

Secretary's report 2020



Scottish Charity 044698

David Vass

The year, like everything else, has been coloured by Covid though, in truth, much has continued as before. This is particularly true of the Marine Applications. 45-50 have been received, notable among these has been the appearance of seaweed farming. Talked about in the past, studied by many including Dunstaffnage Marine Laboratory (now Scottish Association for Marine Sciences/SAMS), but this year we saw the manifestation of the studies. From WHAM's point of view these do not appear likely to become a problem, at least in the short term. One is proposed for the northern side of Oronsay at the entrance to L Sunart and the other on the south side of Pabay near Kyle. We will follow developments closely but the current sites cause no concern. The situation in Castlebay continues to trouble us particularly as the pontoons are badly situated and very exposed to southerly winds, CALMAC still have designs on space in the bay largely due to the size of the 'Isle of Lewis' and there is currently no convenient place to get diesel as the pontoons are a long way from the source! Discussions with the pontoon organizers continue but it is apparent that the pontoons are not where they were originally intended to be sited! The outgoing secretary had a couple of desperately uncomfortable but safe nights there in August! The moorings at Rhum are being resited to give more swinging room which is welcome. Meanwhile Colonsay Community are seeking to site visitor moorings in L Staosnaig as the pier and bay at Scalasaig are not particularly user friendly. They planned to site the mooring close as possible to the power cable to ensure no-one would anchor on it. SSE were constructively awkward at first suggesting the moorings should be out with 200m of the cable! But negotiation has reduced this to about 50m leaving a tempting gap for incautious anchorers!

Progress in Oban with the Trust Port has been slow not least because of Covid but it has been finite. WHAM has contributed to the funds and Oban Community Harbour Development Association (OCHDA) is now endeavouring to engage as many of the users and interested parties in the project as possible. It is now approaching a critical stage with the drafting of the new harbour empowerment order. It needs all the support it can muster, particularly from users and the community, to ensure this very worthwhile project comes into being.

Sarah Brown

Having taken over the WHAM Sec role from David at the start of September my first act is to thank him on behalf of all boaters for the sterling work he has done, and continues to do, for us all. West coast boating would not be half as fun or easy without all the quiet work he, and many others, do behind the scenes.

My second act has been to write to all members, introduce myself and get updated contact details. Thanks to all those who have responded. There are still a few outstanding so please do get in touch if you haven't already. These details will be used to notify you of WHAM business only and will not be shared with any other parties for any reason. You can ask for your data to be removed at any time.

David and I plan to share some of the role over the coming months with him staying on to do the Coastwatcher elements for a while yet so my focus will be to support you as members and to try to increase the weight of the organisation by expanding the membership. It is really important that the responses and advice that WHAM gives to Government agencies and departments such as Crown Estate Scotland, Marine Scotland and the relevant Local Authorities, is taken seriously and the more members we represent the more likely that is. Many of you have neighbouring MA's who are not members and I encourage you to talk to them about WHAM and get them to join if possible.

Updating the constitution is another important job on the 'To Do' list, especially in these days of Covid 19 and online meetings. Members have also shown an interest in a short, and infrequent, newsletter so will get working on that in January and aim to make it a twice-yearly event.

Thank you to everyone who has welcomed me so kindly to the organisation. I very much look forward to meeting you in person at some point!