



1) Attendees and Apologies

Attending

- Jim Traynor (Chair)
- Sarah Brown (Secretary)
- David Vass (Secretary ret.)
- David Wilkie (Treasurer)
- David Wilkinson (Webmaster)
- Chris Perring, Crinan Harbour MA (WHAM Committee)
- Derek Wilkinson, West Connel MA (WHAM Committee)
- Roger Thwaites, South Shian MA (WHAM Committee)
- Robert Kincaid, Mid Kerrera MA (WHAM Committee)
- Marian Austin, Achintore MA
- Stephen Quaile, Craignish Lagoon
- Tony Bennett, Crown Estate Scotland
- Hamish Loudon, Achintore MA
- John Clayton, Arids Bay MA
- Susie Hutchison, Ardentallen MA
- Duncan Martin, Oban Bay CB
- Martin Clarke, Rear-Commodore Royal Highland Yacht Club
- Irene Murray, Connel Bridge MA
- Chris Pendlebury, South Sleat Community MA
- Alex Agnew, Dunbeg Boat Owners MA
- Peter Holmes, Lochcarron MA
- Judy Thwaites, South Shian MA
- Iain Clement, Royal Highland Yacht Club
- Ian Fleming, Roshven MA
- Alastair MacLeod, Loch Craignish MA
- Douglas Murray, Minard and Lochgair MA
- Richard Roberts, Dunstaffnage Bay MA
- David Hitchin, Achnacree MA
- Brian Gallacher, Airds Bay MA
- David Phillips – RYA Scotland Board - Observer

Apologies from

- Colin Scott, Connel Bridge MA
- Rob Macdonald, Harbour Manager, Tobermory

Apologies to

- Jonathan Baxter, Kentallen Bay MA who got cut off from the meeting by accident

2) Minutes of the 2019 AGM

The minutes of the meeting were agreed as a true record and approved by majority vote.

Proposed - David Wilkie, Seconded – Robert Kincaid

3) Matters Arising

None identified.

4) Chairman's Report

Welcome to the virtual AGM of WHAM for 2020.

Although these past months have been challenging for everyone, I take heart in hearing reports of strong activity afloat since we were allowed to venture onto the water.

With the majority of Scottish leisure craft based on the Clyde and the West Coast, more people seem to be using their boats more frequently for holidays and short breaks. Hopefully this trend will continue into the future.

David Vass, our long-serving Secretary, has retired from this role but has agreed to stay on as a Committee Member. I would like to thank David for all his years of dedication as Secretary.

Sarah Brown has stepped up as Secretary and has been busy acquainting herself with David's files.

On a sadder note, Colin Davidson passed away last month. He was a stalwart character from the beginning of WHAM, and I am sure that a lot of members will have their own stories and fond memories of him which will be re-told in the future. On behalf of the Members, I would like to send our condolences to Colin's family.

Topics which have arisen this year vary from CES, constitution update, Oban Bay, moorings obstructions and seaweed farming.

I would like to thank the Committee for their continued efforts and support.

I hope in 2021 we will have more sailing events, and get back to a reasonable level normality.

There were no questions.

5) Secretaries Report

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!

Discussion

There was a short discussion about the Oban Community Harbour Development Association and members were encouraged to have a look at the website, www.ochda.scot and to remember to make comment on the consultation on the boundaries of the proposed harbour authority. The consultation is open until 11/12/20. The OCHDA are particularly keen to see responses from businesses and encourages members to pass on the details to anyone who may be interested.

OCHDA need volunteers, especially those with HR or social media experience. Please get in touch via the website.

The webmaster noted that all the information is listed on the WHAM website and the secretary asked for any news stories of interest to members to be passed to her.

6) Treasurers Report

The situation that has affected us all this year has affected WHAM as well. We have had one physical Committee Meeting in January and one in September (socially distanced!) so there have been reduced expenses there and no expenses for the AGM. The Officers and committee have kept in touch by Zoom and email. The Secretary had small travel expenses in the 1st quarter of the year relating to meetings with Transport Scotland and Crown Estate Scotland.

In order to help promote WHAM and to aid monitoring the membership we are separating income from Member Associations from that of Supporters (Clubs, boatyards, commercial organisations, etc.) and while as usual there are a small number of members who have not paid so far, income is on a par with last year and as expenses are down I anticipate ending the financial year in a stronger position than last year. Inevitably income from our charity savings account will be negligible.

Discussion

It was noted that the subscriptions for WHAM have not changed since 1985 and there will be no change again this year.

The circulated accounts were proposed by Susie Hutchinson and seconded by Duncan Martin and were then adopted by majority vote.

7) Election of Office Bearers

Jim Traynor, Chair, David Vass, Secretary and David Wilkie, treasurer.

Agreeing to stand again, and with no further nominations received, as per the constitution, the Chair and Treasurer stood down and were re-elected by majority vote.

David Vass did not stand again and Sarah Brown was nominated and elected to the position of Secretary.

Proposed Chris Perring, Seconded, Duncan Martin

8) Election of Committee

Chris Perring, Crinan Harbour MA, Derek Wilkinson, West Connel MA, Roger Thwaites, South Shian MA, Robert Kincaid, Mid Kerrera MA, Roger Rhodes.

Agreeing to stand again, and with no further nominations received, as per the constitution, all committee members stood down and were re-elected by majority vote. David Vass, having stood down as secretary, put himself forward for the committee and was elected.

Proposed Marian Austin, Seconded, Duncan Martin

9) Update from Crown Estate Scotland

WHAM members will not be surprised to hear that 2020 has been an unusual one for the CES team both on and off the water. Many boats were not launched at all whilst others managed to make the most of the second half of the season, and there appeared to be significant variation in activity around the coast.

The Bidwells team were advising CES throughout the first lockdown on vessels afloat, moorings in use etc, which led to CES deciding to postpone the collection of mooring fees for Mooring Associations until September in order to allow a more informed decision to be made. As you will now have heard the decision was taken to collect the fees based on the number of moorings that were in place, and in many cases this has resulted in people not having to pay for their mooring this

season. (On the subject of payment I have not been told that fees are to increase next year, but then again I haven't been told that they will stay the same either! I will try and get an update for Tuesday.)

One personal observation from lockdown and its immediate aftermath has been a noticeable increase in the number of vessels that have been reported as either appearing to be sinking or whose moorings have failed. The majority of these appear to belong to owners who live a considerable distance away from the MA area. Maybe there is a lesson to be learnt from this for us all?

With the exception of a dramatic reduction in site visits and meetings the majority of our work continued as in previous years, albeit on a scaled down basis. There have still been conflicts to resolve, mooring applications to approve and licences to grant. Whilst some projects have been put 'on hold' others have moved forward apace such as the new visitor moorings at Colonsay.

CES launched a couple of funding packages for coastal communities in late summer with a total of £750k being made available over the next three years. The two schemes are called 'The Community Capacity Grants Programme' and 'The Environment Grants Programme', the latter being limited solely to CES tenants. Details can be found on the CES website.

Just two weeks ago CES published its annual report and accounts for 2019-20. These show that CES returned £12m to the public purse, significantly more than the target of £8m. Again, full details can be found on the CES website.

Finally, I can also advise that the contracts for the management services provided to CES are due for renewal and are currently part way through the tender process. The current Bidwells coastal team of which I am a member together with Val, Rob and John plus numerous others (at a higher pay grade!) made it through to the interview stage and we are currently waiting to hear the final decision which we are told will be in the next few weeks. Whilst we are obviously hopeful that we will once again secure the contract there is clearly a chance that we won't, in which case this will be my last report to WHAM. On behalf of the team I would therefore like to thank you all for your input, assistance and patience - not only in running your own associations but also in dealing with us - and wish you all the best for a relatively Covid free 2021.

Discussion

A question was asked about why some people did not pay for their moorings. TB clarified that these would be tenants that have not had a mooring on the seabed at all this year and so rent was not due.

A question was asked about how to deal with derelict or neglected vessels. TB noted that he could not discuss individual cases but CES was actively engaged with one case where a boat was slowly taking on water. The law indicates that a sinking vessel is the owners responsibility and only the responsibility of either the Receiver of Wrecks when it lands on the seabed or CES depending on the location. The Harbour Authority may wish to get involved if there is a hazard to navigation.

DW noted that there is a duty by the owner to reduce the loss to the insurer and so an owner in this situation, should they continue to ignore a vessel taking on water, may find themselves uninsured.

10) AOCB

No items were raised under AOCB and the meeting closed at 8.30pm.