

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Cross Party Group on Recreational Boating  
and Marine Tourism, Committee Room 4, Scottish Parliament**

**25<sup>th</sup> September 2018**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Stuart McMillan MSP	
Pauline McGrow	RYA Scotland
James Allan	RYA Scotland
Jonathan Mosse	Keep Canals Alive Alliance
Ronnie Rusack	Chair of Lowland Canal Volunteer Group
Pat Bowie	Keep Canals Alive Alliance
Andrew Rendle	Scottish Coastal Rowing Association
Fergus Duncanson	RYA Scotland
Gordon Daly	RYA Scotland/Seagull Trust Cruises
Carlene McAvoy	ROSPA
Chris Cutts	Forth Estuary Forum
Richard Millar	Scottish Canals
Catherine Topley	Scottish Canals
Jim McLachlan	Forth and Clyde Canal Society
Liam Kerr MSP	
Aileen Monk	British Marine Scotland
Ian White	Canalside Hub
Graham Russell	RYA Scotland
Kenny MacDermid	Water Safety Scotland
Gordon Ritchie	Gordon Ritchie Marketing
Sara Walsh	British Ports Association

Andy Devenport	Keep Canals Alive/Edinburgh Canal Society
Neil Stewart	The Majestic Line
Stuart Smith	Scottish Canoe Association
Andy Carnduff	Forth Yacht Clubs Association/Keep Canals Alive
Courtney Peyton	Crown Estate Scotland
Jonathan Mosse	Inland Waterways Association/Keep Canals Alive
Mike McGregor	
Rhona Fairgrieve	Scottish Coastal Forum
David Vass	RYA Scotland/West Highland and Islands Moorings Association

#### **APOLOGIES**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Mark Simmonds	British Ports Association
Steve Macfarlane	Glenuig Inn
Paul Bancks	Crown Estate Scotland
Martin Latimer	British Marine Scotland
Donald McLaren	Clyde Yacht Clubs Association
Ruth Briggs	Forth Estuary Forum
Lewis MacDonald MSP	
Emilie Devenport	Scottish Environment Link
David Hill	British Marine Scotland
David O'Neill	Save Falls of Clyde - International
Sarah Riddle	Northern Light
Daniel Steel	Sail Scotland
Sarah Kennedy	Fort William Marina and Shoreline Company
Ian Dewar	Fort William Marina and Shoreline Company

## **GDPR**

**SMCM advised that everyone in attendance will have their name printed in the publically available minutes of this meeting and asked if members do not wish their name to be on the publically available minutes they must let him know.**

### **1. Minutes and Action Points from last meeting**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

**Proposed: Graham Russell**

**Seconded: Liam Kerr MSP**

### **2. Action Points from Last Meeting**

1. **Year of Coasts and Waters** – On agenda, decision taken to have joint meeting with Tourism.
  2. **Labour Market Survey** – ongoing.
  3. **British Divers Marine Rescue** – presentation was circulated on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2018.
  4. **Whale and Dolphin Conservation** – presentation was circulated on 3rd July 2018.
  5. **Oban Bay** – this is on agenda and briefing note issued to all in attendance.
  6. **Aberdeen Harbour Expansion** – invite will be sent out.
3. **Update on EU/Brexit** -SMCM asked JA if there had been any further developments from the RYA. JA reported that there has been no further update. SMCM stated that he will keep the group updated on any future developments.
4. **The Marine Tourism Strategy Update**  
AM provided an update on behalf of ML and SL in their absence.

### **Mid Term Marine Tourism Strategy**

AM reported that this is going ahead and will be going out to tender. There will be a refresh of the Marine Tourism Strategy with a possible launching of this in November 2019. British Marine Scotland have also intimated that they wish to become part of the Year of Coast and Water Strategy operational planning group.

An industry consultation meeting was held on 12<sup>th</sup> September with Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs. JA reported that this was a very useful meeting and was extremely welcome as it provided an opportunity to bring forward industry concerns and identify opportunities at grass roots in sport and in particular boating. Discussion took place on the canals.

The next Marine Tourism Development Group is taking place on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> September.

SMCM asked about the event in 2019 and would it launch a revised Marine Tourism Strategy or a new strategy. AM confirmed that it would be a “revision” of the strategy.

RM further explained about the strategic review and the requirement to look at the next 2 years and reflect back in order to build for the next 5-10 years. SMCM stated that the

strategy was to take us to 2020 and asked for clarity on this. RM explained that the strategic aims would remain the same but the action plan would be the focus for the next 5-10 years.

## **5. Keep Canals Alive – Pat Bowie**

Keep Canals Alive – Pat Bowie Pat Bowie introduced herself as General Manager of the Union Canal Boats and Chair of the Keep Canals Alive Alliance. She provided a presentation on the work of the Keep Canals Alive Alliance (please find attached). PB further reported that there is a meeting scheduled for next week with Scottish Canals.

There then followed an opportunity for questions. AD asked about the damaged lock gates. PB stated that the damaged lock gate is at Gate 6 which is between the Kelpies and the Falkirk Wheel and was the result of an accident with a boat.

CT stated that we welcome working closely with Keep Canals Alive. There is an open meeting with Keep Canals Alive on 3rd October. The issue of publishing board minutes was raised and CT confirmed that Scottish Canals is considering this and will keep boaters informed.

Scottish Canals faces significant challenges with the recent asset management model showing that we have a £70 million asset backlog which cannot be resolved by the existing £3.5m pa capital budget. Through the Asset Management Strategy Scottish Canals has socialised this issue and CT thanked the boaters for helping to spread the message.

AC stated that what has become apparent in the published documents is that the money has been spent on non-navigation investments and Scottish Canals have been very successful in this respect. However, more of the core government grant should be spent on the canals.

RM explained that Scottish Canals spends in excess of its government grant in managing, maintaining and operating the Scottish Canal system, constantly strives to bring in third party funding and some of this has been available to support asset improvement. Revenue investment remains a challenge and Scottish Canals is constantly striving to drive value from the canals through repurposing them (e.g. Glasgow's Smart Canal), destination development (TFW/Kelpies Ft Augustus etc) and regeneration (i.e. Pt Dundas, Ardrishaig, Ft Augustus etc) profits from these activities are reinvested in the running of Scottish Canals

PB stated that we require to ensure that there is transparency and we need conversations flowing back and forth. RM agreed that clarity was something that we are striving to deliver in partnership with Keep Canals Alive. RM stated that they are looking at user operations and are working with members of Keep Canals Alive to bring in efficiencies which secure the future affordable operation of the canals.

RR asked whether Scottish Canals had considered outsourcing commercial operations e.g. putting existing café opportunities out to tender for third parties to operate. RM stated that this is something that they have considered and previously taken to the market. However, when we have tested and reviewed, the loss of margin and the loss of quality showed that we were best to operate ourselves. We constantly monitor the market and continue to look at all options. RM reiterated that Scottish Canals is making a good profit at the Caledonian

Canal Centre and Falkirk Wheel and profits achieved are reinvested in the core operation of Scottish Canals.

CT stated that we need to identify what the core investment is for the canals. We require to look at the various users of the canal and there is a destination element. RR stated that he will have a look at the accounts. (JS?)

CT stated that there will be a second draft of accounts and we will strip out the third party investment and then this will provide accurate outline. We will build on the information from then on. RR wished CT well in her new role as Chief Executive of Scottish Canals.

Asset Management Strategy – FD highlighted that decline in the condition of Scotland’s canals would result in wider indirect losses such as health and wellbeing, property values decreasing and we need to look at ways in which we can get the government to listen and fund better. RM highlighted that moving boats add value to waterways reducing maintenance but are also important to encouraging use of the towpaths, regeneration and are a critical driver in property values along the banks of the canal.

CT has met with Michael Mathieson MSP who was very supportive and urged us to do everything we could to support the canals. CT stated that we need additional capital and revenue to do this and Scottish Government are working closely with the team at Scottish Canals.

AD stated that there is day to day business and backlog of maintenance. It has crept up to £70 million and asked if the cost will increase. The canals are publicly owned and we need to find funding from Government to clear backlog. RM highlighted that unfortunately the present backlog will grow unless a step change in funding can be achieved. The Asset Management Strategy defines the priority for investment with the safety of communities, visitors and staff prioritised ahead of navigation. However, Scottish Canals is focussed on delivering these wider safety aspirations as well as boating and sailing as much as funds will allow.

AC stated that he uses the canal for a greater purpose and it is not just a canal; it is used for major tourism in Scotland. We have got a far better circuit in Scotland, the benefit comes to the Forth that services the west. We should see Lowland Canals as one of the important tourist links.

CT concluded that she would love to see all this come to fruition, Scottish Canals will continue to work with Ministers and Government and the ideal situation would be to secure funding levels that will reduce the backlog allowing Scottish Canals to establish a regular maintenance regime.

## **6. Oban Bay**

DV provided report as tabled. There then followed an opportunity for questions - JA stated that this is a positive result from a small group of volunteers. JA recorded his thanks to David Vass, Sarah Brown and Tony Bennet who have all worked hard. SMCM expressed his thanks and said well done to everyone involved.

## 7. Year of Coast and Water 2020

SMCM explained that he is also the Convener for the Cross Party Group on Tourism and has been having a discussion with Leon Thomson who is the Secretariat for the Group. They thought it would be useful to have a joint discussion on the Year of Coasts and Water. SMCM is going to propose that they have a joint meeting and use our next meeting date on 27<sup>th</sup> November to avoid having the same conversations twice. There may be some synergies and opportunities. The two focus topics will be Year of 2020 and Cruise Tourism.

CT stated that one of the key issues is funding. The funding has reduced year on year. It would be helpful if we could have an indicative figure of what we are looking for. RM stated that there are a number of events that used to take place have reduced. It would be good to bring the CPG and Tourism together so that we can bring boating and sailing to the masses again.

SMCM stated that it is an excellent opportunity. The two Cross Party Groups have the same economic opportunities and it will also generate ideas. The CPG on Tourism welcomes this opportunity too and the agenda will be very lean and will be entirely focussed on the 2 focus topics.

SMCM stated that in cruise tourism there were 60 vessels this year that this is going to increase to 92 in 2019 for Greenock, this will provide great opportunities. SMCM attended the Cruise Summit a couple of years ago and they are re-directing vessels from Mediterranean to Northern Europe. There is a wider opportunity for more spaces in Scotland to get economic benefit. GD stated that the Forth is increasing their cruise sector.

**Action: It was agreed that a joint Cross Party Group on Recreational Boating and Marine Tourism/Tourism be held on 27<sup>th</sup> November as a one off event.**

8. Marine Tourism Conference Update – Daniel Steel, Sail Scotland - SMCM reported that Daniel Steel has submitted his apologies for this meeting and we will move this agenda topic to a future meeting.
9. Save the Falls of Clyde International – David O’Neill - SMCM reported that unfortunately due to illness David O’Neill has submitted his apologies and we will move this agenda topic to a future meeting.

## 10. AOCB

Thomas Telford Corpach Marina - SMCM reported that Sarah Riddle from Northern Light is going to provide an update on Thomas Telford Corpach Marina and has requested to present to the CPG, this will take place at a future meeting.

Year of Coasts and Waters – SMCM reported that we have received a request from Emilie Devenport at Scottish Environment Link that they wish to share details of a number of events that they are running to mark the Year of Coast and Water, this will be discussed as part of the discussion at joint meeting.

**AGM in 2019** - SMCM indicated that he wishes to hold the AGM in June of each year so that it takes place before the Parliament Summer recess.

**Clyde Marine Planning Partnership** - GR reported that discussion has taken place on the Regional Marine Plan and two workshops were held and there has been a wider outline consultation. Crinan and Forth and Clyde Canals have been included. There are a lot of issues within integration of marine tourism and terrestrial planning on matters such as access to water, changing facilities and storage facilities, this will go out for full consultation. RF would echo this work that has gone in from the Clyde Marine Planning Partnership. GD asked what is the response from Peel Ports with regards to the Upper Clyde. GR stated that this has been positive.

**Rowing Event** - It was reported that the Clydebuilt Festival hosted year 2 of Castle to Crane, Scotland's biggest open water rowing race, 13 miles of racing from Dumbarton Castle to the Finnieston Crane and 75 rowing boats took part. (400+ crew members)

**Clydebuilt Festival** - this will take place next year 21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> September 2019.

**Stornoway** - G Ritchie reported that there are 3 yacht race companies that will be running events within Stornoway Port Authority during the Year of Coasts and Water in 2020.

**Courtney Peyton from Crown Estate Scotland** reported that they are looking at estates and socio economic factors and are seeking input from CPG on how they could be better utilised. **Action: Email address for Courtney Peyton, Crown Estate Scotland to be sent to members to provide input - [Courtney.Peyton@crownestatescotland.com](mailto:Courtney.Peyton@crownestatescotland.com)**

**11. Future Business**

It was agreed that the next meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> November be a joint meeting between Cross Party Group on Recreational Boating and Marine Tourism and Cross Party Group on Tourism with 2 focus topics

- Year of Coast and Water
- Cruise Tourism

**12. Date of Next Meeting - Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2018 at 6pm.** The meeting closed and SMCM gave this thanks to everyone for their attendance and to Pat Bowie, Chair of Keep Canals Alive for presentation and to Scottish Canals for their contributions.

The meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

**SUMMARY OF ACTIONS/DECISIONS**

	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Resp.</b>	<b>Date Raised</b>	<b>Completed</b>
1.	<b><u>2020 Year of Coasts and Waters</u></b> Look into events for 2020 Year of Coast and Water. To be discussion topic together with discussion	ALL	27/2/18	Ongoing

	about attracting sailing events to Scotland.			
2.	<b><u>Labour Market Survey</u></b> Information from Labour market survey to be provided to SMCM.	ML/SL	27/2/18	Sent to SMCM on 16 <sup>th</sup> October 2018.
3.	<b><u>Aberdeen Harbour</u></b> Invite Aberdeen Harbour to a future meeting.	SMCM/PM	26/6/18	Pending
4.	<b><u>Oban Bay Developments</u></b> Survey to be circulated. Consideration to be given to inviting CMAL to a future meeting.	PM	26/6/18	Circulated 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2018  Ongoing