

Oban Community Harbour Development Association (OCHDA)



Newsletter 2 (March 2020)

OCHDA Update on developments

Legal partners

Following a formal process of selection, 3 legal practices were invited to meet us in Oban in February. In the end two presented their credentials and outlined their ideas for successful development of a Trust Port/Community Harbour in Oban. After careful consideration the Management Committee were unanimous in selecting Burness Paull as our preferred legal partner and they have been appointed. Burness Paull are one of the UK's leading specialists in this field and have been involved in many similar projects, such as Scrabster, Fraserburgh, Portpatrick and Tobermory. We are confident that we have secured the services of the best available partner and we are delighted that they wish to work with us!

Public meeting

On Feb 4th, supported by the Oban Bay Management Group, another public meeting was held, organised by OCHDA. This was a successful meeting, addressed by representatives of CMAL and the NLB as well as John MacAlister (Chair of OCHDA) and Tony Bennett (Chair of the OBMG's Stakeholder Group). All organisations pledged their support for our continuing work.

The meeting was well-attended and very positive, emphasising the satisfactory progress made recently and outlining proposals for the future Harbour Authority area. The NLB were able to describe the positive impact of recent changes to buoyage in the bay, shown by a dramatic reduction in the number of incidents, particularly of groundings on the Corran Ledge. While the establishment of the Harbour Authority is still an urgent task, there has been successful mitigation to aspects of the safety risk assessment.

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Meetings with Transport Scotland and Argyll & Bute Council

Since the turn of the year a number of meetings have been held with representatives of Argyll & Bute Council, particularly over the possible arrangements for transfer of the Council's responsibilities for the North Pier harbour area as well as certain North Pier infrastructure assets.

We have also met with Transport Scotland, the arm of Government with overall responsibility for ports, harbours and ferries, who will be key to future development of the harbour. They will be sending a team to Oban in March to see how far we have progressed over the detail of the development of the Harbour Order and the initial business plan. Discussions with them so far have been extremely positive, however their satisfaction at that stage is crucial for securing their agreement to continue working towards the Trust Port/Community Harbour.

Draft Harbour Order

The preparation of a first draft of the new Harbour Revision Order is well under way. Other parties in the bay (e.g. the NLB, Oban Marina & CMAL) have expressed their requirements and these will be negotiated within the development of the Order in such a way as to maximise efficient, safe running of the harbour within a balanced management structure. At later stages of the development of the HRO there will be extensive, formal statutory consultation with all stakeholders over the detail. This initial draft is to be presented to Transport Scotland in time for discussion to take place when we meet at the end of March.

Membership & funding

Membership of OCHDA is open to all, at no cost. The criteria for membership and OCHDA's aims are available on the Oban Harbour website at www.obanharbour.scot/trust-port.

As we start the detailed work on submission of the Harbour Order, and formulating an agreement with the Council relating to the use of the N Pier assets, we shall require substantial amounts of specialist legal support. We now need donations from interested parties to allow the work from our solicitors to proceed and, hopefully, to enable us to take on a project officer to help drive the work forward.

Date for your diary: AGM

The first AGM of OCHDA will be held on April 15th, at 19:00, in the Fire Station's meeting room. All members of OCHDA are welcome to this meeting where existing office bearers will formally stand down pending the election of new office bearers for 2020/2021.

John MacAlister (Chair, OCHDA)