
BARMOUTH HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 26/03/19

PRESENT:

Members : Cllr. Gethin Glyn Williams – Chair (Cyngor Gwynedd), Cllr. Eryl Jones-Williams (Gwynedd Council), Cllr. R. Triggs (Barmouth Town Council), Dr John Smith (Barmouth Viaduct Access Group / Three Peaks Race Committee), Cllr. Mark James (RNLI), Mrs Wendy Ponsford (Member of Merioneth Yacht Club), Mr Martin Parouty (Barmouth Harbour Users Group) and Cllr. Brian Woolley (Arthog Community Council)

Officers: Llŷr B. Jones (Senior Manager Economy and Community), Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Officer), Glyn Jones (Barmouth Harbour Master), Lowri Haf Evans (Member Support Officer) and Mererid Watt (Translator)

Others invited: Sandi Rocca (Barmouth Publicity Society)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:- Cllr. Louise Hughes (Gwynedd Council), Councillor Ioan Ceredig Thomas (Cabinet Member - Economy) and Mr Arthur Francis Jones (Senior Harbours Officer).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee, held on 23 October 2018, subject to amending note (d) sand clearance page 5 from 'moving sand' to 'moving sand dunes' and to also correct note 5 harbour safety page 6 from 'pots and fishing tackle in Aberdyfi' to 'pots and fishing tackle in Barmouth'.

It was proposed and seconded that 'matters arising from the minutes' should be a specific item on the agenda.

Matters arising from the minutes:

(a) Events

The Motorcross dates had been confirmed

(b) Fairbourne Emergency Telephones

Following a review along the coast, it was highlighted that the use of emergency telephones was low. The representative from Arthog Community Council highlighted that the Community Council wanted the telephones to be retained. It was suggested that discussions should take place with the Community Council regarding the possibility of transferring

responsibility for the telephones to them.

(c) Damage to railings outside the Dora building

It was reported that further damage had been made to the railings outside the Dora Building and although it was the Council that shouldered the burden to pay for the damage it was noted that the costs had been fully recovered.

(ch) Compound Road

Following a suggestion at the previous meeting for a traffic order on the Compound Road land, the Senior Manager Economy and Community highlighted that arrangements for land orders were being reviewed across Gwynedd and this parcel was part of a wider scheme. He added that it was intended to start the consultation process during summer 2019. In response, the possibility of letting or leasing the land rather than creating an official car park was highlighted. **The need to establish suitable management of the site was proposed.**

4. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

(a) The Senior Harbour Officer's Report

A report was presented by the Senior Harbours Officer giving a brief update to the Committee on harbour matters for the period from October 2018 - March 2019.

Following a review of the responsibilities of Cabinet Members in March 2019, it was reported that Councillor Gareth Thomas had responsibility for the field of Economic Development and the Community. Councillor Ioan Thomas, former Cabinet member for Economic Development and Community, was thanked for his support and commitment to the maritime service.

In response to a question regarding membership and the attendance of some Committee members, it was highlighted that the Cabinet Member was responsible for Committee membership and that any change in membership or in the Committee's constitution would be determined by the Cabinet Member.

It was suggested that correspondence should be sent to all existing organisations to seek representation before responding to new applications. In response to membership in the terms of reference where it was noted that it was possible to have 'up to 4 local members of Gwynedd Council', it was suggested that the member representing Penmaenpool should be invited.

Moorings

In response to the October minute regarding a reduction in the number of moorings, it was reported that it was intended at the time to review why mooring owners had left. This had not been undertaken, however, there was a wish to seek the views of users. **A request was made for officers to ask users about the situation along the coast.**

It was suggested that it was necessary to respond to the change in attitude and

to give consideration to market moorings for jet-skis. It was highlighted that users were likely to use a permanent mooring if one was available, however, in the meantime they used temporary moorings with other boats. With events organised with an input from the Harbour Office e.g. The Blackrock Blast, it was noted that it was possible to facilitate the provision, but it was not possible to control individuals. If people do not visit the office, it was very difficult to manage the situation. **To address this it was suggested that it was necessary to consider ways of controlling this better and to provide a specific facility for jet-skis. Members were encouraged to discuss their ideas with the Harbour Officer.**

Port Marine Safety Code Inspection.

It was reported that the Coastguard Agency's inspectors had undertaken an inspection (17-19.09.18) on specific safety arrangements and the systems of Gwynedd municipal harbours in order to ensure compliance with the Ports Safety Code. It was highlighted that every member of the Committee had a responsibility to respond to code matters and for the service to receive comments and views of members about the code's suitability.

Following the review a report had been received suggesting improvements and this was circulated to Committee members. There was a follow-up to the initial visit during March 2019 and a written report was awaited on the conclusions of the second visit.

One matter that arose was the need for an agreement to control the landing stages for the ferry. The need for a draft plan by October 2019 was noted with the intention of having a final agreement in place by October 2020 following a period of consultation.

In response to a comment regarding the implications of not adopting a scheme in accordance with the recommendations of the Maritime Agency, it was noted that Gwynedd Council would be at fault for not taking notice.

Observations arising from the ensuing discussion:

- need to review and engage with licence holders
- need to risk assess the railway bridge - prior to limiting the ferry use
- that the ideal path/passage of the ferry be limited to the East
- that a draft agreement was drawn up in 2017 with a discussion on the path / passage of the ferry - proposed to re-visit this draft
- propose that discussions take place with ferry operators.

In response to an observation about the need to dredge the Harbour, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer stated that dredging was a complex and very costly process and in the future it was not anticipated that any dredging work would be undertaken in Barmouth. He added that the Harbour was a natural harbour with many nature conservation restrictions and with global climate change the Harbour's dynamics was changing as well as the surrounding environment.

In response to the observations, the need for the Council to protect the Harbour in Barmouth was emphasised and it was a valuable resource to attract tourists into the area and of economic benefit to the County. **It was proposed that the Assembly Member Dafydd Elis Thomas, Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism (Dwyfor and Meirionnydd constituency) should be invited to**

the harbour to discuss the implications of the lack of investment in the harbour. In response, the Senior Economy and Community Manager noted the need to consider the practicality of a Barmouth dredging scheme. It was added that preparation work was required by completing environmental/technical assessments which would be very expensive. If there are opportunities then a wider package would have to be considered and it was suggested that there was a need for scoping work.

Observations arising from the ensuing discussion:

- that sand had accumulated within the channels - the main priority was to keep the channels open
- that localised, small scale dredging was not expensive
- the Harbour had to be maintained
- it was necessary to try and reduce the problems between the channel and the harbour wall

It was suggested that Mr Martin Parouty submits his comments on scoping work to the Senior Manager and for Councillor Triggs to submit his observations regarding the specific needs for the Harbour.

Reference was made to a drop-in event, organised by Gwynedd Consultancy (YGC) to share information with the public about the Flood Mitigation Scheme in Barmouth (25.3.19). It was highlighted that the proposal was to discuss initial options that would be funded by the Welsh Government.

Attention was drawn to the following matters:

- That the work of erecting a chestnut fence had been elevated as a priority with the site prepared to start the work 1.4.19
- That two assistant harbour master posts would be created, one to be based in Porthmadog harbour and the other in Aberdyfi harbour, with responsibility for working across all the harbours. Seasonal support would be available in Barmouth this year, however, the situation would be reviewed in the future.
- The Barmouth Harbour budget sheet was distributed and it was reported that it was anticipated there would be an overspend of £22k by the end of the financial year.

(b) Harbour Master's Report

A report was presented by the Harbour Master detailing navigational, operational and maintenance matters. Attention was drawn to the following matters:

- Following a detailed inspection by Network Rail workers and associated contractors of Barmouth viaduct it was reported that essential maintenance work was required over the next three years. It was added that a time-scale for the work had not been published. The Harbour Master noted that there was a good relationship with Network Rail. **The need to ensure that clear communication continued between Network Rail and the Harbour Master in order that updates and day-to-day issues are discussed in a timely manner.**
- That the safety signage displayed in strategic sites around the Harbour was an improvement
- Mooring certificate returns - administrative arrangements had been tightened. This was welcomed and was a significant improvement.

Matters to be Considered at the Request of Committee Members

- Old ferry steps / public steps - restoration work required
- Stage had been repaired this year, need to look at practical plans - consider a metal not concrete stage
- Public information boards had been moved from Fairbourne beach. Although they did not fall under the responsibility of the Harbour, it was reported that the situation was being reviewed by the Beaches Officer. It was noted that the boards would not be re-erected by Easter. In response, the need for information / notice boards for the public was argued and it was suggested that Beach Road was the best site.
- Parking in the Harbour - request to consider double yellow lines from the office up to the lockers.
- The need to clear the compound. The area was not the Council's responsibility and therefore Gwynedd Council highlighted a concern about the suggestion to place a skip on the site. It was suggested that compound users could pay to have a commercial company waste bin. **It was proposed that the Senior Harbours Officer and the Harbour master make further enquiries.**
- Harbour Pontoon - it was highlighted that a meeting had taken place to try and seek ownership and joint operation of the pontoon's management. It was highlighted that an engineer had undertaken an inspection of the pontoon structure and that significant expenditure was required to bring it up to the appropriate standard. It was added that work to raise funds was being organised to pay for basic maintenance in order that the pontoon can be ready for the start of the season.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting will take place on 22nd October, 2019.

Members were reminded that any matters could be referred or reported directly to the harbour master and they were encouraged to inform them of any problem via email.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 12.10 pm

CHAIRMAN