

**Minutes of a meeting of the Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee
held on 20 October 2009 at Neuadd Dyfi, Aberdyfi**

PRESENT:

Councillors Alun Wyn Evans, Anne Lloyd Jones, Dewi Owen (Gwynedd Council) Cllr. David Richardson, Brian Bates (Aberdyfi Community Council), Mr Desmond George (Aberdyfi Yacht Club), Mr W. Bracewell (Aberdyfi Partnership), Mr Nick Dawson (Outward Bound Wales), Mr Keith Stone (Cardigan Bay Fisheries Association)

Officers

Mr Barry Davies	-	Maritime and Country Parks Officer
Mr Paul Edwards	-	Aberdyfi Harbour Master
Mr Huw Davies	-	Group Engineer
Mrs Glynda O'Brien	-	Committee Officer
Mrs. Mererid Watt	-	Translator

Apologies: Councillor Louise Hughes (Gwynedd Council)

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Resolved: To re-elect Councillor David Richardson as Chair of this committee for 2009/10.

2. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Resolved: To re-elect Councillor Dewi Owen as Vice-chair of this Committee for 2009/10.

3. **WELCOME**

Mr Keith Stone, a representative from the Cardigan Bay Fisheries Association, was welcomed to his first meeting.

4. **DECLARATION OF PERSONAL CONNECTION**

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

5. **MINUTES**

Submitted: Minutes of a meeting of the Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee held on 3 March 2009.

Resolved: To accept and approve the minutes as a true record.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Item 4 – Draft Shipping Regulations

The Maritime Officer reported that he had submitted the views of the Consultative Committee following the discussions at the last meeting, regarding legislation to deal with the offence of exceeding the prescribed alcohol limits. It was noted that Personal Watercraft were not defined as boats and it would be impossible for those owners to be prosecuted under the above legislation. However, it was noted that separate legislation was under discussion to ensure that Personal Watercraft, windsurfing etc corresponded with the relevant regulations. The consultation period had expired and it was not possible to submit details before this Consultative Committee. It was confirmed that the Maritime Unit welcomed and supported the legislation.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

7. THE MARITIME OFFICER'S REPORT

Submitted: The report of the Maritime Officer, Mr Barry Davies, on activities in Aberdyfi Harbour with specific reference to the following:

- (i) Navigation
- (ii) General Harbour Matters
- (iii) Events
- (iv) Harbour Statistics
- (v) Budgets
- (vi) Maritime staffing structure
- (vii) Ferry Service

Reported: (a) By the Maritime and Country Parks Officer:

- (i) The unfavourable weather especially during August this year had had an impact on Harbour events and those on nearby beaches and as a result there was an impact on the Maritime Unit's income.
- (ii) Trinity House had inspected all aids to navigation in accordance with the annual requirement and they were all in an acceptable condition and this was a significant improvement compared with the negative report received last year. It was noted that there was a cost of £1,600 for the maintenance of the aids to navigation and it was stressed that this was a substantial part of the budget. A comprehensive work programme would be required for maintenance in order to ensure that the work was completed before the commencement of next season.

In the Chairman's opinion the navigational aids were on their appropriate stations.

- (iii) That the storage racks for tenders had been extended and this meant that many more tenders could be stored safely in the harbour. It was noted that these racks were for tenders only however, it was understood that other members used them and that the use made should be tightened with every tender registered and exhibiting the Council's registration permit. In addition, a member noted that windsurfing trailers were also there and it was asked if these owners paid for their use. In response, the Maritime Officer stated that discussions had been

held with the owners and they were anxious to pay and it was understood that the Yacht Club had received a receipt last year and from the 1st of April a fee had been specified. It was pleasing to note that the problem of anti-social behaviour in the shelter had been reduced as a result of installing lights on the western side.

(iv) Members were be aware of the coastal protection scheme in Tywyn and because of the proposed work it was anticipated that it would not be possible to submit an application for the International Blue Flag in Tywyn as it would be difficult to control the site. However, as part of the scheme one shelter would be adapted with an unit being developed in the future as an information centre and Beach Office.

In the context of Aberdyfi, confirmation was expected from the Environment Agency regarding the results of the quality of bathing water. It was reported that Titan Company had conducted an inspection by discharging a dye into the Leri and the river to ascertain the current flows in the estuary with the intention hopefully, of finding the source of any pollution.

It was pleasing for the Maritime Unit to work in collaboration with local groups to promote events during the season and these local groups were thanked for their willingness and efforts.

During the ensuing discussion the following comments were highlighted:

(a) A request was made by a Community Councillor for the Community Council to receive a copy of the Environment Agency's results when they arrive.

(b) In response to a query by a member regarding what the criteria was for conducting tests, the Maritime Officer explained that they undertook 20 tests between May and September. The likelihood was that the tests were taken at different times of the tide. He went on to say that there will be changes to the Act and it was anticipated that the tests would be more stringent from 2015 onwards with the possibility of losing many of the International Blue Flag awards on several beaches and therefore it was necessary to work hard to try and keep up with the requirements. One of the requirements would be for local authorities to place electronic notices that meant additional costs for authorities.

(c) The Maritime Officer promised to make enquiries regarding the pattern and procedure of the bathing water quality tests conducted by the Environment Agency.

(ch) In response to a query regarding if materials would be transported to Aberdyfi Harbour when the Tywyn coastal protection scheme commenced, the Group Engineer stated that this was likely but currently the tenders for the work had not been sent out.

(v) In the context of **harbour statistics** an outline of the numbers of registered Harbour users were received and the increase in the number of Personal Watercraft that had registered this year via the Office in Pwllheli was noted with only a few registering in Aberdyfi harbour. A general increase was seen in the number of powerboats and members' attention was drawn to the comparison between every Harbour that was a good reflection of the numbers in Aberdyfi bearing in mind the size of the harbour.

The Chairman asked if it was possible to include the statistics for Hafan Pwllheli and Doc Fictoria in the report in future.

Concern was expressed regarding the prospect that the number of boats would reduce next year as some owners had talked of selling up due to the unfavourable weather in the summer. It was known that one boat would be moving to Aberystwyth due to the lack of suitable facilities in Aberdyfi.

The Chairman reported that he had provided on behalf of Aberdyfi Community Council a welcome pack for visiting boats in the Harbour and this included the following:

- Aberdyfi pamphlet
- Tide tables
- Ship chandler
- Information regarding speed
- Bus Timetable
- Welcome letter from the Yacht Club
- Welcome letter from the Harbour Master

and approximately a 100 of these would be provided for next season for the Harbour Master to distribute to the owners of boats visiting the Harbour. Several members felt that the Council did not advertise Aberdyfi sufficiently even in other harbours. Aberdyfi did not get any recognition in magazines such as “Water Sports Wales”, “Pilot guide” nor in the National Park booklet bearing in mind that Aberdyfi was within the National Park. Having larger moorings would be useful in order that larger boats could have access to the Harbour if they wished.

In response, the Maritime Officer thanked the Chair for the above and it was a matter that had been discussed on several occasions, however, nothing had been undertaken due to the other priorities of the Maritime Unit. Certainly he was of the opinion that the service had to be proactive and they would look at the possibility of including the Harbours on the Snowdonia Website.

(vi) In the context of harbour **budgets**, the Maritime Officer referred to the figures before them comparing the budgets of all the harbours. The figures were self-explanatory and it was noted that Aberdyfi Harbour had reached the target of £32,449 against the net budget of £49,630.

Various queries had been received regarding the budget such as payments for electricity at Canolfan Dyfi. The Maritime Officer explained that only one electricity meter had been installed at the Centre and the Council had to pay the bill and reclaim the appropriate sums from the tenants. The local member stated that some individuals were concerned about this considering that they had not received an electricity bill since they had moved into the Centre. The Maritime Officer confirmed that the invoices would be sent out as soon as possible.

(vii) Regarding the **staffing structure** because of secondments and resignations in other Harbours and the fact that it was quiet over the winter the Aberdyfi Harbour Assistant's term would end on 30 October 2009 however, Barmouth Harbour Master's staff would assist in Aberdyfi between 1st November and the end of March 2010. The situation would have to be reviewed with the beach supervisor at Tywyn due to the extensive engineering works that were about to commence.

In response to a query regarding the Maritime Unit using the income generated from the car park, the Maritime Officer explained that this matter had been raised several times and no

Manager would agree to release income from his service to another. They should be pleased that the car park supported the local economy.

It was asked if it was possible for the seasonal beach supervisors to have a dual role by assisting with the control of powerboats on harbour waters. The Maritime Officer explained that this would be difficult due to the need for appropriate qualifications and it was not practical to take an officer off the beach.

The Chairman reported that Sioned Williams, Head of Economy and Community had visited Aberdyfi in August this year when she met with members of the Community Council. She was aware that not much had been made to improve the facilities in the Harbour and she was supportive to the ideas.

(viii) In the context of the **ferry service**, the Maritime Officer referred to the requirements of the 'Boatman's Licence' and in particular to the exact definition of 'favourable weather' together with the list of safety equipment to be transported on board the ferry. It was emphasised that the licence was for sailing in categorised water in a specific area. It would be necessary to have the MCA licence in waters outside some categories.

Members were of the view that it was up to the skipper of the boat in consultation with the Harbour Master if he was available, to determine if it was safe to sail in unfavourable weather. It was recognised that the Council would licence the boat in accordance with the relevant inspections on dry land.

The Maritime Officer mentioned that the members of the Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee had discussed the above issue and had recommended that the ferry operators should have the MCA qualification and licence and had requested the Maritime Officer to investigate this matter further.

Resolved: Accept and note the contents of the report of the Maritime and Country Parks Officer.

That Aberdyfi Harbour Master prepared a mooring that would be suitable for large boats visiting the harbour.

8. ADDITIONAL MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

(a) Matters received from Aberdyfi Community Council

(i) Storage of Boats on the Wharf

Councillor Dewi Owen reported that it was asked at a meeting of the Community Council if it was necessary to store boats on the wharf over winter.

In response, the Maritime Officer was of the view that it would be very expensive for owners to have to move boats somewhere else over winter especially considering the cost of a crane, transport etc and this would certainly reduce the numbers of boats in the Harbour. The Harbour Order allowed owners to winter boats in the Harbour and this was income for the service and very importantly was part of the harbour budget. Several reasons were given by many members in favour of wintering boats on the wharf such as:

- *They couldn't afford losing the income to the harbour*
- *It wasn't possible to move some of the boats because of the size of the masts*
- *That many members of the public enjoyed seeing boat owners repairing their boats in the harbour*
- *That it was an essential service for the owners and local residents*

Resolved: **Accept the above observations and approve that the boats continue to be stored on the wharf.**

(ii) **Illegal dumping at the Gwynedd compound at the entrance of the Dyfi Boat Yard.**

It was reported that the Harbour Master had worked hard over the last week and that the site had already improved. Fishermen were allowed to store their equipment in the compound for some years and each one had an individual key. The fishermen's representative was asked to convey the wish of this Consultative Committee to them to try and keep the compound tidy.

A comment was made by the Chairman that the Community Council was of the view that Gwynedd Council was not making an effort to improve the Harbour whilst Aberdyfi Partnership was working very hard and it was asked if it was possible for Gwynedd Council to work with the Partnership. A further comment was made by a member that she was amazed that Gwynedd Council did not take advantage of convergence monies by drafting a substantial project that the harbours would benefit from.

(a) *In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer promised to raise the above point with his Line Manager in the Economy and Community Department in order that it was possible to discuss the possibility of achieving the outputs.*

An undertaking of a grant for £2.5m had been received for the whole of Wales from the Green Seas Forum and it would be necessary to identify projects for any money available. It was also noted that although specific grants were available it was necessary for any body/organisation to be able to have match funding.

(b) *In response to a query regarding the prices of pontoons, the Harbour Master noted that Barmouth Harbour Master was seeking quotations.*

(c) It was asked if it was possible to have a better system for the yellow buoys and the anchoring chains.

Resolved: **To accept and note the above observations.**

9. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was reported that the next meeting of this Committee would be held on Tuesday, 2 March 2010.

Resolved **To accept and note the above.**

CHAIRMAN