

# Why Oban Bay Marine?

## Key issues

- A Scottish Enterprise report in 2006 identified the marine leisure industry as worth £250 million annually to the Scottish economy. Oban used to be the natural port of call for visiting boats to change crews, take on fuel and provisions, all of which contributed to the Oban economy. They now largely bypass Oban because of the lack of facilities.
- Local and visiting boat owners complain about the lack of facilities for access, water and fuel and that the North and Railway Piers are becoming increasingly congested.
- Charter boat owners report a serious lack of safe access for their crews and guests and a total lack of access facilities for elderly and disabled people.
- Four charter boats have recently abandoned Oban as their operational base, one to Craobh Haven and three to Norway and others are considering moving away.
- Dungallan Park is falling into a state of disrepair.

## What can Oban Bay Marine offer?

- A community based company, seeking to work in partnership with the Council, where profits are not distributed, but can be re-invested in local projects.
- This is the same model as used by the very successful Tobermory Bay Association.
- This model is attractive to external funding bodies and can enable us to seek significant finance not available to the Council from organisations such as AIE/HIE, the Crown Estate, the Big Lottery and the European Regional Development Fund. This last Fund is increasingly supporting community initiatives. This would make our proposal exceptional value for money for the Council.
- Our initial aim is to provide high quality pontoon access for small leisure, charter and fishing vessels (up to 24 metres), including supply of fuel and water and access for disabled people, probably where Borro Boats has been operating for many years. This would not displace any other boat operators in the immediate area and would greatly enhance the limited facilities that presently exist.
- This would be of considerable benefit to many local boat operators and would provide a facility attractive to visitors, hence attracting money into the local community.
- Our proposed development could contribute to improving the condition of Dungallan Park.
- Local canoeists, seeking improved facilities, say that Oban and its surrounding waters is a top ranking kayaking area on a world scale, on a par with the Arctic, Greenland and Chilean Tierra del Fuego.
- We have widespread support for our proposals from many local organisations (see list of Steering Group members attached), national bodies and local business (see attached letters of support from the Royal Yachting Association Scotland, the British Marine Federation Scotland and Oban Marina).
- Our proposals are consistent with the recommendations of the Oban Action Plan produced by Ironside Farrar in May 2006 and would help to relieve the congestion at the North and Railway Piers.
- Our next stage is to commission a professional feasibility study to guide us in establishing new facilities.
- We believe that our proposal gives the Council a unique opportunity to capitalise on Oban's exceptional marine location in the heart of the West Coast and its longstanding maritime heritage and begin to attract its fair share of this growing market.
- **Security of tenure is the crucial factor in obtaining significant external funding.**
- We understand and are sympathetic with the reasons why the Council initially decided to offer a lease on a year-by-year basis only. However, this would kill fund-raising dead and we are now asking the Council to consider a more flexible arrangement, acceptable to the Council and external funders.
- The terms of a lease or sale agreement between Oban Bay Marine and Argyll and Bute Council could contain a clause to the effect that, when the major harbour development takes place in and around Oban Bay, the right will be granted for the Council to include the Oban Bay Marine area within the development area for the common good.