

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF  
THE POLITICAL SUBGROUP OF THE ROUTE PARTNERSHIP  
HELD ON THE ISLES OF SCILLY  
ON **26 August 2009** at 4.00pm.

Present: Councillor Graeme Hicks (Chairman) CC.

Cornwall Councillors Roger Harding, Sue Pass  
and Tamsin Williams.

Isles of Scilly Councillors, Dudley Mumford, Julia  
Day, Marian Bennett and Chris Thomas.

In Attendance Philip Hygate (Route Partnership Chairman) Tim  
Wood, Nigel Blackler, Peter Laverock (minutes).

**1 Minutes**

The Chairman proposed and Councillor Mrs Day seconded the minutes of the meeting of 21 July to be a correct record.

**2 Report of the Project Director, Tim Wood**

Tim Wood emphasised that the 3 Feb 2010 was the deadline for completing the tender process on the new vessel and if this date was missed then the whole process would have to begin again.

Tim Wood said the consultant's report backed the policy of a single vessel on the route, estimating it at £600,000 a year cheaper than the two vessel proposal.

Councillor Chris Thomas described his own personal experience of the ferry industry both here and on the North Sea and concluded that the vessel has got to be a mono-hull. Fuel consumption was much higher for the catamaran fast ferries.

The group agreed that there is not an argument any more about the choice of boat for the Isles of Scilly Link and a forthright statement of support for a single vessel solution should be made. **Action: Councillors**

Councillor Mrs Julia Day said the council had approved the plans to extend St Mary's quay, on 30 July 2009, which will have significant visual impacts and it had been a sacrifice to do so. There were only three objections from local people to the plans for St Mary's.

Tim Wood then explained the consultant's conclusions that the Options B and C (having freight handling away from the harbour) were 21% or 26% more expensive to operate and this would have the overall effect

of putting up freight costs for Isles of Scilly businesses by 8% (assuming Penzance freight costs were 1/3 of the overall freight cost).

Roger Harding said that vans would be able to avoid the docks if there was an out-of-town depot, reducing congestion.

Councillor Dudley Mumford said that it was unacceptable to the islands to have a 7 or 8% increase in the costs of freight, so he was against Options B and C.

Councillor Thomas said that a lorry booking system at Penzance docks would help to reduce congestion. Tim Wood said that the additional space on the reclaimed land at Penzance in Option A would bring an end to unsafe lorry parking in the area. He added that many vehicles making deliveries to the quay went on to make other local deliveries (anecdotally about 80%) so an out of town option would not necessarily significantly reduce freight traffic coming to the harbour. With the combined vessel it would have at least six sailings a week (Summer) compared to the current three of the Gry Maritha thereby instantly halving the freight deliveries for any one sailing. Whilst the amended design has less storage capacity it will still allow any vehicle type to turn around within the facility and exit safely. There would be storage capacity in the freight building so not every load arriving has to go on the same day sailing; late deliveries could go next day.

Councillor Mrs Julia Day expressed her concern about bias in the Cornishman's coverage of the Penzance dock improvements. Tim Wood said he had met the editor of the Cornishman but saw no change in the balance of their coverage.

Councillor Roger Harding said it was time to get all the parties into one room. Everyone wanted to support the Isles of Scilly link. He had no problem with extending the quay and everyone agreed that a passenger terminal was needed. The problem issues were about the risk that the development would impair the future regeneration of Penzance and the mixing of pedestrians/tourists with the freight depot.

Councillor Harding also questioned the wages needed to employ two truck drivers and two fork lift operators at the inland depot, as quoted in Option C all at salaries of £25k. He said that there were men in Newlyn who could do both jobs combined and would work for £17k.

Tim Wood said the salaries used were consistent across the options considered. Additional lorry drivers were needed in Option C and consultants had priced it assuming standard industry rates. Allowances for sickness have to be made and even with multi tasking everybody has a job to do.

Roger Harding said that he did not think there was any issue with the beach, saying it was more about the freight, but Tamsin Williams and Sue Pass disagreed and asked that a list of the design concessions be

made public for all to consider the reduced impacts of the scheme.

Councillor Dudley Mumford said that if the Battery Rocks plan was defeated the islanders would look to other schemes, including Falmouth, which was of equal merit to Options B and C in Penzance.

Members of the group wanted to put out a joint statement showing that they supported the sea link and reminding people that the Penzance plans had been modified in response to public comments. They were unanimous in supporting the need for a sea link to what is a vulnerable island community. A statement was drafted (see below in italics) and the meeting adjourned from the Chief Executive's Office to the airport meeting room, where the final text was agreed and signed by the Councillors present.

The meeting ended at 6.00pm

*Joint letter from the Route Partnership Political sub-group.*

*After meeting on the Isles of Scilly on 26 August 2009.*

*We are very concerned, after being advised by senior officials at the Department for Transport, that the funding for the harbours at Penzance and St Mary's and the new vessel will be lost if the project is delayed any longer. This applies particularly to the Department for Transport funding which must be drawn down by February 2010, and after that would be in doubt due to the public spending reductions that will be faced by whatever government is returned at the next election.*

*We think that it would be unacceptable in the current climate to expect local council tax payers to fund the considerable cost of investigating further options.*

*We feel strongly that single vessel combining freight and passengers all year round is the right choice.*

*We are worried that in the current debate the people of Penzance have not been fully appraised of the changes that have been made to the Penzance harbour plans to address local concerns; such as reducing the size of coverage near to the Battery Rocks beach, reducing the bulk of the freight building and giving the passenger building a more traditional design. We recognise the sacrifices already made on the Isles of Scilly to get the harbour plans approved at that end of the route.*

*We question the conclusion in the press release of 25 August 2009 and are confident that the project is deliverable and would like to see a more reasoned debate around the actual facts and figures as prepared and researched carefully by our officers and external consultants.*

*We fully support the cause of securing the economic future of*

*Penzance and we also wish to re-affirm our moral obligation to support a remote and vulnerable island community.*

*Signatures:*

*Councillor Tamsin Williams - CC member Penzance Central*

*Councillor Sue Pass - CC member Penzance Promenade*

*Councillor Roger Harding - CC member Newlyn and Mousehole*

*Councillor Graeme Hicks - CC Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Planning.*

*Councillor Julia Day, Chairman of the Council of the Isles of Scilly*

*Councillor Dudley Mumford, Council of the Isles of Scilly*

*Councillor Mrs Marian Bennett, Council of the Isles of Scilly*

*Councillor Chris R Thomas, Council of the Isles of Scilly.*