

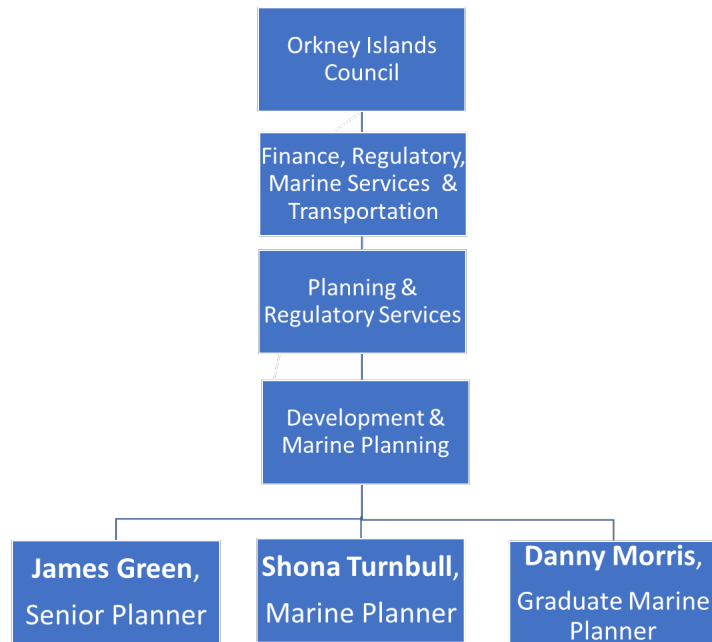


Orkney Marine Planning Update

Summer 2021

Introduction

Since our last update in December 2020, when OIC got the go ahead to proceed with developing a statutory marine plan, a number of significant milestones have been reached. This update provides a brief summary of the current status of the steps underway to prepare the plan, a staffing update, information on the set up of the Advisory Group, amazing underwater work done by NILPS and how you can find out more about getting involved in marine plan-making for Orkney. There is also some information on other marine projects happening around our coasts.



The interim structure diagram (right) shows the management structure of the marine policy team within OIC.

Staffing update

After a recruitment process with some very high caliber candidates, we are delighted to announce that Daniel Morris was the successful candidate for the post of Graduate Marine Planner. Danny started in mid April and will provided vital support and input to the plan-making process. He has always been fascinated by the oceans and has a particular interest in working with communities and businesses to achieve long-term sustainability. In 2018, he graduated with his MSc in Marine Environmental Management from York University, which is the city where he grew up.

After graduating he travelled to Thailand where he trained and then worked as a Divemaster at a dive centre. This was an amazing experience, and after the dive season ended, he returned home to the UK to focus his skills on marine sustainable development in the UK. This led him to the Community of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST), an NGO on the Isle of Arran, supporting community involvement in sustainable management of the oceans, where he worked as an MPA Project Assistant.

After finishing his contract with COAST, he had fallen in love with Scottish island life and vowed to return. After working last summer as an ecological surveyor for HS2,

he is delighted to be able to start a new life on Orkney. He has been blown away by the beauty of the islands and is looking forward to his new chapter as Graduate Marine Planner with the OIC. He can see great possibilities for Orkney’s Regional Marine Plan, and alongside the input from the community and all stakeholders and looks forward to helping unlock its potential.

Orkney Marine Planning Partnership

As the functions to prepare a statutory regional marine plan were solely delegated to Orkney Islands Council, it would not be appropriate for OIC to use the term ‘Marine Planning Partnership’ to refer to a single organisation. Therefore, for the case of Orkney, the term relates to both the legal delegate i.e. OIC, and the supporting marine planning advisory group, as outlined below.

Orkney Marine Planning Advisory Group (OMPAG)

Organisation	Category
NatureScot	Environment
Scottish Environment Protection Agency	Environment
International Centre for Island Technology	Academic
Orkney Sustainable Fisheries	Commercial
Historic Environment Scotland	Environment
Orkney Harbour Authority	Commercial
Visit Scotland	Commercial
Crown Estate Scotland	Commercial
Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation	Commercial
Repsol Sinopec	Commercial
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Scotland	Environment
Orkney Renewable Energy Forum	Commercial
Orkney Marinas	Recreational
Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks	Commercial
Orkney Marine Services Association	Commercial
Orkney Sub-aqua Club	Recreational

To provide expert advice and guidance, the OMPAG was set up in early 2021. The first virtual meeting was on 18th March and the second was on 9th June.

The members represent stakeholders with an interest in the protection and enhancement of the Orkney marine region, along with recreational and commercial users, as shown in the adjacent table of members.

They will provide expert input into the plan-making process, as well as to the various supporting documents required. The members will also promote wider engagement and promotion of the Orkney marine planning process. More details on how this engagement will be done are available in the new Statement of Public Participation (see below).

Orkney Statement of Public Participation

Orkney Marine Planning Partnership has just published a guidance document on how you can get involved in helping Orkney's marine economy and environment: the *Statement of Public Participation*. It outlines the indicative timescale and how you can input to the development of the Orkney Islands Regional Marine Plan.

Alongside the plan, there will be a variety of other reports produced, as outlined in the guidance document. These too would greatly benefit from local input. As the plan-making process develops, we will be holding various public consultation events. The indicative timescale for the main formal on-line consultation on the draft plan is likely to be in summer 2023. In addition to this, we welcome input at any time in the process. Once covid restrictions are negligible, we hope to visit island communities to provide updates in person but can arrange virtual meetings in the meantime for key groups interested. The Statement of Public Participation report can be found on the OIC website at: [Marine Planning \(orkney.gov.uk\)](https://www.orkney.gov.uk/marine-planning) and our contact details are at the end of this update.

NILPS virtual dives

The North Isles Landscape Partnership Scheme (NILPS) have released their excellent series of 'virtual dives' for eight sites spread across the North Isles. On each island's page, a short film takes you on a journey to discover the abundance of life and history that exists along the coasts and in nearby shallow waters. The tour takes in beds of kelp, maerl and eelgrass, vertical rock walls, submarine caves, seabird cities, abandoned islands, lighthouses and shipwrecks. The brilliant underwater footage by Drs Joanne Porter and Richard Shucksmith are complimented by above surface footage by Raymond Besant. Still photographs and links to external sites on each page give access to extra information, enabling you to dive in deeper and learn more about the living seas of the North Isles.



Link: [Explore Orkney's Living Seas | North Isles Virtual Dive \(nilps.co.uk\)](https://www.nilps.co.uk)

Shorewatch Launches in Orkney

Shorewatch, a citizen science project run by the charity Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC), has launched in Orkney for the first time. Anyone can become a volunteer and contribute towards our understanding of whales and dolphins by participating in organized 10-minute coastal surveys. Shorewatch provide training and equipment and are still looking to recruit volunteers.

To find out more, watch the launch video at https://m.facebook.com/watch/?v=255404002993238&_rdr and get in touch at northernisles@shorewatch.org

Contact us:

Please pass this update on to anyone else you think may be interested. Also, if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Email: marine.planning@orkney.gov.uk

Website: [Marine Planning \(orkney.gov.uk\)](http://Marine Planning (orkney.gov.uk))

