

**PORTHMADOG HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
30 SEPTEMBER, 2009**

PRESENT:

Councillors Alwyn Gruffydd, Selwyn Griffiths and Ieuan Roberts (Gwynedd Council), along with Messrs. Gwyne Davies (Porthmadog Town Council), Stephen Shakespeare (Leisure Interests)

ALSO PRESENT: Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Officer) Ken Fitzpatrick (Harbours Maritime Officer), Trefor Jones (Harbourmaster) and Iwan Hughes (Committee Officer).

1. CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED to re-elect Councillor Ieuan Roberts as Chairman for the 2009/10 year.

2. VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED to re-elect Councillor Selwyn Griffiths as Vice-chairman for the 2009/10 year.

3. APOLOGIES: Councillors: Dyfed Edwards (Chairman of the Council Board), Dai Rees Jones (Vice-chairman of the Council Board), Dewi Lewis (Meirionnydd Area), Peter Lunt Williams (RNLI) and David McLean (Landowners' Interests).

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

5. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee, held on 11 March 2009, as a true record.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Further support was expressed for new regulations relating to the offence of using a boat when the user was over the prescribed alcohol limit.

Members welcomed the fact that there were very few exceptions to the regulations on the grounds of size and power of the boat. In response to an enquiry, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that maritime officers had a right to detain anyone that could be committing an offence but only a police officer had the authority to undertake the test. Those over the prescribed

alcohol limit would face the same penalty as car drivers who committed the same offence.

7. REPORT OF THE MARITIME SERVICE

Submitted – the report of the Maritime and Country Parks Officer and the following matters were addressed:-

- Navigation
- Harbour By-laws
- Sailing Club Developments
- Harbour Statistics
- Budgets
- Maritime staffing structure
- Mooring Maintenance

Navigation

Following an inspection by a Trinity House Inspector, it was confirmed that Porthmadog Harbour navigation aids, except numbers 1, 8, 13, 15, and 17 were in an acceptable state of repair.

Because of regular changes in the navigation channel, a number of the navigation aids had to be relocated. It was added that the navigation buoy had been lost at the beginning of May and it had not been possible to install a replacement until 4 June. The officer emphasised that it was unacceptable not to have a navigation buoy on station for a lengthy period of time and a replacement buoy should in future be available on the shore ready for replacement as soon as possible should a buoy become loose in future. There were eight lanterns on the navigation aids and the cost of a lantern for the new navigation buoy was £960.

Also, a new lantern had to be obtained for the Borth y Gest navigation aid. The cost of this was £275. Subsequently, the lantern was lost and a replacement had to be installed at an additional cost of £275.

It was noted that currently there were 11 lanterns and the officer emphasised that the increase was heartening. He added that the lanterns had remained on station throughout the last two winters and this system was proposed this year also.

The maintenance work programme for the winter was submitted and the good work achieved by staff was welcomed.

Harbour By-laws

The officer referred to the work undertaken thus far on the Harbour By-laws.

He referred specifically to By-law 42 (2) (a) and (b). Porthmadog Town Council had not expressed an opinion on it and the officer called for a further discussion and to seek the opinion of members of the Consultative Committee.

It was emphasised that the By-laws should ensure control and the officer noted that the target had been to include all types of craft within the by-laws and to strengthen them generally.

It was agreed that the representative of Porthmadog Town Council would receive a copy of the draft amended By-laws so that they could all be considered thoroughly. The officer emphasised the importance of receiving the observations of the Town Council as soon as possible and also confirmation that the Town Council supported the draft By-laws.

Sailing Club Developments

Madog Sailing Club had requested an extension to the existing pontoon facilities. The officer noted that useful discussions had been held during the summer months and some difficulties had been resolved and concerns alleviated.

Originally, there were concerns that adding to the pontoon facilities would hinder the slipway, which had been extended. However, following studies undertaken during the summer, it was seen that perhaps extending the pontoon would not have a detrimental effect on using the slipway, since boats could not be launched at low tide in any event. It was emphasised that any extension to the pontoon should not interfere with the use of the slipway. As concerns had been alleviated, the application would be submitted for the attention of the Property Unit so that they could deal with the matter.

The officer further noted that any support from the Harbour Authority by means of this Committee would be subject to receiving assurance that the Sailing Club would bear the cost of resolving any problems that could arise as a result of the way in which boats were moored on the pontoons or the impact on any chains or moorings within a specific distance from the development.

Some moorings in the harbour would be lost also and steps would have to be taken to face this financial loss.

The officer welcomed the fact that the Sailing Club was obviously so busy and he was confident that the enterprise would be a success. He referred further to the collaboration that had taken place between the Sailing Club and the Local Authority and members were reminded that the Crown could also become part of the changes.

The Sailing Club's representative noted that they were eager to proceed with the scheme. He added that the proposal to create an additional eight new berths, along with eight visitor berths would ensure £5,000 for the Council.

Harbour Statistics

In a table submitted to members, it was noted that there were 892 Personal Water Craft registered with Gwynedd Council in 2009, compared with 871 in 2008. 1169 power boats had been registered, which again was an increase. Information was submitted, comparing the figures with the situation in recent years and it was noted that the situation still continued to be very acceptable.

It was added that the number of Personal Water Craft and power boats registered in the Porthmadog harbour office and Black Rock Sands showed an increase this year compared with 2008.

The number of power boats registered in Porthmadog harbour was 26 and 28 had been registered on Black Rock Sands.

The officer reported further that 180 pleasure boats had been moored in the harbour this year which represented 75% of the moorings. Of these, 26% had been leased by local residents living permanently in Gwynedd.

In response to an enquiry, it was noted that no commercial vessels were moored in Porthmadog.

It was noted that the total number of moorings in Porthmadog harbour had reduced over the past twelve months. This was a consequence of steps taken to get rid of moorings that had not been used for years. It was emphasised that there was no purpose in keeping these if no use was being made of them.

Because of a restriction in the Borth y Gest area, there would be a need to relocate a number of moorings as some of them interfered with navigation, particularly at night. The officer emphasised that the situation was a cause of considerable concern and difficulties were created because of the moorings located in the navigation channel. He added that it would be irresponsible for the Unit to disregard this problem and there would be a need to ensure that all the moorings located in the navigation channel would be relocated before the beginning of next season.

It was proposed to inform every owner that the moorings would be removed. Consequently, it would be possible for boats to be moored on vacant moorings in the harbour for the same price as the current charges.

One member believed that buoys were located to guide sailors and he could not accept that there was a serious problem in the navigation channel.

It was agreed that a meeting should be arranged on site so that maritime officers could discuss the situation with boat owners. It was reported that there was a need to ensure that the meeting was held before Christmas so that the Harbourmaster and the Harbours Maritime Officer could prepare a work programme for relocating the moorings by the end of March 2010.

Budgets

Submitted, for information, the final budget report of the harbour for the 2008/09 financial year, along with the revenue budget and target incomes of harbours for the 2009/10 financial year. The officer referred to the impact of the extremely unfavourable weather conditions during the summer and he warned that great care would have to be taken to ensure that the service would not commit finances beyond the budget.

It was noted that the income of Porthmadog harbour thus far was £8,061 lower than the target income. A target of £80,350 had been established and the income thus far was £72,289. The officer could not foresee that there would be a substantial increase in this between October and the end of March 2010.

The officer was not overly concerned about this deficit and he noted that the Council was running Porthmadog harbour at a cost of £8,000. There would be an additional saving to this amount in the current financial year because of changes to the staffing structure.

It was further noted that the income of the harbour last year was slightly above the target.

The employees of the Maritime Unit were thanked for their success and the work achieved by them.

In response to an enquiry, it was noted that the money from parking charges on Black Rock Sands was deposited in the Beaches budgets. It was noted that the gross income for the beach was over £100,000 and it was agreed that the details would be submitted at the next meeting of this committee. Following a very poor August, as a consequence of the inclement weather, staff had been successfully retained during September. Reference was made to beaches staff and they were thanked for their professional service.

Maritime staffing structure

A report was provided on the changes to staff (temporary) in Porthmadog, Pwllheli and Aberdyfi harbours during the past two years. The officer explained that the secondment period of the Pwllheli Harbourmaster had been extended until 31 December 2009 but the secondment would have to be terminated at that time and the Harbourmaster would be returning to Porthmadog harbour on 4 January 2010.

The officer added that the secondments had provided employees with an opportunity to gain experience and of working in different locations. He also emphasised that there would be no redundancies.

Members' attention was drawn to the critical financial position of the Council and the need to modernise the working procedures of the Unit, for it to be more enthusiastic and to face the challenge with a professional attitude.

Moorings Maintenance

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported on the plans to undertake an inspection of moorings in the Borth y Gest area.

If a mooring had not been used during 2008, then the owner would be given notice to clear it. If this should not be done before Christmas 2009, harbour officers would clear the mooring and it was expected that this work would be completed by the end of March 2010.

In accordance with the usual procedure, appointed contractors would undertake the maintenance work on the Porthmadog harbour moorings. As Gwynedd Council had invested substantially in maintenance and renewing chains during the past five years, the officer could not foresee that substantial expenditure would be required in 2009/10. He added that there was a need to tidy up the moorings during the next few months by removing old ropes that were not required etc.

To end, the officer stated that the summer, despite inclement weather, had been very successful. The Chairman thanked the officer and the Unit's employees for their conscientious work.

RESOLVED to accept the report with gratitude and noting the observations made by members.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the next meeting of this Committee would be held on 10 March 2010.

The meeting commenced at 6:00pm and concluded at 7:25pm

CHAIRMAN