
PWLLHELI HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

25-03-08

Present: Councillor Michael Parry (Chairman)

Councillors Michael Sol Owen and Alan Williams, (Gwynedd Council), Wil Williams (Yacht Haven), Dewi Owen Jones, (Pwllheli Town Council), Brian Edmunds and David Dewsbury, (Hafan Pwllheli Berth Holders Association), Rod Green, (Pwllheli Boat Owners Association), John Morris (Pwllheli Maritime Traders Association), R.J. Wright (RNLI), Stephen Tudor (Pwllheli Sailing Club), David Hughes, (Pwllheli Chamber of Trade),

Also present: Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Officer), Dafydd Phillips (Pwllheli Harbourmaster), Huw Davies (Group Engineer) and Ioan Hughes, (Committee Officer).

Apologies: Councillor R.P. Hughes, and Councillor Roy Owen, (Gwynedd Council), Councillor B. Bracewell (Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee).

Translation: The translation equipment was not in the meeting room because of an oversight, but it was decided to continue by holding the meeting in English.

Tribute: The Chairman referred to the recent death of David Peters, who had been a member of the Panel for several years. The Chairman emphasised that Mr Peters's conscientious and consistent contribution had been invaluable. Members stood in silence as a mark of respect.

Welcome: There were some new members on the Panel and everyone was welcomed by the Chairman. Everyone was given the opportunity to introduce themselves and to note which society or association they represented.

Vice-chairman: It was noted that the Vice-chairman of the Panel had resigned and it was considered whether another member was required to be elected to the post. It was agreed that this was not required until the next meeting.

Urgent Items

The following items had not been included on the committee's agenda, but the Chairman agreed to consider them under Section 100B (4) (b), Local Government Act, 1972, because the matter could not wait until the next meeting of the Panel on 14 October, 2008.

Letter from the Pwllheli Maritime Traders Association.

Reference was made to a letter received from the Chairman of the Pwllheli Maritime Traders Association.

The Chairman of the Panel was satisfied that the majority of the issues referred to in the letter would be addressed in the meeting's agenda. However, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer referred to a complaint made regarding the Unit's attempts to procure equipment locally.

According to the letter, the Pwllheli Maritime Traders Association were concerned that the purchase of Zap Cats boats and engines for them, had not been sent out to tender. The officer confirmed that boats had been purchased, but they were not Zap Cats. The officer emphasised that only one company sold Powercat boats and there had been no other choice. It was extremely important that officers had boats that were suitable for work involving control of the

harbour and nearby waters. The Powercat boat had been identified as the best for this type of work.

He added that the engines were purchased locally and that the boats purchased last year also had been bought locally.

A member noted that the complaints had been made by two members of the Association.

RESOLVED to accept the information and to note that consideration should be given to give purchases out to tender in future whenever it was reasonable.

Obstruction near the harbour wall

Considerable concern was expressed regarding a boat which had been moored near the harbour wall for some time. It was stated that it was in a poor condition and was creating an obstruction.

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer replied that the boat's owner paid full fees but steps were being taken to move the boat to more suitable moorings.

He added that the Harbourmaster and the Harbours' Maritime Officer had received instructions to ensure that the boat would be located on moorings between the Old Island and North Quay before the end of March, 2008.

RESOLVED to accept the information.

1. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of this committee held on 16 October, 2008, as a true record.

2. Matters arising from the minutes

a) Discount – In the last meeting, the possibility of giving a discount on fees and payments for mooring boats on the pontoon at Hafan Pwllheli for those customers who lived permanently and full time in Gwynedd was discussed.

It was decided at that time that members would send details of any suggestions to the Maritime and Country Parks Officer. It was noted that no suggestions had been received.

RESOLVED to accept the information.

b) Parking – Further attention was drawn to parking difficulties in the area near the lifeboat station and the Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that signs would be installed within a fortnight. It was confirmed that the Harbourmaster and the Harbours Maritime Officer would ensure that the signs were in place before 14 April, 2008.

It was emphasised by a member that payments for boat launching and vehicle parking were to be made, and the only equitable answer would be to have an official car park. Attention was drawn to a site in close proximity which could be used.

There was some ambiguity regarding the legal standing of this site.

RESOLVED to make enquiries and discover further information regarding the legal issues in relation to the site.

3. MARITIME UNIT

The report of the Maritime and Country Parks Officer was submitted regarding the activities in Pwllheli Harbour, providing specific information on the following:

Fees and Payments

Information was submitted on fees and payments confirmed by the Council Board for Hafan Pwllheli and moorings in the outer harbour.

It was noted that payments for pontoon moorings in Hafan Pwllheli had increased by 6%, with the remainder of the Hafan fees increasing by 3%. In the Outer Harbour, payments by those residing permanently in Gwynedd would increase by 2%, whilst payments for those residing outside Gwynedd would increase by 4%.

Reference was made to fees and payments in relation to power boats and personal watercraft.

The inflation for each harbour in Gwynedd for 2008/09 would be expected to be 3.97%. This equated to an increase of £11,270 which would be required in the accumulative income target. The inflation index for Hafan Pwllheli was expected to be 2.98%. This equated to a required increase of £42,260 in the accumulative income target for 2008/09.

It was noted that the income for Hafan Pwllheli and the Outer Harbour was higher than expected. Steps would be taken to ensure that the expenditure and income headings would continue to reach their targets in 2008/09.

The total increase in the income target for the Maritime Unit for 2008/09 would be £62,000. Consequently, the total target income of the Maritime Unit would be £2,070,880.

In response to an enquiry, it was confirmed that a registration system would be operational in Hafan Pwllheli this year. This would be in association with the park and launch scheme, rather than those permanently moored in the harbour. Those who had already been launching on the slipway near the Harbourmaster's office already registered their boats.

As a result of registration, identification numbers would be displayed on boats and the Maritime and Country Parks Officer stated that this would benefit everyone.

Budgets

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer submitted information regarding the financial situation of Hafan Pwllheli and the Outer Harbour.

With regard to the harbour, members were reminded that the target income had been £113,000 for 2007/08 and he noted that the income generated had been £123,000. It was not anticipated that a significant amount of income would be generated during February and March and it was noted that the target income should remain significantly higher than the target.

He added that the target income for Hafan Pwllheli would be £1,418,000 for 2007/08. At the end of January 2008, the income generated had been £1,391,000. It was anticipated that the target income would be reached by the end of March.

It was reported that the expenditure thus far on several matters in the outer harbour had been higher than the budget and this was a cause of some concern because it was foreseen that there would be further expenditure in March. The additional income generated would be required to ensure that the overall budget reached the required targets.

The officer emphasised that 2008/09 would be a difficult year for the Maritime Unit, and especially for the harbour of Pwllheli, Porthmadog, Aberdyfi and Abermaw. He added that effective work would be required and the funding utilised prudently.

Navigation / Moorings

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer submitted a comprehensive report on the navigation aids and moorings.

It was noted that the three temporary buoys were still in their positions near the harbour mouth, to direct watercraft from the shallow water. It was anticipated that the buoys would remain on station, possibly until 2012, when the dredging programme for this part of the harbour would re-commence.

Concern was expressed regarding this and a member emphasised that the entrance to the harbour created the most problems because the channel was so narrow. He warned that there was a danger that boats could collide in that area.

All the harbour moorings had been inspected and maintenance work undertaken on them. It was reported that the total maintenance cost in the Outer Harbour was £4,723.

All the mooring securing rings in the Outer Harbour had been replaced and it was noted that the total cost had been £3,170. As a result, it was anticipated that the mooring rings would not require replacing until 2028.

Some concern was expressed by the Maritime and Country Parks Officer regarding the condition of pontoons used by local fishermen. It was reported that inspection and maintenance work had been completed and that the pontoons were in a serious state of disrepair and that considerable damage had been made to them by vermin.

It was emphasised that there was a need to ensure that fishermen were not storing heavy equipment on the pontoons. The Harbourmaster and the Harbours Maritime Officer would inspect the pontoon on a weekly basis and would remove equipment should it cause any problems or damage.

Also, all bait would have to be disposed in a way which would not attract vermin. It was added that the Unit would consider reviewing the discount on fees and charges unless the fishermen complied with these requests.

Reference was made to the increasing costs and it was enquired why divers were required to inspect moorings when the work could be undertaken at low tide. It was explained that consideration had to be given to the risk of working in the silt and that the work of raising the chains was far easier in water.

Staff

The officer reported on the staffing situation of the Maritime Unit, noting that several officers had been seconded to other areas over the winter. Although the officer who had been seconded to Porthmadog had indicated his desire to return to his post in Abersoch/Pwllheli, it was anticipated that the current Harbourmaster

in Pwllheli, who was on secondment from Porthmadog, would remain in this post until the end of September, when the period of secondment terminated.

Sailing Academy Project

In accordance with the decision of the Council Board, enquiries had been made to the possibility of developing a sailing academy in Pwllheli in response to the popularity of the location as a venue for national and international competitions.

The work undertaken thus far was reported, and it was confirmed that it would be possible to dredge and create a basin to the north of the existing marina and to install pontoons there for visiting or competition boats.

It was added that Marina Projects had been appointed to investigate and recommend the best option. An exhibition had been held in Pwllheli between 6-8 March, so that members of the public could study the scheme and voice their opinions.

An opportunity was provided for members of the Committee to voice their opinions and reference was made specifically to the cost of the scheme and the consequences, should it be a failure.

It was emphasised that it would be necessary to have a very detailed business plan. It was also noted that the Assembly Government would provide a grant towards the scheme and the business plan would have to satisfy them.

Wakestock Festival

It was reported that the annual Wakestock Festival would be held in Pwllheli's northern basin on 5-6 July.

These dates, which had been advertised by the festival organisers, clashed with the dates of the Llŷn Food Festival, and which had already been confirmed. Consequently, the organisers of the food festival decided to change their dates to 7-8 June.

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that a full explanation had been given to the Wakestock Festival organisers that they had to receive official permission from the Council before publishing the dates of the event.

Management of Hafan Pwllheli

Members were reminded that the management work at Hafan Pwllheli would be internalised. The contract with Yacht Haven Management Ltd would end on 31 March, 2008.

Despite the change, it was noted that it would be the same workers who would be undertaking the work, and they were now extremely experienced. It was reported that this was expected to facilitate the change - over without any problems occurring, with the same high level of service continuing.

Gwynedd Council had already thanked Yacht Haven Management Ltd for the excellent service received by them since the opening of Hafan Pwllheli.

Panel members were also eager to note their support for the staff and for the work accomplished in Hafan Pwllheli.

General Issues

It was reported that information had been received regarding several incidents during the winter when motor bikes and quad bikes had been used on the sand dunes and the beach at Glandon and Abererch beach.

It was noted that these places were opposite a Special Conservation Area and the use of these vehicles in such a way was an offence. Additional workers from the Unit had been keeping an eye on these places and further assistance was requested from the Countryside Council for Wales.

During January and February, reports were received that dead turtles had been found on different beaches. The bodies had been sent to London Zoo for autopsies and a report on the cause of death was awaited soon.

Members of the public were called to be vigilant when walking along beaches and to inform the authorities of such incidents.

Information was provided on the events arranged by Pwllheli Sailing Club. The organisers were congratulated for succeeding to attract major competitions to Pwllheli, and special reference was made to the United Kingdom Youth Championships which were to be held in Pwllheli on 3 April, when the Princess Royal would be attending.

It was noted that employees from the Maritime Unit assisted at times, in order to meet the needs of competitors and organisers. These arrangements would continue, but a warning was given that the marina was now working to its maximum capacity and there could be a possibility of insufficient pontoon moorings available in the harbour.

Pride was expressed in the fact that Pwllheli had been chosen officially as a training ground for competitors who could be participating in the 2012 Olympic Games and Para Olympics.

The Lifeboat

Information was provided that a ceremony would take place on Saturday, 26 April, to name the new lifeboat for the Lifeboat Station. Some improvements were called for in the launching area for the event.

RESOLVED to accept the information.

4. DREDGING

The report of the Group Engineer was submitted on the proposed dredging programme for Hafan Pwllheli and the Navigation Channel.

With regard to the proposed work to level the harbour bed, it was reported that the Countryside Council for Wales objected to the scheme. Following surveys carried out, it was found that the levels of chromium were particularly high in four out of five samples taken from the sediments.

In a letter from the Countryside Council for Wales, it was noted that the sites in question were in close proximity to areas of special scientific interest and a warning was given that the work of removing sediments could have a detrimental impact on wildlife.

The situation was a mystery and a subject of concern for members. Some explanations were suggested and a survey was called for on the contents of water from the rivers.

In response to an enquiry, officers explained that the only answer to the situation was to dredge it completely and to take the deposits to a different place.

RESOLVED to make further enquiries regarding the samples and take further samples for assessment, if required.

The meeting commenced at 5pm and ended at 6:30pm