

<https://www.dunooncdt.org/post/what-have-the-save-dunoon-pier-working-group-been-up-too>
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What have the Save Dunoon Pier Working Group been up too?

Since 2023, Ali McLay, Emma Davidson and Conor Bytheway have been working with Dunoon Community Development Trust to look at the future of the Dunoon Pier.



From left: Tom Warren, Chair of DCDT with Ali McLay, Emma Davidson and Conor Bytheway of the Save Dunoon Pier working group.

Operating under the governance of the Dunoon Community Development Trust and in partnership with Argyll and Bute Council, the Save the Pier working group has been actively seeking funding and carrying out further research to progress the necessary technical studies needed to inform these types of developments.

The initial goal of the working group is to develop a robust, evidence-based feasibility study, providing a clear case for the pier's redevelopment and its potential role within the future of the town's wider marine infrastructure. Longer-term they hope to begin the process of the pier's renovation.

The wider team —comprising volunteers with expertise in public sector infrastructure, finance, heritage preservation, project development and community engagement —has been engaging with stakeholders in the public and private sector, having discussions with potential funders, and laying the groundwork to ensure any future redevelopment is viable and sustainable.

A Complex and Ambitious Project

Importantly the working group recognises the scale of the challenge ahead. Hundreds of hours have been dedicated to this effort to date, and the group acknowledge that this is only the beginning of what will be a multi-year project requiring significant investment of both capital and time.

“Our goal in these initial stages is to fully understand the pier's structural condition, development potential, and long-term financial sustainability to ensure it can operate self-sufficiently, without reliance on emergency funding in future.” says Ali McLay from the working group.

“To achieve this, we have taken a measured and strategic approach, ensuring that any recommendations and ideas are grounded in technical and financial feasibility. At this stage, it would be premature to commit to specific redevelopment options as further technical assessment is required. Once we have a clearer understanding of the pier's condition, we look forward to working collaboratively with other members of the local community, businesses, public and private sector stakeholders to develop a viable solution that protects this valuable heritage asset.”

Professionally Ali, works as Chartered Accountant, but locally is probably better known for appearing behind the counter of his family's business, [Dae it Yerse!](#). Ali and the other members of the working group are passionate about their local community and want to use their skills to effect positive change in Dunoon.

“As a community development trust, we are happy to nurture ideas that support the sustainable regeneration of Dunoon” says Tom Warren, Chair of Dunoon Community Development Trust.

“Through our work we always try and forge partnerships with key stakeholders, such as Argyll and Bute Council and bring in funding that helps with this work. In the case of the Dunoon Pier, there are many challenges ahead, as listed structures can be tricky to redevelop and sustain, but the working group is keen to go through a process that ensures that the redevelopment of the pier is rooted in best practice.”

Our Progress So Far

The project has involved extensive positive collaboration with Argyll and Bute Council, alongside wider stakeholder consultations, a public petition, and collaboration with advisors in major infrastructure, heritage conservation, and funding options.

To date, the group have:

- Developed a **financial and commercial model** to assess the pier’s long-term sustainability.
- Engaged with **similar projects across the UK** to apply best practices and proactively identify risks.
- Begun drafting the **feasibility study** looking at the pier’s current structural condition. We are in the process of submitting applications to secure funding to progress it further.
- Explored redevelopment initial options that could **maximise the pier’s benefit to the town and surrounding area**.
- Established a **partnership with Argyll and Bute Council** for ongoing collaboration.

Community Involvement

Community engagement will be essential to shaping the pier’s future. There has consistently been a lot of interest on social media and in the newspaper with large numbers of people getting behind the idea of Dunoon Pier being regenerated. It is clear that there is good community support for the idea and the working group welcomes the input of local residents, businesses, and local organisations as the project evolves.

At this stage, the focus is on gathering the necessary technical and financial evidence to determine what is achievable.

Next Steps

Funding is currently being secured to complete a feasibility study, which will provide a comprehensive assessment of the pier's future potential.

This study will include:

1. **Structural and technical assessment** – Evaluating the pier's current condition.
2. **Commercial opportunities** – Identifying viable economic uses.
3. **Financial analysis** – Estimating costs and projected income for different redevelopment approaches.
4. **Market and economic impact assessment** – Assessing broader economic benefits and demand.
5. **Risk assessment** – Identifying key challenges and mitigation strategies.
6. **Stakeholder and community engagement strategy** – Establishing a structured consultation process (subject to feasibility findings).
7. This study will form the foundation for securing funding to progress any future redevelopment. However, given the scale of the project, careful planning and a phased approach is required. We aim to complete this initial phase and be in a position to share the feasibility study by **summer 2025**.

Looking Ahead

Public infrastructure projects of this scale take time, but the dedication of the team working with the support of the local authority and Dunoon Community Development Trust means that there is a good chance that this project will progress positively. The Dunoon Pier working group is committed to communicating on their progress and will provide regular updates via Dunoon Community Development Trust and partners as the project moves forward.

“The enthusiasm from Dunoon surrounding the pier is incredibly encouraging, and we look forward to continuing this journey into 2025 and beyond.” Says Ali.

Interested in finding out more?

Please contact:

 **Alistair McLay, Dunoon Pier Working Group** savedunoonpier@gmail.com

or

 **Ann Campbell, Dunoon Community Development Trust** ann@dunooncdt.org