Charity number SC053395

West Highland Anchorages and Moorings Association

Winter 2026 Newsletter number 7

Chair's Chatter

Welcome to the latest newsletter of WHAM, which aims to keep our members updated on the work your committee has been undertaking and to seek feedback on how WHAM can support member associations and the sailing community across the west coast of Scotland.

This year WHAM has celebrated its 40th anniversary. Over that time our voice has grown and is listened to by partners and other organisations that we engage with on a regular basis. Your support allows this to happen. Thank you for that support and we look forward to continuing to work with you as we enter year 41.

Best wishes

Jim Taylor

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 some of the key stories for your information that your committee has been involved with over the summer.

Kyle Rhea

We have previously commented on a major licencing issue and the proposed closure of Kyle Rhea for up to 20 days to allow the 20 electricity cables that cross Kyle Rhea to be replaced as they are now 40 years old and reached the end of their operational life span. There is no debate on the need for the work.

SSEN have delayed the work from 2026 and will now undertake the work in 2027 or 2028.

We have lobbied to ensure that the communication around their plans and closure days is effective and widely publicised. SSEN have committed to engage with the leisure marine sector. WHAM will be fully involved to shape the communication process to minimise the impact on leisure and other craft. We will report further in early 2027.

Loch Maddy Marina

Loch Maddy Marina pontoon system was seriously damaged during construction work on the ferry pier. Repairs are now completed and the pontoons are fully back in operation which is good news and represents a great stopping off point in the Outer Hebrides and for those venturing further afield to St Kilda. See this **link** for the marina details.



Ports and Marine Facilities Safety Code

The Ports and Marine Facilities Safety Code (PMSC) which sets out a national standard for port marine safety in the UK was launched in 2025. It applies to all harbour authorities and marine facilities including privately operated marinas and piers. This is a best practice approach and covers 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.

WHAM grants and funding

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 providing matched funding.

We have paid out one grant of £500 this year to assist with the upgrading of the moorings in Craignish Lagoon.

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.

Meetings attended

As secretary, I have attended several meetings including meetings of the RYA Scotland General Purposes Committee, the Northern Lighthouse Users Group Conference, and a conference / workshop on the development of the new National Maritime Plan. WHAM was also represented at the RYA Scotland Coast Watchers Conference by David Vass.

Scottish Government Cross-Party Group on Recreational Boating and Marine Tourism

The Scottish Government Cross-Party Group on Recreational Boating and Marine Tourism has not met since the Scottish elections in May 2026. This is due to the group not attracting sufficient MSPs to serve on the committee across the political parties. WHAM is represented on this group by the secretary.

This group published the Giant Opportunities 2026-30 report which is a strategic framework for Scotland's marine tourism sector. The report can be viewed by **clicking this link.**



If this group is lost then we lose a significant and powerful platform to get leisure marine and tourism issues raised in the Parliament. Members can help support the re-establishment of this group by writing to your local MSPs and asking them to consider supporting the group. If you are keen to write to your MSPs, please contact Duncan Tannahill, WHAM Secretary, who can help with draft wording for your letter.

WHAM member recruitment

And finally, WHAM is about to commence a campaign to recruit new members from mooring associations that are not in membership as well as local businesses / marinas etc who are connected to the industry. So, if you know of any such businesses, we would be grateful if you could drop a note with details to the secretary (details below). The idea is to grow our footprint which in turn improves the strength of our voice when working on your behalf.

A date for your diary

The WHAM AGM will be held on Saturday 16th January 2027 at 10:30am in the Corran Halls, Oban.

Further details and an agenda will be issued in early January.

News from partner organisations and around the coast

WHAM works with a number of partners with similar interests and objectives, so we thought it would be useful to include some updates and news.

Aros Pier development in Tobermory

Tobermory Harbour are delighted to announce the opening of The Hatchery at Aros Pier Waterfront.

Many of you will have seen the refurbishment and improvement works taking place over the past three years, and they are pleased to finally open this fantastic facility for everyone to enjoy.

Facilities at The Hatchery include

Locker Room, Toilets & Showers: Open daily 10am – 4pm, seven days a week. Showers are operated using two £1 coins.

The Hatch Café: The café is planned to open for the 2027 season, offering takeaway options and limited seating.

Meeting Room: Available for hire, with internet access and café facilities available for food and refreshments.

Pontoon & Water Taxi - The small pontoon landing is designated for tenders only. Berthing is not permitted. A dedicated space is provided for the water taxi, which operates to a timetable on selected days.

Island Sauna Shack - The mobile Island Sauna Shack will be operating on a three-weekly basis. Booking is strongly advised. For bookings and further information, please visit www.islandsaunashack.co.uk.



Supporting the new facilities - donations are very much appreciated and help maintain and improve these fantastic community facilities for everyone to enjoy. Donations can be made in cash or by using the contactless system in the locker room including an option to pay your mooring fees.

For further information, please contact us at admin@tobermoryharbour.co.uk.

Tobermory Harbour looks forward to welcoming you to The Hatchery!

OCHDA and the Oban Bay HRO

Transport Scotland have finally made their decision on the Oban Bay HRO and approved the plans submitted by Argyll and Bute Council to award them management of Oban Harbour. This decision was made despite 139 of the original 142 objections remaining outstanding and unresolved.



This is clearly a major decision and it will be interesting to see how A&BC implement their authority. A harbour users' group will be established to ensure that interested and invested voices can make comments and suggestions on the harbour, its operation and safety for all users.

As a footnote – Oban is the second busiest ferry port in the UK after Dover.

Scottish Canals

Scottish Canals has been celebrating the 25th anniversary of the project that reconnected the Forth & Clyde and Union Canals and created the Falkirk Wheel. The organisation reports that the restoration has been a major catalyst for regeneration and community use of Scotland's inland waterways.

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 conference 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.

NLB operates 208 lighthouses around our coastline.

Their major refurbishment plans currently includes a 3-year refurbishment of the Skerryvore lighthouse.



NLB took delivery of the new Oban base ship *NLV Pole Star* on Christmas Day last year and are now planning the replacement of their other ship *NLV Pharos.* This level of investment is all focussed on keeping our coastline safe for mariners, a role they have fulfilled since 1786

A recent and relevant project on the West Coast that the NLB have completed this year is the new replacement beacon in Loch Spelve. The beacon stands 7.5 metres tall, is constructed out of stainless steel and is coloured green to denote leaving to starboard on entry to the loch. A great aid to navigation.

The new NLB beacon en route to Loch Spelve…



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.

You can read the NLB annual reports and other publications **here.**

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

Marine Directorate

The Marine Directorate have launched a Major Consultation on Inshore Marine Protected Areas. The Scottish Government consultation covering more than 160 inshore Marine Protected Area (MPAs) and Priority Marine Feature (PMF) sites around Scotland. The proposals aim to protect sensitive habitats while supporting sustainable fisheries and coastal communities.

WHAM will follow this consultation and comment as and if it impacts many favourite cruising areas on the West Coast. Areas will include habitats such as seagrass, horse mussel beds, maerl beds and flame shell reefs and may influence future discussions on anchoring, moorings and marine conservation.

The Marine Directorate website for further information is **available here.**

Your contact details

Please let the secretary know if any of your or your colleagues' contact details have changed or need updating. Thank you.

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. The first draft of the guide has been prepared and the plan is to have the guide completed and available in both printed and online formats ready for our AGM next January. This guide is packed with clever ideas, best practice suggestions and useful template documents.

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 likewise, if you have news items for inclusion in future editions, please send them to us.

And please share this newsletter with anyone who would benefit from reading it. Thank you.

Kind regards

Duncan

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