

CMAL PUBLISHES FINDINGS FROM GOUROCK-DUNOON PASSENGER SURVEY

Categories : [Press](#)

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Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL) has published the findings of a passenger survey designed to explore the travel habits and opinions of people who use ferry services between Gourock and Dunoon.

More than 600 people took part in the online survey, which was commissioned by CMAL to inform the work of the Gourock Harbour Infrastructure & Vessels Project. The project will deliver a modern and resilient lifeline passenger ferry service between Gourock and Dunoon with improved reliability, and covers the redevelopment of Gourock Ferry Terminal, some works to harbour infrastructure at Dunoon and delivery of two new passenger-only vessels.

The main survey findings include:

- Almost all respondents have used both Calmac and Western Ferries services, although two thirds of respondents use Western Ferries most often. Those passengers travel more often and three quarters of them travel with their car;
- Reliability, needing to take a car, frequency, and proximity to public transport (Gourock train station) were identified as the most important factors influencing the choice between services;
- The main reason for using Calmac most often is the rail link and access to other public transport connections, while passengers cited the need to take a car / drive as the main reason for using Western Ferries most often;
- The top reasons for passenger journeys include visiting family and friends, entertainment and leisure, shopping, medical appointments and work/business;
- After leaving the ferry, the majority of passengers (52%) continue their journey by car, while around one third (34%) continue by train or bus.
- Around half (46%) of those who use a car say they could use public transport for onward journeys and would be encouraged to do so if the ferry service was more reliable, there were better public transport connections and cost-savings on ticket prices were available.

The passenger feedback will be used to inform the development of harbour infrastructure and new vessels.

Kevin Hobbs, chief executive at CMAL, said:

“We want to ensure ferry users and the local community are actively engaged in this project. The survey feedback has given us up-to-date insight into the ways people are using the service and we will use it to inform the development of the harbours and towards the design process for

the new vessels.

“We know reliability is a key passenger issue and recognise that the Gourock to Dunoon service has been severely impacted by infrastructure problems, including a linkspan outage, due to its age and need for upgrade. As an essential service, passengers need to have confidence the ferries will operate efficiently.

“This project will bring much-needed investment to ferry services in the coming years and we look forward to further engaging with the community on progress.”

The Gourock Harbour Infrastructure & Vessels Project is a partnership between Transport Scotland, CMAL, CalMac and Argyll & Bute Council.

A reference group was established in February this year to facilitate engagement with the local community and stakeholders. It meets every four to five months and is attended by representatives from Dunoon Community Council, Inverclyde Community Council, HiTrans and SPT, as well as Argyll and Inverclyde councillors.

CMAL continues to progress work on the project during the coronavirus lockdown. A strategic business case for the two new vessels and harbour infrastructure upgrade at Gourock is being finalised. In addition, project steering group meetings and initial vessel and infrastructure integration meetings have been held virtually.

A copy of the survey findings is available on the CMAL [website](#)