
PORTHMADOG HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 10/10/18

PRESENT:

Councillor Alwyn Gruffydd (Chair)
Councillor Nia Jeffreys (Vice-chair)

Councillor Selwyn Griffiths (Gwynedd Council), Dr John Jones-Morris (Leisure Interests Representative), Robert Owen (Commercial Interests Representative) and Peter L. Williams (RNLI Representative).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Malcolm Humphreys (Porthmadog Harbour Master), Arthur Francis Jones (Senior Harbours Officer), Llŷr B Jones (Senior Manager, Economy and Community Department) and Bethan Adams (Member Support Officer).

APOLOGIES: Councillor Ioan Thomas (Cabinet Member, Economic Development).

1. CHAIR

RESOLVED to re-elect Councillor Alwyn Gruffydd as chair of this Committee for the year 2018/19.

2. VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to re-elect Councillor Nia Jeffreys as Vice-chair of this Committee for the year 2018/19.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

4. URGENT ITEMS

The Chair noted that Barry Davies, Maritime and Country Parks Officer, was not present at the meeting as he was absent from work due to an injury. He was wished a speedy recovery.

A member expressed his appreciation of the staff's professionalism and resolve when faced with unacceptable behaviour from individuals during an incident on Morfa Bychan beach. This was reiterated, and the Committee's gratitude was noted.

Dr John Jones-Morris (Leisure Interests Representative) was congratulated on his appointment as Vice Commodore of Madoc Yacht Club.

5. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 7 March 2018, as a true record.

6. HARBOUR SAFETY

No matters relating to harbour safety were noted.

7. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

The Senior Harbours Officer guided the members through the report and drew attention to the following main points:

- In response to the Coastguard Agency's recommendations in its report on the safety arrangements and systems of Gwynedd municipal harbours in order to ensure compliance with the Ports' Safety Code, the Council Cabinet would be appointed Duty Holder and Captain M. Forbes (Conwy Harbour Master) as the 'Designated Person'.
- The Coastguard Agency's inspectors had been due to revisit the service and give a presentation to the Committee on the Marine Safety Code. However, due to unexpected circumstances, the visit had been postponed until March 2019 to coincide with a meeting of this Committee.
- The employment period of Porthmadog Harbour Assistant (seasonal) ended on 30 September 2018. To assist with the work of the harbour, the employment period had been extended on a three day a week arrangement, on a monthly basis.
- Subject to financial and budgetary restraints, the service was examining the possibility of employing a full time harbour assistant to work at Porthmadog, Aberdyfi and Barmouth harbours. Otherwise, the Porthmadog harbour assistant post would return to work on a full time basis on 1 April 2019.
- Reference was made to a summary of the harbour's budgets and current financial situation up to the end of the quarter.
- In relation to Porthmadog Harbour's proposed fees and charges and the Personal Watercraft launch fees in 2019/20, the service intended to amend the fees in line with the rate of inflation. Confirmation of the rates to be used was awaited.

Porthmadog Harbour Master presented a report summarising the navigation and operational matters that had arisen during the period between March and September 2018, including maintenance matters and incidents during the period. He thanked the RNLI representative and Cricieth Lifeboat crew for their assistance in dealing with the catamaran 'Jessica's Day' that sunk on the evening of 23 July.

The RNLI Representative noted that the Cricieth Lifeboat Crew had responded to three calls in relation to individuals who had encountered difficulties on the North Bank of Black Rock Sands beach, and had saved the lives of ten individuals. He emphasised the importance of installing the new safety signs as soon as possible. He referred to the intention to remove some of the signs during the winter months to minimise damage from the severe weather, and stated his concern. He noted that the risk did not reduce during the winter, with the possibility of incidents occurring over the period.

A member noted that action should be taken in accordance with the RNLI's guidance. In response, Porthmadog Harbour Master noted that the safety signs would be installed as agreed in consultation with the RNLI.

A member noted that the work undertaken as part of the Flood Mitigation Plan in Borth-y-Gest had been a topic of discussion. He explained that the wall that had been constructed was necessary to protect houses from future flooding. He noted that there was concern locally about the memorial benches and that the number would increase, but he had received confirmation from the service that the number would not increase, as those in good condition would be re-located in suitable places. He thanked the service and Gwynedd Consultancy officers for their work on the Flood Mitigation Scheme and their willingness to discuss local concerns.

In response, the Senior Economy and Community Manager noted that he would convey the member's thanks to the officers from Gwynedd Consultancy.

Reference was made to Porthmadog Sailing Club's request for a representative from the organisation to be co-opted on the Consultative Committee. The Leisure Interests Representative noted that Porthmadog Sailing Club's representatives had not contacted him to raise matters at meetings of the Consultative Committee or to ask him about what had been discussed at the meetings. He added that anyone had the right to attend meetings of the Committee as they were public meetings.

A member noted that there was an opportunity for individuals to attend Committee meetings to listen to the discussion.

Porthmadog Harbour Master noted that the Maritime and Country Parks Officer had responded to a letter from Porthmadog Town Council in relation to backless benches, noting that the poles would be re-installed. He noted that he had received a request from an individual to locate a mobile kiosk selling teas and food on the green at Pencei. Members were asked for their views on the request.

A member noted that he supported the request for a concession of this type, on the same terms as the ice cream concession already located on harbour land.

The Senior Economy and Community Manager explained that a competitive process would have to be followed in order for permission to be granted for this type of concession. He noted that the Committee could, if it wished, give its opinion on the principles that would be included in the process.

The Committee's support for the request in principle was noted, and officers were asked to look into the matter.

The Leisure Interests Representative provided an update on Madoc Yacht Club's plan to increase the number of pontoons in the harbour. It was noted, following a request for more information from the Maritime and Country Parks Officer at the previous meeting, that a letter had been received from 'Intermarine'. He summarised the contents of the letter and showed a plan of the proposal. The Committee's opinion was sought on the proposal.

In response to members' observations, the Leisure Interests Representative noted:

- The proposal would mean seven additional moorings with free moorings being relocated;
- The Council would receive the Harbour Tolls and a percentage of the visitor fees collected by Madoc Yacht Club;
- The situation in the harbour was different to that of Holyhead Harbour and maintenance work would be carried out;
- If early permission was granted by the Council, it was intended to complete the associated work by the beginning of the season;
- In relation to the fishermen's concerns about the impact of the proposal on their movement towards Snowdon Wharf, the pontoons would be some distance away from the sediment that had accumulated;
- The laterals would be submerged, with two on one side and four on the other side;
- It was fair for Madoc Yacht Club to pay the costs if chains etc. needed to be moved in the harbour to enable the implementation of the plan;
- One free mooring would be available for Cwch y Dwyfor;
- There would be sufficient space to launch the small lifeboat on the slipway.

The Senior Economy and Community Manager noted that the technical data in the letter from Intermarine needed to be analysed and checked in relation to the strength and suitability of the structure.

A member noted that he had no objection to the proposal if the number of moorings in the harbour remained the same.

The Senior Harbours Officer noted that the impact of the changes on the other users needed to be considered.

The Committee's support in principle for Madoc Yacht Club's plan was noted.

In response to a question by a member in relation to improving the railings between the Maritime Museum and the rear of Y Ganolfan and the proposal to install a gate, Porthmadog Harbour Master confirmed that discussions had been held with y Ganolfan and that some matters had arisen from the discussion.

The Leisure Interests Representative noted the need to ensure that vehicles did not park in front of the gate as emergency access was required. In response, Porthmadog Harbour Master confirmed that no parking would be permitted in front of the gate.

A member referred to the success of the Harbour Fun event that was the result of much hard work. She expressed her gratitude to the Harbour Master and the team, and hoped that more events would be held in future.

RESOLVED to note and accept the report.

8. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on 6 March, 2019.

The meeting commenced at 5.35pm and concluded at 6.25pm

CHAIRMAN