

**Minutes of a meeting of the Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee
held on 2 March 2010 at Neuadd Dyfi, Aberdyfi**

PRESENT:

**Councillor David Richardson – Chairman
Councillor Dewi Owen – Vice-chair**

Councillors Alun Wyn Evans, (Gwynedd Council), Cllr. Brian Bates (Aberdyfi Community Council), Mr Desmond George (Dyfi Yacht Club), Mr W Bracewell (Aberdyfi Partnership), Mr Nick Dawson (Outward Bound Wales), Mr Roger Lawson-Mole (Aberdyfi Chamber of Trade), Mr Nigel Willis (Aberdyfi Boat Club).

Observer Councillor Trevor Roberts (Gwynedd Council)

Officers

Mr Barry Davies	-	Maritime and Country Parks Officer
Mr Huw Davies	-	Chief Engineer
Mr Paul Edwards	-	Aberdyfi Harbour Master
Mrs Glynda O'Brien	-	Committee Officer
Mr Gwynfor Owen	-	Translator

Apologies: Councillors Louise Hughes, Anne Lloyd Jones (Gwynedd Council).

1. **WELCOME**

Councillor Trevor Roberts, Chair of Barmouth Harbour Consultative Committee and also Mr Roger Lawson-Mole, Member of the Aberdyfi Chamber of Trade, were welcomed to the meeting.

In the context of the membership of the Consultative Committee, the Chairman noted that Mr David Hughes had resigned as a Member of the Community Council and therefore he did not represent the Aberdyfi Advertising and Improvements Committee. It was confirmed that the Community Council would nominate another member soon and in the same manner the Aberdyfi Advertising and Improvements Committee would elect a member following their annual meeting in May.

2. **MINUTES**

Submitted: Minutes of a meeting of the Aberdyfi Harbour Consultative Committee held on 20 October 2010.

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

3. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Reported: By the Harbour Master that arrangements were in hand for suitable moorings for large visiting boats to the harbour and the new mooring would be installed in the harbour by Easter

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

4. **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) Fees and Charges
- (ii) Budgets
- (iii) Navigation
- (iv) Staff:
- (v) Beach Award
- (vi) General Matters
- (vii) Beach Concession
- (viii) Visiting Vessel Welcome Pack
- (ix) Commercial Fishing Facilities

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

(i) that fees and charges for the next financial year 2010/11, had been forwarded to the statutory officers and the Portfolio Leader and it was recommended that the charges for those residing permanently in Gwynedd were not increased whilst they would be increased by 1% to those who resided outside Gwynedd.

It was noted that the increase in inflation for every harbour in Gwynedd was negative at -1.05% based on the assumption of the next pay award being 1%. This equated to a slight decrease in the overall Harbour income target of £2,600 during the next financial year. Members were reminded that the Aberdyfi Harbour income target had not reached the required target for a number of years and it would be necessary to take further measures to ensure that general expenditure and income targets achieved their targets without compromising standards.

The fees and charges relating to launching and registration of Powerboats and Personal Watercraft had not been increased for the next financial year.

Attention was drawn to the general increase in the income target for 2010/11 namely £9,070 which compared to a higher target of £51,020 in 2009/10. This meant an increase in the general income target for the Maritime Unit of £2,130,970 in 2010/11.

The Harbour Master added that approximately 90 registration forms for moorings had been received and there were regular enquiries regarding registration on the waiting list.

In response to a query regarding the storage of boats over winter, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that the fees had not increased significantly and there was quite a demand for storage in the Harbour and it would be necessary to monitor the situation for next winter.

(ii) In the context of **budgets**, an income target of £39,660 was noted for 2009/10 and the total income up to the end of December 2009 was £31,694 compared with £32,821 for the same

period last year. It was envisaged that the deficit of **£7,719** could not be created in income during the last quarter of the current financial year which meant that the target would not be reached. Members' attention was drawn to the seriousness of the situation as it was anticipated that there would be an over expenditure of £3,300 in the Harbour budget by the end of March and it would be necessary to overcome this over expenditure together with the income deficit.

Due to the economic climate it was emphasised that it was necessary to identify efficiency savings within local government and therefore it was necessary to operate in a cost effective way to try and safeguard the existing facilities.

(iii) In the context of **navigation**, an update was given by the Maritime and Country Parks Officer regarding the maintenance of navigational aids and the need to identify funding in the current revenue budget to meet the cost. An assurance was given that the Port Fairway Buoy which was a seasonal navigational aid, would be re-located by 1 May 2010 and would remain on the station until the end of September 2010.

Several members emphasised the importance that the above buoy was on station in good time bearing in mind that the Easter holidays were early this year and also that there were other activities to be held by the Yacht Club in the first week of May. A request was made for the buoy to be located in the appropriate place as it was a little north of the channel.

(iv) the officer elaborated on the **staffing** situation and noted that many officers from the Maritime Unit continued to be on secondment. It was noted that Mr David O'Neill (who had been seconded to a post in Abersoch) had been appointed as Harbour Master in Porthmadog. The post of Harbour Assistant in Aberdyfi for the forthcoming season had been advertised and it was hoped that an appointment could be made soon. It was also hoped to appoint one beach officer at Aberdyfi during the summer holidays and specific consideration would have to be given to the appointment of an additional Harbour Assistant in Aberdyfi to monitor and control the navigation of powerboats in the harbour during busy periods.

Members' attention was drawn to the fact that the Tywyn slipway would be closed this year due to the construction work underway with the sea defences and it may be that many boats would launch from Aberdyfi and as a result it would be necessary to open the slipway near the RNLI for this purpose because of the inconvenience to launch during high tide near the Church.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were highlighted:

(a) Concern by several Members regarding the increase in boats that would use the slipway near the RNLI and specifically regarding public safety with all the vehicles reversing into this area and that it was an area that was difficult to control. It should be ensured that there were sufficient staff available to keep the situation under control bearing in mind that there would be a great number of children on the beach.

(b) that there was a tendency as the slipway was closed, for personal watercraft users to try and launch from other private sites and this should be overcome by placing a padlock on the gates.

(c) That a sign should be erected in front of the Harbour Master's office to keep the slipway clear and clean at all times to facilitate swift launching and avoid congestion.

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted the importance that the slipway should be totally clean and he stressed the need for harbour staff to ensure that this occurred daily. It was vital that Harbour staff conducted a formal weekly inspection of all the slipways and to clean the slipway if stones or seaweed impaired use.

(ch) it was anticipated that the parking of trailers would be a problem and it was asked what provision would be made for them and they could not be left on the car park nor near the RNLI station.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer stated that the owners of trailers paid for parking at Tywyn and the Harbour Master would be asked to investigate the options for parking e.g. perhaps opening a temporary green site.

(v) in the context of **beach awards**, disappointment was noted that the Maritime Unit was not in a situation to submit an application for a beach award for Aberdyfi in 2010 as the bathing water quality had not reached the required standard. However, the Maritime Unit had submitted an application for a Resort Beach Award for Aberdyfi. Members were guided through a detailed list of bathing water quality test results in Aberdyfi as well as looking at the tests in Barmouth and Tywyn.

In addition, it was noted that the Maritime Unit would not submit an application for the Blue Flag or the Beach Award in 2010 for Tywyn because of the construction work on the sea defences that was currently underway.

One of the Members had looked at the figures in detail as he monitored the rainfall and it appeared that the tests had been undertaken during heavy rain. Consequently, there was much more water in the Dyfi area and it overflowed to the Leri at this specific time. He was of the opinion that the water that overflowed down to the Leri had a rank smell and the Environment Agency should be asked to check the sewerage pipes in order to find out if the quality of the water was affected by pollution from sewerage.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer stated that they should not be disappointed about the results as the water quality did meet statutory requirements. It was noted that every beach could fail one sample at any time and it was explained that the tests were part of a scientific process with a sample taken at around the same location every time. Results were awaited of the investigation undertaken on behalf of Welsh Water and the Environment Agency when a dye was poured into the Leri to ascertain the flow of current in the estuary in the hope that the source of any pollution could be found.

It was suggested that this would be discussed with the Chief Engineer to place information about the Blue Flag on the notice board in Tywyn in order to inform visitors why the beaches had not reached the Blue Flag status this time.

(vi) In the context of **general issues**, reference was made to a project for development namely positioning a pontoon that would extend from the most eastern point on the quay wall for a distance of around eighty metres. The officer elaborated on what needed to be considered such as the current condition of the quay wall, FEPA licence, planning application, consultation with the Countryside Council for Wales and possible land drainage consent. A survey of the wall would be undertaken by consulting engineers in order to ensure a detailed and full assessment of the condition of the sheet piles and further consideration would be given to the pontoon development following this. If the development proceeded it was noted that the pontoon would be a seasonal facility and it would have to be dismantled and stored on land during winter and repositioned for the summer season activities. The Maritime Unit would consult further with the relevant departments and would work in collaboration with the local community to search for possible grant sources.

The Chief Engineer stated that the realisation of the proposed project would be dependent on the condition of the wall. It was proposed to undertake a survey of the sheet piles soon and it

had to be realised that it may be necessary to undertake substantial work to the wall during the next 10 years or less, dependent on the result of the survey.

The Chairman reported that he had received many letters from organisations and individuals supporting the project and it would be of economic benefit to the village and would assist to attract additional income to the Harbour budget. It was estimated that the project cost was approximately £80,000 and there was an assurance of grants for the sum of £35,000 from different sources. In addition, fishermen from Aberaeron/Aberystwyth had shown an interest in transporting fish to sellers in the village.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were highlighted:

(a) If the survey indicated that the wall required work would it be possible to position the pontoon separately.

In response, the Chief Engineer explained that this would add approximately £150,000 to the cost of the proposed project.

(b) In response to a query regarding if there was a contingency plan to undertake any work if it was shown that the piles were not up to standard, the Chief Engineer stated that no contingency plan had been prepared and they were waiting to see what would be the residual lifespan of the piles before proceeding with any scheme.

(c) If the survey found that the wall was unsuitable and required repair it was asked if there was a possibility that the Harbour would have to close.

The Chief Engineer confirmed that if the wall was dangerous then it would be necessary to close that part of the harbour, however, he did not anticipate that it would lead to this. It was hoped that the report would confirm a lifespan of another 10 years for the wall and piles.

The local member added that closing the harbour would be disastrous for the village and if there was renewal work to be completed on the wall he trusted that the Council had money earmarked to undertake this work.

(vii) In relation to a beach concession, the application by the Maritime Unit for Dyfi Donkeys to continue to give children donkey rides in 2010 was approved.

(viii) Members were reminded of the proposal at the previous meeting of this Consultative Committee to present a **Welcome Pack** to visiting boats and this would include information regarding harbour facilities, local amenities, tides, emergency services etc. It was confirmed that the Harbour Master would distribute the comprehensive Welcome Pack to visiting boats.

The Harbour Master confirmed that 43 boats had visited the Harbour last year and this had generated £633 in overnight fees.

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer noted that the packs were a good idea and it was proposed to produce some for every Harbour.

(ix) In the context of **facilities for commercial fishermen**, it was noted that the Cardigan Bay Fishing Association had made a request for a provision to make and store ice. However, no specific proposal was made and it was not known how many fishermen currently operated. In light of the fact that the representative of the Fishing Association was not present at this meeting further information and confirmation was awaited from them in due course.

The Harbour Master had recently cleared the site used by commercial users because of its terrible condition. It was trusted that the cooperation of commercial users would be received in the future regarding the management of the land in order to ensure the safety and the visual aspect of the site.

Resolved: To accept, note the contents of the report of the Maritime and Country Parks Officer together with the additional comments made above.

4. MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE REQUEST OF THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

(a) Marketing

The Chairman presented an A3 size poster to Members that he had prepared to promote Aberdyfi and to be sent at the start of April to approximately 30 different resorts. He felt that Aberdyfi was not marketed sufficiently especially as it did not appear in the Hafan Pwllheli pamphlet, in the National Park magazine or in the 'Watersports for All' booklet produced by the North Wales Watersports Company. In the National Boat Shows held annually in London adverts could be seen for sailing in Scotland, Ireland, Channel Islands, however, there was nothing about sailing in Wales.

The local member was of the view that marketing was a means to increase income not only in the Harbour but also for local businesses.

The Maritime and Country Parks Officer thanked the Chairman for his enthusiasm and for preparing the poster, however, there would be additional implications for the Maritime Unit in relation to the Council's bilingual policy and also the need to produce a similar poster for every Harbour in the County.

Certainly the Maritime Unit was very willing to assist but it had to be borne in mind that the resources within the Unit were scarce to focus on marketing.

It was added that mariners did not travel much from one place to the next these days and perhaps an incentive could be offered i.e. staying for 3 nights for the price of 2 in the various harbours.

Resolved: To accept and thank the Chairman for preparing the marketing work and the Maritime and Country Parks Officer would organise a translation of the poster to be displayed in the appropriate places.

(b) Pontoon Project

It was noted that the above had already been discussed under Item 4 (vi) above.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Sand Clearance

Reported: By the Chief Engineer that the Consultancy Service would undertake the sand clearance work this year for three days commencing on 15 March 2010.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(b) Gates leading to the Promenade

Reported: That it was difficult for disabled people in wheelchairs and parents with a pram to have access to the promenade from the car park due to the size of the gates.

Resolved: That the Maritime and Country Parks Officer would contact the relevant officers within the Highways Department with a request to investigate the matter.

(c) Mussels

Reported: (i) That approximately 10-12 collectors from South Wales had cleared the beach of mussels over the weekend. The Harbour Master was aware of this and had made appropriate enquiries that stated that the collectors had a valid licence and that they were bona fide collectors. The mussels were of the correct size for collection and the relevant organisations were notified of the event.

(ii) By the Maritime and Country Parks Officer that the Maritime Service had to receive a report when the quality of mussels were suitable for collection in order to give the Harbour Master sufficient notice.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(ch) Minutes of the Harbour Consultative Committee

A member enquired to what Committee the minutes of this Consultative Committee were submitted.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that the minutes were not submitted to any Council committee and that officers acted upon the resolutions when required and in accordance with the authority they had. The Harbour Consultative Committees were not statutory meetings, except for the Porthmadog Harbour Consultative Committee. The Monitoring Officer intended to investigate further into some of the duties of the Council Board in relation to harbours, but currently in accordance with procedure the officers would act on any decision made by the Harbour Consultative Committees.

In addition, it was noted that agendas, reports and the minutes of the Consultative Harbour Committees were posted on the Council's website and could be seen by any member of the public.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(d) Aberdyfi Boat Club

A representative of the Aberdyfi Boat Club asked the Harbour Master to contact the Club if he saw any of the members misusing the estuary.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(dd) Cost of disposing of porpoises

It was asked if the Maritime Unit received additional costs for the disposal of porpoises that were washed ashore, and could not another Unit within the Council assist with this.

In response, the Maritime and Country Parks Officer explained that the cost was the responsibility of the Maritime Unit and this would double if they asked another Unit to assist. It was ensured that staff who undertake this work wear the appropriate attire and equipment.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

(e) Coastal Protection

Reported: By a member that although he appreciated the work that was on-going in Tywyn to protect the coast he expressed concern regarding the impact on the coast south of Tywyn including Aberdyfi Golf Club. He anticipated that the sea would come over into this area and there was potential for a significant loss of income for the Golf Club. The members was of the opinion that the situation should be monitored and that a regulated retreat should be considered.

In response, the Chief Engineer confirmed that all the land had been considered during the design process of the coastal plan and that there was an agreement between the Environment Agency and the Countryside Council for Wales to maintain the land for the next 20 years and the intention was to create a regulated retreat.

Resolved: To accept and note the above.

6. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was reported that the next meeting of this Committee would be held on Tuesday, 19 October 2010.

Resolved To accept and note the above.

CHAIRMAN