

RE: Mallaig-Armadale Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance project.

Dear Scottish Ministers,  
CC: CMAL, Stantac, Mott MacDonald and Peter Bretts,  
CC: Kate Forbes MSP, John Finnie MSP

We were delighted to receive the news that you commissioned a report to look at improving the Mallaig-Armadale ferry infrastructure. The ferry service is a vital link to the mainland for the community in Sleat, South Skye and deserves your attention and investment.

However, as a community situated at the foot of the ferry terminal in Armadale, we are in dismay that the representatives of CMAL, and the appointed consultants Mott MacDonald Ltd and Peter Brett Associates have given us only three weeks to respond to a consultation which will have huge impacts on the community in South Skye. Three weeks is not a fair amount of time to investigate the STAG report, which we know is a desk-based study. We ask you for more time to take into account the expected impacts the proposed development and expansion will have on the area, not only to people, local businesses but also to the marine life that thrives currently.

We have extensively reviewed the information provided and would like to stress some serious concerns to you.

We have not seen any evidence to show that this project is necessary. We see this development as unnecessary in its current state and we believe its main driver is for expansion of economic purposes without taking into consideration the long term impacts of expansion to the ferry terminal.

We reject the option of moving the terminal and pier to the south side of the current pier which will completely destroy the valuable ecosystem at Rubha Phoil as well as several houses, which the consultants don't seem to have considered. This is for the reasons below as well as the impacts to completely annihilate our entire community, several people's life's work and our ecosystem with the rich biodiversity of birds, trees, flowers, lichens, mosses, sea life and so much more. This includes the home of our otters and seals and the countless other creatures we share our home with. We understand that you are aware of the several layers of legal protections that the area and wildlife benefits from and that you understand that this will cause a lot of serious issues for your plans.

We also reject all the other options for the expansion of the ferry terminal on the strongest possible terms.

For these reasons:

- All 4 options by far mostly benefit the big businesses in the community. They will pick the fruits from the passing trade, but the negative consequences are exported to the local community and environment.

- The most pressing issue of our time: climate change was not mentioned at all in the STAG report. The project is completely on a different course from the reality of the different world we will be living in by the time it is completed (estimated to be 2030). Even more so if we think about the projected lifespan of 60 years.

According to the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), we have 11 years left for our last chance to change our lives into a carbon neutral one or we risk runaway global warming which quite possibly means extinction of the human race as we know it.

Building more and bigger infrastructure to accommodate more vehicles for the purpose of tourism doesn't fit into that picture. If we don't play our part in changing our ways, by the time this terminal

reaches the end of its life and needs to be replaced, there will be no civilisation left here that will be using the ferry.

- The expanded ferry service will result in an increase in car traffic, more campervans, more air pollution, more littering, more human waste in every darker corner of our community, more noise pollution, more drones, more dogs needing a quick toilet run, hundreds more people wanting to be entertained all at once and in case of cancellations dozens more people needing beds and so much more....

We sometimes get coach loads of people walking through our forest. I remember following one group to listen what the guide had to say. He told them that there are 3 species of seal in Scotland (there are two) that the viewpoint is called Otter Point (it isn't). and that he had never seen an otter there ever. (there was one swimming next to the shore of Eilean Maol) These people that come in coaches and cruise ships are customers. They buy entertainment of any type and care for the ecosystem matters very little. Can you imagine hundreds of them throttling through the village looking for entertainment? Can you imagine the industry that will follow that profit opportunity? The existing small local businesses will likely be replaced by bigger imported ones.

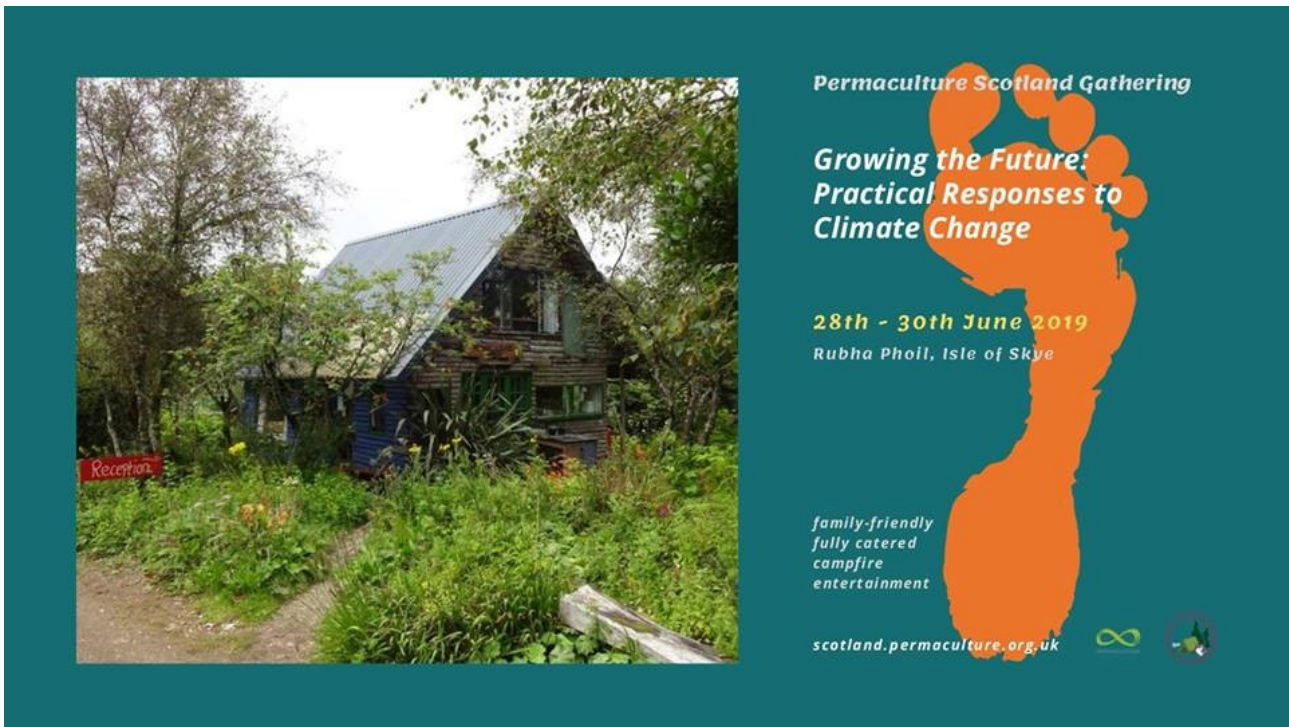
- It will further polarise the economic activity to a higher intensity in the summer and none in the winter. Putting yet more pressure on residential housing which is already a huge problem on the island. Many locals live in caravans as they cannot afford to buy a house and no lets are available.

- The whole exercise is disconnected from any other infrastructure and development plans for the area. A plan for an investment of such a scale and importance for the area, surely needs to do better than this.

- There still is a lot of ferry capacity left over. A report by Calmac tell us that the ferry *never* has full capacity of foot passengers. We benefit from the opportunity of a beautiful train ride from Glasgow and Edinburgh straight to Mallaig. With a tiny investment in comparison, eco-tourism can be promoted and facilitated. People that travel slowly, stay and spend money and not just those that buy petrol and a bag of sweets at the community trust shop and move on, or even drive straight through our village on a rush to get to the fairy pools for a selfie for their collection. All the proposals in this development is designed to attract high volumes of traffic that pass through quickly. It seems much wiser -on all levels of consideration- to attract lower numbers of people that stay longer and travel light. People that care and stop to enjoy and exchange their money for our services. We're talking about slow tourism.

- This new pier needs to serve us until 2090. We should make best use of this large investment. We'll have to live with it for a long time.

56 million is a big investment for our local economy at a time that our public budgets are shrinking, and every penny will need to be spent on climate change adaptation measures. Can you imagine what we could do for our community with that amount of money? We at Rubha Phoil can imagine an entirely different community. Just some examples of quick ideas: a bike repair and renting business by Alex at the pier, a hostel that can be opened when the ferry is cancelled, an expanded taxi service by James, a summer forest school with kids playground and adventure park run by the Community Trust, ..... a few family friendly restaurants, a gallery to sell local arts and crafts and produce, ....



We are welcoming a gathering of about two hundreds of permaculture practitioners at Rubha Phoil 28-30 June, who will be exploring appropriate responses to Climate change. We would like to invite Ministers and Companies involved to join us. It would be a good opportunity for you to meet some experts in sustainable development and for you to make your case for the development, to the future generations, as we have invited young people to join in the discussions. After all, they are the people that will need to live in the ecosystem we are creating for them today. More info here: <http://bit.ly/2019gathering>

- All proposed developments are designed to facilitate the mooring of two 100m long boats at the same time. If it is possible for a cruise ship to moor here, they will. The impact of this on the local community will be huge. Rubha Phoil will not be able to withstand the thousands of daily foot prints on our woodland walk. Visions of the eroded muddy path to the fairy pools shiver through our imagination.

- The existing pier was built in the 90's, 25 years ago or thereabout. We have seen no evidence that it can't be repaired and upgraded without much structural problems. The evidence that we need such a large upgrade is completely lacking. The study glossed over these options as if the case is already made. It is clear to us that it isn't. The study needs to take a step back and look at these options again and make that case.

- With some imagination other solutions can be found: A two-minute thought exercise brings these ideas forward: making the price for campervans more expensive would reduce their numbers and make space for higher quality tourists. Encouraging people to leave their car at home or at designated guarded parking places in Mallaig, Fort William or Glasgow,... would allow more foot passengers to travel to the island, not only encouraging low carbon travel but perhaps the savings from non-expansion would be put into the desperately needed upgrade of our public transport services and roads.

- People overwhelmingly come to Skye because of its natural beauty and views. People want to escape the concrete jungle, which is exactly what is being created by this proposal.

- All proposals are created within the mindset of more and faster growing profit-making schemes in an inflating bubble which won't last. Our community in Sleat needs slow steady and sustainable economic growth. We need long term, not short-term thinking.

In conclusion, we are asking the Scottish Ministers to send CMAL, Stantac, Mott MacDonald and Peter Bretts back to the drawing board with this message: **The design solution does not fit the brief.** We have not seen any evidence that the current terminal needs to be expanded, or even that it cannot be repaired. These two questions need to be answered first. Surely that is obvious.

We would like to see a full report prepared and distributed on the future of the Armadale – Mallaig ferry service, considering the many possible effects of climate change, socially, economically and environmentally. To add to this, we would like to see any traffic modelling that has been prepared for this route to see why expansion is the only answer for the consultants hired for this job and CMAL.

We would be delighted to show you around Rubha Phoil so you can understand our concerns for this project.

Ludwig Appeltans on behalf of The Rubha Phoil community and 143 supporters, Armadale Pier, Ardvassar, IV45 8RS. [www.earth-ways.co.uk](http://www.earth-ways.co.uk)