

***Pwyllgor Ymgynghorol Harbwr  
Porthmadog  
Harbour Consultative Committee***

***22 Medi/September 2010***

**Adroddiad Gwasanaeth Morwrol a Pharciau Gwledig  
Maritime and Country Parks Service Unit Report**

***1 - Navigation***

- 1.1*** Due to frequent and regular fluctuations in the natural direction of the harbour approach channel during 2010, a number of Aids to Navigation were required to be re positioned as the course of the channel deviated. Whilst the channel remained constant during the main part of the summer months, there were frequent changes in direction during the early part of the year.
- 1.2*** All navigational lanterns have been on station throughout the year even though the requirement is for the lanterns to be seasonal. During the yearly part of 2010, additional lanterns were installed on the Aids to Navigation that are situated within the inner harbour area and this has been of significant assistance to mariners. The positioning of additional lanterns was as part of the navigational improvement plan, and therefore additional costs were incurred in order to secure lanterns to the navigational aids. The total cost of the additional lanterns and the replacement lanterns was **£1,825**.
- 1.3*** Additional fixed Aids to navigation have been purchased. One beacon has been established on Cei Ballast and a further two fixed Aids to Navigation will replace those that have deteriorated in the vicinity of Porthmadog Sailing Club and Doc Peilot.
- 1.4*** The Harbour Master and Maritime Officer Harbours will prepare a comprehensive programme for the maintenance of the navigation aids that will be undertaken during the autumn/winter and it is anticipated that all maintenance work will be completed before Christmas. The Harbour Master will distribute the work programme at the meeting.
- 1.5*** The present position of all Aids to Navigation and the light characteristics of the lanterns within the jurisdiction of Porthmadog Harbour are shown in the attached plan.

***2 – Sailing Club Developments***

- 2.1*** Members will recall that Madog Yacht Club has presented an application to Cyngor Gwynedd with regard to extending the existing pontoon mooring facility in Porthmadog harbour. The project has been supported in principle by the Harbour Consultative Committee subject to Madog Yacht Club's assurance that the proposed development does not have any effect on the hydrodynamics of the tidal flow in the vicinity of the pontoon.
- 2.2*** Given that the main harbour slipway has been extended in order to extend the period whereby boats can be launched, concern was expressed that it might not be possible to launch vessels if the pontoon extension was to proceed across the seaward end of the slipway. However, following recent studies, it was identified that the impact of the proposed development would be minimal.

As it was identified that it would be very difficult to launch boats at low water, the outcome of extending the pontoon would not have a detrimental impact on the use of the slipway.

- 2.3** Of recent, the Maritime Unit has been consulted on the development and comments have to be submitted to Trinity House by the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2010, and comment also need to be submitted to the Marine Consents Unit of the Welsh Assembly Government by the same date. Given that the Harbour Committee has agreed to the principle of extending the facility, it is not envisaged that the principle of proposal should be refused outright. The Maritime Unit will be recommending to Trinity House that fixed lights, possibly 2 F.R.(vert) be positioned at the seaward, and landward end of the development. The lights will be subject to approval from Trinity House and would need to be maintained by the Madog Yacht Club should the development proceed.
- 2.4** Prior to the existing pontoon development, Members will recall that access onto vessels moored in the vicinity of Madog Yacht Club was available through the use of the historic (and listed structure) steps that lead from the Yacht Club to the harbour waters. Members of the public have historically been privileged with unrestricted use of the steps and such use of the steps date back to the days when slate was being exported from the harbour.
- 2.5** The existing pontoon development provides the use of an over arching pedestrian access ramp onto the floating pontoons thereby protecting the historic steps. The landward end of the pontoon access ramp is secured by means of a gate. When the existing development was approved, it as envisaged that members of the public would continue to have unrestricted access to the harbour by using the pontoon access ramp.
- 2.6** Of recent, Madog Yacht Club has been in correspondence with the Maritime Unit and it has been stated that Madog Yacht Club will refuse access for those vessels that are engaged in commercial activity. The Maritime Unit is of the opinion that access has to be safeguarded for all users regardless of whether the use is for commercial or leisure purpose.
- 2.7** In concluding, should approval be granted for the positioning of a pontoon, it is essential for Madog Yacht Club to ensure that:-

  - i)** Locating the pontoon will need to demonstrate that the development will not have any impact on the flow of water on either the flood or the ebb tide.
  - ii)** The pontoon extension will not have any impact on the laying of vessels on nearby moorings. Should the development impact on nearby moorings, the Yacht Club would be required to ensure that any correction measures be implemented at the expense of the Yacht Club.
  - iii)** Public access onto the ‘visiting’ pontoon for embarking and disembarking passengers or goods is safeguarded for either leisure or commercial purposes.
  - iv)** The loss of income to Cyngor Gwynedd resulting from extending the pontoon facility will need to be reimbursed in full. It is envisaged that a total of eight moorings will be removed in order to accommodate the proposed development. This is a significant loss of income.

### **3 – Harbour Statistics**

- 3.1** It is noted from the table in the appendix that **955** Personal Watercraft registered with Gwynedd Council in 2010. This compares with **892** in 2009, an increase of **63** this year. A total of **1378** Powerboats were registered with Cyngor Gwynedd with the majority, of vessels, a total of **714**, registering through direct correspondence with the Maritime Office.
- 3.2** It is noted that the number of Personal Watercraft and Powerboats registered in the Porthmadog Harbour Office and on Black Rock Sands in 2010 was once again comparable with the total number registered in **2009**.
- 3.3** As noted in the table, **28** Powerboats and **39** Personal Watercraft registered through Porthmadog harbour, with **32** powerboats and 201 Personal Watercraft registering on the beach at Black Rock Sands. The registration fee for powerboats and Personal Watercrafts is identical to the previous year with no increase to take account of annual inflation. The registration permit fees remained at **£15.00** by postal application or alternatively, the applicant could register directly at the beach for an increased fee of **£20.00**. The launching fee remains at **£12.00** a day or **£130.00** for the season. Given the VAT increases in 2011, it is anticipated that the fees will have to be increased although this will not affect the net income to Gwynedd Council.
- 3.4** It is noted from the table in the appendix that **177** pleasure boats moored in the harbour this year and this is in comparison with **180** in 2009. This means that **74%** of the moorings were occupied a **1%** decrease. Of these moorings that were occupied, **32%** were occupied by local residents who live in Gwynedd on a permanent basis, and **68%** were occupied by persons who live out-of-country. Despite the decrease in the number of vessels occupying a mooring, the overall length of vessels in Porthmadog harbour increased. This indicates that the average length overall of vessels continues to increase.
- 3.5** During the summer months, a number of craft were attempting to launch at Morfa Bychan using forged Registration Permits. Whilst the registration permits were good quality forgeries, staff at Morfa Bychan identified differences between those issued by Cyngor Gwynedd in comparison with the forged permits and the vigilance of maritime staff is commendable. The Police Authority were informed and Officers assisted harbour staff by inspecting other vessels in the vicinity. Approximately twenty forged permits were confiscated.

### **4.0 Harbour Budgets**

- 4.1** Attached, for Members' information, is the harbour's final budget report for the financial year of **2009/10**; the financial situation up to the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2010, together with the harbours' revenue budget and income targets for the **2010/11**.
- 4.2** Due to the very unfavourable weather that was experienced during the main summer month of August this year, it is very likely that the Maritime Unit's income headings will not reach their income target during the current financial year. There will be a need to exercise extreme caution during the coming months in order to ensure that the service does not commit money beyond the budget. The Harbourmaster and the Maritime Officer Harbours will be providing a detailed maintenance programme for the autumn in order to identify expenditure priorities in Porthmadog harbour.

4.3 There are concerns regarding the income target of Porthmadog harbour this year. Members will note in the appendices that the income target for the current financial year is **£77,910**. The Porthmadog harbour income thus far has reached **£70,839** namely **£7,070** lower than the target. It is not anticipated that there will be a substantial addition to the income between October and March 2011.

## 5.0 Mooring Maintenance

5.1 During the winter months, the Harbourmaster and the Maritime Officer Harbours, will co ordinate the work of inspecting and maintaining harbour moorings in preparation for 2011. The inspection of the moorings in Borth y Gest will continue to be undertaken by the Maritime Unit and if a mooring was not used in 2010, then the owner of the mooring will receive instructions to clear the site. If the mooring owner has not been identified before the end of December 2010, then harbour staff will clear the mooring as was the procedure in 2009.

5.2 All moorings within the jurisdiction of Porthmadog harbour will be inspected and maintained by the appointed contractor and it is expected that the work will commence in January 2011. Suitably qualified contractors will be invited to tender for the work. Gwynedd Council has made a substantial investment in chain maintenance and replacement in the past five years, and it is not anticipated that a substantial investment will be required in 2010/11.

5.3 A detailed copy of the mooring service record report will be distributed to Members of the committee at the meeting. Members will note the improved quality and standard of the inspection report that was provided by the appointed contractor in 2009/10.

## 6.0 Severe Gale of July 2010

6.1 During the night and early morning of Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup> and Friday the 16<sup>th</sup> of July 2010, the harbours and beaches of Gwynedd were affected by a severe gale. Wind speeds of 85 miles per hour were recorded at Aberdaron during the early hours of the 16<sup>th</sup> of July and it is estimated that wind speeds in the inner harbour of Porthmadog at one point reached beaufort Force 10. This was an exceptional gale, and one that had not been forecasted although a strong wind warning was in force.

6.2 Staff from the Maritime Unit were alerted by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and were called to the harbour at midnight. Staff were on scene before 01.00 together with the Criccieth Lifeboat crew and members of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. On arrival at the harbour, it was noticed that a large power vessel had come adrift from its mooring that was situated further to seaward and the vessel was in danger of being driven onto the road bridge. The vessel was secured to a temporary mooring and fortunately the mooring held fast until the gale had subsided when the vessel was secured to her permanent mooring the following morning. By 03.00 the gale had subsided all vessels that had come adrift were made safe.

6.3 Maritime Unit staff returned to the harbour at 08.00 and work commenced immediately to re secure a number of vessels to their mooring. Significant damage had been caused to a number of vessels. In surveying the situation, it became clear that the mooring strops had come adrift on either the bow or stern of a number of vessels. The mooring equipment from the mooring riser to the anchors were undamaged demonstrating the effectiveness of the investment committed by Cyngor Gwynedd to maintain the moorings in recent years.

## **7.0 Harbour Committee Meetings**

- 7.1** A request has been submitted to Cyngor Gwynedd by Aberdyfi Community Council requesting that Gwynedd Council considers introducing one additional Harbour Committee meeting to the calendar of all Council committee meetings that are already scheduled. Aberdyfi Community Council is requesting that the additional harbour committee meeting be a joint meeting of representatives of all Harbour Committees and would be convened at a mid way point between the existing Committee meetings either during the summer, or at the end of December/early January.
- 7.2** Members are reminded that representatives from other Harbour Committees are already co opted on to each of the Harbour Committees and that this initiative was introduced by the Maritime and Country Parks Unit in order to ensure that information relating to each harbour was being shared between the Harbour Committees. The representatives from other Harbour Committees are invited to attend with the intention that information to be filtered directly to those Harbour Committees which they represent.
- 7.3** The views of Members as to the proposal by Aberdyfi Community Council to establish a joint meeting of all Harbour Committees in addition to the existing half yearly Harbour Committee meetings is requested. The Maritime and Country Parks Unit is of the opinion that the present system functions in accordance with the Municipal Ports Review and allows for Members to be updated and to be able to contribute and comment on the relevant harbour's Port Marine Safety Code.

## **8.0 Fees and Charges-Draft Proposal**

- 8.1** It is envisaged that the annual report on the fees and charges relative to the Maritime and Country Parks Unit for 2011/12 will be submitted to the Portfolio Leader towards the end of December 2010. Careful consideration will need to be given to any increase that is required in order to maintain fees and charges line with inflation during 2011/12 as VAT will be increased by 2.5% as of the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011 thereby incurring additional costs on harbour customers.
- 8.2** Currently, Porthmadog Harbour is not been sub divided into different areas whereby different fees apply to different areas of the harbour. Of recent, the Maritime Unit has been considering various options given that certain areas of the harbour are deemed more accessible to facilities and services and are also relatively sheltered in comparison with moorings situated further to seaward.
- 8.3** All moorings in Porthmadog has been allocated a number, and each mooring number is recorded in the appended harbour mooring plan. For 2011/12, it is proposed that separate fees and charges be applied to various areas of the harbour and it is proposed that the fees payable will be dependant on the position of the mooring.
- 8.4** The current list of fees and charges together with the new proposal for the fees and charges relating to Porthmadog harbour is appended. Members will be requested to comment on the new format of the fees and charges and Members are reminded of the requirement to ensure that the Harbour achieves the annual income budget target.

## **9.0 Borth y Gest-Yacht Tenders and Dinghies**

- 9.1** During the summer months, staff from the Maritime and Country Parks Unit have been clearing abandoned yacht tenders and neglected sailing craft from the area adjacent to the access point at Borth y Gest. Warning notices were distributed advising members of the public of the requirement to register the craft with the Harbourmaster if the craft was to remain stored on Council land. Yacht tenders that were not registered have been moved to the harbour compound. Those yacht tenders that are not claimed before the end of October 2010 will be scrapped and disposed. Further work afloat and ashore in the Borth y Gest area of the harbour will take place during the latter part of 2010, and it is once again advised that members of the public register their craft with the Harbourmaster otherwise the craft will be removed. Owners of moorings are also advised to contact the Harbourmaster in order to register their mooring. Unregistered and un serviced moorings will be removed.
- 9.2** There has been misuse of the foreshore access point at Borth y Gest during the summer months and un registered power craft and Personal Watercraft have been using the access ramp. In order to control the use of the access point, it is proposed that a security bollard be positioned at the top of the access ramp in order to prevent unregistered craft from launching and recovering at Borth y Gest. Whilst it is envisaged that this could cause inconvenience to those launching a small sailing dinghy and yacht tenders, consideration shall be given to the issuing of a key to those individuals who will comply with the terms of a License which will enable access through the security bollard. Members will recall that a security bollard was previously in position at the top of the access point due to excessive misuse by un registered vessels.