

BARMOUTH HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 22/10/19

PRESENT:

Members : Cllr. Gethin Glyn Williams (Cyngor Gwynedd), Cllr. Eryl Jones-Williams (Cyngor Gwynedd), Cllr. Louise Hughes (Cyngor Gwynedd), Cllr. Triggs (Barmouth Town Council), Cllr. Mark James (RNLI), Mrs Wendy Ponsford (Member of the Meirionnydd Yacht Club), Cllr. Brian Wooley (Arthog Community Council) and S Leese (Barmouth Harbour Users Group)

Officers: Llŷr B. Jones (Assistant Head Economy and Community Department), Arthur Jones (Senior Harbours Officer), Glyn Jones (Barmouth Harbour Master), Lowri Haf Evans (Member Support Officer) and Mererid Watt (Translator)

Others invited: Peter Appleton (Barmouth FLAG), Alison Kinsey (Cardigan Bay FLAG), Ian Sadler (Barmouth FLAG)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Gareth Thomas (Cabinet Member- Economy), Barry Davies (Maritime and Country Parks Manager), Dr John Smith (Barmouth Viaduct Access Group), Mr Martin Parouty (Barmouth Harbour Users Group) and Cllr. Dyfrig Siencyn (Cyngor Gwynedd)

1. CHAIR

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

2. VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to re-elect Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams as Vice-chair of this Committee for 2019/20.

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

None to note

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee, held on 26th March 2019, as a true record.

Matters arising from the minutes:

(a) Events

It was reported that the activities and key events that had taken place on the beach by FLAG (Fisheries Local Action Group) had been successful and had raised awareness. All who had been part of the arrangements were thanked and any ideas for future events should be sent to Alison Kinsey

(b) Compound Road

In response to a request by the Committee at the previous meeting to establish suitable control of the site, the Assistant Head of the Economy and Community Department noted that a review of the County's parking order was being undertaken. He added that a draft list of sites had been identified and Compound Road had been

included on that list. It was highlighted that a Task Group had been established to assist the transport service with the work of analysing the range of options to manage car parks in light of future financial income challenges. **It was proposed to give an update on Task Group's work at the next meeting**

The maritime department was praised for their work in maintaining Compound Road, however, the way users use the site was deplorable. It was noted that there had been five incidents on the site, however, there was a lack of CCTV evidence for the Police to conduct further enquiries. The need to restrict the use to a specific group of users was proposed or to consider a future option of paying for using the space.

(c) Moorings

In response to a minute of the previous meeting that it was necessary to seek the views of users regarding why mooring owners are leaving, it was noted that it was difficult to find any statistic for the reduction in use. It was added that the situation was similar across the country.

(ch) Specific facility for jet skis

In response to a suggestion by the Committee at the previous meeting that consideration needed to be given to ways of controlling and providing a specific facility to moor jet skis, the harbour master noted that it would be difficult to designate a site and specific facility for them. The main barrier was the mud that prevents jet skis from mooring and they could only moor near the slipway or the pontoon at times when the tide allowed. Currently they pushed jet skis onto the beach and parked there. It was highlighted that jet skis were used most often as a convenient way of reaching the town from nearby caravan sites. It was added that it was possible to form a landing stage beyond the breakwater, however, in reality this would not be convenient. It was noted that efforts had been made to try and facilitate provision with no alternative options unless it was possible to dredge the harbour.

It was reported that jet skis did not bring any income to the harbour and if they were launched from a slipway the income would go towards beaches finance. It was noted that many launched from adjacent caravan parks without any firm control. It was added that a jet ski was not recognised as a boat or vessel and therefore legislation dealing with jet skis was vague.

In response to the observations, the Assistant Head of the Economy and Community Department noted, in accordance with the arrangements, that every jet ski should register with the Council. A comment was received that it was necessary to work with caravan sites to control/register jet skis and that visits to the harbour were safe with suitable provision for them. A number of complaints had been received over the Summer which had led to reviewing bye-laws to control jet skis. It was added that discussions were taking place with the Legal Unit and users.

In response to the comments of the Assistant Head, it was noted

- Concern that jet ski drivers were drinking and driving
- That legislation had to be adapted and to seek regulations that were consistent to driving a car
- Better cooperation was required between caravan park owners and the Maritime Service to promote safety aspects and responsible conduct on the water.
- It was suggested that messages should be promoted via the Gwynedd PWC website (jet ski club)

- That the concerns should be forwarded to the Assembly Member, Dafydd Elis Thomas, Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism (Dwyfor and Meirionnydd constituency).

6. 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

In response to a minute of the previous meeting that it was necessary to seek the views of users regarding why mooring owners were leaving, it was noted that it was difficult to find one statistic for the reduction in use. It was added that the situation was similar 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.

Staffing Matters

It was reported that it had been resolved to extend the employment period of Barmouth's Harbour Assistant until the end of December 2019 to ensure support for the Harbour master and provide a continuation of the Service across the County. It was added that the intention was to designate the post as permanent.

Financial Matters

The harbour budget was presented to highlight the current financial situation up to the end of September 2019. An overspend of £11,807 was estimated. It was highlighted that it was proposed to increase daily launching fees from £10 to £15.

In response to a question regarding expenditure on 'equipment and furniture' it was expressed that the expenditure was not wasteful, that everything regarding maintenance, equipment and hand tools were included in this budget. It was added that the equipment's life expectancy was not long due to harsh conditions. It was also asked if the budget was set correctly and suitable for the outcomes. **It was suggested that the Councillors on the Committee should offer input to set the budget.**

Observations arising from the discussion

- How did the increase in fees compare with other authorities?
- Despite the increase in fees, it was not always possible to launch - this depended on the tide and the specific launch site.
- That an increase of 50% was quite a step.

The increase would affect all harbour users and these were not the people who needed to be targeted e.g. jet ski users

- Users needed to be encouraged and prompted to purchase an annual permit which gave more value for money.

In response to the observations, the Assistant Head of the Economy and Community Department noted that as a result of the reduction in income it was not possible to increase the budget. He added that there was a need to promote and encourage more use and raising the income would ensure the continuation of the service.

(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:

- A substantial investment had been made to upgrade the navigational buoys in the channel
- An operational and maintenance work plan had been identified for the Winter
- Good feedback had been received regarding the safety signage (provided jointly with the RNLI)
- A request that members report back on any problem /matter regarding the channel to the Harbour master who will be more than willing to investigate the matter.

In response to a question regarding how accurate were the navigational marks, it was reported that the channel was fine and in a further response to a comment that a 'bar' of sand had formed near the access to the channel, it was reported that because of the presence of the current buoys and the navigational information provided by the harbour master there was no requirement for an additional buoy.

In response to a question regarding noticeboards on Fairbourne beach, it was reported that these were ready to be erected.

In response to a question regarding installing a slipway on the beach in Fairbourne to ensure access to the beach, the Assistant Head of the Economy and Community Department noted that it was necessary to consider a solution and suitable design for the request. He noted that the old slipway did not extend onto the beach to create access and was moved as it was in a poor condition and had deteriorated significantly. It was added that it would also be necessary to consider the cost of the scheme. It was proposed to work with the community to try and seek a solution and to establish a team in Fairbourne to discuss ideas with Gwynedd Consultancy. The Local Councillor noted that a new slipway would be a gesture of goodwill and the community would be willing to try and raise money for the venture. It was suggested that FLAG should be included in the discussions.

In the context of the safety signage a method of protecting the signs was suggested by covering them as they suffered damage when they were moved.

RESOLVED to accept the reports.

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

(a) Barmouth Harbour Development Plan

A wish to draft a development plan was highlighted. It was accepted that there was no budget to realise and implement the plan, however, it was felt that a plan needed

to be put in place to set a direction and plan ahead for the future. Ideally, advice was required on the work that could be achieved and the relevant legislation that need to be considered to dredge the harbour.

It was resolved to ask the Assistant Head of the Economy and Community Department to establish a Task Group to form a 'Mind Map' on what they would wish with an invitation to an officer from Gwynedd Consultancy to attend.

- The need to engage with the public was emphasised and give them an understanding of what can and what cannot be done.
- The following were elected as members of the Task Group - John Smith, Rob Triggs, Alison Kinsey, Peter Appleton, Wendy Ponsford together with key officers.
- The first step for the group would be to establish a foundation for a development plan giving appropriate consideration to the Port Marine Safety Code Framework.
- The second step will be to present the development plan to Natural Resources Wales in order that they can contribute and respond to the Plan.

(b) Public Steps

It was highlighted that an Officer from the Coastal Protection Unit had been called to look at the foundation of the stairs and the Unit had accepted that the foundation was their responsibility.

(c) Railtrack and Barmouth Viaduct

There was a request for assurance that the gabion boxes near the railway would not be raised any higher before commencing the next stage of work. It was noted that mixed messages had been reported. It was confirmed that Natural Resources Wales were now responsible for the assessment work.

(ch) Movement of Sand

Following the clearance work undertaken in March 2019 to clear sand, feed-back was requested regarding cost and impact. It was explained that it was possible to include an item on the March 2020 agenda - this will be an opportunity to get a full year's feedback and the real impact of the work.

(d) Breakwater

A comment was made that it was necessary to keep the breakwater clear of sand to ensure access to users. It was highlighted that machinery was available in the Highways and Municipal Services yard that would be suitable to use with the clearance work.

Observations arising from the ensuing discussion:

- Suggestion to reconvene the Sand Group.
- Need to highlight the concerns to the Head of Highways and Municipal Services
- That the local community was willing to assist with the clearance work
- The breakwater was a valuable asset for the town - it enabled access to wheelchair users, families with prams etc.
- The breakwater needed to be clear throughout the year

- Invite the Tourism and Marketing Manager to the meeting together with members of the Town Council
- To conduct a discussion with the Highways and Municipal Department regarding using their machinery.

(dd) Sand near the Bath-house

It was highlighted that the sand near the bath-house was now forming dunes. The Harbour Master confirmed that he would deal with the situation.

9. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting will take place on 24th March, 2020.

The meeting commenced at 10.30am and concluded at 12.30pm.