

Cross-Party Group on Recreational Boating and Marine Tourism

Tuesday 14th December 2021 at 6pm

Minute

Present

MSPs

Stuart McMillan (Convenor)

Elena Whitham MSP

Invited guests

Ross Wombell (British Marine)

Non-MSP Group Members

James Allan (RYA Scotland, Secretariat)

Pauline McGrow (RYA Scotland Secretariat)

Duncan Tannahill (Secretary of West Highlands and Islands Moorings Association)

Graham Russell (RYA Scotland)

Andrew Rendle (Scottish Coastal Rowing Association)

Glenn Porter (Ocean Sailing Scotland)

Esther Brooker (Scottish Environment Link)

Jonathan Mosse

(IWA Sustainable Boating Group and Chair of IWA Biofuels sub group)

Aileen Monk (British Marine Scotland)

Simon Limb (British Marine Scotland)

Josie Saunders (Scottish Canals)

Mark Smith (Scottish Canals)

Momchil Terziev

Fanny Royanez (Scottish Environment Link)

John Ormiston (Stravaigin Sailing)

Clair McFarlan (Solway Firth Partnership)

David Adams McGilp (Visit Scotland)

Paul Bancks (Crown Estate Scotland)

Gordon Daly (RYA Scotland)

Sarah Kennedy (Fort William Marina & Shoreline Community Interest Company)

Apologies:

Douglas MacDiarmid (Thomas Telford Corpach Marina)

Stranraer Watersports Association

Emma Harper MSP

Jenni Minto MSP

Alison Rose (Whale and Dolphin Conservation)

Martin Latimer (British Marine Scotland)

Catherine Topley Scottish Canals

Eilid Ormiston (West Highland College)

Richard Millar (Scottish Canals)

Andy McKenna (Thomas Telford Corpach Marina)

Agenda item 1 - Welcome and Apologies

Stuart McMillan MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Agenda item 2 - Minute from Meeting on 26th October 2021

The minutes were approved as an acceptable record.

Proposed: Simon Limb Seconded: Sarah Kennedy

Agenda item 3 - Actions arising from minutes of 26th October 2021

None.

Agenda item 4 - Giant Strides Partnership Update

SL provided an update and outlined the following:

- SL reported that we are doing more of the same and there is active market conditions. The partnership programme is moving forward and we will release good news in the new year. We are getting strong indication of strategies that are taking place in local authorities. Overall, we are progressing well and we are not loading too much on people at the moment. Further updates will be provided at the next meeting.
- BMS are also issuing latest business and skills labour market survey to identify skills shortages and identify what we need to do and are working with local industry groups and there is a University Highlands and Islands representative on the board.
- SMCM asked about the 12 months to come and the new variant and how prevalent that seems to be and asked has there been any dialogue on this. SL stated that they have discussion groups round the industry and there is a yacht harbour association group that has harbours, marinas and boatyards within it and there is discussions every 6 weeks. It looks at how they are handling health and safety, staffing and best practice issues. The admin staff will operate from home and outdoor teams will be able to continue to operate but will continue to talk to our membership.

Action: SMCM asked for an update once per month from on the 5 key issues that are being discussed in the sector for onward circulation to the CPG.

GP asked about the government initiative " covid ventilation fund" that excluded the marine tourism businesses, it is something that is extremely relevant to the industry and it may be something to look at. **Action: SMCM requested that those who have a financial interest in this write to him to raise these issues and then he will write to Scottish Government. GP will provide contacts to SMCM.**

National Planning Framework

GR raised about the National Planning Framework 4 Consultation and that responses can be submitted to :

<https://www.transformingplanning.scot/news/news/draft-national-planning-framework-npf4-published/>

GR further explained that there are several mentions of marine tourism in it. It is a long document as it supersedes two previous ones – and recommended that members search for references to 'marine'.

Action: SMCM encouraged organisations and individuals to take part as this will strengthen marine planning.

Elena Whitham MSP echoed SMCM's comments and reported that there is also a committees consultation that is running in parallel. **Action: Elena Whitham MSP will forward details to PM for onward circulation to the members.**

Agenda item 5 - Feedback from member organisations on the last 12 months of the pandemic

SMCM asked for members feedback and the following points were raised:

Claire McFarlan, (Solway Firth Partnership)

CF reported that the pandemic stopped practical things outside but could do things online such as meetings. There was loads of funding available but now there is an issue on the lack of long- term funding so will not help them plan during pandemic or post pandemic. There is a mad rush for pots of money for end of financial year deadline of March 2022. It would be good to have a plan for a lot longer.

SMCM asked DAM about Visit Scotland funding. DAM explained that the idea was to focus market attention. If it had not been for the second lockdown we would have been expecting international markets. The Scotland and domestic markets will be the focus for the summer and autumn of 2022.

CMCF stated that she was talking more generally and that the fund that is most pertinent is the Marine Fund Scotland.

SMCM stated that with the powers of the Scottish Parliament, there is limited scope to carry forward of funds to new financial years.

Glenn Porter (Ocean Sailing Scotland)

GP reported that there were 2 things that came out:

1. Hardship fund and was delivered well and executed quickly.

2. Marine Tourism Restart Grant Fund – it was hard fought fund and was well needed.

GP further stated that they were in a bit of dead water now and there is still an impact with government restrictions as they were only able to do 2 trips. GP stated that his ask of the Scottish Government was to have a new look analysis to ensure that marine tourism industries don't get impacted into next year and any way that this can be highlighted at government level would be appreciated.

Action: SMCM requested that GP write to him on the points he has raised and he raise these on behalf of CPG.

Simon Limb (British Marine Scotland)

SL provided a general sum up of activities and stated that it was fair to say that the sector has been very resilient and they have been able to grow quickly out of the lockdown. The summer months showed high level of activity within watersports activities. The boat sector has been in high demand and there has been worldwide demand for new boats. Large manufacturers have large lead in times well into 2023. The second-hand market has lost a lot of its stock.

Internationally we are seeing pressure on boat shows. The Southampton boat show went well with good levels of business and was a good start event. The Paris Boat show was a small parochial event. The Dusseldorf show lost a lot of its exhibitors. It will not have an effective showcase for the next 9 months.

Our challenge is in the boatyards and marinas is that we have high level of activity but less international activity. Our boatyards have a lot of boats that we have not had before. We are under pressure in having the ability to provide high quality skilled labour to carry out the labour required for the service of the boats and this will need to take place in the next 3 months for launch time. Visitors have been impressed in the quality of the cruise grounds and our short-term goal is to hold onto them.

Gordon Daly (Seagull Trust Cruises)

GD reported that Seagull Trust Cruises have been laid up and they saved insurance money. Their clientele is schools and care homes and therefore they had no customers. Kirkintilloch put their boat back into operation. They are being optimistic and are starting to take bookings for next year. The charity is still in good heart and they are optimistic that it will be better next year.

Mark Smith, Scottish Canals

MS reported that the Lowland Canals have a connective path connecting right across central Scotland that walkers and cyclists have used that was to an extension to boating. They were not being able to manage the aquatic weed but the transit has been devastated and there was difficulty in passage through due to the cooling

system. They obtained a harvester through Transport Scotland and it will be commissioned for the new year and it has had an effect on navigations. We are into our winter months and the banks and tow paths are opening the canal up to a wider group and are hoping to be in a better position going into the new year.

SMCM asked about major issue for Scottish canals in terms of infrastructure investment on lock gates. MS agreed that it has caused some difficulty. There is a big investment from Sustrans. The canal at Maryhill will be open again in spring. MS further explained that they do try to focus them into the 20 weeks of winter and are hoping to have a clean bill of health for opening in April. SMCM stated that he was glad to see things are moving forward in Scottish Canals.

SMCM stated that he was not surprised about the boat shows and there may be still an impact in 2022.

SMCM stated that people have found areas in Scotland that they did not know exist and marketing is key to spread the word about experiences.

SMCM asked DAM what are VisitScotland going to do to keep interest in the domestic market. DAM stated that what the public health crisis has done has shown the wealth and diversity of what is on the doorstep. They have been forced to investigate what is on their doorstep and it has been an enjoyable, wellbeing and educational experience. The Scot Spirit campaign aim was to make people aware of what is in their area and to encourage international visitors in the second part of 2022. Other industry colleagues are focussed on the localisation of the project, how green the destination is and the carbon footprint on local produce with focus on food and drink and arts and crafts. They are maintaining high profile activity involving communities in the most sustainable way possible. They are thinking about their holiday plans and how they can make it more appealing and sustainable for modern visitors.

JS reported that in 2022 it will be the Bicentennial of the Union Canal and they will use this to celebrate inland waterways and on land too. They will create a calendar of events and will also try to introduce new events that will give an opportunity for domestic markets and the UK as a whole and there will be a marketing campaign and will work with Visit Scotland. This will help provide a springboard for 2023/2024. JS stated that she would be happy to come back and share with the group progress at a further date.

DAM reported that the Year of Scottish Stories is due to take place in 2022 and was launched today. There will be opportunities for combined activity and is happy to support.

Duncan Tannahill stated that the challenge they have got is staff and sustainability and from a tourism perspective people are being turned away from restaurants due to over- capacity. It will not represent Scotland in the right light from overseas visitors if this not resolved. SMCM stated that that people have had to reevaluate their lives and the issue of Brexit and EU nationals going back home has caused staff shortages.

GD stated that he backed up what JS was saying about the 200 years of Union canal. There will be a celebration event at end of May 2022 with canal boats going up from Falkirk and Edinburgh. The programme will be discussed at the Scottish Waterways for All Meeting on 20th January and he will keep everyone updated with the programme. On that weekend too the bridge at Ratho will be renamed the Ronnie Rusack MBE bridge to give recognition to the invaluable contribution that he made to the canals. SMCM said that it was a very fitting tribute to Ronnie Rusack.

Agenda item 6 - Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil – Opportunities and Challenges – Jonathan Mosse

JM provided an overview and outlined the following:

- We have been trialling for the past 15 months and all its claims has been substantiated.
- We have trialled in major destinations and different guises and it lives up to its claims. It has been trialled throughout UK. It is 90% carbon neutral, and is smoke free and odourless. It is a very attractive product to use and is biodegradable.
- Getting the word out to fellow boaters and to fuel suppliers has been a bit more challenging. We have promoted it at every opportunity possible. Marinas are starting to take an interest and boaters are interested and are also looking at commercial boaters. We on the Inland waterways and RYA would like to see benefits but there is difficult legislation to navigate and are looking to the CPG to help address these challenges.
- We have been producing hydrocarbons for over 150 years and we can do so cheaply.
- Those producers of hydrocarbons have to pay a levy. We draw some certificates that subsidise biofuels and it is fine if it is recognised by the DFT. Waterways can enjoy HVO for propulsion purposes when it goes into engine but everything other than propulsion is not covered by the subsidies.
- We can afford to use this fuel for propelling boats but can't afford to use it for any purpose for our boats such as cooking etc. It costs 88p for propulsion purposes, but costs £1.72 for cooking, heating and lighting which is a non-starter. It has nothing to do with HMRC but is under DFT jurisdiction.
- Suppliers have been trying to identify a mechanism and will hinge it back off the 60/40 split as is the case for red diesel as per HMRC agreement. It is up to the distributors to get the certificates. They will likely come back with a very complicated calculation.

Action: JM's ask is that all fuel that goes into a boat fuel tank is treated exactly the same way.

MS provided an overview and stated that if the marketplace was to change to over to HVO it would become very simple but at the moment we have had to flush out red diesel and switch to white diesel or HVO.

SMCM asked has there been any type of analysis undertaken by ways of diesel omissions in the industry about what it puts into the atmosphere.

GD stated that in addition to what both JM and MS have said, in the instruction manual for canal boats, all say that biodiesel should not be used in these engines and it can damage them. We can go up to 12% bio but if there is engine damage in boats or cars who is going to be responsible for repairs and replacement? The whole business of biodiesel has not been properly thought through and the engine manufacturers have not been consulted.

JM stated that we have 2 types of bio diesel. There is the 1st generation B7 component. HVO is a second generation and is superior in every way to mineral diesel, it is important not to confuse the two.

GD stated that we are being made to use this higher rate of bio diesel. JM stated that we have a better option but we need to address legislation. We are needing some other government departments to be pragmatic.

SMCM asked does that information exist about emissions about the industry. JM stated that he was not aware of it. Ross Wombell stated that there is information available on the recreational industry emissions for UK and Europe and there is a European directive. **Action: RW will share this information with the group.**

GP stated that his main concern is that the bio diesel that we all think about is not the same thing as JM is referring to. We need to consider how the industry in Scotland deals with this and the supplies.

MS stated that HVO is a European classified fuel and our most recent vessel with a tier 5 engine can use HVO. It is a potential route out of mixed fuels.

Action: It was agreed that we write to Scottish Government to highlight the product to them, this ties into the recent COP26 and climate emergency and will indicate discussion has taken place tonight. SMCM will use the links that were sent from JM and send the information to the government as well and see if they are aware of it and see if they support the issue and start dialogue and raise with UK Government.

JM stated that the Inland Waterways Association will also be talking to the government and this would build the strategy and would be gratefully received.

Action: Once response received this will be circulated to the group. SMCM suggested writing to COSLA so that it this can be raised internally with local authorities and ask the local authorities to engage and support this product and the idea and then this will in turn strengthen the case for lobbying.

EW gave an example of local authority work that has taken place, so it is a worthwhile endeavour. They will have a good reason to get involved for marinas and harbours.

RW stated that there was a consultation on reducing the rates. There may be an opportunity to go back to DFT. JM stated that the RYA and Inland Waterways have already submitted a response.

Action: JM to draft letter to send to SMCM and EW for amendment before sending to Scottish Government and then onto COSLA and then follow onto UK government by Friday 24th December.

Agenda item 7 - Road map for decarbonisation of the European marine craft sector – Ross Wombwell, British Marine - Head of Technical Services (presentation circulated 16th December)

Ross outlined his presentation and there then followed an opportunity for questions:

GR stated that it emphasises the life cycle analysis, who sails round using the diesel engine, carbon costs will go up because of embedded carbon. Alternative fuels will be transformative when the fisheries start using HVO. Training is an important thing, showing people how to passage plan so that they do not need to use their engine.

MT stated that firstly the fact that there is a mention of hydro dynamics and mentions their research field. Hydro foils are physics of flight, you would need high speeds, there is a very good reason why craft do not have foils. We would need to have some type of offsetting.

EB stated that the road map considered reducing the boating sector's blue carbon habitats. We need to look at the infrastructure/moorings and preventing impact on habitats and species and help mitigate against carbon omissions.

RW stated that in training they have had a massive issue and a huge intake in small electrification. They are working on an electrification on marine electrics course and this will be released early next year and will be built into the support that will be circulated to the British Marine members. We need to look at what can be put in a DIY basis and look at how we can provide some sort of certification and look at upskilling to the existing skills pool.

RW stated that in theory we are talking about blue vessels. Marine manufacturing is being done as what was done in the 90s, even in the 60s, we need to lower our energy usage and maximise our energy onboard. RW gave an example and explained that we are seeing hydrofoils coming up onto the market. We are seeing a huge amount of electrified hydro foils. We need to look at how the development of hydrofoils ties in with AI. Efficiency is the first step towards zero omissions.

RW stated that it is not part of the decarbonisation project but it is certainly part of the Green Blue around analysing the effect on seaweed and seagrass. We need to identify as boat users what to do to not affect the environment.

GD stated that he has been a recreational sailor all of his life and seaman for 39 years. The thought of using hydrogen in the engine makes him uncomfortable. Cabin using hydrogen and power coming from lithium batteries and there is a lot of technology that needs to be developed before it becomes viable.

RW stated that he is doing a talk in January on the safety of hydrogen. He has certified a hydrogen system and his risk assessment has concluded that it is safer than petrol or a lpd boat, because hydrogen is so light. There is risk there but we have the technology to make it safe.

SL stated that the JCB have done interesting work, they have managed to run their own engine plant to change over to hydrogen. This would be an easy swap over but we need to keep the same pace with the corporate companies to make it happen. We need to have utility supply for electric boats and look at how we address the capacity.

RW stated that the infrastructure will be the biggest thing and the drain on the local infrastructure will be significant.

SMCM thanked RW for the presentation and said that it had been very thought provoking and the sector requires to change and be part of the solution.

Action: RW will circulate slides and documents for onward circulation to CPG.

Agenda item 8 - Review of CPG Terms of Reference

Action/Decision – It was agreed that this will be reviewed at the next meeting.

Agenda item 9 - AOCB/Future Business

JS provided an update on the pricing at Scottish Canals on mooring fees and licences. The pricing review has begun using the same methodology as 5 years ago and working with SWFA to understand the market conditions so that they have a fair evaluation.

Action: It was agreed that this be added as a future agenda item to enable a fuller discussion.

Agenda item 10 - Date of Future Meetings

To be confirmed.

ACTIONS

Action Point 1 - Marine Sector Key Issues

Update once per month from on the 5 key issues that are being discussed in the marine sector for onward circulation to the CPG. (SL),

Update - Standard agenda item

Action Point 2 - Covid Ventilation Fund/Financial Support

SMCM requested that those who have a financial interest RE Covid fund to write to him to raise these issues and then he will write to Scottish Government. GP will provide contacts to SMCM. (ALL)

Action Point 3 - National Planning Framework

Elena Whitham MSP to forward to PM for onward circulation to the members (deadline date is 10th January 2022). (EW/PM)

Update Circulated 16.12.21

Action Point 4 - Recreational industry omissions data for UK and Europe

RW to send information together with the presentation slides. (RW/PM)

Update: Circulated.

Action Point 5 - Use of Hydrotreated Vegetable oil

Write to Scottish Government, UK Government and COSLA to highlight the product to see if they support and start dialogue and raise with UK Government. (JM to draft letter to send to SMCM and EW for amendment)(SMCM/EW/JM)

Update: Text sent to SMCM on 20.12.21

Action Point 6 - Review of CPG Terms of Reference

To be added as agenda item for next meeting. (SMCM)

Update: On agenda 1st March

Action Point 7 - Review of Scottish Canals Moorings and Licence Fees

To be added as a future agenda item. (JS/PM)

Update - on agenda 1st March

Action Point 8 - Future Agenda topics

- Presentation on coastal change from the Dynamic Coast project (<https://www.dynamiccoast.com/>) (PM)
- Giant Strides Marine Tourism Strategy – Our Waters Clean and Blue
 - The return of the 3-mile fishing zone seeking CPG views. (MF)
 - Impact of dredging on fishing inshore. (MF)

Action Point 9 - Protected area of Arran and Lamlash Bay

SMCM to have discussion with Elena Whitham MSP. (SMCM/EW)

Action Point 10 - Hardship fund and Marine Tourism Restart Grant Fund – Glenn Porter (Ocean Sailing Scotland)

GP to write to SMCM on points raised and he will raise on behalf of CPG. (GP/SMCM)