

MEETING	Porthmadog Harbour Consultative Committee
DATE	11th March 2020
TITLE	Harbourmasters Report
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H 1 Navigational Issues

- 1.1 Vessel movements in the harbour and channel approaches during the winter period have been very limited. The winter weather and associated movements in the course of the navigable channel have caused a number of buoys to become off station or out of position, requiring work in the channel. The recent storms named 'Ciara' and 'Dennis' have exacerbated the situation.
- 1.2 Following approval from Trinity House, the Porthmadog Fairway buoy is currently out of the water and undergoing refurbishment at Pwllheli harbour. Once the refurbished, the buoy will be returned to the water as soon as possible.
- 1.3 It is advised that navigation within the channel be limited to 1.5 hours either side of high water especially when navigating a vessel with a draft in excess of 1.5 metres. Where possible, it is advised to contact with the harbour office prior to any harbour departure or channel approach in order to obtain the latest navigational information. Any changes to the navigational aids in the channel and current navigational information is contained in Local Notices to Mariners produced by the Harbourmaster.
- 1.4 There are currently three 'Local Notice to Mariners' in operation at Porthmadog Harbour.
- 1.4.1 Notice to Mariners number 23/19 – The Safe Water Mark aid to navigation is currently not on station and is undergoing refurbishment.
- 1.4.2 Notice to Mariners number 28/19 the Starboard aid to navigation Buoy No 1 is not on station and awaiting deployment.
- 1.4.3 Notice to Mariners number 01/2020 the Starboard aid to navigation Buoy No 3 is not on station and awaiting deployment.
- 1.4.4 The Service advises that all navigational marks will be on station and fully operational as soon as practically possible.

H 2 Operational Issues

- 2.1 The service has received notification from National Grid, of the need to ship a large transformer through Porthmadog harbour for onward transport by road to Trawsfynydd Power station. The transformer is required to be in situ at the beginning of June this year.

- 2.1.1 The project to receive the transformer in the harbour would be extensive and could cause significant, albeit temporary disruption to normal harbour activities. Preparation work would include the dismantling and temporary removal of the pontoon structure owned and managed by the Madog Yacht Club from the harbour waters, together with a significant number of harbour moorings. The removal of harbour railings at the Pen Cei berth would also be required. Following discussion with the applicant, the project managers acting on behalf of National Grid are considering discharging the transformer on the beach at Morfa Bychan as an alternative site. The Service await a decision from National Grid at the time of writing this report.
- 2.1.2 The firm of Seimens are building the transformer at premises in Croatia. At the time of writing this report, the shipment is due to made at some stage after the 17th March when the Transformer is due to be tested at the factory, an exact date of arrival is presently unknown. National Grid have also advised the Service of a similar shipment required to take place next year and the shipment of a reactor due in 2025.
- 2.1.3 Owners of vessels in the harbour affected by the shipment may be invited to temporarily moor their vessel in Pwllheli harbour until mooring facilities have been re-established at Porthmadog. As an alternative, owners have an option to crane the vessel out the water and shore the vessel temporarily on an area of the quayside between the Harbour Office and the slipway.
- 2.1.4 It is the intention of the Service to recover all costs associated with the project from the shipment contractors and National Grid respectively. However, recovery of costs is not guaranteed. When initially considering the pontoon development it was made absolutely clear to the Madog Yacht Club that there would be the possibility of a ship requiring access to Pen Cei and that the pontoons would be required to be disassembled.
- 2.2 The Service has received information from the firm of 'Intertek' acting on behalf of National Grid of two separate Marine Licence applications under the 'Visual Impact Provision (VIP) Snowdonia project.
- 2.2.1 The licences are for the removal of electrical pylon towers situated on the saltmarshes of the Dwyryd estuary together with the remains of the foundations of a pylon tower previously removed, and the construction of a tunnel 15 metres below ordnance datum for the purposes of carrying an electrical cable.
- 2.2.2 The pylon removal works are due to commence in 2025 with National Grid requiring both Marine Licence applications to be submitted at the same time as planning applications in March this year.

H 3 Maintenance

- 3.1 The Service anticipate an inspection of the harbour moorings as part of the process of receiving the shipment of the transformer. The mooring contractor will replace any worn or damaged mooring equipment identified at that time.
- 3.2 Harbour staff have been working on the refurbishment of a number of navigational marks throughout the winter period, which are now ready for deployment.

- 3.3 The small tender vessel 'Porthmadog' utilised by the harbour staff is currently undergoing maintenance. In addition to a small amount of required fibreglass work and paintwork, the vessel is also receiving new timber gunwales to replace decaying timbers. Thereafter, the vessel will return operational duties.
- 3.4 Work is also currently on going to maintain and upgrade the equipment carried on-board the harbour Powercat patrol vessel, in accordance with Maritime and Coastguard Agency requirements. Subject to operating guidelines, this will allow the vessel to proceed to sea and undertake patrols of the area beyond the limits of the Porthmadog Channel to Morfa Bychan and Criccieth.
- 3.5 Around the harbour environment, work has commenced to paint the harbour railings running along the Northwest quay wall by the Harbourmasters office, extending beyond the harbour slipway to a point near the premises of the Madog yacht Club. In association, new link chains will be installed providing access to the edge of the quayside.
- 3.6 During the winter period, staff have maintained a number of benches and seating around the harbour environment with further work still to be completed. The service continues to receive requests for the placement of benches around the harbour with only limited space available.
- 3.7 During inclement weather, the harbourmaster has been able to undertake administration procedures including risk assessment processes of identified hazards around the harbour environment.

H 4 Other Matters

- 4.1 **Borth-Y-Gest.** The Service has installed additional safety signage on the approach to the beaches near Borth-Y-Gest, to re-enforce the inherent dangers to members of the public in those areas. The RNLI designed signage is in conformity with those already in situ around other areas of the Gwynedd coastline
 - 4.1.1 It remains the intention of the Service to install a dinghy rack overlooking the car park in Borth-Y-Gest in an effort to tidy the grassed area where numerous vessels are currently stored. Relevant notices will be placed upon vessels in that area. During the process, unseaworthy vessels and rusted trailers will be removed. The Service remain mindful that such a measure will be unpopular with a number of residents

H5 Events

- 5.1 The Service have received a request to hold a proposed 'Moveable Feast' event at Porthmadog Harbour on the 6th June 2019.
- 5.2 The service anticipate further notifications within the next month regarding other proposed events or activities within the harbour environment particularly those normally held on annual basis throughout the summer period.