

**Minutes of a meeting of the Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee
that took place on 16 October 2012 at Parlwr Bach, Dragon Theatre, Barmouth**

PRESENT:

Councillors Eryl Jones-Williams, Louise Hughes (Gwynedd Council), Councillors Lark Davies, R. A. Williams (Barmouth Town Council), Cllr. Eric Wilding (Arthog Community Council), Mrs. Wendy Ponsford (Barmouth Harbour and Estuary Users Association), Mr Denis Howell (Meirionnydd Yacht Club), Mr John Johnson (Barmouth and Cardigan Bay Sea Fisheries Association).

Officers

Mr Barry Davies	-	Maritime and Country Parks Officer
Mr Ken Fitzpatrick	-	Maritime Officer - Harbours
Glyn Jones	-	Harbour Master
Mrs Glynda O'Brien	-	Members' Support and Scrutiny Officer

Apologies: Councillor Gethin Williams (Gwynedd Council) and Huw Davies (Chief Engineer).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

In his absence, Councillor Gethin Williams was proposed and seconded as Chairman of this Consultative Committee for 2012-13.

As Councillor Gethin Williams was not present, it was proposed and seconded to elect Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams to the Chair for this meeting only.

Resolved: (a) To elect Councillor Gethin Williams as Chairman of this Consultative Committee for 2012-13.

(b) To elect Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams as Chairman for this meeting only.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Resolved: To elect Councillor Eric Wilding as Vice-Chairman of this Consultative Committee for 2012-13.

3. TRIBUTE

The Chairman, Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams, took the opportunity to pay tribute to the former Chairman of this Consultative Committee, namely former Councillor Trevor Roberts for his service and commitment to the post for many years. The Member Support Officer was asked to send him a letter to convey the gratitude of the Consultative Committee and the Maritime Service for his commendable work and ready support of the harbour activities in Barmouth when serving as the Committee Chairman and to wish him well in the future.

Resolved: To ask the Members' Support Officer, in consultation with the Maritime and Country Parks Officer to send a letter to former Councillor Trevor Roberts as outlined above.

4. **DECLARATION OF PERSONAL CONNECTION**

No declarations of personal interest were received from any member present.

5. **MINUTES**

Submitted: The minutes of a meeting of the Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee held on 27 March 2012 subject to the following correction:

Item 3 (iii) (d) – Page 4

To change the word “reviewed” to “renewed” in the English translation so that the sentence read, “that she trusted that this would not be renewed in light of her concern that more boats would be lost from Barmouth”.

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

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

Before submitting his report, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer apologised to the Committee for the style of the report and explained that lack of capacity and the work load within the service were responsible for this. He emphasised that this Consultative Committee's main aim was to consult on future activities within the Harbour. Any day-to-day issues should be dealt with by contacting relevant officers directly.

Submitted: The report of the Maritime and Country Parks Officer, Mr Barry Davies, on activities in Barmouth Harbour with specific reference to the following:-

(i) Navigation and Moorings

(a) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer referred to the Port Marine Safety Code which had been published in 2003 and would be reviewed in the near future. An amended draft copy would be submitted to this Consultative Committee in March 2013. It would address those elements relating to harbours and the Code would be audited by an independent person. It was required to identify a Duty Holder, and due to the Council's new governance arrangement, it was likely that this responsibility would fall upon the Cabinet. It was noted that the Service's Health and Safety Officer was inspecting the Harbours in order to complete his assessments and report back to the Maritime Service on any actions required. He was due to undertake an assessment in Barmouth very soon.

(b) It was asked whether it would be possible for all members to receive a copy of the Code at least one month before the next meeting of the Consultative Committee to be held in March in order for them to be able to note any concerns they could have.

(c) In response to a Member's enquiry, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted further that unfortunately, the Code was not available on the Council's website despite the fact that the Service had been asking for some years for a dedicated section for maritime uses, such as guidelines, registration forms, fees, regulations etc.

(ch) In light of the above, a Member suggested that this Consultative Committee should support the request of the Maritime Service for resources / assistance to enable it to upload material on the Website in a dedicated space.

(d) It was noted that the navigation aids had remained on station and there had been no negative observations from Trinity House following its annual inspection. £2,7000 of the Harbour's budget had to be spent to install the Perch Marker and users who were present noted that it worked well. Beach zone markers were continuing to disappear once they reached the shore, approximately 33 along the coast in Meirionnydd, and consequently the Service had to bear the cost. It had been decided to attempt to function without these aids in the Fairbourne and Barmouth beach area as most often, at high tides, the markers were at such a distance from the shore that their effect and their value to mariners was very minimal. The zones, under the by-laws, meant that it would not be possible to sail at more than 6 knots within the prohibited area.

(dd) In response to the above, a Member noted his concern in removing them due to uncertainty regarding the boundary lines and the potential for boats to disturb bathers. It was not possible to report on the impact of removing the beach zone markers as there had been very few sunny days over the last year where a number of visitors were on the beach and therefore this was not a fair indicator of the situation. A Member added that these markers assisted in easing the management of the situation.

(e) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the situation would be monitored next year, but emphasised that this Service did not promote swimming in the sea due to the number of drowning incidents.

(f) There had been difficulties with the moorings contractor as following an inspection it was discovered that their boat and vehicles did not comply with the appropriate HSE or Coastguard guidelines. However, following further reports / inspections, it was hoped that they would receive the relevant confirmation and certificates that the boat was fit for purpose during the next week.

(ff) During the next few months, it had to be ensured that all moorings were up to standard. In discussions with the Local Member, it had been decided to establish five new purpose built moorings in the Harbour and should any individuals require an additional mooring, they were to discuss the matter directly with the moorings contractors with the Harbour Master responsible for directing the location. It was hoped that in future, from 2013 onwards, there would be better arrangements in place as far as mooring maintenance was concerned. A valid certificate had to be available for each mooring, either from the contractor or from the mooring owner.

Resolved: (a) To ask the Maritime and Country Parks Officer to send the Port Marine Safety Code to the Members at least one month before the next meeting of the Consultative Committee to be held in March in order for them to be able to submit their observations.

(b) To convey to the Cabinet Member, that the Consultative Committee supports the Maritime Service in obtaining resources / assistance to establish a section of the Website for the Service's information / material.

(c) That local members shall monitor the situation and contact the Maritime and Country Parks Officer should any problem arise as a consequence of not installing the beach markers.

(ii) Proprietor and Boatmen Licences

(a) No problems, such as those experienced in the past with the ferry operators, had occurred this year. Members were reminded of the need to comply with the proprietor and boatmen licence terms. Many hours had been spent by the Maritime Service staff in gathering evidence to resolve the accusations made by both ferry operators against each other of failing

to conform with licence requirements. Secret investigations had been undertaken, but no boats had been witnessed operating in a manner that would cause concern and the Maritime Service staff were confident that they were operating safely. It was noted that the safety of passengers was of the utmost importance and every skipper should be certain that weather conditions were favourable for the journey that was to be undertaken. It was stressed that this was the responsibility of the licensed boat skipper, and the Maritime Unit could not be available to provide a twenty four hour service to decide on the definition of 'favourable weather' .

It was noted that following an incident during the summer months of this year, relating to one of the ferry operators, a Court case ruling was to be confirmed in due course and that any ruling would subsequently be implemented.

(b) A Member noted that it was a shame that such incidents occurred and that it generated a lot of unnecessary work for the staff of the Maritime Unit.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(iii) Maritime Statistics

Reference was made to the appendices attached to the agenda noting comparisons of craft, mooring statistics and power boats and sailing boats statistics. The number of boats in Barmouth Harbour had reduced to 91 this year. The impact of this would have to be weighed up and it was a reflection of the current position of the broader maritime industry economy. There were no development plans for Marinas nowadays, as opposed to those seen three or four years ago, and the high costs of fuel, insurance and unfavourable weather during the summer months had contributed to the impact on the market.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(iv) Harbour Budgets

During the meeting, the following was submitted to the Members:

(a) The final budgets for Barmouth Harbour until the end of the 2011/12 year, and he led them through the various headings. The total staffing costs were £46,680 with an underspend of £-9,203.41 due to the fact that one job had been funded for half-term, rather than two. In relation to the day-to-day management of the Harbour, there was a £10,000 budget and £21,000 had been spent to date leading to £11,557 in overspend. Reference was made to the income targets which showed an overspend of approximately £17,000 last year and this money would have to be discovered in other fields within the Maritime Service.

(b) Current budgets up until September 2012, drawing attention to the £46,723 target and the £1,619.39 underspend due to funding 1½ posts rather than 2 permanent posts. The figures showed that approximately £9,000 had been spent of the £10,000 budget with £1,185.72 remaining to be spent between September 2012 and the end of March 2013. This budget would have to pay for new ladders to the sum of £4,800; a new pump for the red diesel to the sum of £4,500. Based on the figures at the end of September there would therefore be a deficit of £10,000 in the income target. Reference was made to the income target of £48,360 and up to the end of September, £33,481.52 had been collected, leaving the service £14,878.48 short of its income target.

(c) Budgets showing the Aberdyfi Harbour income targets for comparison.

(c) In response to a member's enquiry, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer confirmed that he would print the Tide Tables again this year in November, but he would reduce the numbers due to the copyright costs of Proudman and they would be printed by the Printing Unit.

(ch) The Chairman noted that the Council had made a profit of approximately £150,000 through the sale of assets in Barmouth and it was a shame that a proportion of this gain could not be reinvested in Barmouth.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(v) Events

(a) It was intended to meet with the organisers of the Three Peaks Yacht Race early in 2013 to ensure that arrangements were in place for the competition to be held on 15 June 2013.

(b) It was hoped that the Canoeing Regatta Weekend would be held in 2013 and that it would be a permanent event for Barmouth.

(c) It was noted that the Council was currently consulting on the possibility of having a Dog Control Order for the whole of Gwynedd. It was proposed to amend the Order to include one area on Barmouth beach where dogs would be prohibited. This was important for the Blue Flag award in order to control dog fouling and the Order would provide more powers when it came into force on 1 April for officers to fine the owners of dogs using the prohibited parts of the beach.

(ch) The Barmouth beach bathing water results would be submitted to the Consultative Committee at its meeting in March. It was noted that there was nothing to be concerned about for the time being but it was noted that the standards would be much more stringent and it was anticipated that much fewer Blue Flags would be awarded to Gwynedd and Wales in the future.

(ch) A member noted that the absence of a Blue Flag on the flagpole above Fairbourne this year had been a cause for embarrassment.

(d) In response to the above, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the Green Flag award would be more suitable for a rural area such as Fairbourne. It was assured that the flagpole would be reinstalled for the next season but it was noted that there were difficulties with rural beaches such as Fairbourne in providing a fit for purpose cabin and employing a beach supervisor for six days a week. Applications for beach awards cost £600 each to the Harbour Service, and none of the budget had been allocated for it. It was intended to correspond with the Town / Community Councils to request that they consider shouldering this cost. It was added that the Maritime Service had recently invested £40,000 in order to develop the path in Fairbourne.

(d) The Motocross event would be held in Barmouth at the end of October and it was hoped that the organisers would comply with the relevant requirements for heavy machinery on the beach so as not to damage the sand dunes near the breakwater.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(vi) Concessions and Improvements

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that:

- (a) He was not aware whether the Promenade Shelter would be demolished or not as its ownership had been transferred to another service within the Council.
- (b) It would not be possible to shoulder the cost of clearing the Maritime Compound in the future, and discussions had been held recently with the local member regarding the possibility of providing a better plan for its management.
- (c) The Maritime Service had invested £4,700 to improve ladders recently and further consideration would be given to installing fenders on their outside. The problem was that boats damaged them.
- (d) There was no formal agreement on the ownership and insurance of the Pontoon. It was noted that the Maritime Service had worked with the Sailing Club to secure funding to buy it and the Maritime and Country Parks Officer was of the opinion that the Pontoon was now within the Sailing Club's ownership. It was further noted that the Harbour Master was responsible for managing the Pontoon and responsible for collecting the fees. It was hoped that the matter would be discussed further during the winter months. In response, a representative of the Sailing Club noted that the Club did not own the pontoon, rather it was responsible for facilitating the funding bid on behalf of the community. There would also be a need to discuss and work on installing bilingual signs near the pontoon.
- (e) There was better management of the Aberamffra Harbour area.
- (f) It was hoped that past difficulties with beach and promenade concessions would not be experienced again. A request had also been received for deckchair hire concessions.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(vii) Security of Marine Equipment

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that the Police were eager to circulate the Marine Watch Scheme form (attached to the agenda) as a result of the theft of three machines in Aberdyfi recently. The form would be sent to all boat proprietors to enable the Police to monitor ownership in future.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(viii) Harbour Staff

A very enthusiastic person had been appointed as Harbour Assistant from 1 April until 30 September 2012 and it was hoped that the appointment could be made again next year. In terms of winter staffing, Aberdyfi Harbour Master would be required to assist in Barmouth and similarly, the Barmouth Harbour Master would be expected to assist in Aberdyfi.

The maintenance works programme would be circulated to all members within the next fortnight.

Resolved: To accept and note the above ensuring that the works programme is circulated to members of the Consultative Committee via e-mail in due course.

6. MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

(a) Working Harbour Status

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer assured the Committee that there had been no change to the status of Barmouth harbour and that it operated in line with legislative guidelines.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(b) Management and signage around the Pontoon. Need proposals in writing to manage the area and health and safety / risk assessments.

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that the pontoon would not be included in the Port Marine Safety Code and that the Maritime Unit would undertake a simple risk assessment. The pontoon had been built to the required standard and as the pontoon was not owned by the Maritime Service, the Service would not be responsible for completing the risk assessment.

A Member expressed her concern that individuals had been crab fishing from the pontoon and that further discussions should be held in relation to installing suitable signage to prohibit this activity in order to maintain control when boats came in and out.

In response to an enquiry by the Member regarding removing the pontoon fingers, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer confirmed that this would be discussed with those who had submitted the request.

Resolved: To accept and note the above and the Maritime and County Parks Officer has pledged that the signs will be erected in the coming weeks.

(c) Boats on hard standings / access for loading and unloading

A Member noted that it was difficult for boats to load and unload from the Harbour and accepted that the pontoon had made this more difficult.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer agreed with the comment, however he noted that it was difficult to retain control as there was a lot of coming and going in this area from behind the toilets. Should this section of the Harbour be allocated for loading and unloading there would be a need to install a security fence around any vehicle unloading in this area to avoid any risks to the public. The Maritime and Country Parks Officer promised that he would discuss the matter further with his fellow officers but he did favour the boat wintering area for loading and unloading. The Aberamffra Area was also an excellent area for loading and unloading.

Resolved: To ask the Maritime and Country Parks Officer to further discuss the above matter with the relevant officers.

(ch) Waste Management

It was noted that the area for the disposal of oil waste was not accessible especially in the evenings and on weekends.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer confirmed that the matter would be discussed further with the officers and he emphasised the importance of having a provision in place to dispose of materials such as acid batteries, filters, general waste and oil waste. Maybe a way forward would be for mariners to leave oil canisters outside and for the Harbour Master to collect them and empty them in the tank.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(d) Fairbourne Point

Members reported that a number of camping vans were parking overnight at Fairbourne Point and were taking over the area where boat launching was permitted. During the Bank Holiday there had been approximately 13 vans there and approximately 18 boats launching there for free. Additionally, there were no toilet facilities for them and they often left their refuse behind.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that the Service had no control over parking in this area and that this problem was not unique to Fairbourne as it also occurred on other parts of the coast. Whilst accepting that the land near the sea was the responsibility of the Maritime Service, officers could not be instructed to supervise this area as they had no powers to do so.

The Chairman suggested that the Local Member should raise this matter with the Community Council and invite an officer from the Council's Highways Department to the meeting along with the Police to discuss the best way of proceeding.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(dd) Clear plan to deal with sand

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that initial discussions had taken place regarding the above and that the Senior Manager – Waste and Commissioning was discussing the matter with the Local Member.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(e) Health and Safety – support to re-open the breakwater slipway to obtain better access to the water

(i) It was noted that the Local Member was eager to open a new slipway to the basin area. To achieve this, it would be required to remove approximately 6 – 10 metres of the wall in order to create a space. It was intended to discuss this further with the Highways Unit and it was further noted that there was also a need to hold discussions with the Town Council. The need to seek assurances regarding the safety of the public in the event of doing this was emphasised.

(ii) A representative of the Harbour Users reported that she had been given to understand that the Contractor was not happy with the above, however the users were eager to find funding resources for a plan to open a slipway opposite the Sailing Club. It was added that further discussions would be held by the contractor and the relevant parties.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(f) Budgets / income targets

It was reported that the Local Member was eager to discuss the budgets, collaboration between departments and ideas of how to increase the Harbour's income with the officers and the relevant Cabinet Members.

Resolved: To convey that the Consultative Committee supports the Local Member's suggestion.

7. **ELECTION OF OBSERVERS**

Resolved: To elect Councillor Gethin Williams to serve as observer on the following:

- (a) Aberdyfi Consultative Committee
- (b) Porthmadog Consultative Committee
- (c) Pwllheli Consultative Committee

8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Reported: The next meeting of this Consultative Committee would take place on Tuesday, 19 March 2013.

Resolved To accept and note the above.

CHAIRMAN