

There are a number of key issues arising from the current set up with the cruise liner visits to Queensferry which are negatively impacting some passengers, other visitors, residents and local businesses, summarized as follows:

## Traffic Control

### Issues

- Significant area of the promenade car park written off for the main part of the day causing parking problems for other visitors, residents and thus local businesses who see significant fall in revenue on liner visit days.
- Despite instruction otherwise, some coaches along with private hire buses are accessing from the west, travelling along the High St., particularly early in the morning.
- Coaches approaching from the east require a suitable turning circle, not the current dangerous set up with pedestrians crossing, vehicles parked or in use and other coaches/buses/taxis approaching.
- Reports of taxi drivers and private bus drivers in vocal conflict with each other and residents/business owners. Not a great image for the gateway to Edinburgh or Scotland.
- The area, which is adjacent to our World Heritage Site becomes a coach and taxi car park – highly inappropriate and a purpose it has never been designed for.
- Ships can apparently offload at 600 passengers per 30mins turnaround with the tenders available. (4 tenders x 100 passengers plus Maid of The Forth with 200 capacity).  
Approx one third of passengers expected not to be on excursions, so max 400 passengers staggered over each 30 mins loading on to coaches. Around two coach loads per tender (assuming excursion coach max capacity fill). So should really be no more need than two or three excursion coaches in situ as each tender arrives. Ships have two exit points so tenders may run simultaneously in which case, if the ship cannot stagger these tenders slightly, four/five coaches may have to be in situ but no more than that. Buses & taxis another issue.

### Suggested solutions to explore

- Whilst there is a high concentration of coaches, buses and taxis in the morning when the passengers disembark, the promenade car park is not required for 'stacking' coaches to the same degree after that. Coaches return sporadically rather than together.  
Thus no requirement to have the same area of car park allocated after the initial pick ups.  
**Action (low cost, short term implementation) :** shrink the allocated car park area immediately after pick ups completed.
- Off site 'stacking'. For example the Forth Bridges Contact Centre car park is purpose built for coach parking. This could be used as the coach stacking area with radio/phone communication between driver and control to advise on proceeding to promenade when passengers ready.  
**Action (low cost, short term implementation):** Re-assign the parking area to FBCC car park, assign a control on the ground, brief coach operators and cruise operators.
- The turning area for coaches approaching from the east is dangerous and unsuitable.  
**Action (high cost, long term implementation):** A new and proper turning circle needs designed either for the east end of the car park or east of the Hawes Inn at the bottom of Jacob's Ladder has been suggested by Jim Galloway.
- Conflicts.  
**Action (low cost, short term implementation) :** Coach operators need reminded of the east approach agreement avoiding High St. The private bus operator needs managed more tightly.

## The Visitor Experience

Despite the great efforts of the volunteer guides (who take on the task to avoid the embarrassment of what visitors would experience if they did not step in), there are a number of issues relating to the landing experience through the visitors' eyes (aside from the transport issues which they also witness).

### Issues

- No shelter on the Hawes Pier nor whilst queuing for transport.
- Low tide can result in a lengthy pier walk for those with mobility issues.
- Poor signage – both directional and informational (existing QA signs illegible through weathering). Passengers regularly lost between Hawes and the train station.
- Public transport links are not easily accessible nor well publicised.
- No tourist information centre; relying on volunteer guides for assistance.
- Public toilets are of very poor standard for such an iconic gateway to Edinburgh, to Scotland and a World Heritage Site.
- Queensferry is poorly undersold for its historic value.

### Suggested solutions to explore

- Shelter on Hawes pier.  
**Action (low to medium cost. Short term implementation):** Put out to tender for a sponsored canopy on the Hawes Pier (possibly the west side to avoid interruption of working pier).
- At the Cruise Summit in December, a cab company offered the use of a golf buggy for the pier if required.  
**Action (no cost, short term implementation):** Pursue this offer with the cab company.
- Signage to train station, bus stops, local shops and attractions, historic points, etc all in need of urgent review. Especially the whole route from Hawes to the train station and back. Existing temporary signage by Peter Wilson to include Lothian Country Bus cost options is advised too.  
**Action (medium cost, medium term implementation):** Urgent review of all signage.
- Jacob's Ladder is prohibitive to visitors with mobility issues from accessing the rail network. Coupled with the distance to public bus stops they are very much trapped if they have not taken an excursion.  
**Action (medium cost, medium term implementation):** Explore the feasibility of a local shuttle bus servicing the Hawes Pier, train station, bus stops, Forth Bridge Contact Centre, Port Edgar, Hopetoun House, Priory Church, High St, etc. Could be accessible to residents for a small fare too which would make the liner visits a positive addition to the community.
- Shelter while awaiting transport, Tourist Information and public toilets.  
**Action:** A possible solution to explore could be making better use of the Coastguard building on Hawes Pier. If willing to vacate, this could potentially act as a solution to all of the three above. Much bigger project with a big costs implication but one to consider.
- Queensferry undersold.  
**Action :** Keith Giblett, Graeme McKinley, Jim Galloway & Peter Wilson are looking to engage with local businesses and the Queensferry History Group to build a much stronger plan for promoting Queensferry as a visitor attraction for liner passengers and all other visitors.

## **The Finance**

There is a view from Edinburgh Council that the revenue from the landing fees at Queensferry should not be 'ring fenced' to finance developments relating to the source as it sets a precedent for all sources of income.

The costs attributed to this revenue are believed to amount to just below 50% of revenue. This covers the ongoing management of the visits, maintenance and repairs to the Hawes Pier, predominantly amortized from what we can establish and whatever else.

However, the costs of implementing a sufficient traffic management design, coach parking facility, taxi rank, an adequate reception for visitors by way of shelter, signage, information points & guides, toilets, etc. have just not been considered in this project from the start. It appears this has been a case of say yes, sort the Hawes Pier out and take the cash.

It would also appear to be the case that there has been no person appointed to oversee the liner visits in total and draw all stakeholders together; everything appears to be operating in silos with little or no integration.

What should be a positive, economy driving and engaging experience for all is, sadly, more a major imposition dumped on Queensferry. If we are to sustain and maximise this important revenue driver for Edinburgh then we must tackle the issues now rather than wait until the passengers stop coming because of the experience.

Queensferry & District Community Council have only just started to get involved in this project as it has previously come under the wing of Queensferry Ambition. The information above has been drawn from a number of meetings, discussions, community feedback plus some initial research, we are yet to witness the full working process of liner visits in detail and live but intend to do so as soon as the season starts.

Whilst there is inevitably a significant cost implication involved in creating a proper turning circle, this requirement will likely be a necessity after the High St refurbishment consultation where we expect a High St. restriction on HGV's and PSV's. Therefore any proposed solutions will require to be synchronized with that process.

Despite the issues, the local community remain positive about the potential of the liner visits but rightly do have an expectation of significant improvement. Many residents and local businesses are willing to get involved and help us get there.

*Graeme McKinley, Keith Giblett*

*Queensferry & District Community Council*

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