
PWLLHELI HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
29-03-11

Present: Councillor Peter Read (Chairman)

Councillors Robert J. Wright, Sion Selwyn Roberts and Ioan Thomas (Gwynedd Council), David Dewsbury and Bohdan Brozykowski, (Pwllheli Marina Berth Holders Association), John Morris (Marine Traders Association), Andrew Picken, (Pwllheli Chamber of Trade) and Stephen Tudor, (Pwllheli Sailing Club).

Also present: Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Officer), Wil Williams, (Manager, Hafan Pwllheli), Huw Davies, (Chief Engineer), Llyr B. Jones (Senior Manager – Economy and Community) and Ioan Hughes (Committee Officer).

Apologies: Councillor Trevor Roberts (Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee). In addition, apologies were received from the Harbourmaster, Trefor Jones.

Welcome: The Chairman extended a welcomed to Andrew Picken who was attending this Committee meeting for the first time as representative of the Pwllheli Chamber of Trade.

1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

2. MINUTES

In relation to the Harbour Statistics, it was noted that there had been a reduction of 7% in the number of pleasure boats moored in the outer harbour, rather than the 1% reduction that had been noted in the minutes.

With the abovementioned correction made, the Chairman signed the minutes of the Consultative Committee held on 12 October 2010, as a true record.

3. 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
- Events
- Staff
- Hafan Pontoon Mooring Waiting List
- Wakeboarding Facility

Fees and Charges

The officer confirmed that the fees and charges for Hafan Pwllheli for the next financial year had been approved by the Statutory Officers and the Portfolio Leader. In addition, the fees and charges involving the Pwllheli outer harbour and the other harbours managed by Gwynedd Council had also been submitted for the approval of the Statutory Officers and the Portfolio Leader.

The total income target for the Pwllheli outer harbour for 2011/12 would be £118,130 and the total income target for Hafan Pwllheli was noted as £1,592,300. The officer noted further that there had been a substantial increase of £57,330 in the income target for the Maritime Unit. Therefore, the total income target for the Unit was £2,219,360.

The officer referred to the recommendation made not to increase the fees for 2011 for those who lived in Gwynedd on a permanent basis in relation to the moorings of the Pwllheli outer harbour. It was also recommended that there should be a 1% increase in the fees and charges for those living outside Gwynedd. He emphasised that this was the second consecutive year where fees charged to local residents for moorings in the outer harbour had not been increased.

The Portfolio Leader and the Statutory Officers had authorised a 1% increase in the fees and charges for services at Hafan Pwllheli for 2011-12.

The officer noted that this increase was lower than the projected inflation rate. An inflation rate of 1.9% was anticipated for Hafan Pwllheli.

The officer added that the need to reach targets could not be avoided and he referred to the workforce's commitment and the need to ensure that customers received service of a high standard.

Concern was expressed by a member in relation to the 1% increase for services at Hafan and he emphasised that customers faced a continuous increase in costs. He emphasised further that Hafan Pwllheli secured substantial profits, but an increasing financial burden was placed on those using the service.

In response, the officer said that he shared the same concerns as the members; however, he explained that Pwllheli's financial position could not be considered as a single entity, as the Council had to deal with budgets in their entirety. In light of this, the success of a particular service did not mean that the profits would be invested back into it. He confirmed that he submitted details of the situation and the importance of Pwllheli regularly to the Statutory Officers.

He added that there was a need to strike a fair balance, bearing in mind the need to attract the interest of local people and visitors and also to address income targets.

Reference was made to the sum of £150,000 that the Crown received from Gwynedd. The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that efforts were being made to hold discussions on the matter, and that he did not anticipate that there would be a reduction in the amount.

Budgets

Submitted – details regarding the income and expenditure for Hafan Pwllheli, the outer harbour and the beaches in general on 31 December, 2010.

The officer noted that he was confident that they would be close to reaching the income targets in Pwllheli, however, the position of the other, much smaller, harbours was not as positive.

He confirmed that the situation in relation to electricity would be reviewed during 2011-12.

In response to an enquiry, the officer provided details of the steps taken to provide budget reports and emphasised that total profits of £872,000 was projected for Hafan Pwllheli and noted that the money would be added to the Council's budget total.

Navigation/Moorings

The officer noted that all navigation aids leading to Pwllheli harbour had remained on station during the winter months. He expanded upon the location of the aids and referred to work that had been completed to improve the quality of navigation markers at the harbour entrance. It was expected to hold discussions with Trinity House with regard to establishing these aids on a permanent basis.

Further work was to be done in relation to navigation aids on the sea wall and the officer noted that those who were not used to navigating the channel should do so cautiously.

He explained that more material than had been expected had been carried to the harbour entrance during the winter months and that this had substantially narrowed the channel.

The dredging work at the harbour entrance would commence before the Easter holidays and the dredged material would be stored on the present stockpile site and it was expected that this would generally improve the conditions for navigating the harbour entrance.

The officer emphasised that the area of land available for storing material nearby the harbour entrance had reduced significantly. However, it was envisaged that there was enough space at the moment and consideration was given to what could be done in future to deal with the material.

The officer noted further that there were positive elements and he referred to the capital dredging that would take place in approximately two years' time and that it was intended to undertake further dredging work to improve the channel and other parts of the harbour at that time.

The representative of the Maritime Traders Association expressed concern about the impact the lack of dredging had on maritime businesses.

The representative was also of the opinion that Hafan should be leased. In response, the Senior Manager – Economy and Community said that the decision to internalise Hafan, made a few years ago, had been a temporary arrangement. This would provide an opportunity for the Council to look at the broader management of the harbour and look into the possibility of having one management structure for Hafan and the external moorings.

The Senior Manager – Economy and Community added that the research work in relation to the long term options for Hafan would be undertaken during the next financial year. He emphasised that Hafan was an important asset for the Council and the Pwllheli area, and noted further that the research would look into realising the true potential of Hafan.

A member expressed concern in relation to the condition of the channel, and said that the members of the Pwllheli Marina Berth holders Association wanted definite information with regards to schemes to improve the situation. The member added that the problem, and the need to dredge extended to the Hafan basin and he was concerned that many mariners were thinking of leaving the Pwllheli moorings.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks officer stated that there were plans in the pipeline for capital dredging along with bed leveller work as a short term measure. He added that consideration must be given to the condition of the coast in general.

One member noted that the current situation at the harbour's entrance was dangerous, and in response a member referred further to the work that would be completed there within a few weeks. He added that a worker would be present on the harbour's vessel at busy times to assist mariners.

Events

The officer welcomed the fact that the Wakestock festival was returning to the North Basin of Pwllheli harbour between 6 and 9 July. He added that the organisers had asked for authorisation for the festival to commence with a training schedule on the Wednesday with competition events taking place on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

A similar event was to be held on Abersoch beach on Sunday, 10 July, and it was noted that the Maritime and Country Parks Unit had not received any objections to extend the event period.

The Llŷn Food Festival was to be held on 28 and 29 May and the officer noted that it was anticipated that the Festival would be very successful given that it would be held during the Bank Holiday weekend and the school half-term.

The officer noted further that Hafan Pwllheli had won the 'Five Anchors Award' and the International Blue Flag Award once again. Also, the beach at Marian y De had been awarded the International Blue Flag for 2011, and the beach at Glan Don had been awarded with the Green Coast Award.

The officer referred to the European Bathing Waters Directive which would come into effect in 2015. There would be four classifications of bathing water under the new directive, namely:

- Excellent
- Good
- Sufficient
- Poor

He added that meeting the strict criteria would be a challenge. However, he added that the quality of Pwllheli bathing waters had been very constant over the last five years and that it was anticipated that it would be classified as being of 'excellent' standard under the new directive in 2015.

The officer expanded upon the schedule for the introduction of the new directive.

Staffing

The officer reported that the post of Harbour Assistant for both Porthmadog and Pwllheli for the next season had been advertised that that the post would extend between 7 April and 20 September 2011. In addition, the post of the Harbour Assistant for Barmouth and Aberdyfi had been advertised and the successful applicant would also be employed from 7 April to 30 September.

Members were reminded that these posts used to be full-time posts; however, they had now been reduced to six month posts.

The officer added that a number of beach officers would be employed during the summer season in order to manage the Blue Flag beach at Marian y De and they would

begin their duties on 19 June. A Fuel Pontoon Assistant would be employed at Hafan Pwllheli for the summer season.

He noted further that there had been seven permanent members of staff within the Department during the winter months and that they had been responsible for the entire coastline and the harbours. He explained that Hafan had a separate team.

Hafan Pontoon Mooring Waiting List

Submitted – an update by the officer in relation to the Hafan moorings.

The following information was noted:

- Number of available berths at Hafan - 409
- Number who had accepted for 2011 - 352
- Number not receiving a berth 2011 (cancelled) - 74
- Number of empty berths - 57
- Number on the list requiring a berth in 2010 - 189
- Number on the list requiring a berth - 133

It was noted that all 133 had been offered a berth for 2011, and had refused the offer.

In response to an enquiry, it was noted there were various reasons for refusing a berth but that lack of money and the fragile position of the economy was an apparent reason. It was added that the majority wished to remain on the list.

In order to ensure that the waiting list accurately reflected the situation, the names of those who had refused a berth more than once had been removed from the list and they had been advised to reapply if they really needed a berth.

Previously, members of this Committee had requested that the Maritime and Country Parks Unit should consider increasing the registration fee from £50, as it was now, to £100. This had now been adopted and the new fee would be applied from April 2011. The waiting list deposit could either be repaid or accepted as part of the payment when the applicant received the mooring.

Members were still of the opinion that the short list was misleading, but members felt that the list should be used as a starting point for when berths became available.

In response to enquiries made by members of the Pwllheli Marina Berth Holders Association, the following information was submitted by the members:

Of the number of people on the waiting list during the last twelve months, how many of them had declined the offer of a berth?

- 6m – 3 applications – all had accepted
- 8m – 2 applications – one had accepted, one had refused
- 10m – 7 applications – two had accepted, and five had refused
- 12m – 2 applications – all had refused
- 13.5m - 1 application - had refused
- 15m – 1 application – had accepted

Of the number of people on the waiting list during the last twelve months, how many of them had not been offered a permanent berth?

- Everyone on the list had been offered a berth

What was the length of waiting time quoted to both local and non local residents upon enquiry?

- It was very possible a berth would be available for all those who would require a mooring in 2011.

Wakeboarding Facility

The officer referred to a request received from the owner of the Pwllheli Wakeboarding Training School as to the possibility of positioning a Wakeboarding wire along a section of the Outer Harbour area of Pwllheli.

He explained how the system would work and noted that it would include positioning two relatively short towers on each side of the training area, one located near the edge of the old island site and the other near the entrance of the stilling lagoon. A steel wire would connect both towers.

Photographs and diagrams had been submitted in order to provide members with further assistance.

The officer noted that the Wakeboarding Training Centre at Pwllheli harbour could be an additional attraction. However, he added that there would be a need to give further consideration to the fact that the steel wire would cross harbour waters, and the possible risks associated with this.

He noted further that he had notified the applicant that the first step would be to submit the matter to the Harbour Consultative Committee. The officer had also explained to him that a number of bodies and authorities would have to be consulted.

A local Councillor confirmed that the RNLI did not object to the proposal. The options were considered and it was confirmed that there would be an opportunity for the members to contact the officer to make any further observations and that they would be submitted within a fortnight of the date of publishing the minutes of the Consultative Committee meeting.

The officer noted that the venture would initially receive an annual permit rather than permanent permission.

The meeting commenced at 6:00pm and concluded at 7:40pm

CHAIRMAN