



'Greening' a Maritime Festival Sail Hebrides Maritime Festival, Stornoway 2008

Introduction

The Green Blue attended the 10th annual Sail Hebrides Maritime Festival in Stornoway and helped the event organisers to 'think green' and encouraged participants to minimise their environmental impact whilst enjoying the sailing activities on offer.

Project Officer, Julia Christie, gave an environmental briefing at the welcome reception, promoting the simple measures skippers could take on board their boats. Attention was also drawn to the fantastic diversity of marine wildlife in and around the Western Isles. Sightings of basking sharks, dolphins, Minke whales and a leatherback turtle were all enthusiastically reported. The requirement for skippers to act responsibly and within the law around these marine animals was emphasised. As always, The Green Blue literature packed full of practical advice proved popular, as did the Marine Wildlife Watching Code (by Scottish Natural Heritage). A display of environmentally friendly boating products provided interest for many skippers and crew alike.



Event

The annual Sail Hebrides Maritime Festival in Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, is a sailing event for all types of sailing vessel, ranging from dinghies, traditional Sgoth Niseach (Ness-type skiffs originally built for long line fishing), to small and large yachts alike. Most participants arrived by sailing boat – a great way to travel without using fuel! A range of activities were on offer throughout the festival, which included dinghy tuition for children run by RYA instructors and the Sailing in the City programme, rowing races, tugs of war, sailing races, barbeques and evening receptions. This popular event has been running for ten years and attracts 20 – 30 boats each year.



Stornoway Port Authority provided the berthing, with boats moored alongside the harbour quay and on the pontoons, with a hired marquee used for the receptions and briefings.

Making the environment second nature

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Environmentally friendly practices

The organisers for this event were approached by The Green Blue to see whether there were any opportunities to 'green' their event. This event already had a number of green credentials:

- i) **Reduced Paper Use** - Event advertising and pre- and post event communication was mostly carried out through their website and by email, reducing the need for paper use.
- ii) **Locally Sourced Food** - Food at the two food receptions and barbecue was provided by local residents and a local hotel using fresh local produce, including locally produced salmon, langoustines, mussels, sausages, burgers and bread from the local bakery. Food miles can be very high when catering in the Western Isles, as non-local produce has to be imported from the mainland and involves both lorry and sea miles. By using local produce the food miles were reduced to almost zero and the food tasted wonderful.
- iii) **Locally Sourced Products** - All prizes were sourced locally and included Hebridean Ale from the Stornoway based Hebridean Brewing Company, a stunning painting by local artist 'Vega', a creel made with plastic from recycled bottles and finally a Stornoway black pudding for participation.
- iv) **Shoreside Facilities** - To encourage the use of shoreside facilities, in addition to the council run toilet and shower block in the quayside car park, a portaloos was provided at the exit to the pontoons. A portaloos was also provided for the 'Sailing In the City' dinghy sailors at Cuddy Point.

Additional measures implemented:

- v) **Rubbish Disposal** - Rubbish disposal was an area of concern for the organisers as the only general refuse bin at the pontoons had become overfilled during previous events. Also, there were no recycling facilities within easy walking distance from the harbour. The Green Blue contacted both Stornoway Council and the local Waste Aware Group and requested recycling facilities for this event. They were most helpful and liaised with the Port Authorities, dealt with the necessary paperwork and provided a recycling bank (glass, cans & plastic) between the marquee and the pontoons for the duration of the event.
- vi) **Environmental Briefing** - The Green Blue were invited to make a short presentation to all participants at the welcome briefing. All entrants were given The Green Blue 'How to Guide' full of environmental top tips. In addition they were also encouraged to:
 - a. use of **environmentally friendly products** on board
 - b. carry **oil/fuel spill kits** for accidental spills and leakages and to contact Stornoway Harbour if they had oil waste requiring disposal
 - c. **minimise waste** and to make full use the recycling facilities provided

- d. use the **shoreside toilet facilities**
- e. read the **Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code** – copies available to take away

vii) **Environmental Display** - All The Green Blue publications were available and on display in the marquee throughout the four day event. A selection of environmentally friendly boating products, including cleaning products, oil spill kits, bilge socks and safety fill nozzles were also on display and advice given when requested.



viii) **Local Chandlery Encouraged to Stock Environmental Products** - Prior to the event the local marine chandlery was sent The Green Blue literature and posters to display and was asked to consider stocking a variety of environmentally friendly boating products.

Future Events

It is hoped that the measures in place for this event will continue to be implemented in future events and that participants and other event organisers are encouraged to become more environmentally aware. This not only has a direct benefit on the environment but promotes a good image for both the sponsors and organisers.

Many of the measures implemented were simple, effective and at no extra cost. Websites provide a paper free form of communication and often speed up the process of registration and make it simple to update itineraries and information as it becomes available. Using local resources and produce is cost and effective as well as environmentally sustainable and appreciated by participants. Stornoway Council, through the local Waste Aware team, is actively promoting recycling and the recycling facilities at this event were provided free of charge. By providing participants with an environmental briefing they were made aware of the facilities available, the environmental measures taken and what they could do to reduce their environmental impact whilst out on the water. This festival illustrates how easily a few simple measures can improve the green credentials of any event.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the organisers of the Sail Hebrides Maritime Festival for their co-operation and efforts in 'greening' their popular sailing event.

Thank you also to Iain Campbell and his team at Waste Aware Western Isles for organising the recycling facilities for this event.

Further Information

Green Events

More advice on how to 'green' your sailing event or facilities can be found in the RYA Planning and Environmental Handbook. To download a pdf version visit: www.rya.org.uk/WorkingWithUs/clubs/premises/PE_Handbook

Or contact Julia Christie, The Green Blue Project Officer (Scotland) at:

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For a pdf version of the Scottish Marine Wildlife Code visit www.marinecode.org

Waste Recycling

For information and helpful advice on how to provide waste recycling facilities contact:

Waste Aware Scotland W: www.wasteawarescotland.org.uk

For Waste Aware Western Isles contact:

Waste Aware Western Isles, Creed Integrated Waste Management Facility, Creed Enterprise Park, Lochs Road, Isle of Lewis HS2 9JB

T: 01851 709900 E: recycling@cne-siar.gov.uk W: www.cne-siar.gov.uk

Waste Regulations

For advice on waste regulation and uplift legislation contact the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). To find your nearest area office visit W: www.SEPA.org.uk

For information on Port Waste Management go to: www.britishmarine.co.uk/upload-pub/PortWasteManagement2003.pdf