

Minutes of a meeting of the Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee that took place on 6 March 2018 at the Dragon Theatre, Barmouth

PRESENT

Councillor Gethin Williams - Chairman
Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams - Vice-chairman

Cllr. Julian Kirkham (Arthog Community Council), Cllr. R. Triggs (Barmouth Town Council), Cllr. Mark James (RNLI), Mrs Wendy Ponsford (Member of the Meirionnydd Yacht Club), Mr Martin Parouty (Barmouth Harbour Users Group), Mr Mike Ellis (Three Peaks Race Committee)

Officers

Mr Llŷr B. Jones - Senior Manager - Economy and Community
Mr Barry Davies - Maritime and Country Parks Officer
Mr Arthur F. Jones - Senior Harbours Officer
Mr Glyn Jones - Barmouth Harbour Master
Mrs Glynda O'Brien - Member Support Officer
Mrs Mererid Watt - Translator

Apologies: Councillor Ioan Ceredig Thomas (Cabinet Member - Economy), Cllr. Louise Hughes (Gwynedd Council), Mr John Johnson (Barmouth and Cardigan Bay Sea Fisheries Association), Cllr. Rob Williams (BRIG), Dr John Smith (Barmouth Viaduct Access Group).

1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL CONNECTION

The following members declared a personal connection for the reasons noted:

- (a) Cllr. Gethin Williams - member of the Community Trust
- (b) Cllr. Julian Kirkham - related to one of the ferry operators
- (c) Mr Mike Ellis - member of the Three Peaks Race Committee
- (d) Mrs Wendy Ponsford – member of the Yacht Club, member of the Community Trust
- (e) Cllr. Rob Triggs - member of the Community Trust, member of the Yacht Club
- (f) Mr Martin Parouty – a commercial operator in the Harbour, member of the Yacht Club and the Community Trust

Members did not vote on the matters that dealt with their personal interest.

2. MINUTES

Submitted: Minutes of a meeting of the Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee held on 23 October 2017.

Resolved: To accept and approve the minutes as correct, subject to the following amendments:

Item 6(b) – Reference was made to the minute and Cllr. Rob Triggs wished to note that there was no stop failure.

In response to the above, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that the documentation needed to be reviewed and he stressed the importance of receiving current and correct evidence regarding the condition of the moorings. He added that every boat

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owner had a responsibility to ensure that moorings were fit for purpose. It was confirmed that the Council's moorings were suitable and of a high standard.

In response to a query regarding the risk to the Council with the condition of moorings, the Maritime and Country Parks gave an assurance that there was no risk at all to the Council. However, it was emphasised that it would be a cause of concern, and would have an impact on the insurance premium of boat owners, if the privately owned moorings were not up to standard with relevant evidence to back this up.

Matters arising from the minutes:

(a) Item 6(d) - Maintenance

It was noted that the Senior Harbours Officer and the Harbour Master could update Members on the winter maintenance work programme.

(b) Resolution (b) in Item 6 - Emergency Telephones

In response to an enquiry from a Member, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that the Emergency telephones service had not been used for over two years and that mobile phone signals for 999 was available in each of the locations where these telephones are sited except for Porth Ceiriad in Dwyfor.

Resolved: To convey to the relevant Cabinet Member, the Consultative Committee's approval to remove the Emergency Services Telephones at Barmouth and Fairbourne due to the costs involved and the lack of use.

(ch) Item (iv) - Parking Safety

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that he and the Senior Transport Officer had discussed the section of land coloured with yellow lines near the SS Dora building and he had received confirmation that it was part of the parking order. The owner of any vehicle parked on the area in question would receive a parking ticket from the Enforcement Officer.

It was added that no further decision had been made regarding a road adjacent to the compound.

(c) Events

It was reported that the minute was misleading in terms of organising events in the Harbour and that the minute should read that "organisers should contact the Maritime Service first to get permission to hold activities".

(dd) Cordoned-off activities area

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that the area under the bridge, near the old lifeboat station had been identified as an activities area and that a row of yellow buoys would be placed there to keep boats from this specific area, and to trial this for a period. It was explained that there was no other area available and the water had not been identified as bathing water. The need for competition organisers to undertake risk assessment was emphasised in order to ensure the safety of competitors.

(d) General tidiness and storage around the Harbour

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that it was important to ensure cooperation with commercial Harbour users in order to ensure general tidiness around the Harbour. In response to a query by a Member, it was explained that the situation was not the same as

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Aberdyfi harbour where the Coastguard Agency's inspectors (MCA) noted that there was a need to tidy-up the area around Aberdyfi harbour quay.

(e) Powerboat / Personal Watercraft Exclusion Zone

Stemming from a concern highlighted by a Member regarding the statement in the minutes of the previous meeting that there was no risk to the public if the buoys were not be reinstated to mark the bathing zone, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that only a very low number bathed in the zone in question and the view of the Maritime Service was not to use buoys to mark the zone and the risk was low as boats did not navigate close enough to the shore in this area. The Harbour staff will keep an eye on the area in question over the summer months and report on their observations.

It was added that the Service placed buoys up the estuary near Caerddaniel in order to reduce risk, however, it was laborious and costly to reinstate them on station daily as well as the fact that a substantial number were lost annually.

3. 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.

Alison Kinsey, Coordinator of Cardigan Bay Fisheries Local Action Group, who had requested to attend the meeting, was welcomed and she explained the purpose of FLAG (Fisheries Local Action Group). The following main points were noted:-

- That there were four groups operational in Wales for the purpose of supporting the fishing industry and communities: St Dogmael's to Barmouth, Anglesey and Gwynedd, Swansea Bay and Cleddau to the Coast
- That FLAG received European funding and approximately £160,000 was available until 2020 and it was trusted that this could be used to assist small community led projects.
- That a strategy had been created based on local need
- Priority was given to funding projects that:
 - add value
 - create jobs
 - attract young people, and
 - promote innovation at all stages of the supply chain from fisheries products
- Financial revenue support can be offered towards new projects such as:
project development, pilot projects, feasibility studies, training, mentoring, facilitating and consultation.

Examples were given of the types of activities that could take place with FLAG assistance:

- Seafood Festival on the quay
- Seafood cooking competition between the chefs of local hotels
- Send out a fleet of fishermen to sea to catch fish
- Encourage the local school to take part in a seafood cookery competition
- Working with a group of local fishermen to hold activities, etc.

To conclude, the Coordinator explained that Mr Neil Storkey from Aberdyfi, worked closely with her and having a representative from Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee would be advantageous to be part of future FLAG meetings.

In addition, reference was made to Cywain which was part of the Menter a Busnes projects developed to support the development of products and markets for agricultural and fisheries produce.

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During the ensuing discussion, the following points were highlighted by individual Members:

- That Barmouth had excellent restaurants and it would be ideal to host a seafood festival on the quay
- That the Cambrian group actively collected plastic material that is washed up onto the beach

It was proposed and seconded to nominate Cllr. Rob Triggs as a contact point from this Consultative Committee and the Coordinator promised to contact him directly with any further information.

Resolved: To approve the nomination of Councillor Rob Triggs to represent this Consultative Committee at FLAG group meetings in the area.

(b) The Chairman noted that it was not necessary for the Maritime and Country Parks Officer to guide Members through the contents of the report and he asked Members if they wished to raise or highlight any matters stemming from the contents of the report. To this end, the following matters were highlighted from the report of the Maritime and Country Parks Officer

(i) **Sand Removal** - after many years work to keep afon Ysgethin flowing, it appeared that the sand dunes were disappearing into the sea and Natural Resources Wales were not willing to do anything about this. Unfortunately, due to not listening, the problem with sand clearance at Barmouth will get worse. The above observations were supported by another Member and it was stated that the relevant departments should discuss the matter, and that Natural Resources Wales should be challenged.

(ii) **Coastguard Agency** - it was asked if the inspectors intended to visit Barmouth as they had not visited as part of the inspection due to time restrictions.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that although there was no specific reference in their report to Barmouth Harbour, the Safety Code was relevant to all Harbours and they were aware of what is happening in Barmouth.

Attention was drawn to the intention of the inspectors to undertake yet another visit in the Autumn and they will attend the Porthmadog Harbour Consultative Committee with an opportunity for all Harbour Committee members to attend this meeting and there might be an opportunity for the inspectors to visit Barmouth.

The Senior Manager Economy and Community added that the main purpose of the report was to investigate governance arrangements and harbour management.

(iii) It was asked if everyone had to pay the Crown Estates fee for the sum of £25.00 in addition to the mooring fee.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer confirmed that all moorings owners had to pay the above fee in every Harbour, including the Council's moorings, except for Pwllheli Harbour as the cost for that harbour was £150,000 annually payable to the Crown Estate. It was added that it was not possible to challenge the fee as they could charge more if they wished, and that similar arrangements existed in other counties for many years now.

(iv) Thanks was given for the safety signage from the RNLI. It was added that the signs would be erected in suitable places immediately and they could be erected in a short time.

(v) In terms of changing the date of the Motorcross event on Barmouth beach, as it conflicted with school half-term holidays and that Barmouth would be busy anyway and the car park full, it was understood from the organisers that it was difficult to move the date as they were limited to that date as a result of other competitions that occur throughout Britain.

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During the ensuing discussion the following points were highlighted:

- That one of the caravan shops intended to close during the above event, if it was on the same date as the half-term holidays, along with the Lifeboat Shop as it would be too busy and this meant they would have to keep control of their stock.
- The event was originally welcomed to Barmouth in order to extend the holiday season for the benefit of the local economy.
- If the event did not come to Barmouth this would be a loss to the hotels and bed and breakfast establishments
- That it was intended to provide a questionnaire to local businesses to find out if the event benefited businesses.
- Would it be possible to move this event to another weekend in November to coincide with Bonfire Night, however it was stated that Remembrance Sunday was on 10th November.

Resolved: To request that the Maritime and Country Parks Officer contacts Mr Tom Arnold, Motorcross Organiser to initially find out if it would be possible to move the event this year to another weekend and to suggest that it coincides with Bonfire Night; and secondly, if this is not possible, could they consider a date that will avoid half-term in 2019.

(vi) A Member noted that it was proposed to establish a Lifesaving Group and it was suggested that the Maritime Service should be notified when a meeting had been organised.

In the context of 'trot' moorings, the member of the Three Peaks Race Committee noted that these moorings belonged to their Committee and there had been extended discussions in the past regarding their suitability. It was noted that expensive boats had moored on them without any trouble. The Three Peaks Race Committee were more than willing for the Council to use the moorings if they wished, following the race. It was suggested that the local contractor and the Maritime Service should discuss the matter further to use one or two of the above moorings.

It was understood from the Town Councillor that the Three Peaks Race Committee had recently submitted a financial application to the Town Council. It was further noted that the Town Councillor had met the Senior Harbours Officer to discuss better use of the moorings and that another meeting was to be arranged.

(vii) The Town Councillor noted that the Town Council had proposed to fund a small project in the cemetery area to provide chains to allow launching. The matter would be discussed further with the Maritime Service.

(viii) The Committee was given an assurance that moorings, where there are no forms for them, would be taken out during the summer.

Resolved: To accept and note the contents of the report of the Maritime and Country Parks Officer.

4. MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

(that had not been considered as part of the Maritime and Country Parks Officer's report)

(a) Barmouth Town Council - Dredging

It was asked if there was anything that the Council could do?

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported that it had to be accepted that the channel was changing and closing naturally with the channel going further away from the Harbour, and they had to be realistic in terms of the restrictions of Natural Resources Wales. It was not anticipated that any dredging work would occur due to restrictions and cost.

Councillor Rob Triggs noted that he had met and discussed with officers from Natural Resources Wales regarding undertaking work at a local level with boats, and had understood that it was possible to do this without a licence.

Concern was highlighted that if there was no dredging then the Harbour could be lost.

It was suggested that a way forward would be for the Maritime and Country Parks Officer to receive the names of the officers of Natural Resources Wales to discuss the implications of dredging further, prior to taking further steps to move forward.

Resolved: To request that the Maritime and Country Parks Officer acts in accordance with the above.

(b) Arthog Community Council - Management Developments at Penrhyn Point, Fairbourne

Councillor Julian Kirkham noted that Arthog Community Council requested assistance with the following aims to manage the substantial flow of tourist traffic that reaches the area:

- That the 30mph traffic notice signs, particularly near the Golf House on the way to Penrhyn Point, had been tampered with
- Parking spaces to be painted near the 'passing loop' car park
- Repairs were requested for the road above where the road goes down to the gate.
- Zig-zag NO PARKING marks at the top of the area that has been repaired
- Parking spaces are requested in the parking area at Penrhyn Point
- Height restriction barrier in the car park area - if this is not possible, then two warning signs should be erected near the entrance to the village and the other in Penrhyn Drive North stating 'Restriction for Large Vehicles at Penrhyn Point'.
- Install a Pay and Display machine together with a parking notice '£1.00 for 4 hours' and use the money towards keeping Friog toilets open

Furthermore, Councillor Kirkham noted that Arthog Community Council was willing to manage the Fairbourne Slipway but he personally would retire from the Community Council in April and they needed young members who may be interested in managing Penrhyn Point.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(c) Yacht Club:

- In response to allegations about closing the Promenade Road, the Chair gave an assurance that he had not heard anything about the above.
- Regarding the railings outside the Dora building, concern was expressed by the Maritime and Country Parks Officer about the damage caused to the railings by a commercial boat and a request would be made for a repayment for the damage. It was noted that there was a gap between the half slipway and the steps that caused a high risk in terms of health and safety that persons may fall into the sea and following a risk assessment it was decided to erect a fence. It was noted that the land was

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unsuitable for vehicles to park and this was the reason why the picnic tables had been placed there. Whilst accepting that historically boats were wintered there, it was noted that arrangements were in hand to move them and because of the high risk it was stressed that the quay surface and wall had to be protected. It was noted that it would be possible for vehicles to load and unload near the half slipway and opposite the Harbour Master's office. It was necessary to discuss the way forward with the local contractor to approve measures to reduce the risk to him and the authority.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(d) Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams referred to a report regarding the North Wales Growth Deal Bid and suggested that it might be possible to attract funding for Harbour activities.

In response, the Senior Economy Manager confirmed that he was aware of the above plan and that it was a funding package for different projects.

Resolved: To accept and note the observations on the above matters.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved: It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 23 October 2018.

The meeting commenced at 10:30am and concluded at 12:40pm.

CHAIRMAN.