



Scottish Charity 044698

WHAM AGM 2024

Secretary's report

2023 has been a busy year for WHAM not least due to the publication of the Oban Harbour Revision Order (HRO). This involved work on analysing the issues, communication to our members and preparation and submission of our formal objections and comments to Transport Scotland.

Note that any member wishing to object to the HRO has until 10th January 2024 to make a submission – see previous correspondence on how to do this or click [here](#) for more information.

We were also involved during the year in the discussions around the now abandoned Scottish Government's Highly Protected Marine Areas legislation. While this would have potentially adversely affected leisure marine interests, it would also have been very damaging to west coast communities and fishermen. WHAM is delighted that the Scottish Government have withdrawn the legislation.

Our third big area of work this year has been around the proposed Visitor Levy (Scotland) Bill which is designed to charge a fee for the use of accommodation in Scotland including the use of marine venues such as marinas and moorings despite such facilities not providing accommodation. To the government's credit, the minister involved has acknowledged that there may be unintended consequences for the marine sector with the draft legislation and therefore the legislation will be changed as it progresses through the parliamentary process. WHAM will maintain a watching brief on this issue and report developments to the membership as appropriate.

As normal, we have received several enquiries about moorings and related issues in the West Highland area from individuals and mooring associations during the year on which we have given advice and where appropriate referred to the relevant body or person.

WHAM lobbied Scottish Canals and the Transport Minister for the winter works on the Crinan Canal to be completed before the early summer of 2024 as proposed. The good news is that Scottish Canals agreed to bring forward the completion date for the works from mid-May to 12 April 2024. (Good Friday is 29/3/24). I visited the site on Hogmanay and was impressed with the scale of works being undertaken.

I have been formally appointed as a Coastal Watcher which means that WHAM, through myself, is now consulted on all and any matters which could impact mooring and anchoring areas. David Vass is also a Coastal Watcher, so WHAM is not only playing its part but well informed on issues which could impact our interests. Most notifications are for licence renewals (which are not contentious) but we were involved this year in the new Loch Drumbuie mussel farm development. Our input was successful with the developer agreeing that the farm area be moved in the loch to ensure that traditional anchoring areas are kept free for yacht use.

I have attended all four RYA Cruising and General Purposes Committee meetings on behalf of WHAM. These are now conducted both in person and using online. I have also attended four Scottish Government Cross-Party Group on Recreational Boating and Marine Tourism to represent the interest of WHAM and our members.

We continue to liaise with Crown Estates Scotland (CES), RYA, Marine Scotland and others as required and enjoy positive relationships with key stakeholders. A good example of the CES collaboration is the item on the AGM agenda for the proposed mooring association handbook discussed at the AGM last year and now nearing publication.

Since the last AGM, the WHAM committee has met on three occasions and exchanged many emails and phone calls to ensure that we continue to represent the membership and work on relevant and key issues.

We have reintroduced a newsletter (first edition sent in November 2023) and we hope to send out twice a year. The first copy is available [here](#). If you have items or suggestions for content for the newsletter, please let me know.

The WHAM database has been frequently updated during the year and I would urge members to continue to email details of changes to your office bearers to me so that we are able to communicate with the right people.

I look forward to seeing as many members as possible at the AGM.

Duncan Tannahill
Secretary
January 2024