

# Online Cross-Party Group on Recreational Boating and Marine Tourism (by teams)

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025 at 6pm

Minute

## **Present**

### **MSPs**

Stuart McMillan MSP, Convenor

## **Non-MSP Group Members and Other Attendees**

Finlo Cottier, RYA Scotland CEO and Secretariat, RYA Scotland  
Pauline McGrow, Secretariat, RYA Scotland  
Robin Bromley Martin, Celtic and Viking Corridor Project  
Duncan Tannahill, RYA Scotland/WHAM  
Alistair Cameron, Scottish Moody Owners Association  
Andrew Rendle, Scottish Coastal Rowing Association  
Eilid Ormiston, UHI North, West and Hebrides  
Mark Smith, Scottish Canals  
Margaret McCole, British Marine Scotland Skill Training & Workforce Study for the Leisure & Small Commercial Marine Sector (presenter)  
Anne Shedden, Forth Yacht Clubs Association  
Graham Russell, RYA Scotland  
Fanny Royanez, Scottish Environment Link  
Sarah Kennedy, Fort William Marina and Shoreline Community Interest Company/British Marine Scotland  
Alan Kohler, RYA Scotland/Cruising Association  
Aileen Monk, British Marine Scotland  
Don Mitchell, Board at British Marine Scotland, and RYA principal at UHI Argyll's 2 RTCs.  
Christine Cameron, Lowland Canals Association  
Neil Kitchener, Lowland Canals Association  
Hamish McDonnell, Crown Estate Scotland  
Councillor Maurice Corry, Argyll and Bute Council  
Sandra Snaddon  
John Ormiston, Stravaigin Sailing

## Apologies

Joanna Richardson, British Marine  
Eric Sweeney  
Jonathan Mosse, RYA Scotland/  
Clair McFarlan, Solway Firth Partnership  
Alex McIntosh, Clydeport  
John Kent, Bidwells  
Martin Latimer, British Marine  
Gordon Daly, RYA Scotland  
Simon Limb, Clyde Marina  
Joe Penhaul Smith, Extriko  
Brendan Bocker

## Agenda item 1 - Welcome and Apologies

Stuart McMillan MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologised for the delay in the start of the meeting due to a vote taking place in the Chamber. SMCM also notified the meeting that there is going to be other parliamentary business taking place over the next few weeks so there could be potential disruption to CPG meetings.

## Agenda Item 2 – Minutes and Action Points from last meeting

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

**Proposed:** Simon McDonald

**Seconded:** Sarah Kennedy

## Agenda Item 3 – Firth of Clyde Update

FC reported that we have heard nothing of significance since the last CPG meeting. Finlo Cottier, Sarah Kennedy and Graham Russell met with Alex McIntosh (Clydeport), and they reiterated their position on the waterway but did not mention the conservancy fee. They wanted to understand the activities for clubs on the Clyde. They have taken it off the table for the time being. They have made commitment to consult on any plan that comes forward and there is no indication of when this would happen.

SK reported that they had a 2-hour meeting where AM explained on what they do and for what purpose. The conservancy fee is off the table at the moment, and they had said that a press release would be issued, and it was intended for this to be circulated to both CPG and British Marine Scotland members, but we have not received anything to date. **Action. SK will chase up the press release.**

**Update: Email from Sarah Kennedy, circulated to CPG members on 27<sup>th</sup> October.** Clydeport want to liaise more and give understanding on what they do.

SMCM explained that Clydeport is part of Peel Ports. We do need to keep this on the agenda and be vigilant of any further developments. It was useful to have our colleagues to have these discussions with Alex McIntosh at Clydeport. Alistair Cameron agreed that we should keep an eye on this.

FC reiterated that we would keep in touch with AM at Clydeport and reassured the members in the group that we are not doing deals behind closed doors, we are representing the concerns of the group and the wider boating community. We are looking to ensure that we have a level of engagement with Clydeport and to raise objections where necessary.

AC reported that there was a sinking off Cumbrae and he would be interested to see how Clydeport will deal with this. There are proposals for a marina at Millport and the community is happy that there is going to be increased marina facilities and progress is being made. Arran are not happy with the way funds are being distributed.

AS asked about safety concerns and was there anything in the meantime from RYAS so that we can see that moves have been made and we can take this argument off the table. Do we have any idea on who is on the small ships register. FC explained that on the safety side we want to make clear that Clydeport know what events are going on. We are looking to make this process slicker. Over the course of the year if they are provided with better quality of information on events this will give them reassurance that events are well organised and well communicated. AM encouraged people to listen to channel 12 to find out what is going on. This demonstrate that there is a 2-way communication process with Clydeport. AS stated that it is good that we are working on the abandoned boats paper too.

**Action: Provide detail to Clydeport on how we are progressing on areas discussed at the last CPG meeting.**

AK stated that boat registration may help with abandoned boats. The Small Ships Register is voluntary in the UK and it costs £35 for five years. It may be better to have the boats registered with the government's UK Ship Register rather than with a private harbour company.

SMCM asked that if that were to become mandatory, would that be welcomed? There are pros and cons on the use of a shipping register, and we would require to set a minimum length even if it was on a voluntary basis and promote out to the community.

AS stated that we are partly along the way. In terms of volunteer registration do we have an estimate number on the Clyde against what is on the volunteer register. GR stated that is the problem with it, is that the people we have issues with do not register on the Small Ships Register. AC stated that the point is well made, it is the people who ignore legislation. We would get better results if we promoted safety awareness. There is a new training course being rolled out by British Marine, advising customers on how to behave safely on the water. AC also gave an example of what they are doing in the Loch Lomond Registration Scheme however he is not sure if it has improved safety per se. There are rules requiring registration but not sure if it makes any difference. Awareness is the way forward and he asked that RYA Scotland and British Marine Scotland to spearhead this.

AM explained that that the course has recently come out is the new Port Marine Safety Code course and there is also another course for people new to the marine sector. **Action: AM will find out further details and PM will circulate to CPG members.**

SMCM asked that we report back to the meeting on progress on these discussions.

## Agenda Item 4 – Clipper Race – Fergus Murray, Argyll and Bute Council

FM outlined the presentation and there then followed an opportunity for questions:

- SMCM asked was there any negative points raised from the Oban community. FM stated that it was generally well received with some great feedback; one visitor commented that we were not Scottish enough. The community were desperate to bring the Clipper Race back and Oban has been put on the global stage.
- DT thanked FM for the presentation and said that it is a great opportunity for the West Coast and Oban. DT asked about the breakwater photo and what are the plans by Argyll and Bute Council for the storm damage to be repaired and will it be done before next summer. FM reported that it damaged the inner and confirmed that there will be specialist work done and this will enable the boats to be hosted.
- RBM congratulated FM on a great job. They will be trying to do similar events in the Isle of Man. RBM asked if they could work together said that the bar has been set very high. FM stated that there are other regattas held such as West Highland Week before the Clipper Race that also worked very well.
- FC thanked FM for providing overview of the Clipper Race. It is great to see Kintyre Sea Sports linked to this. The crew have fed back that the stopover at Oban was one of their best stops. FC stated that RYA Scotland will be happy to provide some thoughts or expertise. FM reported that the Clipper does a report back to each port and the feedback from crews was very good. It was a big unknown and we got excellent feedback through the week too. They had the most social media hits from the stops around the world.
- GR stated that this is great work and asked about the coordination with Calmac. FM stated that had he had discussion with them and all went smoothly. SMCM stated that he thought Calmac were a member of CPG. **Update:** PMcG checked the CPG member database and they requested to come off the list in May 2025.

SMCM thanked FM very much for presentation. **Action: Presentation slides to be shared with CPG members. Update: Circulated on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2025. Action: FM will share link to video and will be circulated round CPG members. (Update: circulated on 27<sup>th</sup> Oct 2025)**

**Action: SMCM asked if FM could provide a summary report for circulation to CPG members.** FM explained that there was extensive information provided by Clipper and also asked if it could be shared externally to people outwith the group. FM confirmed that this all can be shared publicly.

## Agenda Item 5 – British Marine Scotland Skill Training & Workforce Study for the Leisure & Small Commercial Marine Sector - Margaret McCole

McC outlined her presentation and there then followed an opportunity for questions.

- Hamish McDonnell, Crown Estate Scotland stated that they are delighted to fund this and thanked Margaret very much for the great presentation. HMCD asked what the timescale was, MCMc stated that it will be presented to Crown Estate Scotland in February 2026.

**Action: Presentation slides to be circulated round CPG members.**  
**Update: circulated on 29<sup>th</sup> October.**

**Action: Funding information to be circulated by SMCM to Margaret McCole.**  
<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/s6/tertiary-education-and-training-funding-and-governance-scotland-bill> (SMCM provided at meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> Oct)

- GR stated that it is very important work and in terms of abandoned boats we need to look at whether they can be refurbished. As we move to circular economy, we need to look at developing these skills. It is very unclear on the side of boaters on the way things are going. As MCM referred to, one of the areas that could be looked at is using the schools to have a refurbishment project and attracting an SQA enterprise, involve local businesses and produce business plans.
- Eilid Ormiston outlined her role in course provision in North Western Hebrides and one of the challenges is funding. EO further explained that she is the Programme Lead on the BA in Marine and Coastal Tourism and this has been reinvested. We do have maritime skills and agriculture and are currently working on an HNC in Marine Leadership and working on CPD in coastal literacy. There is a struggle with tertiary colleges and funding. The large income that this brings to the Scottish economy needs supported. **Action: Eilid Ormiston and Margaret McCole to arrange a follow up discussion.**

**Action: AS offered assistance in co-ordinating input from the FYCA members.** We need to have skilled people to help in particular for the small clubs.

## Agenda Item 6 – Regeneration of dock at Maryhill

NK provided background to the project and outlined the following:

- A survey was conducted, and this has been discussed with Scottish Canals. The working facility could help. This has been sent to Scottish Canals for their consideration.
- A meeting has been held with the technical team at Scottish Canals.
- The masonry requires to be inspected and there are some gates that do not work. We have to identify the work that is needed to make it function again. They require to de-water and they will probably discover other issues such as silt that may be contaminated and find a tip. All the masonry requires to be inspected.
- There is a culvert that drops and there is a series of 4 locks, between 21 and 22. The suggestion is that when the gates are taken out, they can put sluices in the gate so to completely fill the dock again. In order to make the dock usable they require electricity, water and security. There would need to be a cover for work to be undertaken at any time.
- Agreement has been made in principle, but we need funding to support the work. We have made contact with MPs, MSPs and councillors who agree it in principle. We would like to encourage the local community to see the benefits, and this would tie in with the previous discussion on skills.
- It would connect all 3 sides of canals with a cable stay bridge. The intention would be to have a sculpture.

There then followed an opportunity for questions and the following points raised:

- SMCM stated that it can be done and gave an example of Pinkston bridge.

- Mark Smith, Scottish Canals stated that they have done a great job putting this together, it would be a great piece of infrastructure if it took flight.
- SMCM asked what the ball part figure is; CC stated that we need to have some joint funding from Scottish Canals and other interested parties. It is a heritage structure, so there would be spin offs from heritage and looking for people that can do that. We would look to undertake a feasibility study and are looking for assistance from other parties but in particular from Scottish Canals as it is their canal.
- NK stated that it is very difficult to put a realistic figure on it just now; the gates is a simple process, and dredging may prove more complicated if silt is a more complicated task and would cost more money. CC stated that if even though Maryhill may not be considered as a feasible project, they still need to consider maintenance facilities for the boats along the Lowland Canal.
- SMCM asked has there been any engagement with the Heritage Lottery Trust? CC stated that there may have been joint discussions with Scottish Canals but was not sure. Mark Smith stated that there are limited opportunities for boat refurbishment along the lowland canals. Richard Millar has been working hard with canal societies to have dry dock facilities, there is facilities at Ratho, Seagull Trust and the slipway at Kirkintilloch. There are 4 groups that are coming forward and they are working with a crane company. We are almost at the point of having 5 facilities that the boaters can book into. We have a 5-year plan in place, but Maryhill is not on it, and the current works are consuming capital. It will be dependent on the condition of the canal and the risk to share funding. CC stated that the dry dock facilities are not all suitable, e.g. you cannot paint the underside of the boat, there is not enough proper facilities.
- GR stated that it is not only the capital cost, but the recurrent costs require to be taken into consideration and also building up fund for replacement of lock gate. GR asked how would the commercial boats get theirs done, there is a role for someone to have a co-ordinated approach. We need to make it easier for people to ensure that their boats are fit for purpose and keep up the good work.

**Action: Report to be circulate to CPG members and provide Christine Cameron's contact details. CC will continue to liaise with Maryhill community groups.**

## **Agenda Item 7 – AOCB/Future Business**

### **Update from British Marine Scotland - Sarah Kennedy/Aileen Monk**

1. Please join us at our membership info & networking day on 23/10/25 and it would give CPG members an opportunity to find out more about BM Marine Scotland membership, fine to circulate round CPG members.
2. Skills survey - please can as many folks complete it as possible
3. Giant Strides update - in progress and nearly ready to be released - hope to do so on 23/10/25! – we should launch soon up until 2030.

**5th Skiff World Championships in Stranraer-** Andrew Rendle reported that there were 3500 competitors and it was very successful and benefitted the local community.

### **Flotilla of Light – Lowland Canals Association**

CC reported that the flotilla of light will take place into the city centre on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

**Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 6pm. (including AGM)

SCM thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.

Vote of thanks was given to Convenor.

## **ACTIONS FROM 1<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER MEETING**

### **Actions:**

#### **River Clyde/Clydeport**

- SK will chase up the press release. Action. SK will chase up the press release. **Update: Email from Sarah Kennedy, circulated to CPG members on 27<sup>th</sup> October.**
- Provide detail to Clydeport on how we are progressing on areas discussed at the last CPG meeting.
- Alex McIntosh to update the presentation slides and this will be circulated to CPG members.
- Invites to future CPG meetings to be made to Jim McSporran and Alex McIntosh.
- PM to share Anne Shedden's details with Jim McSporran.
- PM to share all organisation contacts to be shared with Jim McSporran and Alex McIntosh.
- Abandoned boats - Graham Russell is developing an advice paper about abandoned boats. FC will look into the insurance side and feedback to Anne Shedden, Forth Yacht Clubs Association.

Cardwell Bay - ES asked about the special mark at Cardwell Bay. AM stated that this is not within their harbour authority. **Action : Peel Ports has not requested any action on this, but AM will follow up and check on**

#### **Clipper Race**

- Presentation slides to be shared with CPG members. **Update: Circulated on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2025.**
- FM will share link to video and will be circulated round CPG members. **Update: circulated on 29<sup>th</sup> October.**
- SMCM asked if FM could provide a summary report for circulation to CPG members

#### **British Marine Scotland Skill Training & Workforce Study for the Leisure & Small Commercial Marine Sector - Margaret McCole**

- Slides to be circulated round CPG members. **Update: Circulated on 29<sup>th</sup> October.**
- Funding information to be circulated by SMCM to Margaret McCole. Provided on 1<sup>st</sup> October. <https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/s6/tertiary-education-and-training-funding-and-governance-scotland-bill>
- Eilid Ormiston and Margaret McCole to arrange a follow up discussion.



- **AS offered assistance in co-ordinating input from the FYCA members.** We need to have skilled people to help in particular for the small clubs. We want people to help with specification works.

#### **Regeneration of dock at Maryhill**

- Report to be circulated to CPG members and provide Christine Cameron's contact details.

## ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

### Celtic & Viking Corridor Project

- Slides to be circulated to CPG members – **Update: circulated on 14th March 2025.**
- SMCM will have discussion with Isle of Man colleagues and further discussion with RBM.
- GD will make contact with RBM to discuss further.
- Councillor Corry and RBM to arrange a further discussion.
- SK will share contact details with RBM.
- Contact details for RBM to be circulated to CPG members.
- RBM requested to meet with the Ministers to cement relationship between Scotland Isle of Man. SMCM asked RBM to come back to CPG at a future date to provide an update.
- **Marine toilets** – A Shedden reported an issue with sea water toilets due to lack of pump out facilities. **Action: SMCM and PM will do a follow up discussion to look at it as a future agenda item.**
- **East connected to west and Lowland canals navigability** - AS reported that she attended the Lowland Canals meeting, and the depth has been reduced so there is an issue with getting small boats moving through and also asked for update on weed clearing. **Action: DAM will follow up with Laurie Piper at a future meeting to discuss this further.** GR has said that these issues have been raised with Scottish Canals already and is due to budget issues. AS stated, that canals were are used as an environmental method to divert water away to stop flooding issues in other areas.
- **Invitations to meetings:**
  - Invite Skills Development Scotland to a future meeting (ongoing).
  - Greenports – unable to attend, look at future date.
  - Crown Estate Scotland, awaiting response.
  - Circular economy - Add as an agenda item to a future meeting.

### Scottish Water

- SGB's to have further discussion with Scott Fraser.
- SF/KD will update CPG on progress on monitors and also the business case progress.

**British Marine Scotland** - Giant Strides paper is being updated by EKOS and to be presented at a future meeting.