

Minutes of a meeting of the Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee that took place on
28 February 2017 at Neuadd Dyfi, Aberdyfi

PRESENT

Cllr. Dewi Owen - Chair
Cllr. Anne Lloyd Jones - Vice-chair

Cllr. Mike Stevens (Gwynedd Council), Cllr. David Richardson (Aberdyfi Community Council),
Cllr. Brian Bates (RNLI), Mr W Bracewell (Aberdyfi Partnership), Mr Dave Williams (Aberdyfi
Advertising and Improvement Committee), Mr Desmond George (Aberdyfi Sailing Club), Mr
Neil Storkey (Clerk Observer on behalf of Aberdyfi Community Council)

Also in attendance:

Officers

Llŷr Jones, Senior Economy and Community Manager
Barry Davies - Maritime and Country Parks Officer
William Stockford - Aberdyfi Harbour Master
Glynda O'Brien - Members' Support Officer
Mererid Watt - Translator

Apologies: Mr Nigel Willis (Aberdyfi Boat Club), Mr James Bradbury-Willis (Aberdyfi
Chamber of Trade)

As a point of order in terms of membership, it was reported that Aberdyfi Chamber of Trade
did not exist any more and the list of organisations on the Agenda should be amended.

In response, the Member Support Officer reported that in May all the organisations/societies
would receive a request for their constitutions / minutes of annual meetings etc. and thereafter
it would be possible to amend the list.

1. **CONDOLENCES**

The Chairman made reference to a bereavement suffered by Mr Dave Williams,
representative for Aberdyfi Improvements and Advertising Committee on this committee, who
had recently lost his wife. Sincere condolences were extended to Mr Williams and all
present were asked to stand as a mark of respect to him and his family in their sad loss.

2. **DECLARATION OF PERSONAL CONNECTION**

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

3. **MINUTES**

Submitted: Minutes of a meeting of the Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee
held on 15 November 2016.

Resolved: To accept and approve the minutes as a true record.

4. **THE MARITIME OFFICER'S REPORT**

Submitted: The report of the Maritime and Country Parks Officer, Mr Barry Davies, updating the committee on Harbour management matters with specific reference to the following:-

(a) **Marine Safety Code**

It was noted that the Safety Code was a live document and how importance it was to receive regular observations on the contents in order to review it and that the document was relevant to harbour activities. It was noted that the Service had been awaiting an inspection from an external expert from the Coastguard Agency, however, due to the lack of staffing capacity this had not occurred and would be reorganised in due course.

Reference was made to the launch of the Neptune Campaign that had recently been undertaken at Tywyn Secondary School following reports that jet ski riders were disturbing dolphins off the Abersoch and Tywyn coast.

In response to the above, a Member noted concern that officers and Members were not aware of local events and better communication should be ensured between Departments in the future.

Resolved: To accept and note the above and the Maritime and County Parks Officer would follow up the concern with the relevant Department.

(b) **Navigation**

It was reported that the Fairway buoy had come off station following storm 'Doris' recently and it was ensured that a Notice to Mariners would be issued without delay and arrangements made with the local contractor to re-install the buoy back on station.

It was added that the sea wall navigation aid buoy in the Tywyn area would be re-installed back on station, however, the tide and the weather had to be favourable to undertake this work.

Generally, despite the harsh weather during storm 'Doris' the other aids within the harbour had remained on their appropriate stations, however, assurance was given that any off-station aid would be re-installed prior to 1 April 2017.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(c) **Maintenance**

The Harbour master outlined the work undertaken over the winter namely:

- Pont y Brics
- Repair work around the harbour
- Repairing the side of the gardens near the Harbour Office
- Installing bars / barriers at the side of the promenade to prevent sand from coming over

It was hoped to clean the RNLI slipway before the start of the season together with other minor matter to ensure that everything was ready by the Easter holiday.

An appeal was made for Members of this Committee to contact the Harbour master regarding any operational matters in order that the work flow could run smoothly.

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A word of thanks was given by the representative of the Aberdyfi Boat Club for the service given by Harbour officers.

(ch) Staffing Matters

(i) It was reported that the Aberdyfi Harbour Assistant contract (seasonal) had been extended for three days a week up to the end of March 2017 rather than moving staff, and this had proven to be cost effective. It was proposed to employ two full-time Harbour Assistants (1 in Porthmadog and 1 for Aberdyfi/Tywyn) from 1 April onwards and these posts would be funded from the Maritime Service's budget.

(ii) It was proposed to consider employing a Beach Assistant at Aberdyfi during the Summer from the Service budget and this will be approximately £4,000 and perhaps to look at the possibilities of attracting funding from other local sources. It was anticipated that the Service would contact the Community Council in order to seek local financial support.

(iii) It was further asked if it would be possible to employ students over weekends and during the holidays from the start of July until September.

(iv) The work of the Beach Assistants was praised and whilst accepting that it was not a life-saver service their work was a means to offer local knowledge and assurance to individuals and their employment was seen as a huge benefit. The Beach Assistants were also of assistance to the Harbour master and could release him from having to deal with beach matters such as children unable to find their parents having been in the sea, first aid etc.

(v) The Senior Manager Economy and Community added that the matter had to be considered in a wider context and the Council was anxious to ensure that safety was a priority, bearing in mind that there was a period of review and changes in terms of financial cuts etc.

(vi) In terms of safety signs in the Harbour and beaches, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that the Service had undertaken a review of all signage in Barmouth in consultation with the RNLI. This review was a foundation for conducting a review in Aberdyfi and Tywyn that would be undertaken in March/April and following this the needs as well as the costs could be measured. In response to an enquiry by the Member regarding if the signs would be in place for this season, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained further that the suitability of the signs, consistency in the context of other beaches in the County, maintenance costs etc, had to be discussed, however, an assurance was given that the local Members would be contacted soon once the review had been undertaken in Aberdyfi for further discussion.

(vii) Several Members stated how important it was to erect suitable signs on the site and this work should be implemented without delay for this season.

(viii) In response, the representative from the RNLI added that he would push hard to implement the above as the basic design of the signs had been discussed, and he did not anticipate why it could not be implemented soon. He further noted that the Beach Assistants were on the beach for the tourist season only, however, the signs would be there for all to see all of the time and if they could get better signage then it was felt that this would be beneficial to teach individuals about their own responsibility for safety.

Resolved: To request that the Maritime and Country Parks Officer updates Committee Members regarding developments with the beach signage review.

(d) Other matters

(i) The Quay Wall

An update was received by the Maritime and Country Parks Officer on the above noting that discussions were on-going between Snowdonia National Park Officers and Natural Resources Wales regarding the environmental element and it was trusted that the Service could submit a business plan to the Welsh Government by the end of March. It was emphasised that the Council had identified 25% of this scheme's costs.

The Senior Economy and Community Manager expressed his disappointment that planning permission had not been confirmed thus far, and in terms of looking to the future it was noted that plans were in order and the various phases of the process were yet to be organised. It was further noted that there was no concern regarding the planning application, however, there was concern regarding the future funding of European programmes as a result of Brexit.

In response to the Chairman's concern regarding time elapsing and the deterioration of the wall structure, the Senior Manager Economy and Community explained that monitoring work was being undertaken on the wall and an assurance was given that the structure had a remaining lifespan of five years if there was slippage in the programme until 2020. Whilst accepting that the structure was drawing to the end of its lifespan, it was confirmed that there was a need for an investment in the short/medium term and therefore there was some time in reserve. The development was more extensive not only for the Harbour infrastructure but also to prevent flooding.

In terms of a concern highlighted by a member that the condition of approximately 95% of the structure's anodes had deteriorated considerably, it was assured that this work would be achieved within the work programme.

Resolved: (a) To accept and note the above.

(b) To request that the Maritime and Country Parks Officer conveys the Consultative Committee's concern regarding the delay in processing the Planning application.

(ii) **Common Land / Storage, waste**

It was reported that the above continued to be problematic due to the lack of local contractors to undertake clearance work. An estimate was expected from a Caernarfon company and in the meantime the Service was seeking quotes to erect a high fence and gate to be funded from the Service budget. This would enable the service to have secure management of the land.

It was disappointing to note that there was no cooperation from the fishermen bearing in mind how much fishing tackle was on the site that had not been moved for many years. They would have to continue to seek their cooperation and appeal to the fishermen's representative to discuss this with the fishermen as an urgent matter.

The Chair added that it was high time to erect the fence and it was trusted that this would prevent persons from disposing waste on the site.

Resolved: To accept and note the above and ask the Maritime Service to persist in their efforts to resolve the problem of clearing the site and erecting a fence around the land.

(f) **Sand Removal**

It was reported that contractors would commence the work of sand removal at the end of March.

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In response to a query by Mr Des George, regarding how much sand would be removed, and an assurance that there were discussions with the Golf Club, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer gave an undertaking that he would ask the relevant officer and report back.

It was further noted that the beach levels were changing significantly.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(g) Financial Matters

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer guided Members through the current financial balance-sheet and noted as follows:

- there was an underspend of £6,075 in staff costs
- there was an underspend of £8,000 in grounds and buildings costs
- there was an underspend of £50 in boat and vehicle costs
- there was an underspend of £1,200 in tools and equipment costs
- the income target was £8,000 short

Generally, the financial position appeared promising, however, it had to be borne in mind that approximately £12,000 of Aberdyfi's budget came from an additional budget and in the future it may have to be removed from this budget for expenditure under another heading.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(ng) Fees and Charges 2017/18

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that inflation for 2017/18 continued to be 1.85% and to meet the income target it was suggested that the fees should increase by 2% on average. It was proposed to increase commercial boat mooring fees to 6%.

Attention was drawn to the additional fee from the Crown Estate who claim £25 from each person with a mooring in the Harbour and the Council, as a Harbour Authority, had been requested to collect this fee on behalf of the Crown Estate.

The Harbour Master noted that he had contacted customers and thus far only two had stated that they would not renew their mooring rights.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved: Although the date of the next meeting had been specified on the 10 October 2017, the Member Support Officer was requested to re-arrange the meeting at a convenient date in November as this would be timely in terms of submitting financial reports.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 a.m. and concluded at 11.45 a.m.

CHAIRMAN.