
**PORTHMADOG HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE,
24 September 2008**

Present: Councillors Selwyn Griffiths, Alwyn Gruffydd, Dai Rees Jones (Vice-chairman of the Council Board), and Ieuan Roberts (Gwynedd Council), along with Messrs Gwyn Davies (Porthmadog Town Council), David McLean (Landowner Interests), Chris Hayward (Leisure Interests) and Robert Owen (Commercial Interests)

Also present: Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Officer), Trefor Jones (Assistant Harbourmaster) and Iwan Hughes (Committee Officer).

Apologies: Councillor Dyfed Edwards, Peter Lunt Williams (Lifeboat Institute), Dr John Jones Morris (Leisure Interests) and David W. Eastwood (Harbour Interests).

Ill-health

Best wishes were extended to Eifion Davies, one of the principal officers in the Maritime Museum, who had been ill for some time. The museum had been closed in Mr Davies's absence and the Maritime and Country Parks Officer stated that attempts were being made to re-open the museum. It was greatly hoped that the options would be discussed with the Principal Archivist and a representative from the Maritime Museum Trust in the winter months.

Welcome

Councillors Alwyn Gruffydd and Dai Rees Jones were welcomed to their first meeting of this Committee.

1. CHAIRMAN

Resolved to re-elect Councillor Ieuan Roberts as Chairman for the 2008-09 year.

2. VICE-CHAIRMAN

Resolved to re-elect Councillor Selwyn Griffiths as Vice-chairman for the 2008-09 year.

3. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of this Committee, held on 12 March 2008, as a true record.

4. REPORT OF THE MARITIME SERVICE

The report of the Maritime Unit was submitted by the Maritime and Country Parks Officer.

Navigation

The officer referred to the difficulties experienced in relation to the navigation aids as a result of the summer's inclement weather. It was further noted that the intention was to continue with the procedure of lighting the aids over the winter months. In addition, it was intended to prepare a maintenance programme for the navigation aids in the autumn.

It was confirmed that all navigation aids had been inspected by a Trinity House Officer on 11 August 2008, and it was reported that they were in an acceptable condition.

Discharge pipe

Concern was expressed regarding the condition of the discharge pipe in Borth y Gest. Members were disappointed that no response had been received from Welsh Water to the request for information relating to the ownership of the pipe.

It was asked whether it was possible to enforce Welsh Water to take reasonable steps to solve the problem and it was agreed that everything possible should be done in order to avoid further delay.

Harbour ownership

It was reported on a conveyance completed in 1977 between Barron Formoy and Others and the former Dwyfor District Council. The conveyance referred to the ownership of the seabed within part of the Porthmadog Harbour authority.

The officer referred to the wording of the conveyance and it was noted that the land had not been registered with the Land Registry in Gwynedd Council's name. After seeking a legal opinion, it appeared that the seabed, between the line of high tide and low tide, belonged to the Crown.

In response to enquiries, it was confirmed that the latest situation would not cause any changes in relation to managing the harbour or other rights and responsibilities held by Gwynedd Council in terms of harbour management. It was further noted that the Council would not face a financial loss.

Harbour byelaws

Concern and disappointment was expressed as the draft byelaws had not been confirmed by the Department for Transport in London.

The officer emphasised that the Council's Legal Section was attempting to solve the problem and hopefully, the byelaws would come into force in 2008/09.

Yacht club and other developments

A request had been made by Madog Yacht Club for permission to extend the existing pontoon facilities. The officer did not envisage that this would be possible as the slipway had been extended and an extension to the pontoon would disrupt it, especially in low water.

It was confirmed that a further request had been received from a nearby landowner, seeking permission to locate a pontoon in the area of the harbour. A similar request had been made in 2007 and despite the fact that members of the Consultative Committee did not object to the application in principle, attention was drawn to the strength of the tide and the sea's condition in inclement weather in the area. Concern was also expressed regarding the restricting of the navigation channel.

A member was of the opinion that there would be objection to plans that would affect the slipway.

It was confirmed that the latest requests would be addressed by the Property Section.

Harbour statistics

Attention was drawn to the reduction in the number of Personal Water Crafts in Porthmadog Harbour. It was noted that there were 46 there in 2008, compared to 136 in 2006. Taking the number of water crafts throughout the County into account, it was seen that the total was 1040 in 2007 and that it had now reduced to 871.

It was believed that the increase in fuel prices had affected the situation. The reduction in the number of water crafts was a disappointment to the officer, however, taking the situation in its entirety into account, he said that Porthmadog Harbour compared well with other harbours.

It was further noted that there were 273 moorings in Porthmadog Harbour and that 195, namely 71.4% were occupied.

Budgets

It was reported that the income of Porthmadog Harbour was £78,260 thus far. This was £2,787 short of the target, however, the officer was confident that the target could be met within the next six months.

In terms of the income of beaches, it was noted that £176,000 needed to be identified and the situation caused concern. The officer believed that this was a reflection of the poor weather experienced during the summer months.

Staffing structure

Reference was made to changes in the Maritime Section and that it was expected for the secondment of the Assistant Harbourmaster in Porthmadog to be extended until the end of December.

The Maritime Officer thanked the workers for their conscientious work and their co-operation.

General issues

It was noted that a new boat had been commissioned and that it had been operational in Porthmadog Harbour during the summer. This was the first time for a new control boat to be used in Porthmadog and the officers were confident that it would be very beneficial.

Maintenance of moorings

It was intended to undertake an inspection of the number of moorings in the Borth y Gest area during the winter months.

Should the mooring be unused in 2008, the owner would be instructed to clear the mooring. Should the owner of the mooring be unidentified by Christmas, the harbour officers would clear the mooring.

In response to an enquiry, information was presented about the Council's statutory and non-statutory responsibilities.

Lôn Gwydryn

The most acceptable steps that could be taken in order to deal with Lôn Gwydryn, Morfa Bychan during the winter, were discussed.

It was suggested that it would be best to close it, however, some concern was expressed regarding difficulties that could arise should there be a need to deal with an emergency.

The Maritime Officer reported that there was a need to duly consider such situations, and he believed that leaving the road open posed a greater risk.

5. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held on 11 March 2009.

The meeting commenced at 6pm and concluded at 7:15pm