

ABERDYFI HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 12/11/19

PRESENT:

Members: Cllr. Anne Lloyd Jones (Gwynedd Council), Cllr. Mike Stevens (Gwynedd Council), Cllr. Bob Tyrrell (Aberdyfi Town Council), Nick Dawson (Outward Bound Wales), Cllr. David Williams (Aberdyfi Advertising and Improvements Committee), Nigel Willis (Aberdyfi Boat Club) and Desmond George (Dyfi Yacht Club)

Officers: Mr Arthur Jones (Senior Harbours Officer), Will A Stockford (Aberdyfi Harbour Master), Lowri Haf Evans (Member Support Officer) and Mererid Watt (Translator)

APOLOGIES: Cllr. Gareth Thomas (Cabinet Member- Economy), Cllr. Dewi Owen (Gwynedd Council), Llŷr B Jones, Assistant Head Economy and Community Department and Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Manager)

1. CHAIR

RESOLVED to re-elect Councillor Dewi Owen as Chair of this Committee for the year 2019/20.

2. VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Anne Lloyd Jones as Vice-chair of this Committee for the year 2019-20.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

None to note

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee, that took place on 5th of March 2019, as a true record.

5. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

(a) Senior Harbours Officer's Report

A report was presented by the Senior Harbours Officer giving a brief update on Harbour matters for the period from March 2019 to October 2019.

Moorings

It was reported that the moorings were on station despite a change in the users' pattern. It was highlighted that powerboats and jetskis were now more popular than yachts and the situation was the same across the country.

Port Marine Safety Code

Members were reminded that the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's inspectors had undertaken an inspection in March 2019 of specific safety arrangements and the

systems of Gwynedd municipal harbours in order to ensure compliance with the Port Safety Marine Code. Following a further visit to see how the suggested enhancements had been implemented, it was reported that Capt. Quader (Agency inspector) was satisfied that the Service was in compliance with the provisions of the Port Marine Safety Code. Members were reminded of their right to submit observations on the suitability of the Safety Code and to refer any concerns to the Harbour Master.

Staffing Matters

It was reported that a full-time Assistant Harbour Master had been appointed and was based in Aberdyfi harbour. The appointment would ensure support for the harbour master as well as assisting in other harbours across the County, when required. The Harbour Master noted that the appointment of Mr Oliver Simmonds to the team had already proven valuable and his experience of working with the Yacht Club was advantageous. The members added that there was good cooperation amongst the staff and it was a good appointment.

Financial Matters

The harbour budget was presented to highlight the current financial situation up to the end of September 2019. There was an estimated underspend of £4,121. It was highlighted that it was proposed to increase daily launching fees from £10 to £15.

In response to a question regarding what had been earmarked for the underspend, it was highlighted that it was proposed to purchase a buoy as well as to undertake winter maintenance work.

(b) Harbour Master's Report

A report was presented by the Harbour Master detailing navigational, operational and maintenance matters. Attention was drawn to the following matters:

- That the service continued to monitor the main navigational channel into Aberdyfi. It was noted that the channel was continuously changing and was moving northwards. It was noted that this caused modification work to assist and ensure navigational safety.
- That the Outward Bound Trust and the Dyfi Yacht Club had conducted a busy and successful programme of events over the summer.
- The Service had seen an increase in the number of animal carcasses that had been washed up on the beach.
- The Outward Bound Trust and the Dyfi Yacht Club were thanked for the assistance given to the Service while structural repair work was undertaken on the harbour vessel.
- That wooden sand ladders enabled access across the dunes to the beach having disposed of the golf club boardwalk.
- The situation regarding the railway bridge to Bryn Llestair (Picnic Island) was being discussed and safety concerns were being considered.
- The Service had been collaborating with commercial fishermen to tidy up the fishermen's compound. It was intended to store unused equipment in the compound and to rotate the equipment as required.
- Further discussions would be held with the Maritime and Country Parks Manager to ensure the safety of pedestrians on the quay.
- Discussions had taken place with the Council's Property Unit to retain the Harbour Office at its current location.

In response to a question regarding the disposal of dead animals washed up on the beach, it was noted that animal carcasses (usually sheep) were disposed of in Dolgellau in accordance with the animal disposal arrangements. Marine animals were buried on the beach - if it was a rare animal then the service contacts the sea mammals research service to record weight, type etc. It was added that there was good cooperation with local voluntary organisations who clean the beach.

In response to a comments regarding the situation with the railway bridge to Bryn Llestair (Picnic Island) it was noted:

- That the decision to close the bridge had been supported by its users, despite the fact that this had an impact on the activities of Outward Bound.
- Gwynedd Consultancy had conducted a structural assessment of the bridge
- That the draft time-schedule of 12 - 18 months had been set to move the bridge - it would be necessary to reinforce the access prevention barriers.
- That the Community Council had an useful local contact with Network Rail - an engineer had met community councillors and Outward Bound staff on the site to discuss the situation. It was noted that the meeting had been valuable and the main concerns had been highlighted.
- A long-term solution and an appropriate plan had to be in place.
- 18 months appeared to be a long time - ideally the construction of a new bridge would be installed in one movement.
- Cooperation with Network Rail was a key part of the solution.

In response to the work done surrounding the Fishermen's Compound, it was noted that the fence erected around the compound was of good quality, was high enough to prevent fly-tipping and was locked. The hard work undertaken to tidy up the area was welcomed and support was requested from the community to keep the area tidy. Following discussions with the fishermen, it was highlighted that about half the fishing tackle had been transferred from the harbour to the compound. It was added that the intention was to rotate the equipment used and to store any other equipment in the compound. Broken or unnecessary equipment will need to be disposed.

Further observations:

- That it was an operational harbour, that attracted a great deal of interest from visitors and was an important part of the area's economy and industries.
- It was necessary to ensure that the site was regularly maintained.
- There was a need to collaborate with commercial fishermen - this was their livelihood.

In response to an observation regarding the site of the harbour master's office, the need to upgrade the office was highlighted for the well-being of the staff. It was added that the facilities were not sufficient. It was agreed that the location of the office was suitable, but ideally an office with a second floor was required to improve visibility across the harbour and the estuary. In the mean time, as a solution, it was proposed to install CCTV. It was suggested that offices to let by the Council's Property Unit were used, situated near the Harbour, for toilet facilities.

In response to the events that had taken place, a comment was made that the Swim Aberdyfi event was one that was organised well with the organisers giving fair consideration to Harbour safety. Although the organisers were very willing to conform to safety measures, it was felt that further discussion should take place to improve arrangements.

It was added that the Watercraft Blackrock Blast had raised up to £20k for the Air Ambulance. It was noted that approximately 100 jetskis had participated and that good work had been done to promote safety in the water.

Everyone was thanked for their commitment to staging and organising events.

RESOLVED to accept the reports.

8. MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

(a) Aberdyfi Quay Scheme

Regarding the renovation of the wall, it was reported that the Welsh Government had approved the application in principle and the scheme had now been listed on the Council's Assets Plan. It was highlighted that the Council had confirmed that match funding had been earmarked and further details on the Full Business Plan had been submitted to the Welsh Government. The work will go out to tender during the 2019/20 financial year with the tender documents and tender assessment methodology completed. The intention was to appoint a contractor before March 31st 2020 to commence the work in September 2020 (avoiding the Summer season) and to complete by Easter 2021. It was added that a public meeting would be organised to share information with local businesses and the community, before the commencement of the work.

This was received as extremely heartening news. The plans were praised and it was welcomed that funding had been secured. It was suggested that the successful contractor should be invited to the public meeting in order to build an open relationship with the local community. It was added that a great deal of work was required to ensure the success of the scheme with a request for all to be supportive.

- It was suggested that the harbour master's office should be upgraded during this period - it was too good an opportunity to miss.
- It was necessary to ensure that the contractor contacts and works with the RNLI and commercial fishermen.

In response to the comment about upgrading the office, it was noted that the Property Unit was aware of the situation and therefore it was possible to hold discussions.

(b) Safety of Aberdyfi Quay

Following a recent accident on the quay, the intention not to use the area as a parking space was highlighted but as a loading and unloading site only. The wish was not to allow vehicles to park on the quay in order to avoid collisions with pedestrians.

9. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that officially the date of the next meeting was 3rd March 2020. However, a request to try for another date was accepted in order to receive an update on the quay work

tender. A request was made for the Democratic Services Officer to discuss the proposal with the Maritime Service.

The meeting commenced at 10.30am and concluded at 11.50am.