

PORTHMADOG HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 7/3/18

PRESENT:

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

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

Observers: Councillor Ioan Thomas (Cabinet Member - Economy Development) and Rob Triggs (Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Officer), 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: David Eastwood (Harbour Interests Representative).

Chair's Announcements

The Cabinet Member and the observer from the Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee were welcomed to the meeting.

1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor Ioan Thomas declared a personal interest in item 5 on the agenda - Update on Harbour Management Matters, as he was Chair of the Caernarfon Harbour Trust.

The member was of the opinion that it was not a prejudicial interest, and he did not withdraw from the meeting during the discussion on the item.

2. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee, held on 11 October 2017, as a true record.

3. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the harbours had been fortunate as there had been little damage during the recent severe weather. He noted his gratitude to the harbour's staff for their work during the period. He referred to the previous period of severe weather on 16 and 17 October 2017. He reported that the harbour staff had collaborated with officers from the RNLI and the Coastguard Agency on 17 October, where one person's life was saved.

The Porthmadog Town Council representative noted his appreciation for the work of the harbour staff and emergency services during the severe weather.

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer guided the members through the report, drawing attention to the following main points:

- The report of the Coastguard Agency's auditors on their thorough audit of the current safety arrangements and systems of Gwynedd municipal harbours in order to ensure compliance with the Ports' Safety Code had been included in the agenda. The auditors noted that the Council complied with the requirements in general but that some aspects relating to recording duties and noting the Duty Holder and Designated Person needed to be amended.
- The auditors would be conducting a further audit in October 2018 and it was intended for the auditors to attend the meeting of the Consultative Committee and invite representatives from the Consultative Committees of Aberdyfi, Barmouth and Pwllheli to the meeting.
- The importance of the Safety Code and the members' duty to submit observations on the suitability of the Safety Code and to receive observations on the work arrangements of the harbours so that the Safety Code could be reviewed to ensure that it was relevant to harbour operations.
- There were currently three Mariners' Notice in operation in Porthmadog. The navigational aids would be relocated once the work on Y Dwyfor had been completed.
- The Porthmadog Harbour navigation channel had changed considerably over the winter months. The Service regularly inspected the channel at low tide in order to try to ensure that the aids to navigation were in the most suitable location. Due to the consistent change in the channel, ensuring that the aids were in the correct position was very challenging.
- Following an inspection of all the harbour's moorings by a diving company, the need to renew 35 moorings was identified. Quotations had been received for chains and shackles and the most competitive price was £5,100. It was anticipated that the work of installing the new moorings would be around £3,000. A plan was handed out showing the mooring locations.
- The employment period of the Porthmadog Harbour Assistant (seasonal) ended on the 30 September 2017. To ensure assistance with harbour work over the winter months, the contract was extended and came to an end on 31 December 2017. At the beginning of January 2018, a request was received from the Caernarfon Harbour Trust asking for the right to discuss a temporary work contract for the assistant with the Harbour Trust. The Officer was now employed by the Harbour Trust. Best wishes were extended to the officer.
- It was anticipated that the seasonal posts would return to a full-time basis in the harbours of Porthmadog, Barmouth and Aberdyfi on 1 April 2018 until 30 September 2018.
- The Service, jointly with the RNLI, has carried out a detailed review of all safety signage in the Harbour near Morfa Bychan beach. Peter L. Williams (RNLI Representative) was thanked for his valuable contribution.
- In response to the inspection and in consultation with the RNLI, the Service intended to order new signs to be installed on several sites around the area of the harbour that abutted Black Rock Sands Beach. The main signs would be erected on the Main Entrance and the Ffordd Gwydryn access with smaller signs erected near Black Rock (coast path), the Greenacres access and the Cwt Powdr area.
- The signs would be delivered to the harbour by mid-June 2018 and it was very much hoped that the main safety signs would be in place before the main school holiday period. It is hoped that it will be possible to fund the scheme via the TAIS scheme, namely the Welsh Government tourism fund.
- Apologies were expressed that, due to technical problems, it had not been possible to share details of the harbour's budget. The details would be sent to the members. A summary of the financial situation was given.
- Although inflation rates for Porthmadog harbour had increased to 2.19% in 2018/19 since submitting a 2018/19 spreadsheet of fees to the previous meeting, it was recommended to the Cabinet Member that the fees and payments should continue

to increase by 2% on average for the 2018/19 financial year because the service had already corresponded with the harbour's customers.

A member asked whether the Cabinet Member would be the Duty Holder under the Safety Code. In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the responsibility would be that of the entire Cabinet. The Senior Manager - Economy and Community confirmed that discussions were continuing with the Legal Service and that the arrangements needed to be confirmed.

In response to an observation about the current situation in terms of the Code, the Maritime and Country Parks officer noted that members did not need to worry and that he was dealing with matters daily and had responsibility for staff and resources. He emphasised that the auditors' report was very encouraging and that it was organisational matters that needed to be confirmed.

In response to a question from a member asking whether the navigational aids would be back on their site by the Easter holidays, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that he hoped they would be re-installed before Easter but, they would definitely be re-installed by the end of April.

In response to a question by a member, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that due to the nature of the Black Rock Sands Beach, some safety signs would be removed during the winter months to minimise damage from the severe weather.

A member expressed his appreciation of the Harbour Master, staff and Police's work responding to a recent case of individuals racing on Morfa Bychan beach. He added that individuals were reluctant to read signs and did not listen to local people when they were given advice on parking on the beach. He noted that he welcomed the additional safety signs.

A member noted his gratitude to the RNLI Representative for his perseverance with the safety signs, and to the Maritime and Country Parks Officer for seeing the value of the work.

A member referred to the future of public toilets in the area. In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the toilets were a matter for the Municipal Unit. In response to a request from a member, he noted that he would contact the Highways and Municipal Department to note that the toilets were important to Porthmadog.

In response to an observation from a member with regards to the Black Rock Sands Beach parking fees, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the beaches' budget was not within the remit of the Consultative Committee. He noted that he would send the beaches' budgetary information to the members.

A member asked for an update on Madog Sailing Club's intention to submit an application to increase the number of pontoons in the Harbour. In response, the Leisure Interests Representative noted that there was currently not enough demand for the provision and the proposal would not be viable. The Sailing Club had considered an alternative plan by placing a 24 metre extension onto the current provision in order to create space for seven moorings, and there would be one for free for the harbour's boat. He noted that permission would have to be obtained from the Council to move moorings to realise the plan.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that he was eager to receive the plan's details as soon as possible in order for the Council to weigh up the information and discuss possible options with the Sailing Club.

RESOLVED to note and accept the report.

4. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on 10 October 2018.

The meeting commenced at 5.30pm and concluded at 6.25pm.