

Minutes of a meeting of the Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee held on 5 March 2019 at Neuadd Dyfi, Aberdyfi

PRESENT

Cllr. Anne Lloyd Jones, Cllr. Dewi Owen, Cllr. Mike Stevens (Gwynedd Council), Cllr. Bob Tyrrell (Aberdyfi Community Council), Mr Dave Williams (Aberdyfi Improvements and Advertisement Committee), Mr Desmond George (Dyfi Yacht Club), Mr Nigel Willis (Aberdyfi Boat Club)

Observers: Mr Neil Storkey (Clerk/Observer on behalf of Aberdyfi Community Council)
Cllr Rob Triggs (Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee)

Also in attendance:

Officers

Llŷr Jones - Senior Economy and Community Manager
Arthur F. Jones - Senior Harbours Officer
Bryn P. Jones - Maritime Officer - Beaches
William Stockford - Aberdyfi Harbour Master
Siôn Owen - Member Support Officer
Mererid Watt - Translator

Apologies: Mr Brian Bates (RNLI), Mr Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Officer)

1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL CONNECTION

No declarations of personal connection were received from any member present.

2. MINUTES

Submitted - Minutes of a meeting of the Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee held on 22 March 2018.

Resolved: To accept and approve the minutes as a true record.

3. THE MARITIME OFFICER'S REPORT

(a) Update on Harbour Management Matters

The Senior Harbours Officer submitted his report, noting the following main points:

- He anticipated that the moorings contractors would install moorings in the harbour at the end of March and would issue a Moorings Quality Certificate to the Harbour master before any boat could be moored.

- That the review of Gwynedd harbour safety arrangements had been conducted by the Coastguard and Maritime Agency.
- That the post of full time assistant harbour master was about to be advertised, and it was proposed to have the new assistant harbour master in post by Easter.
- He presented a report on the Harbour's budgets and noted that whilst there was an underspend when the financial report was produced at the end of February, this finance would be spent on completing the programmed work by the end of the financial year.
- That the expenditure on grounds and buildings noted was spent on rent and maintenance around the harbour. The Harbour master's office had been included here, and it was noted that the location of the office was being reviewed as the existing building did not meet with modern requirements.

Observations and questions arising from the discussion:

- How many applications had been received for moorings?
- Concern was noted that the process of appointing an assistant harbour master was slow, and the schedule was tight if it was proposed to appoint by Easter.
- How had they managed not to spend any of the budget on boats and vehicles?

In response, the Harbour master noted that he estimated that 75 to 80 application forms had been received. He would share the final number with interested Committee members when the number was available.

The Senior Harbours Officer added that he shared the concern of committee members regarding the slow process of appointing an assistant harbour master, however, there had been interest in the post. He noted that the costs of Harbour boats and vehicles came from other budgets and therefore had not been shown on the balance sheet. However, it was noted that the Harbour master's boat had been out of the water and repair work was required before it was safe to use, but there was no budget available to undertake this work until the next financial year.

(b) Harbour master's Report

The Harbour master presented his report, noting the following main points:

- That Aberdyfi Harbour had been inspected by Trinity House on its safety and navigation arrangements, and it was found that appropriate arrangements were in place.
- That the course of Aberdyfi Harbour navigation channel had narrowed and had moved northwards. This had caused a great deal of adaptation work in order to aid navigation and ensure safety. Emphasis was placed on the importance of contacting the harbour's office in order to obtain current information about navigation safety.
- That maintenance work had been done, and he asked for observations on the maintenance programme scheduled for the winter of 2018-19.
- That safety signs had been erected in Tywyn and Aberdyfi following a detailed review carried out jointly with the RNLI.
- That the condition of the timber walkway was now beyond repair and that its future was uncertain in the current financial and budgetary climate. Whilst temporary measures were in place to protect the dunes, the service would consider all possible options to protect the path in the future.

- That the service was still waiting for persons with items on the common/storage land to dispose them. Whilst this was disappointing, discovering that other members of the public continued to dispose waste materials on the site was a cause of further disappointment. Work to improve the site would be carried out early in 2019.
- That work had been done to tidy up the quay, with the intention of clearing redundant equipment from the area. More equipment and fishing pots would be moved from the quay in the future.
- That work had been done to identify the owners of containers that had been located in the harbour area, after concerns had been raised about their condition.
- That the condition of the Railway bridge, which provided access to Bryn Llestair (Picnic Island), had deteriorated in such a way that it had to be closed. The service was awaiting a structural report on its condition before making a decision on its future.
- He gave thanks for the assistance that he had received in an attempt to resolve the problems that had arisen around the harbour.

Observations and questions arising from the discussion:

- The harbour staff were thanked for their work over the busy summer.
- Had navigation problems arisen due to the change in the channel's path?
- The safety signs installed jointly with the RNLI were praised. It was suggested that information about the rip-tide should be included on the signs in order to bring the hazards to the attention of swimmers.
- That it was sensible to take down the signs over winter so that they were not damaged by the winter's harsh weather.
- That it was important for the sand dunes on the path leading to the beach to be protected. If it would not be possible to install a new timber walkway, there would be a risk that the gap in the dunes could open up and affect the defences offered by the dunes from the sea.
- It was hoped that the Common/Storage Land would be cleared and safeguarded soon. It was noted that the Yacht Club was offering to help clear the site.
- Concern was noted about the condition of the quay wall as its condition had deteriorated further and as it helped protect Aberdyfi from sea damage.
- That the appearance of the quay was important, as it needed to be attractive to visitors, as well as be safe.
- That closing the bridge leading to Bryn Llestair, due to its condition, had been supported by its regular users, despite the fact that this had considerable impact on the activities of Outward Bound Wales.
- As the Outward Bound Wales centre was considered to be a school, would it be possible to install a pavement along the nearby road, in order to facilitate access? He added that this posed a potential risk to the Council if it was found that it had failed to comply with its duties to ensure safe access to schools.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Service officers' in attendance noted:

- That the channel's path had been affected by the dry weather, which had reduced the impact of afon Leri and had returned it to its natural course. He added that the nature of the bar could make access to the harbour difficult, however, it was also becoming apparent that the skills and knowledge of some boat owners did not meet the required standard. A great deal of effort was being made to ensure that every buoy was in the correct position.

- That a quote was required from a contractor for rebuilding a new timber walkway, before a final decision was made. The need to protect the sand dunes from erosion was reiterated.
- That it was not easy to manage access to the Common/Storage Land and prevent fly-tipping, and he asked anyone who had any information to contact the Council or the Police.
- That the Harbour master was collaborating closely with the harbour's commercial users to ensure a safe and attractive site.
- The future of the Quay was subject to the Council's new assets plan. It was being monitored and assessed on a regular basis and Gwynedd Consultancy was working on a business case to safeguard it as a part of their flood prevention work. It was not yet obvious what the cost of the required work would be, however, when the funding became available, it would be possible to move quickly.
- Removing the existing bridge leading to Bryn Llestair and installing a new bridge in its place would cost approximately £100,000. Discussions had taken place with Network Rail as the bridge crossed a 'live' railway and it would be necessary to collaborate with them in order to complete the work. The service was aware of the importance of the bridge to local users and Gwynedd Consultancy was working on an assessment of the bridge.
- A tribute was paid to the service staff for their hard work over the busy summer season.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled for 12 November 2019 at Neuadd Dyfi, Aberdyfi.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 a.m. and concluded at 11.55 a.m.

CHAIRMAN.