

PORTHMADOG HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 4/3/15

PRESENT:

Councillor Alwyn Gruffydd (Chairman)
Councillor Selwyn Griffiths (Vice-chairman)

Councillors: Jason Humphreys (Gwynedd Council), along with David Eastwood (Harbour Interests Representative), Dr John Jones-Morris (Leisure Interests Representative) and Robert Owen (Commercial Interests Representative).

ALSO PRESENT: Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Officer), Malcolm Humphreys (Porthmadog Harbour Master) and Bethan Adams (Member Support and Scrutiny Officer).

APOLOGIES: Councillor Mandy Williams-Davies (Cabinet Member - Economy), David McLean (Landowners' Interests) and Peter L. Williams (RNLI).

1. TRIBUTE

The Chairman paid tribute to the late Gwyn Davies, Porthmadog Town Council Representative and Mike Biggs, former Porthmadog Harbour Master.

The members stood as a mark of respect.

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 8 October 2014, as a true record.

In response to a member's question regarding the ultraviolet (UV) disinfection treatment in Porthmadog, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that he had sent an email to Welsh Water on 10 October 2014 regarding the matter, and had received a message thanking him for the comments but that a decision had not yet been made. He noted that he would informally contact Welsh Water over the phone to receive an update.

4. PORT MARINE SAFETY CODE

a) Harbour Safety Code

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer elaborated on the process that was followed to ensure that the Port Marine Safety Code was conformed with. It was reported that no concerns had been received from members of the Committee regarding the code. The members were given an opportunity to raise any matters in respect of the code, but there were no matters arising.

b) Harbour Consultative Committees

It was reported that steps had been taken to seek to confirm the representation of the Consultative Harbour Committees. It was noted that the Porthmadog Harbour Review Order 1998 had been submitted before the Cabinet Member - Economy to confirm representation on this Committee.

In response to a member's enquiry regarding this Committee's observer on the other Consultative Harbour Committees, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that he would notify the member of the observer.

c) Marketing

A member noted that it was necessary to increase the Harbour's publicity, through the website or through the use of web-cameras for example.

In response, it was noted that there was no funding for marketing but that advertisements were posted in the Practical Boat Owner (PBO) magazine. It was added that there was a reduction in the numbers of all Gwynedd harbours, as well as Wales in general, but it was hoped that the excellent waters that were in Gwynedd would attract people here.

In response to an observation by a member regarding Plas Heli in Pwllheli, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that he was confident that this exciting development would create opportunities for other harbours as well as benefits for the wider area.

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that he would contact the Marketing Unit in the Economy and Community Department regarding the possible marketing opportunities, but emphasised that there was financial pressure across the Council.

ch) Navigation and Moorings

It was reported that the navigation aids were in the appropriate locations and that the beacons were working and therefore there were no warnings for mariners.

Attention was drawn to the fact that Cwch y Dwyfor would only be in operation for around 2 years. It was noted, that after its period would come to an end, it was intended to use external contractors to complete the work as there was no budget for a new boat.

A member noted that the option of leasing such a boat should be considered. In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the options would be assessed and that the Committee would be notified when the situation arose.

It was reported that the Morfa Bychan beach zone markers would be re-set in May and that it was expected that they would all be on site by the first Bank Holiday in May.

An update was given regarding the numbers with permanent moorings, highlighting that 109 individuals remained in the harbour with the potential of nine new customers. It was noted that one boat continually sank therefore steps had been taken to issue the owner of the boat with a 21 day warning to move it before taking steps to dispose of the boat.

It was reported that enforcing launching boats from the launch site located near the main entrance of Morfa Bychan beach rather than Cwt Powdwr would continue, in order to ensure the safety of all users.

d) Statistics

It was reported that the situation regarding the number of boats was consistent with the trend in all the harbours and it was hoped that due to the decreasing price of fuel that more individuals would come to the harbour. It was added that 3,000 individuals were corresponded with regarding the harbour using an electronic method for 75% of them to reduce costs.

dd) Budgets

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer expanded on the budget to the end of February 2015, noting that there had been overspending on supplies and that a further increase was anticipated. It was added that an underspend of around £9,000 was anticipated under staffing costs by the end of March.

It was noted that an underspend of around £15,000 was anticipated at the end of the current financial year and that a temporary loan might be made to the other harbours.

In response to a member's question, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the income of £9,237.45 that had been received to the end of February from the pay and display machine in the Harbour Office car park had contributed to the harbour's income target.

e) 2015/16 Fees

It was reported that 2015/16 fees compared with 2014/15 fees had been increased in line with inflation.

In response to a member's observation regarding the vehicle access fee to Morfa Bychan Beach and Machroes Car Park, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that it was required to charge the fee in line with inflation and that there had not been a significant increase in the fee for some years. The fact that the fee for the seasonal parking ticket for 2015/16 would remain the same was highlighted.

A member enquired whether the Maritime Service had considered introducing a non-contact payment service. In response, it was noted that it was necessary to modernise the money taking procedure and that correspondence would be made with the Council's Senior Income Officer regarding installing chip and pin devices in the harbour and perhaps on the beaches.

f) Harbour Staff

An update was given on the harbour's staffing situation. It was noted that Arthur Jones had been appointed to the post of Senior Harbours Officer. It was explained that he would be located in the Porthmadog Harbour Office but would also assist in Aberdyfi and Barmouth Harbours.

Malcolm Humphreys was congratulated on being appointed to the post of Harbour Master on a secondment period and well wishes were expressed to him.

It was noted that interviews would be held in two weeks for the appointment of the Porthmadog Harbour Assistant for the period of April to September, and the individual appointed to the post in line with the annual practice would be located on Morfa Bychan Beach.

ff) Maintenance

The Harbour Master provided details on the spring maintenance work programme.

5. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on 14 October, 2015 subject to being confirmed by the full Council in its meeting on 5 March, 2015.

The meeting commenced at 5.35pm and concluded at 6.35pm