



10 February, 2020

Fort William set to “Awaken the Giant” on Loch Linnhe

Caol Regeneration Company (CRC) award £1.48M construction contract to George Leslie Ltd to build Thomas Telford Corpach Marina public slipway and car park, Phase 1 of a 40 berth marina.

After many years of planning, consultation, detailed design and lease negotiation, **Caol Regeneration Company** are delighted to announce the award of a contract to **George Leslie Ltd** for the civil works involved in the Thomas Telford Corpach Marina facilities building, public slipway and car park. Work on the ground will start in March 2020. Leases were signed on 24 December 2019 with the three landowners - **Lochiel Estates, Scottish Canals** and **Crown Estates Scotland** - which means that CRC can begin to spend the £1,465,000 Regeneration Capital Grant awarded to this project by **Scottish Government** in March 2018, as well as £171,000 from the **EU LEADER** fund.

Thomas Telford Corpach Marina will be wholly owned by Caol Regeneration Company, and will provide a forty berth marina for the use of locals and visitors alike, a long awaited public slipway, and a community coffee shop which is expected to become a popular attraction at this iconic location. Situated at the entrance to the Caledonian Canal, marina users will enjoy outstanding views of Ben Nevis and Loch Linnhe. Despite being the largest town in the Highlands, and the Outdoor Capital of the UK, Fort William lacks a serviced year-round marina - this project fully meets that need, and fills a crucial 100 mile gap between Inverness and Oban.

The Marina Project and the study by Yachting Worldwide Ltd. was instigated by Dr Su Sen. He procured funding from EU LEADER, HIE and Scottish Government on behalf of Caol Regeneration Company Ltd. for the Patrick Keating Study. The community work carried out by Su Sen has had a significant impact on Caol and Fort William and there is a great deal of respect for him in the area .

When completed, Thomas Telford Corpach Marina will be Scotland’s latest marina development in line with Scottish Marine Tourism Strategy “**Awakening the Giant**”, which recognises the importance of this sector to the Scottish economy.

CRC Chairman Donnie Corbett said “*It has been extremely challenging to get to the point where we can actually begin construction of the marina. With sustained commitment over the years by the directors of CRC, and the hard work of the marina project committee and project managers, I am certain that Thomas Telford Corpach Marina will provide major social and economic benefits to the Caol, Corpach and wider Fort William community. We are indebted to Highland Council, for financial support and for the enthusiasm of our local Councillors and of their staff here and in Inverness. Significant financial support has been provided over the years by **Highlands and Islands Enterprise**, without which we could not have achieved this milestone. The **SSE Sustainable Development Fund** too has been an invaluable source of funding during the long and costly preparatory phase. Other welcome contributions, in cash and kind, have come from donors such as **Ferguson Transport** and **MOWI**, as well as several regional landfill funds. I want to express my thanks to all of those, as well as to members of the wider community who have given us their encouragement and steady support over the years.*”

Andy McKenna, Chair of the marina project committee, said:

“*The marina car park, slipway and marina facilities building are fully funded, allowing us to make today’s announcement and crack on with the biggest chunk of the project. However, we are now working to secure the balance of the money needed to complete the marina - just over £1m required*”

to pay for the floating marina infrastructure which will be manufactured and installed by local company **Gael Force Marine** in Corpach, creating immediate local economic benefit.

Highland Council has been allocated £1.2M from the 2018/19 surplus arising from **Crown Estates Scotland** trading receipts. After meeting with **Highland Council Leader Cllr Margaret Davidson** and **CEO Donna Manson** on 4 December 2019, we are confident that this project is an excellent fit for this funding - focused as it is on delivering both community and economic benefits to Highland coastal communities. We will therefore be formally submitting a request for a substantial contribution towards our floating infrastructure. In addition, we presented our case to the board of **Highlands and Islands Enterprise** during their visit to Caol Community Centre in November; this was well received and we have been assured of their financial support in closing the final funding gap. Our aim remains for the marina to open later this year, perfect timing to celebrate the **2020 Scottish Year of Coasts and Waters**.”

Northern Light Consultancy, who as project managers are responsible for fundraising, contract procurement and overseeing the construction phase, have been working tirelessly since 2017 to deliver this superb community project.

Director Greg Riddle said: “This has been a challenging project with several major set-backs, and we are delighted to be supporting the Caol Regeneration Company and the local community as we finally take this fantastic new facility from concept to reality.”

Kate Forbes MSP Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch, and Minister for Public Finance and Digital Economy said:

“I am delighted to see how far the Marina project has come, thanks to the grit and determination of a handful of people. The Marina will transform the marine economy of Fort William. It is remarkable that Fort William and the surrounding villages don't have access to a marina. At a time when tourism is booming and Scotland is celebrating the **Year of Coasts and Waters**, it's brilliant to see the contract finally awarded and the Corpach Marina coming one step closer.”

Local **Caol Councillor Denis Rixson** recently commented:

“The poet Robert Southey is supposed to have given Thomas Telford his nickname ‘The Colossus of Roads’ – a play on ‘The Colossus of Rhodes’ (one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World) and Telford's stature as a civil engineer. I think both Telford and Southey would look with pride at the achievements of the Thomas Telford Corpach Marina Project. Telford transformed the Highlands with his roads, canals, bridges and churches. We all hope that this exciting new marina project will transform the Corpach area – from Loch Linnhe, through the Canal, and up the Great Glen. That would be a fitting reward for all those who have poured in countless hours of hard work.”

Alan Henderson, Fort William's longest serving Highland Councillor said:

“As Highland Council representative on Caol Regeneration I am delighted that after all the false starts this project has finally reached not the conclusion but the start of the contract. Over the years I have been energised by the enthusiasm and drive and commitment of the volunteer steering group. This development has the potential to develop Corpach Sea Port base from not just an industrial operation, but also a leisure and tourism one.”

Thomas Telford Corpach Marina Ltd
on behalf of Caol Regeneration Company

Visit www.corpachmarina.co.uk for more background information, berthing enquiries and project developments.

Contact Andy McKenna about TTCM Ltd on 07760 166 970