

**Minutes of a meeting of the Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee
held on 19 October 2010 at Neuadd Dyfi, Aberdyfi**

PRESENT:

Members: Councillor David Richardson (Aberdyfi Community Council), Councillor Anne Lloyd Jones (Gwynedd Council), Councillor Dewi Owen (Gwynedd Council), Alun Wyn Evans (Gwynedd Council), Councillor Megan Reynolds (Aberdyfi Community Council), Councillor Brian Bates (Aberdyfi Community Council), Councillor Ioan Thomas (Gwynedd Council), Mr Desmond George (Aberdyfi Yacht Club), Mr W. Bracewell (Aberdyfi Partnership), Mr Nick Dawson (Outward Bound Wales), Mr Nigel Willis (Aberdyfi Boat Club), Councillor Dave Williams (Member of the Aberdyfi Improvements and Advertising Committee).

Officers:

| | | |
|------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Mr Barry Davies | - | Maritime and Country Parks Officer |
| Mr Huw Davies | - | Principal Engineer |
| Mr Llyr Jones | - | Senior Economy and Community Manager |
| Mr Paul Edwards | - | Aberdyfi Harbour Master |
| Mr Ioan Hughes | - | Committee Officer |
| Mrs Mererid Watt | - | Translator |

1. CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED to re-elect Councillor David Richardson as Chairman for the 2010/11 year. The member gave thanks for the honour.

2. VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED to re-elect Councillor Dewi Owen as Chairman for the 2010/11 year. The member gave thanks for the honour.

3. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone who was present and introduced members who were attending this Committee meeting for the first time, namely: Councillor Ioan Thomas (Chairman of the Gwynedd Council Development Scrutiny Committee), Councillor Megan Reynolds (Aberdyfi Community Council) and Councillor David Williams (Member of the Aberdyfi Improvements and Advertising Committee). In addition, Llyr.B.Jones (Senior Economy and Community Manager) and Ioan Hughes (Committee Officer) were welcomed as they were attending a meeting of this Committee for the first time.

4. Apologies: Councillor Louise Hughes (Gwynedd Council), Mr Roger Lawson-Mole (Member of the Aberdyfi Chamber of Commerce), Mr Dylan Evans (Member of the Aberdyfi Rowing Club), Mr Sam Wilding (Cardigan Bay Fisheries Association).

5. Declaration of Personal Interest

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

6. MINUTES

Submitted: Minutes of a meeting of the Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee held on 2 March 2010.

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

4. REPORT OF THE MARITIME AND COUNTRY PARKS OFFICER

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

- (i) Navigation and Moorings
- (ii) Proprietors and Boatmen's Licences
- (iii) Harbour Statistics
- (iv) Harbour Budgets
- (v) Harbour Committee Meetings
- (vi) Bathing Water
- (vii) The Quay wall
- (viii) The Dinghy Storage Area

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

(i) that the weather during the summer period had been disappointing following a promising start to the year. In relation to **navigation and moorings**, the officer noted that there had been substantial investment in improving the condition of the navigation aids.

All the navigation aids leading to Aberdyfi Harbour had been inspected by an officer from Trinity House on 21 September 2010 and the officer had initially reported that all of the aids at Aberdyfi were compliant with Trinity House standards. The Maritime and Country Parks Officer reported further that an administrative audit of all navigation aids in Gwynedd had been undertaken by Trinity House on 16 September 2010 and confirmation was received that the monthly monitoring work of all navigation aids had also been up to the required standard.

However, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the work undertaken to improve and maintain the aids was very costly. As an example of the costs, he noted that the cost for the chains for the Aberdyfi navigation aids had been £3,500 to date this year, and the cost of undertaking the work had been £4,000. He added that the Maritime Unit did not have the staff resources or a boat to undertake the work without appointing a contractor.

He emphasised that there was a need to consider the situation in detail in order to obtain different methods of dealing with the work in order to reduce costs.

The Officer added that there was a need to undertake maintenance work on all of the navigation aids during the autumn and winter months, and a work programme had been provided by the Harbourmaster and the Maritime Officer - Harbours.

The officer emphasised that the seasonal buoys to restrict boats from some areas were essential and that there was a need to consider methods of retaining them in their appropriate locations.

Members accepted that the navigation aids had worked well. It was also agreed that an effective plan was needed to secure the location of the seasonal buoys in order to shed some of the water in the harbour. It was suggested that one main anchor could be used with chains to connect them.

(ii) In relation to **Proprietors' and Boatmen's Licences** the members were asked to approve the recommended changes.

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that concern had been expressed in the past in relation to what equipment was being carried on boats licensed by the Council. He explained further that the Council issued licences for boats which carried no more than 12 passengers and in waters that had been categorised under MSN-1776. He emphasised that consistency across Gwynedd was essential and that everyone was in agreement regarding the rules associated with issuing these licences.

Reference was made in the report to a clear definition of 'favourable weather'. In relation to this, the officer emphasised that it was the boat owner's responsibility to decide whether the weather was reasonable enough to travel with the boat. He added that it would not be possible for the Harbourmaster to accept this responsibility. The Officer expanded on this and referred to the steps being taken and the requirements that had to be met before proprietors' and boatmen's licences could be issued.

Members were given an opportunity to voice their opinion on the matter and a member noted that there should be a degree of flexibility in relation to the smaller boats that operated within the harbour's boundaries. The member referred in particular to the radar reflector and he noted that it was not possible to install this equipment on some boats. In response, the Maritime and Country Parks officer said that a radar reflector could be installed where appropriate and accepted that this could not be done on boats if they were not suitable.

The Officer confirmed that the 'MCA' inspector had visited Gwynedd harbours recently and that the report received by them had noted that the arrangements implemented by the Council worked effectively.

The members agreed that the proposed recommendations should be supported.

(iii) In relation to the Harbour statistics, the officer noted that 965 Personal Watercraft had registered with Gwynedd Council in 2010, compared with 892 for the same period in 2009. 1389 powerboats had registered with the Council in 2010, and 714 of these had registered by corresponding directly with the Maritime Office. 1173 powerboats had registered with the Council in 2009 and the officer welcomed the increase witnessed in 2010.

At Aberdyfi Harbour, 37 powerboats and 27 Personal Watercraft had registered in 2010. It had not been possible to register at Tywyn due to the building works there, however, the officer noted that this had not resulted in an increase at Aberdyfi.

97 pleasure boats had moored in Aberdyfi Harbour this year compared with 102 in 2009. This meant that 80% of the moorings were being used in 2010. From this total, 44% were used by local residents living in Gwynedd on a permanent basis, and the rest had been used by individuals who lived outside the County.

Concern was expressed by members as some paid the mooring fees, however they did not use them. Despite the fact that the Council received the income, members emphasised that empty moorings equated to a loss for Aberdyfi. They noted that a procedure should be established where those who did not use a mooring, despite paying for it, should receive a notice on a particular date and then lose the mooring should no positive response be received from them.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer said that there was a need to review the situation in order to secure a fair balance without reducing the income obtained from Aberdyfi Harbour acknowledging also that some had valid reasons for not using the moorings for periods of time. The officer also referred to the need to operate the application form system effectively, however he emphasised that it would not be reasonable for the Council to approve intervening with the use made of private moorings.

Members referred further to the location of some of the moorings and it was emphasised that there was a substantial number in the River and many of them without a boat. A member also warned the committee that a reduction in the Harbour's income could lead to job losses.

The officer confirmed that the matter would be considered in detail and that he would be submitting a report regarding the procedure for installing moorings in the Harbour in 2011/12.

The Chairman of the Consultative Committee referred in particular to the need to market the Harbour in order to attract more tourists. He emphasised that a poster campaign during Spring 2010 had been very successful. 35 posters had been sent out and the Chairman noted that 36 boats had stayed at Aberdyfi in 2010 for a total of 58 nights. This was in comparison with 11 boats visiting the Harbour for a total of 18 nights in 2009.

He also noted that diesel sales from Aberdyfi Harbour had increased by more than 1,200 litres.

The Chairman referred further to the welcome pack provided to the boatmen as they arrived at the Harbour and he emphasised that all the efforts had benefited the local economy and he thanked the Harbourmaster and the Assistant Harbourmaster for their work.

He further emphasised that there was a need to provide for the future in order to ensure that Aberdyfi Harbour was of the highest standard to meet customer requirements.

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that he appreciated the collaboration that had taken place during the summer months and that this partnership should be strengthened in order to improve the statistics.

Information was submitted by the Maritime and Country Parks Officer in relation to the **Harbour budgets** and he drew particular attention to the £13,530 budget noted in relation to the maintenance of the harbour. He explained that this was not a permanent element within the budget, but that the money had been added on a temporary basis in order to improve the facilities at Aberdyfi Harbour. He added that just over £5,500 remained for the maintenance of the harbour during the winter months.

The officer explained that the Harbour was nearly £15,000 short of this year's target income. The officer anticipated a deficit of approximately £12,800 in this year's income. In light of this situation, there would be a need to find this money within the expenditure budget.

Additionally, reference was made to the 2009/10 figures and it was noted that the situation showed a deficit of £6,500 in the income, despite the actual target showing an improvement.

In relation to **harbour Committee meetings**, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that Aberdyfi Community Council had asked Gwynedd Council to consider adding one meeting to the calendar. The Community Council had requested for the meeting to be held jointly with representatives from all of the County's Harbour Committees and the meeting to be held half way through the cycle of meetings already scheduled, either during the summer months or towards the end of December/beginning of January.

The Officer explained that neither the Pwllheli nor Porthmadog Committees felt that there would be any benefit from the proposed changes, however the Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee was supportive of the application. He noted further that the right existed for representatives of the different committees to attend the meetings of other harbour committees.

He added that the opinion of the Maritime and Country Parks Unit was that the current procedure operated in line with the Municipal Ports Review. He also noted that it was intended to review the constitution that was relevant to each Consultative Harbour Committee.

He elaborated that there would be a need to consider any advantages of holding an additional meeting, the objective of changing procedure and the costs that would be associated with any change. He added that it would be difficult to find a suitable time to hold the meeting and he noted that the Service did not see any benefit in holding an additional meeting.

The Senior Economy and Community Manager explained that the initial work undertaken by the Service had highlighted three issues, namely, the Harbours Safety Code, the need to reconcile arrangements in relation to the four Harbour Committees and the need to ensure that the discussions and decisions of the harbour committees were formally submitted to one of the Council's committees.

He added that it was intended to hold further discussions and that a recommendation would be submitted to the members at the March meeting.

A local member expressed concern as he was of the opinion that areas in south Gwynedd were being ignored. Therefore, he believed that having a single strategy for the whole of Gwynedd would be advantageous and that Aberdyfi would be included in the activities.

The Senior Economy and Community Manager noted that the work of developing harbours was very difficult with severe restrictions and high costs.

Another member emphasized that the value of all ports in Gwynedd should be acknowledged and he did not want to see them in decline. In light of this, he believed that having one strong voice would be advantageous.

Another member noted that there was a tendency to look back, and there was a need to take positive steps and to plan for the future.

The Chairman emphasised his support of the application made by Aberdyfi Community Council and noted that it should be arranged for two representatives of every Harbour Committee to meet twice a year.

He believed that the new committee should be formed in order to:

- discuss concerns and situations
- formulate a plan to market the harbours of Gwynedd.
- lobby the Welsh Assembly Government to take a stand at the London Boat Show and the Southampton Boat Show and allow all Welsh Councils with harbours, to attend and market their harbours.
- form a strategy for the development of the harbours for the future
- speak with a united voice with Gwynedd officers and councillors to support the Maritime and Country Parks Officer in achieving the targets of the harbours

In relation to **bathing water**, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer referred to the European Directive on Bathing Water that would come into force in 2015 and would set very strict requirements. Given the fluctuating standard of the Aberdyfi bathing water during the last five years, it was possible that it could be classed as poor standard under the new 2015 directive.

The officer referred to past campaigns and successes in relation to beach awards in Aberdyfi. However, the quality of the bathing water was a cause for concern, and in order to discuss the implications of the new 2015 directive, the Environment Agency was eager to attend the Committee's next meeting in March 2011.

The officer added that enquiries had been held regarding the possibility of identifying another bathing beach and that Glasfor beach was being favoured. He explained that it would be possible to achieve a Green Flag for this beach. The officer emphasised that this kind of success would give Aberdyfi positive publicity.

The members were very willing to meet representatives from the Environment Agency at the next meeting. A member referred to difficulties that had arisen from the land and he noted that these could also be affecting the quality of the bathing water.

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer confirmed that enquiries were being made with the Environment Agency regarding any impact agriculture could be having on the water.

It was noted that there was no information available at the time regarding the water quality at Tywyn beach, however the Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that substantial improvements had been undertaken there.

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that an inspection had been carried out to ascertain the condition of the **Quay wall** and that this was linked to installing a new pontoon along the side of the wall that would assist boatmen in entering the harbour.

He added that the conclusion of the survey was that the remaining life span of the sheet piling sustaining the wall was approximately six years. It was further reported that Gwynedd Council would consider all of the possible options as the quay wall was considered to be of great importance. The Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that enquiries were being made into the true definition of the wall, i.e. was it a coastal protection structure or an amenity. This could affect the funding available for when the sheet piling needed to be changed.

In light of the conclusion of the survey, the Chairman emphasised that provisions should be made for the future forthwith. He emphasised that there should be a modern structure with the necessary equipment for customers. These would include a pontoon and an easy-access bridge, water taps and electricity points.

The Chairman added that there had been occasions during the summer months where babies and dogs were seen being hauled ashore in bags and baskets from boats visiting the harbour. He emphasised that this was unacceptable and he did not wish to see this occurring again.

He reiterated his wish for Aberdyfi Harbour to be convenient for users and he believed that this could be secured through collaboration and by being proactive.

Concern was expressed by the Maritime and Country Parks Officer in relation to the **dinghy storage area** and he explained that the Maritime Unit had installed a storage rack for yacht tenders at the top of the slipway in 2009. The purpose of the rack was to enable those with moorings in the Harbour to secure their tenders close to the launching area.

However, the rack was being increasingly used for kayaks. He was glad to see kayaks at the harbour, however, the Officer emphasised that this limited the overall storage area that should be available to those with moorings in the harbour. Therefore, he intended to take action in order to secure an acceptable procedure.

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that discussions were being held with the Community Council regarding the location of the **time and tide bell** on the wharf. The Community Council had been asked to submit a report on the structural condition of the wharf and it had been confirmed that discussions had been held with an engineer in order to undertake the work.

It was emphasised that the location of the bell should not have any damaging impact on the wharf.

It was intended to have seven bells in Britain and Aberdyfi had been chosen as one of the locations.

At the end of the agenda a representative from the **Aberdyfi Boat Club** noted that Club members appreciated the cooperation of the Harbourmaster and the Assistant Harbourmaster. Some concern was expressed by him in relation to a few issues including difficulties with some moorings, obstructions on the slipway at times and the difficulties that power boat owners faced when launching boats.

The meeting commenced at 10.30am and concluded at 12.15pm.

CHAIRMAN