

First Ferry Passenger Liaison Group (Central-Mui Wo route) Held Successfully with Collective Intelligence Contributes to the Betterment of Ferry Service

The First Ferry Passengers Liaison Group (Central-Mui Wo route) was successfully held on 2 May 2019. Attendees shared their concerns actively with constructive opinions provided while the First Ferry (“NWFF”) management thanked the attendees for the valuable comments and promised to follow-up promptly. At the same time, the First Ferry management has the following sharing with the attendees:

A. Follow-ups of the Passenger Liaison Group (Central-Mui Wo route) held in November 2017:

1. In response to attendees’ suggestion, NWFF had contacted the Housing Authority in early 2018 and obtained the basic residents’ demographic information of the two new estates, and a survey had been conducted in October 2018 to collect the in-depth demographic data of the residents and their daily travel patterns to assess the impact of the newly moved residents on the passengers’ demand of Mui Wo route, so as to provide appropriate sailing arrangements. So far, around 120 responses had been received.
2. In response to attendee’s comment, NWFF had updated the evacuation maps by adding the QR code posting on each vessel which passengers can download and view the information anytime.
3. In response to attendee’s comment, NWFF had adjusted and provided onboard announcement with concise content.

B. Latest service updates of NWFF:

1. In view of the slight increase of passenger caused from new household in Mui Wo and tourists, NWFF has made great efforts to provide additional sailings with the available fleet resources.
2. NWFF’s Mobile App has got a brand-new look with useful functions like “Instant Seating Status” and “Online Monthly Ticket Purchase” added. Passengers can also receive the latest sailing information quickly and easily through activating the “Push Notification” during the time-critical situation like typhoon season.
3. NWFF is now applying to the Transport Department for purchasing an additional fast ferry with over 400 seats in order to cater for the passenger demand on Mui Wo route.

The following are the recaps of the meeting and NWFF’s post-meeting follow-up action plans.

Item	Attendees’ Concerns	NWFF’s on-the-spot replies	NWFF’s post-meeting follow-up action plans
I. Promotion of the Passenger Liaison Group (“PLG”)			
1	Insufficient promotion and incapability of frontline staff to provide relevant information.	- NWFF had promoted PLG through various channels including posting notices at piers and distributing leaflets to passengers who purchased Monthly Ticket. Also, NWFF had provided memo to inform our frontline staff with the details of the registration arrangement of PLG. NWFF will remind the frontline staff on this matter.	NWFF will review the effectiveness of the publicity, including the channels and forms of promotion.
II. Pier Operation			
1	Request for improvement on location indication of Octopus Holiday Return Ticket Registration Point and usage arrangement.	- Currently, Octopus Holiday Return Ticket notices are being displayed. At the beginning of the launch of Octopus Holiday Return Ticket, NWFF had provided discretionary arrangements for passengers who had problems in use. NWFF had reminded frontline staff to explain the related ticketing arrangement to passengers patiently. If passengers encounter any problem, they are advised to contact Customer Service Hotline for follow-up.	Starting from 11 May, NWFF has provided additional indication sign for the Octopus Holiday Return at Mui Wo Pier.
2	Unclear ticketing and boarding arrangement of carriage of pets	- According to NWFF’s “Notes to Passengers”, no pet is allowed onboard the deluxe-class of ordinary ferries or fast ferries. However, pets that need medical treatment will be granted with discretionary arrangement to board fast-ferry sailings when ordinary-ferry sailings are not available during late-night till early morning (T&Cs apply). - NWFF will remind frontline staff to pay attention and remind passengers who carrying pets to follow the instructions of “Notes to Passengers” for boarding while cooperation of passengers is important. - For effective pier operation management, currently, NWFF had arranged passengers of Central-Mui Wo route to purchase pet tickets at the “Cash Ticketing Office” and wait at the paid waiting concourse before boarding.	NWFF has provided additional notices in May to remind pet owners the locations to purchase pet tickets and pets are advised on a lead and muzzled.
3	Unclear freight boarding arrangement and freight charge i. Items allowed to be carried onboard fast ferries ii. Standard of freight charge	i. According to NWFF’s “Notes to Passengers”, accompanied travelling case or bag not exceeding 32 in.(W) x 23 in.(H) x 12 in.(D) in size, baby-car and small shopping trolleys are free of freight charge when boarding ordinary ferry or fast ferry. For bringing any freight out of the aforesaid items onboard, passengers shall pay freight ticket and board the ordinary ferries with the freight. iii. In accordance to the ferry licence, the freight is charged subject to its volume in cubic meter (length x width x height). ♦ As there are quite a lot of goods in irregular shape, NWFF has prepared a fare list with common goods for staff’s reference. Since even same type of items could be in different size, it is impracticable to list all goods out with charges. Passengers can contact Customer Service Hotline for details of freight charge whenever necessary. ♦ NWFF had tested the use of infrared measurement to calculate the freight charge in order to enhance the consistency, however, result of the same item varied from the ways of placement.	NWFF is reviewing how to improve and enhance the consistency of freight ticketing arrangement. Also, NWFF will reflect the potential problems of the current freight charge mechanism to TD.

4	Request for reopening of waiting concourse on 2/F at Central Pier 6	- Due to the low usage rate, the waiting concourse on 2/F is currently closed. In view of the increase of passengers, NWFF will consider to open the 2/F concourse when there are more passengers during holidays to facilitate the passenger flow.	During holidays, when there are more than 400 passengers taking the ordinary-ferry sailings, NWFF will open that waiting concourse.
III. Cabin Order			
1	Onboard storage problem of baby buggies and luggage	- NWFF has provided announcement and notices onboard, as well as reminded crewmembers to instruct passengers to place buggies and luggage at spare areas/luggage rack (if equipped). Cooperation of passengers is indispensable. - There is no by-law to prohibit the carriage of baby buggies or luggage onboard. Considering not only tourists but Mui Wo residents also have needs to bring luggage onboard, NWFF is not appropriate to ban the carriage of luggage on fast ferries.	NWFF will continue to remind crewmembers to monitor and instruct passengers to place the buggies or luggage properly in order to avoid the blockage of passageway.
2	Request to maintain the cabin order i. Offer seats to those in need ii. Keep the cabin quiet iii. Stop drunkards harass others	i. NWFF has provided onboard announcement to remind passengers not to occupy extra seats. Passengers are advised to ask for assistance from our crewmembers if they have difficulty on finding vacant seats. ii. NWFF has provided announcement and video clips onboard to remind passengers to lower the voice. NWFF will remind crewmembers to pay attention and advise the misbehaved passengers. iii. If passengers encounter any emergency onboard, please look for crewmembers and they will provide assistance whenever practicable. Passengers are also advised to contact the Police directly to report the situation whenever need.	NWFF will review and enhance the provision of promotional materials as needed.
3	Request for improvement of onboard smoking problem from passengers/ crewmembers	- NWFF has kept urging the Tobacco and Alcohol control Office who has the power of taking immediate prosecution to enhance the onboard enforcement. Also, NWFF has arranged operation officers to carry out special onboard inspection. - NWFF will admonish the crewmembers for smoking onboard.	NWFF has issued related notice to crewmembers in May as reminder.
IV. Sailing Schedule/Vessel Deployment			
1	i. Improve the sailing schedule (e.g. Increase the number of fast-ferry sailings from Central to Mui Wo at noon/on holidays) ii. Concern about sailing speed (e.g. Xin Zhong). Request for on-time sailing departure and reduce the delays of arrival time of Central-bound sailings iii. Request for the provision of additional sailing	i. The current schedule is set within the ferry licence granted by the Transport Department. For any amendment, apart from obtaining approval from the Transport Department, NWFF has to consider various operational factors (e.g. vessel and manpower availability, and extra operating cost incurred). NWFF had proposed schedule adjustment to the Transport Department. ii. Speed of vessels will be affected by the engine design of vessel, wind direction and velocity of water flow. Vessels are required to run in accordance to the speed restriction stipulated by the Marine Department to uphold the safety. NWFF will remind passengers and freight carriers to get on and off as soon as possible to avoid causing delays. Frequency of sailings during morning peak period is high. Due to the limited berths at Central Pier 6, some vessels may have to wait for berth after arrived Central which will affect the disembarkation time of the sailing. iii. To lessen the impact of full occupancy of sailings on holidays to Mui Wo residents, NWFF has tried to deploy larger vessels or provide additional sailings if feasible. However, the provision of additional sailings is restricted by various factors (e.g. vessel availability, manpower allocation and supply of berths). If certain groups fail to notify NWFF in advance, NWFF could not be able to make special arrangements at once to cater for the upsurge of passenger demand.	First Ferry will closely monitor the change of passengers' demand and provide appropriate sailing arrangement whenever feasible.
V. Vessel Facilities			
1	Concern about the installation of new seats on "Xin Ying"	- New seats are mainly installed at the lower deck of double-deck ordinary ferries. NWFF will adopt the attendees' suggestion to avoid using the new seats for the whole deck.	NWFF will arrange two different types of seats at the lower deck of concerned ferries.
2	Concern about cleaning the cabin	- NWFF will remind crewmembers to pay attention to the way of cleaning to avoid causing unpleasant smells.	Crewmembers have been reminded to pay attention to the way of cleaning the cabins to avoid causing unpleasant smells.

First 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 First Ferry via Customer Service Hotline: 2131 8181, Customer Service Hotfax: 2131 8877 and email: ferry_ideas@nwff.com.hk.