



Minutes of the Caithness Transport Forum

Date: 20 March 2024

Time: 10:00 – 12:30

Location: Pentland Hotel, Thurso / Microsoft Teams

Present:

Trudy Morris (Chair)	Caithness Chamber of Commerce	In-person
Laura O'Kane	Caithness Chamber of Commerce	In-person
Alison Middlemas	Caithness Chamber of Commerce	In-person
Kris Bevan	NorthLink Ferries	Virtual
Cllr Raymond Bremner	The Highland Council	Virtual
Ian Budd	Friends of the Far North Line	Virtual
Julie Calder	Jamie Stone MP Office Case Worker	Virtual
Dougie Cook	Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd	Virtual
John Deighan	Thurso and Wick Trades Union Council	In-person
Bryan Dodds	CVG	In-person
Beatrice Farmer	Dunnet & Canisbay Community Council	In-person
Robert Gillespie	Stagecoach	In-person
Jonathan Gunn	The Highland Council	In-person
Cllr Ron Gunn	The Highland Council	In Person
Nicole Herd	ACCC	In-person
Helen Inkster	Pentland Ferries	Virtual
Audrey John	Jamie Stone MP Office	Virtual
Cllr Willie MacKay	The Highland Council	In-person
Cllr Matthew Reiss	The Highland Council	In-person
Fiona Richardson	The Highland Council	Virtual
Frank Roach	HITRANS	Virtual
Ryan Savage	ScotRail	In-person
David Summers	Highland Council	In-person
David Swanson	The Highland Council	Virtual
Michael Willmot	Far North Line Community Rail Partnership	Virtual

1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all present for attending.

1.2. Apologies were received from:

Marco Bardelli	Transport Scotland
Magnus Davidson	NRS Dounreay
Carole Etna	Dunnet & Canisbay Community Council
Peter Faccenda	Focus North
William Mainus	Stagecoach
Wayne Malcolm	Stagecoach
Zoe Mackenzie	Marie Todd MSP Office
Sandy Mackie	Scrabster Harbour Trust
Cllr Janet McEwan	The Highland Council
Kathryn Scollie	Pentland Ferries
Kim Shaw	Stagecoach
Jamie Stone MP	Jaime Stone MP
Marie Todd MSP	Marie Todd MSP
Tina Wrighton	NRS Dounreay

1.3. It was reported that Marco Bardelli was retiring. His replacement, Graeme Paget gave his apologies.

1.4. The Chair thanked Marco on behalf of the CTF for his valuable contribution and attendance at the Forum.

2. Minutes of last CTF meeting 08.11.23 – CTF (2023) M003

2.1. The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the last meeting.

2.2. Proposed by – Cllr Willie Mackay, seconded by John Deighan.

3. Update on Actions

3.1. **See Appendix A** – Action List for updates on actions from the last meeting.

3.2. All previous actions were closed, and new ones created for any outstanding actions.

Action CTF2024 M002/A001 - CTF2024 M002/A007 – See Appendix B.

3.3. New actions arising from this meeting in **Appendix B**.

4. Review of the Forum

4.1. Priorities for 2024/25 (**See Appendix C**)

4.2. The Chair proposed a way forward for future meetings, with key points noted below: (assuming the renewal of funding for the Forum from Dounreay for another 3 years. An application had also been made to the Highland Council.)

- Focus and streamlining meetings.
- Written updates.

- More progress on matters required in between meetings.
 - More proactive discussions at meetings.
 - Association of Caithness Community Councils to represent all Community Councils and to act as CTF liaison.
- 4.3. The new format in 4.2 above was agreed by Forum members for future meetings.
- 4.4. It was noted that the PSO remained a key priority.
- 4.5. The Chair noted the core priorities from the February 2024 CTF Funders Report in Appendix C and reminded Forum members that some lobbying would be required again as COVID had meant some issues and challenges previously addressed, needed renewed action.
- 4.6. Forum members were requested to consider improvements the CTF should lobby for regarding the A9 North of Inverness.
- Matthew Reiss proposed the widening of sections of the roads by 18” each side, improved drainage, and straightening sections.
 - The bridge at Culgower was highlighted as a potential safety issue with larger vehicles.
 - Flooding north of Portgower and north of Storehouse of Foulis was discussed as an annual problem. Audrey John highlighted that flood mitigation measures at Golspie should be considered as well, as flooding posed a risk of Caithness being isolated.
 - Frank Roach reported that the HITRANS Road Transport Strategy would be out for consultation soon and should have evidence of traffic patterns.
 - Jonathan Gunn noted that a flood analysis of the sewers by Scottish Water in Thurso at Traill Street would be done by April.
 - Cllr Willie Mackay raised a concern over the ongoing issue of speeding at Latheronwheel. The CTF would discuss the potential for a reduction of speed limit from 60mph to 40mph with Graeme Paget at Transport Scotland.
 - Cllr Matthew Reiss mentioned the potential need for improvements to the B roads if the Flow Country was given World Heritage Status as an increase in tourism and educational trips would be expected.

Action CTF2024 M002/A008 - Forum members to feedback on 24/25 Priorities with requests for consideration.

- 4.7. Cllr Raymond Bremner raised the importance of backing up requests with data and evidence. The distinction between capital infrastructure investment and repair and maintenance works should be considered. He noted a Highland Council meeting with Marco Bardelli and Graeme Paget would be held shortly to discuss these.

Action CTF2024 M002/A009 - Cllr Raymond Bremner to feedback to the Forum after the meeting with Marco Bardelli and Graeme Paget at Transport Scotland.

- 4.8. In addition, David Swanson noted concern that the Scotland wide net zero aviation strategy had been lacking. The Chair confirmed that the national aviation strategy for net zero was due to be published in Spring 24. The Chair asked Dougie Cook if HIAL had any input into the forthcoming strategy.

CTF2024 M002/A010 - Dougie Cook to report back to the Forum on HIAL’s input into the national aviation strategy.

CTF2024 M002/A011 - David Swanson to consult with Head of Service at Highland Council regarding their input into the Islands Connectivity Plan (ICP) response and whether Transport Scotland's strategy was on target.

5. Questions, Clarifications and Urgent Matters

Air

- 5.1. A written update was provided by HIAL (**see Appendix D**)
- 5.2. David Swanson reported that the flight timetable was finalised.
- 5.3. The Chair reported that there was an airport consultative committee meeting to discuss the PSO and Wick airport scheduled for 21.03.24.
- 5.4. Dougie Cook gave an update on the lack of air traffic control cover. Presently, there were 3 staff, when a complement of 5 was recommended. The resilience had been poor. Training of new staff should be complete by August. A request for recruitment had been made, however, this had been deferred, and was reported as a two- year long process from start to finish.

Action CTF2024 M002/A012 - CCoC to write to Kevin O'Leary (HIAL C.O.O.) regarding the issues blocking and delays with recruitment requests and the risk to the PSO. The Highland Council to be copied in.

- 5.5. A written update was provided by The Highland Council for the Wick PSO (**see Appendix E**)
- 5.6. Cllr Raymond Bremner reported that a new PSO working group had been established in response to the points received by the Highland Council from Transport Scotland, a condition of the current funding agreement. This group would include representatives from Transport Scotland and would look at ways to address the concerns of government and grow the service.

He also noted that though the Highland Council were the lead body, this had to be a collaborative approach to secure the service for future years.

- 5.7. David Swanson noted that detailed statistics were required in recording passenger usage data for the service. Far North Aviation had been contracted to get a baseline of users and motivation for travel. David Swanson also reported that passenger usage was up approx. 25% this year.
- 5.8. The Chair commented that the recently held Focus North Conference raised the issue of plugging the gap between future needs and present requirements, regarding future development and major projects in the region. The Chair noted it was vital that the service was not lost in the interim.

Sea

- 5.9. A written update was provided by Pentland Ferries (**see Appendix F**)
- 5.10. Helen Inkster reported that Pentland Ferries were looking at connections from Gills Bay to Wick and also onward to Inverness.
- 5.11. David Summers noted he would happily discuss the different options available.

Action CTF2024 M002/A013 - CCoC to send David Summers' contact details to Helen Inkster.

- 5.12. Kris Bevan gave a verbal update:
- 5.13. Passenger volumes in 2023 were up on previous year numbers to 207,163. The first few months of 2024 showed increased numbers to 2023 by 20%.

- 5.14. The MV Hamnavoe was in dry dock in January. This was successfully completed and was put back in service. The MW Hamnavoe was planned to pick up the peak timetable from 1st May to 30th September – 3 trips a day Monday – Saturday.
- 5.15. Northlink was involved in the ICP stakeholder group and Pentland Ferries were planning to respond.
- 5.16. Audrey John requested the timetable information from Kris Bevan for Wick Campsite.
- 5.17. A written update was provided by Scrabster Harbour Trust (**see Appendix G**)
- 5.18. No written update was provided by Wick Harbour Trust.

Roads

- 5.19. Sandy Mackie, Scrabster Harbour Trust raised a concern before the meeting regarding the landslide at Scrabster. Jacobs had carried out survey works and found there was still a risk of movement.
- 5.20. The concern was that with the drier weather approaching and moving towards the start of the peak season for ferry travel, the harbour was already experiencing a backup of traffic. This would increase in the coming weeks and months.
- 5.21. Limekiln turbines were scheduled to be transported through the harbour from mid-May through to October.
- 5.22. It was agreed that Graeme Paget should be contacted to determine what could be done to remove the traffic lights or increase the flow of traffic to facilitate increased volumes of ferry traffic and activity at the harbour.
- 5.23. Cllr Raymond Bremner mentioned this concern had previously been raised with Marie Todd MSP. The volume of the rain and drainage into it had destabilised the cliff. It would also be mentioned at a meeting with Emma Roddick MSP.

Action CTF2024 M002/A014 – CTF to request further information and timeline in regard to removal of traffic lights by Transport Scotland at Scrabster Harbour to alleviate backlog during the Spring/Summer.

- 5.24. Concern was raised about ensuring the safety railings were reinstated at the A9/A836 Thurso Tesco junction works.

Action CTF2024 M002/A015 – CTF to request information regarding safety railings at the junction by Tesco Thurso and enquire if re-installation of these is planned.

- 5.25. A written update was provided by The Highland Council Roads Department (**see Appendix H**) of the proposed capital works programme for this year.
- 5.26. Jonathan Gunn reported that the Highland Council had approved works for the next three years. The list was subject to review after the winter months. Surfacing was due to start in April.
- 5.27. The new thermal machine has been trialled in various areas. West Church Street and Cowie Lane in Thurso were part of the trial. Results of the trial looked good, the quality of the finish, the bitumen were good, and the costs of the hire was being considered.
- 5.28. Jonathan Gunn clarified that the machine heated the whole surface, and the bitumen was put straight in, not requiring a seal round the edge of the repair.
- 5.29. It was reported that surface dressing of roads cannot be done due to the limited resources. Surface dressing should be done within 5 years of a repair, but there were other patching works that were higher in priority.

- 5.30. Beatrice Farmer raised multiple concerns regarding the condition of the roads, including inadequate road markings, verges, numerous potholes and poor road surface conditions resulting in vehicle damage, but recognised the budget and staffing challenges present.
- 5.31. Cllr Raymond Bremner reported that no additional money for the roads had been requested from the government. However, £60m has been allocated for the next 3 years. There was a Highland Investment Plan due in May 2024 that the Council would be looking at.
- 5.32. Frank Roach reported that the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme (STTS) budget had been cut from £7m to £2m.
- 5.33. Cllr Raymond Bremner reported that the current amount of STTS contribution to the capital programme was £0.5m and was likely to be cut.
- 5.34. Over the past 3 years there has been 100km of new roads in Caithness. The cost to dress the roads was £7per m2 compared to £20 per m2 for inlay and overlay.
- 5.35. The Chair encouraged the Highland Council to put out positive publicity and improve the communication regarding work that had been done and the roads and maintenance plan.

Action CTF2024 M002/A016 - Cllr Raymond Bremner to discuss the Highland Council's communication to the public regarding the maintenance and repair programme.

- 5.36. Cllr Ron Gunn made the Forum aware of the harassment and cyber bullying on social media towards road workers. The Forum agreed that the harassment was unacceptable and that improved communication from the Highland Council was needed.
- 5.37. The Forum discussed the confusion and problems from the public associated with the claims and insurance procedures with regards to damaged vehicles from the roads. Forum members requested clarification on the process to enable the public to submit the correct information for a positive claim.

Action CTF2024 M002/A017 – Cllr Raymond Bremner to raise the issue of clarifying the insurance and claims process for the public at the next monthly roads meeting.

- 5.38. Cllr Raymond Bremner stated that the Highland Council were doing their best to recover the situation that had been due to a long period of underinvestment in the roads.
- 5.39. Jonathan Gunn reported that all claims come out of the roads budget. The Roads Inspector must have identified the area for repair and the Council's liability depends on the date when the issue was reported and was due to be resolved.
- 5.40. Cllr Matthew Reiss confirmed that the Road Scotland Act states there was a legal duty to manage and maintain the roads. He reported that almost £34m a year was needed to maintain the current state of the roads. This had increased from costs of £26m, and only between £20m to £22m had been spent in the past few years. One HGV does the same damage to road conditions as approximately one thousand cars.
- 5.41. Cllr Raymond Bremner reported that the whole road system in the Highland was under review at the re-design board. In addition, he confirmed the Transient Visitor Levy would be introduced to increase revenue to counteract the impact of tourism on the roads network.

Bus

- 5.42. A written update was provided by Stagecoach (**see Appendix I**).

- 5.43. Robert Gillespie reported that the first of 6 new buses should be arriving at the end of the month. The seating format would be two seats either side of the aisle. Summer timetables were not available at the time of the meeting.
- 5.44. David Summers reported that the numbers using Bus route 82 were steady.
- 5.45. Cllr Willie Mackay complimented Stagecoach's timekeeping to the timetable.
- 5.46. The Chair reported that Aaron's of Wick had been invited to attend the CTF but had not taken up the invitation.
- 5.47. David Swanson raised the issue of a missed bus connection at the UHI North, West and Hebrides Thurso campus. David Summers agreed to take the discussion offline.

Action CTF2024 M002/A018 - David Swanson and David Summers to discuss the missing bus connection at the UHI North, West and Hebrides Thurso campus.

- 5.48. Cllr Raymond Bremner enquired about when the X99 buses would return to use the Riverside bus stop in Wick. A discussion was had regarding the new style buses potentially not stopping at the Riverside stop due to the design of the bus.

Action CTF2024 M002/A019 – Stagecoach to confirm when the X99 would return to the Riverside bus stop.

Rail

- 5.49. No written update was provided by Scotrail. Ryan Savage reported he would compile an update.
- 5.50. A concern from John Deighan was addressed regarding an incident on the line south of Tain where passengers were offloaded at a level crossing in November. The Fire Brigade had to evacuate the train in this situation and there was a delay to sort out alternative transport.
- 5.51. Ryan Savage reported that Scotrail were considering alternative transport as the reliability of bus and taxi availability varied. The Chair recommended the expedition of suitable alternative transport due to the remote locations passengers could be stranded in on the Far North Line.
- 5.52. Frank Roach experienced connection issues during the meeting and was unable to discuss the issues he wanted to raise.

Action CTF2024 M002/A020 – Frank Roach to email Laura at comms@caithnesschamber.com with comments and questions on the Scotrail update.

- 5.53. The proposal to have a starlight satellite broadband system on trains north of Inverness would potentially be rolled out within the next 12-24 months.
- 5.54. A written update was provided by FNLCRP (see **Appendix J**).
- 5.55. Michael Willmot noted that there was an event to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Far North Line in June. An event was also planned in July in Wick and he requested to be connected with Friends of the Far North to coordinate celebrations.
- 5.56. Ian Budd reported that the Wick group had spoken to Scotrail/Network Rail to get a special service on the actual anniversary date.

Action CTF2024 M002/A021 – Ryan Savage, Ian Budd and Michael Willmot to meet and discuss planned exhibitions and celebrations of 150th anniversary of the Far North Line.

- 5.57. The Chair noted the CTF would be happy to help promote that event.

5.58. Ryan Savage noted that the Highland Tourism group had been resurrected and Alistair Smart had started Scotrail's Inspiration Hub website, looking for groups, people, places to attract tourism to the local area.

Action CTF2024 M002/A022 – Ryan Savage to email CCoC with information and requests from the Highland Tourism group for sending to the Community Councils.

Other

5.59. A written update was provided by Focus North (see Appendix K).

5.60. The Urban Foresight Transport Study was circulated to members.

5.61. The Chair gave a summary on transport solutions from the report. Dounreay and the Highland Council were discussing contracts in an effort to work together. A Pilot project for Employment for Transport had been discussed with the Transport Minister, however, no funding was available in the coming financial year.

5.62. The Chair reported that Cllr Richard Gale was taking forward transport initiatives in Sutherland.

5.63. The Focus North conference was positive, interest and new opportunities coming forward.

6. Any Other Business

6.1. Michael Willmot reported that the Committee for Climate Change published the report on progress of reducing emissions in Scotland. The Government had to achieve a 4-fold increase in reductions to hit the 2030 target.

7. Date of Next Meeting

7.1. The next meeting was provisionally booked for **Tuesday 18 June 2024** both in person and virtually.

7.2. There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone and closed the meeting.

Trudy Morris

Chair

20 March 2024

ACTIONS – last meeting

Appendix A – Actions from last meeting

Date	Action reference	Action Details	Actionee	Status	Meeting Updates
22/06/2023	CTF2023 M002/A001	<p>Chair to respond to Paul Flynn regarding information on the Island Connectivity Plan (ICP). The Chair expressed disappointment that a representative from the Ferries Directorate was unable to attend the meeting. An update has been provided and circulated. (Appendix A) The Chair said the CTF would continue to pursue the issue of the delay to the rollout of the RET on Northern Isles Ferry services.</p>	Chair	Closed	<p>Meeting update 20.03.24 - Action closed. This was taken forward with Fiona Hislop at the meeting held in January 24. She is still committed to RET. The Chair noted key points of the consultation, sent by Helen Inkster, for consideration. See action CTF2024 M001/A001</p>
22/06/2023	CTF2023 M002/A002	<p>David Summers to send contacts to the Chair regarding representatives from Highland Council contributing to the Island Connectivity Plan (ICP). David Summers update 11.03.24: I can involve colleagues as appropriate to the topic</p>	David Summers	Closed	<p>Meeting update 20.03.24 - Action closed.</p>
22/06/2023	CTF2023 M002/A003	<p>The Chair to facilitate a meeting with John MacQuarrie, Scottish Rail Holdings, the Far North Community Rail Partnership and the Forum. The meeting was planned to take place in Helmsdale on 23.11.23</p>	Chair	Closed	<p>Meeting update 20.03.24 - Action closed. Meeting was held. The CRP Model in Scotland differs from the one in England that John MacQuarrie is sympathetic to adopting. Michael Willmot is awaiting a response from John regarding CRP in Scotland.</p>

ACTIONS – last meeting

Date	Action reference	Action Details	Actionee	Status	Meeting Updates
22/06/2023	CTF2023 M002/A008	<p>Cllr Willie Mackay to follow up with contact details of the Landlord / Estate Manager. Chair to follow up with letter regarding complaint and request for information on plans to address issues.</p> <p>Cllr Willie Mackay updated 12.07.23: The Thurso car park was Highland Council owned and the maintenance responsibility remained with Highland Council, the managing service was listed as Communities and Place – General Fund. Highland Council Roads Department had been asked to quote for repairing the car park but have declined due to capacity and commitment to spend all of the Capital Budget for the year.</p> <p>Cllr Willie Mackay stressed this issue was on the agenda for the Highland Council, but current fiscal constraints meant the item was lower on the priority list than other areas.</p> <p>Cllr Mathew Reiss commented that some temporary “goodwill” repairs had been made to the car park after complaints were made and suggested a letter to be sent to Highland Council Roads Department, Communities and Place – General Fund.</p>	Cllr Willie Mackay	Closed	<p>Meeting update 20.03.24 - Action closed. See CTF2023 M003/A001</p>
22/06/2023	CTF2023 M002/A009	<p>David Summers to liaise with Dougie Cook regarding longer bus layovers at the airport.</p> <p>David Summers update 06.11.23 Aaron’s of Wick agreed that the connection time was tight. There has been difficulty in maintaining connections with the flights and the Gills Bay ferry, but they were going to suggest a solution. Discussion to be continued.</p> <p>David Summers update 11.03.24: Aaron’s have sent me a draft timetable which I have reviewed. It includes connections (Mon to Fri) with both outgoing flights and one incoming flight. I am meeting Aaron’s after the Forum meeting to finalise the timetable.</p>	David Summers	Closed	<p>Meeting update 20.03.24 - Action Closed. David Summers to provide an update following the meeting with Aaron's.</p> <p>See Action CTF2024 M002/A006</p>

ACTIONS – last meeting

Date	Action reference	Action Details	Actionee	Status	Meeting Updates
22/06/2023	CTF2023 M002/A010	David Summers to see if a combined timetable can be printed and copies distributed. David Summers updated 06.11.23 - Paused while timetable revisions were under consideration but would progress once agreed. David Summers update 11.03.24: I am meeting Aaron's after the Forum to finalise the timetable changes. We will then produce combined timetables.	David Summers	Closed	Meeting update 20.03.24 - Action Closed. David Summers to provide an update following the meeting with Aaron's. See Action CTF2024 M002/A007
22/06/2023	CTF2023 M002/A012	Chair to follow up with John MacQuarrie, Scottish Rail Holdings at a meeting with regards to catering services, Delmore Loop and franchise plans for Caledonian Sleeper. The meeting was planned to take place in Helmsdale on 23.11.23 at 2pm. An invitation had been circulated to Forum Members. An update on this meeting would be provided at the next meeting of the CTF, scheduled for March 2024	Chair	Superseded	Meeting update 20.03.24 - Action Superseded. Meeting was held. The Chair followed up with the minister and a decision regarding the funding for the Delmore Loop will be made in late Spring 24. CTF requested additional catering services in the winter months. Scotrail to consider recruiting year round jobs to enable this. Superseded by Action CTF2024 M002/A003
08/11/2023	CTF2023 M003/A001	Chair to send a letter to Chief Executive / Head of Roads department raising concerns over the conditions of what is perceived as the busiest car parks in Thurso (Co-op Car Park and Tennis Court Car Park)	Chair	Closed	Meeting update 20.03.24 - The Roads department are not responsible for the repairs to car parks. Christopher Holmes in the property department is the contact regarding these. Cllr Matthew Reiss reported that the Highland Council do not want to release any money to maintain the car parks. Previous repairs have been done under goodwill gestures and are not budgeted for. Cllr Raymond Bremner proposed that Thurso councillors look at their funding. Wick councillors brought money in from their available funds for the Riverside Car Park.

ACTIONS – last meeting

Date	Action reference	Action Details	Actionee	Status	Meeting Updates
08/11/2023	CTF2023 M003/A002	<p>Ryan Savage to update on options for improved communication methods.</p> <p>Fiona Campbell Updated 11.03.24: Yes, the communications team have been excellent at ensuring as much detail as possible is put out to customers during disruption. The staff have all been briefed on the latest technology e.g. arrakis, twitter (X). Most staff have even created twitter accounts now, so that they are always up to date with the info being given to customers. Sometimes customers and staff received a similar message but put across in a different way. This lets staff see both sides and be better informed.</p>	Ryan Savage	Closed	<p>Meeting update 20.03.24 - Ryan Savage gave an update that all staff will be briefed on communication in an attempt to standardise the information given to the public to avoid potential confusion between methods.</p>

ACTIONS – this meeting

Appendix B – Actions arising from this meeting

Action reference	Meeting Item	Action Details	Actionee	Additional Comments
CTF2024 M002/A001	ICP	CTF to respond to the consultation of the Island Connectivity Plan (ICP) to ensure the Caithness side of the Pentland Firth is considered. All members to provide feedback to Laura at comms@caithnesschamber.com by COP Thursday 6th April 2024.	Complete	Response required by: COP Thursday 6th April 2024 (Related to Action CTF 2023 M002/A001) Chair attended Transport Scotland Consultation Event held in Stromness on 29.04.24
CTF2024 M002/A002	ICP	CCoC to formally respond to the ICP consultation with member's feedback.	Complete	(Related to Action CTF 2024 M002/A001 above) Response submitted: 06.05.24
CTF2024 M002/A003	Rail	CCoC to follow up with John MacQuarrie, Scottish Rail Holdings with regards to the franchise plans for Caledonian Sleeper.	CCoC	(Supersedes Action CTF2023 M002/A012)
CTF2024 M002/A004	Rail	Ryan Savage to check the updates to the summer programme regarding catering services.	Ryan Savage	Laura - Awaiting a response
CTF2024 M002/A005	Roads	Fiona Richardson to establish who the owning service is of Thurso Co-op Car Park.	Fiona Richardson	
CTF2024 M002/A006	Bus/Air	David Summers to feedback to the CCoC from the meeting with Aaron's regarding the timetable and longer bus layovers at the airport.	David Summers	
CTF2024 M002/A007	Bus	David Summers to produce combined timetable for printing and copies to be distributed.	David Summers	
CTF2024 M002/A008	Priorities	Forum members to feedback on 24/25 Priorities with requests for consideration.	All CTF Members	
CTF2024 M002/A009	Priorities	Cllr Raymond Bremner to feedback to the Forum after the meeting with Marco Bardelli and Graeme Paget at Transport Scotland.	Cllr Raymond Bremner	
CTF2024 M002/A010	Air	Dougie Cook to report back to the Forum on HIAL's input into the national aviation strategy.	Dougie Cook	
CTF2024 M002/A011	Air	David Swanson to consult with Head of Service at Highland Council regarding their input into the Islands Connectivity Plan	David Swanson	

ACTIONS – this meeting

Action reference	Meeting Item	Action Details	Actionee	Additional Comments
		(ICP) response and whether Transport Scotland's strategy was on target.		
CTF2024 M002/A012	Air	CCoC to write to Kevin O'Leary (HIAL C.O.O.) regarding the issues blocking and delays with recruitment requests and the risk to the PSO. The Highland Council to be copied in.	CCoC	Laura 25.03.24 - Awaiting a response. Laura chased 15.04.24
CTF2024 M002/A013	Sea	CCoC to send David Summers' contact details to Helen Inkster.	Helen Inkster	CCoC to send David Summers info to Helen Inkster - Complete

ACTIONS – this meeting

Action reference	Meeting Item	Action Details	Actionee	Additional Comments
CTF2024 M002/A014	Roads/ Sea	CTF to request further information and timeline in regard to removal of traffic lights by Transport Scotland at Scrabster Harbour to alleviate backlog during the Spring/Summer.	CCoC	<p>Update from Graeme Paget 12.04.24 - Site investigations undertaken by the geotechnical specialists last Friday determined that it is not possible to remove all loose material from the slope using mechanical means alone, due to the distances involved and the limited reach of the largest of plant available. This means that loose material at the highest points will have to be moved down the slope by operatives using roped access and high pressure lances. BEAR are in the process of obtaining quotations for these works, now that they understand the methodology involved, and aim to complete the work by the 15th May when I understand that the abnormal load movements are planned. In the meantime, I have asked BEAR to review the traffic management arrangements to determine if a "Priority" system can be safely achieved whereby the traffic signals could be removed, the overall length of traffic management shortened and signage installed giving priority to traffic heading uphill. I'll have more information about this early next week. Update from Sandy Mackie 23.04.24 - The cones and traffic lights were removed around lunchtime yesterday, but the blocks remain in place. Signage is in place giving priority to traffic leaving the harbour.</p>

ACTIONS – this meeting

Action reference	Meeting Item	Action Details	Actionee	Additional Comments
CTF2024 M002/A015	Roads	CTF to request information regarding safety railings at the junction by Tesco Thurso and enquire if re-installation of these is planned.	CCoC	Graeme Paget response - Feedback from the Road safety team indicated that whilst the scheme is substantially complete, there are still some outstanding works to carry out, including some footway works and road markings, which are due for completion by the end of April. There is a general presumption against installing pedestrian guardrail in the design of new crossings such as this, however each location is assessed independently and a Road Users Safety Audit is now being planned in the coming few weeks to help determine if the guardrail should be installed. Finally, we have raised the issues regarding the crossing timings and the filter lights with the traffic signals installers (Yunex) and asked them to review these to determine if improvements can be made to address the concerns your members have raised. We can monitor this over the coming weeks and feedback accordingly.
CTF2024 M002/A016	Roads	Cllr Raymond Bremner to discuss the Highland Council's communication to the public regarding the maintenance and repair programme.	Cllr Raymond Bremner	
CTF2024 M002/A017	Roads	Cllr Raymond Bremner to raise the issue of clarifying the insurance and claims process for the public at the next monthly roads meeting.	Cllr Raymond Bremner	
CTF2024 M002/A018	Bus	David Swanson and David Summers to discuss the missing bus connection at the UHI North, West and Hebrides Thurso campus.	David Swanson/ David Summers	
CTF2024 M002/A019	Bus	Stagecoach to confirm when the X99 would return to the Riverside bus stop.	Robert Gillespie	

ACTIONS – this meeting

Action reference	Meeting Item	Action Details	Actionee	Additional Comments
CTF2024 M002/A020	Rail	Frank Roach to email Laura at comms@caithnesschamber.com with comments and questions on the Scotrail update.	Frank Roach	
CTF2024 M002/A021	Rail	Ryan Savage, Ian Budd and Michael Willmot to meet and discuss planned exhibitions and celebrations of 150th anniversary of the Far North Line.	Ryan Savage/ Ian Budd/ Michael Willmot	
CTF2024 M002/A022	Rail	Ryan Savage to email CCoC with information and requests from the Highland Tourism group for sending to the Community Councils.	Ryan Savage/ CCoC	

Appendix C – Key Priorities for 2024/25

General

One of the key priorities for 2024/25 will working with the Highland Council and PSO sub-group to ensure a case can be made for continued funding for the PSO and encourage development of a new route to Edinburgh.

Other priorities will include:

Road

- To engage with CTF members and other local stakeholders to identify future areas for investment on the A9 north of Inverness and to lobby Transport Scotland for these to be addressed.
- To work with all stakeholders to ensure maintenance of county's road network in light of declining public-sector budgets, and to lobby for sufficient resource to be provided to address the backlog of works required.
- Push for solutions to the flooding in Traill Street, Thurso.

Rail

- To work with the new Far North Community Rail Partnership to lobby for sustained improvement of the basic service provision on the Far North Line with regards to reliability, journey times, quality of rolling stock, etc., as well as to look at future enhancements to the service.
- To continue to lobby for catering services on rail services all year round.

Air

- To continue to work with Scottish Government, HITRANS, and other stakeholders to work on the ambition for net-zero aviation in the Highlands & Islands by 2040, and to lobby for Wick to be a key part of these ambitions and to be a testbed for new technological solutions.
- Attend the Wick John O'Groats Airport Consultative meetings to represent the Forum.

Sea

- To continue to lobby Transport Scotland to ensure that a solution is found which enables the commitment to deliver Road Equivalent Tariff on the Northern Isles Ferry Services is upheld.

Appendix D – Wick John O’Groats Airport



Public Service Obligation (PSO)

Further 12 months funding until March 2025 has been confirmed.

Aviation Statistics

Statistics for HIAL:

February 2024: Year to date passenger numbers have increased by 4% against February 2023.

February 2023: Aircraft movements are static compared to last year with a reduction of -0.8% on 2023.

Statistics for Wick JOG:

Passengers, February 2024 v 2023 26% increase, YTD 22% increase, the forecast to end of year is over 11k pax.

Aircraft movements down -16% on Feb 2023, YTD -5% the forecast is just over 3k movements this year.

Ongoing works

This year’s maintenance budget has been approved with no specific areas of concentration.

Projects update

The new de-icer trailer and tractor mounted sprayer for winter operations have both been delivered.

Delivery of a new vehicle for security is expected for the end of the month.

Our environmental consultants Ricardo were on site in February and plan to present their findings on the drainage system next month.

Audits and Safety meetings

The CAA will be at the airport 18th-20th March for an air traffic audit.

Staffing levels

ATC staffing is currently reduced to three operational ATCO's.

Our two ATC trainees are progressing well through their validation training. Their validations are now expected for August 2024.

Opening hours

The reduced staffing levels in ATC means the requirement for tactical closures of the airport throughout the day remains in place.

We were forced to close the airport on Sunday 10th March due to the staff shortages in ATC and a member of staff off sick. We continue to manage the staffing as best we can and minimise any disruption.

Eastern Airways and other stakeholders have been informed of the issues we face and will continue to receive regular updates.

The 24/7 cover for emergency flights remains unchanged.

Dougie Cook

HIAL

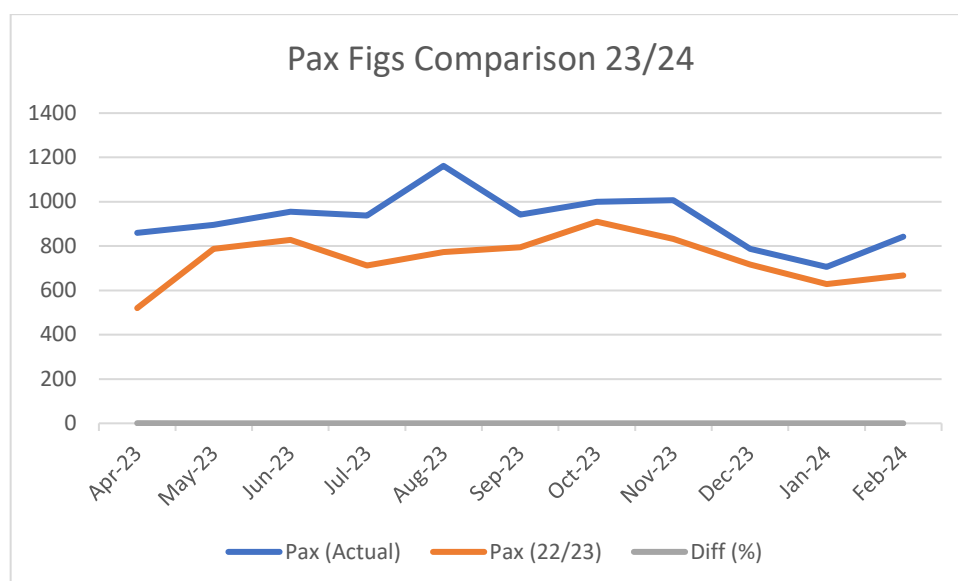
Appendix E – Wick PSO

Wick PSO update

Year 2 summary to date

Passenger figures have seen a substantial and consistent rise across the whole of the second year of operation – as of February 2024 the service has carried just over 10,000 passengers in 2023/24.

Month	Pax (Actual)	Pax (22/23)	Diff (%)
Apr-23	859	520	65%
May-23	896	788	14%
Jun-23	955	828	15%
Jul-23	938	712	32%
Aug-23	1162	773	50%
Sep-23	942	794	19%
Oct-23	1000	910	10%
Nov-23	1007	832	21%
Dec-23	787	716	10%
Jan-24	706	628	12%
Feb-24	843	668	26%



Travel patterns are largely correlated across 2022/23 and 2023/24, indicating a clearly seasonal demand pattern. One notable differentiator can be seen in August 2023, when a trial was undertaken and heavily promoted to offer every seat on the service at a flat fare of £49.99. While the outcome of this trial was successful with regards to increasing passenger numbers, it also resulted in a substantial drop in average revenue which, if continued, would prove financially unsustainable in the long run. The Council and the operator continue to work together to examine ways to boost passenger numbers on the route while ensuring that the service develops towards long-term sustainability.

Funding for 2024/25

Following a period of significant uncertainty regarding the funding for the service beyond 31st March 2024, on 20th February 2024 the Council received a letter from Transport Scotland confirming that their contribution towards the PSO of £1m per annum would continue into 2024/25. The Council itself remains committed to offering its contribution of £0.3m per annum for both 2024/25 and 2025/26.

As part of a wider review of the long-term sustainability not just of the PSO route, but of Wick John O’Groats Airport, Transport Scotland have requested that a Working Group be set up to address the various challenges and opportunities here. The Council has had an early-stage discussion with Transport Scotland on the constitution of the group, and hopes to hold the first meeting in mid-April.

Performance and Reliability

Performance and reliability over the period from November to February 2024 has been largely in line with expectations, given the weather-related challenges over the period – notably heavy snow and ice in January. The relatively low number of cancellations during this period is credit to the hard work of the team at Wick John O’Groats Airport in keeping the airport open in the face of challenging conditions.

Month	Planned	Operated	%Operated	CANX Reasons	Reliability (controllable)	OTP
Nov-23	96	94	98%	2 x Operational 2 x Weather	98%	67%
Dec-23	78	72	93%	4 x Operational 8 x Weather	95%	64%
Jan-24	78	66	85%	4 x Operational	93%	Data not available
Feb-24	92	84	91%	4 x Weather 2 x Operational 2 x Crew	96%	Data not available

Schedule Updates

The previously advised winter schedule, operating from 23rd December to 14th January inclusive, with a period of two weeks in January offering a single daily rotation, appears to have again been successful. As can be seen above, passenger growth was maintained at the expected rate by comparison to 2022/23, and the single daily rotation both mitigated against risks both financially (not operating flights with a low or zero number of passengers) and operationally (moving operations within daylight hours).

The summer schedule (1 April-31 Oct 2024) has been reviewed to assess onward/inbound connectivity at Aberdeen Airport and, as of the date of this report, no significant changes are expected to be made.

David Swanson

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Appendix F – Pentland Ferries



MV Pentalinas annual refit has been completed for 2024 and the vessel will continue in service on the Pentland Firth route until September 2024. The vessel will operate 3 returns sailings a day on the same scheduled timetable as present throughout this time.

MV Alfred has also completed the 2024 refit period and remains in operation for CalMac on the Clyde and Hebrides network until September 2024.

The introduction of our self-funded Resident Discount Scheme (RDS) has been well received by Orkney residents. We are delighted to be in a position to now extend the scheme until end of October 2024. We very much hope this assists Orkney residents with the cost of travel on and off the islands. The scheme was rolled out in addition to the fare freeze we have in place until April 2025.

Recruitment of seafaring personnel is challenging at present. We are currently recruiting for various ranks and ratings on a permanent, relief and temporary basis.

Helen Inkster

Managing Director Pentland Ferries

20th March 2024

Appendix G – Scrabster Harbour Trust



Scrabster Harbour is managed and operated by Scrabster Harbour Trust, established in 1841 and governed by its own legislation. The Trust seeks to serve the local community and all surpluses created are reinvested into the port.



1. PORT ACTIVITY

The Trust is having a particularly strong trading year with record revenues forecast. The activity highlights for the ten-month period to 31st January 2024 are as follows.

- Total vessel arrivals 1,808. An increase of 3% on the previous year.
- Total vessel tonnage 7.758 million tonnes. Again, an increase of 3% on the previous year.
- Ferry Passenger numbers totalled 195,350 with the 200,000 figure being passed in early February. This is an increase of 29.5% on the corresponding period in 2022-23.
- Fish box landings amounted to 239,658 boxes, a decrease of 12% on last year. The decline arises from reduced consigned landings partly offset by an increase in landings through the Scrabster Market.

SEA – SCRABSTER HARBOUR TRUST UPDATE

- General cargo volumes amounted to 61,470 tonnes, a 77% increase on last year. The total includes timber, road salt, electrical transformers, wind turbine components and rock bags for offshore cable protection.
- Faroes fish cargo volumes are 50% lower than last year reflecting disruption to the sailing schedule earlier in the financial year.
- Fuel deliveries by coastal tanker amount to 27,955 tonnes, a 18% decline on the prior year level.
- Offshore Energy activity involved 67 vessels with a registered tonnage of 316,913 tonnes.

2. LOOKING AHEAD & OTHER MATTERS

Upcoming activity and issues at the port include the following.

- The Trust's application to be designated as a Border Control Post (BCP) has reached the final stages. Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) visited Scrabster on 4th March 2024 to inspect the facilities. A decision on the application is expected next month ahead of the introduction of full import checks on 30th April 2024.



- The Scrabster cruise season is expected to begin on 23rd April with the scheduled arrival of the German vessel AidaSol. The season runs until early August with eighteen vessels currently expected.

SEA – SCRABSTER HARBOUR TRUST UPDATE

- The importation of wind turbine components for the Limekiln development is expected to commence in mid-May with the shipping programme ending at the beginning of October. Components for twenty-four turbines will pass through the port. The port will be particularly busy during this period.
- The ferry peak season sailing schedule will begin on 1st May and end on 30th September.
- Following the landslip on 27th December 2023, traffic lights remain in place at the entrance corner to the port. There does not appear to have been any further movement of material since December. With Easter and the peak sailing schedule fast approaching, plus the upcoming abnormal transports for the Limekiln project, the Trust has requested for the lights to be removed.
- For the safety of port users and the public, automatic access barriers will be installed on the St. Ola and Jubilee Piers to restrict access to authorised persons and vehicles.

Sandy Mackie

15th March 2024

ROADS – THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

2023/2024 Priority	2024/2025 Priority	Activity	Route	Road Name/Location	Average Width (m)	Scheme Length (m)	Total Area (m ²)	Cost per (m ²)	Estimated Cost to Lay
284	282	Inlay	U3655	Telford Street	6	98	588	£25	£14,700.00
285	283	Inlay	U3805/U3608	Union Street junction with Miller Street	6	15	90	£25	£2,250.00
287	284	Inlay	U3657	Market Street	3	42	126	£25	£3,150.00
289	285	Inlay	U2372	Elzy Place	6	15	90	£25	£2,250.00
290	286	Inlay	U2376	Elzy Grove junction	6	15	90	£25	£2,250.00
291	287	Inlay	U3801/U3668/U3630	Lindsay Drive - Port Dunbar	6	430	2580	£25	£64,500.00
292	288	Inlay	U3553	Hillhead Road - willowbank junction	6	15	90	£25	£2,250.00
294	289	Inlay	U3520/U3580	Grinogoe Street/leith walk	6	420	2520	£25	£63,000.00
295	290	Inlay	U3502	Leishman Avenue - corner crescent junction	3	15	45	£25	£1,125.00
296	291	Inlay	U3547	Henrietta Street	6	80	480	£25	£12,000.00
297	292	Inlay	U3768	Airport Road-Ambulance station junction	6	40	240	£25	£6,000.00
298	293	Inlay	U3768	Parallel airport Road	3	33	99	£25	£2,475.00
299	294	Inlay	U3407	Hill Avenue meets ackergill crescent	3	15	45	£25	£1,125.00
300	295	Inlay	U3689	U class George Street	6	57	342	£25	£8,550.00
301	296	Inlay	U3634	Robert Street - A99 junction	6	15	90	£25	£2,250.00
302	297	Inlay	U3547	Henrietta Street - A99 junction	6	15	90	£25	£2,250.00
303	298	Inlay	U3805	Station Road	6	150	900	£25	£22,500.00
304	299	Inlay	U3649	Seaforth Avenue	3	120	360	£25	£9,000.00
307	300	Overlay	C1033	Wildeston	3	341	1023	£20	£20,460.00
308	301	Overlay	C1033	Innstack	3	148	444	£20	£8,880.00
311	302	Overlay	B870	Quaybrae to Ruthers junction	3	1200	3600	£20	£72,000.00
312	303	Overlay	B870	Quaybrae junction past Scottag	3				
314	304	Overlay	C1029	Camster Road Pennyland House	3				
315	305	Overlay	C1029	Camster Road Strath to windfarm	3				
316	306	Overlay	C1029	Camster Road at Windfarm entrance	3				
317	307	Overlay	C1029	Camster Road	3				
318	308	Inlay	U3532	Green Road	6				
319	309	Inlay	C1045	Latheronwheel Village Road	6				
320	310	Inlay	U1071	Lybster Main st	6				
322	311	Inlay	A836	Castletown Road	6				
323	312	Inlay	B874	Ormlie Road	7.5				
324	313	Inlay	A99	A99 North St - B874 Jct	5.4				
327	314	Overlay	U1043	Dunbeath - Mulbuie Road	3.5				
	315	Edge strengthening	A836	Thurso East A836 at corner leaving thurso	2.4				
	316	Overlay	B855	Dunnet	3				
	317	Overlay	B874	Tister B874 junction	6				
	318	Overlay	C1006	Wester Bridge - Greenland Road, Reaster	3				
	319	Overlay	C1006	Wester Bridge - Greenland Road	3				
	320	Overlay	C1006	Wester Bridge - Greenland Road	3				
	321	Overlay	C1006	Wester Bridge - Greenland Road	3				
	322	Overlay	C1037	Hastigrow - Upper Gills Road	3				
	323	Overlay	U1296	North Watten side Road bit	3				
	324	Overlay	U1356	Reiss Beach Road	3				
	325	Surface dressing	U1356	Reiss Beach Road	3				
	326	Overlay	U1356	Reiss Beach Road	3				
	327	Overlay	U1557	Skirza	3				
	328	Overlay	U1565	Upper Skirza	3				
	329	Overlay	U1597	Canisbay	3				
	330	Overlay	U1641	Barrock	3				
	331	Overlay	U1771	Nipster Road	3				
	332	Overlay	U1809	Oldhall 41	3				
	333	Overlay	U2300	Calder Lane U	3				
	334	Surface dressing	U2314	Harland Road	6				
	335	Surface dressing	U2401	Mey	3				
	336	Overlay	U2604	Canisbay	3				
	337	Overlay	U2728	Brabstermire Road	3				
	338	Overlay	U2748	Folly Road, Murkle	3				
	339	Inlay	U3618	Newton Road	3				
	340	Inlay	U3618	Newton Avenue	6				
	341	Inlay	U3649	Seaforth Avenue	6				
	342	Inlay	U3649	Seaforth Avenue	6				
	343	Inlay	U3791	Gowrie lane	6				
	344	Inlay	U3795	Buisness park	6				
	345	Inlay	U3805	Bankhead	6				
	346	Inlay	U4024	Duncan Street	3				
	347	Inlay	U4028/U4115	Dunnet Road meets towerhill Road junction	3				
	348	Inlay	U4032	East Church Street	6				
	349	Edge strengthening	U4032	East Church Street	1.2				
	350	Inlay	U4064	Heathfield Road from Surface dressing to pennyland junction	6				
	351	Edge strengthening	U4117	Patersons Lane	1.2				
	352	Inlay	U4117/U3985	Patersons Lane/Brabster Street Junction	6				
	353	Inlay	U4139/U4133	Riverside place from mansons lane resurfacing to wilson Street	6				
	354	Inlay	U4141	Robertsons Lane	3				
	355	Inlay	U4161	Scaraben Court Junction	6				
	356	Inlay	U4287	Market Street	6				
	357	Inlay	U4319	Langland Court	3				
	358	Inlay	U4337	Ormlie Industrial Estate Road	6				
	359	Inlay	U4369	Albyn Court Junction	6				
	360	Inlay	U4733	Houston Terrace junction	3				
	361	Overlay	B874	Lochshell	3				
	362	Overlay	C1010	Barrock - Ham - Brough Road	3				
	363	Overlay	C1025	Bishops hill SD to north first turn	3				
	364	Overlay	C1033	Everley - Crockser Toll Road	3				
	365	Overlay	U1755	Bower	3				
	366	Overlay	U4400	Thurso east from resurfacing to end	3				
	367	Overlay	U1755	Brabsterdorrn to halfway down hill	3				
	368	Overlay	U1082	Braehungie	3				
	369	Inlay	U1082	Guidebest Road	3				
	370	Overlay	U2896	Nottingham Mains Farm Road	3				
	371	Overlay	U1105	Achsinegar Road	3				
	372	Overlay	U1113	Achow Osclay	3				
	373	Overlay	U2819	Brough Road, Hempriggs Row	3				
	374	Overlay	U1226	Long Greens Road	3				
	375	Overlay	U1218	Corbiegoe	3				
	376	Overlay	U1210	Brickigoe Road	3				
	377	Overlay	U1210	Roadside Ragara	3				

ROADS – THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

2023/2024 Priority	2024/2025 Priority	Activity	Route	Road Name/Location	Average Width (m)	Scheme Length (m)	Total Area (m ²)	Cost per (m ²)	Estimated Cost to Lay
	378	Overlay	U2887	Stemster Farm Road	3				
	379	Overlay	U1276	Scouthal Road	3				
	380	Overlay	U1782	Dunn Road	3				
	381	Overlay	U1782	Dunn Farm	3				
	382	Overlay	B876	Hastigrow Burn	6				
	383	Inlay	U4084	Mayfield Road	3				
	384	Overlay	B874	Aimster Farm Road	5.5				
	385	Inlay	A99	Quoys Of Reiss	2.5				
	386	Overlay	A99	Reiss Golf Course	6				
	387	Overlay	U1775	Brabsterdorrان	2.9				
	388	Overlay	U1609	Canisbay	5.8				
	389	Overlay	A99	Keiss Village	7.5				
	390	Overlay	A99	Keiss Village	5				
	391	Overlay	B876	Granton Mains	6				
	392	Overlay	A882	Haster To Bilbster	1.5				
	393	Overlay		Longreens Road	2.5				
	394	Inlay	U1751	Auchorn Square, Bower	3				
121	395	Surface dressing	C1037	Hastigrow to Upper Gills	3				
85	396	Surface dressing	U1597	Stemster seater Road	3				
133	397	Surface dressing	U2388	Carnaby Road	6				
138	398	Surface dressing	U4313	Provost Cormack Drive	7.5				
37	399	Surface dressing	C1037	Hastigrow to Upper Gills	3				
154	400	Surface dressing	U1113	Achow Osclay	3				
112	401	Surface dressing	U2134	Achscrabster Road	3				
161	402	Surface dressing	U4084	Mayfield Road	6				
	403	Overlay	U1190	Clachan Road Clyth	3				

Appendix I – Stagecoach

As mentioned previously we had had significant investment made by way of brand-new vehicles. The first of those vehicles are to arrive by the end of the month.

Our passengers' numbers have remained steady and passenger confidence is generally high.

Appendix J – Far North Line Community Rail Partnership



The Far North Line Community Rail Partnership website is now live at www.fnlcrp.co.uk with the purpose of promoting the line and all the amenities and attractions to which it leads. Its aim is to encourage non car tourism in the area and help the local economy by advertising the appeal of the various destinations alongside the enticement of the scenic beauty of the line itself. We are keen to hear from any business or tourist attraction which is not currently mentioned or linked in. Contact me at hello@fnlcrp.co.uk. We would like to hear especially from providers of community transport or active travel opportunities such as cycle hire where there is a service that can be offered to visitors arriving by train or bus - and in so doing make local transport providers' finances more secure for serving local communities.

The line from Helmsdale to Wick and Thurso celebrates its 150th anniversary this year and to mark this, there will be an event at RSPB Forsinard on Friday 23rd June which will include presentations about the history of the route as well as looking ahead to its future. Anyone who would like to be kept up to date with details of the day as they emerge should again contact me at hello@fnlcrp.co.uk

Michael Willmot

Secretary

Appendix K – Focus North

F O C U S

N O R T H



**DRIVING OPPORTUNITIES
THAT SHAPE OUR FUTURE**

Focus North commissioned a detailed local transport study from innovation consultancy Urban Foresight, in response to concerns raised by stakeholders about transport for employment. Urban Foresight carried out a great deal of analysis to understand current transport modes and public transport provision. This included a survey of local residents and stakeholder that captured more than 350 responses. As a next step, Highland Council and Dounreay are now meeting to examine current contracts with providers and consider how they can take a more innovative approach to improve public transport links. This is likely to be a medium-term action, when existing contracts are up for renewal. In the more immediate term, Focus North is investigating the potential for pilot-level activity off the back of the Urban Foresight report. However, it is worth noting that while Focus North is making progress on many fronts, transport remains a particularly challenging issue and more resource is needed to deliver the kind of transformation the community wants to see.

Nicola More

Business Development Manager, Focus North