

Marine Conservancy & Hydrographic Policy

1. General Powers of Harbour Conservancy

Argyll and Bute Council as Harbour Authority has a duty to conserve the harbours for which it has responsibility, thus ensuring they remain fit for purpose to enable the various stakeholders and Argyll and Bute Council clients to use the ports successfully and safely.

This includes the provision of information regarding depths of water in the harbour and approaches, local notices to mariners etc. The Harbour Authority also has the powers as the Local Lighthouse Authorities (LLA), as providers of aids to navigation (AtoN).

3. Tidal Heights and Meteorological Conditions

Argyll and Bute Council have installed equipment within its harbours to enable observations of the rise and fall of the tide to be made.

Within their statutory harbours, tidal height observations and readings are subject to regular visual check against a local tide staff board to ensure correct operation and repair and maintenance is contracted to a competent provider.

In addition to tidal information, Argyll and Bute Council also monitor and record data on prevailing conditions such as wind strength and direction and barometric pressure.

4. Dredging

The Harbour Authority have the mandate (subject to consent from the landowner and Marine Scotland) to undertake dredging operations for maintenance or channel

- Maintain an AtoN database.
- Maintain an AtoN defect reporting system.
- Ensure procedures are also in place for emergency repair, reporting of navigational aid defects and appropriate issue of a navigational warning.

7. Review of Aids to Navigation

Risk assessment and on-going consultations have determined the requirement for Aids to Navigation in Argyll and Bute Council harbour areas. A program of full review with a periodicity not exceeding 5-years has been developed locally, this should where possible align with the general risk assessment for the harbour itself.

8 AtoN Failures, Maintenance and Inspection

More significant wrecks or navigational hazards will be the responsibility of the Harbour Master to mark that, in their judgement, are or are likely to become a hazard to navigation. They will be lit and buoyed until raised, removed or destroyed.

Due regard will be made to the duty to protect the environment in the exercise of this and all other duties and powers. A risk assessment will be undertaken of any wreck in, or near the approaches to the harbour with the aim of reducing the risk of danger to navigation to as low as reasonably practicable.

In the event of a vessel becoming a wreck in or near the approaches to harbour limits, the process of removing the wreck is laid down in Section 252 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995.

In event of a wreck on the approaches to the harbour, the Harbour Authority may:

- Take possession of, raise, remove or destroy the whole, or any part of the vessel, and any other property to which the power extends.
- Light or buoy the vessel until it is raised, removed or destroyed.
- Subject to various restrictions, sell the vessel or part of the vessel so raised or removed and any other property recovered during the exercise of the above powers.

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