

obanbaymarine



MEMBERS UPDATE MAY 2008

to all Members of Oban Bay Marine

Since our last update and following the very successful meeting in the Argyllshire Gathering Hall, the Board of Oban Bay Marine has been working very hard to develop the planning application for a proposed multi-user pontoon facility and yacht safe haven for the heart of Oban Bay.

The aspirations of the people present at the meeting have translated into overwhelming support for what we are trying to do; many people felt our aspirations were not big enough, but this small project in relative terms at this time is the right way to go.

Any project must be affordable, deliverable and sustainable – all of which this one is, and should lead to future developments.

Progress

Morag Brown, who has been very successful at Tobermory, has been appointed as Project Manager, and Wallace Stone, Consulting Civil Engineers Dingwall, appointed to take forward all necessary survey and design work.

Wave studies showed conclusively that north of the North Pier is unsuitable for consideration at this time, and the proposal is for a facility sited between the North and Railway Piers. Costs are reduced through the use of a plough dredger and Section 34 consent for dredging the proposed location is now in place.

In developing the planning application, OBM have worked very hard to produce a plan aiming to incorporate facilities for all with no-one disadvantaged. Consultation is very important - numerous national and local bodies and groups were invited to contribute by email, and various members of the Board have met with and / or made presentations to a number of local interested users groups including Calmac, Cardingmill Bay Mooring Owners Association, Argyll Charter Boats Association, Oban Harbour Users and Oban Port Users amongst others. No valid objections have been received to date from a long list of statutory consultees, and all queries and points raised are being or have been addressed.

The proposed facility seeks to provide shelter behind a floating breakwater attenuator for a pontoon drop-off with approximately 70 short stay berths in the heart of Oban - enough to satisfy current demand and bring visitors directly into the town. Additionally, we aim to provide dedicated day pleasure trip boat berthing which should be an attractive feature for visitors, and cruise liner passengers should be able to gain access directly on to the attenuator from tenders. Local access to water and provisioning should be available, most likely for a nominal fee. We have made every effort to ensure no loss of amenity for local fishing interests - the aim is facilities for all with no-one disadvantaged.

OBM believe this is the best use of the natural resource – the location – available; Oban lends itself perfectly to becoming the centre of yachting on the West Coast, and be revitalised through the income generated. Shore facilities are currently available from the North Pier, and ways to increase provision are being explored with the Council. Demand will determine what is achievable; the basis of the model we are following - Tobermory - started with a small facility.

The project will be commercially operated but will be run in the interests of the wider community of Oban with surplus funds, if any, being used to assist in the development of further communities' assets within the company area.

Funding for the project

All possible avenues identified as suitable for funding this project are being actively pursued - a long and arduous process.

OBM made a well received presentation on March 19th before the Argyll Project Board for Town Centre and Harbour Development - independent consultants appointed by the Council. As part of ongoing consultation for the development of the town centre, the pontoon plan fits into the overall transport plan identified in the Oban Action Plan. The Project Board have now reported their very favourable view of our proposals, and we believe we are on schedule to tap into a share of £9m earmarked for distribution throughout Argyll.

Applications for grant assistance have been submitted to the Oban Common Good Fund and the Big Lottery.

Oban missed out on the European Cross Border Initiative Sailwest 1 funding because there was no suitable project in place for Oban at the deadline - and Sailwest 2 may not come on stream because of lack of uptake on Sailwest 1! The Crown Estate are under pressure to support projects and have indicated they could fund the entire project on a commercial loan basis; the downside of this is interest payments would leave little for return to the community.

Support

Our sincere thanks go to a substantial number of local businesses who are contributing monthly to fund the feasibility study leading up to the planning application. Our growing membership now numbers 125 Corporate and Personal members.

Forthcoming Members General Meeting

A members general meeting is scheduled for Monday 9th June 2008 at 7pm in the Argyllshire Gathering Hall, Breadalbane Street Oban, to which you are cordially invited. Members of the Board will attend, and it is envisaged there will be an up to date report on progress, with a short presentation and time for questions from the floor.

the Board of Oban Bay Marine, May 2008