

***Pwyllgor Ymgynghorol Harbwr  
Abermaw  
Harbour Consultative Committee***

*16 Mawrth / March 2010*

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

**1 – Ffioedd a Thaliadau / Fees and Charges**

- 1.1** The fees and charges relating to the next financial year, 2010/11, has been forwarded to the Statutory Officers and the Portfolio Leader for approval. It is expected that the Portfolio Leader will have confirmed the fees by the end of March. In order to ensure that our clients are aware of the forthcoming charges, the Maritime Unit has forwarded a copy of the draft fees and charges to all clients.
- 1.2** A copy of the fees and charges relating to the harbours of Abermaw and Aberdyfi is appended, and Members will note that it is recommended that the harbour fees and charges for those residing permanently within Gwynedd are not increased in 2010, whilst the fees and charges for those residing outside of Gwynedd are increased by **1%**. The re introduction of V.A.T to 17.5% on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010 will unfortunately incur a slight increase in costs to all users but will not effect the income generated at the harbour.
- 1.3** The increase in inflation for the harbours of Gwynedd for 2010/11 is forecast to be negative at -1.05%, which is based on the next Pay Award being 1%. This equates to a slight decrease in the overall Harbour Income Target of - £2,600 during the next financial year. Members will be aware that the income target at Abermaw and also at Aberdyfi, has not been reaching the required target for a number of years, and, as expected in such serious financial circumstances, further measures on efficiency savings will need to be taken in order to ensure that the overall expenditure, and income targets achieve their targets without compromising standards and safety.
- 1.4** The fees and charges relating to the launching and registration of Powerboats and Personal Watercraft have not been increased for the next financial year. A copy of the fees and charges for Launching and Powerboat Registration is appended and such fees remain at standstill.
- 1.5** The increase in the overall income target for the Maritime Unit for 2010/11 is **£9,070** which compares with an increased target of **£51,020** in 2009/10. This increases the overall income target of the Maritime Unit to **£2,130,970** in 2010/11.

**2. - Cyllidebau / Budgets**

- 2.1** The financial position of Abermaw and Aberdyfi harbours as of the third quarter of the financial year up to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009 is appended. Members will note that the income target relating to the harbour of Abermaw for 2009/10 is **£52,010**, and that the total income generated at Abermaw to the end of December 2009 is **£35,409**. This is in comparison with having collected £32,821 in income for the same period last year.
- 2.2** As of the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009, the present deficit in income for Abermaw harbour is **£16,601**.

The deficit for the same period last year was **£16,334**, and therefore there appears to be consistency in the income deficit. 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 Abermaw harbour will not reach its target.

- 2.2 As will be noted from the financial details, the expenditure to date has also exceeded the budget on a number of headings. Additional expenditure is anticipated during March, and the key financial indicators for the final quarter anticipates an over expenditure of £3,300 in the Aberdyfi harbour budget by the end of March. The total overall expenditure will have taken the income target into consideration and wherever possible, additional savings will need to be made. It is unacceptable for expenditure to be higher than the allocated budget as any over expenditure has to be identified from within the overall Maritime and Country Park Unit budget.
- 2.3 Given the current economic climate and the requirement to identify further savings, 2010/11 will be a challenging year for the Maritime Unit, especially for the harbour of Abermaw and Aberdyfi both of which demonstrate a requirement for additional financial support. It is emphasised that the over expenditure coupled with the 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.
- 2.4 As a comparison, the income target for Aberdyfi for the same period is **£39,660**, and a total of **£31,694** has been reached leaving a deficit at Aberdyfi of **£7,966**. The total deficit in income for both harbours is currently **£24,300**. The deficit in income, together with possible over expenditure, will have to be identified through further savings within the overall Maritime budget.

### 3 Mordwyo / Navigation

- 3.1 All Aids to Navigation leading to the harbour of Abermaw have remained on station during the initial part of the winter months with the exception of the No 2 Can buoy. The aforementioned Aid to Navigation has drifted slightly northwards, and the Mooring Service Provider has been requested to assist with the urgent re positioning of this important Aid to Navigation. The Harbourmaster will be providing members with a detailed breakdown of the cost incurred in maintaining Aids to Navigation during the winter months.
- 3.2 It is essential that any outstanding work that requires competing in order to maintain Aids to Navigation positioned in the navigable channel will have been completed before the Easter Festival. Of recent, most Aids to Navigation were brought ashore and maintained. Staff from Porthmadog and Aberdyfi assisted with the work. The Fairway Buoy is due to be brought ashore in 2010/11, and the refurbished Fairway Buoy has been maintained and is ready for deployment.
- 3.3 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, and in previous years, Trinity House has been critical of the work, and the lack in quality of our Aids to Navigation.

To date, there are no Notices to Mariners in force for the harbour of Abermaw.

The position of Aids to Navigation at Abermaw are as follows:-

Fairway Buoy	52° 42.72' N	004° 04.91' W
Bar Buoy	52° 42.56' N	004° 04.33' W
No 2 Can Buoy	52° 42.57' N	004° 04.14' W
Inner Can Buoy	52° 42.64' N	004° 03.94' W
Outfall Buoy	52° 43.19' N	004° 05.35' W

- 3.4** The Outfall Marker indicating the seaward extremity of the sewer outfall buoy at Abermaw is giving cause for concern. Whilst Dwr Cymru is aware of the defect, the Aid to Navigation remains defective.
- 3.5** The condition of the Perch Beacon continues to deteriorate and attempt have been made to secure the Perch in it's upright position. Given the potential for the Perch Beacon to become unstable, it is most likely that the Perch beacon will need to be removed from station during the early Spring, whereby a temporary Aid to Navigation will be positioned afloat in the channel in order to indicate the position of the obstruction.
- 3.6** Whilst a Navigational Buoy will not indicate the exact position of the obstruction, the proposed Aid to Navigation will ensure that vessels navigating in the channel are directed away from the obstruction. Shallow drafted vessels that navigate across the north bank at high water will need to be informed of the obstruction and it is intended that a Notice to Mariners be circulated to all holiday parks in the area in order to raise awareness of the obstruction.

#### **4 - Staff – Staffing**

- 4.1** As Members will be aware, excluding Hafan Pwllheli, ten full time staff employed within the Maritime Unit. This total includes the Maritime and Country Parks Officer and the Administrative Officer.

A number of officers from within the Maritime Unit continue to remain on secondment in other areas of the service. Of recent, the Harbourmaster at Porthmadog (presently on secondment to Pwllheli Harbour) tendered his letter of resignation and will be retiring from the post on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010. The Porthmadog Harbourmaster's impending retirement will be a loss to the service, and his experience and knowledge will be missed.

- 4.2** The vacancy of Harbourmaster at Porthmadog has been advertised internally within Gwynedd Council. A new appointment has been made and it is anticipated that the successful applicant will be able to commence duties on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010. In order to ensure continuity over the Easter Festival, there will be a requirement for all Maritime unit staff to demonstrate flexibility by assisting other harbours as and when required.
- 4.3** The post of Harbour Assistant for Abermaw for the forthcoming season has been advertised and interviews were held on the 4<sup>th</sup> March. The successful applicant will commence duties on the 1<sup>st</sup> April, and the appointment will extend to the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2010. This post is subject to review, and a decision will be taken on the possibility re establish a full time Harbour Assistant post at Abermaw.

As Members will be aware, the Maritime Unit will need to demonstrate that such a post is required throughout the year and a detailed breakdown of the work undertaken at Abermaw during the winter months will be available for scrutiny. Members will recall that emphasis has been placed on the need to demonstrate productivity and efficiency in undertaking work at the harbour during the winter period and without productivity and efficiency, it would not be prudent to re establish a permanent and full time post at Abermaw.

The post of Harbour Assistant for Aberdyfi has also been advertised and the successful applicant will also be employed from the 1<sup>st</sup> April to the 30<sup>th</sup> September.

- 4.2 For the main part of the summer season, it is anticipated that three (maximum 4) beach officers will be appointed to manage the Blue Flag Award beach at Abermaw and those appointed will hopefully be able to commence duties in mid June. One seasonal Beach Officer will be appointed for Fairbourne and will also commence mid June.

#### 5 – **Gwobr Traeth – Beach Award**

- 5.1 We are delighted to announce that the Maritime Unit has submitted a Blue Flag Beach Award application in respect of Abermaw beach in 2010. The bathing water quality in 2009 reached the Guideline Standard, and therefore, the application can be submitted for a Blue Flag.

- 5.2 A detailed list of the bathing water test results for Abermaw in 2009 is appended. Members will also be able to compare the Bathing Water Quality at Abermaw to that at Aberdyfi and Tywyn which are also appended.

#### 6 - **Cynllun pontwîn – Pontoon proposal**

- 6.1 Of recent, the Maritime Unit has received a proposal to develop a project that would enhance, and improve access and safety to those embarking and disembarking passengers/mariners at Abermaw. This has been a subject of discussion at previous Harbour Consultative Committee meetings, and members were enthusiastic in their support for such improvement. The proposal involves the positioning of a pontoon that would extend from the quay wall opposite the harbour office for a distance of approximately thirty meters. The western extent of the proposed pontoon would be in line with the small jetty.

- 6.2 The proposal to position a pontoon on the quay wall will require careful consideration, and detailed drawings will be required before any funding will be sourced. There are a number of factors that will require consideration, and such factors include:-

- Condition of the existing quay wall.
- F.E.P.A License
- Planning Application
- Consultation with the Countryside Council for Wales

- 6.3 During the early part of March 2010, we hope to discuss the matter with engineers from the Coast Protection Unit of Cyngor Gwynedd where it will be requested that a detailed survey of the quay wall be undertaken. The report on the condition of the quay wall will be fundamental if the Authority is to give further consideration to the pontoon proposal.

6.4 The pontoon may require dismantling and brought ashore during the early part of Autumn, and re positioned during late April. Such a procedure will require additional revenue funding and additional resources.

6.6 The Harbourmaster has been investigating the cost of used pontoons and further information regarding availability and cost will be presented by the Harbourmaster at the meeting.

## **7 - Goddefiad Traet/Promenad – Beach/Promenade Concession**

7.1 The Maritime Unit normally authorise for a number of concessions to operate on the beach at Abermaw during the summer season. Whilst no application has been received to date, it is envisaged that a new application will be submitted for a concession to operate leisure activities and donkey rides on the beach.

7.2 One of the main attractions is the Land Train that operates on the promenade between April and September. Unfortunately, due to a significant collapse of the promenade at the north end, the Land Train will not be able to operate along the whole length of the promenade until the beginning of May at the very earliest. The collapse in the promenade was possibly caused by a drawdown in beach levels. The Coast Protection unit of Cyngor Gwynedd are currently working on the repair works.

## **8 - Pecyn Cychod Ymwelwyr – Visiting Vessel Welcome Pack**

8.1 At the previous meeting of the Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee meeting, Members of that Committee were presented with a proposal whereby visiting vessels would be presented with a 'Welcome Pack' that contains information on harbour facilities, local amenities, tides, restaurants, emergency services etc.

8.2 It is expected that all visiting vessels that arrive at Abermaw, Aberdyfi, Porthmadog and Pwllheli from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 will be presented with a 'Welcome Pack'. This scheme is to be compulsory for all harbours, and each Harbourmaster has been directed to ensure that a comprehensive, and a quality 'Welcome Pack' is available. The Harbourmaster and Maritime Officer Harbours will present the Abermaw Welcome Pack' to Members at the meeting.

8.3 The Harbourmaster will provide Members with a detailed breakdown on the number of visiting vessels, the average LOA and class of visiting vessel that have entered Abermaw harbour in 2009. Further details of the income generated in harbour dues resulting from their visit will also be made available. The Harbourmaster will also present a detailed breakdown on the income generated by launching at Penrhyn Point.

## **9 - Ferry License Requirements**

9.1 As was reported to Members at the Autumn 2009 harbour committee meeting, Members were informed that the Maritime Unit issued three 'Proprietor's Licences' and eight 'Boatman's Licences' for a ferry service between Barmouth and Penrhyn Point in 2009.

9.2 There is a clear requirement and a need to ensure that the basis for issuing a 'Proprietor's License' is unambiguous and that there can be no doubt of the number of passengers that has been granted by the surveyor to travel on board the vessel. There is also a requirement to ensure that there is consistency with the safety equipment that is required on board the ferry and that the safety equipment is inspected by the maritime surveyor and available on board the ferry at all times, and may be subject to periodic inspection by the Maritime Officer and/or the Harbourmaster.

9.3 The definition of 'Favourable Weather' has been clarified, and Boatmen and Proprietors will be required to ensure that they have a complete understanding of the definition as quoted in publications issued by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. Any licence issued by the Authority will be based on the following paragraph that has been included in the MCA Code of Practice for commercial vessels:-

*'Favourable Weather' means wind, sea and visibility conditions which are deemed by the skipper to be safe for a small vessel to operate within the limits applied to it; or, in any other case means conditions throughout a voyage or excursion in which the effects either individually or in combination of swell, height of waves, strength of wind and visibility cause no hazard to the safety of the vessel, including handling ability.*

*In making a judgement on favourable weather, the skipper should have due regard to official weather forecasts for the service area of the vessel or to weather information for the area which may be available from the MCA or other coastal safety organisations or Harbour Authority.*

9.4 The period when the ferry service can be operated and carry passengers is restricted to daylight hours only. That is - one hour before sunrise and one hour after sunset. Running a ferry service outside these hours will not be permitted. A copy of the Owner's Licence and the current Safety Equipment List have been appended as a reminder of what is required in 2010

9.5 Whilst discussing the aforementioned requirements, Members of the Committee instructed the Maritime Unit to consider that the MCA Boatmaster's License becomes a pre requisite for those applying for a Local Authority Boatman's License. Whilst such a requirement will strengthen the qualification of those operating a ferry, there will be additional costs incurred in applying for a Boatmaster's License and some operators currently licensed by the Authority may not be able to apply due to cost and other pre requisite qualifications.

At present, applicants who submit their application for a Boatman's License to the Council are required to provide evidence of the following:-

- RYA Level Two Powerboat Award with 12 months relevant experience
- Valid First Aid Certificate
- VHF License
- Sea Survival Certificate

The cost of a Boatman's License is currently £35.00 per season and is valid seven days prior to Easter through to the 31<sup>st</sup> October (summer season license.)

- 9.6** The new Boatmaster's License issued by the MCA is sub divided into two tiers. These are defined as Tier 1 and Tier 2 Licenses.

Vessels operating a small passenger vessels within Categorized Waters, as defined by MSN 1776 would require a Tier 2 Boatmaster's License. This, if agreed by members, would be a pre requisite for applying for a Local Authority Boatman's License.

The present cost of applying for the MCA Boatmaster's License is £141.00 – License Processing charge, and a further £22.00 for the issuing of the License. A further cost would be incurred by the applicant in order to obtain a Medical Certificate (approximately £60.00) and a further course on Fire Training would be required. Whilst not undermining or reducing the importance of experience and qualification, such additional costs could place a financial burden on a number of small ferry operators that provide a service at Abermaw.

- 9.7** A detailed information pack containing the Boatmaster's Application form and other relevant information will be presented to Members at the meeting. It is requested that the matter be further discussed at the Autumn 2010 meeting.

For 2010, the existing Boatman's License requirements will continue and the applicant will be required to submit evidence as noted in section 9.5. The harbourmaster or other designated officer from within the Maritime Unit is also required to assess the applicant afloat whereby seamanship skills and local knowledge is tested.