

## LOCHWATCH LOCH AWE

Lochwatch was launched in March 2010, one year after four men died while crossing the loch in a small dinghy, in thick fog after leaving a local pub. Since 2010 Lochwatch has spent a lot of time an effort in promoting safety on the loch; setting up a volunteer scheme and encouraging loch users to wear lifejackets. Lochwatch now believe the time has come to look at providing a safety boat on the loch.

- The safety boat will have the principal function of reducing accidents and raising awareness – list of possible uses are below
- ***Promoting safety on and around the loch***
- ***Maintenance/repair/checking of the loch marker buoys***
- ***Respond to and assist at incidents while afloat***
- ***Act as on scene commander during incidents on the loch, coordinate searches that involve Lochwatch volunteers in boats***
- ***Provide assistance to the emergency services and other agencies (LAIA; SNH; SEPA)***
- ***By its presence alone the loch may well become more attractive to visitors***
- The cost of purchasing a boat, installing pontoons, installing fuelling facilities plus three years running costs amount to £220,000. The plan is to have the boat operating at weekends and bank holidays and be crewed by volunteers. A number of qualified boat handlers have already expressed interest in being part of the crewing rota. The spec for the boat requires that it is all weather capable and be able to operate in most conditions including fog. It will be equipped for rescue and will respond to incidents while out and about. Assistance to the emergency services will be available on a delayed response bases; in other words, the crew will not be on standby for callouts.

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