

## **FRIST Press Release**

**Immediate Release 5 November 2012**

### **FRIST meets Minister to press for long term support for Isles of Scilly Link**

Five members of the Friends of Isles of Scilly Transport (FRIST) campaign Advisory Group met Transport Minister Norman Baker on 2 November in London to press for a long term solution to enable affordable, all year, lifeline services to be created between Scilly and the mainland.

Contrary to advice given by the Isles of Scilly Steamship Company to the Minister prior to the rejection of the Route Partnership proposal in March 2011, FRIST presented evidence from Clarksons, the world's largest ship brokers, that there is no suitable second hand tonnage available in the world to replace the 35 year old Scillonian III.

FRIST said that, based upon the experience of the Scottish islands services, new tonnage can be financed in the private sector provided that there is Government commitment to its use, in the same way that new passenger rail rolling stock is procured by leasing companies.

FRIST told the Minister of the expected problems following the closure of the helicopter service on 1 November; the cessation of Scillonian III operation until the end of March; the susceptibility of the Skybus service to wind, fog and waterlogged runway at Lands End; as well as the high fares, and urged him to consider the needs of the islanders and their economy for an affordable year round lifeline service for all passengers. Clearly this would need some subsidy support as provided on Scottish islands routes and others around Europe.

Minister Norman Baker reassured FRIST and the two delegates from the Council of the Isles of Scilly that he would study Clarksons' views on replacement ships carefully. He explained that he would need to see the impact on Scilly's economy of the loss of the helicopter service, but promised to keep the door open for further discussions.

Further information:

FRIST Co-ordinator (IOS): Marian Bennett

T 01720 422411 / M. 07770341302

Email: [frist.hub@gmail.com](mailto:frist.hub@gmail.com)

FRIST Co-ordinator (Penzance): Dick Cliffe  
T. 01736 331734 / M 07977 455335  
Email: chairman@penzancechamber.co.uk

Campaign website: [www.frist.org.uk](http://www.frist.org.uk)

### **Notes to editors:**

FRIST is a community and business group campaigning for affordable, reliable all year round lifeline transport service between Scilly and the mainland.

With the ending of the BIH helicopter service on 31 Oct 2012 the islanders have to rely upon the more weather dependant fixed wing service (Skybus) as the passenger ferry does not operate in the winter months.

Under the Route Partnership Scheme a new all year round combined passenger ferry/freighter owned by Cornwall Council would have come into service in 2013 and provided an all year round service. The vessel would have been operated under a franchise agreement by the IOS Steamship Company.

The Scillonian III was a purpose built for the IOS route in 1976/7 with a Government provided interest free loan of £1 million (60% of the vessels costs). It has a shallow draft to suit the shallow harbours of the route and a reinforced hull able to take the seabed on a regular basis.

FRIST representatives met with representatives of **Clarksons** (shipping brokers) and **CalMac** (ferry operator) in the morning before meeting the Minister. FRIST has been working closely with CalMac following an introduction arranged by the department of Transport Scotland responsible for ferry services to the Scottish Islands in Sep 2012 (at the EU Small Islands Conference on the Isle of Mull) 18-21 Sep 2012).

### **Present at the meeting:**

Norman Baker M.P., Minister for Transport  
Andrew George M.P.  
Bob Collins, Department for Transport

FRIST:  
Marian Bennett, FRIST Co-ordinator IOS,

Sam Guy, former pilot, master mariner, FRIST Advisory Group member  
Robert Dorrien-Smith, proprietor of Tresco, FRIST Advisory Group member  
James Francis, manager of Star Castle Hotel, FRIST Advisory Group member  
Tony Berkeley, House of Lords, FRIST Advisory Group member

Council of the Isles of Scilly:

Cllr. Mike Hicks, Chairman, Council of the Isles of Scilly (COIOS)

Cllr. Dudley Mumford, Chair of Transport and Health Overview, COIOS