

Introduction

Contacts

Marina VHF #80; tel no 01700811075

Portavadie Marina and Lower Loch Fyne are situated just a few miles to the north of the Isle of Arran, and are accessed from Inchmarnock Water.

This puts the whole area within easy distance of [Largs](#) and [Inverkip](#). In fact it can be said that this whole sailing area offers the very best in terms of sheltered water sailing, including numerous opportunities for anchoring and mooring. With marina and other yachtsman's facilities developing in many nearby locations also, a whole season could easily be spent exploring.

The Marina is formed in a man-made deep water lagoon situated on the eastern side of the Lower Loch Fyne, roughly opposite Tarbert on the western side. The lagoon was originally intended and developed as a yard for building concrete oil rigs, but not one was built here and the idea abandoned. In the 80's the enclosed harbour was used as a fish farm.

The marina which started up about 2013 is now pretty well complete. There is ample berthing space with plenty of room between fingers/pontoons.

Update 2022. They are now so busy that they require you to pre-book your visit on their website (URL below)

The amenities ashore have to be seen to be believed; the buildings are of modern design and pleasing to the eye (and are becoming a "visitor attraction" in Argyll in their own right) The buildings consist of franchises, a top class restaurant and admin offices at the North end near the marina walkway and in the centre are some high end shore-side apartments. At the South end there is a Spa and Leisure Centre with a huge swimming pool, saunas etc along with a coffee bar with small eats.

There is now a shop providing stuff for your galley and a chandlery with some very expensive clothing.

Their website is at www.portavadie.com

Harbours Nearby: [Rothesay](#); [Tarbert Marina](#); [Campbeltown](#); [Arran](#)

Approach

Lower Loch Fyne is clear of dangers providing one....

.... keeps away from the shores, but is very short of navigational marks of any kind.

Portavadie lies about 1.5 miles to the north of Sgat Mor, a small island on the eastern side of Lower Loch Fyne. (Fl.3s 9m 12M)

When following the coast northwards having passed Sgat Mor, be aware of a fish farm just to the north of Rubah Stillaig.. give it a good offing by staying outside the 30 m depth contour. (It is well marked with yellow unlit buoys)

Otherwise there should be no problems identifying the narrow entrance, it is lit for a night entry, (Fl.R.2s) and (Fl(2)G.8s).. the green light having longer range of 4 miles, the red light 2 miles.

NB The buoy laid in 2013 and highlighted in the member's comments below is in the approaches to Portavadie Pier (Calmac), **not** the approaches to the Marina.

The entrance can be clearly be seen in the navigation images, as can a layout plan of the pontoons...

Once through the narrow entrance a swing to port will be needed... directly in front of you will be 6 concrete wave attenuating floats, designed to stop any residual swell reaching the pontoons.

Leave this on your starboard side and move into the Marina, the visitors berths are on pontoon "S" (see our gallery). There is enough room and depth for you to hang over to the port side of the channel and then do a 180 and come alongside port side to if you want to. The fuel berth is on Pontoon G on the other side of the marina. Portavadie marina has deep water all round, being formed in a man made pit.

Contact them on 01700 811075, with a link to their website provided below:

<http://www.portavadie.com/>

Hours:

Sunday to Thursday 8.30 am - 5.00 pm

Friday and Saturday 8.30 am - 8.00 pm

Berthing

There are a couple of anchoring opportunities nearby, best seen....

.... by reference to the chart provided. Asgog Bay to the south of the Marina can offer anchorages in depths of less than 10 m with reasonable shelter from the northerly quadrant but totally open to the south. The head of the bay dries out for up to 1.5 cables, depths rapidly increasing to over 15 m. Some protection from westerlies can be had by anchoring in the eastern corner of the bay where shallower waters will also be found in the inlet leading behind Eilean Aoidhe. Most of this inlet known as Skate Hole dries out, so don't push in too far.

Other possible anchorages are north of the Marina in Glenan Bay and Bagh Buic. Once again there is a drying foreshore dropping rapidly to depths of around 15 or 16 m. Care will be required in the approach to Glenan Bay with various drying rocks radiating southwards from the small island Eilean a' Bhuic.

Both these anchorages are again open to the South. Those determined to anchor will find shelter from south westerly winds in the approaches to Tarbert, covered elsewhere.

Before the marina was built these anchorages were all that was available down this side of the Loch Fyne and they were and still are, in the words of Para Handy, "Chust sublime". The trick was to nip into East Loch Tarbert for provisions and then reach across the Loch to anchor (it's always a reach because the wind is always either "up" the Loch or "doon" the Loch!!)

Portavadie Marina Pre-booking on their website is required

Entry to the Marina has already been described and contact details given.

The Marina has 230 berths and can handle vessels up to 20 m They now (2022) advise that it is necessary to book a berth in advance of a visit here as it has become busier

Their overnight berthing charge (2022) is £3.30 per metre per night . There is a reduction for weeks stay. This includes VAT but shore power is extra paid by top up card.

Facilities

All the berths within the Marina have water and electricity on hand. Ashore in the impressive new buildings will be found 24 hour toilets, together with showers and laundry, together with a family bathroom.

Diesel and petrol are available alongside together with Calor Gas and Camping Gaz

WiFi is available throughout the Marina.

Boats can be lifted ashore by the 18 tonne travel hoist (4.5m beam max), with ample shoreside storage. Masts can also be removed. On-site facilities for engineering, sails, rigging are expected to develop in the future, but for the moment the Marina will be happy to arrange these services for you.

They now have a shop/chandlery ashore where basic provisions may be purchased along with some locally produced fare.

Alternatively Tighnabruaich is about 4 miles away and offers similar facilities, local taxis are available from the Marina.

Transport wise Portavadie is not well served unless you have a car, but buses to Glasgow can be had from Tarbert across the loch. There is a regular Ferry to Tarbert and the timetable can be found here:-

[Ferry timetable and fares](#)

What To Do

The Marina's own bar/restaurant is magnificently situated overlooking Lower Loch Fyne. Food is served all day from breakfast time onwards, and more details including menus can be found on the marina website.

The location and reputation are already drawing people in by car from the surrounding areas.

Note that the restaurant is a fairly up market operation and if you choose the cheapest options from their a la carte dinner menu you won't get much change from £30 per head and that doesn't include drinks or a tip.

Continental Breakfast in their Restaurant is £12.50.

Should you not wish to dine here, and don't have a car to hand, nipping across to [Tarbert \(covered separately\)](#) on the Cal Mac ferry is another option. Here you'll find several hotels, all of which serve food.

See this website for timetables/fares (about £7.00 return)

[FERRY TIMETABLE](#)

Note that the last sailing back from Tarbert is at 1915 from mid June to mid August

History