

COLL AND TIREE LINKSPAN CLOSURE DATES CONFIRMED

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- **Vehicles unable to travel to islands during closure period**
- **Passenger service will operate**

Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL) has confirmed the dates for the closure of the linkspans at Coll and Tiree ferry terminals as part of a replacement programme of work.

The linkspan decks are reaching the end of their serviceable life and are being replaced as part of CMAL's ongoing programme of harbour upgrades and improvements.

During the linkspan closure periods, vehicles will be unable to travel to the islands.

The Coll linkspan will be out of service from Monday 28th October 2019 and will be back in service on Thursday 21st November 2019.

The Tiree linkspan will be out of service from Monday 24th February 2020 and will be back in service on Tuesday 17th March 2020. The linkspan closure date for Tiree has been brought forward by two weeks from an initial timeline to provide more contingency ahead of the start of the summer 2020 timetable.

Throughout this period CalMac will operate a passenger only service, supplemented by a third party freight vessel service for transportation of essential goods. More details of the alternative services will be communicated by CalMac in due course.

Brian Sydney, senior civil engineer at CMAL, said:

“Each linkspan replacement will require a linkspan closure period of three to four weeks to complete the works, subject to weather conditions. If we can reduce the timescale, we will.

“Passengers can still travel to and from the islands during this time and an alternative freight service will be available. Essentially, the islands remain ‘open for business’, but vehicles will be unable to travel to or off the islands during this time.

“We understand the vital and lifeline link the ferry service provides to these islands and our aim is to minimise the disruption to normal life on the islands as far as possible. Working with CalMac, we reviewed capacity numbers and selected the periods of lowest traffic to minimise the impact of the linkspan closures.

“We hope that confirmation of the linkspan closure dates will allow some people to plan ahead

to help ease inconvenience.”

CalMac’s Director of Service Delivery, David Gibson, said:

“While we will be making alternative arrangements for essential freight items, I would urge communities to proactively plan freight deliveries and encourage anyone on the islands planning major construction projects to think about avoiding this period.

“We will try and accommodate all requests for freight movements, however there may be restrictions in what can be carried and it would be helpful if major shipments of material could be avoided during these works.”