

Welcome to Oban



An iconic skyline: McCaig's Tower stands over the town— a monument to a great man and philanthropic gesture to the town. Its construction provided work to local stonemasons during the winter months.



A distillery built on history: Oban Distillery is built on one of the earliest settlement sites in Oban. Today, its single malt is one of the top 20 best sellers in the world. Great for the UK's export industry.



One of our Cathedrals: St Columba's Cathedral, at the north end of the Esplanade, was designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott and constructed between 1932 and 1959.



Our second Cathedral: The Scottish Episcopal Church is represented in Oban by the Cathedral Church of St John the Divine, situated in George Street.



A place you want to live: Making Oban a place where people want to make their lives is important. We want people to choose to stay in Oban or move here and so have invested heavily



A place you want to visit: Whether it's day trips from residents of smaller towns in Argyll and Bute, or visitors from elsewhere in Scotland, the UK or internationally, there's a relaxed atmosphere in Oban for everyone to enjoy.



Lots to enjoy: Oban's retail offer includes well-known high street names, niche independent shops, artisan outlets and much more. A range of supermarkets serve shoppers from as far away as Campbeltown as well as the island communities.



Seafood capital of Scotland: You'll find the best seafood and seafood restaurants in the country in Oban that can be enjoyed alongside some of the best views in the world.



Attracting maritime visitors: The North Pier Pontoons bring maritime visitors to Oban for short stays, bolstering the local economy and acting as a gateway to Argyll and Bute.



Improving accessibility: The pontoons improve accessibility for cruise ship visitors—particularly those with mobility issues—wishing to disembark to visit the town.

Living



Homes in dramatic locations: The Dunbeg Corridor Masterplan will deliver 600 new homes—a mix of houses for sale and rent. This will act as a catalyst for shops, cafes, community uses and commercial activity to create a vibrant atmosphere to attract new families to a fantastic rural location, close to Oban.



A glorious beach on the doorstep: Just outside the town centre is Ganavan Sands, a beautiful stretch of beach to enjoy walks and games with views to the islands.



Looking after health needs: Oban and Lorn Hospital is a purpose-built acute hospital offering services to Oban and the surrounding area, as well as medical and surgical services to the population of Argyll and Bute.



Keeping the community fit: Atlantis Leisure is run by the community, for the community. Run by a charity, it's steered by a volunteer board of directors. The Board oversees the reinvestment of all profits and surplus back into the fabric of the centre, organisation and community groups it supports.



Have a dip—something for everyone: Atlantis Leisure has a 25 metre pool and the fastest flume on the West Coast. The teaching pool has warm shallow water and a gentle sloping floor, ideal for beginners and young children. If you want to stay on dry land—there's tennis, squash, climbing wall, and a range of other sports to enjoy.



Having fun with the kids: There's so much outside space for children to enjoy in and around Oban, but you can't beat specialist play equipment for a fun afternoon with friends and family. Atlantis has it all.



Risen from the ashes—the Phoenix Cinema: In August 2012 Oban Phoenix Cinema opened its doors as a fully independent community-owned cinema, and a registered charity. Since then thrives screening an eclectic mix of arthouse and big blockbuster movies and live streamed theatre.



Innovation in marine science: The European Marine Science Park is home to a vibrant and growing economic cluster based on marine science. This includes innovative enterprises, world-class research, excellent locations and facilities, a skilled talent pool, strong government support for business and close links between policy makers, industry and academia.

Connected



Gateway to the isles: Ferries from Oban connect the Inner and Outer Hebrides to mainland Argyll and Bute. Ferries serve Castlebay, Barra; Colonsay; Craginure, Mull; Kennacraig, Kintyre; Lismore; Lochboisdale, South Uist; Mallaig; Port Askaig, Islay; and Tiree.



Take the bus: Local services, links to Mid Argyll and Fort William. There are several daily connections to the Glasgow and summer services to Dundee and Edinburgh. Catch them from the upgraded Station Square.



The most scenic rail journey in the world: The West Highland Line takes you from Oban to Glasgow in just over three hours. To experience the full stunning journey, continue to Mallaig via the Glenfinnan Viaduct, made famous by the Harry Potter films.



The most stunning airport in the world: Scheduled flights at Oban Airport connects Coll, Colonsay, Islay and Tiree with the mainland and gets island pupils, studying at Oban High School, home with their families at weekends. It also serves charter and private air craft.

Connected—gateway to the isles



Coll is calling: Gott Bay on Coll, tranquil and serene, is linked to Oban by sea and air.



Multi-coloured Tobermory: The main town of Mull and a tourist attraction for generations who remember and loved Ballamory. One of the islands that depends on Oban for connections and services.

Royal Connections



Dunollie Castle: Former fortress of the kings of Dalriada, was captured and destroyed in 698. The present castle was built by the MacDougalls of Lorn in the 13th century, direct descendants of Somerled, and one of the most powerful families in Scotland at that time.



Iona Abbey: Birthplace of Scottish Christianity and final resting place of kings.



Bringing royal connections up to date: The Princess Royal meets pupils from Oban High School.



Royal Walkabout: The Princess Royal out and about in Oban.

Community spirit



Community hub: The Rockfield Centre is a registered Community Benefit Society. Operating in a former primary school, it offers a year round programme of activity across the Arts/Culture, History/Heritage, Community wellbeing and Education/ Enterprise.



Valuing volunteers: We value the work of our volunteers and celebrate their contribution to communities through awards.



Pride in Oban: We have immense pride in all our communities and McCaig's Tower lights up with Pride.



Pride in Oban: Whatever the weather, Oban Pride brings a burst of colour and joy to the town.



Home of An Comunn Gàidhealach: An Comunn Gàidhealach was founded in Oban in 1891. It has supported the teaching, learning and use of the Gaelic language and the study and cultivation of Gaelic literature, history, music and art for over 100 years. The Corran Halls plays host to the Royal National Mod as well as other cultural events, theatre, weddings and concerts.



World-beating ambition: More than a thousand people took to the streets in an attempt to dance the world's biggest Strip the Willow.



Piping in the games: The Argyllshire Gathering is held at Mossfield Park. The stadium also plays host to football and shinty, including the Camanachd Cup final.



Jumping for joy: Young dancers at the Argyll Gathering.

Learning



State of the art schools: Oban High School is one of Argyll and Bute's newest schools, completed in 2018. It's got everything needed to give pupils the best possible start in life.



Further education on the doorstep: Argyll College UHI has nine learning centres located throughout Argyll and Bute, including Oban. There's a wide range of subjects, across all levels, with great links into schools and employers.



World-beating research: The Scottish Association for Marine Science has its base at Dunstaffnage. It researches how the marine environment works, how and why it is changing and how we could use and treat it better. Then it educates, communicates and promotes its finding for the public good.



Supporting our University Town: SAMS has 155 staff, 20 honorary research fellows, 160 full-time taught undergraduate and Master students, 40 full-time research students, and 300 members.

Public and political support



Oban High School • Follow

1 Nov •

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@obanhighschool supports our bid for city status. Click here <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/obancity> for more info. #scotlandinoneplace @argyllandbute @abc_OCTF



"AITC supports the bid for Oban to be recognised with City status. This important tourism destination in Argyll offers visitors a range of immersive experiences on the water, in its historic town centre and through its exceptional local seafood, whisky and gin. With a vibrant night life and routes inland to Argyll's breath-taking scenery and ferry services to adventures across the water to the beautiful islands of the west coast, Oban has much to offer to its visitors, residents, and businesses."

Cathy Craig
CEO



There is strong public backing for city status for Oban.

Our young people got behind the bid, by posting on social media and producing a podcast, and this video, evidencing their pride in Oban and showcasing why they believe Oban deserves city status:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LitRwqW0gTs>

Members of the public gave their support via Argyll and Bute Council's website – the overwhelming majority are in favour of bringing city status to Oban.

HM Lord Lieutenant for Argyll and Bute has given her support.

Oban has received support from across the **business community**, by letter, email, and face-to-face.

Examples come from our key business sectors, and across the area:

- SAMS, the Scottish Association for Marine Science.
- AITC, Argyll and Isles Tourism Co-operation.
- Bid4Oban

Oban has received **political support** from across the political spectrum:

- Councillors across the political spectrum voted for city status
- Oban Community Council is in support
- Oban Area Committee has given its support
- The area's MSP and MP have both sought ways to get behind the bid.

Supporting Oban's bid for City Status

EDM 718: tabled on 30 November 2021

Tabled in the 2021-22 session.

This motion has been signed by 5 Members. It has not yet had any amendments submitted.

Motion text

That this House supports the town of Oban in its bid to achieve city status and become Scotland's eighth city; notes Oban's strategically important position on Scotland's beautiful west coast, connected to the rest of Scotland by a network of rail, air, road and ferry links; acknowledges the vitally important role the busy ferry port of Oban plays in being the Gateway to the Isles, providing a transit point for tens of thousands of islanders and tourists every year; recognises that as a university town, home to the world renowned Scottish Association for Marine Science and a campus for the University of the Highlands and Islands, Oban is at the forefront of pioneering aquaculture innovation and is a seat of learning for more than 1000 students; notes that with stunning scenery, some outstanding seafood outlets and a beautiful old whisky distillery in the very heart of the town, Oban is increasingly becoming a popular visitor destination; recognises that proportionally, Scotland has markedly fewer cities than the other three nations of the United Kingdom, and with a declining population in the western highlands, believes that being awarded city status will bring greater investment in to Oban and the Highlands and Islands and will help reverse the trend of declining population; and wishes the people of Oban the best of luck in their attempts to become Scotland's eighth city.

Tabled by Brendan O'Hara MP



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15 November 2021

Dear Mr Murray

Letter of Support – Application for City Status for Oban

On behalf of the Scottish Association for Marine Science I would like to express our support for Argyll and Bute Council's application for Oban to become a City.

I believe that Oban offers many of the positive attributes of a city: it is a religious centre with two cathedrals and bishops (Catholic and Episcopalian); an education hub with two partner institutions of the University of the Highlands and Islands that bring students from across the UK and wider afield to study in Oban for undergraduate, Master and doctorate qualification. There are industries like the Oban distillery in town and business and innovation initiatives such as the European Marine Science Park. It takes more than two hours to the nearest city (Inverness and Stirling) and no city exists on the entire west coast of Scotland north of Glasgow, holding the development of the region back tremendously.

Being a transport hub with its ferry port, small airport, rail connection and road network mean that Oban acts as the shopping and healthcare hub for people on many of the islands and a wide periphery around Oban on the mainland.

Oban is the only growing town in a region that still suffers brain drain and depopulation. But initiatives such as the European Marine Science Park and the University of the Highlands and Islands have begun to turn the fortune of Oban around, with benefits for the wider region.

We believe that the west coast requires a city for this part of Scotland to flourish. And we believe that Oban is the most appropriate town to take on that role.

Our Association – the oldest oceanographic institution in the United Kingdom – relocated to Oban in the late 1960s in part because of the support offered by Argyll and Bute Council and the vision for the region. We have seen a great transformation of the place from a beautiful sleepy hollow into a vibrant, active and increasingly outward looking community. We believe that we have made a small contribution to this development. We also believe that SAMS will have a successful future in Oban. We love the ambition of the Council for the town and will offer our support wherever we can.

Yours sincerely

Professor Nicholas J.P. Owens
Director, Scottish Association for Marine Science.



JANE MACLEOD

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3 December 2021

FAO Fergus Murray
Head of Development and Economic Growth
Argyll and Bute Council
Kilmory
Lochgilphead
PA31 8RT

Dear Fergus,

Oban – Bid for City Status

I am most excited that Argyll and Bute Council is promoting a bid for Oban to be granted city status in 2022 as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

Oban is very important to the economy and future growth of Argyll and Bute. With its ferry port Oban is the gateway to the Inner and Outer Hebrides, a key transport hub and a centre for tourism. Oban is known nationally and internationally for its warm welcome to home and international tourists.

As a town with a University, a growing population and international recognition it deserves to be given city status.

The granting of city status would benefit not only Oban but the whole of Argyll and Bute and hopefully will encourage businesses, not already represented in Argyll and Bute, to establish branches or set up new businesses in the Oban area. It would support population growth.

I confirm that I am more than happy to support the bid for city status for Oban and to join with the Leader and Councillors of Argyll and Bute Council to help promote the bid in any way I can.

Yours sincerely

Jane Macleod.

Councillor Robin Currie

Leader



**Kilmory
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Constitutional Policy Team
Cabinet Office
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Our Ref: RC/AMcN/OCSB

Your Ref:
7th December 2021

To whom it may concern

Oban - Scotland in One Place: City Status Bid

Since first hearing about the City Status element of HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Civic Honours Competition, I have been immensely excited and enthusiastic about the opportunities for Oban, as one of Argyll and Bute's larger towns.

My enthusiasm is matched, and more, by the potential that Oban brings if chosen as one of Scotland's newest cities.

Oban has elements of all of the good things that Scotland has to offer - but here in Oban, we have them all in the same place. In recent years Oban has seen considerable, and continuing growth. It is home to arguably one of the world's leading marine science institutions, the Scottish Association for Marine Science, which attracts students from all over the world every year. Oban's town centre is full of independent businesses, including top class restaurants offering the best local produce and, of course, a distillery right in the middle of the town!

We believe passionately in Oban's potential. We are highly ambitious for the town, for its contribution to life in Argyll and Bute and, in turn, the whole country. I am sure that when you read our application (or, even better, come to experience Scotland in one place, in Oban, for yourself) you, too, will be convinced.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Robin Currie'.

Robin Currie
Council Leader



Provost David Kinniburgh
Argyll and Bute Council
Comhairle Earra Ghàidheal agus Bhòid
Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll PA31 8RT

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7th December 2021

To whom it may concern,

Oban - Scotland in One Place - City Status Bid 2021

Those of us who are elected to represent the beautiful area of Argyll and Bute often say we have the best job in the world. Argyll and Bute is full of opportunities and potential, communities who care, people and businesses constantly striving for innovation - all set amid stunning scenery in a unique mix of rural and island communities along one of the most breath-taking coastlines in the country.

Oban, as one of our larger towns, is particularly special, and that is why we are seeking City Status for Oban through Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Civic Honours Competition.

As you will see from our application, Oban truly has a piece of everything that is wonderful about Scotland - it is Scotland in one place, and that is the experience open to everyone who lives, works or visits there. From the international students who come to study cutting-edge marine science or traditional music and culture, to the tens of thousands of visitors who enjoy the scenery and the local food and whisky, and a myriad of other good reasons to visit Oban, in between. Indeed, it was my pleasure to welcome Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal to Oban earlier this year, when we had the opportunity to showcase the tremendous level of community spirit and the cultural and historical spectacle that is the Argyllshire Gathering, and when she spent well over an hour with Oban's young people during a visit to Oban High School.

We are immensely proud of all of our communities and believe that Oban is a most worthy contender indeed for City Status. We look forward to the outcome of the Civic Honours Competition.

Yours faithfully

Provost David Kinniburgh
Argyll and Bute Council