
ABERDYFI HARBOUR CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE, 21 MARCH 2023

Present:

Gwynedd Councillors: Councillor Robert Dewi Owen (Chairman).
Councillor John Pughe Roberts (Vice-chairman) and
Councillor Anne Lloyd Jones.

Co-opted Members: Josh Cooper (RNLI Aberdyfi), David Williams (Aberdyfi Improvements and Advertisement Committee), Desmond George (Member of Dyfi Yacht Club), Al Crisp (Outward Bound Trust Wales) and Nigel Willis (Member of Aberdyfi Boat Club).

Observers: Councillor Nia Wyn Jeffreys (Cabinet Member for Economic Development) and Gwilym Jones (Porthmadog Harbour Consultative Committee).

Officers in attendance:

Llyr Beaumont Jones (Assistant Head of Economy and Community Department), Bryn Pritchard-Jones (Maritime Service Manager), Arthur Francis Jones (Senior Harbours Officer), William Arthur Stockford (Aberdyfi Harbourmaster) and Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous committee meeting held on 25 October, 2022, as a true record.

5. UPDATE ON HARBOUR MANAGEMENT MATTERS

The following reports were presented, and Members were invited to give observations on their content and to ask questions.

The Senior Harbour Officer's report, giving a brief update to the committee on harbour matters for the year ending March 2023.

Aberdyfi Moorings and Boat Registration

- It was reported that Aberdyfi Marine Services would provide a new mooring contracting service this year. It was explained that this service was in addition to the moorings service

currently provided by Underwater Maintenance and Inspections company, that had been operational in Aberdyfi Harbour for several years.

- It was confirmed that the Cyngor Gwynedd system to register Powerboats and Personal Watercraft continued to be administered via an on-line agreement. It was added that it was possible for customers to use the on-line system to pay for their mooring.

Port Marine Safety Code

- It was reported that the harbour Port Marine Safety Code would be reviewed this year as well as developing new risk assessments as a result of developments to the new quay wall for the harbour.
- It was explained that the Merchant Shipping (Watercraft) Order 2023 would come into effect on 31 March this year. This legislation would ensure that the owners of personal watercraft would use their craft safely. It was elaborated that harbour officers collaborated closely with North Wales Police to ensure an understanding of the relevant processes as a result of the introduction of this legislation.
 - In response to a query regarding training to use personal watercraft, it was confirmed by the Aberdyfi Harbourmaster that 'Waterwise Marine' training was available in Pwllheli and Porthmadog. It was expanded that personal watercraft would not be able to launch from the harbour if they did not have valid insurance. However, it was confirmed that there was no requirement for owners to prove that they had received training on how to use personal watercraft correctly.
 - The importance was stressed that individuals should note the registration numbers of any personal watercraft they see breaching regulations and to report them to harbour staff.
 - Consideration was given to nearby harbours and authorities. It was noted although it was not possible to prevent individuals from launching their personal watercraft beyond the harbour, the harbour boat travelled between Tywyn and Aberdyfi to encourage people to stay safe and to share information. There was no certainty now whether there were strict regulations with the registration of personal watercraft in Ceredigion, however, the hope was to continue to work together with the authority to encourage them to adopt this system.
 - It was mentioned that paddle-board training was available at the Rowing Club. However, it was emphasised that it was very easy for any person to buy a paddle-board and therefore we needed to be cautious of these users.

Staffing Matters

- The Maritime Service Manager was welcomed to the meeting and congratulated on his recent appointment.
- It was reported that there were no changes to staffing matters during the recent period and it was confirmed that the Harbourmaster and his assistant had undertaken a programme of winter maintenance work.

Financial Matters

- It was reported that there had been an overspend under some budget headings this year such as staff costs and boat and vehicles costs. Nevertheless, there was underspend in property, tools and equipment. It was confirmed that the harbour this year had received £10,251 in additional income to what had been predicted at the start of the financial year. It was considered that this harbour income derived from a recent change in prices as well as more general use of the harbour.
- It was confirmed that an underspend of £13,773 was anticipated in this financial year. Nevertheless, it was confirmed that this total may be amended.

- It was explained that the intention was to retain the money from this underspend in the area, however no assurance could be given that it was possible to do this. It was noted that officers had to look at the situation in the county's other harbours before coming to a decision. Members were reminded that this was the arrangement at the end of the previous financial year when the harbour received £14,000 from other harbours to assist with property costs.
- Details of the harbour fees were given for the next financial year. It was noted that fees would increase in line with the inflation rate of the current financial squeeze of 8.5%. As a result, it was confirmed that the harbour income target had also increased by 8.5%. Some of the other harbour fees were confirmed:
 - Annual fee to register powerboats - £60 (increase of £10)
 - Annual launching fee (including registration fee) - £170 (increase of £20)
 - Launching fees - £20
 - Fees to launch boats less than 10hp - £35 (increase of £5)

The Harbourmaster's report, summarising the Navigational and Operational matters that had arisen between October 2022 and March 2023, including maintenance matters.

Navigation Matters

- It was reported that more sand had been blown near Penhelyg causing the harbour to lose some mooring sites.
- It was explained that one Local Notice to Mariners was in operation in Aberdyfi harbour. It was vital that Mariners navigate cautiously in this area.
- It was noted that work to renew Navigation Aid No. 5 had been completed recently and it was hoped that the buoy would be used as soon as possible.
- It was confirmed that Trinity House had visited the harbour in January 2023 to inspect the records of the availability of local aids to navigation. It was explained that the result of the audit noted that everything was in order and there were no matters arising that required further attention.

Operational Matters

- All local stakeholders, Cyngor Gwynedd Consultancy and the contractor at the site were thanked for ensuring that safe working practices continued in the harbour as the recent construction work was undertaken at the site.
- Attention was drawn to the concerning structural condition of the harbourmaster's office and Cyngor Gwynedd Property Department had recently undertaken an inspection of this building.

Maintenance

- It was reported that harbour staff had undertaken maintenance work to the fencing on the island to assist people walking towards the foreshore following the completion of the project to renew the footbridge over the Cambrian Coast Railway.
- It was explained that the Service had recently approved the renewal of gates in the gateway of Penhelyg gardens.

Other matters

- The concerning situation regarding the sand levels on the beach that affect the RNLI slipway was discussed. It was explained that sand levels had increased for some time and ideas were shared on how to deal with the issue and to stop it from becoming worse in the future.

- The intention to appoint seasonal beach staff was shared. It was hoped that two members of staff could be appointed by the end of May. Consideration had been given to a new cabin for staff to use during the season.

Events

- It was confirmed that the sailing and training programme of Dyfi Yacht Club submitted to the harbour office in February had been given permission.

RESOLVED

To note and accept the reports.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held on 17 October, 2023.

The meeting commenced at 10:30am and concluded at 12:15pm.

(Chair)