



Charity number SC053395

WHAM winter 2025 newsletter

The WHAM committee are please to send you our newsletter edition 5. The purpose of the newsletter is to let members know what WHAM have been up to on your behalf and to encourage general communication across our community.

Chair's Chatter

Welcome to the latest newsletter of WHAM, the purpose of which is to keep our membership updated on the work your committee has been undertaking and also to get feedback from the membership about how WHAM can help their associations and the sailing community generally on the west coast of Scotland.

Our AGM is scheduled to take place on 10th January 2026 in the Corran Halls, Oban and the Secretary will send out details and the agenda shortly. But in the meantime, please save the date.

And a wee request...can you check your details at the end of this newsletter and send any updates to the secretary. Thank you and this helps us stay connected with the right people so we can continue to support you better.

WHAM wish all our members and supporters a very Happy Christmas and a Good New Year when it comes.

Yours

Jim Traynor
WHAM Chair

What has been going on?

There has been much going on since our last newsletter issued in the spring, and listed below are the key issues for your information that your committee has been involved with:

1. We have continued to debate the new proposed CMAL Harbour Revision (Consolidation) Order, which is designed to have the same rules, regulations and charging structures across all CMAL managed ports. While this issue has been quiet recently, we will continue the dialogue to ensure that the interests of the leisure marine sector are listened to by CMAL.
2. Servicing moorings on an annual basis is a critical process for mooring associations and individual mooring holders and ensures that insurance cover remains valid. This year has been challenging due to lack of diving capacity and the impact of storms which have done damage to marinas requiring a rapid response from divers delaying mooring maintenance work.

On a positive note, Oban based KMASS Marine (kmassmarine@gmail.com / 07824504774) have increased their capacity by purchasing a second dive vessel and there are two other services we are aware of that may be able to help.

Note that WHAM cannot recommend any specific service but can signpost our readers to these services which should always satisfy themselves that they can deliver the level of service required.

The first of these new services is diver James Mackenzie (07494 028180 / westhighlandsmooringstrust@gmail.com).

The second is a ROV inspection service offered by Sgurr Access and Marine Services (07706 409540 / lewis@sgurraccess.com) who provide mooring and marine infrastructure

inspections using advanced ROV technology from Deep Trekker. They deliver safe, efficient surveys of moorings, anchors, chains, and seabed components, producing high-definition video evidence and recording accurate GPS data. ROV based inspections offer an alternative solution for routine checks or when diving is impractical, helping owners identify issues early and manage assets with confidence.

Their ROV is depth-rated to 300m and can be deployed from shore or from their coded workboat. It is fitted with a robotic arm capable of recovering items from the seabed and, when equipped with specialist tooling, undertaking more advanced inspection and data sampling tasks.

3. We have continued to engage with Argyll and Bute Council to discuss damage repairs to the breakwater at the Oban Transit Marina following storm damage from Storm Amy. The latest update is that work is still to be completed but should be undertaken by summer 2026. Watch this space.
4. Talking of summer 2026, Oban will again host the Clipper Race in July. See this [link](#) for more details.
5. Argyll and Bute Council have delayed implementation of the visitor levy – see this [link](#) for fuller details. While the visitor levy does not impact marine activities, the article and issue are of potential relevance and impact to the West Coast. WHAM were very vocal on this topic previously and will continue to keep a watching brief to ensure that marine interests are not damaged in the future.
6. And still in the Oban area, plans for a new marina development between Dunstaffnage and Connel at Saulmore Bay can be viewed [here](#).
7. The Loch Maddy pontoon system was seriously damaged during construction work on the ferry pier, but they have now been repaired and are back in operation which is good news and represents a great stopping off point in the Outer Hebrides. See this [link](#) for details.
8. Insurance of boats and moorings is an issue which crops up from time to time. Please contact the secretary with any comments – see contact details at the end of the newsletter.

In a similar vein, abandoned and sunken boats are increasingly in the news and represent an eyesore and can damage the environment. The secretary is involved in discussions with RYA Scotland and the Scottish Government Cross Party Group on how to manage this issue and agree the steps that can be taken to ensure abandoned boats are correctly disposed of. Further details will follow from WHAM as they become available but, in the meantime, please contact the secretary if you have concerns on this issue.

9. On the Clyde, Peel Ports (Clydeport) planned to charge a conservancy fee for leisure craft to use the 450 square miles of the Clyde under their control as the statutory port authority. WHAM has worked with a number of organisations to object to this proposal that was widely seen as a profiteering exercise, and we are pleased to produce a recently released statement from Alex McIntosh of Clydeport below which effectively abandons their plans:

'Please find by ways of an update that Clydeport do not intend to progress the consultation with the wider community into conservancy fees at this time as we will not be progressing the introduction of the fees.

We are focusing on the changes to the Port and Marine Facilities Code and the upcoming compliance exercise.

We will be reaching out to facilities both leisure and commercial within the Statutory Harbour Authority to discuss the industry required bridging documentation and shared risk pictures.'

10. 2025 has seen an update to the Ports and Marine Facilities Safety Code (PMSC) which sets out a national standard for port marine safety in the UK. It applies to all harbour authorities and marine facilities including privately operated marinas and piers. This is a best practice approach and cover ten key measures that can / should be implemented. As such, this may cover activities that you are involved in delivering, so we share the [link](#) to the government website where you can download and review the full PMSC and its implications.
11. The Scottish Government's National Maritime Plan 2 consultation analysis is available by clicking on this [link](#). This work is forwarding looking to help guide the use and long-term protection of the Scottish maritime environment.
12. WHAM are pleased to confirm that we have access to some limited funding for the development of mooring associations and similar facilities. This funding can be either a grant

or a repayable loan up to a maximum of £500 and subject to your organisation match funding the amount you receive from WHAM.

Application should be made to Duncan Tannahill, WHAM Secretary on sec@whamassoc.org.uk

Applications will be reviewed at the next available WHAM committee meeting and processed on a first come first served basis.

13. Through the Coast Watcher scheme, we have been engaged and commented on 158 marine licencing applications to date this year. These vary from the depositing of new moorings to fish farm licences and many other developments which affect the coastline and seabed.

Our input is critical to maintaining a balance of usage of sea areas but most importantly to protecting recognised anchorages and mooring areas. This year we have again had success in a number of fish farm, mussel farm and seaweed farm applications by having the applied for locations moved to protect access to anchorages.

A major licencing issue that WHAM is involved in at present is the proposed closures in summer 2026 on up to 20 days of Kyle Rhea to allow the electricity cable that cross Kyle Rhea to be replaced as they are now 40 years old and at the end of their operational life span.

The relevant detail from the licence application to carry out the work is copied below:

Duration of Works:

It is anticipated that replacement of the cables, utilising the aerial methodology, will take 20 days in total – three days for each conductor and two days for the earth wire. Works will be carried out during a six hour window on each day. It is possible that works will be undertaken as a single block, or as a number of blocks over a period between April – September. Aerial works would be conducted during daylight hours only, with the likely work periods being between 1000 and 1600 daily.

It is proposed that the Kyle Rhea Strait be closed to vessel traffic while aerial works are being conducted. It is proposed, therefore, that guard vessels be used during the Project. Guard vessels will be mobile, and will not deploy anchors except if required in an emergency.

Closure will only be required during normal working hours, when the conductor system is being installed and the new conductor cable is being pulled through. At the end of each working day, the cables would be re-tensioned so full clearance height is reinstated.

Currently, the programme of works is anticipated to commence in Q3 of 2026.

14. As secretary, I have attended several meetings including the Scottish Government Cross-Party Group on Recreational Boating and Marine Tourism and the RYA Scotland General Purposes Committee. and the RYA Scotland Coast Watchers Conference. These meetings are useful for background knowledge but also for debating issues of concern and interest to leisure marine interests.

If any member has concerns on such issues, please let me know and I can raise either at these meetings or with the appropriate organisation / person. We have an extremely useful network of contacts.

15. WHAM has converted to a SCIO charity as previously announced and this has all gone according to plan. The only slight hiccup has been ensuring that people recognise and use the new bank account. So please check our invoices carefully where the new bank details are recorded. Thank you.

News from partner organisations

WHAM works with a number of partners with similar interests and objectives, so we thought it would be useful to include the updates below:

OCHDA and the Oban Bay HRO

It is now almost 2 years since Argyll and Bute Council submitted the Oban to Transport Scotland and we still await a decision from Scottish Ministers. There are 139 of the original 142 objections about the proposals which are still outstanding. It looks like this issue still has a way to run and in the meantime issues such as port safety remain at risk. The December 2025 OCHDA newsletter is available to read [here](#).

Scottish Canals

For more information and news about the Scottish Canals network, a read of their website at <https://www.scottishcanals.co.uk/> is worthwhile. WHAM works with Scottish Canals when appropriate to help them maintain canal access for leisure users.

RYA Scotland

WHAM continues to work closely with RYA Scotland on a range of issues that are relevant to the west coast. The RYAS website link is <https://www.rya.org.uk/gbni/scotland> The website is worth a visit as it is packed with a range of useful articles, news and courses etc.

Northern Lighthouse Board

WHAM attended an especially useful 'partners' day at the NLB offices in Edinburgh where they shared news and updates on their work. NLB are involved in all new or altered sea-based development around our coasts to ensure that navigation requirements are met and therefore maritime safety ensured around our waters. As such WHAM will often comment on developments with our knowledge of the coastline and where plans might impact on sailors and areas used for mooring and anchoring.

The NLB website has some great content and is worth a look at <https://www.nlb.org.uk/>

The WHAM website

Our website contains some useful information which you might want to check out including:

- Section on help and guidance: <https://www.whamassoc.org.uk/help-and-guidance>
- Section on downloads including AGM minutes: <https://www.whamassoc.org.uk/downloads>
- Section on news including notices to mariners: <https://www.whamassoc.org.uk/news>
- Section with useful contact information: <https://www.whamassoc.org.uk/contact-us>

Coming soon

We are working with Crown Estate Scotland to produce a guide on setting up and running a mooring association. This guide will be packed with good ideas, best practice suggestions and useful template documents. More details will be available at the AGM.

And finally...

The WHAM Committee hope you enjoy this newsletter and find it useful. If you have suggestions on how to improve it, please let us know and similarly if you have news or items to include, please forward to us.

Duncan Tannahill

Secretary, West Highland Anchorages and Moorings Association

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