

PORTHMADOG HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
10-03-10

PRESENT:

Councillors Selwyn Griffiths and Ieuan Roberts (Gwynedd Council), along with Messrs Gwyn Davies (Porthmadog Town Council), David Eastwood (Harbour Interests), Dr John J. Morris (Leisure Interests), Robert Owen (Commercial Interests) and Peter Lunt Williams (RNLI).

ALSO PRESENT: Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Officer), Ken Fitzpatrick (Harbours Maritime Officer), Dafydd Phillips (Harbourmaster) and Ioan Hughes (Committee Officer).

1. **APOLOGIES:** Councillors: Alwyn Gruffydd, Dyfed Edwards (Chairman of the Council Board), Dai Rees Jones (Vice-chairman of the Council Board), Roy Owen (Lifelong Learning Portfolio Leader), Trevor Roberts (Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee) and Mr David McLean (Landowners Interests).

2. **DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

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

3. **MINUTES**

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee, held on 30 September 2009, as a true record.

4. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Reference was made to the plans to extend the Sailing Club's pontoon facilities and in response to an enquiry, the representative of Leisure Interests confirmed that useful discussions were ongoing.

5. **REPORT OF THE MARITIME UNIT**

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

- Fees and Charges
- Budgets
- Navigation - Moorings
- Staff
- Visiting Vessel Welcome Pack
- Harbour By-laws
- Lifesaving Equipment on the Cob.

Fees and Charges

The officer reported that the fees and charges for the 2010/11 financial year had been sent for approval to the Statutory Officers and the Portfolio Leader. No response had been received thus far but the officer did not anticipate any changes to the recommendation.

From the perspective of Porthmadog, he noted that the recommendation was not to increase the fees for permanent residents of Gwynedd, whilst the fees and charges for those living outside Gwynedd would increase 1%. Although this difference was small, the officer explained that the benefit for local residents would be more noticeable in the long-term.

It was anticipated that there would be a negative increase in inflation for every harbour in Gwynedd for 2010/11 at -1.5%. It was noted that this corresponded to a small reduction of £2,600 in the general income target of harbours.

The officer drew attention specifically to parking fees on Morfa Bychan beach and noted that it was proposed to charge £3 per vehicle on a daily basis between Easter and 30 June and between 1-30 September. The fee would increase to £4 between 1 July and 30 September. The officer noted that the fees had not been increased for years and he did not think that these figures were unreasonable.

The officer explained further that the Maritime Unit's general target income had increased to £2,130,970 in 2010/11 and he emphasised that this would be a considerable challenge.

Budgets

Information was submitted to members regarding the financial situation of Porthmadog Harbour in the third quarter of the 2009/10 financial year up to 31 December 2009.

The officer reminded members that the target income for Porthmadog Harbour for 2009/10 was £78,700. Up until the end of December 2009, £71,856 had been generated and it was noted that this compared with an income of £74,280 for the same period last year.

As it was unlikely that the income would increase substantially during the months of February and March, the officer noted that it was anticipated that the deficit in the target income of Porthmadog Harbour up to 31 March 2010 would be £5,800.

The officer noted further that expenditure was higher or close to being higher than the budget in respect of several headings. Further expenditure was anticipated in March and the signs for the final quarter suggested an underspend of £13,300 in the budget of Porthmadog Harbour by the end of March 2010.

The officer emphasised that the Maritime Unit had to be dealt with as a whole and other areas within the county had to be considered so that a financial

balance could be achieved. Members were reminded of recent expenditure in Porthmadog and it was noted that neither major projects nor major cuts were currently being considered. Considering the 2010/11 financial challenge, the officer emphasised that much work was needed to maintain the high standards of Porthmadog Harbour.

Navigation- Moorings

The officer reported that there were 17 navigational aids leading to Porthmadog Harbour and it was a challenge to maintain these throughout the year. Despite this he noted that the quality was improving.

He added that there were considerable changes in the channel opposite Cwt Powdwr, however, it was anticipated that everything would be correctly marked by the Easter holiday.

The Harbours Maritime Officer submitted information noting the problems involving navigational aids during the winter months and a chart was distributed explaining the situation in detail. The officer added that maintenance work on the navigational aids was crucial and continuous improvement was evident.

The two officers reported on the inspection work being undertaken by contractors on all moorings and it was noted that the initial report had been good. The officers were of the opinion that this underlined the value of this work and the past expenditure.

Reference was made to the need to remove moorings located in the navigation channel in the Borth y Gest area. These had been identified as life-threatening hazards.

Dissatisfaction was expressed by one member in respect of this but the Maritime and Country Parks Officer emphasised that the moorings would not be moved far from their existing positions and priority had to be given to safety.

Staff:

The officer reported that several officers of the Maritime and Country Parks Unit continued to be on secondment in other fields of the service.

It was added that the Porthmadog Harbourmaster, Mr Dafydd Phillips, who was currently on secondment in Pwllheli Harbour, would be retiring from his post on 31 March 2010. The officer referred to the value of this member of the workforce's knowledge and vast experience. The officer thanked Mr Dafydd Phillips for his support.

This was endorsed by the Chairman and several other members and reference was made to Mr Phillips' willingness to provide assistance and advice when required. To underline the area's appreciation of Mr Phillips' service, a picture was presented to him as a gift from the Chairman of Porthmadog Town Council, Councillor Selwyn Griffiths and Mr Phillips was wished well on his retirement.

Mr David O'Neill had been appointed as Mr Phillips' successor as Porthmadog Harbourmaster. It was noted that Mr O'Neill had been employed by the Council for several years.

The officer referred further to the temporary Harbourmaster's contribution, who had been on secondment in Porthmadog for the past three years. The officer would be commencing in his post as the Pwllheli Harbourmaster on secondment.

Visiting Vessel Welcome Pack

It was anticipated that all visiting vessels to Porthmadog from 1 April, 2010 onward would receive a Welcome Pack. It was noted that the scheme would be introduced in every harbour and the packs would include information about harbour facilities, local amenities, tides, restaurants, emergency services etc.

The Porthmadog Welcome Pack was circulated to members at the meeting. The officer noted that he was eager for this scheme to develop and he asked members to contact the Department if they had ideas regarding anything that could be included in the pack.

The idea was welcomed by members.

Harbour By-laws

The officer explained that the draft Porthmadog Harbour by-laws had been re-drafted following the observations sent to Gwynedd Council from the Transport Department on behalf of the Royal Yachting Association and Trinity House.

A further version of the by-laws was expected to be sent to the Transport Department during April 2010.

The final draft of the By-laws was submitted to members for their consideration. It was noted that Porthmadog Town Council was of the opinion that By-law 42(1), dealing with prohibiting personal water craft, should be included. The representative of the Town Council explained that the opinion was that a robust tool could be provided for the Department to deal with owners of personal water craft that failed to adhere to the rules.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks officer stated that the registration system operated by the Council was a robust tool and the system worked effectively.

Lifesaving Equipment on the Cob

Concern was expressed by the Maritime and County Parks Officer because the lifesaving equipment located on the Cob in Porthmadog was being vandalised daily. He added that lifebelts were being removed from their holdings and thrown into the sea. Consequently, they could not be used in the event of their

need in an emergency and it was confirmed that the Police had been informed of the difficulties.

It was emphasised that the Maritime Unit had insufficient resources to check equipment on a daily basis and equipment not checked could have been taken out of their holdings for several days. The officer added that similar problems existed in other areas.

Members were concerned about the situation and it was emphasised that everyone should realise the seriousness of the situation.

The RNLI representative referred to the site of one lifesaving buoy and he suggested that it should be removed to a more suitable location. He confirmed that the matter would be addressed.

Reference was made also to the untidy condition of the area around Llyn Bach and although this was not the responsibility of the Maritime Department, it was noted that arrangements would be made so that the matter could be addressed.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the next meeting of this Committee would be held on 22 September 2010.

The meeting commenced at 6:00pm and concluded at 7:15pm

CHAIRMAN