

MEETING	Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee
DATE	08 November 2016
TITLE	Update on Harbour Management Matters
AUTHOR	Maritime and Country Parks Officer

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Committee's main function is to consider and advise on matters relating to the management, safety and development of the Harbour and to receive Members' observations on matters relating to the harbour.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide a brief update for the period from March 2016 to October 2016 for the attention of the Committee.

2. Barmouth Harbour

- 2.1 In 2016/17 figures for boats on moorings in the Harbour were as follows: -

There was a total of 88 boats on annual moorings in 2016. This compares with the 93 boats moored in 2015. It was disappointing to report that five boats had left at the end of 2015/16 but the service intended to contact the customers to try to discern the reason for leaving the Harbour. The intention was to report on the results of the enquiry at the next meeting in March 2017.
- 2.2 On the whole, customer numbers fell slightly at all Harbours last year and also at the Marina in Pwllheli. There was one exception: the number of boats at moorings in Victoria Dock in Caernarfon remained consistent.
- 2.3 Of the number of boats at moorings in the Harbour, 67% were power boats and 33% were sailing boats. 60% of customers were Gwynedd residents and 32% lived outside the county.
- 2.4 It was agreed at the meeting in March 2016 that the Harbour Master ensured that no mooring would be allowed to remain at the Harbour unless the owner of the mooring had paid the mooring fee to the Council.
- 2.5 1001 Power Boats were registered in Gwynedd in 2016, compared to 989 in 2015. 82 power boats were registered at Barmouth harbour which compared to the 71 boats registered in 2015.
- 2.6 729 Personal Watercrafts were registered in Gwynedd in 2016. This compared with the 699 registered in 2015. In Barmouth Harbour, 67 Personal Water Craft were registered and this compared with 64 Personal Water Craft registered in 2015.

3. Marine Safety Code

- 3.1 An original copy of the Marine Safety Code had already been distributed to all Committee Members and it was also available on Gwynedd Council's website. The Senior Harbours Officer was reviewing the Safety Code. We sincerely hoped that the Senior Coast Guard Inspector would visit the Council early in 2017 in order to inspect the Safety Code and offer feedback on the Code which was relevant to Gwynedd Council Municipal Harbours. It was understood that the Inspector would visit each Harbour in Gwynedd and would spend several days inspecting the harbours. It was

anticipated that the report would be submitted to the Harbour Committees following the Inspectors' visits.

- 3.2 Although the service regularly reviewed the Safety Code, it was necessary to receive the comments and views of the Consultative Committee on the appropriateness of the Marine Safety Code as well as observations on its contents, in order that the Safety Code may be reviewed and be relevant to the activities, safety and work of Barmouth Harbour.
- 3.3 No issue or cause for concern that would be relevant to the statutory responsibilities of the Harbour was brought to the attention of the service in 2016. Issues involving public safety were submitted for our consideration in relation to using a ferry in Harbour waters. Each case was investigated and the result was that no issue fell within the requirements of the Safety Code.
- 3.4 On 7 August 2016, two young boys got into difficulties whilst bathing in waters within the Harbour's jurisdiction. Both young boys got into difficulties in the sea opposite the Lifeboat Station. Both boys lost their lives despite the efforts of the Emergency Services and Maritime and Parks staff to save them. It was very windy at the time with the wind coming from a south-westerly direction. The tide was high on that day and the tide was at an ebb when the two boys went into the water. The Marine and Parks Service, in consultation with other agencies, would conduct a review of signs in order to improve the information available to visitors and beach users.
- 3.5 On 3 August 2016 a boat that had been moored at the Harbour came free of its mooring and was carried by the tide toward the railway bridge. There was a very strong wind that night and the Harbour monitor had noted gusts of up to 55 miles an hour. The railway had to be closed for a short while to enable the Coast Guard to take the boat from the bridge and enable railway inspectors to examine the bridge to ensure that it had suffered no damage. The boat was removed from the bridge structure at approximately 21.30 with assistance from the Life Boat.

4. Operational Issues

4.1 Navigation

- 4.1.1 Trinity House's Lighthouse Authority conducted an inspection on 26 July 2016. Compared with previous reports, the 2016 report confirmed that the condition and locations of the Barmouth Harbour Navigation Aids had improved.
- 4.1.2 The Harbour's Navigation Aids maintenance work programme has been completed in accordance with the permission, instruction and guidance of the Consultative Committee. An update of the current situation would be given to Members by the Principal Officer of Harbours at the meeting.
- 4.1.3 No Mariners' Notice was in operation at Barmouth harbour.
- 4.1.4 On 22 October 2016, Trinity House operating on behalf of Welsh Water, installed a new Navigation Aid at the harbour. The new navigation aid was situated opposite the Coast Guard Office at location - Longitude. 52° 43.602'N, Latitude. 004° 04.203'W.
- 4.1.5 The purpose of the navigation aid was to safeguard the discharge pipe and guide boats away from crossing the pipe that rested on the sea bed. The Service had drawn attention to the dangers posed by the remains of the navigational aid that remains on site. Welsh Water had

received notice that the remainder of the aid needed to be removed from the pipe as a matter of urgency as the pole that remained poses a danger to boats that crossed the area, especially at high tide.

4.2 **Maintenance**

- 4.2.1 Arrangements and a work programme for maintaining key elements of Barmouth harbour would be submitted by the Senior Harbour Master at the meeting.
- 4.2.2 The Senior Harbour Master would submit a maintenance work programme to be carried out at Barmouth Harbour during the October - December period, along with an outline of the work programme to be carried out during the January - March 2017 period. The feedback of Committee members on any additional work that required consideration and inclusion in the work programme was requested.

4.3 **Staffing Matters**

- 4.3.1 The employment period of the Barmouth Harbour Assistant (seasonal) ended on 30 September 2016. In order to ensure support for and a continuation of the service across the county, the employment period of the Barmouth and Aberdyfi Harbour Assistants had been extended until the end of December 2016.
- 4.3.2 Two harbour assistants would be part of the wider Maritime team to make it possible to respond to incidents and complete the maintenance work programme at Porthmadog, Aberdyfi and Barmouth Harbours over the winter months. The Barmouth Harbour Assistant's work location would be moved to Porthmadog initially in order to secure additional assistance in Porthmadog over the winter months.
- 4.3.3 In 2016, seven applications were received by individuals interested in volunteering to work at Barmouth Harbour. This was very positive and we appreciated the kind offer received by each of these individuals. In order to ensure the safety of volunteers, it would be necessary to conduct a full review of the responsibilities that it would be possible for them to fulfil. A set rota would also be necessary to ensure that the number of volunteers did not over complicate the management of any projects.

4.4 **Other Matters**

- 4.4.1 **Harbour Pontoon.** Since installing the pontoon on the quay wall by the 'SS Dora' building, the Council had invested substantially in maintenance work of the pontoon. In addition to the work and maintenance costs, Maritime and Country Parks staff regularly inspected the pontoon as weather and waves had a detrimental effect on the pontoon.
- 4.4.2 Following several investigations, the conclusion was reached that the pontoon fingers were having a detrimental impact on the main structure and that it was not appropriate or suitable to continue attaching the pontoon fingers to the main body of the structure. It would be appropriate to connect the fingers to the main pontoon for very short periods of time only and for specific events. This would not be possible if weather forecasts were unfavourable.
- 4.4.3 No mooring fingers were laid in 2016 and unfortunately it was anticipated that the Maritime and Country Parks Service would not have the budget or resources to continue to maintain the pontoon if they face high maintenance costs in future.

- 4.4.4 The Service was eager to collaborate with the community and local groups to ensure that the pontoon, in its current form, was available for Harbour users. If the pontoon were to suffer further damage, then the future of the pontoon would have to be reviewed as a matter of urgency.
- 4.4.5 The fingers that were a part of the structure had been anchored and secured in the Bath house area. The decision of the Committee on the future use of the fingers would be required when considering that it is unlikely that the Service would continue to re-set the fingers onto the main structure of the pontoon in future.
- 4.4.6 **Ferry Licences.** Three Owner Licences were authorised in 2016. Whilst improvements had been made to management arrangements, the service would contact Owner Licence holders over the winter months to emphasise a number of issues raised in 2016 and to review arrangements for 2017.
- 4.4.7 In 2017 the ferry pilots would have to undertake a specific course at the Harbour when navigating between Penrhyn Point and Barmouth at times when the tide allowed. A draft plan has been attached requesting Members' opinions on the navigation course that all pilots would be required to undertake.
- 4.4.8 **Coastguard Enquiry.** The Government was inquiring into a possible change to the legislation of Port Waste and it was an opportunity for Members to submit observations on the proposed changes. The changes removed: MGN 253,259 and 326. Whilst there would be a changes to the legislation this would not have an effect on the Harbour Waste Provision Plan in Gwynedd. It is understood that the change to legislation would come into effect on 9 December 2016.

All the documents have been made available on the website below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/implementation-of-directive-20152087-by-means-of-the-merchant-shipping-and-fishing-vessels-port-waste-reception-facilities-amendment-regulations>

5. Financial Matters

- 5.1 A summary of the Harbour's budget, reporting on the current financial situation, is attached.
- 5.2 During the period, it was necessary to commit financial resources for the following: - -
- Maintenance and purchasing of Navigation Aids and Lights
 - Maintenance of Council moorings
 - Extending staff employment terms.
 - Maintenance of lands and pontoons.
- 5.3 The budgets were monitored monthly and a Second Quarter Review would be conducted during the first week of October. The attachment reflected the Second Quarter Review.
- 5.4 **Fees and Charges 2017/18.** The prospective figures spreadsheet for Barmouth Harbour 2017 is attached. Inflation for harbours for 2017/18 was anticipated to be at 1.85%. In

order to meet the financial challenge and the service's income target, it was recommended that fees for Barmouth Harbour be increased by 2% on average for the 2017/18 financial year.

- 5.5 Emphasis was placed on the fact that it was only a draft that had been submitted to Members and that the fees would be subject to confirmation by the Portfolio Leader early in 2017.

6. Events

- 6.1 The following events were held at Barmouth Harbour in 2016: -

- The prestigious Three Peaks Race was held on 11 June 2016. The 2017 race would be held on 17 June when the Race celebrated its 40th birthday. A great number of boats would be expected to take part in the race and the Service would provide all possible assistance to ensure that the race was successful once again.
- The 'Mawddach Paddlefest' was held on 25 and 26 June 2016. The 'Mawddach Paddlefest' festival 2017 would be held on 15 and 16 June.