

Pwyllgor Ymgynghorol Harbwr Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee

28 Chwefror / 28 February 2012

Adroddiad yr Uned Forwrol a Pharciau Gwledig – Maritime and Country Parks Unit Report

1.0 - Dwr Ymdrochi Aberdyfi Bathing Water

1.1 In December 2011 it was confirmed that the Bathing Water quality at Aberdyfi reached the required Mandatory Standard for 2011 and therefore, despite water quality not having achieved the highest standard required for the International Blue Flag Award for a number of years the Maritime and Country Park Unit's application for the Resort Beach Award has been submitted to the Governing Body and it is expected that the application will be successful.

As Members will be aware there is a significant change in the current Directive and the timetable for the revised Bathing Water Directive is as follows.

- **2012:** It is imperative that appropriate signs be in place at all Designated Bathing Water beaches by the beginning of the bathing season, i.e. the beginning of May. The Environment Agency will commence monitoring Designated Beaches using the parameters of the Revised Directive. Grant funding has been secured for the signage requirements and the Unit has submitted the application for grant aid.
 - **2014:** Final Bathing Water report is published using the standards of the current Bathing Waters Directive
 - **2015:** First set of classifications using the new parameters for Bathing Waters will be published and such classification will be based on the data set that commences in 2012.
 - **2016:** New classifications will appear on the signs using symbols that are being prepared by the EC
- 1.2* As previously reported to Members the new strict European Bathing Waters Directive will come into force in 2015 and meeting the stringent Bathing Water criteria set by the new Directive will be challenging. Following further discussion with officers from the Environment Agency and given that the standard of Bathing Water at Aberdyfi over the last five years has fluctuated, it is a possibility that the Bathing Water for Aberdyfi beach could be classified as being of a 'Poor' standard under the new directive in 2015.

There will be four classifications of Bathing Water under the revised directive, these are;

- Excellent
- Good
- Sufficient
- Poor

- 1.3 Looking positively towards the future, should the overall quality of the Bathing Water at Aberdyfi reach the required standard annually, then the Maritime and Country Parks Unit will continue to work towards meeting with the land based criteria and will continue to submit a Beach Award application for Aberdyfi beach. We are of the opinion that such a prestigious and recognised award does have a positive impact on increasing tourism and can have a positive effect on the local economy. The monitoring of Bathing Water also enables the Council to measure the quality and standard of local bathing areas.
- 1.4 The Bathing Water Quality for Tywyn reached the required Guideline standard in 2011. It is anticipated that Tywyn beach will therefore achieve the International Blue Flag Award in 2012. With the aim of drawing positive publicity to the area the Unit has requested that the annual Blue Flag Award Ceremony for Wales be held in Tywyn in 2012.

The confirmed Bathing Water results for Aberdyfi, Fairbourne and Abermaw for 2011 Bathing Season is appended for information and discussion.

2 – Ffioedd a Thaliadau / Fees and Charges

- 2.1 The fees and charges relating to the financial year of 2012/13 have been agreed with the Portfolio Leader. In order to ensure that our clients are aware of the forthcoming charges, the Maritime and Country Parks Unit has corresponded with all clients and advised clients of the revised fees and charges to all clients.
- 2.2 A copy of the fees and charges relating to the harbours of Aberdyfi and Abermaw is appended, and Members will note that it is recommended that the harbour fees and charges for all vessels moored within the jurisdiction of Aberdyfi and Abermaw will be increased by **2.5%** in 2012/13.
- 2.3 The increase in inflation for the harbour of Aberdyfi for 2012/13 is forecast to be **2.08%** a figure which is based on a number of factors that fluctuate beyond the level of inflation (Electricity etc.) As Members will recall pay increases have remained static for the last two years although a small increase has been incorporated within the inflation index within each budget. In comparison with Aberdyfi, the Inflation Rate for Abermaw is forecasted to be **1.69%**.
- 2.4 With the aforementioned inflation rates having been considered, the overall increase in the income target for Aberdyfi for 2012/13 is **£830** bringing the total income target to a modest **£40,700** for the year. Whilst there is a significant deficit in income for Aberdyfi harbour it is anticipated that the increase in mooring fees at a level slightly above inflation once again in 2012/13 will bridge the continuously increasing total when comparing income target with actual end of year income that is generated. Meeting with the income target is important especially given that there will be an expectation to remain within budget on expenditure.
- 2.5 With regard to Abermaw harbour and with the inflation rate being forecasted to be **1.69%**, the overall income target for Abermaw for 2012/13 will be **£46,860**.
- 2.6 Members will be aware that the income target at Aberdyfi together with the income target at Abermaw harbour has continuously been under achieving the required target for a number of years, and, as expected in such serious financial circumstances, continuous further measures and efficiency savings have been identified and discussed. Innovative measures will need to be taken in order to ensure that the overall expenditure and income targets achieve their targets without compromising standards and safety.

- 2.7 The fees and charges relating to the registration of Powerboats and Personal Watercraft have also been increased for the next financial year. Launching fees remain static at £12.00 per launch for daily launching. A copy of the fees and charges for Launching and Powerboat Registration is appended.
- 2.8 The increase in the overall income target for the Maritime Unit for 2012/13 is **£94,800** which compares with an increased target of **£57,330** in 2011/12. This increases the overall income target of the Maritime Unit (not including Country Parks) to **£2,467,550** in 2012/13 a significant target of which will be a challenge to achieve under such ever changing and fragile economic climate.

3. Cyllidebau / Budgets

- 3.1 The financial position of Aberdyfi and Abermaw harbours as of the third quarter of the financial year up to the 31st December 2011 is appended for information. Members will note that the income target relating to the harbour of Aberdyfi for 2011/12 is **£39,870**, and that the total income generated at Aberdyfi to the end of December 2011 is **£30,983**. This is in comparison with having achieved a total of **£30,003** by the end of December 2010 and a total of **£31,694** in income for the same period in 2009. Whilst income levels have remained almost identical the achieved level is below target.
- 3.2 As of the 31st December 2011, the shortfall in income for Aberdyfi harbour is **-£8,887** and the total to date clearly demonstrates that there is a continued general trend and a consistency in the income shortfall on an annual basis. It is not anticipated that a significant amount of income will be generated during the final quarter of the current financial year and it is therefore expected that the income target for Aberdyfi harbour will not reach its target.
- 3.3 We forecast the overall expenditure to be in the region of **-£2,000** below the required target due to under expenditure on certain budget headings. This relatively minor surplus includes having reduced the staffing costs for the winter period in an effort to meet with the budget target. As a reminder to Members the overall total is also inclusive of funding that was introduced into the budget from other Maritime and Country Parks headings in order to undertake certain projects at Aberdyfi.
- 3.4 As in previous years, the total overall expenditure has taken the income target into consideration and given the predicted over expenditure in other areas of the service, additional savings will need to be identified from all Maritime and Country Parks Unit budget headings. For expenditure to be higher than the allocated budget is completely unacceptable and all budget headings will require further scrutiny during the next few weeks.
- 3.5 Given the current economic climate and the requirement to identify continued further efficiency and actual budget savings, 2012/13 will once again be a very challenging year for the Maritime and Country Parks Unit, especially for the harbour of Aberdyfi and Abermaw both of which demonstrate a requirement for additional financial support. It is strongly emphasised that the general over expenditure coupled with the continuous deficit in income will need to be overcome, especially given the significant overall reduction in the budget available to Gwynedd Council and the savings that require to be identified in the future.
- 3.6 In comparison, the income target for Abermaw during the same period is **£46,080**, with a total of **£32,602** having been achieved leaving a deficit at Abermaw of **£13,478**. The aforementioned are comparable to the situation for the same period in 2011. Given that it is a requirement that there will be a saving of approximately **-£2,000** in the expenditure budget at Aberdyfi this will, in turn, demonstrate an overall under expenditure of approximately **- £11,000** for Abermaw at the end of the financial year.

4 **Mordwyo / Navigation**

- 4.1 As of December 2011, two important Aids to Navigation remain off station in Aberdyfi harbour. The Starboard No 1 ‘Bar’ buoy, FIG5s, and the No 2 Port Buoy, FIR5s are both off station. It is essential that work to maintain all Aids to Navigation will have been completed before the Easter Festival which falls early in April this year. It is essential that all Aids to Navigation will be on their chartered positions before Easter.
- 4.2 The starboard ‘Bar’ buoy was damaged beyond repair and a replacement buoy is being sourced. The Port buoy has been transported to Porthmadog for repair and the buoy will also be used as a mould in order to construct replacement buoys for other harbours. The Maritime Officer Harbours and the Harbourmaster will be providing further details at the meeting as to the programme of work for all Aids to Navigation at Aberdyfi. Information detailing the revised maintenance, anchoring and securing system for each buoy together with details of the required maintenance will also be distributed at the meeting.
- 4.3 It is a requirement that the Craft Exclusion Zone marker buoys will be in position before the Whitsun Bank Holiday weekend. Unfortunately, the ground anchoring system used to secure the beach marker buoys has been failing during times of adverse weather conditions and during spring tides.
- 4.4 As in previous years, funding from within the existing revenue budget will need to be identified in order to meet the cost of maintaining Aids to Navigation which is a statutory duty. All Aids to Navigation are inspected annually by Trinity House.

Although two Aids to navigation are off station it is apparent that there are no Notices to Mariners in force for the harbour of Aberdyfi at present. The situation regarding the issuing of Notice to Mariners is being investigated.

5 - **Staff – Staffing**

- 5.1 The post of Harbour Assistant for Aberdyfi for the forthcoming season has been advertised in the local press and on the Council’s web site. The post will commence on the 2nd of April, and will extend to the 30th September 2012. Similarly, the post of Harbour Assistant for Abermaw has also been advertised and the successful applicant will also be employed from the 1st of April to the 30th September.
- 5.2 For the main part of the summer season, it is anticipated that one beach officer for Aberdyfi will be appointed and will hopefully be able to commence duties in mid June. Consideration is being given to the possibility of employing two seasonal Beach Officers for Tywyn given that the construction work on the new sea defence scheme has been completed. The duties of the Beach Officers for Tywyn will commence mid June.

In previous years the Maritime and Country Parks Unit has appointed one additional seasonal Harbour Assistant for Aberdyfi whose primary responsibilities are to monitor, and manage Powercraft and sailing craft navigating in the harbour during the peak period. Given the budgetary constraints it is not anticipated that this post will be advertised for 2012. There will be a requirement for staff to ensure that the appropriate level of service and supervision is applied to the waters of Aberdyfi harbour.

6 Quay Wall

Whilst no firm detail is currently available on the requirement to maintain the quay wall consideration continues to be given as to the process required that will enable maintenance work to be undertaken on the structure. Cyngor Gwynedd are considering all available options given that the quay wall is of significant importance to the operation of the harbour and given that the quay wall also supports the foundation for Canolfan Dyfi, the visitor Centre and the Aberdyfi Yacht Club. Enquiries are continuing in order to determine as to whether the quay wall would be classed as a coast protection structure or as an amenity quay wall. The definition of the purpose of the wall will determine the level of funding that could be forthcoming when the sheet piling is replaced.

Measures have been implemented in order to reduce the effect of accelerated low water corrosion and sacrificial anodes have been positioned on the sheet piling. The position of the anodes on the sheet piling does appear to be effective and such evidence is demonstrated by the fact that the sacrificial anodes require replacing on a frequent basis.

7 Harbour Facilities

Picnic Island - The footbridge that provides pedestrian access from the highway to Picnic Island is the responsibility of the Maritime and Country Parks Unit. The footway is not a Public Right of Way but has been used by members of the public for a long period of time. Access to Picnic Island enable yacht owners to gain access to their vessel and also provides access to the coastal walk locally known as the 'Roman Road'.

The footbridge has been subject to ongoing repair for a number of years and the condition of the footbridge is gradually deteriorating. Whilst no funding is available for replacement action will need to be taken in the near future to ensure that the footbridge does not pose a hazard to users. Furthermore, the footbridge crosses a live Railway line and it is imperative that the footway is maintained to a standard that does not pose any risk to the railway.

7.3 During 2011 the footbridge was inspected by Engineers from the Consultancy Unit of Cyngor Gwynedd and there was also a requirement to ensure that a Railway Inspector was also present in order to ensure that no debris resulting from the inspection came into contact with the railway. The cost of the inspection was funded from within the current budget. The costs were as follows:- Inspection - £350.00. Railway's Inspector Costs - £1,000. A further detailed survey of the footbridge will be commissioned from the Consultancy Unit during the Spring of 2012.

7.4 **Boardwalk – Golf Footpath** – Responsibility for the pedestrian Boardwalk that provides access across the sand dunes to the beach from the end of the Public Footpath has been transferred to the Maritime and Country Parks Unit. The Harbourmaster for Aberdyfi is responsible for inspecting and maintaining the Boardwalk in accordance with the inspection period. Whilst it essential that such a facility is maintained for the good of the community and the economy it is important to emphasise that revenue costs are associated with maintaining such structures.

7.5 On initial inspection, maintenance work is required to be completed on the Boardwalk before the commencement of the Easter festival. Initial estimate for general work that requires to be undertaken is approximately £700. The cost of replacing the seaward section is estimated to be in the region of £3,460