

26 JAN 2016



Caledonian MacBrayne

Hebridean & Clyde Ferries

Our Ref MD/AMcC

19 January 2016

Mr D Stewart, MSP
The Scottish Parliament
Holyrood
Edinburgh
EH1 1SP

CalMac Ferries Limited
Ferry Terminal
Gourock PA19 1QP

t: 01475 650100

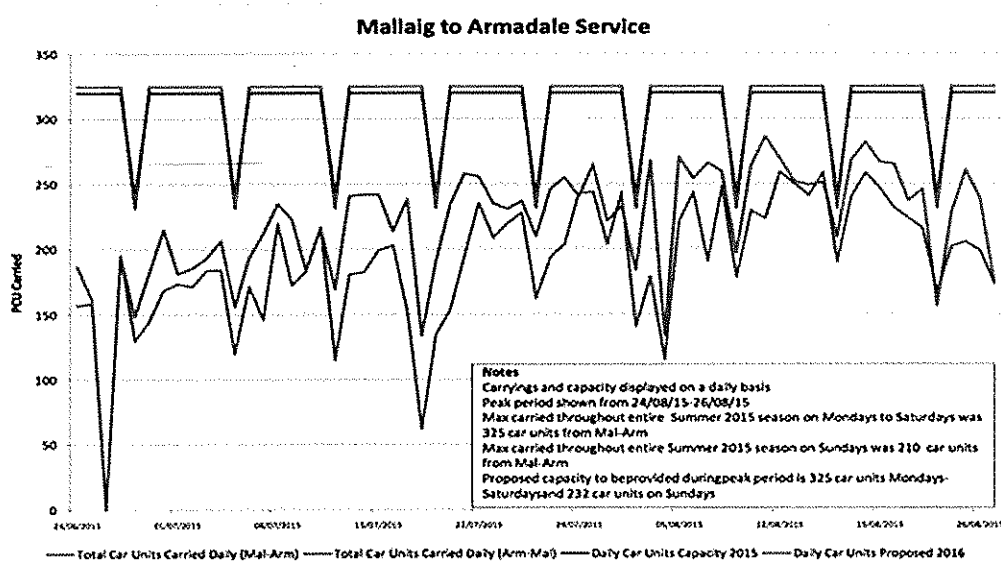
Dear David

Thank for your letter of 7 January with regard to the concerns of the Sleat Community about our plans for the 2016 winter timetable.

As is very often the case with these things, the situation described in your letter has been overtaken by events, and we believe we have now put in place a solution to address these concerns.

Details were announced recently as part of the news release on the summer timetable enhancements but in summary we have agreed to deploy an additional, third, vessel on the Mallaig-Armadale route at peak times which means it will now enjoy significantly increased capacity and frequency as indicated by the tables below:

| YEAR | DAYS | PERIOD | NO OF SAILINGS | VESSEL ALLOCATION |
|------|-----------|------------|----------------|---|
| 2015 | Mon - Sat | All summer | 16 per day | Coruisk |
| 2016 | Mon - Sat | Peak | 22 per day | Loti: 6, Lochinvar: 10, Loch Bhrusda: 6 |
| 2016 | Mon - Sat | Off Peak | 18 per day | Loti: 6, Lochinvar: 12 |
| 2015 | Sun | Peak | 12 per day | Coruisk |
| 2015 | Sun | Off Peak | 8 per day | Coruisk |
| 2016 | Sun | Peak | 16 per day | Loti: 4, Lochinvar: 8, Loch Bhrusda: 4 |
| 2016 | Sun | Off Peak | 12 per day | Loti: 4, Lochinvar: 8 |





| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Status | Major Change - CFL approved |
| Route | MALLAIG - ARMADALE |
| Vessel(s): | Lord of the Isles Lochinvar |

Operates 25 March - 23 June and 28 August - 23 October

| | Mallaig | Armadale | Armadale | Mallaig |
|-----------|---------|----------|----------|---------|
| | Depart | Arrive | Depart | Arrive |
| MON - SAT | 0730 | 0810 | 0820 | 0900 |
| MON - SAT | 0930 | 1010 | 1030 | 1110 |
| MON - SAT | 1100 | 1135 | 1200 | 1225 |
| MON - SAT | 1145 | 1225 | 1300 | 1340 |
| MON - SAT | 1330 | 1405 | 1430 | 1455 |
| MON - SAT | 1400 | 1440 | 1500 | 1540 |
| MON - SAT | 1530 | 1605 | 1630 | 1655 |
| MON - SAT | 1600 | 1640 | 1650 | 1730 |
| MON - SAT | 1800 | 1840 | 1850 | 1930 |
| SUN | 0930 | 1010 | 1030 | 1110 |
| SUN | 1100 | 1135 | 1200 | 1225 |
| SUN | 1130 | 1210 | 1230 | 1310 |
| SUN | 1300 | 1335 | 1400 | 1425 |
| SUN | 1530 | 1610 | 1630 | 1710 |
| SUN | 1800 | 1840 | 1850 | 1930 |

Vessel Key:
 Lord of the Isles
 Lochinvar
 Loch Bhrusda

Operates 24 June until 27 August

| | Mallaig | Armadale | Armadale | Mallaig |
|-----------|---------|----------|----------|---------|
| | Depart | Arrive | Depart | Arrive |
| MON - SAT | - | - | 0715 | 0755 |
| MON - SAT | 0740 | 0820 | 0830 | 0910 |
| MON - SAT | 0810 | 0850 | 1035 | 1120 |
| MON - SAT | 0955 | 1035 | 1100 | 1140 |
| MON - SAT | 1100 | 1135 | 1230 | 1255 |
| MON - SAT | 1155 | 1235 | 1310 | 1350 |
| MON - SAT | 1240A | 1320A | - | - |
| MON - SAT | 1330 | 1405 | 1440 | 1505 |
| MON - SAT | 1500 | 1540 | 1550 | 1630 |
| MON - SAT | 1535 | 1610 | 1635 | 1700 |
| MON - SAT | 1650 | 1730 | 1725 | 1805 |
| MON - SAT | 1815 | 1855 | 1830 | 1910 |
| SUN | - | - | 0915 | 0955 |
| SUN | 0845 | 0925 | 1035 | 1115 |
| SUN | 1010 | 1050 | 1100 | 1140 |
| SUN | 1100 | 1135 | 1200 | 1225 |
| SUN | 1130 | 1210 | 1230 | 1310 |
| SUN | 1300 | 1335 | 1405 | 1430 |
| SUN | 1400 | 1440 | - | - |
| SUN | 1530 | 1610 | 1630 | 1710 |
| SUN | 1800 | 1840 | 1850 | 1930 |

CODE: A
 On Fridays only this sailing will depart Mallaig
 at 1415 and arrive in Armadale 1455



Caledonian MacBrayne

Hebridean & Clyde Ferries

The community also raised a number of questions about our rationale for the proposed changes, and as your constituency covers a much wider area than just Sleat and Skye I thought it would be helpful for you to be aware of the bigger picture, so our responses are attached. These also cover some of the specific points in your letter.

I trust you will note that we have listened to the community's concerns and responded positively where possible, but would be concerned if this issue overshadowed the very many benefits of the new summer timetable which contains the biggest single group of enhancement to ferry services since the CHFS contract came into force in 2007 and, thanks to some creative and innovative thinking, provides a solution to some longstanding requests from local communities, most notably the summer service between Lochboisdale and Mallaig, a direct daily return to Barra from Oban and a "commutable" service between Mull and Oban.

As you will appreciate it has been a huge challenge to achieve these enhancements, especially with our limited resources, and we have done everything we can to balance the differing needs of the communities we serve.

Yours sincerely

Martin Dorchester
Managing Director

Questions raised

| | Question | Response |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | <p>Why move MV Coruisk to Craignure - Oban route at all. This looks like a case of benefitting one community at the expense of another.</p> | <p>Firstly, CalMac Ferries Ltd (CFL) do not believe that Sleat will be disadvantaged. We also believe that the ferry capacity provided on the Mallaig-Armadale route is sufficient to meet the anticipated demand.</p> <p>The introduction of RET on this route will have a significantly greater impact on demand on Craignure - Oban than at Mallaig-Armadale and extra capacity is needed to meet this. There has also been a consistent call from the community there for an earlier morning service to meet commuter needs. CFL is confident that the proposed solution for Mallaig-Armadale will meet the expected extra demand on the route from RET and will be a reliable service.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Why not put MV Lochinvar / MV Bhrusda to Craignure Oban?</p> | <p>In addition to the expected increase on Craignure - Oban which is significantly higher than that expected at Mallaig - Armadale there are a number of challenges which meant that MV Coruisk was the only vessel that would meet all operational requirements. Her size is large enough to carry commercial vehicles on the first sailing from Mull each morning, but she is also small enough to be able to berth overnight at Craignure. However, CFL will continue to monitor the utilisation and discuss with TS whilst sharing statistics with the relevant communities.</p> |
| 3 | <p>Mallaig - Armadale is a significant tourism route to Sleat and beyond</p> | <p>CFL fully understand that and feel the solution proposed, albeit a solution made up of multiple vessels, ensures that this important tourism route is maintained. CFL will monitor route performance and take actions to rectify any persistent issues where possible. CFL are happy to share statistical information on a regular basis. CFL have listened to feedback from the Sleat community and have already revised the initial plans to build in additional sailings and capacity.</p> <p>For 2016 CFL will build upon the Marketing support provided to Sleat and the wider community in Skye in 2015. Furthermore, the CFL Commercial team is in communication with key tourism partners at Sleat and beyond to investigate other ways that they can work together.</p> |
| 4 | <p>Will the proposed solution cope with the many tourist coaches that travel Mallaig Armadale in the mornings, when the smaller vessel MV Lochinvar is planned to be operating?</p> | <p>CFL are aware of the travel plans of the coach operators and are confident that the planned services will meet the demand. CFL are also in dialogue with this important group of customers to ensure that any potential issues are identified and resolved.</p> <p>Furthermore, the increased frequency that a three vessel service will offer over and above a single vessel will mean more choice for coach operators as well as the fact that there will be a shorter time to wait between sailings.</p> |
| 5 | <p>The Harbour Master has stated that due to the number and frequency of vessels CFL are proposing to utilise that the entrance to Mallaig harbour will be extremely congested, and potentially permanently closed to other traffic?</p> | <p>CFL have also been, and continue to be, in communication with Mallaig Harbour Authority and believe that this is not an issue. Mallaig Harbour Authority welcome the additional use and revenue that the proposals offer.</p> |

| | | |
|----|--|---|
| 6 | Having experience of the sister vessel of MV Lochinvar at Mallaig Armadale, will this operation be subject to tidal restrictions? | CFL are aware of this situation and believe that the planned vessel allocation and timetable solution minimises the potential of this eventuality. CFL are used to dealing with tidal restrictions as happens in the Sound of Harris and will plan for any additional or adjusted services. |
| 7 | MV Lord of the Isles has provided an unreliable winter service from Lochboisdale, what happens at Mallaig when it is storm bound at Lochboisdale? | CFL are confident that the planned services will be more reliable over the Summer. CFL marine and technical teams have been working with the on-board team of MV Lord of the Isles to improve the operational response of that vessel. Furthermore, in peak periods, the MV Bhrusda will be positioned in Mallaig and will possibly be able to deliver a shuttle service with the MV Lochinvar to address the demand. |
| 8 | There is no on-board catering offered on MV Lochinvar and MV Loch Bhrusda, and their sailing times will be 10 minutes longer than MV Coruisk. Do you feel this is an acceptable situation? | It is correct that these vessels do not have on-board catering facilities. CFL will investigate options that they can deliver, primarily the installation of vending machines. CFL would welcome approaches from local businesses if they have ideas as to how to fill this need at both port facilities and on board. |
| 9 | Further issue - Operational resilience | Having three vessels providing the Mallaig-Armadale service improves the operational resilience of the service in the event of a technical breakdown. A service would continue to operate, albeit with a lower capacity, compared to no service at all if a one vessel service was in operation. |
| 10 | Further issue – Local economic benefit of reduced fares that RET will bring to the Mallaig-Armadale route. | <p>The fares reduction with the introduction of RET on the Mallaig-Armadale route from October 2015 are significant. <u>Non-RET fare in October 2014 - Passenger £3.60 (equivalent £3.12 – with 6 journey ticket) and Car £20.45 (equivalent £14.67 – with 6 journey ticket)</u> Compared with <u>RET fare in October 2015 - Passenger £2.80 and Car £9.40.</u></p> <p>The intention behind RET is that it reduces the economic disadvantage suffered by remote island communities, and that it will therefore enable the islands to make a bigger contribution to the economic prosperity of Scotland. The reduced cost to local individuals is funded by increased subsidy from the Scottish Government. Besides the direct benefit to local users, the lower fares will likely have a positive impact in the tourism sector.</p> <p>Ferry fares for 2016/17 have been frozen, further supporting the RET benefits.</p> |