

**Minutes of a meeting of the Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee
held on 11 November, 2014 at Neuadd Dyfi, Aberdyfi**

PRESENT

Councillors Anne Lloyd Jones, Dewi Owen, Mike Stevens (Gwynedd Council), Cllr. Brian Bates, (RNLI), Mr W Bracewell (Aberdyfi Partnership), Mr Dave Williams (Aberdyfi Advertising and Improvements Committee), Mr Desmond George (Dyfi Yacht Club), Mr Huw Evans (Member of Cardigan Bay Fisheries Association), Mr Paul Fowles (Aberdyfi Chamber of Trade), Mr Nick Dawson (Outward Bound Wales), Mr Ian Andrews (Aberdyfi Rowing Club), Mr Nigel Willis (Aberdyfi Boat Club).

Officers

Mr Llyr B. Jones	-	Senior Manager - Economy and Community
Mr Barry Davies	-	Maritime and Country Parks Officer
Mr William Stockford	-	Aberdyfi Harbour Master
Mr Huw Davies	-	Chief Engineer
Mr Robert Williams	-	Assistant Engineer, Gwynedd Consultancy
Mrs Glynda O'Brien	-	Members' Support and Scrutiny Officer
Mrs Mererid Watt	-	Translator

Apologies: Councillor John Wyn Jones – (Gwynedd Council)

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Resolved: To re-elect Councillor Dewi Owen as Chair of this committee for 2014-15.

2. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Resolved: To re-elect Councillor Anne Lloyd Jones as Vice-chair of this Committee for 2014-15.

3. **DECLARATION OF PERSONAL CONNECTION**

Mr David Williams declared a personal interest in any matter discussed regarding the RNLI.

4. **MINUTES**

Submitted: Minutes of a meeting of the Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee that took place on 12 March 2014.

Resolved: To accept and approve the minutes as a true record.

5. **THE MARITIME OFFICER'S REPORT**

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

(A) Harbour Consultative Committees – Terms of Reference

(i) Nominations were received to serve on the Consultative Committee, in accordance with the terms of reference adopted for the Harbour Consultative Committees. Attention was drawn to the list of organisations who had responded that was attached to the report of the Maritime and Country Parks Officer, and it was noted that some organisations had not sent the required documentation namely a constitution and current minutes from their Annual Meeting.

The Committee was reminded that up to seven members could be elected to represent the different interests of Harbour users and if more organisations showed an interest than required as part of the Membership then it will be a matter for the Cabinet Member to consider and choose the final Membership. Ten organisations were listed and those organisations that had not already sent the relevant documentation were encouraged to do so without delay, in order that the Cabinet Member could consider the Membership of the Consultative Committee.

It was noted that the Institute was one of these organisations and since the Secretary of that body administered two organisations it was possible that there had been a misunderstanding, and the relevant documents for the Aberdyfi Advertising and Improvements Committee had not been received.

(ii) The Chairman noted concern if organisations could not serve on the Consultative Committee, as those Members who represent the various organisations were willing to attend meetings of the Consultative Committee and they had experience in the field and an understanding of Harbour activities.

(iii) There was a consensus of opinion amongst the Members that the Institute was not eligible as an organisation to serve on the Consultative Committee and in light of the fact that more organisations had shown an interest than the number required.

Resolved: (a) To accept and note the above and encourage representatives of the organisations to send the relevant documentation to the Members' Support Officer by 31 December 2013, in order that the Cabinet Member can consider the final membership.

(b) That the Institute was not a suitable organisation to serve on the Consultative Committee.

(B) Port Marine Safety Code

(i) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that he had not received observations on the above code and they would continue to review it annually. A partnership had been established with Caernarfon Harbour that would review the code on behalf of the Council, and it was trusted that Conwy and Anglesey Councils would also be part of the partnership.

(ii) <<They continued to experience problems with Personal Watercraft launching from Ceredigion and it was difficult to get cooperation to try and control this. The matter had to be dealt with fairly sensitively in the hope that following cooperation with the relevant officers that a similar scheme could be adopted to what is operated in Conwy and Anglesey. In response to the above, several users noted that the problem was not as bad as it had been in the past, however, it was important that the Harbour Master kept an eye on this.

Resolved: To accept and note the above and request that the Harbour Master monitors the situation.

(C) Harbour Staff

- (i) It was noted that Will Stockford had been appointed to the post of Harbour Master and it was trusted that he could give years of service to the Harbour. He was thanked for his commitment and dedication to the work over the last year and also for his work as a harbour assistant, prior to his appointment as Harbour Master. It was further noted that seasonal staff had worked very well in Tywyn and Aberdyfi during the 2014 season.
- (ii) << Cllr. David Richardson added that the Harbour Master had done excellent work last season and he was visible on the water as well as around the harbour. Thanks was also given to Hefin Richards for his commitment and he had now moved on to another post. It was noted that Ken Fitzpatrick, Assistant Harbour Officer, had retired and the Service had not yet appointed his successor. It was further noted that the Porthmadog Harbour Master had accepted another post as Harbour Master in Caernarfon.
- (iii) << In terms of the winter work programme, the ladders had been installed on the jetty and the Fairway buoy had been painted. Members were encouraged that if any matter caused them concern then they should contact the Harbour Master without delay in order to try and keep the Harbour to the expected standard. In response to a query regarding re-establishing the working groups in order to make use of the expertise and experience of individuals, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer confirmed that they would be re-established in the New Year and if members were interested they should contact the Maritime Officer early in 2015 to organise a meeting.

(CH) Navigation and Moorings

- (i) It was noted that Buoy No. 1 was not on station and the Harbour Master had turned off the light, as there was no light on Buoy No. 2; Buoy No. 7 was not on station either. It was noted that a notice had been sent to mariners to draw attention to the faults and it was understood that the RNLi had experienced difficulties on one occasion when they were searching for an individual in the estuary and the buoys were not on station. It was further noted that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) officers had visited the Maritime Service and unfortunately the contractor did not have the appropriate written documentation available in compliance with the regulations, and an improvement notice was issued to the Department by the HSE. A discussion had taken place with the contractor and until an appropriate statement of method concerning risk assessments is received he would not be able to raise three anchors belonging to the Council and cannot re-locate Navigation Aids. This was a great concern to the department bearing in mind the importance of the Navigation Aids. It was necessary for every contractor to have the relevant documentation where National regulations instruct this. We will cooperate with the contractors in order to incorporate the requirements and a new system of working and it is trusted that the matter will be resolved by the end of this month. In response to a query regarding moving sand, it was explained that the nature of work on the beach was different to harbour procedures, however, the appropriate documentation would be required and these would be prepared in due course. In terms of volunteers taking part in Harbour work and at short notice, it was emphasised that they had to have documentation that would show that a risk assessment had been completed as it was necessary to comply with the Health and Safety Executive requirements and they could not breach the law.
- (ii) In response to a concern regarding boats sailing up from Aberystwyth, an assurance was given that they would circulate the notice to mariners again and would note the need for them to contact the Harbour Master for assistance.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(D) Maritime Statistics

- (i) Reference was made to the statistics in terms of the number of powerboats and yachts and it was noted that the numbers continued to decrease due to the economy and reference was made to the comparison of all harbour statistics.
- (ii) A Member noted that a reduction in the numbers of boats stemmed from a lack of service in the Harbour in terms of launching and lifting boats. In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that a number of boats wintered on the quay as the costs of hiring a crane were high and not cost effective.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(DD) Harbour Budgets

- (i) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer guided Members through the Harbour budgets and noted the net total of £19,336 underspend in the 2013/14 budget. It was noted that there was an income target of £32,570 for Aberdyfi and £24,129 had been received which left a shortfall of £8,000 from the target.
- (ii) In terms of the financial year at the end of September it was anticipated that they were approximately £10,000 short of the income target.
- (iii) Reference was made to the fees and charges for next year that entailed an increase of approximately 1%.
- (iv) A Member noted that in terms of the income lost, would it be possible to charge a fee on surfboarders. The Maritime and Country Parks Officer agreed that there was a need to establish licences and it was trusted that a system could be implemented from 1 April 2015.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(E) EVENTS

(a) Quay Wall Progress

Plans were presented during the meeting to the Committee by Robert Williams, Assistant Engineer, Gwynedd Consultancy, and the Chairman thanked him for organising an open meeting during the spring when many people came to see the plans. It was felt that the meeting had been beneficial to all who attended.

During the ensuing discussion the following observations were highlighted:

- (i) Concern regarding the railings, especially when members of the public would be crabbing and that it was a very popular activity by groups of children in Aberdyfi.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the same was true in Porthmadog with children jumping over the railings and control would be required and they needed to look again at the width of the fence. The Engineer added that an area had to be retained for mariners and it was difficult to have a combination to please every Harbour user.

- (ii) In response to a query regarding the timescale, the Senior Manager Economy and Development explained that this was the initial work and a Convergence Fund Programme 2014/15 had been approved and they were awaiting further information regarding guidance in order to get access to European funding. In terms of the Council, as part of the strategic plans, the scheme complied with the outdoors sector element, however, a process had to be followed regarding ensuring funding. If there was local support it would be possible to proceed to get statutory consent together with the specification. It was not anticipated that an application would be submitted until 2015, however, it would be an opportunity to ensure that a sub-group could be established to present an interest and ensure local support. Statements from local organisations would be of assistance in due course.
- (iii) In terms of the Church Bay area, it was noted that currently the intention was to strengthen and renovate the quay wall and the fishermen would discuss with the Cardigan Bay Fisheries Association regarding an improvement to the access.
- (iv) A Member added that the Church Bay area had been planned badly and as there were plans in the pipeline it would be an excellent opportunity to also improve this area. It was also noted that the RNLI were more than willing to discuss considering the whole picture in terms of the area near the side of the Yacht Club and the RNLI where repair work was required to the slipway regarding health and safety as a result of wear and tear by the tide.
- (v) In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that it would be an opportunity to look at the issue but it was difficult to launch in Church Bay as it was narrow. They would await until the Cardigan Bay Fisheries Association have submitted their comments and then it would be an opportunity to add to these.
- (vi) It was noted that the plan would be a huge improvement on the existing site and would make it easy for visitors to gain access to the village, shops and the Harbour Master's office rather than having to climb up a steep ladder as at present.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(b) Church Wall

The Senior Engineer reported that the work of the Church wall was proceeding following a period of delay and this would continue until the end of January.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(c) Yacht Club

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that the Yacht Club events had been staged extremely professionally by Mr Desmond George.

In response, Mr George expanded on the activities and drew attention to the fact that they had extended the main season and was beneficial to the village and the hotels.

Resolved: To approve the good work done by the Yacht Club by staging events to attract visitors to Aberdyfi.

(ch) Yacht Tender Racking System

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that the above racks would be moved and sorted and it would be ensured that the owners register their tenders.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(d) Winter Storm Damage

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that work was proceeding on the following:

- Quay Wall
- Dunes near the Golf Club
- The timber walkway (it was noted that it was a challenge to maintain this as it was an extra asset directed to the Maritime Service)

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(dd) Beach Award

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that there was concern regarding the bathing water quality in Aberdyfi and he was grateful for the work completed by Natural Resources Wales and it was trusted that an officer would be present at the next Consultative Committee in March to report on this issue. Through cooperation it had been agreed to erect signs advising persons not to bathe two hours either end of low tide. It was noted that the infrastructure in Aberdyfi was excellent, however, water quality was not satisfactory but it was hoped that they would be awarded the Urban Yellow Flag.

It was understood that Natural Resources Wales had visited every farm along the river Dyfi and they expected to receive a report and response to the inspection at the next meeting.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(e) Concessions 2015

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that one concession had been presented for 2015 to the owner of the donkeys.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(F) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

An update was received by Cllr. Brian Bates on the new RNLI building and he noted that they had basic ideas for what would be a successful facility to launch the boat and to link the tractor. It was stressed that there would be no change in the building's footprint but rather there would be significant internal changes in order that the new boat may have easy access to the building. It was proposed to place the Crew's room on the upper floor of the extension with a bay window looking out over the estuary. It was felt that this was the best way forward with enthusiastic support of the plan and it would be a strong foundation for the lifeboat for the next

50 years. They were looking forward to the initial work during winter 2015 with the intention of completion before Easter 2016.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved It was noted that the next meeting of this Consultative Committee would take place on 3 March 2015.

CHAIRMAN