



# COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

## WESTERN ISLES AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting held in Committee Room 1,  
Council Offices/MS Teams, Council Offices,  
Stornoway on Tuesday 10 December 2024 at  
10:00am.

PRESENT	Mr Duncan Smith (HIAL) (Chair) Ms Susan Thomson (CNES) Mrs Linda Cunningham (CNES) Ms Rachel Ford (Hebridean Airways) Mrs Anne Macleod (Mobility Access Committee Scotland)	Mr Uisdean Robertson (CNES) Mr Colm Fraser (CNES) Mr Roy Bogle (Loganair) Ms Linda Beavis (Hebridean Airways) Ms Sarah Maclean (Outer Hebrides Tourism)
APOLOGIES	Mr Michael Galbraith (HIAL) Mr Maurice Boyle (Loganair) Ms Julie Simper (Hebridean Airways)	Mr Donnie Steele (HIAL) Mr Luke Lovegrove (Loganair) Mr Graham Everett (Loganair)
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE	Ms Shona Hadwen (CNES)	

### MINUTES

Minute of Meeting of 28 September 2023	1	The Minute of Meeting of 11 June 2024 was <b>approved</b> .  Duncan Smith (DS) updated members on two items outstanding from the previous minute:  <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. NHSWI have now put something in place for the flight operator (Loganair) to be able to contact patients directly if their flight is either cancelled or delayed.</li><li>2. Availability of aisle chairs – Loganair now have aisle chairs in place on their flights.</li></ol>
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### AIR SERVICES

Loganair	2	With reference to item 2 of the Minute of Meeting of 11 June 2024, Mr Roy Bogle, (RB), Loganair, gave a presentation on performance of Loganair for the period April 2024 – October 2024 on the Western Isles routes.  Passenger Performance – figures were provided in relation to the same period last year. Passenger numbers on the Edinburgh/Stornoway route were down 14% on the same period last year, both the Stornoway/Glastow and Stornoway/Inverness routes saw an increase of 3% and 5% respectively on the same period the previous year, whilst passenger numbers on the Stornoway/Glasgow/Manchester route were down 12%. Passenger numbers on the Glasgow/Benbecula route were down 4% and the Glasgow/Barra route (PSO) were down 15%.  It was highlighted that despite a 5% increase in flights and a 33% increase in seat capacity, the Glasgow/Benbecula route, numbers had fallen by 4%.
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Operational Performance – the Report noted a significant improvement in regularity (+0.4%) and punctuality (+6%) during the past six months. This could be attributed to the decision to reduce UK cross border services to focus on Island communities.

RB informed members that Loganair had recently appointed a new Head of Marketing and that there is now a renewed focus on marketing initiatives. RB shared some of the recent marketing campaigns with members, these included:

- Kids Fly Fare-FREE
- 3 for 2 offer
- 15% Seat Sale
- CLAN Points Redemption offer
- FREE “Fly-Flex” Upgrade
- Black Friday 20% offer, strong uplift on SYE – GLA route

RB informed members that Maurice Boyle, former Operations Director had recently retired, Natalie Bush would be taking over his role in December 2024. RB also noted that Rebecca Borresen had recently been appointed as Director of Safety and Sustainability, a newly created role in the business which would focus on working towards the Net-Zero target of 2030.

Members were afforded the opportunity to ask questions.

A question was asked about the faulty de-icing equipment in Benbecula and when this was likely to be repaired. RB was able to inform members that the fault had now been repaired and the equipment would be moved back to Benbecula that week.

A further question was asked about patient numbers travelling from Barra to Glasgow and if this had decreased due to more patients being transferred to Stornoway for their medical appointments. RB was able to inform members that there had been no downturn on patient numbers on the Glasgow route as a result of this.

A question was also asked in relation to the general number of passengers on the Barra-Glasgow route. RB informed members that whilst local numbers travelling from Barra to Glasgow had remained stable, the downturn in numbers was mostly due to fewer tourists making the trip from Glasgow to Barra. This could be attributed to the island resident card which gives locals access to cheaper fares. Loganair were trying to find the right balance with the dual-fare structure, for tourists and residents.

The Chair thanked Roy Bogle for his informative presentation.

The Report was noted.

Hebridean Airways 3

With reference to item 3 of the minute of the meeting of 11 June 2024, Linda Beavis (LB) of Hebridean Air Services Ltd provided an update to members on the performance of the Stornoway – Benbecula – Stornoway PSO for the period 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024.

The PSO service between Stornoway – Benbecula operates three times per week on a Monday, Tuesday and Friday. Offering both an AM and a PM service. Out of a total of 348 planned trips, 65 were cancelled due to weather (18%) and 22 were cancelled due to technical/crew issues (6%). The Report stated that 66% of flights departed on time, and 90% departed within 30 minutes.

A monthly breakdown of total passenger numbers was provided in the Report. Collectively this amounted to 286 flights Stornoway – Benbecula and 344 flights Benbecula – Stornoway.

The Report also highlighted that a second aircraft based in Oban was available to cover the schedules when technical problems occur and a second BN2 would shortly be added to the fleet which would add resilience to the PSO operations. It was also noted that the website for Hebridean Air Services was being redesigned and would be up and running in the near future. It included a specific page on accessibility. Hebridean Airways were in dialogue with NHSWI regarding mobility impaired patients having specific requirements before flying. NHSWI were encouraging patients to contact Hebridean Airways directly to discuss any special requirements needed so that a solution could be found before arrival.

Members were afforded the opportunity to ask questions.

In discussion it was noted that both Loganair and Hebridean Airways were looking at alternatives to wider access doorways on their aircraft. One solution was use of an Avey Ramp, and both organisations confirmed they were looking at this option. Hebridean Airways were also looking at access steps with handles which would hopefully give patients/users more confidence when accessing the aircraft.

In discussion it was highlighted that aircraft seem to be parking further away from the terminal building, particularly in Stornoway. This was proving more problematic for users with mobility issues. DS of HIAL at Stornoway informed members that this was due to conflicts with other aircraft movements in that area at the same time but that he would check to see with Air Traffic Control if anything could be done and get back to members of the group with information.

It was noted that work being done by the Western Isles Transport and Health Working Group was ongoing, results of the findings of the working group should be available from w/c 16 December and all members would see a copy of the final report.

Colm Fraser (CF) informed members that Napier University had been looking at the accessibility of the islander aircraft and have designed a prototype lifting device, suitable for persons with reduced mobility. The hope is that next steps of the project could be funded early next year, including testing trials.

It was agreed by all members that whilst the PSO service was not suitable for everyone, collaborative working between the different organisations to make accessibility better, would hopefully result in a positive outcome for all users of the service.

The Chair thanked the representatives from Hebridean Airways for their presentation and informative discussions. The Report was noted.

Stornoway Airport  
Update 4

With reference to item 4 of the Minute of Meeting of 11 June 2024, Mr Duncan Smith, (DS), Airport Manager, Stornoway presented an update Report on Stornoway Airport for the period April 2024 – September 2024.

The Report provided an update on passenger and aircraft movements from April 2024 to September 2024. Passenger movements were down by 4.4% to 54,046 compared to the same period in the previous year. Aircraft movements were up by 3.2% to 4,253 compared to the same period in the previous year.

Information on projects in the 10-year Capital Project Plan, all dependant on financial availability were included in the Report, these included:

- ATC equipment upgraded
- Security equipment upgraded
- Terminal flooring upgrade
- Runway edge and Taxiway edge lighting to be upgraded.

Future Planning:

- Main runway to be resurfaced
- Taxiway to be resurfaced
- Lower apron extended and upgraded
- Terminal building works
- New building to accommodate the air Traffic, Airport Fire Service, MT and Admin sections
- EV charging points to be installed in the main car park and airside for HIAL vehicles.

The Airport Café is operating well and potentially looking at having a café airside. Festive decorations, carols and a “giving tree” will be in place over the festive season to raise money for a local charity.

The Report was noted.

Benbecula Airport 5  
Update

With reference to item 5 of the Minute of Meeting of 11 June 2024, Mr Duncan Smith, (DS) Airport Manager, Stornoway presented an update Report on Benbecula Airport in the absence of Mr Donnie Steele, Airport Manager, Benbecula, for the period April 2024– September 2024.

The Report provided an update on passenger and aircraft movements from April 2024 to September 2024. Passenger movements were down 15.4% to 14,425 compared to the same period in 2023. Aircraft movements were also down 1.6% to 1402 compared to the same period in 2023.

The Report also stated that the air conditioning works in the Terminal building had been completed. Works opposite the Terminal at the West Camp were nearly completed and consultations had been completed regarding the decommissioning of the secondary runway.

It was noted that the Airport Cafe had reopened and was proving to be successful. Discussions had taken place with the US Military as they may potentially utilise the airfield in March next year.

Meetings had also taken place with the NHS regarding passengers transportation and other areas.

The Report was noted.

Barra Airport 6  
Update

With reference to item 6 of the Agenda of the Minute of Meeting of 11 June 2024 , Mr Duncan Smith (DS) presented an update Report in the absence of Michael Galbraith . The Report covered the period April 2024 – September 2024.

The Report provided an update on passenger movements from April 2024 – September 2024. Passenger movements were down 14% on the same period in 2023 to 8,092. Aircraft movements were similar to the previous year, only a difference of two flights in the same period.

Island Residence Card has had an uptake of 718 to date.

The Report also informed members that the café had finally reopened on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> November and all seemed to be going well to date.

Planned developments included:

- New Control Tower Roof – work has been pushed back to Spring 2025
- New Fire Service Building – a watchroom, training room, two offices and a gymnasium, were all planned for Spring 2025.

The Report was noted.

Date of next meeting 7

The next meeting would be held in June 2025, date to be confirmed. The Chair informed members that he would be retiring from HIAL in March 2025 and that he would notify members of his successor.

Members wished the Chair a happy retirement.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution and attendance.