

IPSO annual report from Wyvex Media Limited, Oban.
1 January-31 December 2022

TITLES PUBLISHED

The Oban Times	print/digital edition	weekly (Thur)	6,120
The Campbeltown Courier	print/digital edition	weekly (Fri)	1,908
The Argyllshire Advertiser	print/digital edition	weekly (Fri)	1,415
The Arran Banner	print/digital edition	weekly (Fri)	2,620
Holiday West Highland	Print edition (free)	2 issues a year	40,000
Mull and Iona Life	Print edition (free)	4 issues a year	2,500
Lochaber Life	Print edition (free)	monthly	12,000
Scottish Field	print/digital edition	monthly	14,491
Cask & Still	Print edition (free)	biannual	5,500
Fish Farmer	print/digital edition	monthly	10,000
Fish Almanac	Print edition	annual	2,500

RESPONSIBLE PERSONS

Susan Windram, Group Editor, The Oban Times, Argyllshire Advertiser, Campbeltown Courier and Arran Banner, plus free magazines Holiday West Highland, Mull and Iona Life, and Lochaber Life.

Richard Bath, Editor, Scottish Field, plus free magazine Cask & Still.

Robert Outram, Editor, Fish Farmer and Fish Almanac.

OVERVIEW

Wyvex Media is a privately-owned company. It produces The Oban Times, which is the regional title for the West Highlands and covers one of the largest geographical spread of any local weekly newspaper in Scotland, serving an area which stretches from the Kintyre peninsula in the south, to Fort William and Mallaig in the north. It also serves the Western Isles, Small Isles, as well as Skye, Tiree, Coll, Mull, Colonsay, Islay and Jura.

Sister titles, The Campbeltown Courier and The Argyllshire Advertiser circulate in the historically important but small Argyllshire towns of Campbeltown and Lochgilphead, and surrounding areas that include the islands of Islay, Jura and Gigha, while The Arran Banner serves the island off the west coast of Scotland that bears its name.

All titles have a dedicated website, Facebook pages and Twitter feeds, with the Oban Times also having an Instagram account.

Wyvex Media Ltd also publishes Scottish Field magazine which has a proud heritage spanning 113 years, delivering editorial on a variety of key subjects, including country news, interiors, gardens, food and drink, property, antiques, travel, fashion, whisky and heritage. Scottish Field has a website, Facebook page, Instagram account

and Twitter feed. The Scottish Field team also produce Cask & Still, a free drinks magazine which is distributed to relevant businesses.

Added to this the company produces Fish Farmer magazine, which has been serving the aquaculture industry for more than 30 years, and has a worldwide distribution and its own website. We also produce the Fish Almanac.

EDITORIAL STANDARDS

Maintaining high editorial standards is at the core of Wyvex Media's business. All our journalists are issued with the Editors' Code of Practice when they join and their contracts make it clear that they are expected to act within its guidelines.

All staff members have a link to the IPSO website plus receive a PDF copy of the Code. Any guidance or notifications that come in from IPSO are passed on to staff.

The Code is also uploaded to the company's intranet site, and any new staff or interns are made aware of the Code at their induction, given a hard copy and directed to the IPSO website. Legal updates from relevant bodies are also circulated among staff.

VERIFICATION OF STORIES

Editorial staff will always endeavour to follow best practice and do their utmost to verify the stories that are put forward for publication. Our aim is to ensure fair, balanced and accurate reporting. Newspaper articles involving possible contentious issues are reviewed by the group editor Susan Windram who would seek pre-publication/ code compliance advice from IPSO and/or the company's lawyer where necessary.

Articles for the Scottish Field stable of magazines are the responsibility of editor Richard Bath, with Fish Farmer the responsibility of editor Robert Outram. Both editors follow the same guidelines and would seek pre-publication/code compliance advice from IPSO and/or the company's lawyer where necessary.

EDITORIAL MEETINGS

The changes brought about by the pandemic have meant we now have a hybrid working arrangement, with some staff working from home on a part-time basis, while others that wanted to are back in the office full-time. This flexible working arrangement seems to work well for staff and the business. As a result, the newspapers' editorial conferences are done by phone every Monday to Wednesday, and by video link on Thursdays and Fridays. Not only do these serve as a platform to discuss what will go in the papers and online, both web and social media, and items for our weekly podcast, but they have also been important in ensuring staff working from home do not become isolated, and allows me as editor to ensure their mental health and physical wellbeing are looked after.

OUR COMMITMENT

Despite the difficulties over the last few years, we have worked hard to ensure we deliver the news and business our communities have come to expect. Life has returned to a more normal pattern, which has meant our reporters are getting out and about on a regular basis, ensuring The Oban Times' continues to be a must read for what is going on across the area. There are still difficulties and challenges, particularly around recruitment and when dealing with the local NHS and Health and Social Care Partnerships, PoliceScotland and our local council.

But the pandemic has allowed us to increase our engagement, particularly with island communities, using video link to attend community council meetings on a monthly basis where we would normally struggle to attend more than once or twice a year due to time and cost factors and issues with ferries.

When contacting people, reporters will always clearly identify themselves, whether by email or on the phone, and explain why they are contacting the person and what any information gathered will be used for (newspaper and online article).

Reporters always keep detailed shorthand notes, and occasionally, with a person's consent, a reporter will record an interview – video or audio – as material may often be used online or in a podcast. If material is to be used in this way, the reporter will make it clear to the interviewee when setting up the interview in the first place and gain consent then.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE EDITOR'S CODE

We will comply with the findings of IPSO and take the suggested remedial action.

COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

Wyvex Media seeks to resolve editorial complaints as quickly and as amicably as possible where a mistake has been discovered. However, we will strongly defend our journalism when we believe that there has been no breach of the Code.

Readers who wish to bring a factual error to our attention are directed to the relevant editors/senior reporters, who will arrange a prompt correction of any accepted inaccuracies. In the majority of cases corrections, clarifications and/or apologies will appear on the same page as the original article. If the story appeared online so will the corrections, clarifications and/or apology.

All complaints will be handled in the first instance by the title's editor or senior reporter. Initial contact with the complainant must be made within 24 hours. Any investigation will be completed within seven days where possible. Where the disputed article also appears online, it will be removed immediately until the investigation has been completed.

All formal complaints to the group editor/magazine editors are recorded on an IPSO complaint sheet which is available to all relevant staff via Google docs. Entries should include the nature of the dispute, how the dispute was handled and any agreed remedy. This helps ensure all complaints are dealt with in a professional and timely manner and makes compiling the annual compliance report easier.

Every effort will be made to resolve complaints amicably, but if the dispute looks like it cannot be resolved, the group/magazine editor must be informed as soon as possible so the matter can be discussed.

After initial contact with the relevant editor/senior reporter, further official correspondence with the aggrieved party will come from the group/magazine editor so the complainer is aware the matter has been escalated.

If the group/magazine editor is satisfied the complaint has been handled properly but there is no resolution, complainants will be given details of how to contact IPSO.

All Wyvex Media Ltd titles have a standard complaints procedure which is published on the letters pages of our newspaper titles and our newspaper and magazine websites along with the IPSO logo. It explains how we will attempt to resolve legitimate complaints and carries details of Wyvex Media's IPSO membership together with IPSO contact information.

All legal complaints (complaints that come via a lawyer's letter or a demand for financial remedy and refer to a cause of action) are handled by the company's lawyers.

As specified above, all formal complaints received by The Oban Times, her sister titles and our magazines are recorded in a rolling report by the group/magazine editors. Although complaints received on an informal basis are generally noted, given the trivial nature of many issues and the disparate way these complaints are received and dealt with (orally, by telephone, letter or email), it would be disproportionate for these types of complaints to be formally assessed in terms of the Code.

The most important factor is that all complaints are addressed and, where possible, resolved quickly. The complaints report is available to all editorial staff management.

We state unequivocally that we will abide by the findings of IPSO and the remedial action it deems necessary.

In line with IPSO's request, we ensure a complete copy of the original articles are archived and kept for four months before any substantive changes are made to an online article or other material in response to a complaint. PDFs of the published pages are retained and original copy by the reporter and any changes made by sub-editors are all archived via Wordpress, which is the content management system we use for all titles. All staff responsible for such changes are aware of these responsibilities. Staff are notified of any changes to procedures or IPSO obligations and updates via our intranet, and if appropriate in our employee handbook.

INTERNAL GUIDES

All journalists are provided with access to the Editors' Code of Practice, which they receive when they join the department, including subsequent updates, and are given details of accessing the IPSO website. We also circulate IPSO rulings among staff. Staff have access to the house style guide and a copy of Scots Law for Journalists. Every employee also has a copy of the Employee Handbook, which is updated when necessary. A copy of the Employee Handbook is also available on our intranet.

STAFF TRAINING

Newspaper journalists receive any relevant updates and guidance about the implications of regulatory changes, particularly in relation to the Editors' Code of Practice and industry best practice. All editorial staff at The Oban Times and its sister titles attend legal training refreshers, usually organised every two years. The sessions include discussions as well as presentations, and are updated regularly to reflect any changes in the law, together with relevant cases. The course usually covers IPSO, including how it works, the Code itself, highlighting any recent adjudications of note. The most recent defamation refresher took place in January 2023 via Zoom. We have a full law refresher booked for later this year. The courses are organised through the NUJ.

Any new editorial staff joining the company between refreshers would normally attend a law workshop at the NUJ office in Glasgow if required.

ADVERSE ADJUDICATIONS

There have been no adverse adjudications against any Wyvex Media titles.

FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY

We endeavour to comply with the code on all occasions.