

2023 Sun Ferry Passengers Liaison Group (Central-Cheung Chau ferry route)

Held Successfully with Collective Intelligence Contributes to the Betterment of Ferry Service

The Sun Ferry Passengers Liaison Group (Central-Cheung Chau ferry route) was successfully held on 16 March 2023. Attendees shared their concerns actively with constructive opinions provided while the Sun Ferry management thanked the attendees for the valuable comments and promised to follow up promptly. The following are the recaps of the meeting and Sun Ferry's post-meeting action plans.

Item	Attendees' Concerns	Sun Ferry's on-the-spot replies	Sun Ferry's post-meeting action plans
I. Pier Facilities			
1	Request improvement of pier facilities (e.g. Provision of wide gates, enlarging the "ticket window" of Customer and Octopus Service Centres, adding the function of displaying the usage status of Multi-ride tickets via Octopus gate machines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As the wide gates require more installation space than the tradition tripod turnstiles, so due to limited space at piers, Sun Ferry may need to reduce the number of turnstiles to spare areas for installation of wide gates, which will affect the passenger mobility inside the piers. - Sun Ferry had adjusted the "ticket window" of the Customer and Octopus Service Centres during the epidemic to strengthen the prevention. - Sun Ferry will study the feasibility of displaying the usage status of Multi-ride tickets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sun Ferry will study the feasibility of installing swing turnstiles. - Sun Ferry has widened the "ticket windows" in late March 2023. - Currently, passengers who purchased the Multi-ride tickets can check the Octopus usage records via the Octopus app. Sun Ferry will study the feasibility of checking the number of trips used by Multi-ride ticket via Octopus machines at piers.
2	Request reopening of toilets in the waiting concourse of lower deck in Central Pier No.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As advised by related government department, the improvement works are targeted to complete by early April 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The 2 unisex toilets were completed and opened for public use by early April 2023, while there are still minor furnishing on the 2 disabled toilets.
3	Request to remove a row of seats near the boarding gate in the fast-ferry waiting concourse in Central Pier No.5, to avoid hindering passengers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At present, the seats installed in the waiting concourses of Sun Ferry are decided in accordance to the operational conditions and per passengers' requests with the approval from the Transport Department. - Sun Ferry will review the suitability of such removal and impacts on passengers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After reviewing the actual operational conditions, Sun Ferry has adjusted the seat locations and will closely monitor the pier operations and the feedbacks of passengers.
4	Concern about the new payment methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sun Ferry will introduce the new fare payment method allowing passengers to pay by QR code within 2023. Details will be announced in due course. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sun Ferry will announce details in due course.
II. Pier Operation			
1	Request modification of the operation of "Passages for Monthly Ticket & Multi-Ride Ticket" (e.g. Adding eligible users, extending the operation period of the passage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adding eligible users will increase the overall amount of users which will unavoidably reduce the efficiency of the passage. - The passage is regulated by the Transport Department which decides the eligible users and the role of Sun Ferry is to enforce the implementation. Introduction of "Cheung Chau Residents" as the eligible users involve the procedures of defining the eligible residents and the verification with the Transport Department. - Sun Ferry is committed to implementing the measures imposed by the Transport Department and remains open to any improvement plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The "Passages for Monthly Ticket & Multi- Ride Ticket" had been extended to open on 4 April and 6 April (those weekdays before long holiday) so as to minimise the impacts brought on local residents owing to influx of visitors. Sun Ferry shall further explore opening the "Passage" on more weekdays within 2023. - Sun Ferry will continue to play an active role to facilitate any new measures.
III. Cabin Order			
1	Blockage of passageways by luggage and baby buggies on fast ferries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sun Ferry agreed that there is a need to keep the cabin passageways clear and unobstructed. Thus, onboard announcements have been made and crewmembers have been arranged to carry patrols to maintain the passageways unobstructed, however, from time to time, passengers will refuse to cooperate according to their personal needs. Indeed, Sun Ferry needs the cooperation of each passenger to be self-disciplined. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sun ferry will instruct crewmembers to increase the frequency of patrols and remind passengers placing the luggage on luggage rack or in luggage zone to keep the passageways clear.

IV. Sailing Schedule/Vessel Deployment			
1	Request provision of additional sailing after the fast-ferry sailings found full during holidays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Previously, as several vessels were scheduled to undergo annual docking after the New Year holidays, thus, it was difficult to provide additional sailings, Sun Ferry will try to avoid arranging vessel's annual docking during holidays, to ensure the vessel availability. - At present, Sun Ferry has provided additional sailings after sailings with full occupancy during peak periods or holidays whenever feasible. However, the provision of additional sailings is restricted by various factors including but not limited to manpower allocation and availability of fleet resources and therefore, it is not possible to arrange additional sailing after each sailing with full occupancy. - Also, Sun Ferry takes time to deploy vessel and manpower, so it is not possible to immediately arrange additional sailing after each sailing with full occupancy. - Sun Ferry is currently recruiting staff via different channels to enhance the availability of manpower resources onboard and at piers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sun Ferry will closely monitor the change of passengers' demand and provide appropriate sailing arrangements whenever feasible. - Sun Ferry had arranged additional manpower during Easter holidays to maintain order at piers and ensure the availability of vessel deployment. Also, Sun Ferry will provide additional sailing after sailing with full occupancy if possible.
2	Request improvement of the full occupancy of fast-ferry sailings on weekdays (e.g. Encouraging passengers whom are entitled to the "\$2 Scheme" to avoid travelling by fast ferries during peak periods, requesting group tourists to travel by ordinary ferries)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sun Ferry had proposed to the related government departments to include the entitlement of deluxe class of ordinary-ferry services under the Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities ("S2 Scheme"). - Sun Ferry can only implement the \$2 Scheme arrangement and cannot refuse entitled passengers to travel by fast ferries. - Sun Ferry always encourages groups to travel by ordinary ferries. However, as a public transportation services provider, while seats are available on a first-come-first-served basis, Sun Ferry cannot limit the ferries that the groups travel. Certainly, Sun Ferry needs the cooperation of group tourists to be self-disciplined. - The provision of Group Ticket discount is only applicable to ordinary-ferry sailings in order to encourage groups to travel by ordinary ferries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sun Ferry will closely monitor the change of passengers' demand and provide appropriate sailing arrangements whenever feasible. Also, Sun Ferry will continue to encourage groups to travel by ordinary ferries to reduce the pressure imposed on our ferry services belong to carrying capacity of fast ferries.
3	Request improvement of the full occupancy of 06:20 CC-C sailings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To encourage passengers taking 06:20 CC-C fast-ferry sailing to have a switch to take earlier sailing, Sun Ferry has launched "Early Bird Sailing Offer" ("the Offer") which provides discounts to passengers taking 05:50 CC-C ordinary-ferry sailings between Mondays and Fridays. At present, patronage of 05:50 CC-C sailings has increased about 20% compared with that before the launch of the Offer. As a public transportation services provider, Sun Ferry cannot restrict or refuse passengers from taking certain sailings, therefore, the patronage of 06:20 CC-C sailing may still increase. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sun Ferry will closely monitor the change of passengers' demand and provide appropriate sailings arrangements whenever feasible.
4	Request improvement of the full occupancy problem of 18:20 C-CC and 18:30 C-CC sailings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sun Ferry has provided the 18:30 C-CC fast-ferry sailing from Mondays to Fridays in accordance to the ferry licence took effect from 1 April 2021, to increase the carrying capacity during the peak periods at night. However, according to our records, some passengers who originally took 18:20 C-CC sailing or the former ordinary-ferry sailings have switched to take this new sailing which caused this sailing found full or even deploying a bigger vessel to run this sailing will still find full. Sun Ferry requires the cooperation of passengers during the peak periods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sun Ferry will closely monitor the change of passengers' demand and provide appropriate sailing arrangement whenever feasible.
5	Request modification of sailing schedules between 05:00 and 07:00 to meet the needs of passengers nowadays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sun Ferry had proposed revision of the sailing schedules before the launch of the ferry licence 2021, however there was not any change of the concerned ferry licence. - Fleet resources have been set and arranged in accordance to the ferry licence, a modification of the existing sailing schedules or providing additional sailings will impose pressure on the operational costs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sun Ferry will closely monitor the change of passengers' demand and provide appropriate sailing arrangements whenever feasible.
V. Vessel Facilities			
1	WiFi signals are unstable and even cannot be searched onboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently, Sun Ferry provides WiFi network mainly via Vita vending machines onboard, but the vessel location and the number of users onboard will affect the stability and usability of WiFi networks. - If passengers cannot search the WiFi signal onboard, they are advised to provide sailing information to Sun Ferry to follow up. 	

VI. Ticketing Arrangement			
1	The Fare Concession period in February 2023 was too short	- The fare concession of ferry services on three outlying-islands routes took effect from 1 February to 28 February 2023 were launched in accordance with the "Profit Sharing Mechanism" that set in the outlying-islands ferry service licences. The discount periods was linked directly to the amount of profits.	
2	Concerns about the impacts of the pandemic imposed on fares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The COVID-19 pandemic has not only affected the patronage of ferry services, but also affected Sun Ferry's revenue, when sailing adjustments were made due to considerable amount of our crewmembers were infected early last year - In addition, the rise in oil prices and shortage of manpower that requires enhancement of employee benefits as attractions, do put pressure on Sun Ferry's revenue. - Sun Ferry has no announcements on fare increase for the time being. 	- Sun Ferry had submitted fare increase proposal to Transport Department.
3	Enquiry about the sale of multi-ride tickets	Since the launch of multi-ride ticket in early 2020, the sales of Multi-ride ticket had increased significantly at the beginning and become stable recently.	
VII. Staff Performance			
1	Pier staff members always block the "Passage for Monthly Ticket & Multi-Ride Ticket" ("the Passage") with unfriendly manner	- As many groups and tourists are not familiar with the pier operation and often line up at "the Passage" wrongly which affects the queuing order and eligible users, thus, pier staff member has been appointed to station at the entrance of "the Passage" to maintain the order, while eligible users can still use "the Passage" as usual.	- Sun Ferry has asked frontline staff members to pay attention to the needs of passengers, provide appropriate assistance to "the Passage" users in good manner.
VIII. Others			
1	Concerns about the publicity of Sun Ferry's Information	- If there is any information that needs to be released, Sun Ferry will immediately announce the related information through the company's channels (including pier and cabin notices, Sun Ferry website, Sun Ferry mobile app and customer services hotline). Then Sun Ferry will send the information to relevant stakeholders for sharing with passengers.	
2	Request to improve Sun Ferry mobile app (e.g. Announcement of the name of deployed vessel)	- Technically it is applicable to add the information of vessel name into Sun Ferry mobile app. However, due to the vessel deployment may change in a short period of time, it is not suitable to announce the vessel name in advance to avoid miscommunication.	- Passengers may approach our pier staff to check the latest information of current sailing when required.
3	Concerns about the arrangements of Cheung Chau Bun Festival 2023	- With reference to the pre-epidemic arrangements, Sun Ferry will request the relevant department to set up a first-aid station in the middle of the entrance of Cheung Chau pier, as well as set up special passages and offer Boarding Ticket to passengers who purchased the Monthly Ticket in May to facilitate them to use the special passages.	- Sun Ferry will announce details in due course.
4	New vessel scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sun Ferry will procure 13 new vessels between 2023 and 2025, including 300-seater, 400-seater, 500-seater and 1,000-seater ferries. First two new vessels are expected to be received and complete the tests by the end of this year. If the tests go well, they can be gradually put into service starting from 2024. - Freight storage areas and pet zones will be assigned onboard with strengthened ventilation system. - The 1,000-seater ferries still contain open-deck areas at the stern on the top deck, and will be mainly deployed for plying between Central and Cheung Chau. - Sun Ferry will study the transitional arrangements for the replacement of the vessels in accordance to the vessel conditions and passenger demand of the ferry routes. 	- Sun Ferry will continue to follow up the construction of new vessels.
5	New Cheung Chau Pier	- The location of new pier is preliminarily confirmed. And the design company appointed by the government is currently working on the design details.	- Sun Ferry will continue to cooperate with the government on the arrangement of the new pier.
6	Apart from current anti-scam reminders, suggest posting stickers on the back of seats onboard to remind passengers that the use of tricycles is prohibited	- The anti-scam reminders on the back of the seats onboard were produced by and requested to be posted by the Police.	- Sun Ferry will reflect passengers' suggestions to the Marine Police of Cheung Chau.

Sun Ferry management would like to extend heartfelt gratitude to attendees for their precious time in participating in the Passenger Liaison Group and comments contributing to the betterment of the ferry services. Passengers are welcome to provide valuable opinions to Sun Ferry via Customer Service Hotline: 2131 8181, Customer Service Hotfax: 2131 8877 and email: ferry_ideas@sferry.com.hk.