

Secretary's report 2018

At a recent WHAM Committee meeting a suggestion was made that we could improve our communications by putting more information on the web site i.e. more than presently gets put there. Currently we put items on it as they come to us and this is a highly variable phenomenon. Weeks can pass with nothing of note. A possible alternative is a 'newsletter' a bit like this note but at more regular intervals. However it does depend on the existence of some 'news'. Some feedback from member organisations would be really helpful. It might indicate your needs, your preferences or whatever. Very relevant to the use of the web site is the fact that our website is undergoing a whole-scale refurbishment through the generosity of Crown Estate Scotland who 'had some spare money'. This should be completed shortly.

This year marine licence applications have risen a little, 79 to date, but there is little of great note. Fish farms are still moving towards provision of 'freshwater tanks' presumably to facilitate the transition from smolt to fish. Also the trend to circular tanks with concomitant increased biomass continues.

We had no objection to the idea of growing seaweed commercially but felt that one of the proposed sites-very close to the entrance to Easdale Sound- would impede craft en route to/from the Sound of Luing or Easdale Sound and suggested re-siting it close to Insh leaving Insh Sound free of any obstruction. No response from New Wave Foods has been received to date though we welcomed discussion.

The Crown Estate Bill has been published and contained little that had not been expected. The presentations and comments are now being considered at committee in the Parliament and we are not aware of any extraordinary changes. Much emphasis on community involvement is expected but we-and others-have continually drawn attention to the existence of communities of interest as well as the 'geographical' communities. It remains to be seen if this difference is recognised but it could be important for Mooring Associations in certain situations.

Crown Estate Scotland have begun lifting derelict moorings in Holy Loch. The intention is to extend this activity to other areas where such moorings are a problem. Importantly, they are, of course, also clearing the sea bed of detritus derived from the moorings particularly where 'unusual' sinkers had been used! It does not need huge imagination to see the benefits of this and having a clear sea bed in anchorages can only get our heartfelt support.

There is nothing to report from WHAM's area of interest on renewables. The Sound of Islay schemes, much heralded in 2013, is still not in place and shows little sign of appearing in 2019. Presently there are no other schemes that we are aware of in our areas of interest.

As mentioned in the last report, Oban Bay is continuing to require our attention. A great deal has happened since December 2017 not least the public survey of views about the harbour and its possible authority. This came out strongly in favour of 'anyone but CALMAC'. Two well attended public meetings re-inforced this view. Recognising this, the Oban Bay Management Group have created space for a study to be made examining the feasibility of creating a Trust Port. This requires Trustees etc and is quite a complex process but, if successful, would allow good governance of the Bay. The new harbour limits are yet to be defined but would have to be

such as would enable control of shipping, including recreational craft, in and around the Bay and its approaches. That the bay and its approaches require to be safe for all mariners is not an issue.

At the AGM there will be a short presentation summarising the current situation and its possible developments.

It is a pleasure to welcome Rum and Eigg communities to membership. Both have laid/are laying moorings and we wish them well in this enterprise.

The secretary is constantly trying to keep his spreadsheet of MA secretaries up-to -date. He knows it is not as up-to-date as it might be. Consequently, would MA's PLEASE notify him of changes to their contact details, particularly the contact details of their secretary, when a change takes place. That way the correct messages may reach the correct people. Thank you in advance.