

Minutes of Hawkshead Parish Council extraordinary meeting regarding the Windermere Ferry held on 7th August 2018 at 7.30 pm in the Upper Market Hall, Hawkshead.

In attendance:

Parish Council members: Cllr Woodhouse (Chair), Cllr Fordham, Cllr Moulton, Cllr Spedding, Cllr Larkin, Cllr Wood

Clerk to Parish Council: Tracey Thornley

County Council: Cllr Ian Stewart (Deputy Leader), Cllr Brereton, Cllr Airey

District Council: Cllr Coward, Cllr Hall, Cllr Berry

Members of the public: 17 present

Cllr Woodhouse opened the meeting and welcomed everyone, he then read out a report regarding information he had received from someone who had spoken to the Ferry Operations Manager as follows:

“Following the ferry fire the engine needed to be completely rebuilt by Perkins. It will be completed and due for delivery on 12th October. There was also damage to the control panel and wiring loom and has been delayed due to dealing with the Insurance company. When replaced it will be with a more up to date system and this will be finished and ready for when the engine is fitted on 12th October. The investigation over the fire was all in order and when the ferry is operational again it will be running as before.”

Ian Stewart, Deputy Leader had also brought with him a more detailed timeline of events and how the Council and worked at getting the Ferry operational again which match up with the report that Cllr Woodhouse read out. Ian briefly ran through the timeline for the benefit of all:-

27/5/18 – Ferry fire incident

29/5/18 – Ferry returned to Ferry Nab

30/5/18 – Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) attended to carry out damage assessment.

1/6/18 – Adverse Event investigation (draft) produced and passed to senior managers and H&S team

4/6/18 – Insurance loss adjusters appointed and first contact made

8/6/18 – Loss adjuster visit site to assess damage. Deep clean price agreed with loss adjuster. Deep clean contractor agreed

11/6/18 – Loss Adjuster advise that specialist marine electrical contractor must be used for all electrical repair work. Loss Adjuster agreed CCC could engage single mechanical contractor to carry out mechanical associated works. Deep clean of hold area carried out

12/6/18 – Damaged engine removal agreed and works commenced.

14/6/18 – Pre start meeting held CCC/Contractor

15/6/18 – Damaged engine removed and returned to manufacturer for assessment.

18/6/18 – Loss adjuster re visit Ferry following deep clean. Contractor to commence mechanical works. First electrical contractor visit to price full rewire.

21/6/18 – Second electrical contractor visit to price full rewire. Loss adjuster in discussion with Engine fabricator with regards engine assessment.

22/6/18 – Loss Adjuster agree new engine to be procured and fitted.

25/6/18 – New engine is located and order placed by Contractor

29/6/18 – Provisional date for the procurement of new engine provided as 12/10/18.

6/7/18 – Electrical contractors quotes received

10/7/18 – Electrical contractors quotes passed to Loss Adjuster for assessment and advice regarding which quote is preferred. Electrical contractor appointed. Specialist painting contractor quote received. Loss Adjuster reject price and request further two quotes.

13/7/18 – Agency employees contracts are suspended.

23/7/18 – Pre start meeting held with appointed electrical contractor. Electrical Contractor starts work on Ferry. Quotation for replacement/repairs to fire suppression system required.

24/7/18 – Request made from Senior Manager (K Melville) for the electrical works programme to be reduced and to look operating the Ferry using a single engine once the Phase 1 electrical works have been completed.

24/7/18 – Request for reduced programme made to Contractor.

26/7/18 – Cost increase to reduce programme in Phase 1 received.

27/7/18 – Loss Adjuster visit Ferry for site visit for progress update.

30/7/18 – Loss Adjuster provide contact details for specialist contractors to provide a quote for the fire suppression repair/replacement. Further specialist painting quote received and passed to Loss Adjuster for assessment. Painting quote agreed with Loss Adjuster.

2/8/18 – Specialist painting contractor starts work.

TBC – Quotes requested from specialist contractors for new fire suppression system. Quote for repairs to the existing fire suppression system requested from Contractor.

Cllrs then asked questions to Ian Stewart:

It is now apparent that the information on the future timescales of the ferry were in place, why wasn't this information shared? There has been a lot of concern and upset which could have been stopped with this information – why wasn't this shared with the public? Ian reported that he had not been asked for this information and neither had the senior officers. Ian was aware of one phone call which resulted in an email from assistant Director of Highways, there was a request for marketing help something that CC provided then subsequently backed up.

Concern that as it was such a public issue why Cumbria County Council did not publicise what was happening sooner? Ian reported that a newsletter had been circulated on the 19th July and put on noticeboards around Bowness which had an update on the repair.

A member of the local committee for the Ferry said progress is being made with the wiring. The main delay has been organising a new engine as they are no longer built so they are rebuilding it and waiting for the MCA to give permission. Insurance delay has also been a problem.

They were then asked why it took so long for signs to go up, some of the diversion signs are confusing, it took 4 weeks for the temporary signs to be placed. They could not answer why there was a delay in signage but it is there now.

Cllr Brereton asked that businesses and the community contact him with how he can help whether it be trying to get a shuttle bus between the ferry, Sawrey and Hawkshead. Asking for the car parks to reduce their fees, a better passenger ferry service. The current passenger ferry can not take bikes and is part of a trip which goes along the lake to different locations. This service doesn't start on this side until 10.20 am and finishes at 4.40 pm which does not help people running businesses on that side of the lake.

A member of the public asked if the question of an extended/more frequent service had been asked? The question had been asked and the boat service is running at full capacity, they don't have the facility to do more.

It was reported that people who walk from Bowness see the yellow signs but no mention of there being a replacement service. The satnav is still sending people down to the ferry as the quickest route, people are ignoring the diversion sign. A sign with do not follow satnav may help.

This is also having an impact of the highways which are already in a poor state.

The question was asked that "could the ferry run on one engine?" The MCA would not allow this.

The National Trust have reported that it has had an impact on their visitor numbers.

It was reported that Cumbria Tourism have been given £285k to market the area after the Lakes line problems. The County Council has no budget for marketing but Cumbria Tourism should be able to help. Cllr Brereton has already spoken to Peter Storey but it was suggested that contact is made with Gill Haigh.

A member of the public queried what the capacity of the ferry will be when it is back running. They do not know as the question hasn't been asked yet but the MCA will have the final say. Concern was raised that the ferry won't be viable if the capacity is less. Ian didn't feel this was an issue as it is not viable as it was. The current ferry will have a 5-6 year life span until it will need replacing completely. The officers are looking at doing the refit this year which is due next year.

The question of what is the plan for the future and what is in place already was asked. It was reported that it is too early for plans to be in place for this but in the next 3 years planning will start. Early thoughts are looking at an electric boat with the current battery capacity this may be a good way forward.

They were then asked if the Council will consider privatising the Ferry in the future as the customer service is currently not very good. It has been recognised that the Customer service wasn't the best and staff will receive customer service training. There have been no conversations regarding the privatisation of the ferry.

Concern was raised that not all County Councillors had been invited to the meeting a few that cover the area around the lake were missing.

County have asked the Lake District National Parks Authority and the National Trust to report back on the impact it has had on them financially.

All permit holders will be getting a refund.

It was recognised that the Ferry is a key part of the infrastructure of the South Lakes.

All agreed that the temporary signage is not good enough and needs to be better. The question of permanent signage to Hawkshead was raised as it isn't very good from any direction. Any sign issues to be flagged up with Cllr Brereton. Each County Councillor has a local highways budget of £6k which can help with signage. Ian confirmed he would happily commit to a few more signs to colleagues at the Local Committee so that Hawkshead in High Furness division gets the signage they want. A question was then asked how quickly can permanent signage be put up – temporary signs can be done quickly there is a different process for permanent signs with the issues of a suitable site there shouldn't be a need for lengthy traffic regulations order.

Question as to whether the Ferry User Group should be reinstated? Keith Little confirmed he was open to this coming back.

ACTIONS:-

- Cllr Airey and Ian will get in touch with Gill Haigh at Cumbria Tourism to get some marketing in place
- Notify Cllr Brereton of any additional temporary signage required or to be changed he will then compile a list
- Notify Cllr Brereton of areas requiring permanent signage

The overall view was that senior members of the County Council need to accept that this is a really important issue to the community and that there should be systems in place should this unfortunate incident ever happen again.

OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr Brereton reported that Victoria Lupton will come and do a site visit of the village on 18th September with regard to The Squares Project and getting this moving.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Signed Date

DRAFT