



## **Annual General Meeting**

**Zoom Meeting Friday 6th November 2020 at 7.30pm**

### **Minutes by Mary Macgregor**

**Chairman** Brian Swinbanks welcomed the attendees to the Zoom meeting and spoke about the difficult year and some impacts on the Marine market. He thanked the Board and staff for coping in difficult times.

Brian then went on to outline the longer term Master Plan for the Harbour highlighting the joined up approach that working with stakeholders would bring to benefit the whole Harbour area and the Community.

1. **Present:** Member Directors 8, Members 15, Associate Members 3, Non-Members 7 and Staff 6  
**Apologies:** Mary Phillips, John and Noreen Franklin, Lyndsey McLaren, Jan Dunlop and Janet MacDonald
2. Minutes of the 2019 AGM and matters arising  
Minutes of the AGM 2019 adopted as true record  
Proposed: Rory Forrester seconded Mary-Jean Devon

There being a quorum minutes were approved.

**Matters arising:** Chris Cotton said he was interested in the study into water quality as a result of commercial activity. He raised issues of scum and slime at Calve evident in the water that that is new. He asked that the changes in the water quality be monitored within the Harbour Environment Impact Study (HEIS) which was introduced at 2019 AGM. It was explained that the HEIS has been put on hold meantime with the Aquarium being closed and the intention is to get that kick-started again as soon as possible. As owner of Calve Island, CC is interested in hearing how that is going. Steve Littlewood mentioned that SAMS in Oban is also interested in the study and have shown an interest in collaboration.

CC noted that the last 3-4 years slime grows on the rocks and slipways at Calve much more than before. Also noted changes in tide levels.

3. **Finance Report (Mary Macgregor)**  
The THA continue to use the services of R A Clement Associates in the preparation of the accounts.



The financial accounts show a healthy surplus of £22,675 for the financial year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 which is up on previous years as the Board decided to hold back on spending and put aside funds for upcoming projects which has proved useful in 2020 to help with the Covid 19 impact. These figures of course reflect the 2019 main trading period.

Trading income (so not including grant income) was up on the year at £362,174. Roughly half of the trading income comes from Pontoon activities such as berthing and cruise ships. This increase reflects additional income from the commercial traffic on the North Arm and a very robust cruise liner season.

### **Where does it go?**

Mary highlighted the main cost areas to illustrate where the Company trading income is utilised throughout the year.

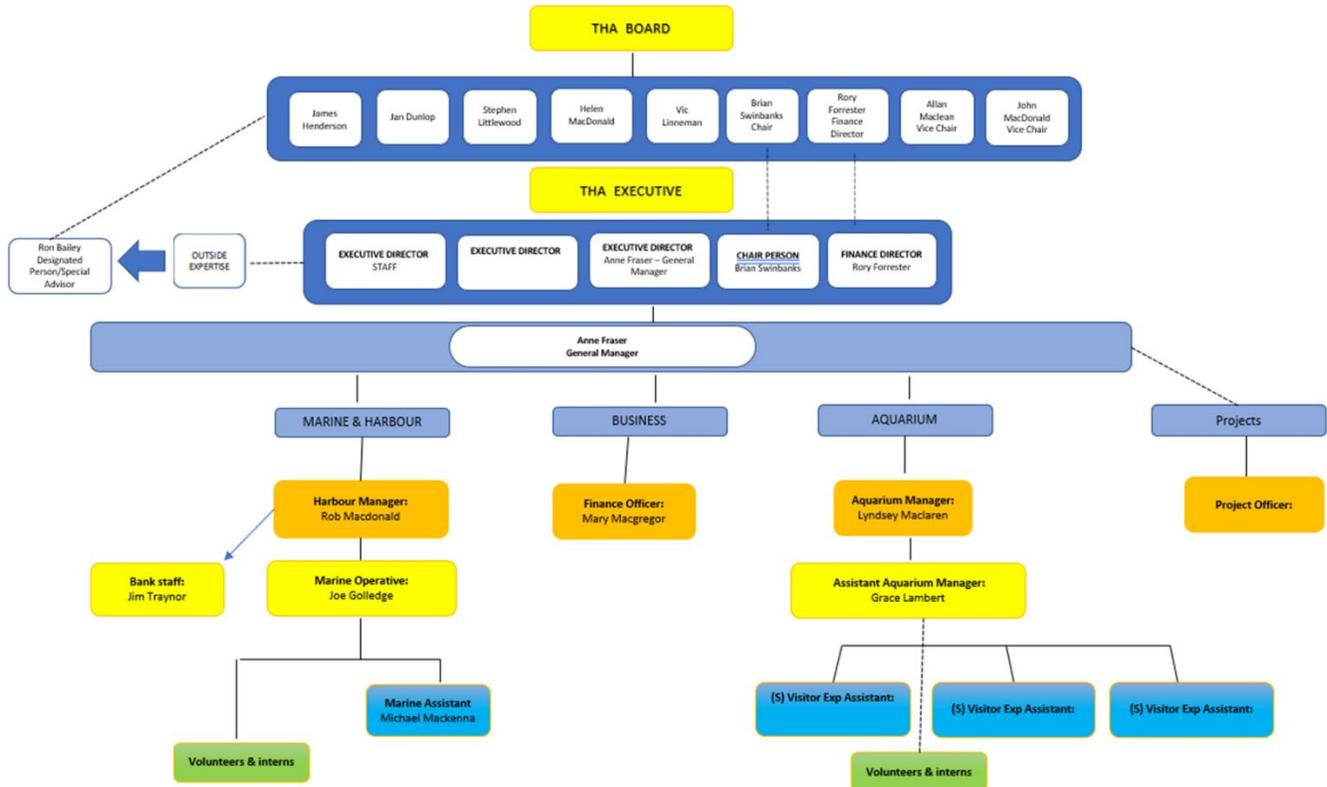
### **What will 2020/21 look like**

- 2019/20 financial year showed the business growth that the Company planned and worked towards and had hoped from 2020/21 to build on that year on year.
- With the season stalled until mid-July and then opened on a restricted basis we anticipate trading income down by about 65%. No Mull Aquarium and no cruise liners in addition to the short/limited season for visitors.
- We have been able to make cuts in some outgoing costs but many remain constant regardless of trading income. Mull Aquarium was of course closed throughout.
- In addition to continuing to cover payroll with minimal income coming in, there were of course additional costs associated with meeting Health and Safety protocols for Covid 19. THA was fortunate to get assistance with cost of additional equipment from the Waterfall Fund's Covid 19 fund, this particularly to help with the continued provision of toilet facilities to the general public which many towns did not achieve.
- In conclusion THA is fortunate to have access to assistance as a Community Company as well as a trading business. In addition to that the Company holds a Reserve Fund and Emergency Fund as backup. We all anticipate hard work over the winter to get ready for whatever 2021 brings. We will be ready for it.
- I would like to ask the meeting to approve the statutory financial accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 which are on the website per the e:mail sent to members. Any questions on the accounts? Any objections to adoption of the accounts? Accounts adopted proposed Richard West seconded Neil MacGilp.  
There being a quorum present the accounts are adopted.

- **Matter arising:** N MacGilp asked where the money comes from. Mary said that she would send out a summary of where the money comes from. Include an income summary slide in the accounts presentation next year for AGM.

#### 4. General Manager (Anne Fraser)

Anne outlined the Board and Staff structure, including the Designated Person and Special Advisor, Ron Bailey whose role in the business as increased in the past year to support staff in regulatory matters and all things Marine.



This year we said goodbye Harbour Master- Robert Hemming – Robert joined us in 2017 to help establish THA as a harbour authority, the post was always short term to give us time to develop the necessary skills within our staffing.



A lot of training work as gone into upskilling staff and Rob, Joe, and I, have taking on additional training on top our day-to-day activities to develop compliance across the team rather than rely on a sole individual.

Thank you Robert and we wish you a happy retirement in Wales.

We also said goodbye to Jenny Hampson who joined us on the Aros project, in January she also took on some general admin work and was a key member of staff during the lockdown period and subsequent reopening of tourism in July and August.

Thank you, Jenny and good luck, in your new role at the HWDT visitor centre.

It has been a difficult year for us all. We have had to make some very difficult decisions.

Anne outlined the challenges in locking down, new safety measures with some staff still operating daily at the Harbour and some working from home.

Even in lockdown, some commercial boats were still allowed to operate and the north arm provided facilities to allow them to continue essential work.

Preparing for opening was even harder to navigate. Understanding requirements and rules and putting the necessary procedures in place to keep everyone safe, staff, customers, and community. The activity in mid-July and throughout August gave us a little bit of trading recovery.

Anne spoke about the difficult decision to close the Mull Aquarium for 2020 and the impact that had on staffing. It was not practical or cost effective to open the aquarium in 2020 given the circumstances. We hope to be able to open again next year.

Anne spoke about the many agencies who supported THA through this difficult time being able to access grant support mainly through the 3rd sector resilience fund and a business support grant.

However, we also received support in other ways with much appreciated advice and guidance, providing webinars with experts, lobbying of government on behalf of the sector or simply taking time to check in and find out how we were doing.



## Thanks for the Support

British  
Ports  
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COMMUNITY\*  
LAND SCOTLAND



Anne highlighted Sail Scotland who have been working exceptionally hard on behalf of the marine tourism sector.

We now head into the winter in a better position than any of us could have imagined back in Apr/May time.

Thank the team for hard work and for coping in a difficult year.

A short video was shown from Lyndsey and Grace of Mull Aquarium who are on Maternity Leave and looking forward to getting back to the Aquarium for 2021.



## 5. Harbour Manager's Report (Rob Macdonald)

### Safety report for this year, 2020.

Covid-19 has brought with it many challenges and a lot of difficulties on the way.

Rob took over from Robert Hemming officially in April of this year, (although had been running the harbour as his deputy throughout the winter). Rob thanked Robert Hemming for his training and guidance and Ron Bailey for his assistance within the new Role. It is invaluable to know we have his knowledge and support.

Rob went on to speak about the three aspects of safety that the Harbour Authority is required to address.

Accidents

Incidents

Dangerous Occurrences

In addition "near miss" reports look at incidents that could have resulted in any of the three and take steps to mitigate these events in the future and avert safety issues.

N MacGill asked what actions are taken if any of these events are reported and Rob explained how they are recorded, communicated and lessons learned proportionate to the event.

### The new handbook.

Rob highlighted that the current THA Handbook needs to be updated and this will be addressed in the coming year with input from the Port User Group (PUG)

The amendments will include updated advice, health and safety information.

### Other

As a harbour authority we are required to keep up with essential training and up-skilling of our staff members. Rob detailed the training undertaken by Marine staff

Rob: Oil spill MCA Level 4. (on Scene Commander), Supervisor in Port Operations qualifications

Joe Oil: spill MCA Level 4. (on Scene Commander), Port Security, Port Operations qualifications

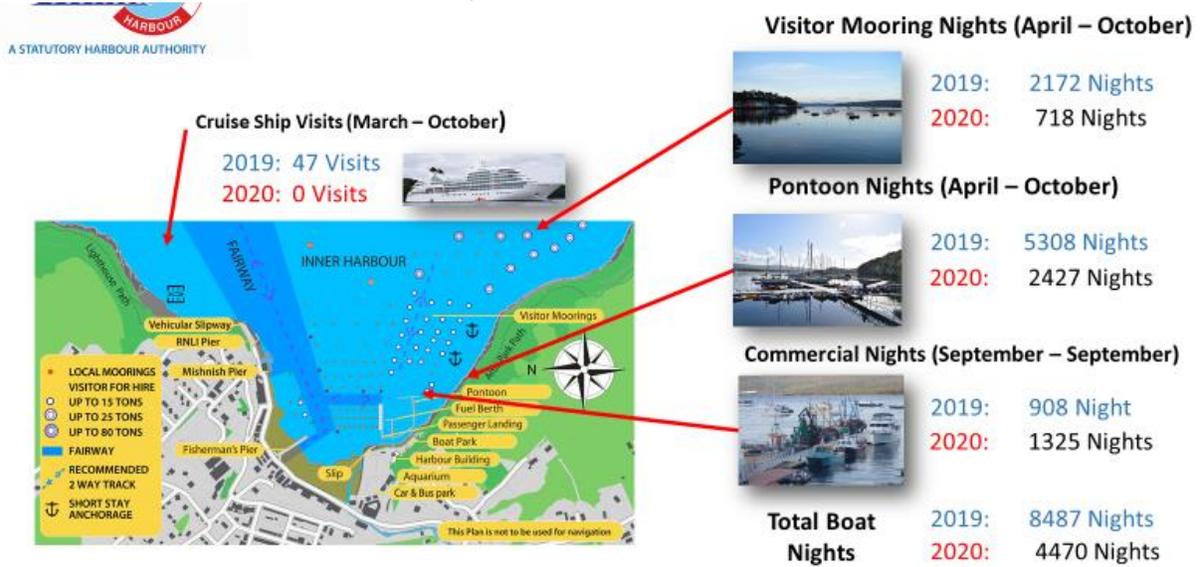
We are building a strong team, continually increasing knowledge and focussing on succession planning to create a safe harbour environment with a sustainable future.

Q. R West asked for a short update on Port User Group progress.

A. Rob outlined recent activity and invited anyone who wants to be involved to get in touch.

**Covid 19 effect**

Rob outlined some of the effects that the pandemic has had on marine visitor traffic



**Harbour Assist**

Rob outlined how the new Harbour Assist database helped manage the harbour and visiting boat numbers as safely as possible.

**How we have helped our customers through COVID- 19.**

Rob outlined some of the ways THA has helped the community and Harbour users through the 2020 season by reducing some fees, making some facilities available to locals which are not usually available in the season and reduced rates to assist local tour operators.

**Other issues raised by members of the Community...**

Rob addressed some questions that had been submitted in advance of the AGM.

He assured Local moorings holders that the positioning of the old fairway was under review and that some blocks have been moved to suitable distance between moorings.

The matter of the THA re-organising and taking on the whole asset of the Local Moorings so that the holders just pay a rental fee to THA is also under feasibility and consideration in consultation with the PUG. This is a huge undertaking and would be at considerable cost to the THA. Although this seems to be a desirable outcome, in the short term it is unlikely that funds will be available.



We will keep the old fairway meantime as some users still use it. With monitoring we will continually assess the matter.

Local moorings holders are presently asked to confirm by tick-box that they have suitable insurance. There is a request that THA insist on seeing and reviewing the insurance documents each year before boats are permitted on the mooring. Rob said that Harbour Assist certainly gives the facility to safely store paperwork and some documents are gathered in but making it mandatory would be heavy on admin.

A member asked that THA adopts a strict policy against the use of chemicals that are harmful to marine life (such as biocides or oxidising agents) when cleaning the THA slipway. Cleaning power washer instead.

Rob outlined the research undertaken and the commitment to change to a different (RYA recommended) chemical and to trial period in the coming year to see what impact a “no-chemical” period would have on re-growth, safety and impact on the surface. This is a balance between safety, asset management, environment, and cost.

Rob thanked the two members who had raised these questions and invited any member to be in touch at any time to bring concerns to the team so that they can be addressed.

### **Matters arising: no further matters arising**

#### **6. Projects : Aros Waterfront Development (Steven Littlewood, Director)**

Steve recapped the funding, the assets purchased and the time-line for the THA’s vision of how Aros Waterfront could look.

- The Project Development Officer for the site moved on in September, and a decision was taken not to replace her in the current climate. The post will be reviewed in the New Year as soon as we are able to give the right kind of support to new appointee, with a view to engaging with the community over further options, developing the options to planning standards, and inviting proposals for business development. The site will have to be self-financing when up and running.
- All this would run side by side with working up funding options, initially for the pier restoration at an estimated cost of c.£500,000, and subsequently for the main buildings' development at a further cost of c.£1.5 million.
- In May 2020, the architect’s feasibility study and design work was completed, providing us with a multi-functional outline design allowing for: A café on the site of the existing boathouse looking towards the pier and bay; a glass ‘atrium’ linking the two existing building sites; and a two storey adaptable space within the existing timber sawmill.



- A short video by Bari Reid of Organic Architects was shown to illustrate the design by a 3D “walkthrough”.
- SL emphasized that the video is an exploration of the possibilities
- The pier is in urgent need of repair and is a priority for development.
- Kayakers and youth sailing groups would be able to use the waterfront for safe launching from the small slip.

#### **Matters arising: no questions raised**

### **7. Harbour Development (Anne Fraser and Brian Swinbanks)** Brian Swinbanks

#### **Recent Harbour Developments**

- Phase 6.1 delivered the Passenger Landing Pontoon, a safe facility for all our local passenger boats then the North Arm Breakwater to provide protection and much needed berthing for inshore commercial, aquaculture & fishing boats.

#### **Brian then outlined the vision for the near future**

- Phase 6.2 to add a new Fuel berth for commercial boats on the north arm with protection to the south to create a safer pontoon harbour. Remove and relocate the dinghy compound and instal a screened, landscaped and bunded fuel tank at this location  
New fuel dispensers will be added to the North Arm  
To help protect the pontoons berths the timber and steel south hammerhead will be removed.  
The south walkway will be extended and two larger 12m fingers added for bigger yachts  
Three 20m x 4m breakwater pontoons will be added to shelter the berthing pontoons from the SE gales. A new short bridge will link the new breakwater to the pontoons.
- There are plans for a new building between the Harbour Building and Macgochans. THA will benefit from much needed space within this new building

#### **Vision beyond Phase 6.2**

- We need a new straight slipway and more space for boat parking ashore  
If we need to expand the north arm could be moved north and even extended



The very sheltered passenger landing pontoon could be extended. We are also working on a possible project to remove the compounds and relocate the fuel tank south of the Harbour Building. Workshop units could be added. Consultation with existing tenants and harbour garage will take place throughout the development of this project. The Aquarium struggles in a building never designed as an aquarium. We propose to infill to the south and add a new purpose-built Aquarium and other much needed facilities.

## **Other Harbour Developments**

### **Anne Fraser**

#### **Purchase of the Solum:**

This land purchase looks like it will settle in the coming weeks. The land underneath the carpark and boat park will be in THA ownership, with the council remaining as tenant of the carpark for the remainder of their lease, with is 25years left to run. Thanks to the Scottish Land fund for this grant enabling us to progress this purchase.

#### **Phase6.2**

I'm delighted to say after many months of hard work, that phase6.2 looks likely to go ahead within this financial year. This Includes 2 projects:

#### **Commercial Fuel Berth:**

The FLAG board (that is the fisheries, local action group) have reviewed our application and have recommended our project for full funding at £283,486.88.

Marine Scotland who administer the fund on behalf of European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and now have the application for final approval, which I assume (and hope) is now just a matter of legal formality, they should complete this by end of next week.

#### **Pontoon extension and hammerhead replacement:**

HIE senior management have approved our project and have agreed to fund 80% of project costs to the sum of £183,200. This is subject to the usual formal legal undertakings which should all be signed off next week.

THA are also investing over £62,000 to these projects and we have accessed finance to assist with these costs.

This is a significant step forward for our company, which is so reliant on tourism market.

70% of our income is generated in 3 months of the year, these developments along with the north arm, installed last year, create opportunities for all year-round activity.



Both parts of the phase 6 project have resulted in over a £1million of investment in within 2 years. Helping our business to diversify which could not have come at a better time. Covid will have a significant impact on our tourism market for some time to come. This investment will help offset this impact in the short term and grow our business in the longer term, creating opportunities along the way.

### **Matters arising: no matters arising**

#### **8. A.O.B.**

Sam Jones asked what the position of the light at the tip of Calve. R Macd has been in touch with NLB who have looked at the proposal. There are questions to be addressed. This to be progress in the new year.

Sheila Barnard asked about storage of the boats in the winter. There is no haul out facility. AF responded that the situation is in the mix and if it becomes possible to add hauling boats out it would be considered. SB concerned that plans seem to be reducing land area for storage not adding to it. AF and BS expanded on possibilities for the future.

Chris Cotton recorded thanks from him and his family for the effort and support from Rob and the THA particularly within Covid times.

Douglas Ingram was invited to make a short presentation on the installation of the fresh water collection facility at Aros which is a joint proposal with his brother Alastair.

DI explained the process of how the fish cleaning is beneficial to the commercial operators but more importantly to the environment.

Bulk quantities of fresh water to be available to commercial fish farm well boats for the washing of fish. There is no farming activity and no effluent involved. BS emphasised that this is purely water collection and the cleaning would all take place at the sites. BS also confirmed that THA is checking the status of Crown Estate Leases and how they sit alongside existing lease for the Mussel Farm.

#### **9. Nominations for the Board.**

The process of the board election

- The member directors can serve for a period of 3 years, after which they must step down, but can stand for re-election. Brian Swinbanks is the Board member who steps down at this AGM and he is willing to stand for re-election.



- The number of Member Director positions on the board is 9. At this time the current Board are happy to remain in post.
- Anne went through the formality and asked if anyone had any objection to the re-election of Brian Swinbanks to the Board or the continuation of the current Board members that they make them known.

There being no objections, Brian Swinbanks is re-elected to stand for a further 3 years.

**Matters arising:** Brian thanked the membership for re-electing him. He did say, as he has in recent years, that he would like to step down from the Chairman position so that his main focus could be projects and if anyone would like to take the Chair position he would welcome that.

**10. Closing remarks by the Chairman:**

Brian thanked the Members for attending and invited everyone to bring forward their input to the THA and the Board and staff will always take on board the views of the Members and Stakeholders.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.15pm.