

**PORTHMADOG HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE,
16 MARCH, 2011**

PRESENT: Councillor Ieuan Roberts (Chairman)

Councillor Alwyn Gruffydd (Gwynedd Council), Councillor Trevor Roberts (Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee), Councillor Gwyn Davies (Porthmadog Town Council), Dr. John J. Morris (Leisure Interests) and Mr Peter Lunt Williams (RNLI).

ALSO PRESENT: Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Officer), Ken Fitzpatrick (Harbour Assistant Maritime Officer), David O'Neill (Harbour Master) and Iwan Hughes (Committee Officer).

- 1. APOLOGIES:** Councillors Dyfed Edwards, (Chairman of the Council Board), Selwyn Griffiths, (Gwynedd Council), Mr Robert Owen, (Commercial Interests), Mr David Eastwood, (Harbour Interests).

BEREAVEMENT: The Chairman referred to the bereavement of Mr Derek Griffith, a member of the Maritime and Country Parks Unit's workforce, and he extended his condolences to him in his loss.

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 22 September 2010, as a true record.

6. REPORT OF THE MARITIME UNIT

Submitted - the report of the Maritime and Country Parks Officer was submitted with particular attention given to the following matters:

- Fees and Charges
- Budgets
- Navigation - moorings
- Staff
- Sailing Club Developments

Fees and Charges

Reference was made to a new fee charging structure that had been introduced, and the officer reported that the harbour's fees and charges for each vessel that moored within Porthmadog authority would vary. Members concluded that the former arrangement of charging one fee was unfair.

On the whole, there would be a 1% increase in the fees. Furthermore, the increase in VAT to 20% would cause a further increase in costs for users, but it was noted that this would not contribute to the harbour's general income.

The Maritime Unit had already corresponded with clients and had emphasised that the fees were subject to being confirmed and approved in final. Around a 100 forms had been returned and the Officer noted that the number was disappointing.

He added that there were several reasons for the disappointing response, such as the effect of the recession and fuel costs, and that the increase in fees should not be held mainly responsible. However, he noted that they would have to keep an eye on the situation.

On the whole, there would be no increase in the target income for Porthmadog Harbour, therefore the officer noted that the target income would be £75,390.

He added that the increase in the general target income for the Maritime Unit for 2011/12 was £57,330. The officer added that the total would be £2,219,360, and that this was extremely challenging but the unit had to be competitive.

Consequently, he referred to the daily fee of £4 that was being charged at Morfa Bychan, and he believed that this amount ensured value for money for the customers.

A member expressed concern about the effect the additional costs could have on local boatmen. He added that there were less and less moorings, and that mooring costs on the Quay side were nearly £500 and that increasing pressure was being placed on local boatmen.

This was endorsed by another member, who was eager to see an increase in the number of local boatmen who used Porthmadog Harbour.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer said that he was keen to see more people from the local community taking advantage of the harbour. He added that the Unit would be willing to discuss the situation with the local boatmen, and that it would be possible to have moorings somewhere within the harbour, although there was no guarantee that these would be in the best location. He emphasised that the Harbour Master would be ready to discuss the situation with the boatmen and the councillors.

Budgets

Information was submitted to the members regarding the financial situations of Porthmadog Harbour and Pwllheli Harbour along with the general budget of beaches, including Morfa Bychan, from the third quarter of the 2010/11 financial year (until 31 December 2010).

It was noted that the target income for Porthmadog harbour for 2010/11 had been £75,190, and up until the end of December 2010 the harbour had succeeded in generating £71,281 in comparison to collecting £74,856 in income within the same period the previous year.

It was not anticipated that substantial income could be generated during February and March, therefore an income deficit of £3,900 had been anticipated for Porthmadog harbour until 31 March 2011.

The officer added that further expenditure had been anticipated during March and the key financial indicators for the last quarter anticipated an underspend of £1,500 in the harbour's budget by the end of March. He explained that the overall expenditure total would have taken into account the total target income. The officer emphasised that such overspend and the deficit in the returns placed an unacceptable financial burden on the Authority.

Given the current financial climate and the need to identify further savings, the officer noted that the Maritime Unit faced a challenging time, and that this was evident in view of harbours that were failing to meet income targets and expenditure targets.

He emphasised that overspend and the income deficit would have to be overcome, especially given the general reduction in the budget available to the Council and the savings that needed to be identified in the future.

With regard to the beaches, it was noted that 50% of the income total came from Morfa Bychan. It was noted that this underlined the importance of the beach and the officer added that a bid had been made for a grant of 42% to build a new toilet for the beach, and that this would contribute further to the standard of the facilities there.

Navigation- moorings

The majority of navigation aids leading to Porthmadog Harbour remained in place during the winter of 2010/11. The officer noted that an organised system was now in place, and when navigation aids moved, they were reinstalled shortly.

However, it seemed that there were changes close to the location of navigation aid no. 5, with the channel in this area having widened substantially. As a result of this, the channel had become more shallow, and the Maritime Unit had advised sailors to be careful when navigating in this area.

It was confirmed that each navigation aid at Porthmadog Harbour would have been monitored and would be in its correct position before Easter.

It was very encouraging for the Officer to be able to state that the navigation lanterns which give additional guidance to sailors during the winter months, had continued working. He noted further that the success of the lanterns was underlined by the fact that the original intention had been to use them on a seasonal basis.

Additional lanterns had been incorporated into the system in 2010, but the officer did not foresee that it could be improved any further.

Information was submitted to the members regarding the work and costs involved with examining and maintaining all the moorings in the harbour.

All the moorings located on Borth y Gest foreshore would be examined by the Harbour Master, and as in 2010 there would be no need to move any of the moorings along the foreshore before the start of the holiday season.

Staff

It was confirmed that Harbour Assistant posts would run in Pwllheli, Porthmadog and Barmouth between 7 April and 30 September. Also, many beach officers would be employed during the summer season in order to manage Morfa Bychan and they would begin their duties on 7 April. There would be additional resources on the beach during the busiest periods of the summer season.

The officer thanked all the workers for their hard work and he urged the members to remain in close contact with the workforce.

Sailing Club Developments

The officer submitted information regarding the consultative work that had been carried out in relation to the Sailing Club developments.

This Consultative Committee had already supported the principle of extending the pontoon facility for moorings in Porthmadog harbour.

Trinity House and the Welsh Assembly Government's Marine Consents Unit had been part of the consultation. The application was later supported by the Dwyfor Area Committee, and the development had now been completed.

The officer reported that the work had been completed successfully, and that the pontoon facility did not impair on other moorings or the slipway.

The Officer thanked the Sailing Club for their cooperation, and in response Dr John J. Morris (Leisure Interests representative) noted that the support and cooperation of the harbour workers had ensured that the work had been accomplished without difficulties.

Some concern was expressed as part of the wall near Llyn Bach had fallen and was affecting the water flow into the harbour. The officer confirmed that he would investigate the matter.

Cricieth

The RNLI representative, Mr Peter Lunt Williams, reported for information that it had been confirmed that Cricieth Lifeboat Station would be acquiring a Coastal Lifeboat.

The boat had been built in New Zealand and the money had come from a local will. Mr Williams stressed that this support was of extraordinary value. He added that the next step would be to have a suitable place to keep the boat, and it was expected for the service to be in action by the beginning of the main holiday season.

He noted further that Cricieth lifeboat had been called out 53 times last year and had saved 15 people who would have otherwise drowned were it not for the service.

The crew at Cricieth Station were congratulated for the service and the information on the new lifeboat was welcomed.

The meeting commenced at 6pm and concluded at 6:55pm.