

**Minutes of a meeting of the Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee
held on 21 October 2008 at Neuadd Dyfi, Aberdyfi**

PRESENT

Councillors Alun Wyn Evans, Louise Hughes, Anne Lloyd Jones, Dewi Owen (Gwynedd Council) Cllr. David Richardson, D. Hughes (Aberdyfi Community Council), Mr Desmond George (Dyfi Yacht Club), Mr W. Bracwell (Aberdyfi Partnership) Mr Nigel Scott (Aberdyfi Rowing Club)

Officers

Mr Barry Davies	-	Maritime and Country Parks Officer
Mr Ken Fitzpatrick	-	Maritime Officer – Harbours
Mr Paul Edwards	-	Aberdyfi Harbour Master
Mr Huw Davies	-	Group Engineer
Mrs Glynda O’Brien	-	Committee Officer
Mrs. Mererid Watt	-	Translator

Apologies: Councillor W. Roy Owen, (Gwynedd Council), Councillor Brian Bates (Aberdyfi Community Council), Mr Nick Dawson, (Outward Bound), Alf Bowen (Aberdyfi Partnership), Mr Roger Lawson-Mole (Aberdyfi Chamber of Trade).

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Resolved: To elect Councillor David Richardson as Chairman of this Committee for the year 2008/09.

2. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Resolved: To elect Councillor Dewi Owen as Vice-Chairman of this Committee for the year 2008/09.

3. **DECLARATION OF PERSONAL CONNECTION**

No declaration of personal connection was received from any member present. .

4. **MINUTES**

Submitted: Minutes of a meeting of the Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee held on 4 March 2008.

Resolved: To receive and approve the minutes as a correct record.

5. **THE MARITIME OFFICER’S REPORT**

Submitted: The report of the Maritime Officer, Mr Barry Davies on the activities of Aberdyfi harbour with specific reference to the following:-

- (i) Navigation
- (ii) General Harbour Matters
- (iii) Events
- (iv) Harbour Statistics
- (v) Results of Customer Views
- (vi) Budgets
- (vii) Maritime Staffing Structure

Reported: (a) By the Maritime and Country Parks Officer

- (i) That there had been a reduction in the number of users on the estuary this year, however, this was generally true along the County's coast. It was suggested that the harsh weather over the summer and the increase in fuel costs had contributed to the reduction in numbers.
- (ii) Although a substantial investment had been made in aids to navigation it was very disappointing to receive a report from Trinity House stating that some of the aids and lanterns did not comply with their requirements. The Maritime Officer emphasised that it was necessary to coordinate a similar work programme to the one that was submitted by Trinity House to ensure that the work is completed. Members' attention was drawn to the cost of £6,195.00 for the maintenance of navigation aids and it was necessary to try and plan ahead for the future and draw up a tight work programme to be implemented. In response to a query by a member regarding using the Dwyfor boat to undertake the work, the Maritime Officer explained that this was not cost effective as three members of staff were required to operate the boat and it was therefore necessary for an external contractor to erect and position the navigation aids but Harbour staff could undertake general maintenance work such as painting, cleaning etc.
- (iii) That a complaint had been received from Snowdonia National Park regarding their failure to maintain the Tourist Information building in Aberdyfi because boats were being stored near the side of the building which made it impossible for workers to gain access to the building. The Maritime Officer gave an undertaking to contact the relevant officers at the National Park to ensure that arrangements were in hand for them to have access for the future maintenance of the building.
- (iv) In response to a query from a member regarding the storage capacity for boats on the quay, it was explained that there was no more room to store boats and in accordance with the Harbour Act planning consent was not required for this. There was a right to store boats on the quay so long as they did not cause damage to the surface of the quay.
- (v) The Aberdyfi Harbour control boat was repaired at a cost of £26,000 and it would be necessary to ensure that the boat would be used to control boats and other recreational use on the estuary. The boat would be available throughout the year, however, it would be stored on dry land over the winter. In response to a query from a member regarding how convenient it would be to launch the boat into the estuary when required, the Maritime Officer did not envisage any problems for it to be used in a real emergency, however, he would not allow one member of staff to operate it especially in rough weather. A member expressed his disappointment that the control boat had arrived late during the season however, having said that having a control boat was an improvement and an asset for the Harbour.

(vi) In the context of harbour events, the success of the Lantern Festival was noted as well as the Windsurfing weekend. A member noted the likelihood that this year's was the last Lantern Festival as the organisers felt that a different event was needed for next year to take place perhaps over two days and they would seek the assistance and cooperation of the Maritime Unit for consent to site a marquee for concerts.

(vii) Members were reminded that Aberdyfi had been awarded the European Blue Flag in 2007 however, it was unlikely to be awarded in 2009 due to the water quality forecasts. Formal confirmation was awaited from the Environment Agency in due course. The Agency took samples every fortnight from one specific location between May and September. If the results were negative for the Blue Flag then the Maritime Unit intended to make an application for the Urban Beach Award for 2009 that was a very prestigious award. The Maritime Officer was of the view that the harsh weather had had an impact on several beaches in the County. During the following discussion a member was of the opinion that there had been a deterioration in the condition of the sewerage system and there were problems with surface drains and land drainage in parts of Aberdyfi and consequently pollution was washed into the estuary. That the Environment Agency should be encouraged to contact and discuss with Welsh Water the deterioration in their sewerage system especially as the failure to be awarded the Blue Flag Award was likely to have an impact on tourism and the economy of Aberdyfi. In response, the Maritime Officer stated that a very strong liaison existed between the two bodies in question and that regular instructions were received.

(viii) Members were guided through the attached appendices and it was noted that there was a reduction in the number of Personal Watercraft, however, the figures registered in Aberdyfi had remained consistent with last year's figures, There was a reduction in the number of Powerboats registered in Aberdyfi and it was noted that it was half the number registered in 2004/05. The statistics for moorings, powerboats and yachts were looked at as well as the comparison of statistics for boats in other harbours in the county.

(ix) It was noted that there was room for 120 moorings in Aberdyfi Harbour however, there was a disagreement amongst Committee members regarding this number and it was felt that the Harbour was full to capacity with 102 moorings. The area opposite the Yacht Club was full and if additional moorings were permitted it would mean that boats would be squeezed into a restricted area by extending the provision to the West. Consequently, this would create difficulties to sail dinghies. It was also noted that some boat owners paid mooring fees in the Harbour but did not use the mooring and therefore deprived other owners of the chance to have a mooring in Aberdyfi as there were approximately 12 boat owners on the waiting list. It was felt that empty moorings caused a loss to the village of Aberdyfi as regards to the economy and it was suggested that consideration should be given to imposing a condition regarding moorings that are left empty for a specific period in order to offer them to those on the waiting list. In response, the Maritime Officer gave an undertaking that the Maritime Unit would review the number of moorings in the next few months.

(x) The results of the customer questionnaire will be submitted to the next Consultative Committee meeting in March..

(xi) In the context of the budget, concern was noted that the income of Aberdyfi Harbour would be approximately £12,000 short of the target for the current financial year. The need to be very cautious was emphasised as the Building Rents income once again appeared very high and it was possible that they had been miscoded and the income needed to be transferred to the

correct budget heading. If this was so, then it meant that the income target was approximately £17,972 short of the target that caused a great deal of concern for the Maritime Unit bearing in mind the current financial climate and the poor settlement given by the Welsh Assembly Government to local authorities.

A member asked if it was possible for the beach to be cleaned by a commercial company to remove the seaweed and debris that had collected. Trees being washed down the estuary caused concern bearing in mind that it was the half term holidays next week and it was possible that visitors would want to walk along the beach. In response, the Maritime Officer explained that if the debris was natural material such as seaweed, the tendency was to remove it and place it amongst the sand dunes and a local contractor could be employed to remove the other debris. He appealed to Members to refer any concern they had regarding day to day issues to the Harbour Master in order that the Unit was aware of them and any problems could therefore be dealt with without delay..

(xii) He expanded on the staffing structure that supports the Harbour Master's work in Aberdyfi and noted that the Maritime Unit would review the situation in detail regarding the requirement for seasonal staff over the winter months. In order to ensure sufficient assistance in the Harbour during winter Barmouth Harbour staff would assist the Aberdyfi Harbour Master for the period 1 October until the end of March 2009.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were highlighted:

(a) Was it possible to make Aberdyfi Harbour more user friendly by siting a floating pontoon near the side of the jetty, bearing in mind that money had been earmarked to undertake a feasibility study for this. It was felt that this would hugely increase the Harbour's income by increasing the number of visitors. The general complaint was that boat owners found it difficult to climb up the steep ladder on the quay when coming from their boats and a floating pontoon would be more suitable for elderly persons. In response to the query by the member regarding the number of complaints received regarding the safety of the ladder on the quay, the Harbour Master stated that he had not received any formal complaint however people did comment on how steep it was.

The Maritime Officer proceeded to say that the Unit had looked at a plan to site a pontoon approximately three years ago, but it was resolved to delay at that time until the full proposed plan of Harbour developments by Aberdyfi Partnership was ready to avoid duplication of provision etc.

The Maritime Officer explained that there was a tendency for boats not to move from one Harbour to the next and perhaps they should be encouraged to do so in order to use different facilities.

(b) In response to a query from a member regarding the plans of Aberdyfi Partnership, it was explained that the first phase had been completed and that they were commencing on the second phase and had to submit applications for European funding for harbour developments. It was important to bear in mind that the scheme period was 10 years and currently there were negotiations taking place between the Assembly Government and the Irish Government however, the Partnership's intention was to complete the environmental assessment together with developments to create an additional pontoon.

Resolved:- To receive and note the contents of the Maritime and Country Parks Officer's report.

6. **ADDITIONAL MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED**

(a) Matters received from the representative of the Aberdyfi Boat Club.

- (i) Stones to be removed from the slipway as this makes reversing down very difficult for vehicles and trailers and it is difficult to get a grip on the slot

In response, the Maritime Officer recognised that the slipway should be cleaned daily and he gave an assurance that arrangements will be in place to deal with this.

- (ii) A request for the Harbour Master's truck to be parked somewhere else rather than near the slipway as this causes another obstacle to reversing down the slipway - especially when the public walk past not to mention onlookers. It was asked if it was possible for the Harbour Master to park to the right of the office on the Harbour?.

In response, the Maritime Officer recognised that the slipway was not easy to gain access to and the Harbour Master would be more than willing to park somewhere else in order to facilitate access to the slipway. It was also noted how important it was for other vehicles not to park near the slipway.

- (iii) Would it be possible to confirm the location of the hosepipe since it was mentioned that there was one near the offices on the front. With permission, was there any chance that the Boat Club could provide a hose for Club users only?

A representative from the Boat Club would be asked to discuss this with the Harbour Master and it would be useful to monitor the usage.

(B) Matters received from Aberdyfi Community Council

- (i) The possibility of installing a light in the Public Shelter near the Harbour Master's office.

In response, the Maritime Officer gave an undertaking that the Maritime Unit would deal with this. The shelter had caused problems for the service for a number of years and the public misused it as a toilet.

- (ii) Aberdyfi Community Council had received a request from a resident for a sign to be erected on both sides of the walk boards near Pont y Brics requesting dog owners to clean up after their dogs.

In response, the Maritime Officer confirmed that the Harbour Master was acting in accordance with the above request. In addition, it was explained that the Harbour Master had recently received training and he had the power to fine individuals who drop litter and dog owners who do not clean up after their dogs on the street.

- (iii) Bridge over the Railway to Picnic Island

It was reported that one or two of the wooden boards on the bridge were rotting – temporary work had been undertaken in the past, however, the bridge should be permanently repaired.

In response, the Maritime Officer had inherited responsibility for the bridge in question and he confirmed that the Maritime Service would make arrangements to restore the bridge

(C) Request to investigate the location of the sandbank buoy and to have the navigation aids on station early before the commencement of the season.

The Maritime Unit will undertake a hydrographic survey in the estuary early on in 2009 in order to ensure that the maritime navigation aids are in the correct sites. The Harbour Master will prepare a detailed work programme in order to ensure that all the navigation aids are maintained over the winter months and if the weather is favourable to ensure that the navigation aids are on station before the 1st of April 2009.

Resolved: To receive and note the Maritime Officer’s response to the above enquiries.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was reported that the next meeting of this Committee will take place on Tuesday, 3 March 2008.

Resolved To receive and note the above.

CHAIRMAN