

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Cross Party Group on Recreational Boating
and Marine Tourism, Committee Room 5, Scottish Parliament**

26th June 2018

Name	Organisation
Stuart McMillan MSP	
Pauline McGrow	RYA Scotland
James Allan	RYA Scotland
Simon Limb	British Marine Scotland
Martin Latimer	British Marine Scotland
Alison Rose	Whale and Dolphin Conservation
Sarah Dolman	Whale and Dolphin Conservation
Jonathan Mosse	Keep Canals Alive Alliance
Ronnie Rusack	Chair of Lowland Canal Volunteer Group
Andrew Thin	Scottish Canals
Pat Bowie	Keep Canals Alive Alliance
Andrew Rendle	Scottish Coastal Rowing Association
Fergus Duncanson	RYA Scotland
Stuart Rennie	Keep Canals Alive Alliance and Lowland Canals Users Association
Gordon Daly	RYA Scotland/Seagull Trust Cruises
Carlene McAvoy	ROSPA
Chris Cutts	Forth Estuary Forum
Richard Walsh	Scottish Government
Alison Harris MSP	
Sarah Kennedy	Fort William Marina & Shoreline Company Limited
Ian Dewar	Fort William Marina & Shoreline Company Limited

Cicely Oliver	Keep Canals Alive Alliance
Colin McFadyen	British Divers Marine Life Rescue
Richard Millar	Scottish Canals
Angus MacDonald MSP	
Catherine Topley	Scottish Canals
Josie Saunders	Scottish Canals
Sue Bedford-Visser	The Bridge/Keep Canals Alive Alliance
Jim McLachlan	Forth and Clyde Canal Society
Liam Kerr MSP	
Aileen Monk	British Marine Scotland
Clare Adamson MSP	
Emma Harper MSP	
Ian White	Canalside Hub
Graham Russell	RYA Scotland

APOLOGIES

Name	Organisation
David Hill	British Marine Scotland
Marc Crothall	Scottish Tourism Alliance
Kathy Gostick	Forth Yacht Clubs Association
David Vass	RYA Scotland/West Highland and Islands Moorings Association
Donald McLaren	Clyde Yacht Clubs Association
Michael Avril	Water Safety Scotland

Andy McKenna	Thomas Telford Corpach Marina
Jackie Baillie MSP	
Emilie Devenport	Scottish Environment Link
Tim Ford	Capercaillie Cruisers
Stuart Smith	Scottish Canoe Association
Mike McGregor	
David Hill	British Marine Scotland
Rhona Fairgrieve	Scottish Coastal Forum
Daniel Steel	Sail Scotland
Graeme Harvey	Lowland Canals Association
Paul Bancks	Crown Estate Scotland
Carlene McAvoy	ROSPA

Welcome and Apologies

Stuart McMillan MSP, Convener of the Cross Party Group on Recreational Boating and Marine Tourism welcomed everyone to the meeting and to the Scottish Parliament and introductions were made round the table.

SMCM outlined the GDPR statement prepared by RYA Scotland and explained that they are the data controller in their role of Secretariat. SMCM asked if people wanted to keep in contact and receive information on the Cross Party Group they must indicate this by “opting in”.

1. Minutes and Action Points from last meeting

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

Proposed: Gordon Daly

Seconded: Martin Latimer

Action Points from Last Meeting

- Dundee Marina Project - Contact details for Gordon Reid, Dundee City Council to be passed to Graham Russell/SMCM will write to Cabinet Secretary and Fergus Ewing re the project. Circulate letter that was sent to Cabinet Secretary and Fergus Ewing MSP re Dundee marina project.** - This was achieved.
- Green Blue - It was agreed to re-issue out Green Blue information to CPG members and ask them to speak to their local boaters.**

Information has been circulated.

SMCM reported that he put a motion down and this has been circulated.

3. **Electronic version of RYA Magazine showing Brexit Article to be circulated**
This was circulated on 23rd March.
4. **2020 Year of Coast and Water - Look into events for 2020 Year of Coast and Water. To be discussion topic together with discussion about attracting sailing events to Scotland.**
This is ongoing. ML reported that an Officer for Marine Tourism has been appointed by North Ayrshire Council.
5. **Scottish Sea Angling Network to be invited to present at the next meeting on 28th November or alternatively to one of the meetings in 2018 -**
Invitation has been sent out and we await response.
6. **Labour Market Survey**
Information from Labour market survey will be provided to SMCM.
7. **Careers Video** to be shown at Clyde Marine Planning Partnership
This is ongoing.
8. **The Green Blue - Further discussion is required on Green Blue requirements in Scotland and potential literature to be produced with assistance from Graham Russell** -This has been circulated.
9. **GDPR - Discussion to take place on procedure for processing of information for CPG members** – This has been achieved and in process.
10. **2020 Year of Coast and Water to be added as discussion topic to a future agenda and combine with “Attracting sailing events to Scotland”** – This has been added to the 25 September agenda.
11. **Thank you Letters - Thank you to Fiona Hyslop and Alan Rankin** – these have been issued.
12. **Fort William Marina and Shoreline Company Limited - Sarah Kennedy – Letter of Support** -This letter has now been issued.

2. **AGM**

Election of Office Bearers

Convener

Stuart McMillan MSP

Stuart McMillan MSP was approved as Convener.

Proposed: Angus MacDonald MSP

Seconded: Liam Kerr MSP

Deputy Convener

Liam Kerr MSP

Liam Kerr MSP was approved as Vice Convener.

Proposed: Stuart McMillan MSP

Seconded: Angus MacDonald MSP

Secretariat (Secretary/Treasurer)

James Allan and Pauline McGrow were approved as the Secretariat by all in attendance.

2. Scottish Canals and Q and A

Andrew Thin provided a presentation and background to the current situation. He also introduced Catherine Topley who is the Interim CEO of Scottish Canals and also Richard Millar who is the Director of Infrastructure. (Please see below information provided in presentation).

Andrew Thin provided the following background and outlined the financial constraints and there then followed an opportunity for questions

Benefitting Scotland: 2002-15

- 178,887m2 Employment floor space
- 5,425 housing
- 4,701 construction jobs
- 5,052 FTE jobs
- £878m investment

Scottish Canals Assets

- There are 5 canals together making 140 linear miles.
- £1.78billion to rebuild the canals
- 560 moorings

Dredging and draft issues

- Dredging issues on the Forth and Clyde Canal
- Draft restrictions on the Caledonian Canal
- Reduced draft – Crinan Canal
- £4m - £6m backlog

Live Issues

- Bonnybridge and Twechar - £1.2m upgrade required.

Levels of Funding

The levels of funding were outlined (please find attached presentation)

Due to the wider economic outlook future investment is anticipated to continue to flatline

or decrease as revenue and capital grant becomes tighter. In real terms this is significantly decreasing available asset investment.

Backlog / Deficit Growth on Current Investment Levels

Strategic Prioritisation

- Avoidance of major catastrophic failure whenever an asset presents a danger to wide spread public safety/ national infrastructure we will either fix, close or replace
- Public & staff safety Delivers a safe environment for visitors and staff
- Operability & functionality of canals Sustains operation of the canals
- Preventative maintenance to reduce risks
- Our approach is to deploy resources efficiently against known prioritised risks to protect assets and slow asset decline

Asset Management Plan (please find attached presentation)

Asset Management Strategy (verified by auditors Ernest and Young)

Have made indirect losses at Crinan Canal (£,1510K), Caledonian Canal (£6,872K), Falkirk Wheel and Helix (£4,000K).

The Value of Navigation

- £2.011m boating
- £12.96m in hospitality (direct and indirect)
- £150m in property

Priority from a navigation perspective

- Caledonian Canal
- Crinan Canal
- Union Canal
- Forth & Clyde east
- Forth & Clyde middle
- Forth & Clyde west

- Permanently closed Monkland Canal

Priority Projects to Deliver 2018/19

Avoidance of major catastrophic failure

Reservoir Works – Linlithgow Embankments Phase 2 – Investigate High Risk Embankments

- Public & staff safety – Bridge controls, lights and barriers – Clachnaharry electrical safety works – Leamington Lift bridge – Almond Feeder
Gairloch large craft jetty – Programmes to investigate leakage on embankments, lock structures & gates and aquatic invasive species (Caley)

Operability & functionality of canals - Falkirk Wheel - Kytra Lock gates
Bonnybridge/Twechar (£1.205m) Bascule Bridges (£0.2m)

Priority Projects to Deliver 2018/19

£3.370m £3.0m Cap/£0.37m Rev

Asset Management Strategy Launch

Launched: 21st June AMS/ AMP sets out

- A clear line of sight from Corporate Plan and canal visions to asset management.
- A clear process to manage these 250-year old assets responsibly, competently and for the benefit of all Scotland's people.
- Defines how we will be prioritising our available investment into works according to both the safety of the public, our customer and staff, and projects that bring the widest possible benefits for all the people of Scotland.
- Clarifies that without additional investment, we will continue to see asset decline, reduced service and potentially failure.
- Engagement
- Continued discussions with Scottish Government and Local Authorities regarding further investment.

AT reiterated that the backlog of works has increased and there is currently a £50m backlog.

- There is a risk and we require to make the assets as productive as possible. If we drive up income it will not solve everything, it would develop the sustainability on its own. We are heavily focussed on regeneration and have made a major contribution to economic regeneration. We have had to make tough decisions and we require to prioritise in a democratic way.
- Steve Dunlop has left Scottish Canals and moved to Scottish Enterprise. Catherine Topley is the Interim CEO on a secondment until the end of the year. Catherine Topley explained that she began her secondment as interim CEO 4 weeks ago and is looking at the Asset Management Strategy. In order to maintain canals to allow continual boating, she stated that she wants to work with boaters to minimise the challenges. She further stated that she is a strong advocate of ensuring that we do not revert back to the old days.
- RM stated that there is a 4 minute video available on the Scottish Canals website that he would encourage members to look at and stated that in order to rebuild the canals it would cost £1.2 billion.

Challenges

RM outlined the current challenges and provided an outline of the Asset Management strategy and current challenges -

- Lock gates were built in 1970s.
- Hydraulic system 1960s.
- Lock Chambers.
- Mechanical and electrical equipment.
- Massive sink hole, water falling behind it.
- Queen Elizabeth 2nd, silt failed, canals are being challenged by the water they hold.
- Bridges – swing bridge over major roads.
- Dredging and draught – hydraulic issues.
- Twechar and Bonnybridge lift bridges – priority is public safety and with 3-4 hour closure of main road meaning issues for emergency services and the risk of breakdown.
- Twechar has a restricted operation.
- Bonnybridge is still a challenge and are having positive discussions with Scottish Government.
- There is £19m defects and £50m of project works. £70m is required to get to a steady and sustainable level.
- We are very grateful to Scottish Government for investment of £8m grant but we need more investment. If we stay at existing investment the backlog will grow. £1.2m received in income but £5m required to run.

Asset Management Strategy - We must maintain and manage canals and safety. We have had asset inspectors/technicians and chartered engineers to look at the conditions and identify the higher risk. As far as Heritage goes we have had capital projects but these are not always the answer for heritage sites. We have done work to understand the value of our income streams. The Crinan and Caledonian Canals have the highest transits. We have to prioritise and this has had an effect on Forth and Clyde Canals.

Union Canal - RM stated that they have an asset strategy. There is a clear process and it defines and prioritises and we will continue discussion so that everyone has clarity. They are working with the Scottish Government/local authorities and private sector to ensure that there is investment. We are fighting tooth and nail to ensure that we do not go backwards.

There then followed an opportunity for questions –

- SMCM stated that there are 1.2 million visitors to the Kelpies and 750,000 to the Falkirk Wheel. Can this income be used for infrastructure? AT stated that the income generated will not solve the problem.
- Angus MacDonald MSP asked are you continuing to lobby Scottish Government. AM further noted that there had been an article in the Glasgow Herald stating that there had been an emergency finance package from Scottish Government or is this on the wish list? The question was posed whether the impact has been relayed to Scottish Government and whether there is no emergency package. RM stated that we are looking to source funding from Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government Framework.

- Alison Harris MSP asked about the Millennium Link funding of £83m that came with conditions over a period of 25 years. AH asked what the levels of use and is there a contingency fund? CT stated that the statutory requirements is to keep the canals maintained. AT stated that they have looked at this and have been receiving ongoing advice. The Millennium link purpose was to keep the canals open but it is not contractual “to not allow passage of boats”
- Question was posed what does maintenance mean? CT stated that it would come down to Government to fund and we would not be able to repair everything. Alison Harris MSP asked whether you would be required to refund grant already received. RR asked about the European funding agreement. CT stated that he she will check this.
- GD asked about investment in towpaths and cycle paths that are paid through Council tax. GD asked whether other users have been asked to consider what other users contribute to the work for the Canals. AT stated that the average spend is driving up and that their policy is to increase income from users however we have no right to charge them. GD asked why Scottish Canals charged people for moorings. AT stated that this would be a matter for Scottish Parliament.
- RR asked how much money has been made from investments and asked what profit is being made by Scottish Canals. AT stated that the entire investment is for Scotland and it is used to provide public services at the least cost to the public and are trying to make them as productive as possible. Paddle sports does not generate much income. AT stated it is an investment owned by the Scottish Canals. AT stated that it is an investment owned by Scottish Canals and reiterated that they are not a commercial company.
- RR asked about the Falkirk Wheel and the boat lift that is a tourist attraction that is not utilised by boaters. AT stated that we have generated a small surplus.
- SL stated that there are two conflicting messages in terms of assets and structure. The negative view, is that it is unsustainable and that this will have an impact on boat companies. SL asked are we looking at further closures. RM explained that we get yearly investment and our approach is to prioritise to where the biggest value is.
- The Lowland canals are important to Scottish Canals but it is dependent on investment. They will be keeping the narrative and discussion going with Scottish Government who are supportive.
- Alison Harris MSP provided an outline of the Falkirk economy and stated that there are 494 holidays and 3000 days been provided for family groups. The bookings have dropped and the boat hire companies have had to relocate to England. AH asked what do you intend to tell the boat hire companies as there will be a loss to the economy in Falkirk and as a result business lost. This will also have a knock on effect

to the Falkirk Wheel and the Kelpies and stressed that it was vital that we address this. RM stated that there is a clear plan for the infrastructure and engineering at Twechar and Bonnybridge and they are having positive dialogue with the Scottish Government.

- RM stated that there is a clear plan and we do not want to lose the boat hire fleet and want to increase boat traffic. Alison Harris MSP expressed concern that if something goes wrong with the Falkirk Wheel then this would be detrimental. CT stated that they are due budget announcements soon and they will be directing them to particular opportunities.

SMCM thanked Scottish Canals and to everyone who contributed to discussion.

3. British Divers Marine Life Rescue – Colin McFadyen (presentation circulated)

CM gave his thanks to the CPG for invitation to present at the meeting. He explained that he is the North East Co-ordinator and they run Whale and Dolphin Rescue teams and cover area from Grangemouth to Shetland.

CM requested that if boaters see animals in distress please notify them and also inform the Coastguard. CM further explained that he has very good links with Marine Scotland and they have access to their air and water vessels so they can assist when required. They have funding from Marine Scotland and Crown Estates and are part of Scottish Entanglement Framework. They are working with the Creelmen Fisheries Federation to come out with a new strategy and requested that boaters keep an eye out for ghost gear.

4. Alison Rose, Whale and Dolphin Conservation, Alison Rose (presentation circulated)

Alison Rose provided her presentation and explained that she is the Centre Manager at the Visitor Centre at mouth of River Spey. (presentation circulated).

There then followed an opportunity for questions.

FD asked about fishing gear. CM stated that they deal with fishing nets and creel nets and individual ropes and that there is a parallel between boaters. FD explained that the RYA have a policy to report incidents on floating lines and that they could add information about whales to these reports.

A Rose stated that there are lots of sightings that are reported on social media however this can cause problems as people then instantly go to that sighting. AR encouraged people to be aware of the wildlife code and use the hashtag of the code when making posts on social media. CM explained that we have not went too publicly, we do not want people trying to deal with this by themselves and they have also been working with industry bodies to get the message out.

GD asked what advice you would give when dolphins attack porpoises. AR stated that their advice would be not to intervene. GD asked that they give consideration to publicising this. AR agreed that they would look into this. IW asked about ghost gear and whether there was

any guidance. CM stated that there are other organisations that are “fishing for litter”. CM stated that we don’t have anyone involved and we try and publicise their work when we can.

Action: Whale and Dolphin Conservation presentation to be circulated round CPG.

5. **Update on EU/Brexit**

SMCM reported that the EU Withdrawal bill has been passed through Parliament. The European Council meeting is to take place and we should get further information after this meeting.

JA reported that RYA UK are working with the UK government on the following –

- Border control for recreational boaters.
- Qualifications and whether they will be recognised in EU.
- Transporting of Instructor qualifications, whether they will be able to operate within the EU.

6. **The Marine Tourism Strategy Update, Review and Launch**

SL reported that the Marine Tourism Development Group is in its fourth year and is taking the strategy forward. A detailed discussion has taken place between Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Scottish Tourism Alliance and they have reviewed and re-aligned their targets. The brief for the assessment has been undertaken and will take place in the second half of this year and they will be inviting comment from local authorities and we will invite them to the Marine Tourism Development Group.

They will use the review and local authority engagement to build infrastructure and they need more focus and will look at regeneration benefits. Once a business case is put together they will try and source someone to take this forward. They are working with the RYA on “2020 Year of Coast and Water” and British Marine Scotland on industry and skills and will look at larger scale growth.

SMCM thanked them very much for the presentation and asked about the strategy/action plan and that he had expected more to happen at this point. SL acknowledged that they are not as far along as they had anticipated but that they are now looking to deliver.

SMCM asked about “2020 Year of Coast and Water” and stated that this will be a big hook for attracting new investment. SL stated that we are looking to have events and will be working with the RYA on what can be delivered.

ML stated that they have arranged a meeting with Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs to look at infrastructure and look at how this can be resourced as they need a delivery manager to look at each infrastructure project (and any that are brought to light) and check them for ownership and owners commitment to progress on their site), local plan compliance, planning issues, local authority and Government policy and them to produce high level costings, feasibility and funding reports.

2020 year of Coast and Water

GD asked for background to the Year of Coast and Water. SMCM explained that there are

various themed years. They have been spaced out to every 2 years to provide adequate lead in time. The Year of Coast and Water will be a great opportunity to promote activities and the Cross Party Group have played a pivotal role in this.

7. **AOCB**

Aberdeen Harbour Expansion

Liam Kerr MSP raised about Aberdeen Harbour expansion and stated that this will be a great asset to the area.

Action: It was agreed to invite Aberdeen Harbour to a future Cross Party Group.

8. **Future Business**

JA raised about the Harbour Revision order at Oban and asked that it be added as a future agenda item. JA further reported that there is a consultation survey that will be issued.

Action: Oban Consultation Survey to be circulated to all CPG members.

Action: Consideration to be given to inviting CMAL to a future meeting.

**ADDENDUM – Written Report from Scottish Coastal Forum provided by Rhona Fairgrieve
Points from the SCF:**

- Successful completion of the EU-funded SIMCelt project in May should allow Rhona's time to be freed up for re-instigating more direct stakeholder engagement via the Scottish Coastal Forum; apologies for this meeting but would hope to attend in September

Points from Marine Scotland:

- Ian Black has recently joined the Marine Planning Team and brings with him a range of experience as a terrestrial planner; Ian has taken over from Wendy Geary in dealing with the rolling-out in due course of the Scottish Marine Regions and Regional Marine Planning;
- A new Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind is in the process of development and the documents relating to the Sustainability Appraisal were released for public consultation on 13 June. This includes a Social and Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) that includes a Scenario Mapping exercise, which will consider the potential social and economic impacts and opportunities on a wide range of stakeholders and sectors making use of Scotland's marine and coastal resources. All relevant documentation is available at:
[https://consult.gov.scot/marine-scotland/offshore-wind-scoping/;](https://consult.gov.scot/marine-scotland/offshore-wind-scoping/)

Roseanna Cunningham hosted a Marine Litter Summit in Oban on 18 June and invited industry, e-NGOs and others to contribute ideas on how to combat single use plastics and marine litter. The Scottish Government's ban on the production of microbeads in wash-off personal cosmetics came into effect last week and further work is underway across SG and with the UKG on addressing other elements of marine litter, particularly cotton buds and microplastics.

9. **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 25th September 2018 at 6pm.

The meeting closed and SMCM gave this thanks to everyone for their attendance. There was a vote of thanks to the Chair.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS/DECISIONS

	Actions	Resp.	Date Raised	Completed
1.	<u>2020 Year of Coast and Water</u> Look into events for 2020 Year of Coast and Water. To be discussion topic together with discussion about attracting sailing events to Scotland.	ALL	27/2/18	Ongoing
2.	<u>Labour Market Survey</u> Information from Labour market survey to be provided to SMCM.	ML/SL	27/2/18	Ongoing
3.	<u>British Divers Marine Rescue</u> Presentation to be circulated	PM	26/6/18	Circulated 29 th June 2018
4.	<u>Whale and Dolphin Conservation</u> Presentation to be circulated.	PM	26/6/18	Circulated 3 rd July 2018
5.	<u>Aberdeen Harbour</u> Invite Aberdeen Harbour to a future meeting	SMCM/PM	26/6/18	Pending
6.	<u>Oban Bay Developments</u> Survey to be circulated. Consideration to be given to inviting CMAL to a future meeting	PM	26/6/18	Circulated 28 th June 2018 Ongoing
7.	<u>Aberdeen Harbour Expansion</u> Invite Aberdeen Harbour to a future Cross Party Group meeting.	PM	26/6/18	Pending