

Cross-Party Group on Recreational Boating and Marine Tourism (online only)

Wednesday 27th March 2024 at 6pm

Minute

Present

MSPs

Stuart McMillan, MSP

Arianne Burgess MSP

Invited guests

None.

Non-MSP Group Members

Pauline McGrow

Graham Russell

Aileen Monk

Sarah Kennedy

Stuart Smith

Fanny Royanez

Duncan Tannahill

Finlo Cottier

Momchil Terziev

Laurie Piper

Anne Shedden

Andy Carnduff

Apologies

Emma Harper MSP

Martin Latimer

David Adams McGilp

Cathy Craig

Clair McFarlane

Andrew Rendle

Eilid Ormiston

Gordon Daly

Simon Limb

Andy Harmer

Peter Griffiths

Paul Bancks

Barry Schafe

Christine Cameron

Jonathan Mosse

Agenda item 1 - Welcome and Apologies

Stuart McMillan MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

Agenda Item 2 – Minutes and Action Points from last meeting

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

Proposed: Laurie Piper

Seconded: Sarah Kennedy

HVO – responses received from Department of Transport and have been circulated round CPG members. AS stated that it does not cover salt water recreational boating. LP reported that both the ILWA and British Marine are looking at this. At Scottish Canals level some boaters are not interested

in this. We need to make sure boats can run the diesel and will need to balance the aspiration vs reality. LP referred AS to Jonathan Mosse for further information. **Action: JM to provide update at next meeting.** AK stated that discussions are ongoing to extend to lumpy water boaters, the Clean Maritime plan covers big ships which is due imminently, there is a call for evidence from Department of Transport.

GR followed up by saying that we require to get the legal position changed and have supply of HVO in the future. There will be other industries that will require HVO but there is a shortage. LP stated that the aspiration is to have electric boats, but the practicality is that we don't have the onshore infrastructure to support electric boats e.g., lack of charging points.

AS stated that there are a lot of boats that are on moorings, so it is difficult to plug in. From the point of HVO "diesel bug" is an issue and there are a lot of smaller boats that come out for the winter with engines cutting out. It is a safety issue and also require to ensure that it is affordable and accessible.

SMCM asked if the joint working group are addressing all the issues or just HVO. LP stated that it is primarily looking at HVO; however, there are a number of strands and there is "net zero" aspiration. In regards to pumped hydro storage we need to understand who is the lead body on this. SK stated that British Marine have done a very good piece of work looking at different areas of propulsion and will be presenting at a future CPG meeting. AM reported that Ross Wombell from British Marine is leading on net zero aspects within British Marine, and they are about to have a "decarbonisation hub" available on the website.

Action: Synopsis report to be re-circulated together with a request for advance questions for Ross Wombell for the meeting on 14th May. AM to let PM know if there is further detail on the website.

AK reported that in regard to alternative and electronic propulsion AK has had a meeting with Ross Wombell and Joanna Richardson and the Department of Transport will be dealing with recreational propulsion and "road to net zero".

AK stated that the big issue is range which is 15 to 30 miles and many sailing yachts have range of 200-300 miles and there are not many power sockets.

SMCD reported that the Tayvallich fishing boat has converted to all electric, and there is a video on their facebook site entitled "it will never work" to show how they went about it. They keep the boat on a swinging mooring with a working range of 23 miles. This demonstrates that it is possible, and the equipment is available to convert boats.

Agenda Item 3 - Visitor Tourism Levy Bill

Arianne Burgess MSP stated that the cruise ship levy part is very positive and in order to bring the cruise piece into the mix we are committed to making this happen.

SMCM encouraged everyone to make their submissions. SMCM further stated that we had a very positive outcome following on from the Minister attending the CPG meeting followed by a round table discussion and as a result there was an amendment made to the bill. SMCM stated that he would not anticipate any further changes at Stage 3.

There were amendments with regards to introducing a levy for the cruise ships. Scottish Government do not believe that this is the correct bill to do that. SMCM has had a meeting with Andy Harmer and know SMCM's position. The industry has accepted that is going to happen, but it is how it is going to happen. In addition, there has been some questions around the implement of the legislation.

Discussions have also taken place with Scottish Tourism Alliance; once they are at the stage SMCM would encourage CPG to contribute and we would invite the Minister to attend the CPG again.

SJ stated that we have to be careful of unintended consequences and we should look at wording. The Waverley would need to be mindful that it would not impede the small ships sector which are classed as cruising. SMCM stated that with the current bill this would cover this, and any particular legislation has had to be looked at. The Waverley and the Maid of the Loch would require to be taken into consideration. We will have that dialogue further down the line. AL stated that it would be good for host communities. SMCM agreed that the cruise levy should benefit the local communities.

(From Teams chat), LP stated that way back in the mists of time the intention was that the Visitor Levy would be administered locally by a recognised body (i.e., DMO) to ensure local delivery / outcomes. SMCM explained that the bill will be collected locally and given to local authorities to determine how they spend the money. AB agreed that this was correct. The primary purpose is to support activities that tourism will be involved in, and the bye product will benefit communities. After this becomes an act local authorities will consult, and it will be very important for people to contribute. This money could be diverted to the housing issue and where it is appropriate for the local authorities. The bill is flexible and local authorities can decide on whether they will be willing to take part. SK raised concern that if it goes to Highland Council then it will get lost in the coffers and want to ensure that it is directed to areas to benefit the visitors e.g., toilet facilities and repair of road potholes. AB emphasised that that is important to engage with the local authority consultation to feed in these concerns.

LP asked about the non-statutory functions, and it is expected the Visitor Levy would be in about now, it would come into councils and councils would work with the recognised local body e.g., DMO, (Visit Inverness) to determine the amount of money spent locally. It was to make sure that it would be spent on statutory areas. We are in a good place, but we need to be mindful that things have changed since 2000. AB asked for clarity around what you mean by “changed”. LP gave us an example of short-term lettings and that the tourism industry being extensively affected by the pandemic. AB explained that percentage is fairer but if you do a flat rate then the hotels are all spending the same amount. Local authorities will require to familiarise themselves with the technology to make this as easy as possible. AB encouraged members to get involved in the Moray consultation if they wish to do so. LP stated that someone has to pay for tourism, and we need to try and influence how it is being spent to ensure that it is spent on tourism areas.

AB stated that there is a housing issue in Cairngorm National Park as are struggling to have housing for those working in the hospitality sector and if this was addressed then it would free up spend in other sectors. AB encouraged members to keep an eye out for the local authority consultation.

DT reported that it was announced today in the news that VisitScotland are going to close all visitor information centres across Scotland and asked for opinions on this issue. AB stated that there has been a gradual erosion and this area that we need to look at as this supports tourism information. SMCM gave an example of Gourock Visit Information Centre that is situated within the library. There is an official VisitScotland aspect there but none in Greenock or Port Glasgow. Discover Inverclyde information is available for cruisers docking and it has regular visitors.

SMCM stated that “tourism is everyone’s business”. SMCM agreed with AB that there should be a point for visitors to visit to source tourism information and these offices are very important. Information is being sought online however a joint operation with others and Visit Scotland would help provide that sort of service.

DT stated that there has been a loss of branding from town centres and the other issue is what you lose consistency of message and methods of identifying what is available and it is counterproductive to tourism. AL suggested sending out resource packs to businesses who want to interact with or inform tourists, with a “Welcome to Scotland” message.

A Shedden using a local sim card which would direct you to the website and in turn direct to the tourism information to include a translation app.

Action: AB to check what responses were submitted to the Tourism Levy and feedback to CPG.

Agenda Items 4 – AOCB/Future Business

GR raised the following areas for discussion on behalf of RYA Scotland:

- **Environmental Awareness Campaign**

RYA Scotland hopes to organise a campaign this summer to collect litter from remote beaches. However, there is a problem of disposal. We have been talking to Keep Scotland beautiful.

Ariane Burgess MSP reported that she has had a discussion on Minister for Biodiversity, and asked if it could be linked to the Fishing for Litter harbours. AB further explained that they do a big gathering and bring it back to designated places. AB referred to organisation that deals with recycling, [A Big Bang for Plastic Recycling \(preciousplastic.com\)](https://www.preciousplastic.com), the technology is simple and it creates four pieces of machinery to make it from very simple materials that you can get in a hardware store. It could potentially work in rural and island communities. LP also reported that the Vic 32 Puffer is using compressed rapeseed pellets, <https://youtu.be/YqfAps7dsF0>

AL stated that the fishing for litter repositories is few and far between and Mallaig is one of them. The system only covers a few harbours, but it is a good model to look at especially if there is a supply chain in place.

GR stated that RYA Scotland would very much like to help, how it should be collected to make it easy. All the bits are out there, it needs to be joined up and the tourism levy could support it as clean beaches are very important.

- **Oban Bay Harbour Revision Order** - We are concerned that Argyll and Bute Council as the proponents of the Oban Bay Harbour Order are also managing the responses to the consultation rather than Transport Scotland. This appears to be a conflict of interest and lays Transport Scotland open to a legal challenge. FC reported that of those who submitted objections would expect a response within 28 days and it is unclear what the next steps and timeline is and there is a lack of clarity. The groups put in a Freedom of Information request to Argyll and Bute Council, but they were unable to provide. and they responded by saying that they could not do this. There is an extensive amount of discontent about the process. DT raised concern about the lack of communication since the objection was lodged. DT has challenged both Argyll and Bute Council and Transport Scotland. AB stated that she was not aware of this and asked that DT provide her with details, and she will follow up with letter. GR advised that he thought it should be Transport of Scotland that should be dealing with this matter. **Action: SMCM and AB to write a letter to ask them why the process was done this way. FC will provide wording to assist. Letter sent to Transport Scotland on 25th April 2024.**

- **Consultation on Harbour Revision Orders:**

GR reported that there is a current consultation on revising and consolidating the Harbour orders for the CMAL facilities. RYA Scotland broadly welcomes this simplification and updating but is checking the details with colleagues in the RYA head office to ensure that there is no encroachment on moorings or anchorages. We sent it down to RYA Legal to let them go through it, and from our Coastwatchers' to identify any issues. We are responding to and people with detailed knowledge can go in.

RNLI

We would also like to note and welcome the five parliamentary motions celebrating the 200th birthday of the RNLI and recognise the contribution that RNLI have played in our waters.

Lochmaddy

FC reported that the Lochmaddy pontoons in North Uist have been damaged due to dredging and there is a dispute over who should take responsibility for the repair. The Manager of Lochmaddy was keen to alert the boating community that they will not be available until at least early summer. We are trying to get the communication out to make boaters aware. FC asked if the Cruising Association could get the message out and it will also be put through RYAS channels and highlights the small operators where do they get support. **Action: SMCM to send email out to MSPs who represents the Highlands so that they are all aware.** GR stated that there is a worrying trend that cruisers are expecting to tie up on pontoons, but they can also use anchorages.

SMCM asked whether it would be ok to have a contact email address for RYA Scotland, this was provided: admin@ryascotland.org.uk

Action: Lochmaddy will be preparing a statement and will circulate round the CPG members. AC asked about whether there has been a Notice to Mariners issued. GR explained that there are so many organisations who issue Notice to Mariners, so it is difficult to get the message out.

Scott Johnson, Waverley Excursions reported on some good news stories:

Issue of piers and landing stages and maintenance - Jenni Minto MSP has been instrumental in assisting. Helensburgh Pier has nothing left to give and it has now crumbled. SJ stated that they believe that they can lead a community ownership offer to reinstate the landing stages and has been in discussion with Jackie Baillie MSP to take this forward.

Port at Fort William - Partnership established with Cruise Loch Linnhe and will be returning to Fort William as a result.

Greenock – £250,000 has been invested in the Greenock workforce and are going in at end of April and will visit ship in the dry dock and extended invitation to SMCM.

Action: DT stated that he is involved with a Community Asset Transfer project and would be happy to have a discussion with SJ if this would assist to provide some background to his experiences.

Acton Points from 7th February 2023

- Invite Skills Development Scotland to a future meeting (ongoing).
- Contact be made with each of the 32 local authorities (education directors) to make them aware and also provide a list of the types of jobs available so that they can feed into Modern Apprenticeship Week. **(Action ongoing)**

Actions from 28th November 2023 Meeting

The following 4 organisations to be asked to present at future meeting:

1. Greenports – attending on 14th May 2024.
2. Crown Estate Scotland, awaiting response.
3. Argyll and Isles Partnership – attending on 14th May 2024

4. Cruise Liner Association, Andy Harmer, Managing Director, Cruise Lines International Association attending on 14th May 2024.

Action Points from 27th March 2024 Meeting

- HVO – JM to provide written update for circulation.
- Synopsis report to be re-circulated together with a request for advance questions for Ross Wombell for the meeting on 14th May. AM to let PM know if there is further detail on the website. **Update: Ed Tuite attending on 14th May.**
- Oban Bay: SMCM and AB to write a letter to ask them why the process was done this way. FC will provide wording to assist. **Update: Letter now sent to Transport Scotland on 24th April 2024.**
- **Lochmaddy**
 - SMCM to send email out to MSPs who represents the Highlands so that they are all aware. **Update: Ongoing**
 - Lochmaddy will be preparing a statement, and this can be circulated round the CPG members. **Update: This cannot be progressed due to legal obligations.**

Agenda Item 5 - Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 14th May 2024, 6pm to 8pm at the Scottish Parliament and online.