

**NORTHERN LIGHTHOUSE BOARD**  
**SCOTTISH USERS' CONSULTATIVE GROUP (SUCG)**

**MINUTES – 5 November 2015**

PRESENT:	Sarah Arthur	Repsol Offshore Wind
	Tony Bennett	Crown Estates, Argyle and the Inner Isles
	David Blair	BP Exploration Marine Team
	Iain Buchanan	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
	Derek Byrne	Nautilus
	Andy Clift	RNLI
	Ian Craig	Marine Scotland - Compliance
	Guy Dale-Smith	Calmac
	Anna Donald	Marine Planning and Strategy, Scottish Government
	Yvonne Edmond	Ports & Harbour Branch, Transport Scotland
	Val Ferguson	Ports & Harbour Branch, Transport Scotland
	Robert Hollingdale	Royal Institute of Navigation
	Andrew Liddell	Ministry of Defence
	Adrian Muddin	UK Chamber of Shipping
	Cephas Ralph	Marine Scotland
	David Vass	Royal Yachting Association, Scotland
	Patrick Vaughan	Northern Marine
	Chris Walton	United Kingdom Hydrographic Office
	Alastair Beveridge	Chairman SUCG
	Alistair Mackenzie	Commissioner, NLB
	Mike Close	Commissioner, NLB
	Mike Bullock	Chief Executive
	Moray Waddell	Director of Engineering
	Peter Douglas	Navigation Manager
	Mike Spain	Business Development Manager
	Archie Johnstone	Navigation Officer
	Steve Driver	Coastal Inspector
	Gillian Burns	Coastal Inspector
	Karen Charleson	PA to Director of Finance

Alastair Beveridge, the NLB SUCG Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from the following organisations:

EMEC, Fife Council, Kirkcudbright Harbour, Moray Council, P&O Ferries, Port of Inverness, Scottish Canals, Stenaline and Stornoway Port Authority.

**2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING & MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 November 2014 were agreed as a correct record. Matters Arising will be addressed during the meeting programme.

### **3. ANNUAL REVIEW OF NLB**

Mike Bullock, Chief Executive of NLB, welcomed the attendees to the meeting of the SUCG and gave a brief overview of what NLB are doing to improve the way it operates, how it is changing to make the delivery of services as effective and possible and also provide best value for money to the ship owner who pays light dues.

#### **Devolution**

The Smith Commission report published late in 2014 specifically mentioned the NLB on two fronts.

1. Proposing that the Scottish Government should appoint a Commissioner to the Board and in negotiation with Transport Scotland, Commissioner John Ross was allocated this role. When he retires from the Board in 2017 he will be replaced by a Commissioner appointed by the Scottish Government. The GLAs have also incorporated Transport Scotland into the Joint Strategic Board alongside their colleagues from the Department for Transport and the Irish Department for Transport, Tourism and Sport.
2. NLB will lay their accounts before the Scottish Parliament. The detail of exactly what this will entail is still being negotiated. Evidence has been provided to the Scottish Parliament's Public Audit Committee on a number of occasions and we expect the issues to be discussed again at a PAC sometime in November. The evidence NLB submitted is available on the Scottish Parliament's website.

The changes have allowed us to build on a very good relationships within the Scottish Government, not least Transport Scotland and Marine Scotland.

#### **Finance Issues**

NLB are now approaching the end of a 5 year period where the NLB was set clear targets by the Department for Transport on operating cost reduction. NLB are well on track not only to deliver the savings promised but also to meet the stretch target set by ourselves back in 2011. Over the last twelve months NLB have been working alongside the Department for Transport and the other General Lighthouse Authorities to establish an arrangements, similar to the one in use now, for the setting of efficiency targets from financial year 16/17 onwards. This will provide us with the essential budgetary stability required to plan the delivery of our services whilst still giving NLB the mechanism to drive the ethos of best value for money.

NLB's Corporate Plan for the next five year period has been submitted to the Department for Transport and will now be scrutinised by both the Department and the Lights Advisory Committee. Following this process and having made any adjustments, we expect the Secretary of State to approve the 5 year plan sometime in the New Year.

#### **Delivering further efficiencies**

NLB continue to strive to act smarter through better joined up planning. The benefits of introducing new technology which improves reliability and reduces maintenance can be seen in the investment in a new paint system which allows the refit cycle for our fleet of buoys to shift from 6 to 8 years. The rate of Light Dues was reduced by a penny earlier this year which reflects the efficiencies delivered.

NLB work very closely with Trinity House and Irish Lights on a number of levels. At the highest level the Joint Strategic Board and Chief Executives group deal with the big issues. At the operational and tactical level there are a number of working groups which cover people, training, finance, procurement, engineering, operations, navigation and Health and Safety. These groups work on initiatives from simple sharing best practice, developing common policy and procedures right through to collaboration on procurement. We also share a small R&D team based in Harwich, called the Research and Radio Navigation Team who do great work in both directly supporting our operations for example through light measurement and through cutting edge research.

- **Tri-GLA Helicopter Contract** - At the last meeting it was reported that work was underway to set up a new shared contract for helicopter provision for all three GLAs. The Contract has now been awarded to PDG Helicopters. During the last year NLB has been working, in co-operation with PDG and the other GLAs to align operating procedures and have conducted familiarisation training with a Helicopter embarking in PHAROS. The contract goes live in December 2015. There will be a considerable saving to the General Lighthouse Fund overall but because NLB will be by far the biggest user of the aircraft the direct savings will be minimal.
- **Commercial Work** - NLB have continued to use Reserve Capacity to take on Commercial opportunities and bring in revenue which we have been able to offset against operational costs e.g. work with the Ministry of Defence to provide support for Submarine Rescue, deployment of Oceanographic buoys on behalf of the Met Office and berthing services for the HEBRIDEAN PRINCESS at our Oban base.

NLB also continues to provide long established contracted buoy services to a number of customers including Scottish Water and various councils.

- **Tri-GLA Fleet Review** – As part of the regular programme of reviews to make sure the three General Lighthouse Authorities are operating in the most effective and efficient way, the Marine consultants from Houlder Ltd were appointed earlier this year to conduct a review of the vessels operated. The Review has been overseen by a Project Board which has included representatives from the shipping industry in the form of the Lights Advisory Committee as well as the Department for Transport. The report is due to be published by the early in the New Year.

#### **Incident with NLV PHAROS**

NLB had an incident with PHAROS during the summer when she ran aground off Skerryvore. A combination of factors led to the event but the post incident recovery went well and after repairs in Garvel she was back on operations in September.

#### **Chairman of the Northern Lighthouse Board**

Captain Alistair Mackenzie took up the post as Chairman of the Board of Commissioners in April 2015. Alistair is also Chairman of Aberdeen Harbour.

#### **4. CORPORATE PLAN LIGHTHOUSE CAPITAL PROJECTS 2016/17 TO 2020/21**

Moray Waddell, Director of Engineering at the Northern Lighthouse Board gave a presentation on the 5 Year Lighthouse Capital Projects Programme. More details are included in the presentation attached to these minutes.

## 5. NATIONAL MARINE PLAN/REGIONAL PLANNING

Anna Donald, Head of Marine Planning and Strategy, Marine Scotland gave a presentation on Marine Planning under the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010. Marine Planning promotes sustainable development and use of marine resources, manages conflict in the marine environment and inform decision making. Marine Planning also contribute to the delivery of Good Environmental Status. The Plan was published in March 2015 and is built on a strong evidence base. It was noted that there will be a review in 3 years to establish how the plan has been implemented. More details are included in the presentation attached to these minutes.

## 6. OFFSHORE WINDFARM PLANNING

Sarah Arthur, Project Co-ordinator, Repsol gave a presentation on Inch Cape Offshore Wind Farm. Sarah provided an introduction to Repsol, a background of the Project, and overview of the application and consent process, the programme and relative key dates. Sarah also talked through the discharging conditions required and the mitigations taken. More details are included in the presentation attached to these minutes.

Questions	Answers
When are you likely to choose which port you will use to support the construction phase?	Sometime next year.
Where can I find the statements?	All statements are available on the Marine Scotland site.

## 7. NLB AND THE NATO SUBMARINE RESCUE SYSTEM (NSRS)

Mike Spain, Business Development Manager, Northern Lighthouse Board gave a presentation on the NATO Submarine Rescue System. The original presentation was kindly supplied by Submarine Operating Centre Defence Equipment & Support UK Ministry of Defence. Mike give an overview of the NSRS and the co-operation between NLB and the MOD. NLB has a Memorandum of Understanding in place with the MOD which allows it to access NLB vessels. The general philosophy for Submarine Search and Rescue (SUBSAR) Operations is to provide a reasonable level of assurance for the more likely Submarine accident situations. NATO Submarine Rescue System (NSRS) is jointly owned by the UK, French and Norwegian navies, and is specifically packaged for rapid deployment by air transport and is on constant standby. NLV PHAROS can support the Intervention Remotely Operated Vehicle (IROV) as it can self-load. PHAROS took part in an exercise with the Norwegian Navy deploying equipment PODs which was very successful. More details are included in the presentation attached to these minutes.

Questions	Answers
Is it a cost recovery arrangement?	There is a MOU in place with MoD to deliver the best value for tax payers.

Questions	Answers
How do they get vessels for recovery?	There is a database of vessels. All are similar in size to NLV PHAROS.

## 8. CHANGES TO NLB PROVISION OF ATON DURING LAST YEAR AND GLA E-NAVIGATION STRATEGY

Peter Douglas, Navigation Manager, Northern Lighthouse Board gave an overview of the changes to the NLB provision of AtoNs as a result of the 2015 AtoN Review which was published on 6 May 2015. A copy of the Review can be found on the Northern Lighthouse Board's website ([www.nlb.org.uk](http://www.nlb.org.uk)). Peter explained that this was a smaller scale review than had been done previously covering more immediate changes to buoyage in the Sound of Kerrera/Sgeir Thraid/Sgeir Ghobhlach) and new virtual AtoNs (Nun Rock/Sule Stack). A current area of interest is Sound of Mull where NLB was examining the marking due to a couple of incidents recently.

Peter Douglas went on to explain the E-Navigation Strategy which is an IMO led concept, supported by IALA based on the harmonisation of marine navigation systems and supporting shore services driven by user needs. Primarily, NLB are working with partners in IALA, focussing on data modelling, implementation/testbeds, telecommunications, eNavServices, Position, Navigation & Timing. For further information see IALA e-Navigation.net portal.

More details are included in the presentation attached to these minutes.

Questions	Answers
How robust is e-Navigation against interference?	AIS signal quite vulnerable.
There is nothing more reassuring than lighthouses – don't remove too many.	Very much agree.
What is your view on e-Loran?	There has been a lot of effort providing e-Loran. The future at present is not looking good with the French and Norwegians talking about discontinuing. Discussion are on-going.
If France and Norway pull out are there any other countries interested?	No firm news on other countries.
Does VDES provide a new generation of data?	Ten additional channels. Scope for transmission of a number of different types of data.
What about Cleit Rock beacon?	Cleit Rock has slipped in the programme but is planned for next year.

## **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

## **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the SUCG is scheduled to take place in Edinburgh on Thursday, 3 November 2016.

### **Navigation Contacts**

Peter Douglas	0131-473-3196	<a href="mailto:peterd@nlb.org.uk">peterd@nlb.org.uk</a>
Archie Johnstone	0131-473-3197	<a href="mailto:archiej@nlb.org.uk">archiej@nlb.org.uk</a>
Steven Driver	0131-473-3155	<a href="mailto:stevend@nlb.org.uk">stevend@nlb.org.uk</a>
Gillian Burns	0131-473-2431	<a href="mailto:gillianb@nlb.org.uk">gillianb@nlb.org.uk</a>