

# **Cross-Party Group on Recreational Boating and Marine Tourism**

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2023 at 6pm

Minute

Present

MSPs

Stuart McMillan, MSP

Emma Harper MSP

Invited guests

Ivan McKee BPA/MSP, Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism & Enterprise

Non-MSP Group Members

Martin Latimer, British Marine Scotland

Fanny Royanez, Scottish Environment Link

Duncan Tannahill, RYA Scotland and West Highlands and Islands Moorings Association

Gordon Daly, RYA Scotland

James Stuart, RYA Scotland/British Marine Scotland

Annabel Lawrence, UHI West Highland

Scott Johnson, Waverley Excursions Ltd

Clair McFarlan, Solway Firth Partnership

John Ormiston, Stravaigin Sailing

Eilidh Ormiston, UHI West Highland

Laurie Piper, Scottish Canals

Momchil Terziev

Jonathan Mosse, RYA Scotland

David Adams McGilp, VisitScotland

Simon Limb, British Marine Scotland

Charles Bird, RYA Scotland

Graham Russell, RYA Scotland

Derek Peters, Waverley Excursions Ltd

Scott Johnson Waverley Excursions Ltd

John Telfer, Scottish Government

Chris Kelly, EKOS

Matthew Leitch, Office Manager to Stuart McMillan MSP

Kathleen Dow, North Ayrshire Council

Glenn Porter, Ocean Sailing Scotland

Aileen Monk, British Marine Scotland

Clair McFarlan, Solway Firth Partnership

Simon McDonald (Fisheries Aquaculture and Processing Consultant)

## Apologies

### Name

### Organisation

Jenni Minto MSP	
Katy Clark MSP	
Sarah Kennedy	Fort William Marina & Shoreline Community Interest Company
Aleen Semple	
Dr Alistair Rennie	Dynamic Coast Project
Esther Brooker	Scottish Environment Link
Fred Moore	Cruise Loch Lomond

## **Agenda item 1 - Welcome and Apologies**

Stuart McMillan MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## **Agenda item 2 -Ivan McKee BPA/MSP, Minister for Business, Trade, Tourism & Enterprise**

IM introduced himself and provided an outline of the various areas of his remit:

- Tourism Industry Leadership Group with Marc Crothall.
- Blue economy; very important to the economy and communities and it is worth £600m to the economy. Visit Scotland work is also in place. Employment benefits, in clean blue waters.
- IM stated that he has had a look at the Marine Tourism Strategy and this fits well with the 2030 overall tourism strategy.
- Volunteering is hugely important and the CPG should be very proud of what has been achieved.
- Waterways and Scottish canals.
- City region deals; there is a lot of investment into the sector.

EM stated that would be happy to take observations and stated that he recognised the importance in the role of the CPG and is very welcome to see full attendance both in person and online.

The work on the economic study is extremely important to further develop its full potential and puts the sector in a strong position.

## **Agenda item 3 - Boat based tourism and future opportunities**

**James Stuart provided background of the work taking place and outlined the following:**

There has been real power in this Cross-Party group to bring forward these strategies. The research involved in the development of both the Awakening the Giant and the Giant Strides strategies has very been very much appreciated and we are grateful to SMCM's for his leadership. These strategies have enabled us to align and influence across the wider sector. The strategy straddles marine tourism and other agendas and has unlocked opportunities and benefits. This has enabled access to money, growth deals and boat-based tourism. Some organisations are third sector and we require to look at how to streamline to really help us contribute. We require to challenge the seasonality of the sector. There is also a governance review underway on skills. The third iteration of the report outlines:

1. Challenges, new models that are merging to address.

2. Advocating partnership working
3. EKOS Study, supported by 8 partners

ML stated that we are really pleased that we have been directed to the city deals, however the length of time to get through the process is proving to be an issue as we are in an area of high inflation and growing costs. ML asked how can we shorten the process to ensure good governance and to encourage jobs into the sector.

IM stated that inflation is a challenge and city deals were agreed based on values and conversation has taken place taken place with all sectors. There are governance issues that we need to address and will be looking for opportunities to make them streamlined. IM will unpick this in more detail. ML stated that we are cognisant of this and can we work with them to help short circuit and offered to help with the solution.

IM asked what was the best forum to set up a small group. IM stated that Crown Estate Scotland are also involved. JS stated that the aim of the recent Act was to look at how you can bring in further value.

DT stated that he was concerned about the strategy and the risk that highly protected marine areas could have on tourism and where these areas are situated. IM stated that this was not something that he was close to but would refer to his rural and environment colleagues that are leading on this. **Action: IM will discuss this with his colleagues and asked for key issues and will report back..**

GR stated as regard Highly Protected Marine Areas a lot of a lot of sea area has already been effectively scoped out and there could, at least in theory, be an HPMA for recreation.. Recreational boaters recognise the importance of the fishing industry and it is a beginning of the process.

Simon McDonald (Fisheries Aquaculture and Processing Consultant) stated that there is currently a spatial squeeze and the HPMA will be rearing its head shortly. It would be helpful to hold discussions between the two groups on offshore renewables as there are larger developments all the time especially in the east coast. He also provided example of the Machair development in Islay. There are worries about this being restriction on sailing. There is also a proposed seaweed farm on west of Bute.

SL stated that we will talk more in depth of skills and training and careers in the industry, this is steeply intertwined in the economic benefits. **Action: SL requested a meeting to go into more detail with the Minister.**

Derek Peters, (Waverley Excursions), made a heritage element plea; Scotland has a number of historic ships and shore based facilities and they struggle with what sector they fall into. **Action: IM thanked them for raising this matter and asked that Derek Peters email him to arrange a further discussion.**

SMCM thanked the Minister for attending the meeting. SMCM further explained that John Telfer is the link to the Minister and can be contacted on the following email address: [john.telfer@gov.scot](mailto:john.telfer@gov.scot)

GD stated that he is involved with Scottish Waterways for All/Solway Yacht Club and RYA Scotland. The structure of the canal system is over 300 years old and asked that the relevant ministers please listen to what the Scottish Canals are saying as regards the works required.

## **Agenda item 4 - Skills, Challenges and opportunities for the future (Annabel Lawrence)**

AL outlined the key findings (presentation circulated to members on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023):

- The sector needs to recruit new entrants, there are significant challenges and skills shortages and an aging workforce.
- Results on the survey:

There then followed an opportunity for questions:

SMCM stated that this it is good to have this information but it is a stark message. SMCM asked about the engagement that has taken place to make them aware of opportunities. SMCM accepted points that the businesses are small and don't have the time to go to the job fairs and asked whether it would be possible to attend the jobs fairs in key locations. ML explained that British Marine Scotland is a membership organisation and time is limited for attending job fairs. The courses exist online but unfortunately the qualifications relate to the English educational system. We need to make these courses available in Scotland and make the government aware. We can deliver the courses with a Scottish edge. It is a lack of awareness, if you ask small traditional businesses about apprenticeships is not a 5-year period but is modular, ML stated that we should share training opportunities e.g. farming and engineering and tie up and work with the education system to develop this further.

JS stated that the dominant recipient is a micro business, apprenticeships are good opportunity for them to engage, The common challenge for adult and further education sectors and Skills Development Scotland is to make them micro business friendly. The providers cannot get the evidence base and we are staying small. We cannot approach this as marine centric, we need to cross cut and overlap into other sectors and have a multi skilled workforce that can deliver both seasonal and off season. James Withers has been commissioned to an independent review of the skills landscape by the Scottish Government and it good for us as a sector to discuss this with him.

SMCD stated that we are needing a two-pronged marketing approach on this, we need to drum louder and market hard on infrastructure to create an awareness, the leisure industry in the marine world is growing at a faster rate than most, but we need to support local jobs and communities in fragile economic areas.

SJ stated that it was a great report; it highlights issues and the people and the skills are key. Seasonality is a challenge for us, the difference between mandatory and elective training. SJ further stated that there is a significant barrier to entry STCW certificate and it costs £1K just to be able to come on board before training to operate at sea. Skills Development Scotland will fund elective training.

**Action: It was agreed to invite Skills Development Scotland to a future meeting.**

GD asked were Calmac and North Link and Glasgow Nautical College included in this survey. ML stated that BM Scotland is a member organisation and we need to look at partnering up with these organisations and get Scottish Government involved,

Emma Harper MSP stated that there are good connections in rural education and Stranraer College, Stranraer Watersports Association and are working with college.

**Action: EH will follow up with college and STENA and will report back on outcome.**

GR stated that there is a lot of agricultural expertise and we should work with them and get government to facilitate.

CB asked what is being done to let 16 and 17 year olds know that these jobs are available. ML stated that in terms of communication, this has to be done in partnership with other agencies due to budget restraints but will take this on board.

ML stated that there are a lot of sectors and is not seasonal as it used to be and so list needs to be done of the types of jobs and promote it as all year round as more commercial than tourism sector.

GP stated that there are 2 sectors within a sector; commercial fish farms and ferry companies and they have a lot of this tied down with courses and facilities, where we fall short is leisure marine, the engineers have lots of resources available, if we can get partnerships together to get the leisure marine sector brought up to speed then this will assist greatly.

PG (Calmac) reported that they have just undertaken a campaign for seafaring crew and communications have went out on the modern apprentice scheme to schools.

**Action: It was agreed that 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.**

SMCM gave an example of Green Growth Energy in Inverclyde that was aimed at children who did not engage with education that proved very successful.

**Action: It was agreed that the British Marine Scotland infographic be circulated.**

ML stated that the Watersports hub at Stranraer and Campbeltown is all about confident, capable, qualified people. GD reiterated that we need to get the message across. GD gave an example of Solway Yacht Club who have 200 members and

several of the cadet members have sent onto to careers at sea e.g. chief engineer, mate on sailing yacht.

**Action: It was agreed to Invite Skills Development Scotland to the next meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> May. SMCM will write to both SDS and COSLA with the skills and market industry report.**

**Action: Invite Education Convenor at COSLA. JS suggested that a question is proposed about micro business and what the approach is that has been taken at all levels. JS will provide words for the letter.**

## **Agenda item 5 - EKOS Study and Future Plans – Chris Kelly**

Chris Kelly outlined his presentation and there then followed an opportunity for questions. SMCM thanked him for presentation.(presentation circulated to members on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023)

The following questions were raised:

- Net Zero contribution – CK stated that further discussion is required on this and we need to come together and say what our offer is. AL reported that they are working in collaboration on biodiversity of native oysters at Morven.
- EH MSP gave her thanks to CK, there is potential for expanding marine education and tourism. EH further explained that she joined CPG because of the excellent work that has taken place in Stranraer. There is excellent work going on in the Health Committee with Women and Girls in Sport on the water and it is a great example of what can be done. EH stated that you can feed into the call for evidence and raise awareness of women's skiffy teams.

**Action: EH will send note on Women and Girls on Sport to PM for onward circulation to members.** GD provided an example of Solway Yacht Club where there is a current Cadet officer and Chief Instructor, and there are more girl cadets than boy cadets and suggested that this could be used as an example.

JS stated that there is exciting stories but we look at how we respond to these actions. The future meetings and focus of the reception being held on 27<sup>th</sup> June will provide an opportunity to do that and will cut across a variety of sports. HIE are very focussed on communities and we have the ingredients of something quite powerful.

**Action: SMCM asked members to provide suggestions on who should be invited to the Parliamentary reception on 27<sup>th</sup> June from both the public and private sectors to enable the messages to be spread as wide as possible.**

## **Agenda item 6 – Any Other Business**

### **Inland Waters**

JM reported that Inland Waters in Scotland has been formally established in Scotland and with Scottish Canals. **Action: JM will do a follow up discussion with Laurie Piper (Scottish Canals).**

### **Commercial Boat Operators Association**

J Mosse explained that the CBOA stands for Commercial Boat Operators Association. This is often mistakenly written as Commercial Boat **Owners** Association and is relatively new to Scotland (JM has been rep for about a year) but there is a long-established association south of the Border, representing most of the large (and small) inland waterways freight operators. **Action: JM requested that Scott Johnson and Gordon Daly be included in any corresponded with Peel Ports. GD stated that he would raise this and SJ offered his assistance.**

SJ stated Waverley Excursions have not had support because they do not fall into the category that is eligible and have a £500K shortfall and £150K has been raised by surcharging to customers.

GD asked SJ about the draught for the Waverley and how much depth had been lost. Due to the loss of Helensburgh Pier, they are now unable to come alongside due to closure of pier (3ft 8 draught, 1 metre).

## **Agenda Item 7 - Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 6pm at the Scottish Parliament. (Hybrid meeting)