

Outer Hebrides Tourism Industry Association

FUG Meeting 18th September 2008

Note to all OHTIA reps:

- **Scottish Government Ferry Review-** This refers to the already announced overall review of ferry services by the Government. The main feedback from the meeting to the government were that the consultation process should be robust, and include all island communities and that the final policy report should be by its nature flexible to reflect the changing picture of demand in the various island groups.
- **RET** There was discussion on the effects of RET and how it might operate in practice. Concern was expressed that a ticket bought and not used on the same day would become void. Also there were concerns around the disabled and senior citizens' concessions which under current proposals would not be as generous as before.
- **HiTrans Ferry Connections Study** A study is under way to examine connections (or lack of them) on all the Calmac routes and recommend appropriate improvements.
- **Operational updates** The performance figures should have included the Oban-Castlebay- Lochboisdale triangle and will do in the future. There are still problems around the bus changeover at Invergarry; there is insufficient space to create a bus shelter or layby, so the operator will look at offering the changeover at a different location. The sometimes discouraging attitude of staff at Uig was met with surprise/denial from Calmac. The fairly general desire for later ferries across the Sound of Harris was discussed at some length. Currently the MCA have not approved night time operation on this route, although CnES and Calmac believe it is feasible.
- **Mallaig – Lochboisdale CnES Consultation** Storas Uibhist have put forward a proposal for a stand alone daily summer ferry between Mallaig and Lochboisdale. This is now in the hands of the minister for consideration. Calmac have produced a draft timetable moving all Lochboisdale and Castlebay services to Mallaig. CnES have postponed their consultation until the nature of the proposal becomes clear.
- **Lochmaddy Ferry Terminal** This is now almost finished and will be finished soon. An official opening will be held.

Other items discussed at some length included the prohibition on using the left luggage lockers at Oban ferry terminal.

The differential in charges between a motorhome and a commercial vehicle or community minibus was described by Calmac as government policy and as such an approach to the minister would be required to effect any change.

The next meeting was provisionally set for Thursday 19th March in Tarbert.