

PWLLHELI HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 14/03/2023

PRESENT:

Cyngor Gwynedd: Councillor Hefin Underwood (Chair) and Councillor Nia Jeffreys (Cabinet Member - Economy and Community).

Co-opted Members: Nigel Hough (on behalf of Jenny Moss) Representing Pwllheli Marina Berth Holders' Association), Michael Sol Owen (Representing Plas Heli), Councillor Mike Parry (Representing Pwllheli Town Council), Wil Partington (Representing Pwllheli Maritime Traders Association), Andrew Picken (Representing Pwllheli Chamber of Commerce) and Alwyn Roberts (Representing Pwllheli Lifeboat Institution).

Officers: Gerwyn Owen (Pwllheli Hafan and Harbour Commercial Manager), Llŷr B Jones (Assistant Head of the Economy and Community Department), Einir Rh Davies and Lowri H Evans (Democracy Services) and Alaw Hughes (Interpreter).

Others Present as Observers: Desmond George (Observer, Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee), Ruth James (Secretary, Pwllheli Marina Berth Holders Association) and Andy Vowell (Pwllheli Lifeboat Institution)

At the start of the meeting, condolences were extended to Mr Stephen Tudor in his absence, following the loss of his father, Mr Huw Tudor, and a minute's silence was held as a mark of respect.

1. APOLOGIES

Councillor Elin Hywel (Local Member), Councillor Gwilym Jones (Observer, Porthmadog Harbour Consultative Committee), Jenny Moss (Pwllheli Marina Berth Holders Association), Councillor Richard G Roberts (Local Member) and Stephen Tudor (Pwllheli Sailing Club representative).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

3. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent items were received.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee held on 18 October 2022 as a true record. At the previous meeting, an urgent matter was raised regarding the Dinas Dinlle Air Ambulance Site, and it was agreed to send a letter of concern in the Committee's name. A reply had been received confirming that discussions were on-going, however, by now further confirmation had been received that an extension of three years had been approved. The Committee was asked to write once more when there is another consultation to implore them to keep the current arrangements as any different arrangement would be detrimental to the area. It was agreed to keep the Committee in the picture regarding any developments or further communication.

5. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Reference was made to the report created by the Pwllheli Hafan and Harbour Commercial Manager, and it was reported as follows:

1.1 Port Marine Safety Code

The Committee was reminded that Barry Davies (Maritime Services Manager), would be retiring on 31/3/23 and that he had been crucial to maritime work and the Hafan for over 27 years. The Committee noted its wish to write to him on his retirement to thank him for all his work.

1.2 Dredging the Channel

It was confirmed that the work was proceeding to dispose of half the material, and there was no detrimental impact on the Holiday Park by undertaking this. It was confirmed that the work would continue until the end of the month and that a hydrographic survey had been undertaken.

In response to a question whether the groyne was working, it was confirmed that it continued to be a very challenging situation, but there would be an effort to remove 20,000 tonnes by the end of the month, and this would be something to be undertaken annually.

The Committee was reminded of the previous arrangement to take the sand to beaches such as Grugan, and it was asked whether this arrangement had come to an end? It was confirmed that Natural Resources Wales (NRW) had responsibility for Glandon beach. Half had been sold and there was half in reserve, and YGC had submitted an application to move the sand to Grugan in the autumn. Welsh Water own the land, and the challenge to keep the sand level down in the Harbour mouth continued. It was confirmed that the Service was in a strong position to sell the sand now, and the hope was that it would be sold.

Dredging the marina basin was challenging, especially as the lagoon was full and reference was made to the Work Programme and discussions were afoot with NRW to look at placing the mud in the sea, however it was necessary to undertake the dredging work in October 2023.

It was confirmed that the sand would be sold for £5.17 per tonne, contributing approximately £130,000 but £50,000 of this would go to the Crown Estate and it was agreed that it was necessary to correspond with the Crown Estate. It was noted that there was an effort to get this at cost neutral, bearing in mind that dredging the mouth of the Harbour was £100,000 on its own, and was a huge challenge. A solution was required regarding what to do regarding dredging, as there was a need for regular dredging without disrupting the use made of the Harbour.

It was asked what was in the lagoon, and the concern that it was not possible to take it to the quarry. It was confirmed that the regulations/standards had changed, and it was frequently tested, and Jones Brothers were looking to condense it, however the work to find a solution continued. Consequently, it was confirmed that the sand was 2% too high to be placed on Abererch beach. Concern was noted regarding the situation and there was space on the Tŷ Towyn Mound. It was asked whether it was possible to discuss this with NRW and it was confirmed that there had been a useful talk between YGC and NRW. In addition, it was noted that the Pwllheli Hafan and Harbour Commercial Manager had outlined the challenge to NRW when discussing the Pwllheli Flooding Risk Plan, which was a long-term programme. It was confirmed that the YGC Officer was discussing this, as well as the maritime licence, except for the construction of lagoons. It was noted that it was the small brook that had been polluted, with approximately 40,000 tonnes to be disposed of, and the intention was to dispose of 10,000 tonnes a year.

1.3 Financial Matters

The Pwllheli Hafan and Harbour Commercial Manager referred to the upgrading work and confirmed that the fuel quay bridge work would be delayed until after Easter. It was noted that there was collaboration with Antur Waunfawr by installing a second bike rack, relocating the bikes to Beics Antur, looking at installing a clothes bank and using their paper disposal service. In terms of fuel, it was confirmed that the pontoon would arrive before Easter, however, the changes would not be undertaken until after Easter, and the old fuel bridge would continue to work.

1.4 Fees and Charges 2023/24

It was confirmed that the fees had been approved by the Council and it was a very challenging situation. The Agreements had been sent and 303 had been received and only 26 had been cancelled. It was confirmed that the Hafan looked good and many wanted to come to Pwllheli. It was noted that many had not received the agreements through the post, and they were looking to move to an electronic system next year, however, it was felt that the Hafan would be full by March.

Reference was made to the Council's financial review, and it was noted that there were three elements of savings in the Hafan. Concern was raised about the pattern of cuts and the logic behind the cuts was questioned, especially cutting back annually in the Harbour, rather than investing.

The Cabinet Member took the opportunity to say that she had visited the Harbour and had seen excellent work. However, it was noted that every Council Department had to look for savings due to the financial gap and the increase in inflation, and there was no option but to ask for savings from every Department, and to weigh-up the needs of Gwynedd residents. It was noted that cuts are never easy and that difficult decisions had been made. The Pwllheli Hafan and Harbour Commercial Manager added, noting that the cut was less than other Departments. He noted the aim to increase the income target, by remaining competitive. Reference was made to historical savings, and it was noted that the Crown Estate percentage had not increased for years. He also confirmed that additional staff would not be appointed over the summer.

The comments of the Cabinet Member were supported by the Assistant Head of Economy and Community Department, and it was noted that every Department had to initially identify savings of 20% of the budget which was a huge challenge in terms of prioritisation. He confirmed that no one liked cuts/savings however he noted that he was fairly confident that this would not have an adverse effect on Gwynedd residents. He noted that there was huge pressure on the public budget. He confirmed that the fees had not increased higher than inflation. All were reminded of the need to retain the ambition, bearing in mind the investment in the Pwllheli/Glan Don Development Plan.

The Committee made the following observations:

- Fuel was cheaper in other locations, and it was noted that many did not go out due to fuel costs and it was also noted that it used to be cheaper in the Marina.
- No one had objected to the increase in fees, however discontent was noted regarding the costs of electricity and the need for a fairer system, such as a smart meter or modern technology. In response, it was noted that historically electricity was calculated according to boat metres, and the work of seeking a solution such as looking for charging points was in the pipeline, however it was not currently possible to change this. The hope was that the electricity fees would be reduced to get a fair price for all.

1.5 Operational Items

Navigation - on 20 March 2023, it was noted that everything was on station.

Staffing - great credit was given to the team, who had received 91% satisfaction in a questionnaire for berth holders, namely 'excellent' or 'very good' service.

Graph - from the results it was possible to target work such as Wi-Fi and the parking, this was important work that had shown valuable results in the questionnaire. The team was congratulated on the customer satisfaction figures.

Personal Watercraft - it was previously reported that they were not identified as boats, and consequently it was not clear at present who had the right to prosecute, should a case arise. It was reported that the proposal now was to promote the fact that personal watercraft could now incur a fine or prison sentence and that a piece of work was needed on this. It was asked whether this was a matter for the Welsh Local Government Association, as there were wider issues concerned. It was confirmed that the new Maritime Service Officer would meet with the UK Harbour Authorities to raise the matter, as several matters were unclear with expectations arising from them. The former Maritime Service Manager was thanked for his work on this, and the Cabinet Member agreed to make further enquiries.

The sense that the questionnaire reflected how people feel was noted and that on the whole it was an excellent marina. It was suggested that personal watercraft were being harshly criticised and any caution signs should be for the attention of everyone. The Pwllheli Hafan and Harbour Commercial Manager noted the need for the owners of personal watercraft to be educated to improve the time on the water for all.

Strategic Plan - it was confirmed that an initial meeting had taken place with Blue Sea Consulting, and they would visit again.

28 March – Officers and County Councillors to welcome the Consultants.

29 March – Drop-in sessions at Plas Heli – everybody was welcome to call in or to organise a specific time.

30 March – The Consultants would be around in the morning.

The Pwllheli Hafan and Harbour Commercial Manager confirmed that he would write to the Committee with the above dates.

He confirmed that they would undertake a review of the Glan Don and Cae Ceffyl area, etc. and the Glan Don Strategic Plan.

The opportunity was taken to

- Inform the Committee that Prosiect Pum Mil (S4C television programme) would be in Plas Heli working on a community project to install more shower facilities. One intention was to raise funds for autism and the Committee was encouraged to attend on the day.
- It was noted that Plas Heli and the Sailing Club had recently won several national and international competitions for Pwllheli.

RESOLVED:

To note and accept the report and agree that the Cabinet Member raises the issue of the New Legislation around Personal Watercraft with the Local Government Association.

Everyone was thanked for their valuable contributions.

6. FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS

Future arrangements were discussed and the wish of some to meet face to face was noted. Reference was made to the views of the Full Council (at its meeting on 2/12/21) regarding the future arrangements for formal committee meetings and the viewpoint was accepted.

All were reminded by the Pwllheli Hafan and Harbour Commercial Manager should they need a chat that his door was always open or they could contact him by telephone or via e-mail.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting will take place on 10 October 2023 at 6.00pm.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and concluded at 7.15pm.

CHAIR