

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

05 October 2010

Maritime and Country Parks Unit Report

1- Navigation and Moorings

- 1.1** In accordance with statutory requirements and in compliance with public expectation and the Port Marine Safety Code, all the Aids to Navigation leading to Abermaw Harbour were inspected by the officer from Trinity House on the 21st September 2010. The inspector has initially reported that all the Aids to Navigation at Abermaw, with the exception of the Perch mark were in an acceptable condition. The lantern for the Perch mark is presently extinguished and a local Notice to Mariners is currently in force. In the very near future, it is anticipated that there will be a requirement to position a temporary Aid to Navigation in the channel until such time as a decision regarding the future of the Perch mark has been reached. The Maritime Officer Harbours and the Harbourmaster are currently investigating future possibilities.
- 1.2** Despite the unseasonal severe weather that was experienced on certain days during the summer season, all the navigation aids have remained consistently on station over the season. Maintenance work will need to be completed on all navigational aids during the autumn and winter period and the Harbourmaster and Maritime Officer Harbours will have prepared a comprehensive programme for the maintenance of the navigation aids for this period. It is expected weather permitting, that all maintenance work will have been completed before Christmas. The Aids to Navigation will be brought ashore by the nominated contractor and all the anchor systems will also be checked by the contractor.
- 1.3** Despite efforts to maintain the Perch beacon and reduce the overall maintenance and replacement costs the condition of the Perch aid has further deteriorated over the summer months. Despite the poor condition of the aid to navigation, the temporary anchor system presently securing the Perch has withstood the severe weather that was experienced during the summer. Modest funding has been identified from within the Maritime Unit's current budget in order to position a temporary buoy in the channel. A qualified fabricator has visited the site to inspect the Perch and we are awaiting proposals for replacement. Further structural engineering reports have also been requested.
- 1.4** The moorings allocated for visiting vessels and all permanent moorings in the Council's ownership were inspected and maintained prior to the start of the season. Craft exclusion zone and speed restriction zone marker buoys were positioned on both Abermaw and Fairbourne award beaches and the work was completed by harbour staff. As the speed zone marker buoys were once again positioned by Council staff, no additional cost needed to be identified in order to pay for the services of a contractor. All moorings within the jurisdiction of Abermaw harbour will once again be inspected and maintained by the appointed contractor and it is expected that the work will commence in January 2011. A detailed copy of the mooring service record report will be distributed to Members of the committee at the meeting.
- 1.5** During the winter months, the Harbourmaster and the Maritime Officer Harbours, will coordinate the work of inspecting and maintaining harbour moorings in preparation for 2011. The inspection of the moorings in the harbour will continue to be undertaken by the contractor and if a mooring was not used in 2010, then the owner of the mooring service provider will receive instructions to clear the site. If the mooring owner has not been identified before the end of December 2010, then harbour staff will give instruction for the contractor to remove the mooring.

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

The cost of maintaining Aids to Navigation and for servicing Council moorings at abermaw prior to the start of the season was £3,485.

2 – Proprietor’s and Boatman’s Licences

- 2.1 In 2010 the Maritime Unit issued four ‘Proprietor’s Licences’ and seven ‘Boatman’s Licences’ for a ferry service between Abermaw and Penrhyn Point. As in 2009, only one ‘Proprietor’s Licence’ was issued for a ferry operating in Aberdyfi harbour. Both harbour areas are defined as Categorized Waters under MSN-1776 (Merchant Shipping Notice.)
- 2.2 Members of the Committee have previously expressed concern regarding the level of qualification and experience required for a navigator to hold a Boatman’s License and it was requested by Members that the Maritime Unit undertake further work to ensure that the basis for issuing a ‘Boatman’s’ Licence’ was clear and unambiguous. There was also a requirement for the Maritime Unit to ensure that the requirement with regard to the issuing of ‘Proprietor’s Licences’ was also clarified.

The concerns of the Committee were discussed at length with the Marine Surveyor during the spring of 2010 and it was categorically stated that the number of passengers to be carried on board a licensed vessel was once again to be clearly stated on the License and also on the survey form that is to be completed by the marine surveyor. This ensured that there would be no ambiguity regarding the number of passengers that were granted by the surveyor to be carried on board the vessel. Consistency with regard to the type of safety equipment that was required to be on board the ferry and that the safety equipment was to be inspected by the maritime surveyor and also the requirement for the equipment to be available on board the vessel at all times was also clarified.

- 2.3 The definition of ‘Favourable Weather’ was based on the following statement that is included in the MCA Code of Practice for commercial boats:-

‘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 hasard 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.

As noted in the aforementioned statement issued by the MCA and the Committee of the YDSA (Yacht Designers and Surveyor’s Association) who are also authorised by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, it is clear that the Skipper of the vessel is responsible for making judgment as to whether the weather conditions at the time of the intended voyage is safe for the vessel to proceed on its journey. The safety of passengers is of paramount importance and each Skipper should be in no doubt whatsoever that the prevailing conditions at the time are favourable for the journey that is to be undertaken.

- 2.4 The period whereby a ferry service can be undertaken is restricted to daylight hours only; one hour before sunrise and one hour after sunset. Operating a licensed vessel outside these hours is not authorised by the License and is therefore not permitted.
- 2.5 A copy of the current 'Proprietor's Licences' and the current list of Safety Equipment has been appended to this report and the views of Members regarding the wording of the revised licence and revised equipment list which will apply in 2011 is requested. These documents will need to be continued to be exhibited on board a licensed vessel at all times when operational in the categorised waters.
- 2.6 During the current License period which ends on the 31st October 2010, several claims that vessels were navigating without due regard to good seamanship were presented to the Maritime Unit. Such claims were taken very seriously and each claim was investigated.
- 2.7 On the 27th August 2010, the matter was discussed at length with the regional officer from within the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. The officer confirmed that all vessels duly licensed by Cyngor Gwynedd by virtue of the Public Health Acts Amendments Act were observed to have been in compliance with the terms of the License and all vessels were observed having been in compliance with the International Regulations for prevention of Collisions at Sea (ColRegs.) The MCA Officer did not observe any vessel operating in a manner that would cause concern.
- 2.8 As aforementioned, the Maritime Unit has issue seven 'Boatman's Licenses' for the current license period. Licenses are issued to those applicants who meet with the qualification criteria. As Members will note from the appended draft application form for 2011, the following evidence will need to be presented:-

- RYA Powerboat Level 2 (minimum) with logged evidence of 12 months relevant experience
- Valid First Aid Certificate
- VHF Restricted License
- Sea Survival Certificate
- MCA ML5 Certificate of Medical Fitness (adapted for local license)

It is proposed that the Council issues an amended equivalent of the MCA ML5 application form as the completed form will not be required to be presented to the MCA/RYA.

For those not able to provide logged evidence, then the Maritime Unit will undertake an independent assessment of the competency of the applicant.

- 2.8 During the early part of 2010, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency invited interested parties to provide comment on their research into the existing 'Boatmaster's Licenses'. The Maritime Unit responded to the proposal and a full copy of the responses will be distributed to Members at the meeting. It is anticipated that members will be able to provide feedback on the proposal directly to the Maritime Unit. It is anticipated that the MCA will be considering introducing a new Level two Boatmaster's Licence in the near future.

3 – Harbour Statistics

- 3.1 As will be noted from the table in the appendix, **965** Personal Watercraft registered with Gwynedd Council in 2010. This compares with **892** for the same period in 2009, an increase of **73** in 2010. A total of **1389** Powerboats were registered with Cyngor Gwynedd with the majority of vessels, a total of **714**, registering through direct correspondence with the Maritime Office.

- 3.2 As noted in the table, **112** Powerboats and **82** Personal Watercraft registered with Abermaw harbour, with **16** powerboats and **17** Personal Watercraft registering with the holiday park. The registration fee for powerboats and Personal Watercrafts is identical to the previous year with no increase to take account of annual inflation. The registration permit fees remained at **£15.00** by postal application or alternatively, the applicant could register directly at the beach for an increased fee of **£20.00**. The launching fee remains at **£12.00** a day or **£130.00** for the season. Given the VAT increase to 20% in 2011, it is anticipated that the fees will have to be increased although this will not affect the net income generated for Gwynedd Council.
- 3.3 It is noted from the table in the appendix that **99** pleasure boats moored in the harbour this year and this is in comparison with **102** in 2009. This means that **80%** of the moorings were occupied in 2010, a slight decrease in comparison with 2009. Of these moorings that were occupied, **44%** were occupied by local residents who live in Gwynedd on a permanent basis, and **56%** were occupied by persons who live out-of-county.
- 3.4 Despite the decrease in the number of vessels occupying a mooring, it is encouraging to note that the overall length of vessels in Abermaw harbour has increased slightly in 2010. This indicates that the average length overall of vessels in general continues to increase. This is a trend that is common in other areas.

4.0 Harbour Budgets

- 4.1 Attached, for Members' information, is the harbour's final budget report for the financial year of **2009/10**; also the financial situation up to the 31st August 2010, together with the harbours' expenditure budget and income targets for the **2010/11**. Members will note that there was a slight over expenditure of **£7,187** at Abermaw in 2009/10. The total deficit (over expenditure) for the harbour was **£19,412**.
- 4.2 Due to the most unfavourable weather that was experienced during the main summer month of August this year, it is very likely that the Maritime Unit's income headings will not reach their income target during the current financial year. There will be a need to exercise extreme caution during the coming months in order to ensure that the service does not commit funding beyond the budget. The Harbourmaster and the Maritime Officer Harbours will be providing a detailed maintenance programme for the autumn in order to identify expenditure priorities in Abermaw harbour for the remainder of 2010/11.
- 4.3 There are concerns regarding the income target for Abermaw harbour once again this financial year. Members will note in the appendices that the income target for the current financial year is **£51,600**. The Abermaw harbour income thus far has reached **£30,957** namely a deficit of **£20,642** below the required target. It is not anticipated that there will be a substantial addition to the harbour income between October and March 2011 other than for winter storage and compound fees.

5 Severe Gale of July 2010

- 5.1 During the night and early morning of Thursday the 15th and Friday the 16th of July 2010, the harbours and beaches of Gwynedd were affected by a severe gale. Wind speeds of 87 miles per hour were recorded at Abermaw and at Aberdaron during the early hours of the 16th of July and it is estimated that wind speeds in the inner harbour of Abermaw (as well as in Porthmadog harbour) at one point reached beaufort Force 10. This was an exceptional gale, and one that had not been forecasted although a strong wind warning was in force.

5.2 Staff from the Maritime Unit were alerted by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and were called to Porthmadog at midnight and staff were also on scene at Abermaw harbour at approximately 07.00. In Porthmadog harbour, staff were also required to be on scene before 01.00 together with the Criccieth Lifeboat crew and members of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

5.3 Harbour staff at Abermaw attended to a number of vessels that had drifted on their moorings and slight damage was caused to a number of vessels. Further assistance was sought from the mooring service provider and other harbour clients assisted in recovering vessels.

6.0 Harbour Committee Meetings

6.1 A request has been submitted to Cyngor Gwynedd by Aberdyfi Community Council requesting that Gwynedd Council considers introducing one additional Harbour Committee meeting to the calendar of all Council committee meetings that are already scheduled. Aberdyfi Community Council is requesting that the additional harbour committee meeting be a joint meeting of representatives of all Harbour Committees and would be convened at a mid way point between the existing Committee meetings either during the summer, or at the end of December/early January.

6.2 Members are reminded that representatives from other Harbour Committees are already co opted on to each of the Harbour Committees and that this initiative was introduced by the Maritime and Country Parks Unit in order to ensure that information relating to each harbour was being shared between the Harbour Committees. The representatives from other Harbour Committees are invited to attend with the intention that information to be filtered directly to those Harbour Committees which they represent.

6.3 The views of Members as to the proposal by Aberdyfi Community Council to establish a joint meeting of all Harbour Committees in addition to the existing half yearly Harbour Committee meetings is requested. The Maritime and Country Parks Unit is of the opinion that the present system functions in accordance with the Municipal Ports Review and allows for Members to be updated and to be able to contribute and comment on the relevant harbour's Port Marine Safety Code.

7 - Events

7.1 On the 19th of June the prestigious Three Peaks Yacht Race started from Abermaw harbour. Thirty boats took part in the race this year and this indicates that its popularity is increasing. At the start of the season further funding was committed towards improving the mooring equipment that was used for the Three Peaks Race boats. The next race will take place on the 25th of June 2011 and we are looking forward to working closely with the Race Committee once again.

7.2 The bathing water quality in 2009 reached the required Guideline Standard and therefore, due to the high standard of beach management and local facilities, the beach was awarded with the International Blue Flag Award in 2010. The bathing water quality of Barmouth beach for 2010 appears promising thus far, however, we will have to wait until all the results have been published before they can analyse the bathing water quality for 2010.

7.3 Should the quality of the bathing water reaches the required standard in 2010 then the Maritime Unit will submit an application for the International Blue Flag once again in 2011. We are of the opinion that such a prestigious and internationally recognised award does have a positive impact on the local economy and enables the Council to measure the quality and standard of beaches in Gwynedd against other beaches within the UK. It must however be emphasised that the Maritime Unit does not have a budget for beach applications as the budget was identified as a saving in expenditure in 2008.

The results of the Bathing Water for 2010 is appended for information although it must be emphasised that further samples will be taken during the remainder of the season.

8- Diesel Fuel Supply – £1,735 5000 ltrs from 10.000 bollards £1375 positioning

- 8.1** The diesel supply tank for Abermaw harbour was replaced during the early part of the summer. The previous diesel tank had the capacity to hold 10,000 litres of diesel. Having the capability to hold such large amount of diesel was proving to be problematic especially given that it was necessary to ensure that the tank was full to capacity during the winter months as this would reduce condensation from forming in the tank.
- 8.2** A new diesel tank was installed at a cost of £1,735 and has the capacity to hold 5,000 litres of red diesel. Reducing the amount in stock by half will ensure that the stock of diesel does not age and therefore there is less risk of contamination with condensation. There will also be further opportunities to sell red diesel at a more competitive price as it is anticipated that there will be a better turnover of diesel for the future.
- 8.3** The sale of red diesel at Abermaw is relatively low in comparison with other areas.

Month	Abermaw	Aberdyfi	Porthmadog	Hafan
April	182	335	135	16,108
May	98	1282	867	30,537
June	234	517	452	36,621
July	157	420	696	22,046
August	378	831	782	43,570
Total	1,049	3,385	2,932	148,882