

**Minutes of a meeting of the Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee
that took place on 27 March 2012 at Parlwr Mawr, Dragon Theatre, Barmouth**

PRESENT:

Councillor Trevor Roberts (Chairman)

Councillors Eryl Jones-Williams, Gethin Glyn Williams (Gwynedd Council), Cllr. P. Bunce (Barmouth Town Council), Cllr. Eric Wilding (Arthog Community Council), Mrs. Wendy Ponsford (Barmouth Harbour and Estuary Users), Mr Denis Howell (Meirioneth Yacht Club).

Officers

Mr Llŷr Jones	-	Senior Manager - Economy and Community
Mr Barry Davies	-	Maritime and Country Parks Officer
Mr Ken Fitzpatrick	-	Maritime Officer - Harbours
Mr Huw Davies	-	Group Engineer
Glyn Jones	-	Harbour Master
Mrs Glynda O'Brien	-	Committee Officer

Apologies: Councillors W. Roy Owen (Portfolio Leader -Maritime and Country Parks), Ioan Thomas (Chair Development Scrutiny Committee), Cllr. Aeron Williams (Barmouth Town Council), Mr John Probert (RNLI), Mr John Johnson (Barmouth and Cardigan Bay Sea Fisheries Association) and Cllr David Richardson (Observer on behalf of Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee).

1. **DECLARATION OF PERSONAL CONNECTION**

Councillor Trevor Roberts stated that he was a life member of the Yacht Club and he took no part in discussion associated with the Club.

2. **MINUTES**

Submitted: Minutes of a meeting of the Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee held on 4 October 2011.

(a) A Member drew attention to the accuracy of the following issues:

(i) Page 2 – Item (i) Navigation Aids – that paragraph two referred to stationing the aid by November, however, this contradicted what was said in the second paragraph of point (b) on the same page that stated it would be in place by Christmas.

(ii) Page 6 (d) (in the English translation) – the Maritime Officer was asked if he had said that he “was concerned about the quality of the surface of the walls in the Diesel Storage area and that it was necessary to invest to repair them”.

(iii) Page 7 (ch) – it was asked if a Member had expressed the comment noted in the last sentence about the officers.

(iv) Page 8 – Point (2) – Fenders on ladders – the Chair was asked if he had said that ‘day to day issues that are a matter of concern to Members could be raised with the Harbour Master rather than waiting to raise this at the Consultative Committee meetings’.

(b) In response to the above, the Chair and the Maritime Officer were of the view that the minutes were correct and the Committee Officer promised to look at her notes from the last meeting. It was further noted that she would request for this Consultative Committee to be recorded in future.

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

2.1 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(a) Item 5(ii) – Proprietor and Boatman Licences

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer referred to the decision he had made to organise a meeting with the ferry operators and noted that he had sought to ensure convenient dates, however, due to various reasons and commitments it had not been possible to organise a meeting. Applications for licences would be received seven days prior to the Easter holiday and if an opportunity arose for a meeting an assurance was given that a meeting would take place.

The Harbour Master noted that one of the operators who was the holder of a boat owner licence had returned back safely from Afghanistan.

Resolved: To accept and note the above explanation.

(b) Item 5(iv) – Harbour Budgets (Disposal of Assets)

The Maritime Officer reported on the disposal of assets and that several of the units on the Quay and at Aberamffra had now been sold for £170,000 with three of the units remaining unsold. It was noted that the total income created from the units was approximately £4,000 per annum for the Maritime Service.

Resolved: To accept and note the above information.

(c) Item 7 (5) – Advertising the Harbours

The Maritime Officer referred to a request made at the last meeting for the Maritime Service to advertise Harbour activities in appropriate places and magazines to attract more customers and he stated that advertising in magazines was far beyond what the Service could earmark within the budget. Hafan Pwllheli was advertised in 'Yachting Monthly' and 'Practical Boat Owner' magazines at a cost of approximately £1,500 - £2,000.

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer added that the pilot booklet 'North West Venture Yacht Club – Cruising Anglesey and Adjoining Waters' included harbours up to Porthmadog and the Council had taken advantage of having a full advertisement in it. The Maritime Officer had discussed with the author of the booklet the possibility that he could visit Aberdyfi and Barmouth with the intention of writing relevant pieces about these harbours to be placed in the booklet. It was trusted that both Harbours would be included in the pilot booklet in a year and a half to two years time.

Resolved: To accept and note the above information.

3. THE MARITIME OFFICER'S REPORT

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) Fees and Charges

(a) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that an increase of 2.5% was recommended in harbour fees and charges for all vessels moored within the jurisdiction of Barmouth Harbour in 2012/13. It was anticipated that the increase in inflation at Aberdyfi

harbour for 2012/13 was 1.69%, a figure based on a number of factors that fluctuate beyond the level of inflation. When considering the rate of inflation, it was noted that there was a general increase of £780 in the income target for Barmouth in 2012/13 with the total income target being £46,860 for the year. It was noted that there was an error in the report in the context of the rate of inflation in Aberdyfi Harbour and it should read 2.08% rather than 12.08%.

The fees and charges to register Powerboats and Personal Watercraft had also been increased by approximately £5.00 and the daily launching fees would remain static for this year.

There will be a challenging increase in the general Maritime Unit income target for 2012/13 namely £94,800 which compared with an increased target of £57,330 in 2011/12. This increased the overall income target of the Maritime Unit (excluding Country Parks) to £2,467,550 in 2012/13.

(b) A Member noted that the beach was a very valuable asset for the Harbour and that it attracted visitors who park in the Council's car park and on the Promenade. He was of the view that a percentage of the received parking fees, if not all, should be transferred to the Maritime Service in order to alleviate the problem of attaining the Harbour's income target.

In response, the Chairman agreed and he had striven for many years with the above suggestion and it was not possible to reach an agreement. However, he had served on several working groups recently which dealt with the Council's new governance procedure following the May Elections. The new Council would have a Cabinet system like every other authority in Wales and it was trusted that the new procedure could facilitate changes in terms of parking fee receipts.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(ii) Budgets

(a) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer guided Members through the budget balance-sheets for Barmouth and noted that it was a balance sheet for the third quarter of the financial year up to 31 December 2011. It was noted that Barmouth Harbour's income target for 2011/12 was £46,080 with the total up to the end of December 2011 being £32,602. From the 31 December 2011, there was a shortfall of £13,478 and it was anticipated that there would be approximately £15,000 of over expenditure for this financial year. Therefore, it would be necessary for the Maritime Service to find the shortfall from other areas within the Service. It was emphasised that bearing in mind the current economic climate and the requirement to identify savings that 2011/12 would be challenging for the Maritime and Country Parks Unit and especially for Barmouth and Aberdyfi Harbours which indicated that additional financial assistance was required.

(b) A comparison was made with Aberdyfi Harbour budget and attention was drawn to the deficit of £8,887, however, it was expected that there would be a saving of approximately -£10,000 in the expenditure budget that would indicate a general under expenditure of approximately -£2,000 at the end of the financial year. Therefore, considering this the total over expenditure for both Harbours may be reduced.

(c) Members were reminded of the concern expressed at the previous meeting of the offer to mariners to berth their vessels at Hafan, Pwllheli over the winter months, reducing the number of vessels wintering at Barmouth. It was noted that only 6 boats from Barmouth had taken advantage of this offer.

(ch) A Member noted once again, in light of the importance to reach the income targets, that it was unfair that the Council profited from the income made from the car parks in Barmouth.

The person who had drawn up the budget should be aware that the Promenade was part of the beach and so much profit would not be made from parking receipts if it was not for the beach and Harbour activities in Barmouth.

The Chair added that 100% of the parking receipts on the Promenade should be transferred to the Maritime Service and that it was easy to calculate how much money was made from the parking machines on the promenade.

(d) A member noted, in response to the comment made regarding the proposal for mariners to berth vessels at Hafan Pwllheli, that she trusted that this would not be reviewed in light of her concern that more boats would be lost from Barmouth.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(iii) Navigation

(a) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that all the aids to navigation leading to the harbour of Barmouth had all remained on station during the initial part of the winter months. Trinity House would be re-inspecting all Aids to Navigation during the summer of 2012. As reported at the last meeting, it was proposed to locate the Perch aid prior to Christmas, however, this had not been possible due to health and safety and the fact that low tide did not correspond to daylight hours. However, on the first possible low tide the Aid was installed by a local contractor and it was trusted that it would remain on station. The Assistant Maritime Officer – Harbours added that the light had to be re-programmed and it would be operational prior to Easter.

(b) In terms of the remaining aids to navigation, it was necessary to have estimates for maintenance. Welsh Water had a comprehensive programme and it was hoped that further attention could be given to the aid near the coastguard's office.

(c) It was confirmed that all the Aids to Navigation that remain afloat throughout the year had been dressed with reflective tape.

(ch) The Craft Exclusion Zones at Fairbourne would be looked at again as it had been identified as being ineffective due to the significant distance between where the buoys were positioned and the beach. At high tides the buoys were at such a distance from the shore that their effect was very minimal. Over the years, several anchors and buoys had been lost. Due to their ineffectiveness over recent years consideration was given to the possibility of not positioning buoys in Fairbourne bay and on the periphery of Barmouth beach in 2012, and the situation would be monitored at the end of the season.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(iv) Staff

Submitted: To Members during the meeting, a programme of work for the period October to December showing the work completed by Harbour Staff and an undertaking was given that the proactive programme would be sent without delay to members to show the Harbour Master's day to day work.

(a) It was reported that a gentleman from Porthmadog had been appointed to the post of Barmouth Harbour Assistant, and he would commence his duties on 2 April until 30 September 2012. The post would be reviewed, however, it was unlikely due to the financial situation the post would be full-time in the future. A Harbour Assistant would not be appointed to Porthmadog or Pwllheli Harbours and the intention was to use the present officer to serve the Harbours.

(b) Three beach officers would be appointed to manage the Blue Flag Award beach at Barmouth.

(c) The situation for Fairbourne beach had been reviewed and it was not anticipated that a beach officer would be appointed for Fairbourne in 2012. The income total for Penrhyn Point was inconsiderable and therefore it had to be considered if it was sustainable to employ an officer there. The situation would be reviewed, however, the need to focus on specific beaches was stressed.

(ch) Stemming from the above, a Member expressed concern that the Council would be criticised if an accident occurred at the expense of a little cost to appoint a beach officer in Fairbourne. The representative from Arthog Community Council stated the same concern bearing in mind that a great deal of people went to the beach in Fairbourne and it was felt that £5,800 was a small cost compared with the loss of life of an individual, and that the suggestion not to locate the buoys in the Craft Exclusion Zone should be re-considered.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that the Council had a long and beautiful coastline at Porth Neigwl with hundreds of visitors and no supervision. He noted further that no statutory responsibility existed to manage the coastline. There was a great deal of cost associated with looking after beaches. Not many rules were breached at Fairbourne beach, however, it was assured that the situation would be monitored following the removal of the Craft Exclusion Zone. It was further noted that mariners had a responsibility to be aware of what was around them when sailing however, the Service demanded that owners had insurance although this was not statutory.

Resolved: To request that the Maritime and Country Parks Officer organises that a proactive work programme is sent to Members following this meeting.

(v) Beach Award

(a) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that an application had been submitted for the Blue Flag Beach Award for Barmouth beach in 2012, and the bathing water quality in 2011 had achieved the guideline standard and therefore an application could be submitted for the International Blue Flag Award. Reference was made to the results of the bathing water tests and the test had only failed on one day, namely 7th August.

(b) Attention was drawn to the cost of a Blue Flag application for 2013/14 at £600 and in light of the fact that no budget had been earmarked for this it was proposed to present requests to Town/Community Councils to ask for a contribution towards the cost.

(c) In response to a query from a member regarding the one failed test and if further research was being undertaken, the Maritime Officer explained that the tests had reached the highest possible standards and there was no point in undertaking research to the one failure. If it had failed totally then Environment Agency officers would research the matter further.

(ch) It was noted that the tests were undertaken opposite the Arbour Hotel.

Resolved: To accept and note the above information.

(vi) General Matters

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported on the following:

(a) **Beach Concessions** - an application to sell consumable goods from a static position on the promenade had been refused. A new application had been submitted requesting

authorisation to hire deck chairs on the beach and there was no objection to this request following confirmation that the Town Council were supportive.

In response, the Chairman noted that the above would be welcomed on condition that the deck chairs would be cleared in the evening and that the applicant did not erect a mobile or similar hut.

(b) That the **Motorcross event** on the main beach had been a success.

(c) That the **Compound Area** continued to cause concern for the Maritime Service and the views of members were requested regarding the disposal of the area on the open market. Historically, the area had been allocated for fishermen, however, now its use had changed and furniture etc had been disposed of there. Managing the area was a significant drain on the Maritime Unit's resources in having to move tonnes of material from the compound to Ffridd Rasmus, Harlech at a significant cost in time and resources. Although there was CCTV in this area, it was not possible to see who was disposing of materials illegally. If the area was disposed then the Harbour would receive income and would release staff to deal with other duties.

(ch) In response, a Member expressed her discontent to dispose of the compound area. Whilst accepting that it was being used illegally the asset was important and useful to Harbour users.

The Chair was supportive to retaining the compound area, however, it had to be managed. He suggested that if the tenants did not conform then appropriate steps should be taken to revoke their tenancy. The Member agreed that specific steps should be taken to this end as this was a significant cost to the Maritime Service.

During the ensuing discussion it was suggested that it would be beneficial to implement the following procedure:

- To attach a strict covenant to the tenancy outlining clearly to the tenants what was expected of them to keep the compound tidy.
- Invest in better supervision equipment in order to catch the offenders.
- Erect a sign in the compound area regarding the new resource available at the Dolgellau Recycling Centre to dispose of materials that should not be dumped in the compound.

The Senior Manager Economy and Community stated that it was evident from the above that Members were anxious to retain the compound area in the Council's ownership, however, it was necessary to look at future management options.

Resolved: (a) To accept and note the above.

(b) To authorise that the compound area should not be sold and that it be retained as part of the Harbour's assets.

(d) **Tide tables** The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the Maritime Unit would continue to print the tide tables as they had done in the past.

(dd) **Pontoon Development** – It was pleasing to note that through the enthusiasm and enterprise of the Meirionnydd Yacht Club that a pontoon would arrive in Barmouth in April and it would extend for approximately 25 metres along the quay wall. They had been successful to attract grants from the Environment Agency's 'Splash' fund and also from the Snowdonia

National Park's CAE Fund (Sustainable Development Fund). Financial support had been received from the Council to pay the cost of the Maritime Licence for the sum of £2,275 and the cost of planning applications of £731.00.

The Chair thanked the members who had striven hard to attract the grants and to realise the project that would benefit Barmouth harbour.

A Member of the Yacht Club added his thanks to the Council for supporting the enterprise and noted that it was not the Yacht Club's enterprise and it would be open for the public to use free of charge and was not under the jurisdiction of the Harbour Master.

In response, the Senior Manager Economy and Community noted that in terms of managerial arrangements that further discussion was required with the Yacht Club regarding the operation and management of the development. An initial meeting had taken place regarding this, however, clear and specific discussion was required regarding responsibility for the facility.

Resolved: (a) To accept and note the above.

(b) That the Senior Manager Economy and Community holds further discussions regarding the operation and management of the pontoon.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) The Chairman noted that as part of the Titanic Centenary activities that Barmouth Town Council had resolved to erect a slate plaque in memory of Commander Harold Lowe (Fifth Officer serving on the Titanic) on the wall under the Harbour Master's Office and the Maritime Service Staff were thanked for contributing and organising for the plaque to be erected. It was noted that the plaque would be unveiled on the 15 April and it was felt that this part of Barmouth was the ideal place for the plaque to be seen by all.

(b) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer was thanked for organising to resolve the problem that arose recently in Talybont.

(c) The Senior Manager Economy and Community noted his thanks to the Maritime Service for dealing with challenges during a very challenging period. The Maritime staff team were very enthusiastic and had been nominated and reached the short list in a competition called 'The Council at its Best' which recognised the hard work and efforts made by staff in their work. The Team had been nominated for their best quality service to customers and it was trusted that they would be successful to receive an award.

The Chair added his thanks to the Maritime Team and also added that the Maritime and Country Parks Officer was always willing to assist at any time, even at weekends, if required.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was reported that the next meeting of this Committee would take place on 16 October 2012.

Resolved To accept and note the above.

CHAIRMAN