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Convener
Transport Committee
Scottish Parliament
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09 September 2026

Dear Convener,

MV Glen Sannox – LNG Operation and June 2025 Gas Venting Incident

During my appearance at the Transport Committee on 09 September 2026 I committed to seek and provide further detail on the operation of LNG systems on MV Glen Sannox and a gas venting incident which occurred in June 2025. As noted in the session, I can confirm that I was not briefed on this event before today.

MV Glen Sannox and MV Glen Rosa concept designs were developed from around 2010 and the contracts for detailed design and build were awarded to the Feguson Marine Engineering Limited (FMEL) shipyard in October 2015. The vessels are first in class dual fuel ferries which can operate on and switch between conventional Marine Gas Oil (MGO) and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) depending on regulatory requirements, operating conditions and demands on the routes they serve.

The MV Glen Sannox LNG system was successfully fully commissioned before handover in November 2024. LNG was trialled before handover, including rigorous testing and necessary regulatory approvals, and used alongside MGO for the vessel's initial period of operation after deployment in January 2025. MV Glen Sannox is currently the only vessel in the CalMac fleet capable of operating on LNG. MV Glen Sannox completed her maiden voyage from Troon to Brodick on 12 January 2025 and from 13 January she took up the scheduled timetabled service in place at the time.

On 3 June 2025, the MV Glen Sannox crew reported a malfunction of a vent valve on the LNG system. This resulted in venting of gas, with some being drawn back into the engine room's ventilation system. This triggered gas detection alarms in the generator room, and in spaces which are protected with air lock entry. Due to the significance of this incident, the application of operating protocols and the need for a full investigation, the vessel moved to operate on Marine Gas Oil (MGO) only.

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The incident demonstrated that the vessel's highly sensitive safety systems operated exactly as intended, ensuring there was no risk to life and maintaining the integrity of the system. It is difficult to assess how the gas which vented would have dispersed in the wind, but based on the fact that the gas detectors activated only in machinery spaces, the findings of the investigation indicate that passenger safety was not compromised during the incident.

Separately, following a joint investigation by CMAL, CalMac and Ferguson Marine Port Glasgow, a number of lessons were identified. As a result, a minor design modification has been incorporated into MV Glen Sannox and MV Glen Rosa to provide an additional layer of safety and further enhance the resilience of the system. These modifications were implemented proactively as part of a continuous improvement approach and to further strengthen an already robust system.

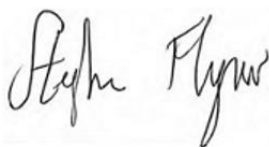
Safe operation of LNG has been possible since dry dock earlier this year. This capability has not been activated due to the variety of routes now being successfully covered by MV Glen Sannox, including Castlebay – Oban, Ullapool-Stornoway and Tarbet – Lochmaddy, and the limitation of LNG fuelling requirements which are currently only possible at Troon.

CalMac notified Transport Scotland officials on 30 June 2025 of the incident, a summary of which was shared at that time with the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Ms Hyslop in line with normal processes.

We continue to depend upon the expertise of CMAL as the vessel owners and CalMac as the highly skilled operator to advise and help with the decision-making process on vessel systems and operation. Through the Clyde and Hebrides Ferries Service contract, I expect them to follow any necessary legislation and processes in incidents such as these – but I have asked that Officials give further consideration as to how best keep Parliamentary Committees and local elected representatives routinely appraised, noting that we would not expect this to relate to routine operational matters.

I trust that this provides the further clarity and detail which I could not offer before now.

Yours sincerely,



STEPHEN FLYNN