

**Minutes of a meeting of the Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee  
that took place on 19 March 2013 at Parlwr Mawr, Dragon Theatre, Barmouth**

**PRESENT:**

**Councillor Gethin Williams (Chairman)  
Councillor Huw Edwards (Vice-chair)**

Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams (Gwynedd Council), Cllr. Lark Davies, Robert A. Williams, (Barmouth Town Council), Mr David Baily (Member of the RNLI), Mrs. Wendy Ponsford (Barmouth Harbour and Estuary Users Association), Mr Llew Griffin (Meirionnydd Yacht Club), Mr John Johnson (Member of Barmouth and Cardigan Bay Sea Fisheries Association).

**Also in attendance having received an invitation:**

Mr John Smith

Officers

Mr Liŷr Jones	-	Senior Manager Economy and Community
Mr Barry Davies	-	Maritime and Country Parks Officer
Mr Ken Fitzpatrick	-	Assistant Maritime Officer - Harbours
Mrs Glynda O'Brien	-	Members' Support and Scrutiny Officer

**Apologies:** Councillor Louise Hughes (Gwynedd Council), Cllr. David C. Richardson (Observer on behalf of Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee) and Mr Glyn Jones (Harbour Master).

1. **BEST WISHES**

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that Mr Ken Fitzpatrick was attending his last meeting of this Consultative Committee, as he would be retiring from the service at the end of August this year. Mr Fitzpatrick had given many years of dedicated service to the Council as a Harbour Master in Pwllheli, Assistant Harbour Master in Porthmadog and recently as an Assistant Maritime Officer – Harbours. He would certainly leave a huge gap and he was thanked for his commitment to the service over the years and good wishes were extended on his future retirement.

2. **DECLARATION OF PERSONAL CONNECTION**

The following members declared a personal interest in the matters below:

- (a) Councillor Gethin Williams, Mrs Wendy Ponsford and Mr Llew Griffin in relation to matters dealing with the Yacht Club as they were Members.
- (b) Mr Llew Griffin and Mr John Johnson in relation to Item 4 – Maritime Officer's Report and specifically the reference to Aberamffra Harbour Area as they rented sheds there.

The members were of the opinion that they were not a prejudicial interest, and they did not withdraw from the meeting during the discussions on those specific items mentioned above.

### 3. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee, held on 16 October 2013, as a true record.

#### 3.1 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(a) **Item 5 (ii) (b)** – It was reported that support had been received to commence the work of setting up a section of the Website for the Maritime Service with information and service materials.

(b) **Item 6 (d) - Penrhyn Point, Fairbourne** - It was reported that there had been no progress regarding control over the plot of land where vans camp overnight at Penrhyn Point, Fairbourne. Discussions were continuing with the Regulatory Department to consider creating a Parking Order on specific sites and Penrhyn Point was one of these.

It was understood from the Environment Agency that the site where cars and vans parked was a flood plain and it would be wise to contact them regarding any notice proposed for the land.

In response to a query by a Member regarding parking fees, the Maritime Officer explained that the Order would not be for pay and display but to prohibit overnight parking.

The concerns of this Consultative Committee were noted that there had been an increase in the number of vans camping overnight on this land and it was suggested that there should be a further report on this issue at the next meeting of this Committee in October.

**Resolved: To accept and note the above.**

### 4. 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) **Navigation and Moorings**

(a) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that 75% of the Port Marine Safety Code review had been completed and it was trusted that it would be completed by the next Harbour Consultative Committee in October.

(b) The Assistant Maritime Officer - Harbours noted that 2 of the aids had come off station, however, by now they were back on station except for the steel buoy that was being repaired in Porthmadog. It was confirmed that every aid had a light and it was trusted that the work of installing a lamp on the inner buoy would be completed before the end of May this year.

(c) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that it was proposed to install the beach zone buoys by Whitsun as there was no need to install them before then. The efficiency of the buoys up towards Sunnysands would be re-assessed and the support of Caerddaniel was appreciated. In response to a query from a Member regarding if using portable buoys was less costly, the Maritime Officer explained that there was a need to be consistent along the County's coast.

(ch) A list was submitted to Members during the meeting indicating the moorings that had been maintained. Approximately 50 applications for moorings had been submitted thus far, and

they would be given to the contractor without delay in the absence of the Harbour Master from his work due to illness. It was noted that the Service would have 5 new moorings positioned in the water in front of the Harbour Office and the existing two private moorings would be moved to the side. It was confirmed that the owners were aware of this and it was stressed that a boat owner did not have the right to a specific mooring site.

(d) Substantial investment had been made in chains and moorings and it was confirmed that Trinity House were content with their condition having recently inspected them.

**Resolved: To accept and note the above.**

#### **(ii) Proprietor and Boatman Licences**

The Maritime Officer reported that the Service had released two applications for a boatman's licence and two applications for a proprietor's licence to operate the ferry. Officers had met with the proprietor of one ferry in order to explain the terms and to ensure that he conformed with Harbour regulations. It was added that the landing sites were in place and the pontoon was a more convenient addition. It was noted that one of the ferries would be operational before Easter and it was trusted that everyone could navigate together successfully this year.

In response to a query from a Member regarding the licensing period, the Maritime Officer explained that the licence was operational for 7 days prior to Easter until the end of October and if a licence had to be withdrawn from an operator then another individual could have the right to operate. The licences released for this year would be valid until the end of June, when each licence would be reviewed. If a licence was re-issued then there would be no additional cost.

**Resolved: To accept and note the above.**

#### **(iii) Maritime Statistics**

(a) It was reported that there was a reduction in the total number of powerboat registrations for 2012, namely 868, and the likely reason for this was the high price of fuel and the weather as there was a general reduction in numbers across each of the Harbours. In the same manner, there was a reduction in the number of personal watercraft registrations across Gwynedd that had an impact on Harbour budgets. This was also generally true in other neighbouring authorities. Although the pattern in other Harbours showed a decrease, the number of personal watercraft in Barmouth had increased.

**Resolved: To accept and note the above.**

#### **(iv) Budgets**

(a) Members were guided through the current budget targets for 2012-13; current expenditure and income to the end of February and the third quarter review drawing attention to the following:

- A saving of approximately £9,000 was anticipated on the staffing budget because of a commitment to appoint one officer and a half.
- It was envisaged that the Harbour costs would be approximately £11,000 higher than what was in the budget and an investment of £10,000 had been made in the Harbour this year for ladders, diesel pump etc.
- That there was approximately £10,150 under the general maintenance heading

- That the income was based on historical figures with a target of approximately £48,000 and an overspend of approximately £12,000 was anticipated, an investment of £17,000 more than the budget available.

(b) The Member noted that it made no sense at all for the target to increase whilst the Harbour was at the same time losing income from the sale of the sheds.

In response, the Senior Manager Economy and Community noted that the above comment was valid and it was explained that historically every Department had a target and in terms of the arrangements to dispose of property the income target should be removed. The income targets were set based on Harbour customers and the historical pattern. It had to be noted that the number of customers had decreased and following discussions with the Finance Officer it was agreed to reduce the income targets and these would be reviewed annually. The same process occurred in the other Harbours, however, it was noted that the maintenance of the sheds was costly for the Service and the income received from them was insufficient to be set against expenditure.

The Chair added that a very useful meeting had taken place with the relevant Cabinet Member in order to consider a more realistic target for Barmouth Harbour.

(c) Reference was made to the table showing the impact of inflation on the budget and that 1% had been determined for Barmouth Harbour in 2013-14 which meant a final target of £48,900. It had been resolved to keep the launching fee at £12.00 rather than raise it to £15.00, in the hope that this would encourage people to take advantage of launching facilities in Barmouth.

(ch) It was suggested that it may be possible to have the Harbour Master's service for launching at Penrhyn Point, Fairbourne. Approximately 17 boats had been seen launching from there and it was likely that some were not registered either. In response, the Maritime Officer noted that this was a matter for future consideration and there were difficulties as there was no office provision, toilet etc there. Perhaps the Harbour Master could work from the site on fine days for approximately 2 hours, however, it had to be borne in mind that the costs of maintaining Penrhyn Point were much higher than the income that would be received. In the past, an offer had been received from adults in Fairbourne to collect launching fees occasionally.

(d) It was suggested that an honesty box might be placed there. In response, the Maritime Officer noted that this could be considered further but he was concerned that the box might be stolen.

(dd) Concern was expressed regarding if boats had the appropriate insurance. In response, the Maritime Officer explained that boats could not be forced to have insurance, however, when they registered with the Council the owners signed that they had insurance.

(e) As the above was a matter of concern for the Consultative Committee, it was suggested that it would be beneficial to hold a meeting with representatives from Arthog Community Council and the Consultative Committee together with officers, in order to establish an action plan to resolve the increasing problem of boats launching from Penrhyn Point without paying and perhaps in some cases without insurance.

**Resolved: To request that the Maritime and Country Parks Officer arranges a meeting as outlined in (e) above when the Harbour Master was back at work.**

**(v) Events**

(a) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that:

- the Service supported the Three Peaks Race and a meeting had been arranged to discuss the final arrangements. The importance of supporting this event was noted and to welcome boats as they arrived in Barmouth.
- The Canoeing Regatta Weekend had proved to be very popular and it was trusted that the weather would be more favourable this year for the event.
- They would not be awarded the Blue Flag this year as a result of an unfavourable result in the quality of the bathing water in 2008. It was explained that in accordance with the new guidance that had come into force, the water bathing quality results had to be excellent for five years. It was added that the results for this year were excellent and it was trusted that an application could be submitted for the Blue Flag Award again next year.
- That the results for bathing water quality in Fairbourne were excellent to receive the Green Flag. The difference between the Blue Flag and the Green Flag were explained and it was noted that although the expected standards were the same, the Blue Flag was designated for an urban beach and the Green Flag to a rural beach. The requirements of the Blue Flag meant that it was necessary to have staff supervising the beach daily over the period when the flag was flying, which was an additional cost to the Service. The Maritime Service would make a request to Town/Community Councils this year for the costs of Beach Award applications, as the Service did not have a budget for these.
- In response to a query regarding supervision in Fairbourne, the Maritime Officer explained that it would not be possible to have supervision on the beach and the Service had other beaches without supervision that were much more popular than Fairbourne beach such as Porth Neigwl, Llandanwg and Harlech and it was necessary to consider the risks linked to every beach and unfortunately supervision could not be secured on each one of these.

(b) The Chair commented that an application should be submitted to the Council's Regulatory Department for the money received from the car parks and on the promenade in Barmouth bearing in mind that the people who parked there used the beach. In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that the beaches budget was under a separate budget heading to the harbour budget.

**Resolved: To accept and note the above.**

(c) It was reported that the Dog Control Orders consultation had been successful and it was noted that signs would be placed on every beach with the new Order coming into effect on 1 April 2013. It was noted that officers would have the right to give fines to people walking dogs on unauthorised zones. It was noted that concern had been raised by the Town Council regarding dogs fouling on the beach and the Promenade, however, the Maritime Service did not have additional resources to deal with this. It was understood that the Harbour Master in Barmouth had given fines to dog owners in the past.

(ch) The Chair added that he had discussed trialling a system with the Harbour Master using a machine that would Hoover up faeces that was operated by the Street Services Manager and this might be beneficial to Barmouth.

**Resolved: To accept and note the above.**

**(vi) Concessions and Improvements**

**(a) Reported:**

- That there were strict rules regarding the disposal of flares and users were encouraged to take them to the Harbour Master's Office who would then arrange to dispose of them via a specialist company. The possibility of having a legal site in Porthmadog would be looked at to dispose of them safely and store flares and to comply with regulations. At the moment the nearest place for disposal was Holyhead. Approximately £3,000 was paid for their disposal recently as it had to be ensured that there were no hazards around the Harbour office. It was understood that the guidance in the act would change whereby pyrotechnics would be returned to the manufacturers for disposal.
- That meetings had taken place regarding the maritime compound and it was trusted that in April contracts would be sent out in order that formal arrangements were in place. Locks had been placed on the gates as well as a barrier, however, they were not used and Harbour staff had disposed of material from the compound daily to Ffridd Rasmus, Harlech. It was hoped that the agreements would be a tool to have better future control of the site. To try and alleviate the problem it was suggested that a padlock should be placed on the barrier near the Yacht club shed to prevent the public from gaining access to dispose of litter and to instruct compound occupiers to ensure that they locked the barrier at all times.
- That the ladders on the quay had been renewed.
- That the management of the Pontoon had not been resolved thus far. The Pontoon fingers had been taken off and it was intended to reinstall them by the 1<sup>st</sup> of May this year as the weather may be unfavourable until then. Following a request to place them back earlier, it was stressed that someone would have to take responsibility for them, apart from the Maritime Service. Because of the different views regarding reinstalling the Pontoon fingers and this was dependent on the maritime season and Easter holidays, it was suggested that it should be discussed at the meeting of this Consultative Committee at this time next year.
- By now, the majority of the sheds in Aberamffra had been disposed of and one shed had been retained.
- Historically, several applications were received regarding concessions for activities such as the provision of donkeys on the beach, trampoline, swings etc annually. As well as applications from individuals who wished to sell goods occasionally, however, the impact this had on other concessions and local business had to be considered. In addition, a kiosk would be situated on the promenade managed by the Maritime Service with assistance from the Property Unit. Last year an application was received and approved for a concession to hire deckchairs. An application was received again this year for this concession to continue in 2013. In addition, an application was received to sell goods along the promenade, however, the Maritime Service was rather concerned regarding this due to the impact it would have on local business. Usually a fee of approximately £80 per annum was charged, however, this would have to be re-looked at. The application received was discussed with the Council's Licensing Unit and it was understood that the Unit would deal with the issue directly with the applicant. It was noted that there were rules in place namely a trading embargo on each street unless the Council lifted that right to the individual who had submitted the application. Some streets had a complete ban on street trading except for trading by Charities. Therefore, it was noted that applications for further concessions had now been referred to the Licensing Unit for consideration. It was confirmed that they would consult with the Local Member and the Town Council. It was noted that further consultation had occurred regarding a hawker's licence operated by the Police and it was understood that the individual with this type of licence had to move from one village to the next.

- In response to a comment made regarding refusing an application for a concession because of competition with local traders, a Member of the Town Council noted that their Council took local businesses into consideration as they paid rates throughout the year and they were given priority. It was felt that it was unfair for an individual to take advantage of trading on fine weather days at the expense of local businesses who trade throughout the year, whatever the weather.
- That the stall of the individual who operated with a hawker's licence was up throughout the year and that action should be taken.

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

**(b) Approve:**

- (i) to discuss this at the meeting of this Consultative Committee this time next year when the Pontoon fingers should be placed back.**
- (ii) that the Maritime and Country Parks Officer sends copies of the Harbour and Promenade By-laws to Mr Llew Griffin.**

**(vii) Sand Removal – Spring 2013**

(a) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that arrangements were afoot for sand removal this year.

(b) Photographs were submitted and a report was received from a Member noting that he was under the impression that the ruts in the dunes were a natural phenomenon and he could not understand why sand was disposed a little nearer the land to the dunes. It appeared that this delayed the natural progress of the dunes. In addition, the machinery that removed sand from the Promenade appeared to dispose of it at Ynys y Brawd.

It was noted that the natural phenomenon created what was known as dune slack and this occurred naturally in dune development. It was noted that as soon as water collected there the alkalinity of the sand would reduce and therefore create growth and grey dunes. Although it appeared to be mud, it was noted that moss and other plants grew there. A Member felt that it was strange to try and interfere with nature and in time the grey dunes would transform into heath and bocage with the grey dune slack becoming stable whilst the yellow dunes would be movable. You only had to look at the dune system in Harlech and the Member was of the view that natural growth should be encouraged rather than buried.

The Chair added that he had received complaints that the standing water was smelly.

(c) In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that the dunes had developed significantly over the years. Several years ago, in consultation with the Town Council, it was resolved to develop sand dunes along the side of the sea-wall to prevent sand from blowing over into the Bathhouse area. Whilst accepting the above comments, it was noted that the intention was to try and create an area to enjoy seaside activities. Over the years, many complaints had been received about the sand dunes, however, it had to be borne in mind that it was not a natural site and that the proposal was to clear the mud and growth from there and create a beach to be enjoyed for recreation.

**Resolved: To accept and note the above.**

**(viii) Maintenance of slipways**

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that following an inspection of the slipways that their condition had reached an acceptable standard where there were no concerns about them and they will continue to be inspected and maintained.

**Resolved: To accept and note the above.**

**(xi) Harbour Staff**

It was proposed to hold interviews for the post of Assistant to the Harbour Master during Spring/Summer 2013 and it was trusted because of the absence of the Harbour Master from his post, that the successful candidate could commence his/her post earlier than expected.

**Resolved: To accept and note the above.**

**(x) Maintenance Work Programme 2013**

It was reported that there were no concerns regarding the maintenance programme and it was confirmed that the key notice boards would be up by Easter.

**Resolved: To accept and note the above.**

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

**(a) New Slipway**

The representative from the Yacht Club reported that whilst the Yacht Club had no objection to the proposed new slipway on the corner, they did not see that it would be of use to them or to the local community and the children's sailing club. They had concerns regarding relocating the gate in the fence to the club's compound, reduction in their revenue area and a huge reduction in the number of available parking spaces. Additional concern was expressed regarding the angle of the proposed slipway as it was anticipated that tow bars may be damaged and it was questioned where car parking and trailer revenue would be directed.

The Yacht Club had its own ideas regarding the proposed slipway outside the Yacht Club which would be a community slipway, however, this had to be discussed with the Principal Engineer before moving forward with any proposals.

**Resolved: To request an early meeting with the Principal Engineer to discuss the Yacht Club's ideas for the proposed slipway.**

**(b) Management and signage around the Pontoon.**

In response to a concern that the signage around the pontoon was not there, the Maritime Officer agreed to investigate this matter.

It was confirmed that a weekly inspection of the pontoon was undertaken and it was confirmed that it would be maintained as required.

**Resolved: To accept and note the above.**

**(c) Picnic Benches and Loading Area**

It was reported that the picnic benches located outside the men's public toilets prevented lorries from loading and unloading boats and bearing in mind that the Harbour was a commercial one it was asked if it was possible to remove the picnic benches and place two of them on the side of the women's public toilets and that yellow marks be painted to designate this as a loading area.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer agreed to remove the benches at the request of the Committee, however, he knew that contractors used this area to store machinery all day to undertake work around the harbour.

He quoted from a report by the Health and Safety Officer which stated that "part of the Promenade near the public toilets was not safeguarded with a rail to prevent a fall and therefore we propose that this part of the promenade has a protective rail."

**Resolved: To approve the temporary removal of the benches from the above area and to monitor the parking situation and if any problems arise then they would have to be put back.**

**(ch) Locks - Aberamffra**

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that there was no public right of way to Aberamffra and the only people with a right to be there were those who had purchased property there. If any individual needed to go to Aberamffra a key was available from the Harbour Master which should also be returned to him. There had been difficulties approximately 9 years ago when parked vehicles and equipment were left in the area and the only option was to close the site.

**Resolved: To accept and note the above.**

**(d) Dora Building and Aberamffra Sheds**

It was reported that one shed in Aberamffra was vacant and it was hoped that the unit within the Dora building would be taken over by the Maritime Service to be used as storage and maintenance provision.

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that he did not support the wintering of boats in the quay area in Barmouth because of the fragile condition of the quay wall.

**Resolved: To accept and note the above.**

**(dd) Work on the Bridge**

In response to a query regarding if Network Rail would extend the use of the gabion, it was suggested that a letter should be written asking for details of their plans regarding this.

**Resolved: To request that the Maritime and Country Parks Officer ask Network Rail for details of their plans regarding work on the bridge.**

**(e) Volunteers**

It was asked if it was possible to attract volunteers to undertake work to help the Harbour Master such as helping to launch boats, clearing around the Harbour etc.

In response, it was explained that any scheme was a good idea and if people were willing to volunteer then they should contact the Maritime Service.

**Resolved: To accept and note the above.**

**(f) Harbour Development Plan**

(a) Mr John Smith was welcomed to the meeting and he explained and submitted proposed plans for a project in the Harbour to improve access to the viaduct from the town. The view was that a walkway would improve access from the bridge to the harbour. A Development Group had been established in consultation with the Town Council in order to develop the above idea and it was reported that a public exhibition would take place in the afternoon (19.03.13) in order to ascertain the views of the community. If there was community support then they would contact the relevant authorities.

The Development Group identified two possible problems namely planning application for the walkway as well as land ownership. The Group had met with the Planning Officer who generally supported the proposal and called it a low impact development. In addition, Network Rail, the landowners, were also supportive.

It was noted that if public support was received they could then contact Gwynedd Council stressing the need for the Council to be the appropriate authority to receive financial resources. It was trusted that a meeting could be arranged with appropriate officers from Mid Wales Transport Consortium TraCC, in order to further discuss financial sources.

The project would entail that the coastal footpath would link up with Barmouth which would be useful to all. Information was currently being collected regarding the use of the bridge, Mawddach Trail, Ardudwy Trail, in order to find the type of users who use these provisions.

(b) In response, the Senior Manager Economy and Community noted that the Development Group had taken the correct initial steps, particularly ascertaining local support, and that it was important to try and manage hopes and expectations especially with such an ambitious scheme. It was noted that the discussion was on-going regarding future financial sources. The regeneration source would be reduced and would focus on approximately 12 specific areas. It was understood that a European Programme was being developed for 2014-2020 following the Convergence Programme and currently the guidance was being drafted with a consultation in Spring and the hope was that tourism and building on the development of coastal footpaths would be included. In order to move forward it was suggested that one of the Council's Regeneration Officers could support the Development Group in order to have a feasibility study and a business plan in place. It was noted that there were technical aspects to be considered but the first step was to identify the preparatory budget, scoping the options, landownership details, together with what rights would be needed to bring the plan together. Future projects would need to give attention to the economic benefits and how many jobs could be created from schemes.

(c) Mr John Smith and the Development Group were congratulated on the excellent work that had been achieved thus far. The project received the Consultative Committee's approval as it would be of benefit to Harbour users.

**Resolved: (i) To accept, note and thank Mr John Smith for the presentation and to approve the proposed plan.**

**(ii) To request that the Senior Manager Economy and Community contacts the Regeneration officer to discuss the next steps further with Mr John Smith.**

**(g) Health and Safety Issues**

It was noted that the above would be discussed at the Consultative Committee meeting in October.

**(ng) Report on the Destination Management Plan**

It was noted that the above would be discussed at the Consultative Committee meeting in October.

**(h)** In response to a query regarding the removal of dead marine or farm animals from beaches, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that the service did respond to this, however, this had been difficult recently as only one member of staff was on duty in Meirionnydd. He further noted that there was no requirement for the Service to remove dead animals, however, this was done if it was practically possible.

**Resolved: To accept and note the above.**

**(i)** In response to a query, it was confirmed that staff would place the red flags on the foreshore in Fairbourne.

**(j)** It was noted that there was an urgent need for pedestrian access from the zigzag path to the Promenade on Glan y Môr Road in Fairbourne. When walkers reach the sea-wall there was no access to the beach and it was asked if it was possible to act on this.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that it was not a requirement for the service to create a disabled access to any beach. He did not envisage any scheme to construct a path over the moraine as it was a natural part of the coast and nothing artificial could be created. It was noted that a ramp access was available at Penrhyn Drive South and if any group wanted to make an application they could as an initial step contact the Regeneration Officer at the Council Offices in Dolgellau and then submit an application to FRAG.

**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 21 October 2013.

**Resolved To accept and note the above.**

CHAIRMAN