

## Expression of Interest

Cardigan Bay Fisherman's Association

Aberdyfi Town Quay

(Renovation and upgrading)



### **Introduction:**

Aberdyfi is situated on the north side of the river Dyfi estuary. It has been associated with fishing for many centuries and was also a very important trading harbour with rail links to the rest of Wales and the UK.

The jetty and wharf continued in commercial use (mainly coal) until 1959. After prolonged negotiations, redevelopments of the harbour from 1968–1971, including rebuilding the jetty, led to its present use primarily for recreational purposes with a small fleet of commercial fishing vessels and charter boats.

There are three commercial fishing boats operating out of Aberdyfi. The main target species are crab, *Cancer pagurus*, lobster, *Homerus gammerus*, spider crab *Maia squinado*, common prawn, *Palaemon serratus*, common whelk *Buccinum undatum*, along with fin fish such as sea bass *Dicentrarchus labrax* and mackerel *Scrombus scombrus*. Other species which are caught, mainly as by catch, are black bream *Spondyliosoma cantharus*, Dover sole *Solea solea*, cod *Gadus morhua*, brill *Scophthalmus rhombus*.

The main fishing activity is focused around the three artisanal fishermen who operate from small Under 10 meter vessels employing low impact and sustainable fishing methods primarily using pots and trammel netting.

Traditionally the three boats are moored in the Dyfi River and only come along side the quay when needed. The smallest of the boats is hauled out in the winter months as conditions tend not to be suitable for all year round fishing, the other two, which are bigger are able to withstand more adverse conditions, are able to fish throughout the year, though, only when conditions allow.

From most wind directions the sanctuary of the river moorings afford good protection however from certain directions, namely easterly and south easterly winds there is little protection. In stormy conditions when the wind is from these directions boats have been known to break their moorings and have been lost.

## **The Project:**

The ideal solution to this problem is to create a safe haven at the eastern end of the harbour where up to 4 boats at any one time, can be safely tied up to ride out any storm. Currently this area of quay side is already being used by the fishermen to store and maintain gear that is not in use and to come along side to load and unload when tidal conditions allow. A new slipway access is also suggested to improve launching of small craft.

The present quay wall and wooden jetty was rebuilt in 1967 although substantial works were carried out at the time, over the course of the past 47 years the wooden deck of the jetty and the corrugated steel cladding, which creates the quay side itself, has deteriorated and is now in a poor state and needing substantial maintenance and renewal.

Gwyneth County Council have put forward a plan which would not only replace, new, what is presently there, but also improve the quay side facilities to allow easier egress and access to commercial vessels and visiting craft who tie up to the quay wall. This is a major engineering exercise and will take several months to complete and require substantial grant funding. It is suggested that if the safe haven plan is accepted, it would be incorporated into the greater scheme with construction to run in concert with Gwynedd County Council's original plan.

The advantages of this would be:

1. Major disruption to harbour activities during the construction period will be limited to one period.
2. A single application for funding.
3. A complete redevelopment that will be fit for purpose for both recreational and commercial harbour users for many years to come.
4. A dedicated safe haven for fishing boats which would allow for greater security of craft thereby allowing, potentially, for all year round fishing.

The concept of the safe haven would take the format of constructing a wall 27m long, to a similar height as the existing quay sidewall and running parallel with the eastern side of the harbour wall at a distance of 10m. At its northern end a further wall would be constructed at 90° running back to the original harbour wall. This would allow for a hard standing to be constructed between this retaining wall and the road side where the top of the Church Bay slipway now stands.

It has been noticed that there has been a drop off of public launching of water craft from Aberdyfi over the past few years with a significant loss of revenue. This can be attributed, to a certain extent, by poor launching facilities. To combat this and improve public access to the water in Church Bay and encourage greater tourism, it is further suggested that a new slipway is built from the top of the newly constructed hard standing running down to the water directly adjacent to the new 'safe havens' most eastern wall. Currently launching of PWC's and other trailered craft is tricky as the existing slipway is difficult to negotiate by towing vehicles with trailers. Having this new slipway will significantly ease this problem and allay traffic congestion on the Terrace Road (A493) as well as attract a greater number of launching fees.