



Forth Bridges Forum - Meeting 37

27 October 2020
MS Teams meeting

MINUTE

Attendees

Scott Lees – (SL) Vice Chair	Transport Scotland
Michael Dineen (MD)	Transport Scotland
John Andrew (JA)	ICE Consultant / Transport Scotland
Ian Heigh (IH)	Network Rail
Sarah Duignan (SD)	Network Rail
Caroline Warburton (CWar)	Visit Scotland
Miles Oglethorpe (MO)	HES
Rebecca Jones (RJ)	HES
Alan Watt (AW)	Fife Council
Ken Gourlay (KG)	Fife Council
Elin Williamson (EW)	City of Edinburgh Council
Graeme Malcolm (GM)	West Lothian Council
Andy Thomson (AT)	BEAR Scotland
Joanna Buggy (JB)	BEAR Scotland
Chris Waite (CW)	BEAR Scotland
Gillian Laurie (GL) Secretariat	BEAR Scotland

1. Welcome & Introductions

- 1.1. SL welcomed all attendees to Meeting 37 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; Derek Christie – Network Rail; Janice MacGregor – Visit Scotland; Paul Lawrence - CEC
- 2.2. Minutes of previous meeting held on 28 July 2020 were agreed with one amendment and subsequently published.
- 2.3. Action points were reviewed and updated as follows:
- Action 21.2 – Open action
 - Action 34.2 – Closed
 - Action 35.1 – Open
 - Action 35.2 – Ongoing
 - Action 36.1 – Closed
 - Action 36.2 – Ongoing

Action 36.3 – Ongoing
Action 36.4 – On hold
Action 36.5 - Closed

- 2.4. Action 35.2 - Options for public meeting/information discussed. See item 6.2
- 2.5. Action 36.2 – WH Coordinator post discussed – See item 5.1
- 2.6. Action 36.3 – FBF Newsletter – Discussed. See item 6.2
- 2.7. Action 36.5 – Newton layby plans have been shared and comments passed back from MD to Stuart Ness.

3. Covid-19

- 3.1. SL discussed impact of Covid on Transport Scotland and operation of the trunk road network. The impact of Covid on the Forth Bridges area was also discussed.
- 3.2. KG, CW and EW all commented that South Queensferry has remained busy during the local restrictions.
- 3.3. FRB remains a popular place for walkers and cyclists.

4. Tourism Update – Update by AW

- 4.1. Signage Strategy for North and South Queensferry is progressing with consultancy brief and procurement documents prepared. Considering phased/conservative approaches to secure funding. Further funding discussions ongoing.
- 4.2. Visitor infrastructure assessment – Document is finalised and with Procurement at Fife Council. AW will seek an update as there is an eagerness to push forward with this.
- 4.3. Digital Visitor Information Strategy - AW has spoken with Chris Van der Kuyl of 4J Studios. Increasingly most people wish to have quick access to info on mobile phones.
- 4.4. Digital discussions with Chris Van der Kuyl and AW led to further discussion on a lighting strategy for all 3 bridges. IH added that this would need buy in / engagement from senior level within Scottish Government. Carbon Neutral conversation needed.
- 4.5. Marketing of Forth Bridges Area – CWar advised information required to understand the opportunities for the area include who are the visitors and where are they from?
- 4.6. AW emailed 27 local businesses who were contacted regarding signage strategy and how we can support their businesses. Responses have been slow but encouraging. Conversations have been had with various business owners.

- 4.7. IH requested copy of the Paul Hogarth Signage and Interpretation Strategy Report. MD to send.
- 4.8. CEC will chair the Tourism Group for next 12 months. EW is new to the forum role and acknowledged that Sandra Montador-Stewart has been of great help, SL welcomed EW to the Forum.

5. World Heritage Management Group Update – Update by MO

- 5.1. MO hoping to resume dialogue with D Boyce at Network Rail on World Heritage Coordinator Role. SD will contact D Boyce and come back with an update to MO this week. MD added that he speaks regularly to D Boyce and advised that this role is very close to being officially signed off.
- 5.2. Memorandum of Understanding to be revisited. HES reported difficulties with finance during this period of uncertainty.
- 5.3. World Heritage Management Plan has expired. Important priority for management group and key task for WH Coordinator.
- 5.4. Working with JA and the Briggers continuing with items being received. Formation of a Collections group still to be done.
- 5.5. UNESCO trail is again underway in partnership with Visit Scotland.
- 5.6. 75th Anniversary of UNESCO is on 16th November 2020. Group discussed ways in which to mark this. Illuminating sites in blue was discussed (i.e. Glenfinnan and Kessock were recently lit up blue and QC was lit up in blue tartan during its opening celebrations). SL explained the QC's existing architectural lighting system can only emit white light. CW confirmed the FRB doesn't have a lighting system. SL explained permanent lighting improvements can be costly and that temporary projection is a cheaper alternative. SL added that lighting of structures/buildings 'strikes a chord' but requires senior buy in. A paper on this proposal will be discussed at the FBF Comms meeting on 3rd December 2020. Ensure activities for anniversary are added to the website.

ACTION: SD contact D Boyce re. WH Coordinator role

ACTION: MO pass UNESCO anniversary item(s) to CW for website

ACTION: Comms Group discuss lighting proposal paper

6. Forth Bridges Forum – Update by SL

- 6.1. Events Planner - Most events are postponed or cancelled for 2020. Group discussed virtual events and agreed to include these on the events list. This should be discussed at next comms meeting.
- 6.2. Public meetings cannot be held due to current restrictions. Content for newsletter was discussed. Relevant current content could include winter, ice sensors on QC, current FRB works, introduce BEAR Scotland as new Operating Company, FB experience update and Heritage update. This is to be

progressed. This will be discussed in the next FBF Communications Group meeting and once prepared to be circulated via usual channels.

6.3. Merchandising – MD will conduct a stock check. Online shop idea being considered.

6.4. Fundraising – on hold

ACTION: GL to create 2021 events list. Virtual event information to be passed to GL and communications group to discuss in December

ACTION: Newsletter discussion to be added to Comms agenda.

7. Queensferry Crossing – Update by SL

7.1. QC official handover to TS from FCBC in September 2020. BEAR Scotland now operate and maintain structure on behalf of TS. FCBC still on site (albeit much reduced presence) to manage defect liability issues.

7.2. BEAR Scotland contract handover was smooth and engagement has started with communities. AT agreed the contract handover went well although was made difficult during covid. Many staff transferred from Amey bring continuity.

7.3. SL advised the expansion joints should be complete on FRB by the end of the year and the ice accretion sensors are installed on QC. Workshop held recently to test the response to ice accretion and FRB could be used for diverted traffic if required.

7.4. SL advised that the autonomous bus trial on the FRB is still being progressed.

8. Communications Group – Update by CW

8.1. Last Communications meeting was 24th September 2020 and considering the comms strategy going forward.

8.2. The Forth Bridges Website transferred to BEAR Scotland on 16th August 2020. While most current users visit for operational information such as bridge status, traffic webcams and wind data, this is no longer the main trunk road operating company website and there is an opportunity to reach out to new audiences with more tourism, heritage and education content. In the longer term the website could be redeveloped to meet the objectives of the Forth Bridges tourism strategy. CW will produce a paper for the next comms meeting on 3rd Dec 2020 outlining proposals for short term development of website content while continuing to meet the objectives of the Forum

8.3. Website Statistics report for Q3 was issued. CW gave overview of the report highlighting the spike during QC closure on 11th February 2020.

ACTION: CW to produce paper on development of Forth Bridges Website

9. Network Rail Update – IH provided an update

- 9.1. Bridge Walkway Experience – Tenders due back Monday 2nd November 2020, with contract potentially being awarded December 2020. IH added this had been an interesting tender exercise with requests to extensions granted.
- 9.2. Work on old painting system on North of Forth Bridge expected to begin in the next year.
- 9.3. SD has replaced Sally Abdelraziq within the forum and will be invited to all forum meetings. SD was welcomed to the groups.

10. AOB

- 10.1. Newton Traffic Issues – G Malcolm advised there has been an increase in complaints from residents in Newton about increasing traffic flow and congestion, complaints have been progressed through councillors and MSP's. SL will speak to H Gillies and arrange a meeting to discuss.

ACTION – SL arrange meeting with H Gillies and GM to discuss. (Post meeting note – meeting organised for 18 November).

11. **Date of next meeting** – 26 January 2021