is due to be hosted by Jenni Minto on 27th January to discuss a range of ferry service issues.

ICCFC wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport on 27th November questioning the justification for a 10% ferry fares increase for 2025. A response was received on 17th December defending the increase. Subsequently the press has announced that this increase is approximately 5 x higher than prevailing inflation and that an increase of only 2% had been recommended by CalMac.

Operational -

Heb Isles left CalMac's service 21st Nov. Since 26th October, Islay has been on a timetabled single vessel service for Winter with Finlaggan. ICCFC has strongly protested about the continuing inadequacy and vulnerability of single vessel service.

For the Summer, due to expected delay in delivery of 'Isle of Islay', ICCFC has formally requested that CalMac either provides a suitable substitute for Finlaggan during her drydock from 23rd April or postpones the drydock by at least a further month. Currently, for the 3-week drydocking, CalMac has factored in only the 'Isle of Arran', which would be far short of the 2 vessels needed, including 1 of similar capacity to Finlaggan. Without prompt action on this, bookings will soon be full.

ICCFC has also requested that Finlaggan should be retained until start of the PETD development work makes this port unusable.

ICCFC is still in discussion with CalMac regarding formal confirmation on Traffic Prioritisation protocols at times of disruption. Comments have been sent to CalMac in response to their latest version.

Timetables/Capacity

ICCFC is awaiting further news from CalMac regarding their discussion on summer timetable options with commercial delivery operators. A decision as to whether in service ship maintenance should be carried out on 2 days per month or for 6 hours per week has to be made and this will have a major effect on timetabling with the new vessels.

People are still having problems making bookings, ships reported as fully booked are continuing to sail with vacant deck space, the position is exacerbated by late lorry booking cancellations and the Ar Turas computer system continues to cause problems.

Date for a further meeting between ICCFC members and Alan Hood of CMAL to discuss 'Advance Standby' and how this might be improved has to be confirmed.

New Ferries -

CMAL has announced that delivery of mv 'Isle of Islay' is likely to be delayed until end of March.

Port Ellen work is unlikely to obtain the necessary consents and approvals, including SG funding approval, before Summer 2025 and the work is then expected to start in Autumn 2025, taking around 2 years.

A public update event is due to be held by CMAL at Ramsay Hall from 15.30 on 21st January regarding Port Ellen terminal development.

Ferries Community Board - Next regular meeting 7th March. Due to meet with DML board 26th March and possibly 20th February with the Minister for Transport at Holyrood. CalMac's website is being updated with information about the board and its role.

DRAFT