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## BARMOUTH HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 19/10/21

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### Present:

Members: Councillor Gethin Glyn Williams, Councillor Rob Triggs (Barmouth Town Council), Dr John Smith (Barmouth Viaduct Access Group), Peter Appleton (Cardigan Bay Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG))

Officers: Barry Davies (Maritime Manager), Arthur Francis Jones (Senior Harbours Officer), Bergitte Evans (Barmouth Harbour Assistant) and Lowri Haf Evans (Democratic Services Officer).

### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Gareth Thomas (Cabinet Member - Economic Development), Councillor Louise Hughes, Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams, Councillor Brian Woolley (Arthog Community Council), Mr John Johnson (Barmouth and Cardigan Bay Sea Fisheries Association), Councillor Matthew Harris (Barmouth Destinations Improvement Group), Mark James (RNLI) and Llŷr B Jones (Assistant Head Economy and Community Department)

### 2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

None to note

### 3. MINUTES

The Chair accepted the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee that took place on 23 March 2021

Matters arising from the minutes:

- **Feasibility Study** - the Maritime Officer highlighted that the result of the feasibility study into proposed dredging works in the Harbour would give a clear picture of what will be possible in the future.
- **Legislation requirements in the context of the Harbour Development Plan** - the Maritime Officer highlighted that Barmouth Harbour was established as a Municipal Harbour under the Council following the requirements of the Pier and Harbour Confirmation Act (1930). It was noted that the legislation did not force the Authority to develop the harbour, only to maintain it. The development of the Harbour was a discretionary matter. In addition, it was highlighted that the Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009 confers further requirements on the Harbour Authority and compliance was required with this act prior to the consideration of further developments.

### 4. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

The following reports were presented, and members were invited to give feedback on their content and to ask questions.

a) **The Senior Harbour Officer's report, giving a brief update to the committee on harbour matters for the period from March 2021 to October 2021.**

The Senior Harbours Officer noted that it was pleasing to announce that it had been a successful year with an increase in the number of visitors and customers reflecting the gradual relaxation of Covid restrictions and barriers to overseas travel.

Attention was drawn to the following matters:

**Moorings**

There had been 54 boats on annual moorings in Barmouth Harbour in 2021

**Staffing Matters**

All the staff (harbour and beach) were praised for their service during a busy and very challenging time. It was reported that they had a proactive attitude and it was pleasing to see good cooperation and safe supervision over the summer. No complaints had been received. It was added that the staffing situation in the harbour had received detailed consideration and it was proposed that the Assistant Harbourmaster and the Harbour Assistant would be offered a secondment to stay with the intention of advertising the Harbourmaster's vacant post early in 2022.

Following a very recent review it had been resolved that the Assistant Harbour Master would be promoted to the Harbour Master's post on secondment until 30 September 2022 and the employment period and post of the Harbour Assistant would also be extended until 30 September 2022 with a promotion based on secondment.

**Financial Matters**

In response to a question regarding the Harbour's finance, the Maritime Officer highlighted that a brief summary of the Harbour budget and the current financial position would be shared with members in the next few weeks. It was added that approximately a further £6k was to be spent on maintenance matters, however, the income level this year had achieved the target. In relation to Barmouth Harbour's proposed fees and charges and the Powerboats and Personal Watercraft launch fees for the 2022/23 season, it was noted that the Service intended to amend the fees in line with the rate of inflation. It was also noted that there was a need to consider energy costs. The Service had not received confirmation of the rates that should be implemented - it was suggested that the information would be available before Christmas. **The Maritime Officer to circulate a brief summary of the Harbour budget and the current financial position to members**

**Feasibility Study - Dredging**

It was reported that there would be a need to dredge a volume of 70,000m<sup>3</sup> if it was desired to have an appropriate depth within a small area opposite the harbour quay. Members were reminded that a financial bid, with the support of the Cardigan Bay Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG), had enabled the Council to commission a feasibility study with an additional £10k to the £35k for a scheme to sample the nature of the mud. It was reported that an analysis and results of the

scheme would determine the possible options with a draft report to be released at the end of November. Peter Appleton was thanked as well as FLAG for their support. **Maritime Officer to circulate the draft report to Members. Members to consider the draft report and to present feedback / comments / questions to the Maritime Officer to give to the experts, in order to report back on the matter at the March 2022 meeting.**

#### **Registration Issues:**

To facilitate the registration process, powerboat and personal watercraft owners could register their vessels on-line via Gwynedd Council's website. It was reported that the process was effective and had reduced the administrative work considerably. It was added that an e-mail would be sent to owners in February 2022 to re-register on-line. It was noted that the service continued to work jointly with the Information Technology Unit to try and ensure that a scheme to pay for moorings would also be available for spring 2022. **It was suggested that the Senior Harbours Officer and the Harbour master communicated with local forums to raise awareness of the on-line registration scheme.**

In response to an observation that there had been registration difficulties with some launching personal watercraft from leisure sites / holiday parks along the coast, it was noted that officers had communicated with the managers of these locations to ask them to encourage owners to register their vessels prior to launching. In response to a follow-on question, it was noted that the response had been weak, but officers were continuing with the venture. It was accepted that it had been a difficult year and there had been 'new visitors' in the area - the hope was that the situation would improve. **It was suggested that Councillor Mathew Harris should contact the leisure sites/holiday parks again and for Councillor Rob Triggs to raise the matter at the Town Council.**

#### **The Department of Transport's Consultation Paper**

Reference was made to the consultation relating to altering legislation to bring recreational and personal watercraft within the scope of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995, to ensure safe practices. The Maritime Officer highlighted that Gwynedd arrangements for this matter were tight enough, with the exception of some private sites. Members were encouraged to submit their individual responses by the closing date of 1 November 2021, however, reference was made to the responses of the Harbour Committees of Pwllheli and Porthmadog to the consultation.

The main elements of the consultation were outlined and it was noted that some amendments were complex and long-winded. It was proposed to support option 3, namely creating legislation under section 112 of the Railways and Transportation Safety Act 2003 to extend the relevant provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995, and relevant regulations, to include recreational and personal watercraft emphasising the importance of ensuring training for users and a call to increase the age limit to drive recreational and personal watercraft

- (b) The Senior Harbours Officer report, summarising the navigational and operational matters that had arisen between March 2021 and October 2021, including maintenance matters.**

The Maritime Officer thanked Barmouth Harbour staff for their work during the season - Members added their gratitude and reported that it was pleasing to have staff stability and support for the community.

It was reported that the Service had received its annual inspection of navigational aids in Barmouth and the channel approach by Trinity House staff on 28 September 2021. A report on their findings would follow.

Currently, no Local Notice to Mariners was in operation regarding the navigational marks in the channel.

## **RESOLVED**

1. **To note and accept the reports.**
2. **To respond as follows to the Department of Transport's Consultation Paper, "Strengthening enforcement of the dangerous use of recreational and personal watercraft":-**
  - **That this committee supports option 3, namely creating legislation under section 112 of the Railways and Transportation Safety Act 2003 to extend the relevant provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995, and relevant regulations, to include recreational and personal watercraft.**
  - **To emphasise the importance of ensuring training for users and a call to increase the age limit for driving recreational and personal watercraft.**

## **5. MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE REQUEST OF MEMBERS OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

### **Merioneth Yacht Club**

It was highlighted that the Club's representative, Mrs Wendy Ponsford would be leaving the area and therefore the Yacht Club needed to nominate someone in her place. It was reported that Mrs Ponsford had been a member of the Committee for years and her contributions were always enthusiastic and appreciative. Best wishes were extended to her in her new home. **The Maritime Officer to send a message on behalf of the Committee to thank Mrs Wendy Ponsford for her service.**

Mr John Smith noted that he would be reporting on the Club's activities until a representative had been formally confirmed.

### **Beach buoys**

It was reported that it was not practical to install buoys to prevent powerboats to come close to the beach as the buoys themselves would move with the tide and come ashore. It was noted that in the past up to 40 buoys had been installed and a number had been lost. It could be argued that it would be possible to install stronger / heavier buoys, however, a specialist boat would be required to undertake this work.

It was suggested that as owners register they could be encouraged to stay approximately 100m from the beach. If there was no compliance then the registration number should be noted and followed up.

### **Outdoor Swimming**

There had been an increase in interest to have an open air swimming resource in the Harbour - a suggestion by the Yacht Club to create a watercraft prevention zone in order to create an all year round swimming area. **It was proposed to hold local discussions to seek to trial the venture emphasising** that if buoys were used, they would have to be installed without prejudice and swimmers should take responsibility and dress appropriately.

#### **Motor Cross 2021**

It was reported that the event had been successful but a comment was made regarding the timing. **The Maritime Officer to write to the organisers and suggest a date for 2022.** The date to then be circulated to Members of the Committee and Barmouth Town Council for observations prior to confirmation.

#### **Sand near the compound**

A request to consider a price for the work - **it was suggested that a local discussion should take place to discuss this**

### **6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

22 March 2022.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 2.55 pm

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**CHAIRMAN**