



Forth Bridges Forum – Meeting 53

22 October 2024

MINUTES OF MEETING

Attendees

John Andrew (JA) - Chair	Transport Scotland
Gillian Laurie (GL) - Secretariat	BEAR Scotland
Dave Bishop (DB)	BEAR Scotland
Joanna Buggy (JB)	BEAR Scotland
James Bruhn (JBr) - Online	Historic Environment Scotland
John Mitchell (JM) – Online	Fife Council
Hilary Roberts (HR)	Fife Council

1. Welcome & Introductions

- 1.1. JA welcomed all to meeting 53 of the Forth Bridges Forum.

2. Apologies, Minutes of Previous Meeting and Actions

- 2.1. Apologies received from: - Scott Lees, Transport Scotland; Karen Stewart – Forth Bridges Area Tourism Strategy Manager; Francis Newton, Elin Williamson – CEC; Chris Waite - BEAR Scotland; Sarah Duignan, Stuart Lothian, Alastair MacFarlane – Network Rail; Gordon Brown – West Lothian Council; Caroline Warburton, Neil Christison – Visit Scotland;
- 2.2. Minutes of previous meeting held on 23 July 2024 were agreed and subsequently published.
- 2.3. Action points were reviewed and updated as follows:
Action 43 5 –WH Coordinator Role – Ongoing – See item 5.3
Action 47 2.4 – FBF ministerial briefing – Ongoing – See item 3.2
Action 47 5.1 – Terms of Reference review – Ongoing – See item 3.2
Action 48 4.6 – CEC use – Ongoing
Action 51 5.1 – FBF Terms of Reference meeting – Ongoing
Action 51 8.1 – Revisit FB Experience Business Plan – Ongoing
Action 51 8.3 – Network Rail pass engagement with NQCC to BEAR – Ongoing
Action 51 9.1 – Beamer Rock solution – Ongoing – See item 8.1

3. Forth Bridges Forum – update by JA

- 3.1. Forum attendees at today's meeting low. No representation from CEC, WLC, Network Rail, Visit Scotland. One representative from each organisation to attend future meetings. Attendees list should be reviewed annually.
- 3.2. FBF Terms of Reference review not yet finalised, mainly due to turnover of forum members. Final draft to be issued after this meeting with approval sought from all parties. Thereafter, ministerial update will be given. Following this, sub group terms of reference will be produced.
- 3.3. FRB 60th anniversary celebrations went well. This included:

- Education event with local schools with ministerial attendance.
 - Afternoon presentation and networking session with past bridge employees/builders
 - Evening lectures
 - 60 members of the public received trips up FRB tower and pipers piped on top of tower
 - Rowing community meet and tugs with water hoses display
 - Vintage bus trips on 7 September 2024
- 3.4. Events Planner – Supernova on 2 November 2024 – Organisers wish to use CEC building. **ACTION - JA to confirm yes or no asap.**
- 3.5. Supernova organisers wish access to inside barrier car park from 1 Nov to set up. **ACTION - DB will send footprint of event to JA who will seek sign off**
- 3.6. QDCC mapping exercise complete. **ACTION: JA to reply to K Giblett re. Jacob's ladder**
- 4. Operations - Update by DB / S Duignan (written update)**
- 4.1. Forth Road Bridge
- Main cable dehumidification refurbishment ongoing, nearing completion
 - Grillage scheme ongoing
 - Footway lighting column replacement
 - Supernova planning underway
 - Doors Open Day on 28 September was a success
- 4.2. Queensferry Crossing
- FCBC replacing one bearing at end November. This will mean weeks of traffic management and no access for abnormal loads.
 - Architectural lighting upgrade scheme ongoing
 - Automated barrier servicing and trials taking place now. Two full trials of diversion system on 9 and 10 November.
- 4.3. Forth Bridge
- Abseil on 13 October went well, 18 charities took part, over £54k raised for CHSS. 2 wheelchair users took part using a motorised hoist
 - Barnardo's Your View event took place over weekend 20-22 Sept
- 4.4. Forth Bridge Experience – Design options continue to be developed and costed.
- 4.5. **ACTION: SD to provide update on North Approach issues**
- 5. Tourism Sub Group – Update by HR in KS absence**
- 5.1. Forth Bridges Tourism Strategy Review presented to group.
- 5.2. Delivery Plan 2024-2029 - key recommendations. Decision on tourism group structure – Group agreed that Tourism Directors Group and Tourism Coordinators Group should be merged into one tourism group reporting into Forth Bridges Forum. **ACTION: KS to implement new group and draft new Terms of Reference**
- 5.3. Integration of Forth Bridge Area Tourism Strategy Manager role with World Heritage Coordinator role – Job description finalised, funding agreed for one year – longer term funding needs to be agreed, ideally 3-5 years funding. Appointment to be

finalised Dec 2024. **ACTION: JBr and JA to meet with Transport Scotland Rail Directorate, Fife Council, CEC and Network Rail**

- 5.4. Tourism update – July to Oct 2024
- 5.5. Forth Bridges Trail signage – JM asked who has long term responsibility for maintaining these signs – **ACTION - HM will check with K Stewart**
- 5.6. Cruise survey – Final report due March 2025
- 5.7. Future of Queensferry museum – JBr asked if any stats of visitor numbers available. Unlikely as it is a shared building with Register Office.
- 5.8. Are stats available from the counters on viewpoint / FRB footpath? **ACTION – DB will seek update from provider.**

6. World Heritage Management Sub Group – Update by JBr

- 6.1. JBR agreed to chair WHMG meetings. **ACTION - JBr and JA to agree who is best to take on secretariate role for future meetings.**
- 6.2. World Heritage Coordinator Role, see item 5.3
- 6.3. World Heritage management Plan Review – HES will support WH Coordinator.
- 6.4. MOU and funding – MOU will form part of the management refresh.
- 6.5. Collections and Research – **ACTION: JA will discuss with Stuart Baird how to evolve the valuable collections for all bridges.** JBr added it is important to capture the story behind the materials, HES can provide assistance with this. Must share Frank Hay's research further. **ACTION: JA and JBr to discuss further.** GL will pass JA's email address to daughter of Ferryman Stuart Reid with regards to future of Ferry brass bell.

7. Communications – Update by JB / GL

- 7.1. The Quarterly Forth Bridges website analysis report was shared.
- 7.2. JB highlighted organic and direct searches remain high, page popularity views – Home 17k, QC 11k, FRB 9.1k, FB 4.1K. Wind and weather and traffic webcams above FB showing operational peaks. Continual move towards tourism focus with push from social media posts to website
- 7.3. GL advised there has been 62 enquiries via FBF mailbox in last quarter, July to Sept 2024. A rise from 41 in previous quarter. A few outstanding emails for action by JA.

8. AOB

- 8.1. Beamer Rock – pass update Francis Newton. Potential apprenticeship opportunities. JB advised Engine Shed would be keen to help. **ACTION – JA send any apprenticeship info for longer project to JBr**
- 8.2. JM asked about the overflow car park in NQ. Potential to use if Ferrytoll at capacity. **ACTION: JA to raise with Transport Scotland Operational colleagues.**
- 8.3. Public toilets – not fit for purpose. Discussion on proposal for new toilet block. **ACTION: JA will discuss with Transport Scotland to seek architect proposal.**

9. Date of next meeting – 21 January 2025 - TBC