

PWLLHELI HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 16/3/21

ATTENDANCE:

Gwynedd Council: Councillors: Dylan Bullard, Peter Read, Gareth Thomas and Hefin Underwood

Co-opted Members: Ifor Hughes (Pwllheli and District Boat Owners Association), Stephen Tudor (Representing Pwllheli Sailing Club), Michael Sol Owen (Representing Plas Heli), Wil Partington (Representing Pwllheli Maritime Traders Association), Alwyn Roberts (Representing Pwllheli Lifeboat Institution) and Jenny Moss (Pwllheli Marina Berth Holders' Association)

Others present: Barry Davies (Maritime Service Manager), Williams S Williams (Hafan Manager) Llyr B Jones (Assistant Head of Economy and Community Department), Councillor Rob Triggs (Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee), Bethan M Evans and Delyth M Jones (Translators), Einir Rh Davies and Lowri H Evans (Democracy Services Officers).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED to re-elect Councillor Hefin Underwood as Chair of this Committee for the year 2021/22.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to re-elect Councillor Peter Read as Vice-chair of this Committee for the year 2021/22.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Mici Plwm (Pwllheli Town Council)

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

5. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

6. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee held on 15 October 2019 as a true record. At the previous meeting, it was proposed to contact the Assembly Member, Dafydd Elis Thomas, to draw attention to Natural Resources Wales' strict regulations, along with obstacles in environmental legislation and policy preventing the construction of effective groynes. It was confirmed that there had been contact with Natural Resources Wales who had referred back to the Act and the fact that it was compulsory to comply with it.

7. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

A report was presented by the Maritime Officer and the Harbour Manager for the period from October 2019 to March 2021, and the following main points were noted:

- **Outer Harbour Slipway**

It was noted that there was a need to resolve the matter of the use of the slipway and the land management lease, with urgency. It was confirmed that the lease terms referred to the arrangements and that discussions were ongoing with the Local Member, the Chairman and the Service and it was agreed that Ifor Hughes would be consulted to keep him in the picture.

- **The Committee's Constitution**

Representatives were reminded that they needed to submit their committee meeting minutes to this Committee, along with a copy of their constitution. This information was mandatory to ensure the Organisations could continue on the Committee.

- **Port Marine Safety Code**

Two inspections had been held by the Marine and Coastguards Agency which had confirmed that everything was in order and that the Council was compliant with the requirements of the Safety Code. It was also confirmed that virtual inspection work had been carried out by the Conwy Harbour Master and that he, as the Designated Person, was also satisfied with the standard of the Code in Gwynedd. It was noted that this would be reported to the Cabinet in due course. Everyone was reminded of the need to report, at this Committee, of any safety concerns.

- **Dredging**

It was noted that there was frustration regarding the dredging situation in light of issues related to Covid. It was reported that the Royal Smalls company would be undertaking the work in Pwllheli, following the same work contract as the one at Doc Victoria. It was confirmed that the timetable had slipped, mainly as Royal Smalls was unable to permit its staff to travel due to Covid restrictions. It was hoped that the work would commence in September 2021, meanwhile, the work to dredge the harbour mouth would commence in April 2021 through the contract that could possibly run for three years.

- **Hydrographic Survey**

It was reported that the water depth in the marina basin was relatively good although it was shallower towards the harbour mouth. It was noted that the work to dredge the harbour mouth would be completed before the work on the navigation channel. It was confirmed that the £270,000 for the work had been divided to 2/3 for Pwllheli and 1/3 for Doc Victoria, with a significant portion of the investment going to Pwllheli. It was noted that there was disappointment that the work had not proceeded and there was concern regarding the possibility of losing depth in the channel and it was questioned whether there was another plan such as levelling the sea bed for the season? It was confirmed that the work to dredge the harbour mouth would continue and the work to level the navigation channel would also begin soon. Additionally, the need to consider and weigh up the sea bed level was noted and to compare the seabed level with the level in the navigation channel. There was a wish to revise and look at what could be done, however it was confirmed that there were issues with the availability of contractors, nevertheless it was agreed that the appropriate officer would review the matter again to consider what was possible.

- **Navigation**

It was agreed to consider what could be done in terms of the depth of the navigation channel as the design level was a depth of half a metre at low tide. It was agreed to share the hydrographic survey with members in due course. It was noted further, as the problem was being caused by sand and gravel, there was a need to search for an alternative use for it as there were no suitable site to process it at the moment. It was proposed to look into the possibility of using a barge to move it. The importance of

the Crib Groyne was emphasised and it was confirmed that an investment of £300,000 had been made for its reconstruction. It was not anticipated that there was any hope of extending it in the medium term.

- **Financial Matters**

A spreadsheet was distributed reporting on the financial situation. It was confirmed that there had been no new expenditure.

- **Fees and Charges**

It was confirmed that fees had remained the same despite a 4% increase in the cost of electricity. Disappointment was expressed that three months had elapsed and no payments had been taken, and that it had all been added at the end of the year without notice. It was confirmed that this had taken place as no one was certain of what would come and that the costs of running the Harbour still continued. It was confirmed that every customer would receive an invoice as soon as possible after 1//4/21 and that outstanding payments would be amended subsequently. A concern was noted that this was affecting customers and that it was important to ensure that the payment period was suitable for the customer. A concern was also noted that berth-holders could be hit with two invoices but the individuals were encouraged to contact the Council in order to reach an arrangement if there were any difficulties.

It was suggested that there was an excellent opportunity to market the marina based on the fact that the fees would not be increased. It was confirmed that it was intended to ask for guidance on the fees for 2022 in the autumn of this year. It was noted that there was an appetite to see quick progress on the work of marketing the vacant spaces. For information, it was noted that the fees in Conwy had increased by 5.7% this year.

- **Loyalty Discounts**

The Maritime Service Manager confirmed that the loyalty discount concept had been under consideration for some time and noted his wish to discuss the matter at the meeting in 2022. It was confirmed that fees would not be increased this year, and the hope was to seek clarity on the 2022/23 fees by Christmas 2021.

- **Operational Issues**

The buoy needed a chain

There were no changes in the fuel quay and it was working effectively.

Maintenance and cleaning of the pontoon was continuing.

- **Staffing Matters**

It was confirmed that Mr Keith Williams, Deputy Manager of Hafan Pwllheli had now retired and it was noted that it had been an honour to work with Keith. It was agreed to correspond with him to express gratitude for his service at Hafan for over 30 years.

- It was reported that it was hoped to appoint three new members of staff in the coming weeks and it was asked if three was enough.

- **Statistics**

It was confirmed that the Hafan Manager would update the annual mooring figures as he was still receiving the numbers daily.

- **Any Other Business**

There was reference to the app that was now available for smartphones, and the work on the web cams was in the pipeline. Also, the facility to register craft was now available online, rather than in paper form. The new lifeboat was now in place, and a lot of training was ongoing.

- **Covid Issues**

It was confirmed that it had been a difficult time for everyone, but that staff had been able to continue working throughout the entire lockdown. Reference was made to the previous practise of leaving customers' boat keys at Hafan, and that staff had expressed concern that contractors had been collecting the keys during the lockdown. Consequently, it was confirmed that the owners had been asked to hold on to their own keys, as the reception area was too busy. Concern was expressed about the decision, although committee members understood the situation, but were eager to

find a solution. It was confirmed that the matter had been discussed at length and it was a difficult situation but there was a need to safeguard staff. It was confirmed that staff would continue to keep an eye on the boats no matter where the keys were. It was agreed to look at other ways of doing this and the committee members were encouraged to share any ideas. It was suggested that there could be a procedure for giving 24 hours' notice before collecting keys by means of an appointment. Another suggestion was to use coded locks. It was agreed that the Maritime Service Manager and the Hafan Manager would discuss the matter further.

Plas Heli and the Sailing Club

It was noted that Covid issues had been a major problem and it was hoped that there would be light at the end of the tunnel soon. It was noted that Plas Heli would be closed throughout 2021 as it was being used by the RNLI, Betsi Cadwaladr Nurses and the schools, but they were looking forward to re-open.

It was confirmed that the RNLI building had been fenced off, and gates and signs had been erected and they had been very fortunate to receive a grant and a loan from the third sector.

The Maritime Service Manager asked that if any matters arose, between meetings, for members of the committee to contact them at once.

RESOLVED: to accept the contents of the report and to note the above-mentioned observations.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 12 October, 2021 at 6.00pm.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and concluded at 8.00 pm.

CHAIR