

North Uist Community Council



Comhairle Coimhearsnachd Uibhist a Tuath

NUCC minutes

Meeting held on Monday 29th August 2022 at 8.00pm via MS Teams

Present:

Joan Ferguson (**JF**) – Chair
Lynda MacLean (**LML**) – Secretary
Anne MacLellan (**ANNEML**)
Angus MacLennan (**ANGUSML**)
Effie Rodgers (**ER**)
Ragnall Maclain (**RMI**)
Peter MacNab (**PMN**)
Cllr Uisdean Robertson (**UR**)

Kevin Hobbs (**KH**) – CEO of CMAL – *joined at 8.32pm*

1. Apologies:

Mairi Claire Elwood, Donald Ewen Morrison, Conor Lawless, Michelle MacDonald, Zara Wilkie, David Downham

2. Welcome

Chair welcomed and thanked everyone for attending and explained the meeting was held for the purpose of discussing the two CalMac option proposals provided by **UR** to **NUCC** members and **KH** from CMAL is to join at 8.30pm.

3. Members discussion on options

Option 1

Date of closure –

- 10 October 2022 – 27 March 2023 (24 weeks)

Continuity plans –

- Same proposal, no additional options available
 - Service between Lochmaddy – Ullapool (summer & winter)
 - Enhanced Lochboisdale service to Mallaig/Oban (summer & winter)
 - Enhanced Berneray/Leverburgh service (winter)
 - Charter vessels: MV Arrow (winter, MV Pentalina (from Feb/March 2023), foot passenger ferry service (summer & winter)
 - Transport connections for displaced passengers (summer & winter)
 - Fare equalisation (summer & winter)

Disruption –

- Planned closure longer than Option 2
- Closure commences summer period, during heightened traffic volumes

Capacity –

- Expected sufficient capacity will be available to meet demand. However there will be significant disruption to customers' normal travel patterns

Risk –

- During periods of weather disruption the headroom to manage displaced traffic will be reduced, exacerbated due to extended closure period
- Less risk of unplanned disruption due to construction works
- Extended construction impact ability to deliver service

Option 2

Date of closure -

- Outage 1 – 30 January – 27 March 2023 (8 weeks)
- Outage 2 – 30 October – 11 December 2023 (6 weeks)

Continuity plans –

- Same as Option1, however MV Pentalina could be available majority of the time.
- MV Arrow may also be available these times

Disruption –

- Planned closure shorter than Option 1, improving winter resilience
- Closures do not impact summer period
- Potential 12 weeks unplanned disruption (27 March – 30 June 2023), safe operations to berth may be impacted due to construction work ongoing – unable to quantify until further details available

Capacity –

- Expected sufficient capacity will be available to meet demand during outages.
- Significant disruption to customers' normal travel pattern, although less than Option 1
- Normal winter timetable will be delivered out with outages, although potential construction disruption could reduce capacity

Risk –

- During periods of weather disruption the headroom to manage displaced traffic will be reduced, although less than Option 1
- Inability to operate safely and resiliently during construction
- Extended construction impact ability to deliver service
- Higher risk of linkspan failure resulting in extended service outage

Members had discussion on their thoughts of *Option 2*, the unanimous consensus showed concern of how it will negatively impact tourism if the potential unplanned disruption (27 March – 30 June 2023) occurs, especially after the recent technical difficulties with MV Hebrides.

More information and understanding of the programme is required from CalMac, members agreed CalMac should already have this information to hand.

4. Kevin Hobbs – CEO CMAL

KH advised was hard to come up with solution which doesn't involve the 24 week closure, they have been worked on by Highland Council, Wallace Stone, RJ MacLeod, ACON and CMAL.

Temporary but competent round head being proposed due to ability to take 10 weeks of closure period off option 1.

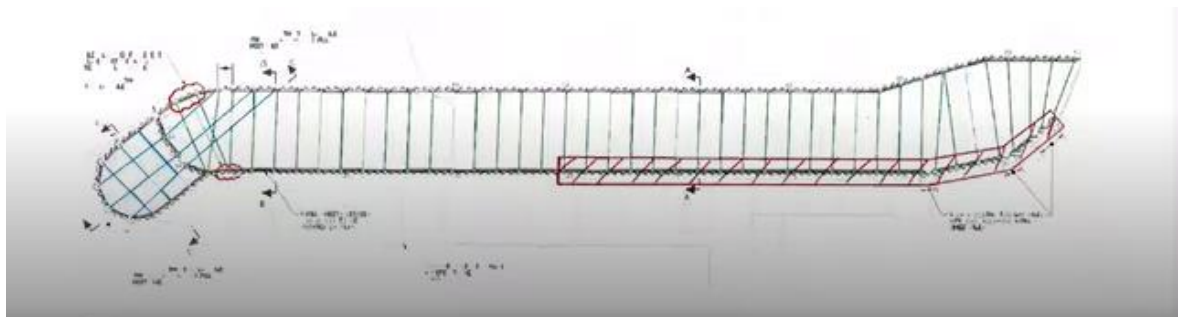
4ft diameter piled in defenders on and a fender face to create an additional roundhead of 6-7metre ahead of existing roundhead to protect people as the works is taking place.

KH own view is given same level of certainty of existing current roundhead, same metric. The ship doesn't use roundhead every single time, a lot more in winter than summer. Bear in mind April, May and June not the worst months in terms of weather.

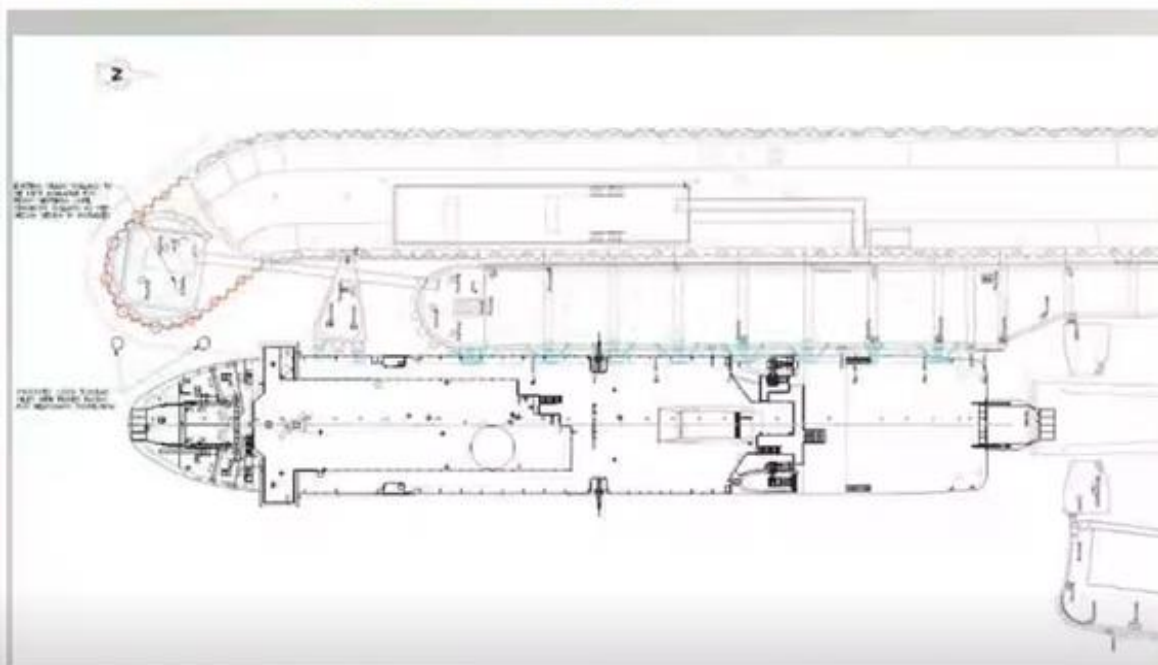
If ship needs to use roundhead it will pivot on it and work its way down the berth.

The piled structure meaning all wave action was going under piled structure forcing vessel off the berth, with new arrangement the piling along the full outer edge of the berth will be completely enclosed with massive sheet piled and round piles, resulting in better and safer berthing than there ever has been.

KH shared below diagrams and explained current and new berthing arrangements.



Roundhead Piling & Fendering



KH advised that in his 30 years of being chartered engineer he can't see there being an issue bar due to weather if ship doesn't sail, though this is expected in any case. **KH** guesses that he is 95-97% competent for the ship to berth and does not agree with what CalMac said in the meeting (when they shared the 2 options) of the major problem of the additional potential 12 week closure.

From **KH's** experience as engineer he advised that it is no more of a risk except in a horrendous storm when the ships aren't sailing anyway.

KH advised that there is not many other options though as asset owner, CMAL, he advised that there are no spare ships though they will continue to look at the second hand market and look at options to charter MV Pentalina and potentially buy MV Arrow.

Shortening the programme of works by 10 weeks is at a cost of £6m more to the Government.

UR enquired on expected dates of when the two new vessels are due -
MV Glen Sannox due March to May 2023

Vessel 802 due Oct to Dec 2023 though with 2 month familiarisation process with any new ships, won't be in service during 2023.

The two ferry option was also discussed, **KH** agreed this is required especially during summer months. **KH** advised capital is not the issue, it's the continued level of support for the life of the vessel which is astronomically expensive. Works out at £6m per year of today's money as level of subsidy of each ship every year for 30 years along with £50m cost of building new ship.

KH hopes for an opportunity to come and visit the Islands and sit face-to-face with larger diagrams and show what the vision for the future may look like. Members agreed that this would be welcomed by the Community.

Members thanked **KH** for taking the time out to attend the meeting.

After **KH** left the meeting members summed up that on the face of it option 2 is clearly the best option but there is still concern of the potential 12 week unplanned disruption.

5. Date of next meeting

Next NUCC meeting scheduled to take place at the Claddach Kirkibost Centre on Tuesday 6th September at 8pm.