

Dungrianach
Oban.

The Editor,
Oban Times,
Oban.

Monday 20th September 2010

Dear Sir,

Oban Bay Marine (“OBM”)

There has been much discussion in your paper, and other media, regarding a proposal for short stay pontoons between the North & Railway Piers in Oban.

A public meeting has been called by the Council’s Oban CHORD Project Board this Friday, 24th Sept. at the Corran Halls and a meeting for members of OBM, at “Skippinish”- (formerly McTavishes) to which the public are welcome, on Mon. 27th Sept.

Can I just briefly explain for the benefit of readers what it is that OBM proposed, and why.

The community (not for profit) company OBM, was formed on a voluntary basis; and plans were developed to provide the town with a ‘short stay transit marina ‘ much like a “car park for boats” in the town centre. Just as shoppers have become accustomed to driving their cars to buy their main shopping, so boat owners from elsewhere in the UK and abroad increasingly expect to step ashore onto a pontoon when visiting a town. If the facility is not there they move on & take their business elsewhere.

The pontoon proposal was greeted enthusiastically at a public meeting in Jan. 08. Local business people contributed generously, and by Nov. 08 planning and other necessary consents had been obtained.

The plans provide for approx. 50 berths on pontoons, inside a breakwater, between the piers. The Planning consent stipulates boats cannot stay more than 3 nights maximum; and be open for summer use only, so it *would not* be full of empty boats on permanent berths rattling around over the winter. It *would* be a facility to allow visitors to step ashore into the heart of Oban, change crews, provision, shop, and enjoy all that Oban has to offer. It would form part of a long proposed and slowly developing chain of such facilities right up the West Coast, but, the transport links to Oban make it a key link in that chain.

The OBM vision was to design a modest deliverable project to produce an immediate impact not just for the benefit of “Yachties”, but in line with the waterfront regeneration projects promoted by the Council, develop something capable of re-vitalising the whole town centre – and bring new business to the whole community, (eg, many crews and their families stay in Bed & Breakfast or hotel accommodation ashore in connection with a boats visit) – and which additionally would not compromise any larger scale plans that might be envisaged for the future of Oban.

For almost 2 years now the project has been on “hold” ,pending the outcome of the Councils deliberations over the grant of £900,000 offered to OBM in Nov. 08.It has decided this month that it can not assist.

What happens now for the future of Oban in light of the Council’s decisions will be the subject of debate on Friday, while what the future is for the OBM project itself will be discussed at our meeting on Monday.

Yours faithfully,
Mike Robertson.
Co. Secretary, OBM.