

MEETING	Abermaw Harbour Consultative Committee
DATE	23rd March 2021
TITLE	Harbourmasters Report
AUTHOR	Abermaw Assistant Harbourmaster

1. Navigational Issues

- 1.1. The navigable channel on the approach to Barmouth Harbour has remained relatively constant over the last year. Permission was however sought from Trinity House to alter the position of the 'Fairway' buoy (safe water mark), to bring it more in line with the buoyed navigable channel. Permission was granted and the Fairway buoy is now located at position 52° 42.815 N. 004° 04.887 W.
- 1.2 The Service regularly inspects the navigable channel at low tide in order to try to ensure that the navigational aids are in the most suitable location.
- 1.3 Each year Trinity House, the General Lighthouse Authority, conduct an independent audit of the physical presence and functionality of the aids to navigation recorded at Barmouth Harbour. Additionally, every two years a further inspection is undertaken by Trinity House of the buoyage maintenance records and risk assessments associated with the safety of Navigation in the harbour. Both examinations were completed during the autumn of 2020.
- 1.4 There is currently one Local Notice to Mariners in force at Barmouth Harbour. Local notice to Mariners No 12/20 referring to the light on the No 2 Port Hand Buoy which is currently extinguished.
 - 1.4.1 A new lantern support bracket and a new lantern has been purchased for the No 2 buoy damaged by rough seas, which will be fitted as soon as practicable. A new Local Notice to Mariners will then be issued to replace No 12/20.

2 Operational Issues

- 2.1 The Coronavirus epidemic and the associated Welsh Government restrictions imposed on the lives of individuals to curb the spread of the virus, has had a major impact on Harbour operations during 2020. In consequence, it has been necessary for the Harbour Authority to issue Local Notices to Mariners to advise harbour users of the restrictions imposed as time has progressed. Despite the issue of such Notices, the Service have been inundated with requests from individuals requesting to know what activities may or may not be undertaken within the harbour.
 - 2.1.1 Whilst fishing vessels have been allowed to continue operations throughout, tourism and leisure movements in the harbour were fundamentally restricted with many owners deciding to leave their vessels ashore for the year. It is expected that the Coronavirus epidemic will, to some extent, continue to affect harbour operations for the forthcoming season.

- 2.1.2 At the height of the 2020 summer season when some Coronavirus restrictions had been lifted, the harbour frontage became a very busy area, with vehicular traffic coming to virtual standstill on certain days, as parking places in the town became a scarce commodity.
- 2.1.3 The footways on the harbour also became congested due to the volume of people in attendance, with many visitors showing little regard to social distancing measures set by the Welsh Government, associated with the Coronavirus disease. The matter was further exacerbated by local traders on the harbour placing tables and chairs outside their premises on the footways.
- 2.2 **Port Marine Safety Code:** In accordance with the provisions of the Port Marine Safety Code and in order to ensure safe working practices, the Service continue to undertake a review of fishing and ferry operations within its harbours. The focus of the review covers the vessels utilised, together with the tasks and specific risks associated with those activities within the harbour environment, including the stowage of fishing gear on the harbour front.
- 2.3 **Harbour Moorings:** The visitors moorings located in the harbour underwent an annual inspection and service in 2020 conducted by an external contractor. With movements of the navigable channel under review, it is very possible that these moorings may well have to be re-located for forthcoming season, in order to maintain their deep water status.
- 2.4 The Service emphasise that owners of all vessels occupying moorings within the harbour are required to return the relevant mooring confirmation form together with the mooring inspection form to the Harbourmasters office at the earliest opportunity in preparation for next season. This will allow administration procedures to be progressed and for the mooring to be inspected. The Service remains committed to removing from the harbour any derelict and unused mooring that is unfit for purpose or any mooring that has not been allocated to a vessel and dues paid.
- 2.5 **Vessel Tenders:** The Service would also like to remind mooring holders of the need to register any tender vessel utilised and associated with their mooring at the harbour office. Each tender vessel should be marked and readily identifiable with the vessel it is serving as a tender.

3 Maintenance

- 3.1 During the period in question, maintenance of the aids to navigation has been undertaken by an external contractor at a net cost to the Service of £2600. Gwynedd Council owned trot moorings have also been subject to inspection and the work was undertaken by the Harbourmaster who was in post at the time.
- 3.2 It is disappointing to note that damage has occurred to the two new harbour ladders that had been fitted to the harbour wall last year. The damage was caused by vessels moored alongside the quay wall. The Service will seek to undertake repairs of the ladders in conjunction with the owners of the vessels involved.

3.3 The Assistant Harbourmaster will introduce the maintenance work programme undertaken at Barmouth harbour during the winter period. Feedback from Committee members is requested on any additional future work that may need to be considered and included.

4. Other Matters

4.1 **Harbour Subsidence:** Subsidence around the harbour infrastructure continues to occur. A collapse of the sea wall beneath the 'Last Inn' Gardens has led to rock armour being placed in the vicinity to prevent further damage. Subsidence of the harbour ground near the dinghy rack has also become exacerbated. Gwynedd Consultancy have been progressively informed of the subsidence and inspections made of the areas to determine the appropriate course of action.

4.2 **Harbour Dredging:** Following a local consultation process between the Service and harbour stakeholders, a report was prepared and presented to the Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) with a view to securing funding in association with the Welsh Government's local development strategy, for a feasibility study into proposed dredging works in the harbour.

4.2.1 Following a successful application, with the assistance of the Consultancy Service of the Council, the matter is now in the process of gathering information to form the tender package for Barmouth harbor dredging 'Feasibility' works.

4.3 **Unseasonal Storms:** Unseasonal weather in the form of storm 'Ellen' on the 22nd August 2020 caused one vessel to capsize in the harbour. Storm 'Francis' on the 25th August 2020 caused the submergence of two vessels within the harbour and caused a further vessel to drag its anchor in the old harbour. All vessels have since been recovered.

4.4 **Fisherman's Compound:** The Service continue to review the allocated spaces within the Fisherman's Compound. Following a further inspection to ensure that all unwanted materials have been removed from the site, compound plot holders will be contacted concerning the re-instatement of individual plot limits.

4.5 **Harbour Parking:** Parking bays on Compound Road have been marked to assist water based Commercial Operators to continue their activities in a busy harbour environment, particularly during the summer period. It is regrettable that since the placement of bollards to prevent indiscriminate parking by non-authorized individuals, many bollards have received unreported damage. The cost of repair of such damage cannot continually be sustained by the Service. The matter is now subject to review.

4.5.1 Indiscriminate parking on the harbour remains a problem, particularly in front of the access gates to the harbour compound situated behind the 'Lobster Pot' premises. This is despite signage in place to inform individuals not to do so. In consequence, the Service are now considering available options to prevent access to the site from being obstructed.

4.5.2 The Service advise that assistance will continue to be sought from Gwynedd Council enforcement officers as and when required, to facilitate free and unobstructed access to

the slipway for harbour users in respect of the road markings located by the 'SS Dora' building.

- 4.6 **Harbour Pontoon.** Barmouth Community Trust have taken ownership and managerial operation of the Harbour Pontoon. It is understood that structural work has been undertaken on the main section of the pontoon, with work to be undertaken on the pontoon fingers and pontoon claws attached to the pontoon beams.
- 4.7 **Friog:** Natural Resources Wales will be carrying out improvement works to the flood defences at Friog Corner in Fairbourne, Gwynedd, adjacent to Penrhyn Drive South and Friog Corner Caravan Park. The proposed improvement works will involve piling a 115m length of buried sheet pile cut off wall, though the landward face of the sea defence embankment to manage the seepage of sea water through the embankment, which is causing flooding to the land behind the embankment.
- 4.8 **Llanbedr Airfield Airspace Change Proposal:** Following a proposal by the owners of Llanbedr Airfield to increase the size of the airspace danger area around the airfield, the Service have received confirmation that there is no plan and no current requirement for an associated marine traffic exclusion zone and that all marine activities will be able to continue safely when the Danger Area is active, as has been the case with the Temporary Danger Area over the past five years.
- 4.9 **Barmouth Rail Bridge:** The harbour Authority have been provided with a draft time frame for the schedule of works for the bridge as follows;

April/May 2021

Survey work will be undertaken on the metallic spans of the bridge. Scaffolding will be erected around the legs of the bridge in order to maintain and paint the structure. The lower parts of the piles will be exposed.

June 2021

The main part of the work will commence. Most of the work will be undertaken at low tide with access being gained from Morfa side of the estuary. Divers will be used for the deeper water section.

September 2021

The Bridge will be closed to the public from 12th of September 2021. Work will be undertaken on the bridge on shifts covering 24/7. This period is when the majority of the bridge will be re-built using 2 cranes and 2 supporting machines.

December/January 2021/22

Replaced materials will be moved from the bridge.

2022

Aberamffra harbour may be required at this stage. The marine license was accepted last year.

Movement of materials from the bridge to Aberamffra harbour will be taking place throughout the spring/summer season of 2022. The contractors will be using small pontoons and this work will not affect boats or moorings in this area.

September 2022

- 4m x 12m steel pontoons will be used to move timber to and from the bridge using Aberamffra harbour. This could affect boats/moorings.
- New metal and timber sections for the bridge will be built in the allocated compound on the promenade and moved by lorry to Aberamffra harbour where they will be placed onto pontoons and transported to the bridge. Public access to Aberamffra harbour will be managed by the contractor.

5. **Events**

5.1 It is regrettable that a number of planned events which were due to be held at Barmouth harbour during 2020 had to be cancelled as a consequence of the Coronavirus epidemic. The following events were amongst those cancelled;

- Three Peaks Yacht Race
- Paddle Sports Festival
- Food Festival
- Motocross Event
- Kite Festival

5.2 It is uncertain if proposed events will need to be cancelled again this year. In consequence the Service would like to remind members that it is essential to comply with the prevailing Coronavirus Regulations and advice produced by the Welsh Government and to liaise with the Harbour Authority at the earliest opportunity to gain permission to stage the event.