Rotary Club of Oban

COUNCIL MINUTES	Thursday 23RD July 2026		6:30pm

		Notes/Discussion/Decision
1	**WELCOME, ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES:**	**Your Council members are:** Eddie Thornton, Steph Lowe, Sarah Jones, Ronnie Forbes, Peter Tosh, Alan Hoar, Alex Burton, Lachie Beaton, Ciorsti Baxter (also ADG). **Apologies: Steph, Peter and Alex.**
2		**CLUB BUSINESS**
2.1	**Minutes & matters arising**	!8th June Minutes - Proposed: **Alan** Seconded: **Ronnie**
2.2	**President's update – Eddie Thornton**	**Council wished to record their sadness at the passing of Walter Burton and endorsed the sentiments that the President had already expressed at the recent lunch. Walter was a long-standing Rotarian. His commitment to Rotary fellowship was evidenced in his continuing attendance at lunches and events despite more recent failing health. He will be missed by the Rotary family. The Club's sympathies were extended to Alex and all the Burton family. There will be a cremation at Cardross Crematorium on 6th August at 1:15pm. Further arrangements to celebrate Walter's life will be announced in due course.** July has seen a busy start to my presidential year. We had the Raft Race earlier this month and on Saturday the club took a stall at the Charities Day. We now look forward to the Duck Race and we have a busy few weeks ahead selling as many ducks as possible. Thanks to Ciorsti and her team the Raft Race seems to have been a great success with 15 rafts participating which is a good increase on last year. The feedback I have is that we seem to have the basis for making this event more prominent in our calendar. Thanks to Sarah for organising the stall at Charities Day, my view was that this would be an opportunity for showcasing Oban Rotary and I think it was a quite reasonable success. A number of people did take the opportunity to read the info about the club that Sarah had prepared and I had a young lady who spoke to me about the possibility of she and her recently widowed father who had only moved into the area joining as members. I did offer to speak to her father but she thought that might be too much but she took relevant details and hopefully this might develop. Thanks to David Mudie, Alex Burton, Steph Who manned the stall during the day.

		We have the Duck Race to look forward to and hopefully as many members as possible will make themselves available to man the selling rotas and assist on the day.
2.3	Treasurer's update – Ronnie Forbes	**Discussion of monthly financial update (previously circulated). Noted continuing relatively high balance remaining - for this time of year - in charities account. Very small amounts being requested. President agreed to circulate some ideas for a proactive funding strategy – e.g. we could choose to focus on a specific section of the community and its related support organisations on an on-going basis for a period of time.** **Only one member's subs outstanding.**
2.4	Secretary's update – Sarah Jones	**Council agreed the policies associated with the 2026/27 compliance statement, signed by the President. Secretary to send to District Compliance Officer.** **Agreed to repeat the same format – with shorter narrative - for the 2025/26 Annual Report and Accounts. To include finances up to end September - to capture our summer events. The date of the Special General Meeting (to approve said accounts etc) was agreed as Tuesday 1st December.**
3		**FUNDING REQUESTS**
3.1	5th Oban Brownies	**Agreed request for £500 to support trip in September 2026.**
3.2	Oban Otters swimming club	Plan for Rotary Council members to meet leader with a view to discussing some longer term funding support.
3.3	Rockfield Primary P7 trip May 2027	**Council minded to support – amount not specified. Council asked for more information on cost per pupil and targeting of families who could not otherwise afford.**
3.4	Appin Skiff Coastal Rowing Club – new set of lighter weight oars	**Agreed £800 – half the amount requested on the grounds that other orgs had also been approached for funding.**
3.5	Link & Connect (Developing Potential)	**Request for £2,080 to support Monday Lunch Club over the coming year - agreed conditional on a meeting to discuss longer term sustainability. Could merit support on an on-going basis (see discussion above).**
3.6	Oxygen Oban	Possible future application
3.7	Pink Ladies of Argyll	**Sponsorship of £250 agreed to support annual pamper day for women affected by breast cancer.**
4		**CORRESPONDENCE.**
4.1	Idee einer internationalen Club -Partnerschaft	Proposed partnership with the Rotary Club Hückeswagen – Radevormwald. Still under consideration – as there are certain stipulations about international partnerships.
4.2	Shelterbox	**Thank you letter from Shelterbox for our donation to the Venezuela Earthquake Appeal (please see attached)**
5		**COMMITTEE UPDATES (full list for completeness)**
5.1	Membership - President, Eddie Thornton	**Agreed President, Past President and Secretary to consider format and funding for an event in the Autumn. Treasurer confirmed some funding could be made available without using funds raised for the charities account. ADG Ciorsti mentioned District plans to create a fund for this purpose which we could apply for.**

5.2	**Community & Vocational – Ciorsti Baxter**	The C& V committee have been busy recently with a number of events and thank you to all Rotarians who participated and supported our drive to bring awareness and knowledge of Rotary to the community and beyond. **The Raft Race** was held on Sunday 12 July this year which was the first Sunday of the Clipper Race in Oban. It was very well attended with 15 rafts taking part and a significant number of spectators, I am sure assisted by the fantastic weather! We were supported by the sponsors George St Fish and Chips who donated £500 and prizes, Distribution Oban who donated a selection of trophies, and McQueen Brothers who provided their Event Trailer for use by Nevis Radio. It was a really successful day. We intend to hold an event debrief in the near future to capture views of those involved and to start the process of organising next year's event. **Although this was a community fun day rather than a major fund-raiser - Council discussed possible improvements including focussing on a specific cause for fund-raising. More Rotarian and partner resources would be required to collect public donations if we were to go down this route.** **Charities Day** was held on Saturday 18 July at the Rockfield Community Centre. Footfall was much lower than at the previous Station Square street area. We engaged visitors in Rotary's work by posing Q&A on our Club's annual fundraising total, the number of local businesses who sponsor our events and the number of local organisations who benefit from our support. Pirate-themed 'prizes' were handed to children whose parents guessed correctly. Feedback from other charities confirmed fewer visitors than usual and that the 10am to 4pm opening time was too long. Our volunteers confirmed a tail-off in visitors beyond 2pm. Our efforts with the pirate theme, the Q&A 'quiz' and the new Rotary banner ensured visible promotion on the day and in the socials. **Council would be reluctant to participate in a similar event again – as the effort was disproportionate to the engagement and visibility with the public. But the Club should consider alternative formats and locations. Suggestion that the Club could offer to be involved in organisation of Charities Day.** Rotary members were in evidence marshalling the **Clipper Race Parade of Sail** on Sunday 19th July. Eddie, Steph and Peter can be seen on the BBC coverage. **The Duck Race** is getting ever closer! We are starting to have ducks sponsored on Friday and Saturday this week and Thursday, Friday next week with the Race on Saturday starting at 3pm. Thank you to those who have already signed up to support us and if you haven't had the chance there are already spaces to assist.

		Update: Duck selling on 24th and 25th went well. Volunteers for 30th , 31st July and race day 1st August will be sent a reminder. **The Classic Car Tour** route has been agreed and Jack has done a great job with the website. We are currently scoping full sponsorship to get things started and hope to have that in place by the end of August.
5.3	**Foundation & International - Ken Moncrieff & David Finlayson**	Earthquake in Venezuela - Council has agreed a donation of £612 to Shelterbox for assistance with the earthquake. £612 will buy a substantial tent for a family of four and earthquake pack which includes mattresses, blankets and essential utensils. Shelterbox has acknowledged the donation and a letter of thanks has now been received.
5.4	**Sports & Social – Lachie Beaton**	On Thursday 25th June 26, four members of our club travelled to compete in-the 40th Dunblane rotary club annual am-am golf competition. The team was led by President Eddie along with Dave Mudie, Gordon Seaton and Jack Tollan. A total of 59 teams competed on the day of brilliant sunshine. Play started at 7 : 40 am and the last team out at 17 :10 pm. The Oban team did not quite do enough to be winners but they thoroughly enjoyed the day out and are looking forward to the 2027 competition. Taking part on the day were Andy and Jamie Murray ,both being grandsons of the late Roy Erskine (the person who came up with the idea of the am-am.) After completing their round Andy's mother (Judy) told him about the Oban connection to his grandfather Roy and Andy came across and joined the table of my own entered team (D & A Munn) and had a good blether with them.. in fact ending up with my team getting pictures taken with Sir Andy (giving him his title) the team all agreed a very sociable and down to earth person. The following is a note from Andy which appeared in the programme "This is a big year for the rotary am-am event which holds a special place in my family's hearts. My grandfather created this wonderful team golf event in 1986 to raise funds for the local Strathcarron hospice. He organised and ran it for 25 years at Dunblane new golf club aided and abetted by my grand mother and many other volunteers. To date it has generated over half a million pounds, the Rotary am-am is still going strong and celebrates its 40th birthday in June and I am looking forward to taking part along with several other members of my family to continue my grandfather's legacy and to help raise much needed funds for a good cause." A note about Strathcarron hospice: "Strathcarron hospice is a local charity and needs to raise £ 19452.00 every single day with only 1/3 of that funded by the government, the charity is incredibly grateful to our generous supporters who make up the significant shortfall. This year's am-am raised over £30k. Many thanks to all for supporting the above event, See you all in 2027." **Report from Ian MacInnes**

5.5	Youth Services – Peter Tosh	**Council welcomed the recent talk given by District Challenge Enterprise advocate, Ken Robertson. It was agreed to support at least 2 and up to 6 participants dependent on engagement with Oban High School.**
5.6	PR & Reputation – Alex Burton	Over the last month on Facebook the amount of views was 26,566. We added 18 new followers for a total of 208. Posts were made for Charities Day, A reel for the Raft race, and promotion for the Raft race. A post by the Oban Times on Charities day was also shared to our page. On Instagram post wet made for the same except for the one by the Oban Times. There were 573 views of this content, and 11578 views of the piece on the Raft Race (I believe across platforms). five new followers were added for a total of 179. **Council agreed that a separate meeting with Oban Times was probably unnecessary now given recent event-specific engagement with reporters and resulting coverage.**
5.7	Am-Am – Alan Hoar	**Final Council Report: AmAm 2026:** This year's competition, our 40th anniversary, attracted 37 teams from the Oban area and beyond. Starters included entrants from Glasgow and Rotary colleagues from Dunblane. The inclement weather added to the challenges presented by the Glencruitten course and undoubtedly impacted on scoring. Nevertheless, the winning teams produced impressive performances with first prize and the Oban Times Trophy being secured by the 'Old Hackers'. Close on their heels were Dalmally 4 who lifted both the PDK Shellfish Ltd trophy and the prize for the leading visiting team. Third place went to the imaginatively named 'Better Lucky Than Good' who were presented with the Bank of Scotland trophy, now sponsored by Holcim (Glensanda) Ltd. Finally, our yellow ball competition, sponsored by Dunstaffnage Marina, was won by Oban Memorials. We again received invaluable support from, club captain, Malcolm Cullen and the members and staff of the Glencruitten Club. The players certainly enjoyed the hospitality of the club and generously supported the clubhouse raffle which contributed over £1900 to the final amount raised. I remain indebted to all our sponsors and particularly grateful to our main and principal sponsors, PDK Shellfish Ltd, Holcim (Glensanda) Ltd, The Oban Times and Dunstaffnage Marina. I also record my sincere thanks to the AmAm committee for their support and guidance and members of our club, all of whom contributed in a various ways to the success of the event that has generated £13,066.40. Full accounts, courtesy of Jack Tollan, accompany this report. Please see attached.

		As previously agreed, proceeds of the raffle will be allocated to support the OLDS Christmas lunch with the balance enabling us to continue our Rotary mission; supporting our local community. **Council congratulated Alan and the team on a very successful event. Alan noted that fund-raising totals had been very similar over preceding years indicating that the format had probably reached a ceiling of what could be raised.** **Ideas for consideration to be remitted to the 2027 Am-Am committee included broadening invitations to competitors beyond Oban making a feature of the Bob MacIntyre connection; offering reciprocal guest passes with other golf clubs; focussing fund-raising explicitly on specific causes.**
5.8	**OLDS – David Mudie**	**Confirmed Ciorsti as Council's representative on the OLDS sub-committee.**
5.9	**Laurinburg Students Exchange**	**Council welcomed the increased transparency and knowledge gleaned from the Club's involvement in the 2026 exchange programme. Council agreed that fresh communication initiated with OHS and Laurinburg Rotary had the potential to inform an enhanced role for Oban e.g. an increased financial and organisational contribution to benefit the students. The formal Rotary lunch with students could be reviewed in favour of more meaningful engagement and feedback. Council agreed to explore all this with contacts recently made.**
5.10	**Safeguarding**	**Council confirmed Ciorsti Baxter as the Club's Safeguarding Officer. Noted in purely an advisory capacity. Council retained overall responsibility. District to be informed.**
5.11	**Storage and inventory**	**Council discussed the urgent need for better storage facilities – preferably, mostly, at a single location. Alan would ask the golf club about access to a new container – which was unlikely to be exclusive to Rotary. Ciorsti would again ask the McQueen Brothers.** **Sarah's draft inventory could not easily be completed until Club items were identified and re-located to a dedicated space.**
6	**SPEAKERS UPDATE**	• **Dot to invite Oban Nature Network - Rosy Thomson possibly for 1st September.** • **Request sent to Catriona Petit to be followed up – Hope Kitchen Service Manager** • Ciorsti to invite Mark McQueen. **President Eddie would approach Dot to ask if she would be willing to be speakers' coordinator.**
7	**DISTRICT UPDATE**	To note District calendar and when Club votes are required
8	**ATTENDANCE REPORT for weekly lunch/dinner Ronnie Neill – Attendance Officer**	June 2026, No. of Meetings: 5, Attendance Rate: 62.4% Members with 100% Attendance over the month: Alex Burton, Dot Dahl, Davie Finlayson, Alan Hoar, Steph Lowe, Peter Tosh
9	**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**	

10	**NEXT MEETING:**	**Proposed date Thursday 27th August 6:30pm. Hotel would need to be informed.**