

Arran Recovery Group

Meeting notes

22/1/21

Summary:

- Arran will have lost approximately £35m or 50% less tourist income in Calendar 2020. This is our best estimate based on ferry passenger numbers.
- Business is now unlikely to open before April. This will mean only 4 months of trading in Fiscal 2020/21. Not possible to overstate the impact on tourist infrastructure over the long term. At best, dept will increase and repayments extend, reducing the ability for future investment. We will continue to push for special financial support for Islands in general and Arran in particular.
- Full impact on the community is still to be realized. Front line folks have the pressures of too much to do, others the opposite. Both very stressful.
- As the new year begins, we need to refocus; away from a reactive operational agenda, to implementing the programmes in: 'Arran Recovery and Beyond '.We will return to a more reactive agenda, in separate discussions, as the needs arise
- Vaccine roll out over the weekend provides a welcome light at the end of the tunnel.

Present: Tom Tracey, Alastair Dobson, Linda Johnston, Cameron Bruce, Sheila Gilmore, Jude King, Vikki Yuill, Bill Calderwood, Susan Foster, Sheena Borthwick Andrew Stirling, Timothy Billings, John Maguire, Daryll Urquhart-Dickson.

Apologies: Ruth Betley, Ian Staples, Lucinda Gray.

I. Welcome and Introduction

Update from Sheena – Planning permission granted for site at Rowarde, some standard conditions to planning. Build costs at or around budge. Good progress on this key change initiative.

Visitor Economy Economic Outlook - Cameron's work on visitor numbers, based on passenger numbers, suggest that visitor volume is down by - 60% in 2020. Revenue is down by – approximately 50%. The difference is a change in visitor profile. i.e. less day visitors. This gives an estimated spend of £35m in 2020 compared with £69m in 2019

STEAM data will allow a more accurate assessment and is expected in April May

Taking a step back

Update

- The current agenda reflects work done since May and has been reactive and operational, through necessity. For this new year, we need to refocus, implementing the programmes in 'Arran Recovery and Beyond '.

- We will return to a more reactive agenda, in separate discussions, as the needs arise.
- Monthly meetings with core update on: Community, Environment, Business. Community probably should be Health and Social Care and the wider Community. Ideally, each should have a coordinator. Jude for Environment, Alastair for Business and Ruth for HSCP are relatively easy. The wider Community will need more discussion.

Actions in one area impact others. So, the idea is to keep everyone up to speed with progress and get support as required. This keeps everyone up to speed and provides the basis for wider community communication. This should not slow any communications already planned

- All of this is in the wider context of appointment of Islands Manager (IM) who will be in place mid-March. ARG will have two meetings ahead of this on the 12th Feb 12th March to ensure we have an updated plan to support the IM.

Group input

- This will give better balance to the work of the group. The plan is bold and brave and needs to be put in the front of the ARG website rather than reports of ARG meetings. Senior Managers at NAC are on board. ARG should be involved in the IM announcement.
- Everybody's responsibility to make sure the document reflects what is happening in their area and is relevant and updated. It also needs to be easily found on the ARG and other websites.
- There was discussion around confusions on the name of the plan. Referring to it as one thing and then another. I for one have been guilty of this. It has led to the mistaken believe that there are multiple plans. To be clear, there is only One Plan. It is called; 'Arran Recovery and Beyond', There was a link to it on our last Community Survey, so it is already public. I have attached the PDF for clarification. If we want to change the name at the next Rev, we can.

2. Communications Jude/Sheila

Update

Public meeting has not happened yet but still planned and needs to be done to include community and focus in on areas of greatest concern:

1. Mental health that had good output form ACVS getting info into the Banners, 2.Transport update still in the planning.

Group Input

- Now is the most important time to get communication right with start of IM imminent. This can be achieved by highlighting 2-3 key areas. Need to involve IM in future communication activity. Community wants to hear about direction and progress in simple form.
- Meetings with NAC about Arran Recovery and Beyond – focus on land-based transport i.e. roads and active travel. Russel McCutcheon has assigned a person to work on this. We need

to create an overall Island Transport plan led by NAC.

- Group needs to familiarise, scrutinise and own The Plan. Community needs updating. Meeting notes could be more related to plan. Only one form of communication.

3. Business Linda/ Sheila

Update

- Businesses closed with no opportunity to get restarted any time soon so not making any announcements, now closed for 6 months with an expectation of another 2 out of the last 12 months.
- Borrowing to fund fixed costs as level of support is not sufficient yet this will need to be paid back and will impact on future product investment.
- Hoping for further announcement of a one-off grant, there is light at the end of the tunnel, but we need to get there.

Some businesses have not had funding as yet, Impact is as great on small businesses as large even though the financial scales are different. SG offering help with identifying correct funding. There is a vast array of funds that are difficult to navigate and insufficient.

- Market readiness – It will be harder for businesses to restart the longer this goes on. Businesses just trying to survive, Supply chain is also on its knees.
- Arran's whole economy relies on visitors, this needs to be understood, Level 3 will not enable businesses to reopen it is more dangerous to open up at this level if operating costs are higher than being closed and would-be taking business from others who could survive on it

Group input

- Retail and Hospitality funding will include Arran businesses, the cut off on rateable value is £51k there is a huge difference between a business at this level and a large business such as Auchrannie but there is no gradient in funding.
- NAC is getting a discretionary fund but trying to spot the gaps is difficult with changing criteria of other funds.
Self catering fund is also coming. Top up for hospitality businesses doesn't relate to B&B's and self-catering businesses Caravan parks and campsites because other funds are expected for them but not yet announced (A lot of these will now also be getting 4 weekly top up payment) Those who qualify for top ups will receive an email and finance expected to arrive by Weds 27th Retail properties will get 6k or 9K payments going today.
- Other Island communities in level 3 are getting level 4 support, Arran should be able to access this as principle already set.

4. Ferry Status – Bill

Update

- December numbers hopefully formalised next week
- Single vessel as of today
- Gourock link span is progressing and barge should arrive over the weekend weather dependant, should be operational in 3 -4 weeks.

Group input

- Discussions improved plans for the dry dock period next year have started and plans to do more locally and get contracts signed earlier are progressing. The Ferry committee is keeping the pressure up on this and we need to be aware of impact on our vessels from incidents across the network.
- Cannot lose sight of the fact that there is still no apparent plan for stranded passengers in the event of Ferry Failures through weather or mechanical difficulties. Will bring this up at the next ARG/NAC meeting to get clarity on who is responsible. Not a problem at the moment obviously but we need to know the answer before we are in the problem.

5. External Agencies Alastair

Update-

- Arran Recovery and Beyond: (For presentation purposes, Alastair has renamed The Plan 'Arran Island in Balance ' in presentations to SG.) It have been very well received and is a very useful tool to present to agencies showing Arran with one voice. The Project/Program review document, extracted from The Plan answers the question: "If we gave you £5m what would you do with it.?"
- A SG sponsored wellbeing and place based steering group has been set up which Alastair is inputting to.
- HIE and NAC are joint funding IM role so this is strategically important opportunity to engage with them particularly HIE.
- NAC good engagement on Arran Recovery Plan which positions Arran strongly
- When NAC appoints a person to be responsible for a workstream we need to give them the right work to do

Group Input

- Need to be aware when dealing with non-NAC leads on AEP they may not be aware that Arran comes under HIE and UHI and not the normal Ayrshire bodies.

Action CB to recirculate proposals for projects, they are valued and mapped against CWB They are split short and long term projects

6. AOB

Arran CVS update -Vikki

- Connecting Scotland 20 Ipads handed out with 10 digital champions giving support Bid in for further 10 to support low-income families with schoolchildren
- Alcohol and Drug study reached phase 5 with output supported by multi-disciplinary steering group. Excellent feedback from report as it captures hidden problems and what

happens on other islands

- Most of our addiction support services are on the mainland which can be very problematic, particularly when we have ferry disruptions. To solve this we need Arran based support: - Job spec written for a combined full time role that will enable other support to be offered. For example, direct support to individuals and families affected by alcohol and drug use and a single point of contact for all for all services for information, co-ordination and training.
- Prior to the Christmas period, Community groups and Arran CVS arranged circulation of information on support services and community activities to be delivered to every household via volunteers, ensuring everyone was reached and well informed of who to contact if required.

Group Input

Good progress being made on these very important community issues.

Outdoor centre Update – Daryll

- Working with young people of key workers. Hub is at status quo provided 25 emergency hampers, financial support and prescriptions
- Feedback from Christmas period - People have been using it Ian and Daryll manned the hub over Christmas to provide continuity

Group input

Good to see the Outdoor Centre is still providing the community Hub while getting back to working with young people.

AHS Update -Susan

- Time with Outdoor Centre alleviates amount time young people spend sitting in front of screens
- 55 Chrome books and internet connections given out to ensure young people have online learning. IT support post offering help to overcome difficulty of accessing online platforms
- Health and Wellbeing important therefore offering weekly drop ins.
- Uncertainty for SQU students evidence based or teacher assessed not yet determined
- Learning has been consistent apart from fortnight of Covid outbreak
- Use of no coverage hotspots for students would be useful, Mobile has been a solution

Group input

- Andrew offered to help if required with poor connectivity issues.
- Another great example of adaptability in teaching methods combining with new technology, and new logistics to give us the best results possible.

Thanks to everyone who participated.

Regards

Tom Tracey

25th January