



Fishing For Litter



## **KOMMUNENES INTERNASJONALE MILJØORGANISASJONLOCAL AUTHORITIES INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANISATION**

### **PRESS RELEASE**

#### **COUNCIL PLAYS ITS PART IN FISHING FOR LITTER**

Argyll and Bute Council is playing its part in an international effort to tackle marine litter at sea.

The 'Fishing for Litter' initiative – administered by European local authorities environmental organisation KIMO - encourages fishermen to take ashore litter they catch while fishing by providing the infrastructure required.

Participating fishing boats are provided with large, heavy duty bags so that any waste they collect can be easily stored and deposited on the quayside.

Argyll and Bute Council has just taken delivery of two 1,100litre bins with the branding 'FISHING FOR LITTER – KIMO' in two of its main fishing ports, Campbeltown and Rothesay.

The authority has organised for the special bins to be uplifted once a week from the towns' piers.

The first boats to sign up to the scheme are the Leven Mor, which operates from Rothesay, and the Campbeltown-based vessel Kelly Emm.

Spokesperson for Islands and European Affairs Councillor Len Scoullar, who is Argyll and Bute's representative on KIMO, said he hoped they would be the first of many.

"This is a very innovative project which has been extremely successful so far in other parts of Europe," he added.

"Despite many programmes and legislation to reduce marine litter, it remains one of the most significant environmental problems and affects the marine environment on a worldwide scale."

Councillor Scoullar said that recent studies have found that about 20,000 tonnes of litter – predominantly plastic – is dumped into the North Sea alone every year. Of

that, 70% sinks to the sea bed, 15% floats on the surface and 15% washes up on beaches.

“There is an abundance of scientific evidence which proves that sea life has been significantly affected by the increase in marine waste. Thousands of species of bird, fish and mammals are suffering every year in Europe's waters as a result of this problem,” he said.

“In addition, the litter can cost the fishing industry tens of thousands of pounds per boat every year through contamination of catches, broken gear and fouled propellers.

“We in Argyll and Bute have very strong links to the sea, and we must play our part in the stewardship of our local waters.

“It is therefore essential that urgent action be taken to reduce what is currently a significant marine pollution problem, and I am delighted that the Leven Mor and Kelly Emm have signed up to ‘Fishing for Litter’. I look forward to many more local fishing boats joining the scheme over the next few weeks and months.”

The estimated reduction in litter being washed up on beaches and other shoreline will also be of benefit to coastal communities throughout Argyll and Bute. In addition, it is hoped that there will be positive impacts on various other industries such as aquaculture, as marine litter can clog and damage cages and nets.

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