
**PORTHMADOG HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE,
10 OCTOBER, 2012**

PRESENT:

Councillor Alwyn Gruffydd (Chairman)

Councillor Jason Humphreys (Gwynedd Council), along with Messrs Gwyn Davies (Porthmadog Town Council), Dr John Morris (Leisure Interests Representative) and Peter Lunt Williams (RNLI).

ALSO PRESENT: Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Officer), David O'Neill (Harbour Master) and Ioan Hughes (Members' Support and Scrutiny Officer).

APOLOGIES: Councillor Selwyn Griffiths (Gwynedd Council) and Robert Owen (Commercial Interests).

1. CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Alwyn Gruffydd as Chairman of the Porthmadog Harbour Committee for 2012/13.

2. VICE-CHAIRMAN

Resolved to elect Councillor Selwyn Griffiths as Vice-chairman of the Porthmadog Harbour Committee for 2012/13.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

4. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 7 March 2012, as a true record.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

a) The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that he had not resolved the situation regarding the material that had been left on the bridge between the harbour and Llyn Bach. It was added that the material affected the moorings and that mud was building up with the riverflow because of the situation. The officers confirmed that this matter was still being addressed.

6. ELECTION OF OBSERVERS

RESOLVED to elect Dr. John Morris to represent the Porthmadog Harbour Consultative Committee as an observer on the Consultative Committees of Aberdyfi, Barmouth and Pwllheli harbours.

7. MARITIME SERVICE REPORT

Navigation and Moorings

i) The Maritime and County Parks Officer referred to the Port Marine Safety Code published in 2002. He outlined the main points and explained that the Code would have to be reviewed in the near future.

He added that it was intended to send a copy of the Safety Code in its current form to the members before the Christmas holiday. The revised Code would then be submitted to this Committee at its meeting on 6 March, 2013. It would then be reviewed every three years.

ii) Copies of the Porthmadog Harbour Order were distributed to members. It was noted that this was the only Gwynedd Council Statutory Harbour Committee, and it was reported that it would be possible to consider a similar constitution for the Aberdyfi, Barmouth and Pwllheli Harbour Committees.

iii) It was noted that the work undertaken had ensured substantial improvement in the standard of the navigation aids and that this had been reflected in the Trinity House inspections. The Department was aware of the suggested improvements in light of the inspections and it was confirmed that the work had been completed. Additionally, the work of building buoys, as opposed to buying them, had commenced.

The officer called for the mariners' feedback in relation to the number of navigation aids and their positions.

iv) It was explained that beach zone markers were being installed in order to separate those who were bathing from the boats with propellers and that full use was being made of them in Morfa Bychan.

It was added that the existing hazards were highlighted when a young boy had been injured in Porthmadog harbour during the summer months. Reference was made to the effective way in which the emergency services and officers from the Maritime Department had responded to the incident. It was confirmed that the department had reported to the Marine Accident Investigation Branch. Best wishes for a speedy recovery were extended to the injured boy.

v) Approximately £4,000 had been allocated for the maintenance of moorings and it was confirmed that the work would be completed during the winter months in order for all moorings to receive maintenance before the Easter holidays of 2013. The chains were in a good condition due to regular works.

Maritime Statistics

i) It was noted that the total number of boats on moorings in Porthmadog Harbour had fallen to 164, compared with 173 in 2011. It was added that the decline was apparent in other harbours also and in Pwllheli Marina.

It was added that this reflected the current economic situation of the maritime industry. It was further noted that there was an over-capacity in harbours and marinas across Britain and that the impact of the unfavourable weather during the summer months was also apparent.

Budgets

i) It was noted that there was a budget of £39,780 for staffing costs and that a saving of £6,712 had been secured.

ii) In relation to buildings, there was a £20,550 budget, and a saving of £16,136 had been achieved. However, it was explained that £12,000 of this sum had been transferred from another heading on a temporary basis and that efforts were ongoing to retain the money in Porthmadog.

iii) The Officer referred in particular to the total spend of £79,960 in Porthmadog Harbour and that this showed a saving of £27,272. He noted that managing a harbour did have complications but that the standard achieved in Porthmadog with limited finance was very effective.

iv) An income target of £75,460 had been set for the harbour, and although the income was £4,500 short of the target, there was an overall saving total of £22,000. This meant that the harbour was being managed effectively. Members noted their appreciation of this effective work.

v) In response to a further enquiry regarding the £27,000 saving, the officer noted that no such success had been witnessed elsewhere. He added that the efficiency of the staff in Porthmadog had made it possible to achieve savings in order to assist other locations.

He drew attention to the fact that the Department's income target, except for Country Parks, for next year was £2.6 million and that this was very challenging in light of the current fragile economic climate.

vi) This year, an income target of £21,370 had been set for the beaches, and he noted that £150,611 had been collected to date meaning that there was a deficit of nearly £65,000. It was emphasised that this was another example of the impact of the unfavourable weather.

vii) In relation to fees and payments for next year, it was noted that a recommendation would be made to either freeze them or to increase one element of them by 1%. This was endorsed by the members.

viii) Information regarding the harbour car park was welcomed which had secured a profit of £6,000 and the money would be incorporated in the harbour's budget.

Improvements

i) It was noted that substantial work, which included general clearing, had been completed in Borth y Gest.

ii) In Porthmadog, it was noted that the greatest need was to retain the standard that had been set. Additionally, it was intended to extend the tender boat storage area near the public slipway.

ii) In response to the talk of ships coming to Porthmadog in relation to the work of strengthening electricity pylons, the officer noted that no formal application had been submitted and that no information had been submitted by any prospective contractor. A member was aware of a meeting being held in Caernarfon to discuss the matter along with an exhibition at Glaslyn Leisure Centre at a later date. It was confirmed that information would be given to the Chairman should there be a need to discuss any development.

iii) An investment of £150,000 had been received through Green Coast for the erection of new toilets in Morfa Bychan. The building work had already commenced and it was expected that the toilets would be officially open by 1 April, 2013.

Staffing

i) It was noted that the Winter season staff were now working and that there were fewer resources.

Crime

A member noted that offences, such as theft from boats, were increasing and were evident in the Porthamdog area. This was a cause for concern for the Police, therefore, It was intended to work within the Marine Watch Scheme, and in January, forms would be sent to all boat proprietors in the area asking them to register their property with the Police.

Dog Fouling Orders

i) It was noted that the Council was currently consulting on the possibility of having a Dog Control Order for the whole of Gwynedd. The Order would involve changes in the Porthmadog area.

A proposal had been made for Borth y Gest beach to be a dog exclusion zone. Additionally, changes had been suggested for Morfa Bychan to ensure that the exclusion would not affect the Coastal Path.

ii) Members referred to existing problems and the Officer noted that the Council's consultation was an opportunity for the public to voice their opinion.

iii) In light of the new toilets and the dog control order, it was intended to apply for a Blue Flag for Morfa Bychan beach by 2013. It had not been possible for Morfa Bychan beach to reach the Blue Flag standard in the past.

Security

A member expressed concern as misbehaviour in the vicinity of the Harbour was dangerous. He noted that the accident that occurred during the summer months when a young boy had been injured by a boat propeller had derived from this.

RESOLVED to accept the Maritime and Country Parks Officer's report and that the matter of bad behaviour and safety is addressed at the next meeting on 6 March 2013.

8. DISABLED PARKING

a) In accordance with a member's request, consideration was given to the matter of parking cars for the disabled on beaches and on the Maritime Department's land.

b) The member noted that 6% of the Council's car parks were allocated for the disabled and that there was an inconsistency as this was not the case for beaches. He referred to Morfa Bychan beach noting that this was the only location in the area which offered disabled people the opportunity to gain access to the beach in their cars.

c) He was concerned that this was in breach of the Equality Act, and he wanted disabled people, with blue badges, to have free access to Morfa Bychan beach.

Ch) Councillor Gwyn Davies noted that he was a blue badge holder, and for information, he noted that the badges did now contain detailed information to ensure that they would not be misused.

d) In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer said that this was an entrance fee rather than a parking fee, and that there had been charges to Morfa Bychan beach for years without any discrimination.

He added that situations arose when it was difficult to ensure safety for all, and he suggested that further enquiries could be made in order to submit a full report to the next meeting.

RESOLVED to defer the matter until the next meeting on 6 March 2013 to submit a detailed report including observations from the Council's Equality Officer.

9. ROUNDABOUT

It was noted, for information, that grant funding had enabled the Department to buy a buoy to be placed on the roundabout outside Porthamdog. The buoy came from the Port of Boston, Lincolnshire and this created a direct link, as Port of Boston was where William Alexander Madocks had represented as Member of Parliament.

10. MEETING TIMES

It was noted that some members had not noticed that the meeting time had changed from 6pm to 5pm and that this could have affected attendance.

RESOLVED that the next meeting, on 6 March 2013, would commence at 5.30pm.

The meeting commenced at 6pm and concluded at 7:40pm