



## Forth Bridges Forum - Meeting 35

28 April 2020

Skype call meeting

### MINUTE

#### Attendees

Scott Lees – (SL) Vice Chair	Transport Scotland
Michael Dineen (MD)	Transport Scotland
John Andrew (JA)	ICE Consultant/ Transport Scotland
Miles Oglethorpe (MO)	HES
Rebecca Jones (RJ)	HES
Caroline Warburton (CWar)	Visit Scotland
Chris Waite (CW)	Amey
Paul Lawrence (PL)	City of Edinburgh Council
Allan Watt (AW)	Fife Council
Graeme Malcolm (GM)	West Lothian Council
Ken Gourlay (KG)	Fife Council
Gillian Laurie (Secretariat)	Amey

#### 1. Welcome & Introductions

- 1.1. SL welcomed all attendees to Meeting 35 of the Forth Bridges Forum.

#### 2. Apologies, Minutes of Previous Meeting and Actions

- 2.1. Apologies received from: - Hugh Gillies, Mark Dunlop, Lawrence Shackman, Keavy O’Neil – Transport Scotland, Ian Heigh, Sally Abdelraziq – Network Rail; Mark Arndt – Amey, Janice MacGregor – Visit Scotland
- 2.2. Minutes of previous meeting held on 28 January 2020 were agreed and subsequently published.
- 2.3. Action points were reviewed and updated as follows:

Action 21.2 – Open action  
Action 32.1 – Closed  
Action 32.2 - Ongoing  
Action 32.3 – Ongoing  
Action 33.1 – Closed  
Action 33.2 – Ongoing  
Action 34.1 – Closed  
Action 34.2 - Ongoing

- 2.4. Action 32.2 – MD to send funding breakdown to MO and RJ
- 2.5. Action 32.3 – Service level Agreement to be sent to MD
- 2.6. Action 33.2 – World Heritage Coordinator – MD will seek update from I Heigh
- 2.7. Action 34.2 – Interventions to be shared – see accompanying attachment.

### **3. Covid-19 Impact on Business as Usual**

- 3.1. SL advised that Transport Scotland has ceased all non essential work in line with Scottish Government Guidelines. Work for planning ahead is underway.
- 3.2. MO and RJ gave an HES update. Future planning ongoing although some World Heritage sites are struggling at this time. Unesco trail initiative is on hold.
- 3.3. PL gave a CEC update. Tourism Recovery plan is being considered. Michael Matheson encouragement of Active Travel, SL added there are opportunities here.
- 3.4. CWar gave an update from Visit Scotland. Tourism industry devastated by lockdown. For Forth Bridges area this includes marine sector i.e cruise, boat operators, impact on local businesses. Scottish Tourism Emergency Response planning is underway. CWar asked if we can link with Allan Watt for Forth Bridges area top level.

**ACTION: SL asked forum members as a multi agency for ideas of how to support during this crisis and how to help for future.**

### **4. Tourism Update**

- 4.1. The Forth Bridges Tourism Group is considering how best to ensure that high quality visitor information can enrich and enhance the visitor experience in North and South Queensferry. The destinations require visitor information that is informative, up-to-date, well maintained and future proof. Work to achieve this will include the implementation of the North and South Queensferry Orientation and Signage Strategy along with the application of digital technology to provide visitor information and will include educational aspects linked to the Forth Bridges in terms of engineering, design etc. A proposal on this work will be presented to the Forth Bridges Area Tourism Group in due course and funding sources will be identified in order that funding applications can be made once the current restrictions have been eased and these funding channels are open once again.
- 4.2. MD offered a summary of the Merchandise Trial Report. Overall there has been a varied response to the offering with most retail outlets reporting a successful volume of sales, some healthier than others.
- 4.3. Stock wise, we have sold out of a handful of products, namely the red mug and poster D. Other items such as the pop-up card, basic pen, postcards, water bottles and traditional style t-shirts have also all sold very well.

- 4.4. From the 41 orders placed a revenue of £5,890 has been generated, resulting in a net loss of £1,788. This is in part due to ordering the minimal quantity of items at the start which comes with high unit costs.
- 4.5. The trial has proved that there is a demand and a market for Forth Bridges items and the Barnardo's event in September 2019 provided us with the comfort that all the products we offer can sell, given the right platform to do so.
- 4.6. In order to progress matter we need to consider selling the items on-line. Shopify has been identified as the preferred option and MD will research this option further to understand all costs involved.
- 4.7. SL added he is pleased the trial has been undertaken and can see there is a market which we should offer an on-line platform to.

## **5. World Heritage Management Group Update – Update by MO**

- 5.1. Last WHMG meeting was held on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2020, rescheduled from 11<sup>th</sup> February due to bad weather. It was a very busy meeting, over 20 attendees.
- 5.2. Bank of Scotland £20 notes are in circulation
- 5.3. There is support for UK wide Industrial World Heritage.
- 5.4. Suggestion still for Forth Bridges WHMG to work closer with Edinburgh Old and New Town WHS.
- 5.5. Collections may be coordinated more during this period of lockdown
- 5.6. WH Coordinator post with Network Rail to resolve.
- 5.7. MO reiterated that a tourism rail map of Scotland is needed. Forth Bridges Forum could play a part in supporting / promoting Public Transport.
- 5.8. RJ added that World Heritage day on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2020 was a social media focus and received a good response. Forth Bridge images shared and Lego Forth Bridge promoted too.
- 5.9. 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Forth Bridge review – JA provided an update. This was a very successful event with some great feedback received. See attached paper.
- 5.10. MO and SL congratulated all involved with this event

## **6. Forth Bridges Forum – SL gave an update**

- 6.1. Events Planner is continually updated although many events are postponed or cancelled for the coming months.
- 6.2. The public Meeting arranged for 21<sup>st</sup> April 2020 was cancelled due to Covid-19. Discussion on potentially holding a virtual event. Options will be discussed further at Communications meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

**ACTION: Communications group consider options for a public engagement meeting**

6.3. MOU – MO advised that this is to be signed off soon.

**7. Queensferry Crossing – SL provided an update**

7.1. No non essential works on QC or FRB as per current guidance

7.2. Ice accretion problem in February 2020. Transport Scotland and Amey are working to manage and mitigate the problem. Risk during design stage was deemed low. Sensors are being installed to predict ice build-up. Forecasting being looked at to predict conditions which cause this and diversion strategy is being considered.

7.3. QC one year evaluation report has started. It will assess if the project delivered scheme objectives. Stakeholders views are being obtained.

7.4. SL advised that Ferrytoll Park and Ride has not yet been handed over to Fife Council

7.5. A904 Road performance is being monitored.

7.6. SL advised that the new operating company for the South East Unit including Forth Bridges will be BEAR Scotland from 16<sup>th</sup> August 2020. Amey won the contract for the South West. Mobilisation and demobilisation process has begun.

**8. Communications Group – Update by CW**

8.1. Communications strategy is being reviewed by the group. This is a good time to review to coincide with the operating company contract change.

8.2. Website will be reviewed. There is a shift of usage for the website. It has changed its purpose from users looking at FRB closures, delays, roadworks to more general information and history. A tourism led website may be better.

8.3. Website Statistics report has been issued. It has remained consistent to January 2020. The next report will show a spike during QC closure on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020. 52,000 people used the website on one day, website managed the demand very well. SL added that BEAR Scotland use same web developers as Amey for Forth Bridges website.

8.4. SL asked about the attendance of local authorities at communications meetings. CW wishes the focus and purpose of these meetings are clearer. The comms group should help other Forum subgroups to deliver on actions. MD asked that Paul Lawrence is informed if CEC are unable to attend.

8.5. SL asked what information this group can share during lockdown. CW advised social media images or stats, information which grabs attention. C War added that the Forth Bridge game should be shared.

- 8.6. The HES general learning page link:  
<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/learn/learn-at-home/>

And there are links to the Go Forth resources as well as other World Heritage and HES Heritage sites.

## **9. Network Rail Update**

- 9.1. MD gave an update on behalf of Derek Christie. All works apart from essential tasks have been suspended. The community will be informed when they will recommence.
- 9.2. Questions have been received about the material and process being used for paint removal on the bridge with the community council requesting copies of the risk assessment and COSHH statement. These will be provided shortly. We understand local communities' concerns from 20 years ago however process and materials have moved on and NR will be adhering to strict guidance on the delivery of the works and the use of the material.
- 9.3. [post meeting note] Ian Heigh provided an update to the Network Rail Bridge Walk which recently received planning permission.  
I am pleased to formally note that Network Rail received Planning Permission to construct the Forth Bridge Walkway Experience from CEC council on 4th March 2020.  
I would also like to record that The CEC Planning Officers presented an extremely detailed case to the public hearing showing a complete understanding of the information produced by our design team and our own Town Planner.  
The Chair of the committee offered high praise on the Quality and detail of the overall Planning Submission which helped greatly in them reaching a favourable decision.  
Whilst Planning consent was granted there was a significant vote regarding the number of car-parking spaces presented in our plans with the result that there was a condition passed that these should be reduced from 78 to 39 spaces which the council was heavily split over.  
NR and their design team were greatly surprised at this given the understanding of parking limitations of South Queensferry and whilst we shall do everything we can to promote rail travel this still concerns us greatly.  
NR are considering a response to this condition.  
Since then NR have been working on developing the Outline Business Case for the project along with commencing the procurement exercise for delivering the project.  
Programmes of work are being developed and should hopefully be available at the next Forum Meeting.

## **10. AOB**

- 10.1. COP26 has been postponed to 2021.
- 10.2. CW advised that Edinburgh Bike Hire station has been installed close to the viewpoint. 3 plaques have been installed at the viewing platform with human

cantilever model still being considered. SL added the bikes may be referenced within active travel if appropriate.

10.3. MD advised that BBC Scotland Sunday night, Inside Central Station, episode 5 on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> May will feature the Forth Bridge Lego model.

**11. Date of next meeting – 28 July 2020**