

**Minutes of the Meeting of the  
Cross Party Group on Recreational Boating  
and Marine Tourism, by Conference Call  
26<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at 6.30pm**

**ATTENDANCE**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Stuart McMillan MSP	Convenor
Emma Harper MSP	
Jenni Minto MSP	
Finlay Carson MSP	
Elena Whitham MSP	
Bill Caven	On behalf of Finlay Carson MSP
James Allan	RYA Scotland, Secretariat
Pauline McGrow	RYA Scotland, Secretariat
Andrew Rendle	Scottish Coastal Rowing Association
Momchil Terziev	
Clair McFarlan	Solway Firth Partnership
Esther Brooker	Scottish Environment Link
Fanny Royanez	Scottish Environment Link
Martin Latimer	British Marine Scotland,
Penny Coles	Crown Estate Scotland
Annabel Lawrence	University of Highlands and Islands
Andy McKenna	Thomas Telford Corpach Marina
Barry Shafe	Scotboats/Chair of Forth Estuary Forum
Ian White	Canalside Hub Edinburgh, Paddlesports Liaison

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
John Ormiston	Stravaigin Sailing
Gordon Daly	RYA Scotland/Private Boater
Fergus Duncanson	RYA Scotland
Alan Rankin	Sail Scotland
David Adams McGilp	VisitScotland
Graham Russell	RYA Scotland
Aileen Monk	British Marine Scotland
France Marley in place of Brian Clark	British Marine Scotland
Sarah Kennedy	Fort William Marina & Shoreline Company Limited
Simon Limb	British Marine Scotland
Eilid Ormiston	West Highland College
Richard Millar	Scottish Canals
Charles Bird	RYA Scotland

### **APOLOGIES**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Jonathan Mosse	RYA Scotland
Stuart Smith	Scottish Canoe Association
David Davies	Stranraer Watersports Association (a representative attending on his behalf)
David Vass	WHAM
Glenn Porter	Ocean Sailing Scotland
Suzanne Roberts	Keep Scotland Beautiful

#### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

Stuart McMillan MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## 2. Minute from Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021

The minutes were approved as an acceptable record.

**Proposed:** Emma Harper MSP                      **Seconded:** Sarah Kennedy

### Registration of Cross Party Group and appointments

**Convenor:**                      **Stuart McMillan MSP**  
**Proposed:** Gordon Daly                      **Seconded:** Martin Latimer

**Vice Convenor:**                      **Elena Whitham MSP**  
**Proposed:** SMCM                      **Seconded:** Sarah Kennedy

**Secretariat**                      **RYA Scotland**  
**James Allan, Pauline McGrow**

## 3. Actions arising from minutes of 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021

None.

### Giant Strides Partnership Update

#### SL provided an update and outlined the following:

- Giant Strides is moving forward, and foundations are strong and are in place.
- There are 20 supporters, 9 partners and 4 ready to sign. They have had funding support from 4 major groups and are looking to start grouping partners together and identifying work streams. James Stuart will provide more detail in the next 4-6 weeks.

For the benefit of the new members SMCM explained that Giant Strides is the second national marine tourism strategy that has emanated from this CPG. It began in 2015 and that this is the next iteration.

**Action: PM to circulate the 2 versions of the strategy to new CPG members.**

SL reported that following COVID they have sat down and considered what it has brought to us as an industry. There has been a boom in staycations and we need to capitalise on this and ensure that this trend continues.

SMCM stated that we have looked at how we extend the season due to the restrictions earlier this year. SMCM asked if they had received feedback on people's experience of staycations. SL stated that they have seen a growth in start-up participation and first timers. There has been an increase to the visitor economy and UK boat owners and the

quality of the marine offering on the shorelines is much better than 10 years ago. Restaurants and service level has also increased.

SMCM asked whether there had been staff shortages. SL stated that there has not been as much in our industry but stressed that we still need to focus on skills shortages. It is a focus for British Marine Scotland for skills and training and there is a need to grow the workforce.

CB stated that there are manpower shortages on the canals and in particular shortages in bank staff for the Crinan Canal. The RYA Scotland Cruising and General Purposes Committee have received anecdotal evidence of people coming from abroad and checking into canals and harbours who have been given a good welcome.

**Action: SMCM suggested that as we progress for the next meeting, we could invite a selection of organisations to do a 5 minute brief synopsis on the feedback that they have had over the season to give the members an understanding of what has happened over the last 12 months and looking towards 2022.**

SL stated that it would be good to get feedback from the food and drink sector especially on the west coast as we have the AIS that shows the boat movement of cruisers round this area. SK reported that they have had 4 mini cruise ships in Fort William with last minute people coming in their yachts staying overnight on pontoons. Once they have their extension in place, they will be able to take even more.

RM stated that from a Scottish Canals perspective they have been running at 70% of staff. There has been a seasonal challenge with seasonal staff. It has been the driest year in Argyll and Bute for 160 years and this has drained down reservoirs. The big win has been the level of activity on the canal with paddleboarders, kayakers etc. Next year they are looking forward to welcoming their Scandinavian partners.

JA reported that it has been a busy season with the cruising fraternity. Clubs have seen an upsurge in interest for different watersports and the traditional sailing clubs can provide ease of access for these activities to take place. We need to convert that surge of interest into club membership and encourage people to get involved in volunteering and to enjoy their experience on the water. We need to look at what makes a sustainable club, not just for boating or sailing and have clubs evolve that new approach of combining different watersports. Stranraer Watersports and Kintyre are excellent examples of how this works in practice.

We are looking to reach out to the community to get out on the water and we have been involved in interpreting Covid guidance over the last few months to ensure people could access the water. We were able to work with sportscotland to ensure that the people could return to the water safely during the pandemic.

AR stated that on the commercial side, the charter operators and the small ships cruising sector that are carrying less than 12 passengers did not become active until July, so had a virtual half season. There was a carry forward from last season with all part of staycations and “safe family unit afloat” with a business carry forward into 2022.

The promotion in 2022 follows these themes and funding has been secured through the Visit Scotland Marketing fund. The campaign is running in November 2021 and through the first 3 months of next year. The campaign will focus on “Exploring new destinations”. AR further explained that they have a specific angle to the south coast of England and looking at “cruise

and stay". They can attract boats from England and put partnerships in place with operators. The social media and digital campaign will kick off with drone coverage. There will be digital links to offers and to the campaign itself, supported by the Visit Scotland Covid Recovery Fund.

SMCM stated that there have been some distressing images recently of the raw sewage going into waters into the south of England and this some may encourage people to take trip to cruise and stay in Scotland instead.

#### **New Members of the Cross Party Group**

**Elena Whitham MSP** - EW provided an outline of her background and explained that as a wild swimmer, kayaker, canoeist and wife of a SUP enthusiast that she was all about supporting the wider public to access our coasts and water bodies safely to help drive the economies of local coastal towns and villages. EW also stated that as part of the Ayrshire Growth Deal negotiating team, she was passionate about driving investment to the Ayrshire Coast including Girvan. There is a good clean up going on and they have got an ongoing piece of work. There is sewage going into waterways and are keeping an eye on it, a whole lot of farmers working on this. There is potential in the Ayr coast and stated that she is glad to be part of this group.

**Annabel Lawrence** - AL reported that she was keen to promote the restoration of the natural capital along our coastal waters to support the wildlife that attracts so many visitors. AL stated that she is a member of staff at University of Highlands and Islands and is a Lecturer on the Marine Coastal degree and is involved at community level in biodiversity projects such as Lochaline to promote eco-tourism. There is an opportunity to sponsor and donate to the project. AL further emphasised that it is important to help the environment to function. They are hoping to introduce sea grass and blue carbon.

SMCM stated that there has been dolphins seen in Inverclyde area which has been the first time in a lot of years, and it has garnered a lot of interest in the local community.

**Action: Clair McFarlan stated that she would be keen to discuss with AL further to make sure that we are going along the right lines regarding seagrass and shellfish development.**

**Action: PM to pass on contact details.**

#### **4. Red/White Diesel**

JA provided an update and highlighted the following: (<https://www.rya.org.uk/news/rya-welcomes-red-diesel-extended-implementation-date-for-northern-ireland> )

Red diesel can be used in UK for marine sector. 60/40 will remain so there will be no massive change. There is a hiccup in Northern Ireland, and they can use red diesel. Boats can go to NI with red diesel but there are different arrangements for going onto Republic of Ireland and we are awaiting clarification from HMRC. The RYA Director of External Affairs will be looking at this. **Action/Decision: It was agreed to remove this a standing item on the agenda.**

as RM reported that Hydrogenated Vegetable oil is an alternative, but this has not been given another viable option. RM has raised this with the civil servants to see if there any way round this. We could reduce carbon footprint if we were able to move to HVO and it fits in with the conversation but is not giving the right notice around tax relief.

Elena Whitham MSP stated that blue carbon capture is hugely valuable to Scotland and very much in the background and it would be great for this group to help get it into the wider consciousness and into the minds of policy makers.

**Action/Decision: It was agreed that climate change be added as a standard agenda item.**

EW further stated that we have had such a dry summer and private water supplies have dried up. The loch was at its lowest and it is going to effect waterways hugely with these flood and drought events becoming more frequent. The potential to use HVO and use seagrass to capture carbon is huge. There is a huge plethora of items that can be discussed under this agenda item.

**Action/Decision: CB agreed that HVO would be a good item to discuss as a future agenda item and suggested that we could have a short presentation on the advantages and some of the issues. Action: It was agreed to Invite Jonathan Mosse and Philip Horton to present on this topic.**

AL reported that the Scottish Marine assessment 2020 published by Naturescot provides a summary that details that we have lost of 50% mussels that supports the nursery habitats. We need to be aware that if we do have the natural resources then we then look at ways to restore them.

**Action: PM to circulate to the marine assessment report and all the relevant links posted within the Zoom chat.**

**EW asked whether there had been any discussion around the protected area of Arran and Lamlash Bay. SMCM stated that we have not looked at this. Action: SMCM will discuss offline with EW re these issues.**

**Action: Low Carbon Issues/climate change to be added as a standard item on agenda.**

**Action: It was agreed to have wider discussion on other issues.**

## 5. Outdoors Scotland

### **Outdoors Scotland Strategy**

**AR outlined the following:**

There is increasing recognition of the value of the outdoors to the Scottish economy and the role it plays in supporting sustainable economic growth by creating employment, sustaining tourism spend and enhancing the profile of Scotland through the promotion of its natural landscape and scenery.

The Outdoors Scotland Strategy is an initiative led by Wild Scotland and Sail Scotland (project partners) to champion a collaborative approach for the sector to drive Scotland forward as a leading outdoors tourism destination for sustainable, and environmentally focussed marine and outdoor activities aligned to Scotland's Outlook 2030.

Marine and outdoor activities provide the backdrop to Scotland's experience proposition and for the strategy Outdoors Tourism is defined as:

“An authentic and memorable experience involving visitors actively engaging with nature and culture and connecting with the outdoors. It is any outdoor activity or journey that takes place in a natural land or marine environment. It’s about outdoor experiences that are unique and individual for each visitor, matching their interests, providing a sense of personal achievement and creating their own lasting memories”.

### **Strategic review**

BTS and 56 Degree Insight have been commissioned by Sail Scotland and Wild Scotland to develop an Outdoor Tourism Strategy for Scotland. The Project aim is to set in motion the full realisation of the potential of the Scotland’s Outdoor Tourism sector and to identify the way forward and precise actions to support the industry.

Our Approach is a three-stage process to deliver the strategy and action plan:

#### **1. Scotland’s Place in the Market:**

- Desk research of the complex weave of local, regional, national and international policies, strategies and delivery plans and to draw out and make sense of these, drawing on best practice and locally determined priorities.
- Added to this is primary research with UK consumers and International Travel Trade and Tour Operators to fully understand where Scotland is currently positioned, determine the most important markets for Scotland as an outdoor tourism destination and provide new insights which would address knowledge gaps relating to Scotland’s Outdoor Tourism market.
- To fully understand Scotland’s Outdoor Tourism offer and product we will undertake a detailed product audit (supply) of Outdoor Tourism in Scotland creating a comprehensive database of outdoor tourism operators in Scotland to determine their capacity and maturity to attract and contribute to the visitors’ quality experiences. This will inform the market positioning of Outdoor Tourism in Scotland and to build a robust understanding of the size and scale of the Outdoor Tourism Industry in Scotland.

#### **2. Industry Engagement and Consultations**

- An extensive consultative programme, comprised of a series of interviews with key stakeholders and operators, an electronic survey of tourism operators and a series of facilitated regional workshops to feedback to the industry key findings and to gather views of participants to feed into the final strategy.

#### **3. Strategy and Action Plan**

- The final stage focuses on analysing the data accumulated to prepare a market driven, consumer led Strategy, designed to guide strategic decisions with overarching objectives, and specific outcomes. The action plan will translate the strategy into deliverables and key actions.

### **Project Timing**

The project commenced in August 2021 with completion towards the end of February 2022.

### **Contact**

To find our more contact: Stewart Walker; BTS; E: [stewart@bts.scot](mailto:stewart@bts.scot) T: 07909 915196 or visit the Project web site: [www.bts.scot/ots](http://www.bts.scot/ots)

Finlay Carson MSP then joined and SMCM welcomed him to the meeting.

DAM reported that Visit Scotland fully supports the work that AR has just described. There are various marine tourism projects that are high priority and marine and coastal tourism development can play a major part in recovery. We have faith in the planning process of what projects can go ahead. We are coming to an unexpected extension of coastal and water activity; it has increased

enthusiasm without that level of market focus. DAM stated that they will support local authority and national park investment.

EH stated that we are looking for support to south west. DAM stated that there is a huge necessary commitment to climate change and there will be other small scale investment for step ashore facilities.

RM stated that the Clyde and Inner Hebrides have been busy but it would be good to find out the situation in the Western Isles, the Northern Isles and the east coast.

GR provided a link on [Hydrogen – Orkney Renewable Energy Forum \(OREF\)](#) that will show what is taking place in Orkney.

GR stated that the RYA pathway to zero document can be downloaded from <https://www.rya.org.uk/about-us/policies/environment-and-sustainability> The RNLI also have a plan for moving to net zero.

AL reported that the Scottish Government will be proposing Highly Marine Protected Areas in 10% of our MPA network.

GR stated that while fuel duty is a reserved matter it would be good to know what the scope is for the Scottish Government to encourage the production and distribution of HVO.

GR stated that it is perhaps worth noting that a safety forum has been created for the whole of Loch Ryan including the 3 current and future statutory harbour authorities. This should provide good support for Stranraer Watersports.

EH reported for information to all that David Davis is going to send a link to the YouTube videos on the Stranraer Watersports Association Website.

RM reported that Scottish Canals are talking with Johnston Oils who have coverage in central Scotland but wider supply still remains an issue.

RM stated that Inland Waterway Assoc have experts and that Jonathan Mosse maybe a candidate for a 15 minute presentation on HVO. RM suggested that later in the session a presentation on retrofit/ electrification of boat engines may be useful. It is an area that policy may not have yet focussed on and could do with some intervention investment increase activity.

**Action: SMCM agreed that discussion was required on this and get idea of sizes of boats and scale on how it could be achieved.**

SL stated that research is being conducted and the industry is being more conscious to address more issues but it is going to be a relatively small effect and we need to address how do you actually carry out a change over scheme to replace the engine. We also need to look at future proofing for utilities and how electric charging and the local infrastructure will be managed. Other aspects will be recharge rates and how many vessels there will be and what this will look like in 10 years' time.

RM stated that canals is a test bed, both electrification and hydrogen side and need to how we get power into remote locations. We need to work out what the carbon footprint of all the leisure boats are. DAM stated that he wished to be included in the trials.

IW asked is Green Hydrogen going to be used as a stored fuel source for electric propulsion motors.



GR suggested that it might be good to have a presentation on coastal change from the Dynamic Coast project (<https://www.dynamiccoast.com/>) as sea level rise is going to be a big issue.

AM reported that he has met with MOWI and asked if he could he reserve a commercial berth to bring electric power boats to Loch Linnhe and stated that he would help install a 7kw charger. We have a 240kw supply. We should have significant demand for charging in the marina.

SL stated that the Cala Gas supply has been an issue and refilling has been a problem, this will have an effect on the tourism sector as a whole. SMCM asked what are Cala Gas saying in this regard. SL stated that they have indicated that it is a management issue but as yet it is still to be resolved.

## 6. **Future Business – topics for discussion**

SCM asked for members to send suggestions to topics. The agendas will be shorter with a focus topic and then we will prioritise what we want to get involved in.

### **Terms of Reference – CPG**

Circulate round to members and decide on what we want the TOR to be and have it as the first agenda topic.

## 7. **AOB**

GD asked members to save the date for the 200<sup>TH</sup> anniversary of the canal on May 21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> 2022. There will be canal boats going up from Falkirk to Linlithgow, Ratho and Edinburgh.

## **ACTIONS**

No	Action	Lead	Date Raised	Update
1.	<b><u>Giant Strides</u></b> PM to circulate the 2 versions of the strategy to new CPG members.	PM	26.10.21	
2.	<b><u>Feedback from members on last 18 months of pandemic</u></b> Invite a selection of organisations to do a 5 minute brief synopsis on the feedback that they have had over the season to give the members an understanding of what has happened over the last 12 months and looking towards 2022.	SMCM/PM	26.10.21	

3.	<p><b><u>Future Agenda topics</u></b></p> <p><b>Standard items to be added to agenda:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low carbon/climate change</li> <li>• Invite Jonathan Mosse and Philip Horton to do a presentation on HVO</li> <li>• Wider discussion on environmental matters</li> <li>• Hybrid boats and the setting up the infrastructure.</li> <li>• Presentation on coastal change from the Dynamic Coast project (<a href="https://www.dynamiccoast.com/">https://www.dynamiccoast.com/</a>)</li> <li>•</li> </ul> <p>Giant Strides Marine Tourism Strategy – Our Waters Clean and Blue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The return of the 3-mile fishing zone seeking CPG views.</li> <li>• Impact of dredging on fishing inshore.</li> <li>• Other issues re marine environment</li> </ul>	PM	26.10.21	
4.	<p><b>Links provided in Zoom chat to be circulated to members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The marine assessment report</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Hydrogen – Orkney Renewable Energy Forum (OREF)</a></p> <p>Red/White Diesel  <a href="https://www.rya.org.uk/news/rya-welcomes-red-diesel-extended-implementation-date-for-northern-ireland">https://www.rya.org.uk/news/rya-welcomes-red-diesel-extended-implementation-date-for-northern-ireland</a> )</p>	PM	26.10.21	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GR stated that the RYA pathway to zero document can be downloaded from <a href="https://www.rya.org.uk/about-us/policies/environment-and-sustainability">https://www.rya.org.uk/about-us/policies/environment-and-sustainability</a></li> </ul>			
5.	<p><b><u>Protected area of Arran and Lamlash Bay</u></b></p> <p>SMCM to have discussion with Elena Whitham MSP.</p>	SMCM/EW	26.10.21	
6.	<p><b><u>Cross Party Group Terms of Reference</u></b></p> <p>Consideration to be given to revising the Terms of Reference.</p>	ALL	26.10.21	
7.	<p><b><u>Outdoors Scotland Strategy</u></b></p> <p>Information on the strategy and workshops to be circulated.</p>	PM	26.10.21	Circulated 16.11.21