

Oban Bay Stakeholders Group

Minute of meeting on 7th November 2018 at 1.30pm Perle Hotel, Oban

Attendees

David McHardie, Paul Jennings, Andrew Spence, Chris Wilcock, Brian Swinbanks, Jim Traynor, Robert Hemming, David Vass, John Macalister, Mike Robertson, Phil Hamerton, Alison Rennie, Ross Wilson, Robert Kincaid, Duncan Martin, Derek Grier, Alison Chadwick, Vicki McKenzie, Richard Dobson, Peter Tosh, Coastal Connection, Billy Forteith, Eric Chapman, Gary Adams, Tony Bennett

Recent Developments

TB provided an update on recent events including both the preliminary meetings of the Stakeholder working groups and the recent OBMG meeting. This was followed by a brief update from PH and DM regarding the recent Navigation & Safety and Major Incident workshops.

Possible Project Officer Funding

AS gave a summary of work that was already underway to try and secure funding from HIE and other possible sources, emphasising how important this was in order for the project to proceed. DM supported this by suggesting that additional parties and groups could perhaps also help with this such as OCC.

The Transport Scotland perspective

Chris Wilcock from Transport Scotland (TS) gave the meeting a presentation on the different types of Harbour Authority and the requirements of TS. He explained that whilst the group were considering a Trust Port, they should also be aware that some Private Ports operate in a similar way to that of a Trust Port but have a Trust sitting 'behind' the limited company.

Chris provided a detailed account of the assistance that is available from TS before then describing exactly what is required to become a Harbour Authority. Common themes throughout his presentation were the importance of sustainability, longevity and viability. The full detail of the HEO/HRO process was covered, including the fixed 42 day time-span, consultation, involvement of Scottish Ministers and possible public inquiries.

DM sought clarification on fees and charges - CW explained that charges had to be reasonable and justifiable, and could be the subject of an appeal to Scottish Ministers.

RK asked about the timing of staff employment etc. CW explained the issues around the timing of the HEO, and suggested that further advice could be obtained by speaking with other ports.

The Tobermory Experience

Brian Swinbanks from the Tobermory Harbour Association gave the meeting a detailed summary of the evolution of the THA and how it achieved SHA status in 2017. This had involved a number of changes in legal status that had finally resulted in it becoming a Community Company Limited by Guarantee. Like Oban, the catalyst to the HEO had been CMAL also seeking a HEO for part of the harbour before then deferring to the THA application some time later. It took two years for the HEO to be signed off, during which time

the RYA continued to object throughout. The OBSG should consider setting up a 'vehicle, in order to seek the HEO, and to secure funding to help with this.

Brian emphasised that in becoming an SHA the increased responsibility brings about significant increases in costs, most notably those relating to insurance and personnel. He also confirmed the importance of acquiring assets as soon as possible.

Robert Hemming, the new THA HM, then gave a summary of the practicalities the PMSC and the different challenges that this brings to running a SHA. IN his view Oban should operate a LPS (Local Port Service) rather than VTS. Robert emphasised the need for trustees/commissioners to be competent which usually requires specific training, and the role of the Designated Person.

OBMG Update

Paul Jennings advised the meeting that the OBSG supported the work that the Stakeholders were undertaking. In particular, they were happy to provide meeting rooms at the North Pier, NLB offices and CalMac terminal, as well as technical work/support as required and the additional input of Mike Brew as required.

Paul also advised that the maps, charts and Code of Practice were all being updated and that these would be circulated via TB to the Navigation and Safety Working Group.

AOCB

Stakeholders should be thinking about what they want to achieve for Oban through becoming an SHA.

Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the OBSG should take place in February 2019, TBC.

A M Bennett
14 November 2018