

Introduction

Contacts

Harbour Master tel 01971 521235; mob 07901514350

Kinlochbervie is small harbour 10 miles South of Cape Wrath and, as such, is a very popular jumping off point for yachtsmen when rounding Cape Wrath. This is not surprising given that the weather windows for Cape Wrath can be very narrow so the 5 to 6 hour passage from here to Loch Eribol or the other way round it can be a boon.

The harbour itself is narrow and very sheltered unless you have South Easterlies blowing up Loch Inchar from many miles to the South East when it can be very windy and fairly difficult to turn into.

In recent years the Highland Council has cottoned on to this fact and has made a series of improvements to the facilities for the cruising yachtsman. In 2009 they installed a pontoon on the Western side of the harbour to the south of the ice making plant and they extended this in 2013. They say that there is room for 8 visiting yachts but this is an exaggeration as they have allowed an increasing number of local boats to occupy the pontoon and there is now only room for about 6 visitors and three of those have to raft outside the others. The photograph of the pontoon in our gallery showing only one green yacht on the pontoon was taken after there had been a general exodus in the direction of Cape Wrath; the previous night that green yacht had to berth further up the harbour against the wall as the pontoon was completely double banked.

In earlier years the trawlers used to come into Loch Clash to land their catches at the pier there but the main harbour is now in Loch Bervie off Loch Inchar. The Highland Council built a huge handling shed for the offloading of fish into lorries for transport by refrigerated lorries into the road network to the South. For some reason the popularity of this harbour has waned and, when we were there, there were very few trawlers coming in and the shed was virtually unused and the harbour and its surrounds was like a ghost town with the visiting yachts parking on its outskirts.

The village itself is historically a fairly new settlement which was started by highlanders who had been evicted by the Highland Clearances. They had a very, very hard time of it and had to start cultivating the land by hand with pick and shovel due to its rocky nature whilst living in turf huts and surviving on shell fish and whatever else they could catch in the meantime (There is a very good account of this on an historical website <http://www.electricscotland.com/history/kinlochbervie/>)

Now we are left with a small village which is basically a ribbon development on the road round the harbour and out to the South East.

Their website can be found at http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1/business_and_trade/102/harbours/4

Approach

From our waypoint it is just a matter of motoring in.....

..... avoiding the NCM on the reef, and waiting until the harbour opens on the port bow. Be careful not to cut the corner but wait until you can see right in to the harbour before shaping a course between the channel markers.

This sounds simple, and it is, apart from the fact that if you are coming up from the South West or across from Stornoway you cannot identify the entrance to Loch Inchar until you are almost upon it. You will be able to identify the sandy beaches to the North West of the entrance but until you have passed Dubh Sgeirean the beaches in Loch Clash will not be clear; then you will slowly see the beach at the head of Loch Clash begin to open and become a bit better orientated. That all round flashing white on the Rubha na Leacaig headland is no help by day as its mast is painted a colour that renders it invisible to the naked eye (we managed to identify it with binoculars as we passed abeam it!) You wouldn't be the first to make for Loch Clash and not realise your mistake until Loch Inchar opens on

the starboard beam!!

Berthing

Most people make for the pontoon inside the harbour

- it's the first thing on the port side after you have passed the second port hand mark in the approach channel.

If the weather has been inhospitable for a passage around Cape Wrath for a few days the pontoon may be crowded with boats waiting for the weather so expect to have to raft or be rafted upon. Do not expect any contact with or help from the HM at the weekend (this is Highland Council after all) and you may find he only puts in an appearance first thing in the morning to collect harbour dues of those who have stayed overnight.

Their charges are in bands and for a boat between 7 and 10 LOA they are charging (2022) £26.36 per night. That includes VAT and free berthage for a second night here or in another HC harbour. They also do a 15 day rover ticket which is worth checking because Gairloch and Lochinver to the South are HC (Kyle of Lochalsh is not any longer - but Kyleakin, over the water is)

For further information on charges see

https://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/536/harbour_dues_-_main_2019

Don't worry about the "2019" in that URL - it still leads to the 2022 download!!

If considering a "Rover ticket" for HC harbours heading South be aware that Kyleakin (on Skye) is HC but full to bursting with commercial FVs; Kyle of Lochalsh is NOT HC. Highland Council going south are Lochinver, Portree (no alongside berths) and Kyleakin (rarely room) and Uig (no alongside berths)

There are places to anchor in Loch Inchar depending on the weather

Facilities

There is shore power and water on the pontoon. Showers are at the North end of the Fish Shed where there is also a laundrette. The nearest toilets are next to the old Seamen's' Mission opposite the Fish Shed but there are also toilets collocated with the showers.

You can buy limited stores at the Spar shop which is located on the road to the Loch Clash pier. I think there may have been some development in this small village over the years; I notice that there is a community health centre in the village opposite the harbour pontoons and there is also a Filling Station and post office across there (you could reach it more directly by taking a dinghy trip across the harbour to that building on the shore opposite the pontoons and going up the track from it to the main road) That wee shop/petrol station/post office may sometimes have a Camping Gaz 907

What To Do

The Kinlochbervie Hotel on the hillside overlooking the harbour is the only watering hole that we know of though some fishermen told me of a pub in the village in the heyday of the fishing industry which may now be closed.

History